

FIRE AT WEST TAIERI

There has been, we regret to say, another serious destruction of farm produce at the Taieri. The sufferer now is Mr James Kemp, farmer, West Taieri ; and he has lost five stacks of oats (2000 bushels), of the value of L250. A man named John Cartwright, *alias* John Ferguson, *alias* Jack the Wag, is in custody on suspicion of being the incendiary ; and he will be brought up at the West Taieri Court-house to-day, with a view to a remand.

The fire was discovered soon after midnight of Monday. Mr Kemp's farm is situated between Outram and Lake Waipori ; his house being on the right-hand side of the road from Outram, and his stack-yard on the opposite side, about 20 or 25 yards distant from the house. Thomas Kemp, the eldest son of the sufferer, was awakened about midnight by a crackling noise ; and on opening the door, he saw some of the stacks burning, and the prisoner Cartwright, standing close to them. James Kemp, jun. on hearing the alarm of " Fire " given by his brother, got up and ran to the stack-yard. The prisoner was

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run to the stack-yard. The prisoner was still there, and in reply to a question, "How has this happened, Jack?" he replied, "I'm trying to put it out." We gather from the account with which we have been supplied, that it was impossible to do anything to prevent the spread of of the fire ; and that all the stacks in the yard were destroyed.—Cartwright was employed by Mr Kemp during the harvests of 1865 and 1866, but was discharged because of his frequent tipsiness. It is known that on Monday night he was drinking at the Plough Inn ; that he left there in company with two men ; and that they parted with him within 300 or 400 yards of Mr Kemp's house. This was about midnight, or very shortly before the stacks were found blazing. Before his arrest, the prisoner stated to two or three persons, that he was near the stacks "when the grass took fire," and that he was "trying his best to put it out," when the alarm was given by Mr T. Kemp.