A FIRE PROBABLY CAUSED BY SLAKING LIME.

At 1 A. M. on the morning of February 12, 1913, the west barn at the Hays Branch Experiment Station, Hays, Kansas, was found to be burning. The fire was so far advanced and burned so rapidly that the barn, 26 horses and considerable equipment were totally destroyed, causing a loss of approximately $10,000.

The barn was a low, L-shaped structure, well built and entirely enclosed. Feed storage rooms with concrete floors were located at the ends of the heel. Alleyways ran the length of each wing and connected the feed rooms. The inside construction was entirely of wood. Less than a half ton of hay was in the bay near the heel of the building.

A door at the end of one wing was opened by the superintendent of the farm, but the smoke inside was so dense that he could not enter. There was no sound or sign of life within the building. It is supposed that the horses were suffocated in their stalls by the smoke. It was later found that only four horses had broken their halters and moved out of their stalls.

The indications are that the fire originated near the heel and spread through the litter or the alleyways. The night being cold, the doors were closed and latched and few windows were open. The barn foreman made his last round between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, and the electric current was switched off at ten o'clock.

It is thought that the fire started from the slaking of lime. During an epidemic affecting the horses during the summer of 1912, air