

## A BUSH FIRE BRIGADE.

THE residents of Berrigan, just across the Murray, are to be heartily congratulated upon the initiation of a movement which ought to be extensively adopted throughout Australia. They have organised and equipped a brigade for putting out bush fires, and although only a few weeks in existence excellent work has already been performed by it. Recognising the great danger from fire in a season like the present, which is remarkable for a prolific growth of grass and crops, the Berrigan residents determined to render all the assistance possible to farmers and graziers in the district, and to that end a meeting was called about six weeks ago for the purpose of forming a brigade, having for its chief object the extinction of bush fires. The idea was enthusiastically taken up. One prominent resident offered to provide a pair of horses and a drag having accommodation for 16 men. Another undertook to supply a horse and watercart, to be used for putting out fires in trees, stumps, etc., after the main conflagration had been extinguished by the beaters. A horse and cart to bring along drinking water and refreshments for the workers at a fire was offered by another resident; a bell, fire beaters—in fact the whole of the necessary equipment was guaranteed at once, and then the members of the brigade were enrolled. The institution has been in full working order for about five weeks, and has already done splendid work. The members number about 30, most of whom are employed in the town. The arrangement, in which their employers fully concur, is that as soon as the bell rings each fireman runs to the rallying spot and takes his place in the drag, which is then driven at full speed in the direction of the fire, the importance of losing no time in getting to work being fully recognised. Each fireman is provided with a beater consisting of a piece of leather or greenhide 12in. by 18in., slit into three parts for about two-thirds of its length, and fastened to a wooden handle about 5½ft. long. The slit parts of the hide or leather are in some instances protected by pieces of light hoop iron, and beaters made in this way have proved wonderfully serviceable. Owing to the promptness with which the brigade turns out great damage has already been averted, and as all services are rendered absolutely free of charge, landholders within about 12 miles of the town are furnished with aid that is keenly appreciated in time of need. To give an idea of how promptly the brigade turns out, a fire broke out a couple of weeks ago at Gum Swamp, and bore down, as-

ago at Gum Swamp, and bore down, assisted by a strong wind, on Old Berrigan Station, the property of Mr. Arthur Wilson. Before Mr. Wilson could get his station hands together, the brigade was on the scene, and had stopped the progress of the fire, although it was ten miles away. Had it not been for the prompt action of the volunteers, Mr. Wilson believes that the grass on a large portion of his run would have been destroyed. It is within the power of every

town to do what Berrigan has done, and thus greatly assist in making each district comparatively safe. This is a prolific season for grass, the growth of vegetation during the winter and early spring having been remarkable for its luxuriance. The danger from fire is, therefore, unusually great, and as the two worst months of the year in that respect are still to come, it will be great good luck indeed if disastrous outbreaks do not occur.—'Australasian.'