

DISASTROUS FLOODS IN THE SOUTH

SERIOUS DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

The heavy rain experienced in Dunedin towards the end of last week ceased early on Saturday morning, and, although there were some showers during the day, all fear of a flood was dispelled. A considerable quantity of water lay on the Taieri Plain, and the river rose rapidly, but no serious damage is reported. The Waipori River was in a state of high flood, and was the cause of a serious mishap to the Dunedin Corporation's intake near the electrical works. There was exceptionally heavy rain on Thursday in the Balclutha district, and Friday morning the Molyneux River began to rise with alarming rapidity, the rise in less than twelve hours being eight feet. By 7 o'clock on Saturday evening the flood had reached the 13 foot mark, a point which has not been reached since 1878. Were it not but for the heroic work of a number of the townspeople in stopping the leakages in the protective works serious damage would have resulted.

The most disastrous flood experienced in the Gore and Mataura Valley occurred on Friday evening. The flood was expected, but proved unexpectedly serious. The whole length of the Mataura Valley suffered severely, and the losses are enormous in stock alone, thousands of sheep and hundreds of cattle and horses being lost, and the carcasses carried away by the rushing waters (reports the representative of the *Otago Daily Times*). All the crops still out on the low-lying Waimea Plains are irretrievably lost. Gore and Mataura were particularly hard hit. At Gore half the private residences were submerged several feet. Appalling, though less devastating, damage was caused by the flooding of the shops in town, particularly the drapers. Large consignments of sugar, flour, sago, tapico, etc., were reduced to waste, and the booksellers, bootmakers, and other trades suffered great loss. Windows and mirrors were smashed, and goods were washed out of the shops.

On a rough estimate the damage in Gore is £100,000, and in the district, including the whole of the Mataura Valley, £150,000. One draper at Gore estimates his loss at £2500, and another at £1500. Other tradesmen put their loss at from £600 up. Only one small shop in the whole town escaped. Stocks of tea, tobacco, rice, and tons of groceries have been ruined. Cases were broken, and good floated down stream for miles. Tons of sugar melted away, leaving only the sacks.

At Mataura the river rose with great rapidity. It broke its banks at 9 a.m. above the town, and all the houses above the paper mills and to the west side of the township were swamped in a very short space of time. A great panic ensued, the people flying from their homes and women and children being rescued in carts and taken to safety. One store and one hotel were the only business places flooded, all the shops in Bridge street escaping. The coal mines have been flooded. One house on the river bank and a two-roomed cottage were washed away.

The floods were the most serious experienced in Southland for 30 years. Railway traffic was completely dislocated through washouts and miles of railway being under water. The losses of stock is very heavy. At Waianiwa, where the flood waters seldom penetrate, one farmer lost 150 sheep, 13 cattle, and two horses.

Mr. Dodds, a farmer at Mataura, lost a thousand sheep. One hundred and fifty families in Mataura had to be lodged on higher levels, and 105 people took refuge in the paper mills all day on Saturday, food being sent to them by means of a wire.

Otautau reports that a man named Younger was drowned on Saturday when attempting to rescue some stock. One farmer at Makarewa estimates his loss at £600, and there are many others who have suffered equally with him.

The most serious floods for many years were experienced at Tapanui on Friday and Saturday. Continuous rain fell, 248 points being registered at the State Nursery. Kelso town was flooded, and much inconvenience was caused to residents, besides minor losses of property and damage.

A Christchurch message stated that as a result of a nor'-wester on Thursday and Friday the Waimakariri River on Saturday was in high flood. A good deal of the flooded area was in potatoes, and these will be ruined if the water does not get away quickly. Several big crops of beans are likely to be washed away.

On the arrival of the first express from Christchurch on Saturday at Ashburton the passengers were greeted with the announcement: 'Rangitata bridge unsafe. All passengers for south of Rangitata will be conveyed by trolley over the river.' Four piles of the bridge spanning the north branch of the river were washed out, and the bridge was rendered unsafe for railway traffic, which, in consequence, was completely disorganised.

A howling gale was experienced throughout the West Coast on Friday and Saturday morning, the result being floods in all the local rivers. Much damage was done in all directions. The approaches to the Taipo and Wainihinihi bridges were completely destroyed, whilst damage wrought to the Teremakau bridge will cost at least £4000 to repair.

Commercial

PRODUCE

Messrs. Donald Reid and Co. report:—

Oats.—Moderate quantities have been offering for direct delivery from country stations. The export demand is not keen, and millers' limits do not allow them to operate freely at current prices, but nearly all consignments coming to hand have found buyers at quotations. We quote: Prime milling, 2s 2d to 2s 2½d; good to best feed, 2s 1d to 2s 2d; inferior to medium, 1s 6d to 2s per bushel (sacks extra).

Wheat.—Local millers' operations have not been heavy during the past week. We quote: Prime milling velvet, 3s 11d to 4s; Tuscan, etc., 3s 9d to 3s 10d; medium, 3s 6d to 3s 8d; best whole fowl wheat, 3s 3d to 3s 4½d; medium to good, 2s 10d to 3s 2d; broken and damaged, 2s 3d to 2s 9d per bushel (sacks extra).

Chaff.—We quote: Best oaten sheaf, £3 10s to £3 15s; choice black oat, to £3 17s 6d; medium to good, £2 15s to £3 5s; light and discolored, £2 to £2 10s per ton (bags extra).

WOOL

Messrs. Stronach, Morris, and Co. (Ltd.), report for week ended Tuesday, April 1, 1913, as follows:—

Rabbitskins.—We offered a very large catalogue at yesterday's sale to a good attendance of buyers. Competition was very keen, last sales' rates being well maintained. We anticipate another good season. Quotations: Does, 25d to 27½d; bucks, 17d to 19d; best racks, 12d to 13d; light racks, 11d to 11½d; spring does, 10½d to 13d; outgoing, to 19d; small, to 8½d; fawns, to 13½d; blacks, to 30d; hareskins, 12d to 13½d per lb; horsehair, 18½d to 21d per lb.

Sheepskins.—We offered a large catalogue at today's sale, but competition was restricted. Prices, however, were very high, in some instances showing a slight rise on last sales' rates. Quotations: Best half-bred, 8½d to 9d; medium to good, 7½d to 8½d; best fine crossbred, 8d to 8½d; best coarse crossbred, 8d to 8½d; medium to good, 7d to 7½d; dead and inferior crossbred, 6d to 7½d; best lambskins, 7½d to 8d; medium to good, 6½d to 7½d; best lambskins, 7d to 7½d; good, 6d to 6½d; inferior, 3½d to 5½d.

Hides.—We held our fortnightly hide sale on Thursday, the 27th ult., when we offered a good catalogue. Prices for hides and also calfskins and yearlings were fully up to last sales' rates. Quotations: Extra stout heavy ox hides, to 12d; good, 9½d to 10½d; stout heavy do, 8½d to 9½d; medium and light do, 8½d to 9½d; extra stout heavy cow hides, 9d to 9½d; stout heavy do, 8½d to 8½d; medium and light do, 8½d to 8½d; inferior cow and ox hides, 6½d to 7½d; cut, 6½d to 9½d; slippy, 5½d to 7d; bull and stag hides, 6½d to 6½d; horse hides, to 14s 3d; best calfskins, to 11½d; medium to good, 9½d to 10½d; inferior, 7d to 8½d; best yearlings, 8½d to 8½d; medium to good, 6½d to 7½d.

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