



ABOVE: An aerial view of homes in Weymouth St, New Plymouth, in the lake formed by the broken banks of the Mangaotuku Stream. Weymouth St has always been one of the troublespots in New Plymouth flooding.

## LANDSLIDE

A landslide has caused thousands of dollars' worth of damage and isolated the farm of Mr T. W. Watson, Otaraoa Rd, Waitara.

Mr Watson said by telephone that a landslide, several acres in extent, missed his house by a few feet but completely wiped out a large farm shed.

"The landscape is completely changed," he said.

Mr Watson said a car was lost in the shed, and two tractors and a Land-Rover were pushed 40ft out of the shed.

"Hundreds of dollars-worth of gear are under 10ft of

earth where the shed stood."

In another section of his farm Mr Watson had 1400 sheep. He does not know how many are now buried beneath earth falls.

Several big slips on the Otaraoa Rd had isolated his farm, Mr Watson said, and he could not reach either Waitara or Inglewood. "Another slip has diverted a creek and I now have a river running down my farm drive."

Mr Watson is chairman of the Clifton County Council, but he said he had received no other reports of damage in the district. Communication was somewhat difficult however, and the closure of the Waitara River Bridge had prevented the county clerk from reaching his office.

## Pumping all night at Opera House

In spite of a pump working during the night, workers still "lost ground" in their attempts to drain the Taranaki Opera House basement of water.

At 6 p.m. yesterday, scenery was shifted to 30 inches above the basement floor. When workers left at 7.10 p.m. there was no water in the building.

However the president of the New Plymouth Operatic Society, Mr J. W. T. Murphy, said today the problem came up very suddenly between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. When pumping began there was about 14 inches of water in the basement.

Mr Murphy said the workers lost ground to some extent. Although the pump sucked out 7000 gallons an hour, there was about 18 inches to two feet of water in the basement when work stopped about 6 a.m. today.

People were back on the job at the Opera House early today as the spring tide threatened further flooding.

## RISKS IN BRINGING IN BOATS

The recent bad weather had brought to notice the risks involved in bringing larger boats involved in the newly expanding fishing industry into the harbour, said the deputy harbourmaster, Captain D. C. Giles, at the Taranaki Harbours' Board's meeting in New Plymouth today.

The larger boats were those which might be brought in for storage purposes, said Captain Giles. They might create a serious problem in certain circumstances and the matter would have to be closely considered.

The chairman, Sir Harry Blyde, said the board would do all it could to co-operate with the fishing industry.

## RATS ON WHARF

A complaint by the master of a visiting ship about the number of rats on Newton King Wharf was considered by the Taranaki Harbours Board in New Plymouth today.

The deputy harbourmaster, Captain D. C. Giles, said the rat population had grown considerably since wheat shipments had been made at the port. Baits had been laid but the results were not satisfactory.

The board decided to instruct its staff to take concerted action to reduce the problem.

## PHONES OUT OF ORDER

No trunk communications had been affected in Taranaki, but in various areas there were pockets of subscribers whose telephones were out of order said the acting chief postmaster in New Plymouth, Mr J. Fowles.

In the central business area of New Plymouth about 500 subscribers were affected. Floodwater in cables accounted for about 300 disruptions at Waitara and 50 at Midhirst. Telephones of about 100 subscribers in little pockets around Hawera were also out of order. The Lepperton automatic exchange developed a fault and all its connections were temporarily out of order.

Mr Fowles said it was hoped to have all communications restored by midday, with the exception of the central city area which could take a little longer.

## BUSINESS AREA A MESS

As the water subsided in the central business area of New Plymouth today the force of last night's floods became apparent.

Several plate glass windows were smashed by the weight of water (though some were broken deliberately to ease the water pressure) and in Devon St outside Whites Ltd an area of asphalt footpath about 12ft square has been torn away.

At the height of the low quantities of stock spilled out into the street from several stores. In Brougham St, Camera House lost its main window and a large amount of photographic goods swept away. Eyewitnesses reported a camera floating along on its display stand at one point.

In front of the same shop a huge subsidence has opened up in the footpath, and at midday water was flowing into the hole from the street.

Opposite, outside the New Zealand Shipping Co, the footpath was lifted in sheets, turned over and left in a pile.

A wooden building on the corner of Egmont and King Sts occupied by Standish, Anderson, Brokenshire and Howell, solicitors, was moved two inches by the force of the floodwaters.

The proprietor of Haughton's Fabrics Ltd, Mr M. J. O'Connor, said considerable damage had been done to stock in his shop. It was the first time floodwaters had entered the premises.

The Criterion Hotel was unable to open its bars at the appointed time this morning, but the licensee, Mr W. B. Dent, said the public bar would open later. He said the cellars were completely submerged and the ground floor had 8in of water throughout at the height of the flood.

"The kitchen was under water, and this was a problem as we had a full house," Mr Dent said. But all guests were supplied with bacon and eggs, tea and toast.

Some basements were being pumped out early this afternoon and the fire brigade was expected to begin similar work later.

Stock from affected shops was piled in the street and at the corner of Brougham and Devon Sts staff of the Kingsway Outfitters Ltd were hosing down racks of men's suits. On the opposite corner a large pile of furniture was stacked. Glass, coat-hangers and dozens of other items litter gutters.

The flood was perhaps best summed up by Mr G. L. A. Bognuda, the insurance assessor. "This is bad. The worst I've known."

HELP: The Taranaki Harbours Board decided in New Plymouth today to offer its help to the city council in mopping-up operations after the flooding.

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