February 1883 North Island Flooding (1883-02-21)

Start Date
1883-02-21

Abstract
There was heavy rain in Manawatu-Wanganui, Taranaki, Waikato, and Auckland, which brought some heavy floods. There were also some high winds. Two people were reported drowned in Northland.

Return Period
Moderate

Notes
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February_1883_North_Island_Flooding

North Island Region

Northland Region

Flooding at Russell
Map Location
-35.260642 174.122015
Casualties
A boy, Alexander McLeod, was drowned at Russell.

Flooding at Waipapa
Map Location
-35.208698 173.92071
Casualties
A lad named Joseph Mills was drowned while crossing the Waipapa creek.

Auckland Region

Multi Hazard at Auckland
Damage Comment
Great damage was done in the country districts.

Multi Hazard at Auckland City
Map Location
-36.852397 174.762337
Comment
A heavy northeast gale with much rain prevailed in Auckland on the 26th.

Waikato Region
### Flooding at Komata

**Map Location**
-37.342645 175.67923

**Impact**
The Te Aroha coach got stuck in the Komara Creek and the passengers had a narrow escape.

### Flooding at Ohinemuri River

**Map Location**
-37.407707 175.819011

**Comment**
There were heavy floods in the Ohinemuri River.

**Affected Lifeline**
- Two bridges on the Taurangan Road and the Owharoa Bridge were destroyed.

### Flooding at Paeroa

**Map Location**
-37.37937 175.671378

**Damage Comment**
The Paeroa steamer wharf and sheds were washed away.

**Impact**
Cattle were swimming in the paddocks between Paeroa and Puke.

### Heavy Rain at Thames

**Map Location**
-37.140988 175.533107

**Comment**
Rain was still falling in Thames on the 26th.

### Multi Hazard at Waitekauri

**Map Location**
-37.376149 175.765225

**Comment**
The storm was heavy in the Waitekauri Valley.

**Damage Comment**
It would take several thousand pounds to repair the damage.

### Taranaki Region

### Multi Hazard at Taranaki

**Comment**
Captain Edwin telegraphed that bad weather was probable between northeast and east and south, the glass would rise further, but with backing wind and increasing sea.

### Heavy Rain

**Affected Lifeline**
Between Stratford and Inglewood heavy rain washed the gravel off the road in a number of places.

**Damage Cost**
The damage to the road between Stratford and New Plymouth was estimated at £200 ($30,640 2008 dollars).

### Flooding
Comment
The rivers south of New Plymouth were very high.

Heavy Rain at Hawera

Map Location
-39.586876 174.27571

Comment
There was a heavy fall of rain in Hawera from the 21st to the 22nd. The rain was exceptionally heavy on the afternoon of the 21st and through the night.

Comment
Nothing like this fall of rain had been experienced since the Waiwakaiho Bridge was washed away.

Physical Characteristic
Hawera received 4.08 in (10.4 cm) of rain in 24 hours.

High Wind / Gust

Comment
Towards the morning of the 22nd the wind rose from the southeast and developed into half a gale.

Flooding

Damage Comment
A channel was made by the water under the road in the down cutting leading to Mr Hick's property, endangering the road.

Flooding at Inglewood

Map Location
-39.163073 174.187246

Comment
There was flooding at Inglewood on the 24th.

Damage Comment
Culverts were unable to cope with the stormwater.

Affected Lifeline
The Waiongana River, near Waiori Station, washed away the road on its banks.

Affected Lifeline
The main road from Norfolk Rd to Inglewood was damaged in several places. At the Junction Rd in Inglewood a large culvert was carried away. For about a mile on the road from Inglewood to New Plymouth the road was blocked for cart traffic when a culvert completely collapsed.

Landslide at Manawapou River

Map Location
-39.66451 174.33955

Affected Lifeline
A large landslip occurred on the Manawapou hill on the night of the 24th. An immense quantity of earth and shrubs was brought down and completely blocked the road. Traffic was resumed the next morning.

Flooding

Comment
The Manawapou River was in a state of flood on the 24th and 25th.

Heavy Rain at Manutahi

Map Location
-39.659312 174.39656

Comment
Very heavy rain fell between Manutahi and Kakaramea on the 26th.
### Multi Hazard at New Plymouth

**Map Location**  
-39.051214 174.06972

**Comment**  
The weather at 9am on the 22nd: New Plymouth- E.S.E. light breeze, raining, sea moderate. Barometer, 29.81.

### Heavy Rain

**Physical Characteristic**  
On the night of the 21st and 22nd 4.08 in (10.4 cm) of rain fell.

**Comment**  
It rained incessantly during the whole of the 24th and up till about 4am on the 25th.

### Flooding

**Comment**  
The rivers were higher than they had been for many years.

**Affected Lifeline**  
Some of the rails of the tramway were washed away.

### Landslide

**Comment**  
There was a landslip at the Fishing Rock.

### Flooding at Norfolk

**Map Location**  
-39.203119 174.232537

**Affected Lifeline**  
About 1/4 mile (402 m) south of the Norfolk Rd station, a culvert and part of the embankment was washed away. The road was closed for cart traffic.

**Damage Cost**  
The damage done there was about £50 ($7,660 2008 dollars).

### Heavy Rain at Opunake

**Map Location**  
-39.456198 173.859526

**Comment**  
There was heavy rain in Opunake.

### Flooding at Tangahoe River

**Map Location**  
-39.578009 174.340736

**Comment**  
The Tangahoe River was in a state of flood on the 24th and 25th. The waters reached within a short distance of the planking of the bridge.

### Flooding at Waitara

**Map Location**  
-38.99656 174.213734

**Comment**  
There was a considerable freshet in the Waitara River.

**Damage Comment**  
A punt broke from her moorings and was washed out to sea.

**Physical Characteristic**  
On the night of the 24th or early on the 25th, the river rose to within 1 ft (32 cm) of the top of the wharf.
The river ran down with great violence, forcing its way through the back of the northern stone embankment, carrying away about 200 feet of the stone wall.

A heavy landslip occurred on the railway line between Waitara Station and the New Plymouth road on the night of the 24th or early on the 25th. A section about 120 ft (37 m) long and 30 ft (9 m) deep was carried away, leaving the rails suspended.

A good deal of damage was done to roads and bridges in the country districts.

The large bridge culvert at Kaikokopu was damaged.

The water at the Kaiwhaike quarries was 10 ft (3.0 m) higher than had been known since Mr Denby commenced operations there more than four years prior.

Traffic was suspended over the Okehu bridge on the main road when the approaches were carried away. A bridge on the Puherimu Rd was totally destroyed.

Several slips also occurred on the road and the north railway line.

The bridge over the Ohie Stream was washed away.

Heavy rain fell in Wanganui again on the 24th and 25th.
At high water on the night of the 25th the river had risen to within a foot of the highest point reached by the flood of the 23rd. The river fell steadily from high tide on the 26th.

Serious damage was done at the Heads. 28 spans of staging for the new breakwater was washed down and the engine and pile-driving machine was thrown into the river. The channel at the Heads also shifted further south.

The loss to the contractor was estimated at over £500 ($76,600 2008 dollars).

It was the heaviest flood known for six years, and was considered by some as equal to the big flood of 1876. Residents who had observed both floods agreed that the present flood was not within 1 ft or 18 in (32 cm or 46 cm) of the flood of 1876.

A continual stream of timber and decayed vegetable matter was brought down the river. The decayed filth made a foul stench. Enormous quantities of drift wood were brought down, including whole trees.

On the evening of the 25th the river was flowing over Bett's Wharf and the road on the left bank.

There was damage on both banks of the river. Opposite St George's Gate the bank was swept down so much that the formation of the road had given way. In other places the earth was carried away right up to the fence. In the enclosure, and from there up to the bend in the river, the bank was dangerously undermined in one or two places and some hundred yards of earth had fallen in. On the opposite bank, a large portion at the back of Messrs Barns and Higgies saleyards was carried away, leaving part of the fence overhanging the river. Some of the staging was carried away as well as several beacons.

Churton's Creek was said to have been higher than ever known before, showing the tremendous overflow from the Westmere.

The flood in the Wanganui River washed away a great portion of the road along the cliff fronting Mrs Smith's property, which stopped all traffic.

A slip occurred at Shakespear's cliff, blocking the road.

The debris brought down the Wanganui River bore evidence of heavy landslips in the Upper Wanganui, caused by the prolonged rainfall.

The Whangaehu bridge appeared to have been considerably weakened by the strain of masses of timber collected on the piers by the flood.

References

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The late heavy rain.


Opunake.


Correspondence.


The floods.


Narrow escape of hotel from fire.


Effects of the flood.


Wanganui-Waitotara Highway Board.