

## Appalling Disaster.

### Earthquake Shakes the Province.

#### NAPIER AND HASTINGS IN RUINS.

Thousands Homeless.

Hundreds of Lives Lost.

Great Damage in Waipawa.

The most appalling disaster in the history of New Zealand occurred yesterday, when the business sections of Napier and Hastings, as well as large portions of the residential areas were laid in ruins, first by a violent earthquake and then by fire. At Napier the water supply was cut off and it was impossible to stay the progress of the flames. Hundreds of people were caught in the falling masonry, but no reliable estimate can be obtained of the loss of life. At Hastings the Grand Hotel and Roach's fine store collapsed like a pack of cards and practically the whole of the employees were buried in the ruins. Heart-breaking scenes were witnessed as the bodies of the dead were recovered.

#### AT WAIPAWA:

##### BIGGEST SHAKE ON RECORD

##### WIDESPREAD DAMAGE

Waipawa was yesterday visited by the most disastrous earthquake experienced within the memory of the oldest resident, although it is stated that the shake of 1863, which diverted the course of the river, was more severe. Be that as it may, after yesterday's experience no one has any desire to go through another like it.

The earthquake commenced at 10.48 with a gentle swaying motion, which rapidly developed in intensity until the whole town was rocking. Loud reverberations accompanied the shake, and terror was added to the situation by the noise of crashing windows and falling bricks.

People rushed into the streets terror stricken, women and children sobbed in fear, and men blanched as they were brought face to face with the most disastrous visitation of the century.

##### Buried in Ruins.

Immediately the first big shake had subsided in violence cries for help were heard from a heap of ruins where a few moments before stood the bootmaker's shop of Mr S. Burkin. The brick wall at the end of Bibby's Buildings had collapsed, crashed on to the shop adjoining and crushed the building to matchwood.

A wife and gang speedily got to work to remove the debris, and when at last Mr Burkin was extricated it was apparent that he had sustained very serious injuries. He was badly cut about the head, and it was believed that both legs were fractured. He was taken to the hospital at Waipukurau with all speed, where he received every attention.

H. Hopkins, a telephone exchange clerk, happened to be in the shop with Mr Burkin when the crash occurred, but he was sheltered from the falling bricks and timber by the counter, and escaped with superficial injuries.

##### Survey of the Damage.

A casual survey of the town after the first big shock had subsided revealed a deplorable state of desolation.

The whole of Bryant's window frontage collapsed and the show goods were precipitated on to the footpath, whilst in the grocery and glassware department practically the whole of the stock had been deposited on the floor. A brick wall at the western end of the building fell on the store adjoining, crashed through the roof and smothered a lorry in bricks and mortar.

At the "Mail" the upper portion of one of the brick walls in the machine room was displaced, great stacks of paper were thrown to the ground, cases of type in the jobbing room were scattered over the floor, and the linotype machine was moved bodily about two feet but sustained no damage.

On the other side of the road the big plate glass windows of the Lounge and Mr K. Hutchings bicycle shop crashed and the stocks scattered in all directions.

But the damage in High Street is even more severe. Probably the most serious was at Mr W. I. Linbrick's two-storied concrete building. The heavy cornice on the front crashed on to the suspended verandah, brought it down in a heap of tangled wreckage.

##### Miraculous Escape.

On the northern side of the building the parapet fell on to the roof of Mr C. E. T. Woods' dental surgery. Mr Woods, his assistant, and a patient who was under an anesthetic has a miraculous escape. Just prior to the first big shake they made their escape from the surgery and immediately afterwards a great mass of bricks and mortar crashed through the roof and the ceiling, burying the chair which the patient had just vacated. The waiting room in the front suffered similarly.

Mr F. Williams' jeweller's shop on the opposite side of the road is practically a total loss. The whole of the shop front was thrown bodily into the street, and the valuable stock was buried in debris. Fortunately for Mr Williams he happened to be out of the shop when the disaster occurred.

Another building to suffer severely was that occupied by "The Dainties." Here, too, the whole of the shop front was destroyed, and portions of the main building were extensively damaged. The parapet on the southern end of the structure fell on to the offices of Miss E. Peilow next door, crashed through the roof and ceiling and practically wrecked the building.

Williams and Kettle, Ltd., and Messrs Leigh and Eagle and Mr J. McGowan, chemist, and heavy losses through the breaking of glassware, crockery and bottles. There was a narrow escape from a conflagration at Leigh and Eagle's, owing to chemical action, but it was discovered in time to prevent fire adding to the disaster.

##### Scene of Wreckage.

From the interior standpoint the Empire Hotel presented a scene of devastation hard to imagine. There was hardly a sound bolt left in bar, but this was not the greatest loss. The hotel was lined practically throughout with plaster, and nearly the whole of this was displaced, transforming what was one of the best hostels in the province to a dreary waste. Both the Imperial and the Commercial Hotels also considerably, the hot water service at the latter place being put out of action.

Evidence of the violence of the upheaval is furnished by the condition of Williams and Kettle's store at the railway station. This was practically lifted off the blocks and slewed round.

The damage to private residences was mainly confined to that done by falling chimneys and the loss caused by broken crockery and glassware. There is hardly a sound chimney left in the district.

At the District High School the children, fortunately, were just commencing their morning interval, and the majority had left the building before the most severe shake.

The chimney in the infant room fire-place crashed through the ceiling on to the desk of the headmaster, who had only just vacated his chair.

Similarly in St. 3 and 4 room the bricks tumbled down on to the teacher's desk.

Many of the children were panic-stricken, and it was deemed advisable to close the school until further notice.

There was one long continued stream of cars running through Waipawa last evening en route to the devastated towns. Efforts are being made to prevent as many as possible of those who are purely sight-seers from entering Napier.

##### Isolation.

Waipawa was entirely isolated from the rest of the world for a time, the railway service being suspended and telephonic and telegraphic communication being cut off.

The south bound express train had just reached Takapu when the shake occurred, and the violence of the disturbance was such as to throw the engine of the line. What would have happened if the train had been travelling one shudders to imagine.

At various places along the permanent way the rails were badly twisted, and it was deemed unsafe to attempt to maintain a service. Arrangements were made to convey passengers from Takapu to Napier and Hastings by car and bus.

The Telegraph Department sent reinforcements of linesmen from Palmerston North, and after the local telephone service had been restored work was concentrated on getting a line through to Wellington. During the day, however, the local office despatched telegrams by car to Waipukurau and thence by wire. The local office was open throughout the night for the convenience of the public.

##### Vigilance Committee.

Realising the gravity of the position His Worship the Mayor, Mr G. H. Hunt, called a meeting of citizens for yesterday afternoon for the purpose of forming a Vigilance Committee. There was a very large attendance.

On the motion of Mr F. Adeane all present formed themselves into an Earthquake Relief Committee.

About twenty volunteers enrolled themselves for duty in watching business premises which were not protected, and eight of the number were, with Constable O'Halloran, on duty last night.

An executive committee was set up to deal with matters of urgency.

On the motion of Mr A. E. Jull, M.P., it was decided to forward letters of sympathy to the Mayors of Napier and Hastings.

##### Te Aute College in Ruins.

The picturesquely situated Te Aute College, which cost some £45,000 to build, suffered severely from the effects of the quake. The dining hall, over which is one of the dormitories, is practically in ruins, whilst the tower in the main building is levelled to the parapet. Great cracks are to be seen in all the three brick structures, and it is almost certain that the whole will have to be demolished. It was fortunate, indeed, that the scholars had not re-assembled after the holidays.

##### Damage at Otane.

Although there were no brick buildings in Otane, the wooden structures suffered severely. The verandahs of all the business places were wrenched off and deposited in the roadway. Mrs Searle, proprietress of the Railway Hotel, was a heavy loser, practically the whole of the stock of glassware and crockery being smashed to atoms.

The most serious feature of the visitation to Otane was the destruction of nearly every tank. At St. Hilda's Home the stand which carried three 500-gallon tanks collapsed.

A survey of the district did not reveal one standing chimney.

##### NAPIER'S HOLCAUST.

##### Business Section Levelled to the Ground.

Although the situation in Hastings is deplorable, it is infinitely more tragic in Napier, which has been practically laid in ruins. The only buildings standing in the business area are those constructed of ferro-concrete, and even these are badly damaged.

The scene is one that beggars description. The handsome business buildings which on Monday were the pride of Napier are now nothing but a heap of smouldering ruins. The Masonic Hotel, a three storey structure, was completely demolished, and it is feared that the majority of the large staff are buried in the debris.

That noble edifice the Cathedral also collapsed. Service was being held in it at the time and it is believed that a number of worshippers were imprisoned. It is reported that Dean Brockelhurst, the officiating clergyman, was killed.

One of the most serious aspects of the disaster was the total collapse of the Nurse's Home, on the Hospital Hill, and practically the whole of the night staff were killed.

Many people were killed in the streets of the town. When the earthquake commenced they rushed out of the buildings pell mell, only to be caught by the falling masonry.

Shortly after the first big shake had subsided fires broke out in different parts of the town, starting through chemical action in the ruins of the dispensaries. The water supply had been cut off and the fire-brigade were powerless except for the use of the wells.

The new post-office is apparently intact, but fire has gone right through the building.

A great portion of the Bluff Hill broke away from the mainland slipped into the sea, taking with it a number of houses.

The fire spread from the business area to the wooden buildings in Shakespeare and Milton roads, and at latest reports were spreading at an alarming rate.

At the Port practically all the wool stores were levelled by the quake, and widespread damage has been done by fire.

The bed of the Iron Pot was raised bodily, and the trawling fleet were high and dry.

One span of the Westshore bridge collapsed, cutting off all communication with the north.

Relief measures were immediately instituted. Temporary dressing stations were formed in Clive Square, and the patients then transferred to the Napier Park Racecourse where a hospital was established.

Wireless messages were sent out by the Veronica for help from Nelson and Mr Lean parks were thrown open to the public who are homeless, and texts were supplied by the authorities.

No reliable estimates can be formed of the number of killed, but from the number reported as missing it is believed that the death roll will reach 500.

Both the "Herald" and "Telegraph" buildings were totally destroyed by quake and fire, and all the smaller printing offices were also put out of action.

The sight last night, when the fires were in full blast, was awe-inspiring, the flames shooting up hundreds of feet.

The commander of the warship Veronica sent a large detachment ashore to assist in the relief operations.

Wireless messages were sent out by the Veronica for help from the larger centres, and arrangements were immediately made in Wellington to despatch doctors and nurses, and also camping equipment and food supplies.

Repeated efforts to get into touch with the lighthouse staff at the Mahia have failed, and serious apprehension is felt concerning the safety of the three men and their families. The lighthouse would be near the centre of the disturbance.

The Technical School at the corner of Manro and Station street collapsed and a number of pupils were buried. Several bodies have been recovered.

The Marist Brothers' seminary at Greenmeadows was totally wrecked and nine of the priests in residence were killed outright.

At Taradale the Town Hall, which was leased by Mr W. L. Wheeler for the showing of pictures, collapsed entirely, and the machine was buried feet deep in debris.

Wellington located the centre of the seismic disturbance at from two to three miles seaward of Napier. The upheaval lasted for five and a half hours, quite apart from the tremors which followed it.

Large numbers of the injured were despatched to the hospitals at Waipukurau, Dannevirke and Palmerston North. They were taken by cars to Otane, where they were placed aboard a train.

Every effort is being concentrated on getting the women and children out of the town, in view of the possibility of an epidemic owing to the damage to the sewers and the shortage of water.

All food supplies have been commandeered, and no one is allowed to make sales.

The naval force from the Veronica is in control of the town.

##### Sympathy.

The Mayor this morning received the following telegram from Mr H. Holland, Leader of the Labor Party:—

"On behalf of the Buller electorate and as Leader of the Labor Party, I hasten to express my deepest sympathy with you and your people in the appalling disaster which has overtaken the community. Buller is ready to help in any possible way."

The Mayor this morning received a telegram from Major Holderness, chairman of the Hastings Relief Committee, asking for a thousand loaves by lunch time. Mr Hunt undertook to supply five hundred to-night.

##### AT HASTINGS.

##### Collapse of Grand Hotel.

##### Staff Buried.

Roach's Building Wrecked by 'Quake' and Swept by Fire.

##### GREAT LOSS OF LIFE.

The first news of the disaster in the northern part of the province came from Hastings, where it was reported that the whole of the front of the Grand Hotel had collapsed, imprisoning the staff, and that a similar fate had befallen Roach's fine building.

Confirmation of the early reports was not long in coming through, and people who went down in the afternoon to review the results of the visitation were speedily convinced that the seriousness of the situation had not been exaggerated.

Heretaunga Street was one mass of ruins, and fires were burning fiercely in many business places. Rescue work was concentrated on Roach's and the Grand Hotel, and heartrending scenes were witnessed as the dead were brought out. The condition of the walls at the hotel rendered it unsafe to venture far in, but Roach's building was practically levelled to the ground, and up to the present some thirty bodies

One of the victims of the earthquake was Mr J. H. Colbourne, Hastings manager for Williams and Kettle Ltd, who was killed by the collapse of a roof.

##### HASTINGS CASUALTIES.

A complete list of the Hastings casualties will necessarily not be available for some time, but the following victims have already been identified:—

- DEAD.**  
 TED RATTRAY, aged 65, a visitor from Riccarton.  
 MRS AGNES JENSEN, 60 years, of Haumoana.  
 MRS MARY ALICE McLEOD, 45 years.  
 LILLIAN JENKINS, about 20 years.  
 BRIAN HOOPER, 22 years.  
 THOMAS WILSON ALEXANDER, 45 years, Paki Paki.  
 ALBERT GIG, 22 years.  
 EUGENE BRACE.  
 THOMAS GILL.  
 MISS HOLIHAN.  
 MISS CLEARLY.  
 MR DRUMMOND.  
 MRS D. R. ROSS.  
 MR J. H. COLEBURN.  
 ROY GRAHAM.  
 SHORA AILEEN SPENCE.  
 MISS GRUDENOFF.  
 BERT DYER.  
 WILLIAM POOL.  
 HERBERT WALKER.  
 PERCIVAL LAVIS.  
 MISS OLIVE CAMBRIDGE.  
 MRS CONSTANCE HORSEBELLY.  
 There are also a number of unidentified bodies.

- INJURED.**  
 Mrs Mulgrove, 402 Miller street, Hastings, contusions on head, injuries to spine.  
 Mrs Hutchinson, 126 Parade, Island Bay, injuries to right arm.  
 Miss McKelvie, Havelock North, external lacerations; condition serious.  
 Arnolda Retter, 1023 Frederick street, Hastings, broken leg.  
 Mrs McKenzie, 905 Willowpark road, dislocated shoulder.  
 Miss N. Duggan, Hastings Club, minor cuts on head.  
 Mavis Faulkner, King street, Hastings, fractured right leg, head injuries.  
 Mrs John Etheridge, 30 Ashridge road, Napier, left arm broken.  
 Mrs B. S. Storey, 207 Avenue road, Hastings, broken leg, injuries to back.  
 Miss Horta, care Mrs Cook, Hastings, wound right leg.  
 Mrs Potham, Queen street, Hastings, compound fracture right arm, scalp wound; condition favorable.  
 Miss Betty Percy, care Nairn, Railroad road, Hastings, injuries to head and side and bruises.  
 Mrs Leaning, Heretaunga street, Hastings, shock and left groin injured.  
 Mrs D. Schofield, Grove road, Hastings, injured leg.  
 Miss Carroll, Beech road, Hastings, fractured right femur.  
 Miss Peggy Blowes, Riversea road, Hastings, lacerated upper arm, bruised leg.  
 Miss A. Brown, 613 Avenue road, Hastings, injured back.  
 Mrs Baumfield, 306 King street, Hastings, injured finger.  
 Mrs Martin, 410 Lyndon road, Hastings, cut head.  
 Dorothy Ruse, Fitzroy Avenue, Hastings, crushed finger, head injuries, and broken leg.  
 Miss Clark, 503 Eastbourne street, Hastings, cut face.

MISSING.  
 A. L. RYAN, reporter, "Hawke's Bay Tribune."  
 (Owing to extensive damage to the "Mail" building, which prevented the use of the machinery, this is the best we could do with the plant at our disposal. We feel sure that our readers will, in the circumstances, excuse the smallness of the sheet.)