

RECONSTRUCTION

Ten Months After

New Zealand's Greatest Disaster

Hawke's Bay Earthquakes and Fires

February—In the Year of Grace, 1931—December

"How does the task proceed?"

"With good cheer and steadfast hope."

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"It is the frame of mind that counts. No fact is as important as the spirit in which it was conceived, executed or endured."—Emil Ludwig.

TEN months after. "After what?" The Hawke's Bay earthquakes and fires. "Do they not belong to things that have passed and gone?" No. To those who lived through the visitation it will remain an outstanding experience, which will be referred to as long as life endures. Visitors to the devastated area shortly after the fateful 3rd of February, were surprised at the extent of the havoc. The spokesmen of the large party of legislators who came to Hawke's Bay, stated they had read everything they could, seen the pictures of the catastrophe, and yet had formed no adequate conception of what they called "New Zealand's greatest national calamity. The desolation they saw, has been cleared. Rebuilding has quickly proceeded, even though it was high six months before building permits for permanent structures on the former building line of Hastings' main street could be issued, and even though the complex adjustments required to secure the widening of some of the streets in the Napier business area are not yet finalised.

Most of the people of the province have been, and are, cheerful under affliction. Tragedies are not paraded, and a sense of humour is an aid to mental balance. Those who escaped serious hurt in mind or body realised that loss of property, however large, was of less importance compared with the preservation of life. But the evidence of good cheer, the vigour of rebuilding, and the business of replacing what was destroyed, is in the foreground. The bereaved and the wounded bear their loss in quietude. The men whose assets have vanished, and whose liabilities remain, have felt the strain of the weary months of waiting. It may be difficult for Government departments to hasten their set routine, but when dire need exists, the speedier the relief, the greater its value.

When all has been done that can be done, will 1931 pass into the limbo of forgotten things?

If such forgetfulness should shroud the memory of a great testing

time in the life of this young Dominion then will the heritage of the future be the poorer.

Since the fateful 3rd of February last, when earthquakes wrecked and fires consumed the business centres of Napier and Hastings, and brought wide havoc throughout the Province of Hawke's Bay, there has been revealed in epic measure the helpful sympathy, courage and resilience of our people.

It is a story that will live.

The intensity of the earthquakes that started at twelve minutes to eleven on the morning of February the 3rd, may be evidenced by the fact that some of the twelve-inch pipes in a well laid line, were later found to be telescoped one into another. The heavy struts at the Breakwater, set in concrete to withstand tremendous pressure, were pulled out of their setting. Ferro-concrete buildings, separated by a passageway, bumped at the top with such violence as to break off pieces of matured concrete. It was the larger and more costly homes that suffered most; and though hundreds were killed and thousands injured the wonder is that the loss was not ten times greater. Just before eleven in the morning, school children were in the playgrounds, comparatively few people were on the streets in the business areas, and there were no morning picture shows. The heaviest ratio of fatalities were people on the footpaths who were unable to reach the centre of the roadways where they might have escaped.

It is only when the whole machinery of a modern town is destroyed, that we become fully aware of the complexity and quiet efficiency of the multiple services that cater in normal times to every need and amenity, and what has taken scores of years to build up cannot be replaced in either a few weeks or a few months. The first concern after noon on February the 3rd last, was to find food and shelter for the people of the two shattered towns, to tend the injured, and to bury the dead. Emergency organisations were quickly established. Food and clothing poured in so that none



The ruins of Napier's business centre with the first of the temporary buildings. (1 and 2) The community shops. (3) The associated banks.

should lack. Though the people of New Zealand were enduring hard times yet there was a determination to give quickly and abundantly. The Prime Minister desired that one fund should organise relief, and approaching four hundred thousand pounds of subscriptions have been acknowledged. With donations sent direct for distribution by local agencies, with gifts made in kind, the monetary measure of the freewill offerings must considerably exceed a half million of pounds.

In addition, there have been the services of the various departments of Government. How they responded to the cry for help is outlined by the Prime Minister in the Annual Report of the Public Trust Office.

And yet, so tremendous are the losses sustained, that there is apparently no measure of relief for many who have suffered severely.

Ten months after, Sir Michael Myers, Chief Justice, and President of the Special Earthquake Adjustment Court, points out as a needed measure of relief, the early discharge of those who were forced into bankruptcy by earthquake losses.

Ten months after, representatives of the business men in the stricken area have waited on the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, to point out that out of the £1,250,000 authorised by Parliament as the first instalment of relief to private applicants, only £380,000 had been granted as loans, and £11,000 to be given to necessitous cases.

Most of the owners of ruined business premises hoped for rating relief upon their costly empty sections, which would automatically apply had the rating in the towns been upon the capital value. They also hoped that the requisite capital for re-building would be made available at the lowest possible cost so that they might have a chance to work out their own re-establishment. Others whose plight was worse, only expected the same measure of assistance which might be given to the people of any other district in the undesired event of another national calamity.

If it is not possible to go so far, then the ideal of one central relief fund will not in any future catastrophe be acceptable to subscribers who wish to ensure that those they are most interested in shall have help.

The future of Hawke's Bay is assured. The East Coast is the greatest centre for the production of wool and meat in the Dominion. Fruit culture will steadily advance, for the heaviest yield per tree in the Dominion is the record of the province. From one ten-acre orchard have been sent ten thousand cases of first-grade export fruit in a season. The overthrow of the distributing centres of such a district must be quickly repaired, and reconstruction is proceeding more rapidly than many are aware. Pictures cannot portray the full story of what has already been done, especially in the public services. In Napier *twenty miles* of sewer reconstruction has already been completed at a cost of £34,750. Restoration of water supply has so far cost £10,257. On street repairs £5,383 has been spent. The broken light, power, gas, and telephone services are restored. The Post and Telegraph and Public Trust offices will shortly be in use again.

In Hastings, likewise, the light, gas and telephone services have been restored. The decreased flow from the artesian wells that provide the town's water supply has been augmented by the sinking of two six-inch

wells which go down to another strata 280ft. below the surface. The power station has been made secure. The Hastings West School has been re-built in wood. The first contract for the restoration of the Municipal Theatre is nearing completion at a cost of £10,800; other essentials are likely to bring the total expenditure to £14,000. The Assembly Hall and Municipal shops have been restored at a cost of £3,500. The plans for the enlargement of the Memorial Hospital are nearly ready.

In the Hawke's Bay County, roads have been cleared, bridges erected. The Hawke's Bay Rivers Board has not only carried out extensive repairs to the wrecked protection works, but the taking of levels over the area of their operations establishes the fact that there is a line of normality running north and south where the levels are the same as before the earthquakes. To the west the land has risen from a few inches to five feet, while to the east, the land has sunk, the township of Clive by approximately two feet, and the vicinity of Hastings by a foot.

Waipawa and Waipukurau have practically restored all damage. Wairoa suffered much, but will in time make full measure of repair.

Ten months after gives a worthy record of accomplishment of which the people of Hawke's Bay may well be proud.

December, 1931.

—H. R. FRENCH.

THE MAYOR OF NAPIER SPEAKS.

The Mayor of Napier (J. Vigor Brown, Esq.) when invited to review the work of the restoration after the brief period of ten months, said:—

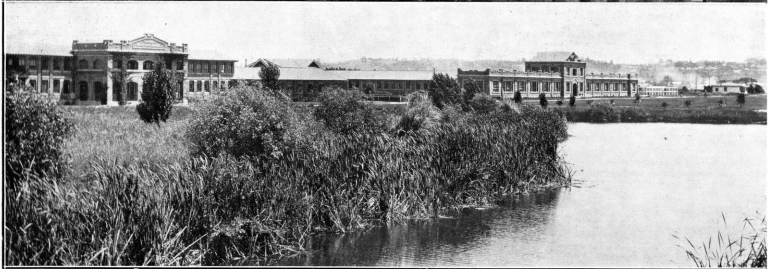
"We are getting on very well, all things considered. My work has been lightened by the activities of the Commissioners, Messrs. Barton and Campbell.

"The business men, who were the heaviest losers in the blow that fell on February the 3rd, have no fear for the future of the town. The spirit of the citizens is shown by the work already done and in progress. Everyone has sought to help each other to stand up and get going.

"Unfortunately, some visitors who have been here for a day or so, and seen buildings still requiring restoration, have failed to realise the many difficulties in solving the complex problems inherent in such a catastrophe. Because of their losses some companies have had to be wound up and fresh companies formed to provide the requisite new capital. In instances where large shareholders are living abroad, delay is inescapable. Capital is quietly flowing in, though the economic conditions, both of the province and the Dominion, are not helpful to the immediate finding of large sums of money. Fortunately, the weather has been beautiful which has saved hardship."

"How is town-planning progressing?"

"Slowly. The ideas in that connection vary so much that it is hard to get a satisfactory basis. Our residents are very chary in utilising the powers of the new Act passed last session. To widen some of the streets by a few feet should be practicable, but beyond that my mind is taken up with readjusting business propositions. We are pressing on."



Above: After the days of desolation.
Below: Napier High School again in full service.



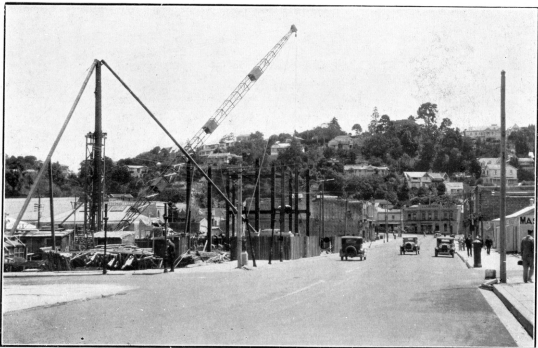
Napier's handsome post office will soon be ready for occupation.



Business back to normal. The reconstructed picture theatre on left.



More restoration at the corner of Emerson and Dalton Streets.



Starting work on the Criterion block.



The Navy clears the wreck.

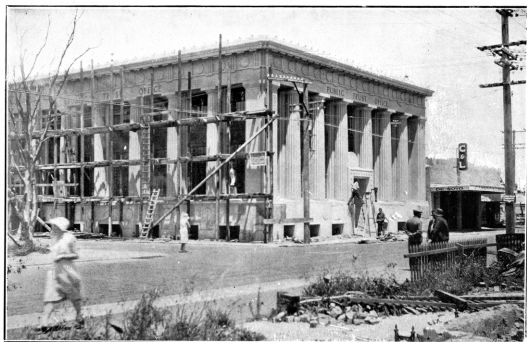


The same locality as above now restored.

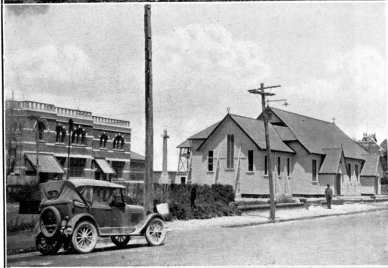
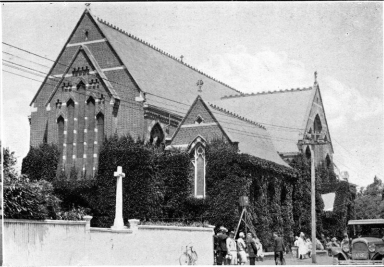
Left: Williams & Kettle's new offices. Centre: The library. Right: The restored Hawke's Bay County Council and Rivers Board offices.



Napier's restoration is proceeding. First: Anderson & Hanson's garage. Second: Peach's Garage. Third: G.P.O. at corner.



Nearly finished restoring the Public Trust Office.

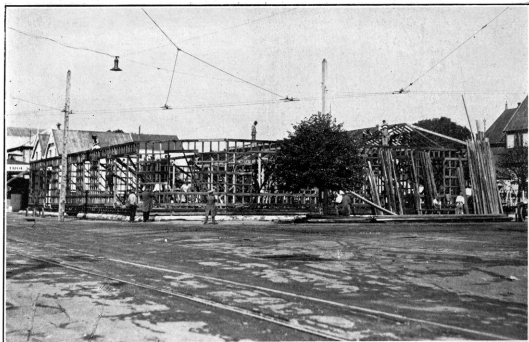


Presbyterian Church.
New Cathedral.

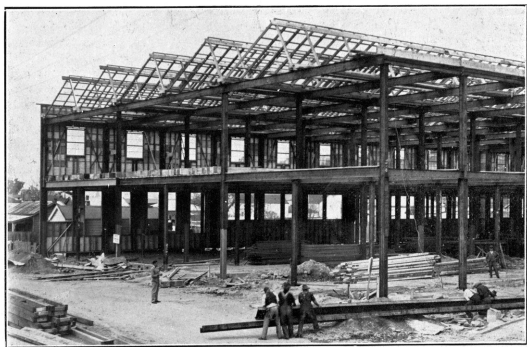
The Cathedral of precious memory, completely destroyed 3/2/31.
The ocean's retreat, with Bluff Hill in distance.



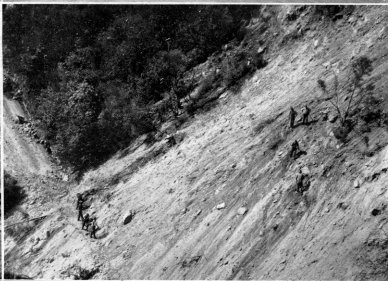
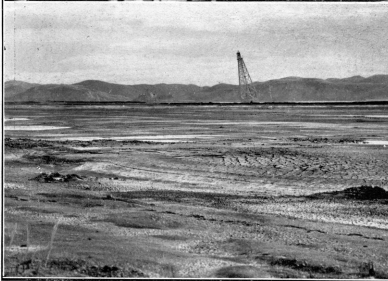
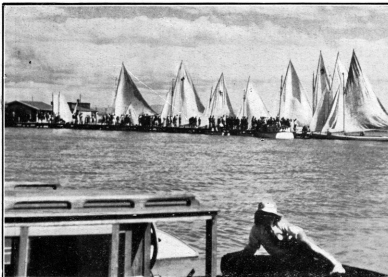
Views of community shops erected in Napier's two picturesque squares.



The first structure after the earthquakes. The associated banks building was erected in a few days.



Showing rivetless framework of new wool stores at Port Ahuriri now complete.



Westshore before the earthquake.
Westshore after the earthquake.

Throwing out millions of bricks.
The heavy work of repairing country roads.



View of the business area of the town from aeroplane, showing the smoking ruins.

—Hobday, photo.



Restoration in 2nd and 3rd blocks, Heretaunga Street East.



Risen from complete ruin, Roachs' new store on old site.

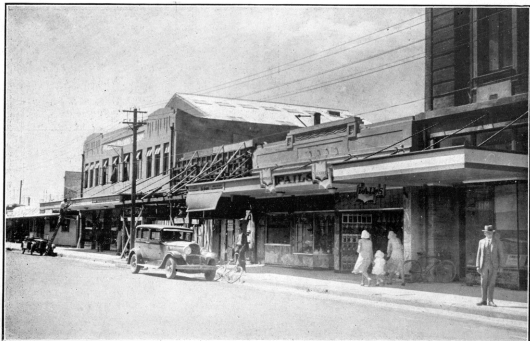


HASTINGS' FIRST BUSINESS BLOCK EAST OF RAILWAY.

On left: Ruins of five-storied Grand Hotel.

Lord and Lady Bledisloe came at once to give encouragement. His Excellency took this picture on his visit.

By courtesy of His Excellency the Governor-General.



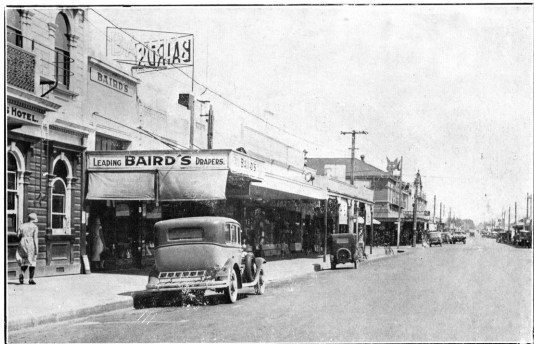
New buildings already up in Grand Hotel block. Plans for a three-storey hotel are completing.



Restoration work and improvements at Baird's now complete.



Part of restoration work in third block, HERETAUNGA STREET WEST. A new, handsome, Cosy Theatre will be built on the location of the one destroyed.



Restored south side of first and second blocks, Heretaunga Street West.



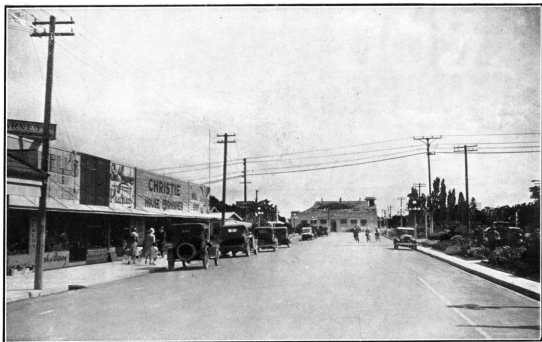
Restored north side of first and second blocks, Heretaunga Street West.



Built to withstand earthquakes, and did so. The Hawke's Bay Farmers' block and garage, Market Street.



Tourist Motor Co.'s new premises, Market Street.



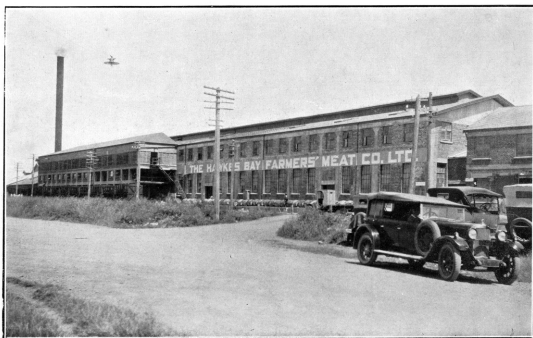
New shops in Russell Street S. de Pelichet and McLeod's repaired warehouse in distance.



Westerman's temporary premises built since the earthquake, 330 feet long. The premises run from Heretaunga Street to Eastbourne Street.



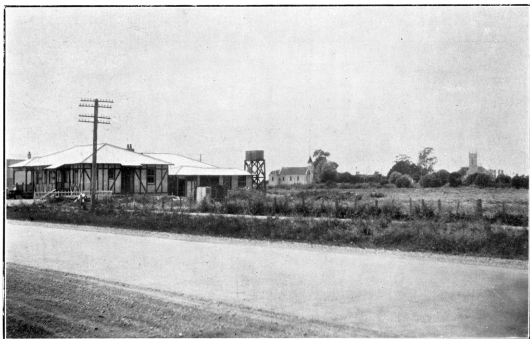
The new hall, Clive.



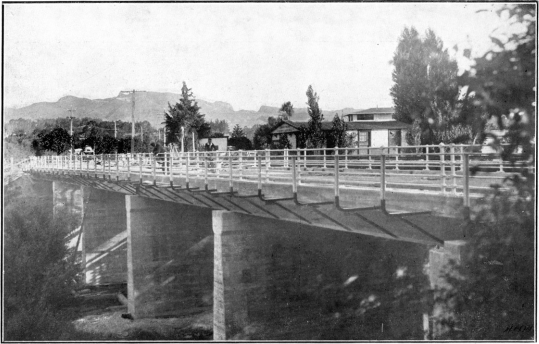
Repairs completed at the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Meat Co., Whakatu.



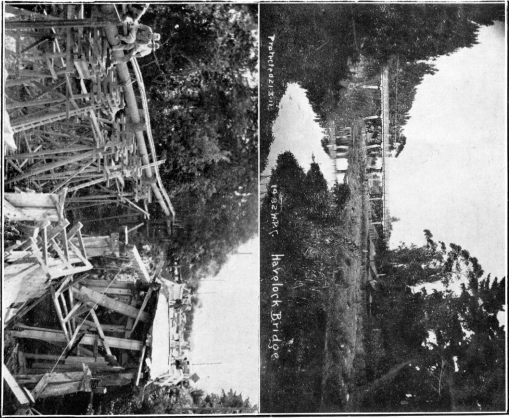
What the earthquake did to Wairoa's business centre.



Clive, showing the new hotel built opposite the one destroyed.



The new Havelock bridge, not yet open for traffic, taken six months after commencement.

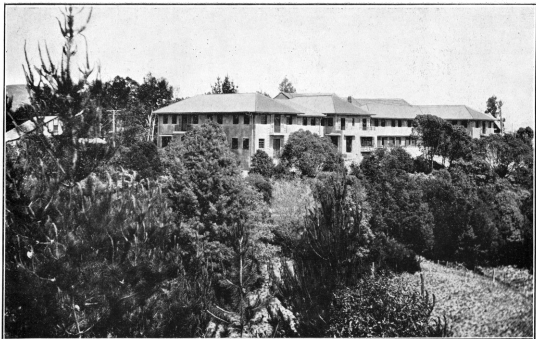


The Havelock bridge before February 3rd.
What the earthquake did to Havelock bridge.

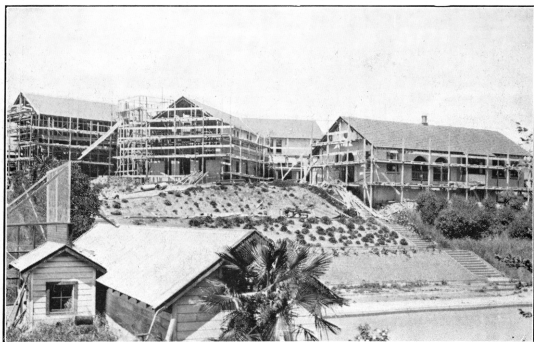
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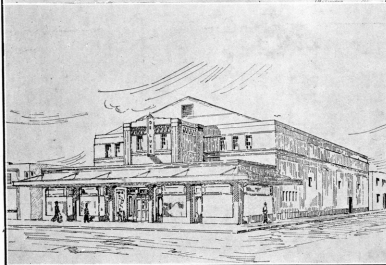
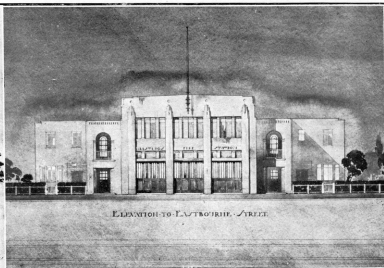
Havelock Bridge



The reconstructed Woodford House, the well-known Girls' Boarding School.



Iona College nearing completion. Another famed Girls' Boarding School.



BUILDINGS PLANNED AND YET TO BE ERECTED.

Bank of New Zealand.
Cosy Theatre.

Fire Station.

The Hastings retailers message in the great procession of the Restoration Carnival.

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