

Temuka Leader. 19 September 1901 (PP) [19/05/2023]

Letters from “Our Boys” at the Front.

Lance Corporal Webb, of the Seventh Contingent, also sends a brief letter to his parents, extracts of which are given below. As a curio he enclosed a Boer cheque for £250. Cheques, by the way, seem fairly plentiful over there. He writes from Wolvehoek, under date July 17th, and says: -

We have not been doing much lately, except the other day, when we came into about 400 hundred Boers and a big convoy. We captured about twenty of their waggons, 800 head of cattle, 60 horses, 60 mules, and a lot of working bullocks. We also captured 4 Boers, and shot and wounded a few. It was very rough country or we would have caught the lot. We could not get the big guns up to the top of the kopje in time, for it was too rocky and rough. It was great fun to see the Boers cutting the mules' and the bullocks' harness to get them out of the waggons. Their waggons were loaded with flour mostly, and meat. They were just going to have a good feed, for they had three or four bullocks cooked, pots of rice, and all sorts of “ha-h-ma-gandy” ready. I can tell you they got a great fright. We were advanced guard that day, so we saw it all. They even had a lot of women with them, and they went in such a hurry that they left half the women behind them. We also got a good bit of ammunition from them. Some of the Sixth Contingent passed through here last night. They have not done much fighting, and have only lost one man as yet. We have lost 8 or 9, and 7 or 8 wounded. All the Temuka boys are doing well, and are in good health. I weighed myself last night, and found I have not gained a pound since I left New Zealand, when I was 12½ stone. Don't forget to send some papers. My horse nearly got drowned in the great Vaal river the other day, but I got him out all right.

Temuka Leader. 5 November 1901 (PP) [19/05/2023]

Letters from “Our Boys” at the Front.

Lance Corporal Webb, of the 7th Contingent, writes a lengthy letter to his brother from Mereyton on the 2nd September, and the following extracts have been placed at our disposal:

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I suppose you know by this time we are having plenty of fight every day, but the Boers have not got into any of us Temuka lads yet. We have had the bullets near enough to us all the same, as close as I want them anyhow. There have been nine men killed in our Contingent and about 30 wounded. A good few of our lads have also been captured. When the Boers catch them they take everything from them, strip them naked, give them a kick, and then let them go. The Boers are getting very hard up now. We have caught them with coats made of sheep and goat skins and pants made out of blankets and sacks. The women are just as bad, you see them without boots or socks. We have been giving the Boers particulars since we have been after them; we are rousing them all over the shop. If we do not catch them, we generally drive them into another column. The South African papers give our contingent great praise for the work we have been doing. Out of 78 columns we were top sawyers for last month's captures. We captured 51 men, 84 waggons, 10,000 sheep, 3700 cattle, 292 horses, 50 rifles, 13,000 rounds of small ammunition, 32 Cape carts, 70 tons horse feed, 610 women, and 460 Kaffirs. I would like the life all right, but we don't get enough tucker, and we are half the time marching at night, so we don't get much sleep either. But that is the time we get at the Boers. This general of ours (General Garrett) is a terror to fight. He gives us no rest at all. The 6th Contingent have seen very little fighting. They have only had two men killed. I saw Jim Scott when we first landed, but none of the other lads. Jim was looking very well. South Africa is not a bad place after all. It is a bit rough in some places, but that is nothing. We had a bit of a scrap with De La Rey the

other day. We lost two men, another got his arm shot off, and some more wounded. We caught 25 Boers and shot a few, but I don't know how many."

Temuka Leader. 14 July 1903 (PP) [19/05/2023]

The Weather.

A HEAVY SNOWSTORM

South Canterbury, or the greater portion of it, will have occasion to remember Saturday, July 11th. On that date—Saturday last—the heaviest fall of snow experienced within the memory of the oldest inhabitants of the district occurred.

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SATURDAY'S STORM

A TRYING EXPERIENCE

FROM CATTLE VALLEY TO TEMUKA.

UNDERTAKEN BY SIX YOUNG MEN THROUGH SNOW THREE FEET DEEP.

A party of six Temuka young men, Messrs William and Andrew Webb, Leonard and Herbert Hobbs, Frank Wareing and William Moore, had an experience on Saturday last during the snowstorm which will not soon be effaced from their memory. They are employees of Mr Hedge, basket-maker, of Temuka, and were engaged in cutting basket willows at Cattle Valley - a spot some 26 miles from Temuka. and 10 miles this side of Fairlie. On the way to Temuka the nearest settlement is Hilton, which is 17 miles, or there about, from Cattle Valley. The men had their camp in the Valley, where they had been working for the past week, and on Friday afternoon last heavy rain set in. The water came down the valley in considerable quantities during the night and after the men had retired to rest for some time they had to turn out and dig trenches as the water worked under the canvas. The night was very dark and the task proved a long and arduous one. Those engaged in it were soon wet to the skin but when the work was done they were able to retire with some degree of comfort. On waking in the morning, the men found that they were snowed in. To make matters worse all the provisions and cooking utensils were under 3ft of snow. There were no means of lighting a fire, and as things looked very black indeed it was decided to set out for home before matters got worse. Five of the party had bicycles and one — Frank Wareing — a horse. Like the provisions the bicycles were buried in the snow, but after energetic digging these were recovered. As there was nothing eatable the journey had to be made on an empty stomach. Those with the bicycles resolved to carry their machines through the snow in the hope that they would have to go only a few miles at the most, and then be able to ride. With the bicycles on their shoulders and with a good three feet of snow about their legs, they made a start at 10 a.m. the horseman going first to make a track.

Soon after starting a small creek had to be crossed. Usually there is but little water running in it. Now, however, the heavy rain of overnight had flooded it bank high. As the horse would not carry two on its back at once there were, therefore, no means of getting across the river again. Thus there was nothing to be done [but] for the would-be cyclists to wade through the rushing waters clothes on and all, with their bicycles still on their backs. The water was icy cold and reached to the men's waists, but fortunately the distance to be traversed under these very trying circumstances was not above a chain. After the feat was accomplished the young fellows being hungry, felt in anything but a fit condition for their 26 mile journey under even ordinary circumstances, but when it is considered the difficulties they had to contend with their plight can be readily realised.

After a few miles had been covered the snow was found to be as deep as, if not deeper than, when they first set out. All were thoroughly knocked up, but with that dogged perseverance, as

characteristic of the colonial youth as of their English forefathers, they kept on. Young Wareing shared the horse with his companions, taking a lift on each occasion with the bicycles, which had to be carried, as it was impossible to wheel them in the snow. On they had to go, even without resting, except for relieving their shoulders for a few moments by laying the machines on the snow. Each time they were taken up they seemed heavier than before. When about four miles from Hilton two of the party — W. Webb and H. Hobbs, both about 20 years of age — found it impossible to keep up with their companions, and therefore, lagged behind. They called at the house of Mr Leary, where they were very kindly treated, being provided with a meal and resting about an hour. The other four pushed on and reached Hilton at 6 p.m. — 8 hours after leaving camp. Thus doing the distance at the rate of a little over a mile and a-half an hour. The two arrived at Hilton an hour later and called at Mr Rowland's store, where the others had put up. Mr Rowlands was extremely kind to the travel-worn party taking them all to his home and giving them a meal which was partaken of most heartily.

Young Hobbs and Webb being thoroughly exhausted they stayed at Mr Rowland's for the night, but the other four pushed on again determined to get to Temuka that night. The bicycles, however, were left behind. The pedestrians took turn about at riding the horse. It was 9.30 before Temuka was reached and never were there four more worn-out individuals. The distance had to be tramped through snow, the greater part being through a depth bordering on three feet, and in some places it was almost five feet in depth. As Temuka was neared the snow was found not to be so deep. At the Manse footbridge Moore became knocked up and rode the rest of the way into Temuka.

The two who remained behind at Mr Rowland's at Hilton, came on the next day, leaving at ? a.m. and arriving at Temuka at 2.30 p.m. The distance was done on foot, and being stiff from the previous day's exertions they found the task a trying one. Both speak in the highest terms of praise of the kindness experienced at the hands of Mesdames Leary and Rowlands. The latter did all she could to make them comfortable during their stay on Saturday night, and they will ever remember her attention.

Speaking of the experience the members of the party say they never thought it possible to go through such an ordeal and live. They also aver that they would not do it again voluntarily for a fortune. Three of the young men — Andrew Webb, Herbert Hobbs, and William Moore — were members of South African contingents, and they declare that the campaign and life on the veldt were as nothing in comparison to Saturday's experience.

Press. 6 October 1938 (PP) [09/04/2023]

OBITUARY

MRS HELEN JANE WEBB

The funeral took place yesterday at Temuka of one of South Canterbury's oldest identities, Mrs Helen Jane Webb, who died at her home at Princes street, Temuka, on Monday, at the age of 78. Mrs Webb's parents, Mr and Mrs Waddel, were engaged in farming at Selwyn, and Mrs Webb, could remember the great flood of 1868 when both South Canterbury and Mid-Canterbury were inundated.

At the age of eight Mrs Webb saw stock being carried out to sea by the flood waters of the Waimakariri. It was after the flood that the family went to live at Milford. Mrs Webb was a regular exhibitor at the Temuka Horticultural Show about 30 years ago. She was the oldest pupil at the Milford School and cut the cake at the jubilee celebrations some years ago.

Mrs Webb is survived by her husband, Mr Andrew Webb, and seven adult sons and daughters. Five of her sons served in the Great War, one being killed in action. Her three daughters are Mesdames Hawke (Lowcliffe) Tregonning (Christchurch), and McNab (Matamata). There are 40 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

Timaru Herald. 17 January 1939 (PP) [09/04/2023]

OBITUARY

MR ANDREW WEBB

The death occurred at the Timaru Hospital on Saturday night of Mr Andrew Webb, one of the oldest settlers in the Temuka district. Mr Webb came to New Zealand in the sailing ship, St. Lawrence, landing in a surf boat at Timaru. He was a native of County Wicklow, Ireland, and after his arrival he gained recognition as an expert blade shearer, his services being much in demand. In 1879 he married Miss Helen Waddel at Temuka. For 17 years he was a member of the Temuka Volunteer Rifle Company, which was at that time under the command of Major Young, of Winchester. At one time in the early days of Temuka Mr Webb was employed on the Green Hayes estate and later occupied the position of head gardener to Mr James Guild at "Trevenna," a position which he held for some years. His wife died three months ago. He leaves five sons and three daughters.