

## SOLDIERS' SOCIALS.

### AT FAIRLIE.

One of the brightest socials held in connection with our soldiers at Fairlie regularly since the war began was held in the Fairlie Public Hall last week. The function was of considerable importance as it combined a welcome to half a dozen returned men with a send-off to a local man after final leave. The hall was crowded, extra seating accommodation having to be provided. The secretary of the Entertainment Committee (Mr W. J. Ormandy), assisted by Mr J. Caskey and others, had the hall in first class order for the entertainment. The decorations were becomingly patriotic and the floor and supper (the latter provided by Mr T. Clarke) were all that could be desired. The function was enlivened by the presence of four recently returned men from Temuka, and they received an extremely hearty welcome. They arrived during the afternoon by car and attended the social in a body. Gunner Rickus, Private C. Williams, Private McGillam, and Private Bradshaw were their names, and they were afterwards associated with the local returned men, Sergeant A. Allan, and Privates C. Hannifin, D. Burns, A. McGregor, J. McLeod, and M. Kerr, and occupied seats on the stage with them when the official welcome took place. Mr C. J. Talbot presided, and in opening the proceedings apologised for the unavoidable absence of the Revs. Hanby and Standage. He addressed the returned men and extended to them a very hearty welcome home on behalf of the Dominion and the district. He congratulated them on their safe return and on the progress they had made towards renewed health. He hoped that they would soon be completely recovered, and thanked them on behalf of the community for their part in the great war. After briefly referring to the hardships, sacrifices and sufferings that the carrying out of that duty entailed he called for cheers for all the returned men.

These were very heartily given after which Private C. Williams thanked those present for the sincere and cordial welcome. He alluded to some of the hardships they had gone through and stated their pleasure in getting back to the hospitable shores of their native land.

Good wishes were also extended to Private Walker, on final leave, and to Privates H. Kerr and J. Murray, home from camp on holiday leave. Cheers were then given for the men at the front. The evening was occupied with music, singing and dancing and games till shortly after midnight. The floor was in the charge of Mr C. Boulter, who was ably assisted by Private C. Williams. Songs were given by Mrs E. Macdonald, Mrs C. Talbot, Miss Miller, Miss Ruby McKinnon, and Private Williams, while Private Rickus gave a couple of recitations. Excellent music was provided by Messrs H. Foden (piano), J. Braddick (violin), and W. Ormandy (cornet). Extra dances were played by Mrs Wright, Miss Loomes and Private Rickus. As usual the ladies' committee had the supper arrangements well in hand and the large number present were attended to in record time. The proceedings closed with the National Anthem and renewed cheers for the returned men.

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**PROLONGED GALE.**  
**A FIERCE NOR'-WESTER.**  
**DAMAGE TO TEMUKA PROPERTY**

The worst for many years is the description given by old residents of Temuka to the gale which raged with one intermission from Friday night until sunset last night. On Sunday, at sunset, the gale moderated to the lightest of light breezes, but at 6 a.m. yesterday it recommenced with renewed vigour, and continued all day until the sun had gone down again.

The gale was of unusual severity and did considerable damage to property, farms, gardens and orchards suffering most. Fences were hurled to the ground, insecure pieces of roofing iron, and in some cases, complete roofs of sheds, were hurled to the ground, while trees and shrubs were torn out by the roots, and large boughs were broken from trees.

The force of the gale at times was severe, and those who had occasion to use the country roads consider it the worst they had ever experienced. Clouds of dust, too, made conditions most unpleasant for pedestrians and cyclists.

**DESTRUCTION IN GERALDINE DISTRICT.**

On Saturday evening a gale of unprecedented violence struck the Geraldine district. The big wind started about 7 o'clock, after a heavy blow during the afternoon, and increased in strength till about 8 o'clock, when it reached the dimensions of a full gale which continued till after midnight, with intermittent gusts which must have reached a terrific velocity.

The tale of disaster is gradually coming in from outside districts, and grows with each hour that passes by. The Four Peaks electric power line went out of commission about 9 o'clock, but was restored by 8.30 on Sunday morning. Telephone lines are down all over the countryside, about 50 applications for repairs having been received at the local Post Office, The linesmen had a busy time, and will be fully occupied for some time to come.

Individual losses have been heavy. In Geraldine town, Mr Haig, who has a large glass-house filled with early tomato plants all in flower, had the whole structure blown away. Mr Haig had a narrow escape. He was just about to open the door to close a ventilator when a gust caught the building and swept it away in a smother of broken glass and window frames. Next day the neighbours rallied round and re-erected the house as well as possible, from the parts left intact, but without any glass, which will have to be put in later.

Mr M. G. Williams, Geraldine Downs, had a hundred foot pine tree blown down across the corner of his house, smashing a glassed-in verandah to matchwood, and narrowly missing the main building, which was injured by a glancing blow at the gable end. Seven other trees were snapped off like carrots, and deposited twenty feet from their bases, in a paddock. Numerous fences are down in the town. Mr J. J. Robinson, Four Peaks, had the roof torn from his house, and demolished, and Mr R. Robinson, Te Moana, had his woolshed blown down. Mr J. Opie's house had the roof blown off, and Mr **Alex. Allan**, Peel Forest, had the hood lifted clean off his motor car. Messrs Wooding Bros., Peel Forest, had several grain stacks blown down and the sheaves spread over the paddocks. There are fourteen trees blown down at Mrs C. M. Burden's place, and Captain R. Burdon has lost his woolshed. At the Mount Peel Station, the roof was lifted from a large motor garage. Mr A. G. Macdonald, "Waitui," had his woolshed blown down, and also had a chimney on fire, which at the time looked serious, but was put out without much damage being done, a number of willing hands from Geraldine assisting. Mrs Twomey had her chimney blown down at the south end of Geraldine, but fortunately it fell clear of the house.

Early in the evening a fire started in a gorse hedge near Mr Scott's residence, Geraldine Downs, probably from some embers being blown there by the raging wind. The hedge, which is a heavy one with gorse growing on each side, was quickly a mass of flame which endangered the dwellinghouse for a time. The flames reached a height of thirty feet or more, and great bunches

of gorse burnt off were taken by the wind and deposited many yards ahead of the fire, starting up fresh fires where they fell. The blaze was a magnificent spectacle, but to the farmers living in the neighbourhood it was menacing as the adjoining paddocks had long dry grass which, if it had become ignited, would have set a large area ablaze. The efforts of the neighbours confined the fire to the hedge, however, and it gradually burnt itself out about 10 o'clock.

While the gale was still at its height, a gorse hedge at Orari caught fire, it is supposed, from the fanning to flame of some embers by the high wind. The fire spread to an unoccupied house owned by Mr G. M. Wilson which was soon reduced to a mass of ashes.

The double doors at the side of the Geraldine Town Hall, which are secured by iron bolts let into the concrete, were blown in during the screening of the pictures on Saturday evening, and the scenery stored . . . .

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### **GERALDINE.**

#### **AFTERMATH OF THE GALE**

From all reports, it would seem that Geraldine and district suffered very severely from the gale which raged on Saturday evening last, and daily, fresh reports of damage are to hand.

At Four Teaks, the roof of Mr J. J. Robinson's house was torn off bodily, and deposited on the ground; while at Te Moana, a woolshed belonging to Mr R. Robinson was levelled to the ground, and the roof of Mr J. Opie's house was torn off. The hood of a motor-car belonging to Mr **A. Allan**, of Peel forest, was ripped asunder. At Woodbury, Captain R. Burdon's woolshed was demolished, as also was the woolshed of Mr G. Macdonald, which was carried over 12 yards away from its original position by the wind.

Though the gale proper had spent its force by Sunday, a strong nor'-wester prevailed on Monday, and again yesterday. A slight fall of rain took place at about 11 o'clock on Tuesday evening.