

## FIVE KILLED IN MOUNT EGMONT ACCIDENT

### Nurses & Guides in Roped Party Fall Over Bluff

### TWO OTHERS INJURED

(PA)

NEW PLYMOUTH JULY 27 (1953)

Two men and three women were killed and two others were injured in the worst alpine accident in Mount Egmont's record and one of the worst in New Zealand late yesterday afternoon. All the victims were in a party returning from the summit and were roped together when they fell over a 30ft bluff at an altitude of about 6000 feet. Some of the victims slid 300 to 400 yards.

The victims were:-

MR. KEITH GLADSTONE RUSSELL, aged 25, schoolteacher, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Russell, Bulteel Street, New Plymouth. *[Died while being carried to safety]*

MR. ANDREW LORNIE, aged 17, apprentice carpenter, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Lornie, Powderham Street, New Plymouth.

MRS. RUTH CALDWELL, aged 29, staff nurse, Brooklands Road, New Plymouth and formerly of Nelson. *[Died at the Tahurangi Hut]*

MISS. JULIA GUIDA CASSELS, aged 18, nurse, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Colin Cassels, George Street, Eltham.

MISS. JANET CAMERON, aged 20, nurse, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cameron, Wanganui.

#### INJURED

MISS. CYNTHIA THOMLINSON, aged 19, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A Thomlinson, South Road, Hawera; broken leg, condition reasonably satisfactory.

MISS. ELLEN BEVERLEY McBETH, aged 19, nurse, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L McBeth, Marton; broken leg, condition reasonably satisfactory. *[Died next day]*

Search parties found five of the party still alive at 8 p.m. One died when brought to a Nissan hut about half a mile from the scene of the tragedy, two others died while being carried to the hut on stretchers.

The injured were brought to the New Plymouth hospital by ambulance early this morning. The nurses were all members of the Nurses Tramping Club and belonged to a group of thirty who climbed to the summit and returned in parties on several ropes. They were guided by Taranaki Alpine Club members.

The party under Mr. Russell left the summit at 3.30 p.m. and concern was already being felt for their safety as the mountain was considered dangerous once the sun had left the slopes.

The party was crossing above Hongi's Leap *[Bluff]* at about 6.20 p.m. with Mr.

Russell acting as anchor at the rear of the rope, when they began to slide.

They slid over the 30ft. bluff and continued sliding when they struck the icy slopes below. Four of the party were found close to the foot of the bluff, two further down and one 400 yards from the bluff near the Stratford mountain track. The accident was seen by one club member who made a solo descent to gain assistance.

The Police were notified at about 6.35 p.m. The Taranaki Alpine Club's search and rescue organisation went into operation within 10 minutes of the accident. The first two carloads of experienced climbers were on the mountain by 8.30 p.m. They were at the scene of the accident at 9.30 p.m.

The victims were members, guides or friends of the Nurses alpine Club, 26 of whom, with five men made a winter ascent to the

summit yesterday. They returned in several parties on ropes, and the six under the control of Mr. Russell were the second group. They left the Tahurangi Hut on the way up at about 11.00 a.m. yesterday.

The mountain was icy and although steps were cut, they were icing up quickly and the climbers didn't reach the summit until about 3.15 p.m. They started to leave the crater on the way down at about 3.30 p.m. At Tahurangi Hut, the club's captain, Mr. T. Herbert was watching through binoculars. He saw them about 4.10 p.m. coming down the Lizard into Snow Valley and then felt assured that they would be safe.

Mr. Russell's party of which he acted as anchor was crossing a slope above Hongi's Bluff on Mr. Russell's long nylon rope when the accident happened. Exact details are not known, but one of the party in front of Mr. Russell dropped her ski stick, and while Mr. Russell was trying to help her another girl fell, dragging the line with her.

**Mr. Russell threw himself flat on the snow to try to hold the line, but was unsuccessful and all seven slipped over the bluff. They dropped 30 feet to the icy slope and continued sliding down the Maketawa Valley.**

The actual accident was not witnessed by other parties of nurses on their way down the mountain. Many did not know anything had happened until they reached the Tahurangi Hut. As they were mainly inexperienced they continued down the mountain and left for New Plymouth.

Most of the injured suffered fractures, and head injuries and the task of carrying the stretchers over the dark slopes was not easy. It was midnight before the first stretcher party reached the hut at the end of a two-hour carry and 2.30 p.m. before the last arrived. One of the injured, Mrs. Caldwell, died in the hut and Mr. Russell, who had broken both legs, and another of the injured persons died while being carried to safety.

The Maketawa Valley below Hongi's Bluff, is a narrow and forbidding valley with many rocks with the snow or ice slopes broken by many rocks. Unless there has been an exceptionally heavy fall of snow this week many rocks were showing through the ice face. It is usual in June and July to have to cut steps across the snow slope above Hongi's Bluff unless the ridge route is chosen to the west of Snow Valley. Then a zig-zag route is used up the second staircase which leads on to the

climbing ridge and avoids the slope above Hongi's Bluff.

The first of the victims reached the Nissan Hut shortly before midnight and the last at about 2.00 a.m. Although the hut is still just a shell, with no furniture, blankets, mattresses and provisions were carried across from the Tahurangi Hut. A fire was lit, and every measure taken for the comfort of those who were still alive. Two nurses attended to the injured until the arrival of Dr. R. Watson from Inglewood.

**A blizzard blew up about 10 p.m. and conditions were made easier for the rescuers as soft snow covered the icy slopes. It was intensely cold, and visibility was bad for two or three hours when the blizzard ended.**

Until the arrival of the first rescue party with stretchers, four club members stayed with the injured and tried to keep them warm. The stretcher parties started moving the injured nurses down to the hostel at 5.30 a.m. today, and they were taken to New Plymouth by ambulance about 8.00 a.m. The last of the bodies was brought down at 10 a.m.

The efficiency of the organisation is indicated by the fact that about 100 took part in the rescue operations, between 40 and 50 being up at the scene of the accident. In addition to Taranaki Alpine members there were a party of 16 of the Mt. Egmont Alpine Club, 10 from the Stratford Mountain Club, six New Zealand Army personnel, six fire brigadesmen, Red Cross workers and local residents.

Hongi's Bluff is at an altitude of 6500 feet and about 500 feet above the Tahurangi Hut, an alpine club hut on the north face of Mount Egmont. The snow face above Hongi's Bluff is part of the normal route taken by parties ascending or descending from or to Tahurangi hut when using the Snow Valley route.

Snow Valley is a very wide valley which narrows to the Maketawa Valley. At certain times of the winter the snow above the Hongi's Bluff is quite steep and tends to icy because it loses the afternoon sun fairly early. It is the last dangerous spot on the descent to Tahurangi Hut.

Within the last month a Wellington skier lost control and went over part of Hongi's Bluff, but escaped with head injuries. He has now been discharged from Hospital. On this occasion the snow below the bluff was softer and he did not slide. Yesterday however the snow below the bluff was very icy all the way down to the track from North Egmont to Manganui, and was hard even below the track.

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## ***One Victim Married Two Months Ago***

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH, July 27,

One of the victims of the mountain tragedy, Mrs. Ruth Caldwell, was married two months ago. While she was climbing with the Nurses Club yesterday her husband was waiting for her in the Tahurangi Hut.

He remained on the mountain until 5 o'clock this morning when he was brought down.

Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell were regular climbers on the mountain.

## ***MT. EGMONT'S TOLL***

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH, July 27,

The five people who died on Mount Egmont yesterday afternoon brings the number who have been killed on the mountain or died from injuries received on its slopes to 19.

Yesterday's tragedy was the first since Easter Sunday, 1947 when a 17 year old youth died after being seriously injured in a fall on the Stratford side of the mountain.

There have been three double tragedies on the mountain.

Yesterday's accident was the worst climbing accident in New Zealand's history. On only one previous occasion have five people been killed in a mountain accident and the circumstances were different. Four women and one man were killed on the Tasman Glacier in January 1930. They were out walking when they were caught in the open by a blizzard and died from exposure. Yesterday's death toll on North Egmont happened while the party were still moving.

## ***One of the Leaders Describes Fatal Egmont Climb***

### **Victims Formed Largest of Six Ropes Used.**

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH July 28.

**The seven climbers, including the leader, Mr. Keith Russell, chief Taranaki Alpine Club guide, who plunged over the 40 foot Hongi's Bluff on Mount Egmont late on Sunday afternoon, formed the largest of six**

**ropes that were filing down from the summit, a member of the party said today.**

Mr. Russell and four other climbers, three of them nurses, were killed and two other nurses were injured in the accident.

Miss Beryl Robinson, one of the six leaders who accompanied 25 members of the New Plymouth Nurses' Alpine Club on a winter ascent, today described leaving the North Egmont Hostel at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning and reaching the Tahurangi Hut 42 minutes later. Some nurses were already there and others had not arrived, she said.

The climb from Tahurangi Hut began at 11.30 a.m. The 31 climbers were divided into six ropes, three led by men, Messrs Russell, R. Williams, and another and three by girls, Miss. A. Robinson, Miss. L. Eades and Miss. A. Vickers. There were seven in Mr. Russell's rope and five or four on each of the others, Miss. Robinson believed.

Conditions were icy all the way up and strong wind was blowing snow into and filling the steps cut by the climbers as they moved upwards. As a result the ascent was made fairly slowly and did not end till 3.45 p.m. when all the climbers were on the summit.

Miss. Robinson said the groups roped together as before began to descend again. Another climber equipped with crampons, Mr. D. Quickfall, went ahead alone to cut fresh steps, as those cut going up had been covered up.

Mr Russell's party of seven left first followed by Miss Robinson and Mr. Williams started down last. His party over the early part of the descent comprised 11 climbers, but three men who had been to the top with crampons joined them as they entered Snow Valley, moved some of the nurses onto another rope and took last place on the file.

**Miss. Robinson said she did not see the actual accident happen. With Mr. Russell acting as anchor, the rope was following the steps cut by Mr. Quickfall on the steep slope about 100 feet above Hongi's Bluff, and she them until they were sliding over the edge of the Bluff. She estimated their speed at between 35 and 40 miles an hour.**

Miss. Robinson continued with the rest of her party along the same steps that the first party followed: "We had to be very careful," she said. "They must have slipped over about 6.30 p.m., as it took us another hour and a half

to get down to the hut. It was very icy by this time, and although the moon gave plenty of light, the shadows were particularly bad. We had to be careful where we were putting our feet, as the person in front threw shadow onto the steps, and we were just as likely to put our feet out of the steps as into them.

After reaching the Tahurangi Hut at 8 p.m., Miss. Robinson said the nurses were re-roped and she took a party down East Egmont turn-off, returned to the hut with the ropes and led more down.

The nurses were then left to make their own way off the mount, as the track from there to the North Egmont Hostel was easy to negotiate. She and other leaders returned to the Tahurangi Hut with the ropes and assisted in moving equipment to the Nissan Hut, to which the accident victims were subsequently taken.

**Miss Robinson said that of the 31 climbers in the party only Messrs. Russell and Williams had crampons. Mr. Russell was the only member of his rope with an ice-axe. All the rest had ski sticks. Two climbers in her party had ice-axes, and she did not know how the others were situated, although she believed there were at least 20 ice-axes among the whole party. "I think there would be at least one ski stick on each rope, but no more than two ice-axes on most."**

In the six parties there were 12 climbers with experience, said Miss. Robinson. Six were leaders and the others had at least one experienced on ice and snow before. The others were quite inexperienced as far as the conditions on Sunday were concerned.

Questioned about the organisation on Mr. Russell's rope. Miss. Robinson said she could not be certain who was leading. As they left the summit she heard Mr. Russell calling to the leader to keep digging his or her heels in all the time. The name he used might have been Lornie (Mr. Andrew Lornie), who was killed, or Julie (Miss. Julie Cassels, who was killed).

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### ***Guide Had Climbed On The Matterhorn***

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH July 28.

Mr. Keith Russell, the Taranaki Alpine Club's chief guide, who lost his life on Mount Egmont on Sunday, was one of the club's most experienced climbers. He captured some virgin peaks in the Arrows Range in the South Island and climbed many peaks in the

Alps last year. While teaching in England, he crossed the Continent and climbed the Matterhorn without a guide and the Zinal Rothorn.

A teacher at the Central School in New Plymouth, Mr. Russell entered Training College in 1945 and was appointed a probationary assistant in 1947 at Tawhiti. No board was available there, and he slept in a sleeping bag in a park.

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### ***WHERE THE DANGER LIES IN CLIMBING MOUNT EGMONT***

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH July 28.

Twenty-four people have died on Mount Egmont – more than on any other mountain in the Southern Hemisphere. To this grim distinction is added Sunday's tragedy in which five more lost their lives.

As a mishap, Sunday's accident was the worst known in New Zealand. In January 1930, four women and a man were caught in a blizzard on the Tasman Glacier and died of exposure.

Egmont is not considered a difficult mountain. On the contrary, it is the simplicity and accessibility that are the causes of its high toll. Mt Cook, for instance, awe inspiring and remote, keeps the uninitiated at a distance. Egmont, a simple cone in the centre of one of New Zealand's most thickly populated areas, offers an open invitation to all.

Several years ago, a group of fully equipped climbers turned back from a summit attempt because of ice and mist, only to meet on their downward journey a man upward bound in street clothes, including light shoes. Others have passed unnoticed and some are included in the list of the dead.

Egmont's primary hazard is ice. Fourteen of the 24 have died following a slide down frozen slopes. Ice forms as afternoon and evening shadows move almost unnoticed around Egmont's cone, and the climber who ascends over soft snow returns to find the path glazed and slippery.

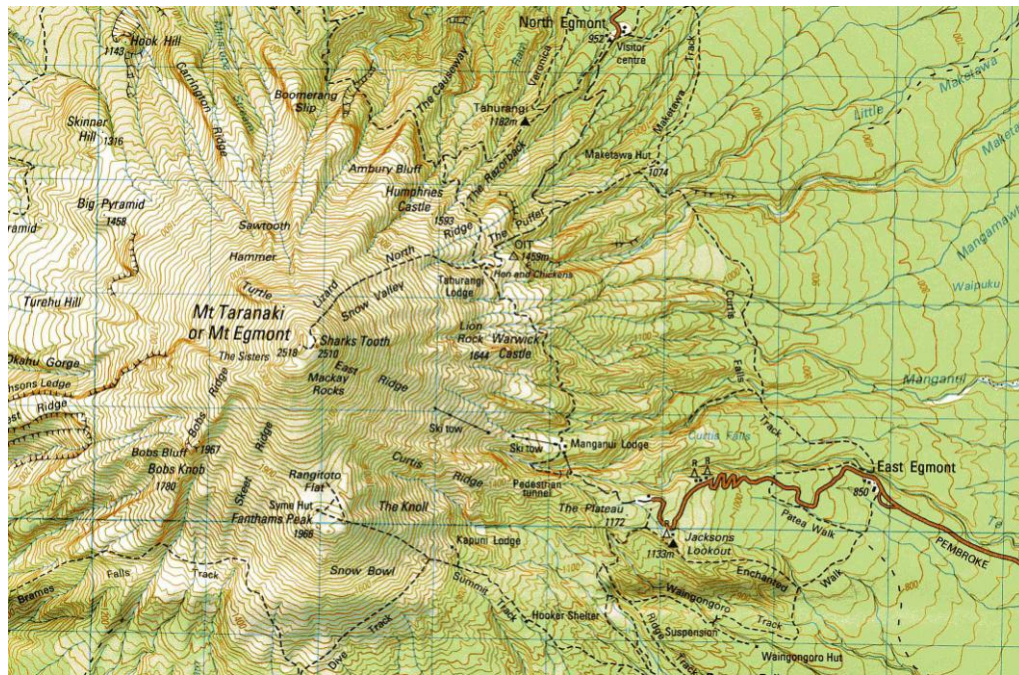
Of the remaining 10 deaths, Egmont can be acquitted of blame. For two who had simply collapsed, it could have happened on any mountain. Two others were killed by falling stones. Two died of exposure at night and three of exposure after becoming lost, and one just disappeared and is presumed to have been drowned in a river. Five of those killed were solo climbers.

**The way to the summit from North Egmont showing the critical points pertaining to the disaster.**

Note: Hongi's Bluff is located near the head of Snow Valley and is obscured by the North Ridge. The party descended from the summit and while crossing the head of Snow Valley, slipped on the icy slope above Hongi's Bluff and slid into the valley, two sliding 400 feet towards the Tahurangi Hut.



Tahurangi Hut      Snow Valley      Hongi's Bluff      North Ridge      The Lizard      The Summit



**A Section of the Land Information Topographical Map of Egmont showing the critical points of the disaster.**

The following weekend a party from the St. Johns Presbyterian Bible Class youth group under the leadership of Mr. Bob Perks made a day trip to the Kapuni Lodge. Before leaving the Dawson Falls Hostel, they were asked to watch out for two climbers who had not notified their intentions to the caretaker. It was assumed they were making for the summit but it was believed that they were not equipped for such a climb. On reaching the Lodge, the two climbers were observed climbing high above. When they did not respond to our calls, Bob Perks, one another and I started to climb after the pair. From the direction of the climb, they

appeared to be heading for Fanthoms Peak but before we could gain their attention they became obscured by cloud. At this point it was thought prudent to return to the Kapuni Lodge.

Our party eventually left on the descent at about 3.30. p.m. due to the soft surface of the snow freezing over. We had only just made it down to the Hooker Hut when the ice thickened and conditions became treacherous underfoot. The next day we learned that the two climbers had unfortunately perished on the icy slopes.

The following are newspaper reports from the days after this further tragedy, truly a disastrous week in Mt. Egmont's alpine history.

## **TWO MORE SLIDE TO DEATHS ON EGMONT**

### **Young Climbers Fell 1400 feet Roped Together**

### **EIGHT LIVES LOST WITHIN WEEK**

(PA)

NEW PLYMOUTH AUG. 3.

Within a week of a disaster that killed six, two young men slid to their deaths on Mt. Egmont on Saturday night. The cause of this tragedy was the same as the last – ice crust on the snow.

The two men, who were last seen roped together near the summit in a perilous ascent, were found dead in lower Snow Valley early yesterday morning. Still roped they fell to their deaths about 1400 feet over bluffs and steep ice.

The two killed were:-

MR MAURICE GEOFFREY ROGERS, aged 21, single, son of Mr. and Mrs. D. A. Rogers, 48 Fenton Street, Stratford.

MR. HECTOR JAMES HICKEY, aged 28, single, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Hickey, 17 Duke Street, Mt Roskill, Auckland and formerly of Opunaki.

Both were on the staff of the Ruakura Animal Research Station, Hamilton and were on weekend leave to celebrate Mr. Rogers 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, which was in July.

This new disaster brings the number of deaths within a week to eight and the total for the mountain to 27.

A smoothly organised search for the two men made use of aircraft and drew in 80 men. Their discovery within an hour of daybreak was the result of careful planning.

It is not certain that Mr. Hickey, who is understood to have no climbing experience, was well equipped. Mr Rogers had had a little climbing experience.

Just what happened to the two men between the time darkness concealed them at 5.40 p.m. on Saturday until their bodies were found in the snow in lower Snow Valley on the northern side of the mountain at 7.55 a.m. yesterday may never be determined but it seems likely that the ice carried them to a swift death soon after dusk on Saturday.

The two men drove onto the plateau 350 feet above the Mountain House in Mr. Hickey's light English car. It was found parked and locked there that evening and its Palmerston North number plates gave a false clue and a touch of mystery before the identity of the two men became known.

They did not fall over a bluff and were found some distance above the point where the party of seven met disaster on the previous Sunday night.

Throughout the morning and afternoon a group of 56 Junior National Party members from Te Awamutu led by the vice captain of the Stratford Mountain Club, Mr. W. Dorfinger, could see the pair as they ascended. During the afternoon the pair were seen sitting for almost an hour above the Manganui Hut.

The pair ascended Mt Egmont from the east side at 8.30 a.m. on Saturday. Mr Rogers drew crampons, an ice axe and gloves from the Stratford Mountain House and the pair set off without informing the caretaker, Mr. J. Hennesey, that they proposed a summit attempt.

Watched from both the Manganui Hut and the Stratford Mountain House they resumed their climb. Meantime several of the party had gone around to the Tahurangi Hut on the north face of the mountain with Mr. Dorfinger and were told Mr. R Syme, Hawera, search co-

ordinator for the Egmont National Park Board about two men.

Mr. Syme and Mr. Dorfinger returned to the Manganui Hut at 3 p.m. and Mr. Rogers and Mr. Hickey were still climbing towards the summit at least two hours after they should have been down off the icy slopes. Mr. Syme informed the Police.

Mr. Rogers and Mr. Hickey still climbing and apparently moving around toward the north face, were watched through binoculars from East Egmont till darkness concealed them about 5.40 p.m.

Throughout Taranaki, alpinists were alerted by telephone calls and slides on cinema screens. At 10.15 p.m. when the men had had ample time to come down if they were to come down if they were to come down at all that night, the reserve organisation was put into operation.

**Throughout the night the preliminaries went ahead. Little searching could be done before morning. Searchers gathered at the mountain huts and radios and medical supplies were packed up. The Search and Rescue Organisation in Wellington was alerted.**

**More than 80 experienced searchers were abroad before daybreak and at dawn a party of three was sent to the summit to watch for signals from searching aircraft. While first was a Tiger moth from Hawera and later a Harvard from Ohakea droned across the shy, this tri toiled up the still icy slopes in the light of clear day. By 8.10 a.m. they were back at the Tahurangi Hut with a report that they had found the bodies.**

**As the news spread the recall signals went up – smoke signals, rifle shots, Very lights and flag waving. At 10.10 a.m. the bodies were brought to the Tahurangi Hut and two hours later the stretcher parties reached North Egmont.**

At 12.15 p.m. after the long, hard journey down with the laden stretchers, they filed past a notice near the North Egmont Hostel which proclaimed in big letters: "This mountain is now dangerous."

**Moonlight had assisted the earliest searchers fairly well on the south and east side of the mountain before the dawn light was effective, but a gusty wind that blew loose snow up**

**handicapped the going severely and occasionally blinded the men.**

**The pilot of the Tiger Moth that took part in the search was the pilot-instructor at the Hawera Aero Club, Mr. B. Haybittle. He had with him Detective-Sergeant G. Hogan as a passenger.**

## ***Rescue Alert Started Possibly Before Tragedy***

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH AUG. 3.

**The search and rescue alert began at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, possibly before the two climbers had met with their fatal accident on Mount Egmont.**

Mr. Rod Syme, Hawera, who is overall controller of the Egmont National Park Board search and rescue organisation, was returning from a trip around the mountain to Tahurangi Hut with Mr. F. Bourke, Hawera, when he saw Messrs Hickey and Rodgers climbing the difficult east ridge, one of the hardest routes to the summit.

Messrs Syme and Bourke kept the climbers under observation for an hour and a half and alarmed for the climbers safety returned hurriedly to Hawera to alert the rescue organisation. To attempt to reach the men or signal them was impossible as darkness was creeping over the mountain then.

Messrs Syme and Bourke last saw the men at 7400 feet and for the last 20 minutes had watched them cutting steps round the mountain towards the north, and still climbing slightly.

Mr. Syme said today that he was amazed when he first saw the climbers still ascending and thoroughly alarmed by the time they had reached 7400 feet. They were in a dangerous position with night coming on and conditions becoming bitterly cold, he said.

Mr. Syme continued that if the climbers had continued on at the speed they were making when they were last seen they would have reached the point above where the bodies were found about 7 p.m. He considered that they must have fallen from that height over the bluffs and ice slopes into the bottom of Snow Valley.

"I'm definitely of the opinion they continued late yesterday afternoon when they found that they were unable to retrace their steps." Said Mr Syme. "When they were about 6000 feet they probably tried to come back, found they could not get down and continued to climb with the object of getting round to the supposedly easier northern slopes. The route they were taking on east ridge is most difficult

and steps would have been unsuitable for coming down.”

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**CAREERS OF THE MEN  
WHO DIED**

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH AUG. 3.

Mr. Maurice Godfrey Rogers was educated at the Stratford primary and technical high schools. After working for the Ruakura Animal Research Station, Mr. Rogers won an Agriculture Department bursary. He studied at Massey Agricultural College at Palmerston North for two years at which he gained a diploma in agriculture. At the time of his death he was working as a farm research technician at the Ruakura station.

Mr. H. J. Hickey was born at Opunaki and educated at the Opunaki Convent school. He left Opunaki about 14 years ago and, after securing a diploma in pig management at Massey College, he went to the Ruakura Animal Research Station where he has been for the past three or four years.

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**CAN'T STOP PEOPLE  
CLIMBING, SAYS EGMONT  
OFFICIAL**

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH AUG. 4.

People could not be stopped from climbing mountains and nothing had shown the futility of warning the public more than Saturday's accident on Mount Egmont which had happened while the whole country was still mourning the loss of six lives in a similar tragedy last weekend. Mr. Rod Syme, Hawera, said this at yesterday's meeting of the Egmont National Park Board in New Plymouth.

Mr. Syme was referring to the accident where two young men were found dead on the slopes of Mount Egmont on Sunday morning.

He added: "If the previous weeks accident didn't stop the public, nothing would stop them."

The Board after long discussion of the two tragedies on the mountain, decided to call a meeting of the board and all mountain clubs in Taranaki to discuss the search and rescue organisation as it applied to Mount Egmont as soon as possible after the inquests and enquiries into the two accidents were completed.

The acting chairman Mr. W.A. Knapp, said the accidents were no reflection on the board. It could not control individuals actions. But could the board, by providing equipment, do anything more to prevent accidents?, he asked. Could it grant extended powers to hostel managers to

prevent climbers going beyond a certain height? He felt the Act did not allow for this to be done.

It might be suggested that a substantial penalty be imposed on anyone going beyond a certain height under certain conditions when a notice forbidding such action was on display in hostels, but some foolhardy person might still try to do the impossible.

Mr. L. W. Lovell, the board's secretary, said that people had written their names on the signs displayed at the mountain hostels reading "this mountain is unsafe" and walked past them.

Another member said there had been women in high heels climbing the mountain yesterday.

Mr. Clemow asked if the board could prevent all climbing until after the inquests were held but Mr. Knapp said that was a matter for the police.

Mr. Syme then told the board that the Minister of Internal Affairs, after consultation with the Federated Mountain Clubs, decided on an intensive mountain safety campaign including broadcast talks and booklets for schools which were now being prepared.

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**MORE RISKS TAKEN ON MT.  
EGMONT**

(PA) NEW PLYMOUTH AUG. 4.

**Two instances of risky behaviour  
on Mount Egmont yesterday have  
been reported.**

When Mr. W. G. Watts, New Plymouth a member of the Taranaki alpine Club, and two other climbers who had spent many hours searching for the two men lost on Saturday night were collecting gear from the Kapuni Lodge before leaving the mountain yesterday afternoon they saw about 50 day trippers, including women and children, slipping and sliding as they came up the icy path to the hut.

Some of the women were in skirts and ordinary street clothes and shoes, said Mr. Watts. Yet they were thoughtlessly climbing at the 4000ft. level where yesterday he had been cutting steps for safety in hard ice.

"It is time that people got a bit of sense. These people had no extra clothing and had there been a sudden blizzard at that level we could have had more deaths on the mountain this weekend," said Mr. Watts.

The mountaineers, after warning the trippers of the danger, also saw a party of four persons sliding down the snow slope of a valley at the end of which were sheer bluffs.