

FLOOD THREAT LOOKING EASIER

WEATHER: Fine, mild, mainly sunny. Top temperature 21°.

THE GUARDIAN

CIRCULATING IN SWAN HILL
NORTHERN VICTORIA AND
SOUTHERN N.S.W. RIVERINA

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TELEPHONE 32-2161, 32-2817

4.78 metre peak now predicted

LATEST indications suggest that the Murray River flood will peak at Swan Hill at about the 1975 level — 4.78 metres.

The river has been steady at 4.71 metres for the past eight days after reaching 4.72 metres on October 4, following torrential rain in the district the weekend before last.

Predictions issued by the Weather Bureau last week were for the Swan Hill level to reach at least 4.80 metres by next Monday.

However, the bureau has reassessed the situation this week and now feels the 1975 peak will not be exceeded — provided nothing unforeseen happens.

The peak flow in the Murray from north-eastern rivers was at Echuca yesterday.

This, too, was expected to be marginally below the original predictions, and the peak was 36 hours behind original estimates in arriving, suggesting the flood was spreading out and slowing.

The estimated arrival in Swan Hill is still being based on a nine-day travel time from Echuca, but this might also be delayed by a day or so.

State Emergency Service Regional Director Peter Simmons, who has been directing the flood fight from Shepparton, Echuca and Swan Hill for the past two weeks, said the Edward and Wakool Rivers were providing relief valves for Swan Hill.

"There is a huge volume of water bypassing Swan Hill through these NSW streams and extensive flooding, particularly along the Wakool, can be expected," he said.

Mr Simmons said further upstream on the Murray, between Echuca and Shepparton, farmers were the losers, as the water was unable to drain from inundated farmlands

back into the river because of the high levels.

"This drainage will be a slow process and river levels will remain high for some time yet," he said.

Mr Simmons said that also spelt danger for levee banks right along the river.

"While levee banks look secure now, the longer they remain under pressure from a high river the softer they will become and the greater will be their potential to fail.

"There is no need for panic, but we must remain completely vigilant."

"We can't afford to become complacent, because the danger of a levee bank breach will continue as long as the water level remains high," he said.

Mr Simmons said it was fortunate for Swan Hill, too, that the peak flow in the Loddon had apparently passed.

He said there was still a

lot of water in the Little Murray River and some of the Murray flood would also make its way along that course, but it should remain manageable so long as no further heavy rain fell in the catchment or local areas.

Yesterday the Little Murray at Fish Point was said to have fallen "about an inch".

On Saturday morning members of the Swan Hill SES unit presented a demonstration of sandbag laying in Campbell Street, which attracted considerable interest.

There was also a good response from the community to a register for volunteers for flood fighting, such as laying sandbags, but still more are needed.

People who can add their support can telephone the unit controller, Ian Vernon, Swan Hill 32-2085 or 32-9222 during work hours.



Governor renews old ties

THE Governor of Victoria, His Excellency The Honorable Richard McGarvie, was more than happy to renew his old links with the Nyah District at the weekend's centenary celebrations.

His Excellency was asked to plant a commemorative tree in the grounds of Nyahwest Primary school, where his mother was a teacher in 1921 and 1922, and he was delighted to oblige.

In attendance were several former pupils of the school, including the oldest surviving pupil Roy

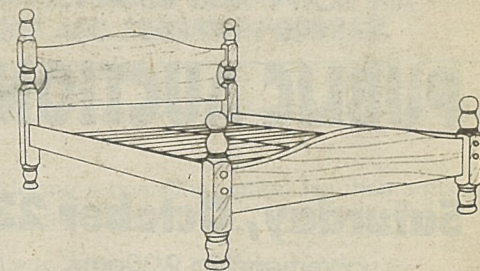
Pearse, who attended Nyahwest primary from 1920-1924.

Morning tea was served as old and new pupils exchanged stories and Mr McGarvie listened to tales of his mother's teaching days.

The Governor also attended an ecumenical church service in Nyahwest Park and the grand parade and commemoration service at Nyah.

A full report on the centenary activities and accompanying pictures will be published on Friday.

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