

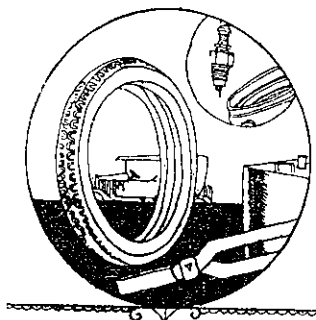
Waimakariri River, at Bealey, Canterbury. Waiting to be assisted over the river. J. Anderson, photo, Christchurch

MOTORING ON WEST COAST ROADS

THE incidents depicted in the accompanying photographs* took place on that mountainous portion of the Main West Coast Road lying between Bealey and Otira.

As a rule it is advisable for the motorist to truck his car at Springfield and rail it to Otira, unless the weather is settled, and even then sudden and violent downpours of rain are not unknown in the mountains.

Rivers and creeks rapidly flood and fortunately fall again as quickly



when the rains cease.

At the best of times the road is rough and calls for skilful driving, the grades are steep and the turns sharp. The surface has not improved since the completion of the railway.

The incidents depicted herewith were the indirect result of the railway strike last year, as all the traffic from Christchurch to Greymouth and in the opposite direction was thrown on to the road.

Coincident with the stoppage of the trains a violent mountain storm was staged with a deluge of rain and disastrous results on the mountain portion of the road.

The Waimakariri River at Bealey is the longest and most difficult crossing, and on this occasion some fifty cars were held up on each bank of the river until such time as the floods subsided sufficiently to allow the cars being assisted across in the manner shown.

One picture shows a number of the cars waiting their turn, and one is of a single car as the rain cleared off and the sun broke through, lighting up the snow on the mountain tops.

THE TRIALS AND PLEASURES TO BE EXPECTED BY THE MOTORIST IN CANTERBURY

By J. ANDERSON

After negotiating the Waimakariri River on the journey West, the next obstacle met with was the wash-out, a mile before the township of Arthur's Pass is reached. Here the water just poured down the mountain side and the road, at that point disappeared into the gully below.

It was not expedient at that time to bridge the gap, so that a road, room enough for a car was dug out by the roadmen, assisted by some of the car drivers.

Rough Creek was the next obstacle, just at the entrance to Arthur's Pass station, usually a trickling stream, now swollen to a raging torrent. Here one car met disaster.

THIS car was an Oldsmobile, making its maiden trip from Christchurch to Otira, with three passengers, one of whom was a lady.

They had negotiated the Waimakariri River before the worst of the storm broke and reached Rough

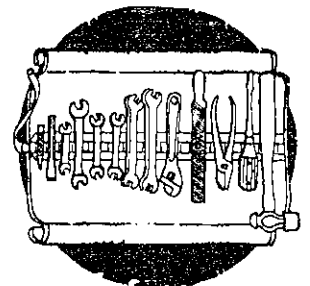
Creek in the darkness, and assayed the crossing. On reaching the middle of the torrent the engine stalled, and failed to start again. By this time the water was over the running boards, and on opening the doors rushed through the car, and was still rising rapidly, so that the car had to be abandoned.

The passengers, of necessity, waded to the bank of the torrent in a deluge of rain. Kindly residents procured the necessary comforts for the unfortunate passengers, and helped to secure the car with a rope. The picture shows the large boulders brought down by the flood in the night and deposited in the car. Fate, in the shape of a large rock which lodged beside the car, had the effect of diverting the stream and thereby saving the car, as it was doubtful that the rope would hold against the fury of the rush of the waters.

By the morning the flood was sufficiently abated to enable the car to be dug out and hauled to the railway.

It was a curious fact that the tail light of the car was still in action in the morning.

The next and last of the troubles to encounter on this occasion was at McGraths' Creek, usually negotiated by a ford built of trees and stones. This ford, however, had vanished in the night. Here, with the efforts of the men of the P.W.D. a temporary ford was constructed to enable the cars to get through. The picture shows one of the service cars crossing this ford.



THERE will no doubt be many to whom it will be no effort to remember the occasion of the Railway Strike.

However, to the motorist who prefers to shun the less hazardous trips, and when the weather is fine, the trip is one that is full of interest. The mountain scenery and the mountain air are tonics for the city dweller. Snowclad peaks and glistening glaciers are seen *en route* and the famed Otira Gorge negotiated with its rugged mountain sides, bush-clad and bright with the red of the rata, the Otira River far below at the bottom.

Mt. Rolleston is seen when nearing the summit of the Pass, and many waterfalls leaping out from hidden sources in the bush.

The summit of the Pass, Lily Flat, offers a comparatively flat run of half a mile, and it is here that the motorist crosses from Canterbury into Westland. In the months of November and December Lily Flat is one mass of the snow-white blooms of that exquisite alpine flower the Mountain Lily, which later is replaced by the Mountain Daisy, not so striking a blossom but none the less beautiful.



Crossing McGrath's Creek on the West Coast Road at Arthur's Pass J. Anderson, photo, Christchurch

*See also pages 59, 60 and 62.