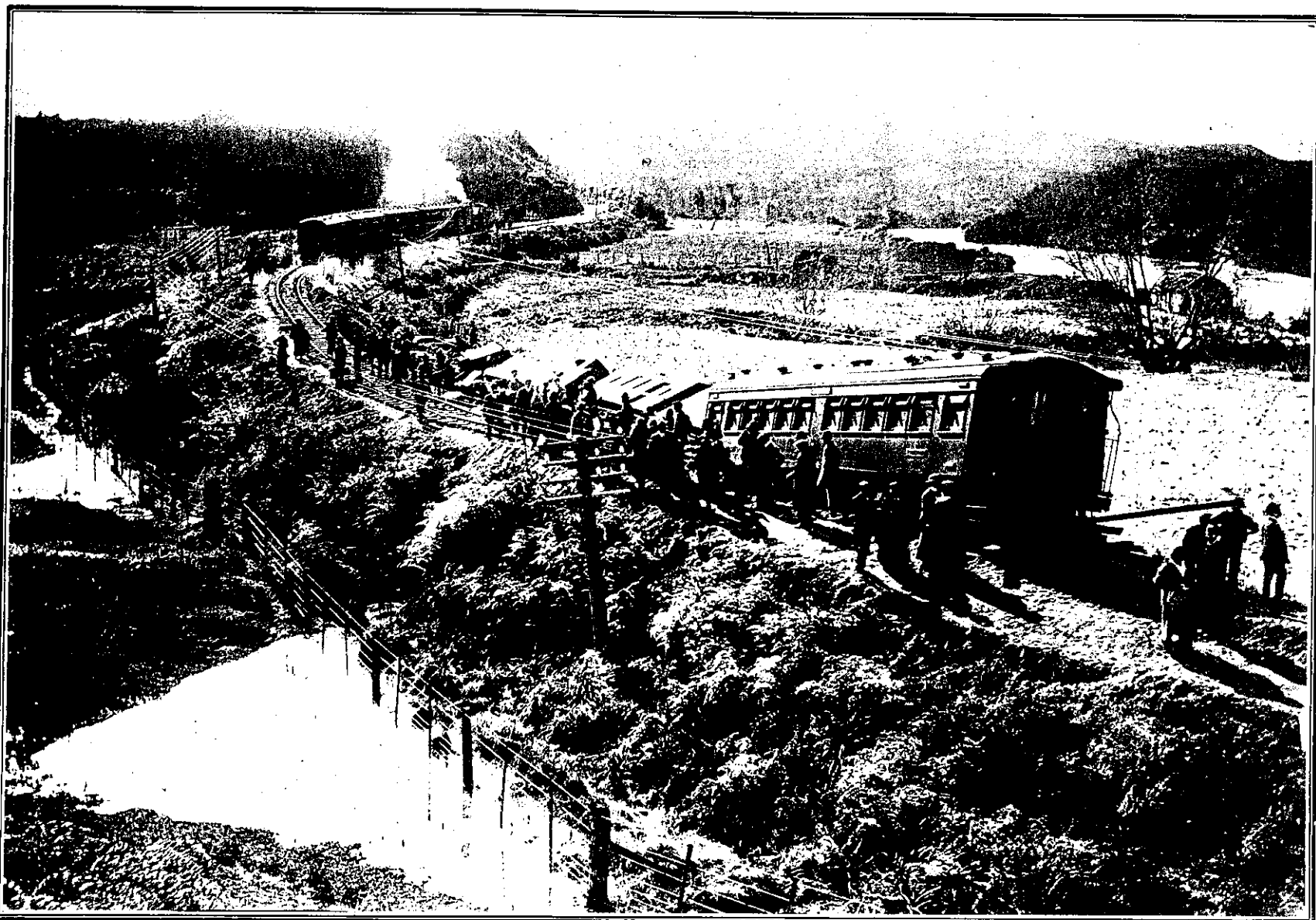


MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY SMASH NEAR TAUMARUNUI ON FRIDAY, JULY 23.

A sensational railway accident occurred on Friday afternoon last (July 23) when the Main Trunk Express from Wellington to Auckland, consisting of two engines (both in front), a postal van, two sleeping cars, seven passenger cars and two luggage vans, came to grief at a filled in embankment at a low part of the line about a mile below Taringamotu, near Taumarunui. The train was only proceeding at two to three miles an hour when it reached the embankment, which had been undermined as the result of the heavy floods and their attendant sideslips. It appears that the leading engine had almost negotiated the weak spot when the front driver noticed that the second engine was sinking, and with great presence of mind shut off steam and applied the brakes. The bank then seemed to melt away and the two heavy engines with the mail vans turned slowly over head down a drop of nine feet into the soft pumice and partly into the back-wash of the river. The rails with sleepers attached also went over, and the whole embankment of soft material subsided for a distance of about 50 yards. Fortunately the engine drivers, postal officials and passengers in the sleeper all escaped without injury.



THE SCENE OF THE SMASH, LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS TARINGAMOTU, SHOWING THE DERAILED SLEEPER, MAIL VAN AND TWO ENGINES.—The train in the distance is transferring its northern passengers to a train at the rear of the wrecked express to resume their journey to Wellington.



THE CAPSIZED ENGINES AND POSTAL VAN EMBEDDED IN THE SOFT PUMICE.—A gang of workmen are seen relaying the rails to enable the Main Trunk express to pass the obstruction.