

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE AT CHILDERS. TWENTY-THREE SHOPS

DESTROYED.

ESTIMATED DAMAGE, £20,000.

CHILDERS, March 24.

A disastrous conflagration occurred here at midnight last night, when the whole of the Southern side of the main street, except ten buildings, was totally destroyed. The loss is estimated at £20,000. The origin of the fire is unknown. No lives were lost. Altogether twenty-three shops were destroyed, including Messrs. Overell and Sons' establishment. Their loss is £4500 alone. The stock in many instances was saved.

The fire started in H. Newman's store, which was completely burned, stock and everything. The fire rapidly spread to Redmond's Palace Hotel and Overell's store, and strenuous efforts were then made to widen the breach on each side, but all were wooden buildings, with but little space between them. Nothing except the stock could be saved until Cockings's store on the east and Martin's auction mart on the west were reached, where good breaks occurred, and energetic work was successful in stopping the fire altogether. There were twenty-two business places utterly destroyed, but in many a fair percentage of stock was saved. The following were those burned out:—Redmond's Palace Hotel; Gaydon, chemist; Hood, stationer; Couzens, fruiterer; Dunn Bros., saddlers; Oakley, bootmaker; Overell and Sons, general merchants; Christensen, cabinet-maker; Wegner, bootmaker; Mrs. Dunn, fruiterer; H. Newman, general merchant; Gosley, tailor; W. B. Jones, auctioneer; Graham, fruiterer; Cooper, commission agent; Lloyd, hairdresser; the Federal Jewellery Company; Foley, hairdresser. The theatre was in imminent peril, but willing hands forced back the fire, and it was saved. So far as I have been able to learn there was about £8000 worth of insurance effected. There will be a severe loss to the shopowners, as the fire insurance rate was very high in the section. The offices interested, so far as can be ascertained, are the Phoenix, the National of New Zealand, the Alliance, the Liverpool, London, and Globe, the Lion, and the New Zealand. Many of the citizens worked heroically, and the Kanakas gave good service to prevent the spread of the fire and save stock.

CHILDERS, March 25.

The fire is still smouldering. Many of the burnt-out business men have rented other premises and have their names painted up and resumed business. The destruction of many buildings was very

Painted up and resumed business. The destruction of every building was very thorough. The following are particulars of the insurances:—S. Oakley, £200, buildings and stock, New Zealand Insurance Company; R. G. Graham, £70, stock, in the Commercial Union; M. E. Gosley, £75, stock, in the National; M. Redmond, £2000, hotel and stock, in the London and Lancashire and Commercial Union; W. B. Jones, £140, stock, in the Colonial Union; C. C. Couzens, stock, £100, in the National of New Zealand; H. Newman, £300, stock, in the Liverpool, London, and Globe; W. J. Overell and Sons, £2500, on building and stock, in the Phoenix; P. Christensen, £300, in the Alliance; W. Hood, stock, £400, in the Royal; T. Gaydon, stock £450, and buildings £450, in the Royal; Gaydon and Hood, buildings, £400, in the Royal; Gant and Brand, £375 on buildings, in the Alliance of New Zealand; H. Wegner, £200 on stock, in the Alliance; J. W. A. Kulick, building, £75, in the Lion; Dunn Bros., £125 stock, in the Alliance of New Zealand. Mr. Jeffrey owned three business premises and a large storage house, which were all destroyed, but the amount of insurance cannot be ascertained here. It is expected that an officer to adjust losses for all the offices will reach Childers to-morrow.