

THE WEATHER IN NEW ZEALAND IN DECEMBER 1987

General—A trough of low pressure crossed the country during the first few days of December. In the 48 hours to 9 a.m. on the 14th almost 350 mm of rain had been recorded at Milford Sound; 255 mm fell during the first 24 hours. The trough was followed by a period of cooler showery south-westerlies. Another trough then moved over the country during the 9th and 10th. Anticyclonic conditions prevailed until the 14th. Then moist north-easterlies associated with a shallow trough in the north Tasman Sea spread onto the North Island, while a ridge of high pressure remained over the South Island. A period of disturbed westerly conditions affected New Zealand from the 18th through to the end of the month, as a series of deep depressions passed to the south. This was interrupted briefly by ridges of high pressure on the 21st and 22nd, and on the 28th and 29th. Thirty houses were reported to have been damaged, and three people were injured when strong winds occurred in the Auckland suburb of Howick on the afternoon of the 25th.

Rainfall—Due to predominant westerly conditions rainfall totals were above normal in Northland, Auckland, and western regions of both islands. Almost twice normal December rainfall was recorded at Cape Reinga, Warkworth and in the Buller region. It was also wetter than normal throughout Bay of Plenty. In most other regions drier conditions prevailed, especially in Hawke Bay, where totals were only 30 to 60 percent of normal.

Temperature—Mean temperatures were 0.5 to 1°C above

normal in most North Island regions, and in Marlborough, Canterbury and North Otago. In Westland, Fiordland and Central Otago they were 0.5 to 1°C below; and almost 2°C below at Alexandra. Elsewhere they were only a little below normal.

Sunshine—Sunnier than normal conditions predominated in east coast regions of the North Island. In all other regions December was a rather cloudy month, except for Northland where totals were near normal. Hours of bright sunshine were significantly below normal in Westland, Fiordland, and coastal areas of Otago and Southland. Totals of only 75 percent of normal for Hokitika, 65 percent of normal at Dunedin Airport, and 69 percent of normal at Invercargill Airport were the lowest for December at these stations since records began in 1964, 1962 and 1935 respectively.

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