TRAPPED BY THE FLOODS

A Little Boy’s Story

Many stories have been written about our recent floods . . . stories of courage and sacrifice . . . stories of fear, and heroism, and destruction . . . stories of the hopes and ambitions of those people who have suffered, and yet still fight on.

Dawn recently had a letter from fourteen-year old Jimmy Quinlan, of Kinchela, and this youngster, in his own simple way, tells a graphic story of how the floods came to Kinchela.

Jimmy said, “It rained very heavily here about the middle of August and flood warnings went out to the people living in the Hunter and Macleay areas.

“We boys here were just settled down, preparing to have a good night’s rest when Mr. White came running down to tell us to pack all our belongings and get ready to leave.

“Some of us were very sleepy and didn’t want to be awakened, but we packed our bundles, stripped our beds and packed our mattresses up high where they could not be reached by the expected floodwaters.

“The small boys moved out at 11 o’clock that night,” said Jimmy, “but the older boys waited until morning. Believe me, it was a hard job. Mr. White rang for a bus to come and get us, and soon it was packed to the roof with bundles and all shapes and sizes and a lot of very drowsy boys who had not been to sleep all night.”

Jimmy went on to tell how Les Darcy and Fred Ward had helped move the cattle out into another paddock near the entrance of the Macleay River, and how the boys left the school.

“We were taken to South West Rocks,” said Jimmy, “and as it was my first trip there I made the most of it. The South West Rocks people put on a concert for us, and soon we were all joining in, eager to forget the ever-threatening flood.

“We returned to the Home about three days later and were delighted to find the floodwaters had not invaded the buildings, because we had so many other cleaning-up jobs to do.

“We were so tired after our first day back that Mr. White let us all sleep in the next morning.”

And that was Jimmy’s letter. A simple letter from a little schoolboy who had found himself and his forty mates suddenly in the path of a raging flood.

Can you imagine just how those youngsters, suddenly awakened from their sleep, must have felt that night?