

# NOGOA RIVER FLOOD RESCUES

"No man who went out on to that river could honestly say he was not afraid." This was how Mr. Albert Rasby, of 97 Denison Street, on his return home, summed up conditions under which the rescues were made in the flooded Nogoa River at Emerald last week.

Mr. Rasby's new 18 ft motor boat was ralled to Emerald at the height of the disastrous flood which cost the life of one young man, George Ward. Manned by Mr. Rasby, Plainclothes Constable G. Fairweather (Rockhampton) and Bill Hickey, the boat was used to rescue nine men, eight of them from trees in midstream. They were in boats which had capsized in attempts to find other men reported stranded by the flood.

There was no lack of helpers, said Mr. Rasby. His boat, weighing 600 lb., was manhandled off the railway wagon on to a motor truck, taken along one of the flooded roads and lifted into the water.

## RESCUE METHOD

Describing the methods he used in reaching the stranded man, Mr. Rasby said the boat was taken a mile and a half along a laneway, across fences and through a wide belt of trees to reach the main stream. The water there was roaring by at 12 to 15 knots and the little craft at times barely made headway.

The boat fought its way upstream past the men in the trees until a suitable tree was found for an "anchor". A heavy rope was tied to the tree and, with the crew taking the strain, the boat was allowed to drift back to the men in the trees.

trees.

In the first operation Constable H. Smith and Jack Johnson, who went through an ordeal of 52 hours, were picked up. The sturdy little engine was given full throttle and the boat, bow turned into the current, was then edged carefully into calmer water.

On the second run to pick up Kev Jones and Bob Crawford about 80 yards of rope was paid out from an "anchor" tree. Jones had spent an agonising day and night standing in a crouched position in the fork of a sapling. His ankles were badly swollen. Crawford was in a tree that swayed and quivered in the current without a stop for a day and night.

George Phill was rescued from an "island" where he had swum with a lifebelt dropped from a Lincoln bomber.

On the last run the party rescued Vince Douglas, Jack Paris, who had a badly bruised chest, Walter Osborne, of Park Avenue, and Bill Watson.

## COURAGE, ENDURANCE

Mr. Rasby had high praise for Hickey's courage and endurance. Hickey had gone out in a boat, equipped with an outboard motor in an earlier rescue attempt. The boat overturned and Hickey spent part of a day and a night in a tree before swimming to the bank. He immediately volunteered to go out again in the Rockhampton boat and, because he knew where the others were stranded, he was able to give valuable assistance.

The motor boat, only a month old but rich in achievement, has been brought back to Rockhampton.