

## The Flood Drainage.

(To the Editor of the Portland Guardian.)

SIR,—I observed in your paper of the 27th inst. an article under the above heading, in which it was stated that the obstructions which caused the flooding on the Whittlebury swamp and the damage to the road across it from the Lake water since the Condah Swamp was drained were caused by "trees that have fallen across the river, and have, by making a resting place for accumulated rubbish, formed dams across the river's course, or in some cases fisheries constructed by blackfellows in former times have resulted in similar obstructions."

The cause thus given of the overflow at the Whittlebury swamp being incorrect induces me to write a few lines on this subject, and if you will kindly give them publicity for the information of your readers I will feel obliged.

The obstruction to the water course lies deeper than in fallen trees and old fisheries erected by the blacks, viz., in the bed of rocks across the creek just at the outlet of the water which is dammed up in the Whittlebury Swamp.

Formerly the water used to lie on this swamp and made it almost impassable up till Christmas time of each year, but as I desired to make the swamp more useful for pastoral purposes than it used to be, I got it drained with our blacks, who excavated a drain of nine feet wide, five feet deep and four feet wide at the bottom and about one mile in length, with several minor drains, and another to take up the lake water. In order to obtain success in our draining operations, we got the rocks across the creek blasted out 14 feet wide at the top, and 10 feet at the bottom and four feet deep. After we did this work the water could flow off more rapidly and never lay longer on the swamp in the wettest season than three or four days. Having succeeded so well, the swamp was sown over with clover which flourished splendidly upon this reclaimed land. One year when it was flooded—the

upper part that is—the portion above the road kept the water longer than the lower did and damaged the road considerably, but this was owing to the culvert which the Council erected across the drain in the road having been too low, thus the water was kept back until it flowed over and covered the road.

I drew the attention of the Council to this defect and it has since been rectified, as the culvert has been raised to its proper height.

Since the Condah Swamp has been under draining operations we are troubled with floods again as we used to be before our swamp (that is the Whittlebury Swamp) was drained, and both the road as well as the reclaimed pastoral land belonging to the Mission Station suffer from its effects, the road being damaged and the beautiful clover on the swamp having been almost completely destroyed. The water comes now with such force and quantity that it can no longer be carried away by the outlet of the Whittlebury Swamp in its present size.

I consider, therefore, that in fairness to the Shire and to this station on which the blacks have done no small amount of work to make it a comfortable home for themselves, the Government ought first to deepen and widen the rocky bed of the creek at the outlet of the Whittlebury swamp and see whether the water will still do damage to the road. I (for my part) am positive that if this is done the difficulty will be solved in as far as the damage to the road and this station property is concerned, and I shall therefore communicate about this matter with the Board for Protection of Aborigines with a view to getting the obstruction to the flood water removed out of the creek as soon as possible.—Yours, &c.,

Mission Station, J. H. STÄHLE.  
Lake Condah, August 29, 1888.