

Since my last report I have gained considerably more experience in this type of farming. I was working on the machines at crutching-time, in the time when I was not mustering. For the past two months I have been fencing with an experienced fencer, and have gained a useful knowledge of that branch of farming. I have had a rise of 5s. per week in my wages, and am to get 30s. per week during the busy season. Thanking you for the interest you are taking in me.

I must apologize for not reporting on my progress to you before, but I have been so interested in my new surroundings that it completely slipped my memory.

It is rather difficult to give you my idea of this place, because this country seems so strange and wonderful after England. Since I have been at — the work has been very much the same. I cannot imagine how any boy could return Home and say that New Zealand has no possibilities, because it is full of them, providing one is willing to work and settle down to colonial conditions.

Mustering on the hills with good dogs is very fine work, and I enjoy it immensely. There are a very fine lot of sheep here, practically all purebred Romneys and Merinos, which require constant attention for the many ailments they are subject to. There is a good herd of milking-cows here, and a well-equipped modern dairy.

My employer is very good to me, and shows me anything I want to know. In fact, all the men are very willing to help me with my work, which is very encouraging to one who is in the country for the first time. I am extremely grateful to you for the interest you have taken and are still taking in me. I shall never regret coming out here, and would not return to the Old Country for anything, unless for a holiday in years to come.

I will report to you again soon, but up to the present my work has been nearly all mustering. When the lambing and shearing comes around I shall have plenty to say. Thanking you again for your utmost consideration.

Owing to the fact that there has not been much farm-work to be done beyond the feeding of the stock, much progress in farm knowledge has not been possible. However, I could neither milk nor ride on my arrival, but am now able to do both. I have learnt to harness and feed the horses, as well as driving and using them about the farm. I have learnt to work milking-machines of the L.K.G. make and New Zealand varieties, and understand the working and disassembling of them. I can also work the gas-engine and start the water-wheel used for driving the machines. I have worked on a sheep-dip, and could now dip sheep by myself. Beyond the general work of the farm there has been nothing else done, but most of the cows, with the exception of sixteen which will be milked all through the winter, will be dried off in a week's time. When these have been put out into the rough country we will begin sowing-time, and will soon be on to ploughing. I have done some potato digging and grading, and can use harrows. When we get into the more serious work of the farm I can report on my progress, and will forward my next report with full details.

I am most thankful for all the thoughtfulness and consideration which was shown to our party throughout the journey, and everything seems to have been done for our comfort.

I am sorry I did not send a report last month, but I forgot all about it until I came across your letter recently.

I have quite settled down to farm-life, and I like it very much. I have learnt quite a good deal already, but, of course, it is very little in comparison with what there is yet to learn. I am getting good experience in several branches of farming, as there are cows, sheep, pigs, and a few crops on the farm. The cows are milked by machinery, and I am now capable of milking them by myself when occasion demands. I do a variety of jobs such as fencing, disking, harrowing, rolling, maize-cutting, tree-logging, &c. There is always plenty to do, but it is a fine life, and I have no desire at all to return to England. It really is a wonderful country, and every day conditions are much better than I expected. Altogether I think I am making very good progress.

*Re* your letter of the 18th, I am pleased to say that I am enjoying the best of health, and I am progressing favourably with the farm-work. In January last my wages were raised another £1. My farming experience at Home has helped me immensely out here. Since my last report to you I have been haymaking, which lasted practically all the month of January; then, in February, I was busy draining—putting in new ones and cleaning out the old. At present I am working a three-horse team, ploughing, disking, and harrowing in the grass and oats. Next week I hope to be on the mower cutting the second crop of hay, weather permitting, or else it will have to be for ensilage. On the whole I have found the conditions and surroundings which prevail in this district to come up to all my expectations; also the great kindness and generosity which has been extended to me from all with whom I have been in contact—especially from Miss —. I think that is all that I have to report up to the present, so thanking you for your interest in my welfare here in New Zealand.

I am in receipt of your letter dated the 2nd February, *re* my quarterly report, the overlooking of which I apologize for.

My employer is writing a report to you per this mail. The following are the chief extracts from my diary, 1924:—

“November 4th: Shearing commenced. I ran the engine, did the experting, and put in time wherever required when I could get my regular duties (such as oiling, grinding, &c.) finished. I also picked up useful information in the classing of wool. Shearing was in full swing for practically the whole of November.

“December: This month was spent mostly in making gates, doing up fences, a few days in the garden, and milking until the arrival of —. I did no milking during shearing.

“January, 1925: Main operations this month were cutting ragwort and cattle-mustering (in which I made good to the effect that at time of writing I am the owner of two dogs, and go out and keep same hours as shepherds, and put in full time with sheep-work, and generally hold a responsible position during the dipping). Shearing of sheep which were missed at shearing-time was also performed. January 29th, 30th, and 31st were spent in introducing — to his duties.”

In conclusion I should like to say that I am very well placed here, and that any one who makes up their mind to get on would always get on with such an employer as Mr. — and on such a station. I have no complaints whatever to make up to the present, and I hope that circumstances will permit me to remain here for some time yet. My parents have forwarded me a letter from Mr. — (England), whose son is, I believe, due to land here this month. Mr. —, according to the letter, was given my parents' name by New Zealand House, London, and, from the way the letter is written, also reports of progress made by some of us.

I do not know whether the “first-party reports,” which were only an experiment on our part, have helped the scheme, or whether they are just side-lights; but the arrival of Mr. —'s letter has given me an impression that if we only try and make an effort, not only on our own personal part and in our daily duties, but as a body of public-school boys, to recognize and support any movement of the Department of Immigration in that way, so that we may at least feel that we have tried to thank the New Zealand Government for their venture (which might have been a risky and costly one) in supporting the scheme, and make a name of credit which will draw more to New Zealand, and in due time bring a greater wealth and prosperity to the Dominion, or, as Mr. F. Milner, in a letter to the association, wrote, “an educational glory of our great Empire.”

I therefore hope that if there is any way in which we can show ourselves above and beyond the first goal of making good ourselves, by helping our new home, that you will let me know, when you have time, so that I may acquaint the members and do our best to achieve it. I will forward my report for this present quarter on May 1st, which is a down-river mail-day, without fail.