

## THE MILKY WAY

### Note On A Pastoral Scene



HOW would you answer if somebody asked you this question: "When a cow decides to recline gracefully on the grassy sward, does it get down front end or back end first?"

The radio answer given in a recent 2ZB quiz was: "Front end first and it rises the opposite way."

All this so intrigued a Taihape farmer that he wrote to Maurice Hawken, 2ZB quiz announcer, on these lines:

"... Last Thursday you said that cows got up back end first. Enclosed is a snap of one milking cow we have here which generally gets up as shown in the photograph. I think it is about the only one of its kind, as I have never seen any other cows get up that way."

All that is missing from this photograph is the proof that, when it was taken, Daisy was actually rising bright and early for the day's cud-chewing, and not preparing for the night's slumber. But either way it seems to be a different way from that officially supported by 2ZB.

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East Cape, Nugget Point, Stephen's Island, and Farewell Spit.

Kaipara Heads were beautiful. "I'd love to be there now," said Mrs. Cocker, "with all the conveniences they have these days. When we were there, two of our sons joined the Merchant Navy. They used to signal the news to us from the decks of their ships as they sailed past the lighthouse. That was the only way we learned the news in those days."

We looked at the photos of her sons—seven of them ranged on a table beside her. They were strong and healthy. "My only regret about the life," said Mrs. Cocker, looking at the portraits, "is for the lack of sports in the boys' lives. They were all so athletic, but they had no chance to develop this or to play any sports. But the boys themselves have no regrets. In a letter recently one son wrote, 'Thank God for the fresh air of our childhood.'"

#### Memories from Photographs

Mrs. Cocker brought out the family photos gathered over 25 years and each brought with it a stream of memories. This one was a souvenir of the terrible smell at Farewell Spit when the black fish, huge and ugly, were stranded on the beach.

"They say they came ashore to commit suicide," mused Mrs. Cocker. "I don't know if that's true, but they were always getting stranded."

That one showed the tuataras at Stephen's Island where the dove petrels died in their hundreds at the bottom of the light. The tuataras burrowed holes where they lived at night, but in the daytime when they left their holes, the dove petrels would come and use the burrows as a home till the tuataras came back.

"The arrangement seemed to suit both parties," she laughed.

This photo brought back the lovely six months at Portland Island, six months of fishing, boating, and swimming; a place where the ground was so fertile that lighthouse people could grow tomatoes and cucumbers. And here was one of the beautiful shells and the swimming pools at Farewell Spit.

But the houses were so low-lying there that in winter the lawns were all under water and the keepers had to use a high walk built right up over the ground to the lighthouse.

#### Flies in the Ointment

"We grew beans there 10 feet long," added Mrs. Cocker. "But there was always a fly in the ointment. At Farewell Spit, the transport was very difficult. Of course there was no road. Only once did we live in a lighthouse that could be approached by road. We used to arrange for a taxi to come right along the spit, which was very dangerous because of the shifting sands. That would cost us £4 a time. At the other lighthouses we either had to come in by the sea and up cliffs or along the beaches or down rivers. I've often ridden through swollen rivers on a pony. When I was at Pencarrow I had to walk in, three days before my baby was born. I took him home again 14 days later on horse-back. Once only was I unable to travel in, in time for my baby to be born. That one was born at the lighthouse."

"Here is a photo of the most convenient place we were ever at, Nugget Point. We had only a four-mile walk from here to the store. I often used to walk in to buy some little luxury. That was a real treat."

The pages of the photograph album turned slowly. "That's Kaipara Heads," explained Mrs. Cocker. "The light there was five miles away from our houses. Our men used to spend a fortnight at the heads and a week at home. We didn't like that. We used to walk out with the afternoon tea to them every day. This is Stephen's Island. I'll never forget the day there when a load of coal went over and split one of my boy's feet. But Mr. Cocker fixed it up and that son is now in Italy. He's walked thousands of miles, yet he didn't have one stitch in that cut. This photo of Farewell Spit is where we used to watch the snipe leaving for Siberia. And here's one taken at Christmas time. Mr. Cocker was always Father Christmas—and how the boys used to love their special treats! We used to try to put special supplies aside for birthdays and other functions."

Gorgeous - Adorable You!

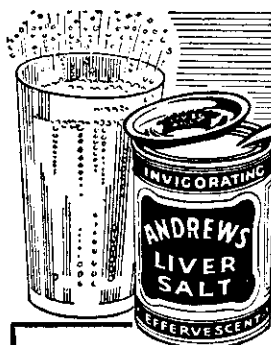
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