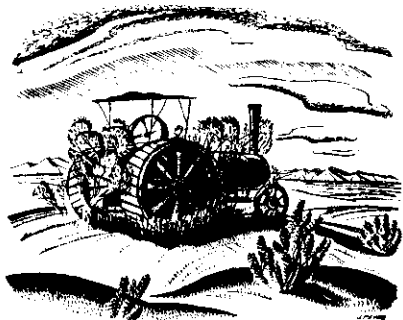


when thirst happens to assail them. But the chances are about three to one that you will find their lounges so heavily curtained when you enter that it will take you a moment or two to get your bearings.

And small-town refreshment rooms follow the same fashion. It is not a question of keeping out the flies, since most of these places are remarkably clean. Nor is it a plan for the preservation of carpets and furniture, since those refinements belong to genteel housewives who don't usually manage hotels. It goes further than shyness, deeper than modesty, and we over-simplify it if we just call it discretion. I suppose psychology has a name for it, and anthropology too, but I suspect that there would be nothing to name if New Zealand had been settled from the Mediterranean and not from the North Sea.

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I WAS dramatically reminded one afternoon in Martinborough of the speed with which even farming methods change. I had just given way to an all-purpose farm tractor, which was travelling in one direction almost as fast as I was in the other, and looked with its high rubber wheels capable of doing almost any speed at all, when I rounded a corner and saw something in a vacant section that pulled me up short. It was a traction engine that had stood so long in one spot that African thorn was growing through its wheels and round its funnel and making a natural camouflage for the whole lumbering mass. It dates me to say that I thought at once of the day when an engine arrived in our district that could not only move itself



along, but drag a heavy mill behind it. We had heard of such things, but until the proof arrived we did not believe they were possible, and I can still recall my excitement when I was added to the staff as "water joey." But exciting though that was, it has never blurred by memories of the old portables, when 8, 10, or 12 horses, straining and steaming and slipping in the mud, dragged first the engine and then the mill over home-made roads or no roads at all, and then repeated the performance when one set of stacks had been threshed and it was necessary to move on to another. Now steam has disappeared, and steel wheels are in process of disappearing. The mill goes round the paddock faster than it is comfortable to walk, and harvest and threshing are a single operation. I spoke to a man near Masterton who told me that his header had paid for itself in one season by being available precisely when it was wanted—racing the wind to his wheat, and gathering in his grass-seed during the critical three or four days when grass-seed is worth most.

## GATHERING FACTS FOR FARMERS

### BBC Expert's Far-ranging Mission

TO equip himself with a first-class knowledge of farm practice in English-speaking countries, J. D. F. Green, BBC liaison officer—which in this case means director of the farm services—is now in New Zealand on the last leg of a long trip. When we interviewed him early this year at Auckland, he told us that his investigation of New Zealand conditions would follow a visit to Australia. Now he has seen something of our agricultural methods, and when we talked with him again the other day in Wellington he was able to make comparisons with methods in other countries. He told us that radio was playing a large part in service for farmers in England, Canada, and the United States; on his return to Britain he will be able to extend the BBC's farming services further, for he has gathered much information about farming practice generally, and costs of production.

Mr. Green said that, from what he had seen, he believed the New Zealand farmer to be the most effective farmer in the world. But it was largely the climate that made him so. "Because of our winter the English farmer cannot be so effective, yet he can still learn something from the methods which climatic conditions in New Zealand allow. For example, we have to provide shelter in Britain, but there is no need to lock up as much capital as we do in farm buildings that would be more suitable for churches and government offices than for storing fodder and keeping live stock.

#### A Hint from Australia

"I find that the New Zealand farmer milks twice as many cows and looks after twice as many sheep as the farmer in England. And that is principally a matter of tradition. Many of our practices are not essential, but an equal number really are essential. You might think we have nothing to learn from Australia, but it would be an education for any British farmer to visit that country. He can't get any perspective, remaining at home, of the capital that has to be maintained in Britain to keep water off the land, until he has seen the struggles of Australia to get water on to it. But there are few countries in the world that are not faced with the problem of growing plants either in a bog or in a desert."

We asked Mr. Green what he had seen in other countries during his tour—in Canada, for instance.

There, he said, the British farmer could learn something about the economic use of farm buildings and the winter handling of fodder, because the Canadian, again, had a long and bitter winter to contend with. "But all the New World farmers have to learn from Britain the principles of sound husbandry. What we call 'farming to quit' is a universal fault in the New World. That is a phrase used about a bad tenant who takes all he can out of the land, while intending to give his landlord notice.

And so soil fertility must suffer from 'extractive' methods with no regard for the generations to come."

"Are not extractive methods used almost everywhere?"

"There is no phase of agriculture in the New World that has not had its counterpart in some period in Britain. For example there is the transition from pastoral farming to closer settlement. The problem of closer settlement, to enable the industrial revolution to proceed and great cities to arise, can only be understood fully by a close study of the lives of the great improvers of the 19th Century."

"Would you say that New Zealand farmers should visit Britain for experience?"

#### Farmers' Mecca

"Yes, and I would say that I wish every young New Zealand farmer could have the opportunity to go to Holkham, the home of Coke of Norfolk, the great land reclaimer and improver during the Napoleonic wars. Farmers need not merely to be technically competent to hold their own in the modern world; they also have a moral responsibility for the soil which is not shared in the same degree by other members of the community. A respect for history and a humane attitude to the land should also be an essential part of a farmer's education."

"In what specific ways can broadcasting help farming?"

Mr. Green answered our question by saying that he had gone to the BBC 11 years ago, to build up the agricultural and horticultural services. "In the last five years," he said, "radio had played (in addition to the service it gives to farmers) an increasing part in technical education through the use of broadcasting for discussion groups. I can say, too, that I was amazed at the enormous use made of broadcasting in extension work in Canada and the United States of America."

"It is not only a question of the use made by qualified experts and extension officers to spread their knowledge, but the use also that can be made by discussions among the farmers themselves. Actually, the successful farmer is less jealous of his secrets than any other member of the commercial fraternity. But it is surprising how long useful hints on sound farm practice take before they really produce an effect."

Then we asked Mr. Green to tell us something about his own particular mission.



J. D. F. GREEN

"'Farming to quit' is a universal fault"

The main object of his long journey, he said, was not specifically to arrange broadcasts while away from home, or to talk himself when he returns. Rather he is looking into the background of farming so that farm talks in England can be accurately supplied when requested by the Dominions' broadcasting services. He is also anxious to see to what extent recordings by farmers of the Dominions can be used in the Home Service programmes. This, he said, would be interesting in so far as it related to farming practice and costs of production.

Mr. Green admitted that he was anxious to see what British farmers were up against, because the BBC realised that it had a heavy responsibility not to mislead the farmers of Britain in the coming years by painting false prospects. And his eye is not shut to the greater opportunities that might exist for British farmers (particularly the younger men) overseas. Except in dairying, the farmers of Britain were overcrowded, he said, and sound managers often had insufficient scope.

Now he is nearing the end of his tour which, summed up, has meant an investigation into how far an opportunity exists for the exchange of news of primary production in English-speaking countries, and how far broadcasting can be extended in agricultural education.

"I must confess," he said, "that I am appalled at how little I saw in Australia and how long it took me to see it, but the compactness of New Zealand will make this part of the tour much easier."

Mr. Green is a neighbour of Lord Bledisloe, in Gloucestershire, and a breeder of Dairy Shorthorn cattle, and Oxford Down sheep. While in Wellington he gave a talk over the main National and Commercial stations.