

"I can, because the landing ground, a war emergency job, is at my front door. But Duck Creek runs between us and the main road. You know something about that."

"I do. Without your tractor I might have been there yet. But it would not be a big job to bridge a stream like that."

"Not for the Government. But it's a big job for one settler. And we still have no school."

"Do you still need one?"

"I don't. But my two nearest neighbours have young families. There is already a third generation here."

"What's wrong with the Correspondence School?"

"Nothing. It's very good. My youngest boy has just finished with it. But his mother was a teacher. Most mothers don't know how to start even if they have the time. And they have least time when they most want it—when they have two or three young children on their hands, and two or three men to cook, wash, and mend for."

"That's about a normal experience, I suppose?"

"It has been in this valley. Domestic assistance is out of the question, and when a woman has to get musters away before daylight, then do a full day on top of that, the correspondence lessons don't get done."

"You think teaching by correspondence has its drawbacks?"

"I wouldn't say a word against it. It's been wonderful for us. I think it's wonderful so far as it goes for everybody. But you can see what the situation is for parents who have neither the training nor the time to start their children off and keep them going."

"You had a school in the valley once, I think?"

"Yes, the Board built one down by the Whistler, and for six or seven years we had a resident teacher. He used to live at the head of the valley, gather the children up with a car as he came down in the morning, and return them to their homes in the afternoon. For some time before that we had a household school here at Island Hill. But as one settler after another walked out with his family those facilities disappeared. We are back now to our first five years."

"You mean in education services?"

"Yes."

"But in general where are you? Is life easier now or harder?"

"Easier, but not so much easier as you probably think."

"Would you face it a second time if you had the choice?"

"Yes, I think I would. It's been a tough life, but never tame or dull. We've been up here in a world of our own and I can't see myself in any other. It's certainly a hard world. But when I look back I can see that my worst worry has been the fear that I might have to leave it—walk out after the others and start somewhere else."

\* \* \*

FROM that fear George has been free for some years. But I was surprised to find an anxiety of a different kind developing in the valley which made me

(continued on next page)



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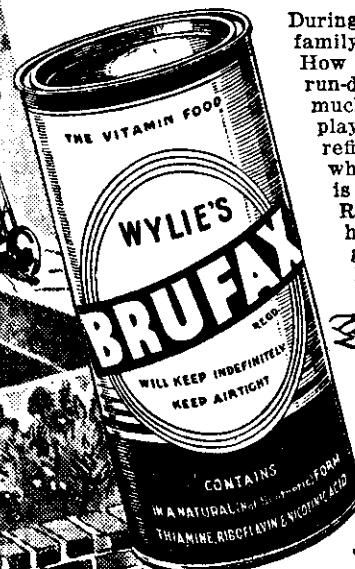


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