

OFFICE DESK TO WOOL STORE

★ Interview With A Man With A Conscience ★

HARD work doesn't kill a man or even temporarily incapacitate him, I decided, as I walked out of the office of a well-known city business man who had just exchanged his three weeks' annual leave for three weeks' hard labour in a wool store. Knowing his distaste for physical work, which extended even to gardening (a few weeks ago I had taken him some cabbage plants and he had inquired, unenthusiastically, whether they needed much digging), I had expected to find him lounging limply in his office chair. Instead I was struck by his air of alertness and the absence of that Monday-morning-feeling.

He reached for his pipe.

"It's good to be able to smoke when and where and as long as you please," he said.

"Weren't you allowed to smoke?" I asked.

"No, smoking was absolutely prohibited. Well, perhaps not absolutely. Occasionally I would take out my pipe for a few quiet draws and the foreman would come along pipe in mouth, and tell me that smoking was not allowed."

"How did you come to take on this particular work?" I asked. "Surely there were less strenuous jobs?"

"Well, I didn't have much choice in the matter. I had heard the continued appeals over the air for men to do work

of national urgency, so I went to the Placement Officer and offered my services for three weeks."

"Did you have any special sort of work in mind?"

"A friend of mine had spent his holidays painting, round at the patent slip. I was rather keen on that, but the job was finished by the time I started. Being an unskilled labourer I ended up in a wool store."

"I suppose the first few days were the worst?"

"Yes. For the first few nights I could hardly move my arms, and it was agony to turn over in bed. But after a while the muscles became attuned to the new work and I began to feel really fit. I got a good few blisters to begin with, and was forced to wear gloves in spite of a lot of good-natured chaff from the other men. But the discomfort of a blister or two is nothing compared to the discomfort of almost laying oneself out. One day I was clamping down a bale of wool when the ratchet slipped and the handle flew up and hit me on the forehead. It left a lump the size of an egg."



What he missed most was morning and afternoon tea

"What else did you do besides clamping?"

"Mostly trucking bales of wool from one place to another. The bales weigh about 500 lbs. and have to be hauled through a hole in the floor, manoeuvred on to a truck, and wheeled over to a weighing machine, after which they are again trucked over to another place to be cut open and inspected. Most uninteresting work. Many a time I wished that every sheep in New Zealand had been killed off long ago. And even now when I look at a lamb chop it reminds me how heavy a bale of wool can be. Then one day I created a diversion by dropping my truck down the hole in the floor, and occasionally at the beginning I'd drop a bale of wool from the truck. But they're a good crowd of chaps in a

wool store and if you're in a jam someone always comes along to give you a hand."

For a Change

"Didn't you have a change of work sometimes?"

"Occasionally I would have to sew up a torn bale that had been cut open for inspection. Quite a difficult job this, as the wool is packed so tightly that when you push it back into one hole it springs out in another. But one day I got a good break. I was sent out with another chap to put tarpaulins on railway waggons loaded with bales. It was great being out in the sun after being shut up for days surrounded by bales and with not even a window to see out of. You can guess we made this job last as long as possible."

"What hours did you work?"

"An average of 56 for the six-day week. We clocked in each morning at 7.45. Normally I'd just be getting up about then. But the long hours are necessary because there's a big job of work to be done there. They handle something like 70,000 bales of wool a year, and every pound has to be accounted for."

He Missed the Tea

"What did you miss most in your new job?"

"Morning and afternoon tea," was the quick reply. "When for years you have been accustomed to having a cup of tea placed on your desk morning and afternoon at the same hour, you find it rather difficult going for four hours without a break for refreshment. Of course I wouldn't like to say that I was always tealess—there was a nice little shop quite handy, and once you know that the boss won't be round for a while—well, wouldn't you?"

The telephone rang and I moved to the door.

"Oh, by the way," he fired at my disappearing back. "Got any more plants to spare? I'll be glad of them."

(Contributed)

**Make his heritage
SECURE**

Whatever plans you may have for your son, make wise provision to see that they are carried out, in case your own experience and judgment are not available when the time comes for him to assume the full responsibilities of life.

A great safeguard of his interests will be for you to appoint the Public Trustee the executor and trustee of your estate.

Ask the Public Trust Office for details of the permanent, faithful and efficient service which it can render.

**The PUBLIC
TRUSTEE**

LISTENINGS

Perpetrated and illustrated by
KEN ALEXANDER

A FEW atmospherics from the World Programme:

Batan—the place where the Japanese suffered victory and the Americans won a glorious defeat.

From the Soviet spokesman, M. Lozovsky: "... One thing was certain—Germany would be defeated this year." Well, the Russians are in a better position to know this than any one else—except, perhaps, the Germans.

Russia says that she now has as many tanks for the spring as the Germans. That sounds like good shooting. Tanks a million, M. Stalin! But the real point is—who will have the most tanks after the spring? The question will be decided by a Bear majority.

The Japs thought Ceylon produced only tea. But when they called, they discovered quite a lot of T.N.T.

There is some suspicion that the United Nations are contemplating a second front against Germany. But this shouldn't worry Hitler. He has spent all his life fronting two ways.

Taking it all round, the news has been pretty dark lately. But Britain always seems to see better in the dark. It was dark in 1918.



Mother India seems to be celebrating Mother's Day.

The Case for India: To get what she wants from Britain while not getting more than she wants from Japan.

It is reported that Japanese soldiers can fight on a handful of Reich. Later on, they may have to battle on with only powdered Reich for support. The Aussies are knocking the Japs to leg at Rabaul. But they don't wait to bring home the Ashes.

They're training them as tough guerilla troops in Australia. You need guerillas to counter jungle monkey-tricks. New Zealand might do well to ape the guerilla plan.