FIFTY YEARS SHEEP FARMING

IN CANTERBURY, OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

By C. F. OVERTON

EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908329-26-7

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908332-22-9

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: Fifty years sheep farming in Canterbury, Otago and Southland

Author: Overton, C. F. (Charles Fitzroy)

Published: Otago Daily Times & Witness Newspapers, Dunedin, N.Z., 1949

THE AUTHOR, LORA, 1938.

FIFTY YEARS SHEEP FARMING

IN CANTERBURY, OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

by

C. F. OVERTON

Dunedin, N.Z.:
Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspapers Co., Ltd.
1949

INTRODUCTION.

In these few pages space would not permit me to enumerate the many hundreds of worthy Pioneers who helped this country in the making. Thus I have confined my remarks to those I have had the privilege of knowing, or have come in contact with.

To the relatives of one or two who have gone before, I express my appreciation for information received.

As I have kept a diary since 1896, records of events should be accurate.

And finally, as I do not lay claim to any literary qualifications, I hope readers will not look with too critical an eye on anything that might offend literary taste.

C. F. O.

Nov. 4th, 1948.

This book is dedicated to my two brothers—Major P. J. Overton and Lance-Corporal Guy Stanley Overton, who were killed on Gallipoli on August 7th, 1915, World War I.

And to my late wife and family, who, by their loyalty and devotion, have made the writing of these pages possible.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIFTY YEARS SHEEP FARMING

I.

MIGRATION

On my mother's side my grandfather, the Rev. Gideon Smales, arrived at Hokianga in 1840, and my grandmother, who was a sister of the Rev. J. H. Bumby, who was drowned in the Hauraki Gulf in 1840, arrived also at Hokianga in 1839.

On my father's side my grandfather, Thomas Overton, migrated from Lincolnshire with his wife and a family of seven children in 1846, settling in South Australia, where they took up land about twenty-eight miles from Adelaide at a place called Willunga. While in Australia, four more children were born, making in all a family of eleven.

After ten years in South Australia, glowing reports of the opportunities and advantages New Zealand presented for settlement reached Australia, and after a preliminary inspection by my grandfather they decided to come over and settle in New Zealand, which they did in 1856; no mean undertaking in those days for a man with a wife and family of ten children; before leaving Australia, one of the girls married a Mr. Haywood, which reduced the number of children to ten.

The site selected for the new home in New Zealand was near Otahuhu, in the Auckland district. Here a new house was built of white brick and the place was called "The Grange," a name it bears to this day; the house which still stands with some alterations being used as the golf house of the Otahuhu Golf Club.

About 1855, grandfather Smales took up a block of land at East Tamaki, which included the hill now called Smales mountain, though the Maori name was Matanginui, or the place that will not be taken without the much shedding of tears.

This Maori stronghold, which in the old days was fortified right to the top, was the scene of much fighting among the different tribes when Hongi made his raids from the North, and even to-day on the terraced slopes of the hill one can define the earth works where many a gallant Maori met his death in the defence of his stronghold.

On the eastern slope of the mountain, among a grove of karaka trees and native bush, grim relics of the fight can still be seen in the shape of human bones placed in a small cave after the fight was over. My last visit to this spot was in 1940, when the remains were still there after a period of over a hundred years.

This property, which was called Hampton Park, and is still in possession of the family, consisted of rich volcanic soil and has been principally used for dairying.

The house built in 1855, and afterwards burnt down about 1940, was situated on the edge of a large amphitheatre which appeared to be part of an old extinct volcano crater. In area about three to four acres, the rich soil on the slopes offered an excellent site for the orange grove and citrus fruits with which it was planted. In the hollow at the foot of the terrace, apples and peaches grew in abundance, and in the centre of the basin was a round house in which the old gardener lived, a man, by name Fraser, who had fought in the Crimean War and took a delight in building his rock garden to represent a small model of the fortress of Sebastapol, at the siege of which place he was present.

This place was the home of my mother until she married my father in 1875, and in the little stone church at the foot of the drive, which was built by my grandfather in 1860 for the use of all denominations, the records of the family are engraved and the bones of those who have gone before us lie in the vault underneath the floor.

And now to return to the other branch of the family, who after farming at "The Grange," Otahuhu, for five years decided to go back to Australia, where they settled for a short time near Melbourne, leaving another daughter behind this time, who married Mr. James Wallace, of Papatoetoe.

II.

CANTERBURY

During the later years of their residence in the Auckland Province, the Taranaki War had been raging, and things generally throughout the district as regards settlement and acquiring an outlet for a growing family became cramped and risky, especially bordering the Maori country. Under these circumstances the Overton family decided to return to Australia.

ETHEL ROSE OVERTON IN PRESENTATION DRESS, 1936.

[See page 9

About this time the Canterbury settlement was getting under way and glowing reports came to hand of the prospects of that part of New Zealand, so in 1862 the family decided to again migrate to New Zealand, this time taking up a block of land of 2,600 acres on the south bank of the Selwyn River, where they built their home, calling the place "Meadowbank." In addition, a block of 1,400 acres on the Lake Ellesmere Flat was leased from Captain Milton, making in all a holding of four thousand acres.

No doubt my grandfather, coming from the Fens of Lincolnshire, was attracted by the Lake Flat and, with the better class of land near the homestead, this made an excellent block of country, part of it to this day still being retained by the family near Lakeside.

The timber for the Meadowbank house was carted by Mr. Brooks, after whom Brookside is called, Mr. Brooks' son still being a prosperous and much respected resident in the district.

In 1869 Thomas Overton died, and according to the will all property had to be sold and the proceeds divided among the different members of the family. Previously two of the family, John and Charles, had started farming on their own account, John at Prebbleton and Charles on 330 acres of the Meadowbank estate. Henry, after the sale, rented the balance of the property from the purchaser, where he successfully carried on farming, establishing a stud flock of Lincoln sheep which became noted throughout New Zealand. He also bought part of the Milton property adjoining and about 1890 built a new homestead on the property which he called "Waipuna," now in possession of the Stephens family. The other son, Frederick, rented Mincheners' property bordering Lake Ellesmere, consisting of about 800 acres.

In 1875 my father, Charles, married and went to manage Wai-iti, a property situated on the bank of the Eyre River about twenty miles west of Christchurch and belonging to the Hon. J. T. Peacock. Here my eldest brother Percy, John, and sister, Ethel Rose, were born. I was born in Christchurch in 1881, and in 1882 we went to live at Waipapa, a property of 1,500 acres which we leased from the Hon. J. T. Peacock and afterwards made freehold. This property, which was on the north bank of the Eyre River, lay opposite Wai-iti, and consisted of a large area of good wheat land running out into lighter ground on the northern side next the Kaiapoi-Oxford

railway line. Swannanoa was the railway station, which was about a mile from the homestead. The name Swannanoa being taken from the adjoining property which was once owned by one called Yankee Brown, who came from America.

Waipapa had been previously owned by Captain Wood, who had built the homestead and laid out the garden which was planted with a great variety of trees, the name Waipapa being given to the place by my father as there was evidently a wet season at the time he inspected it with a considerable amount of water lying about, and being a Maori scholar he thought the name Waipapa or "watery flat" a suitable one.

This then was the scene of our boyhood for thirteen years until we took a house in Christchurch, from where we boys attended school at Christ's College. During these thirteen years times were hard, with fat lambs at only five shillings per head and wool worth sixpence to eightpence per pound. all pocket money had to be earned by hard work, and the mere pittance that we got in a week would not keep a modern youth going one day. One way we had of earning money was by bird-nesting,—the Road Board in those days used to pay twopence per dozen for sparrows' eggs and fourpence for linnets' and blackbirds' eggs. On Saturdays, my eldest brother and I used to set off with our lunch and birds' egg tins to the Eyre River bed, where the large gorse bushes were the nesting places for these birds. Frequently we came home with from twelve to eighteen dozen eggs for our day's work.

The river bed was our hunting ground, and when the egg season was over we wandered far afield with the dogs hunting for rabbits or setting snares for the hares which used to come into the young wheat from the shelter of the river-bed.

Later on, when we were old enough to shoot, I had my first gun when I was twelve, we aspired to greater things and occasionally were lucky enough to get a pheasant or duck, which were both plentiful in those days. Grey duck came in hundreds when the creeks were full after a wet season and the wheat stubble provided excellent feeding grounds for them. Occasionally a few Paradise duck put in an appearance also. About that time the Californian quail began to show up in the river-bed, and numerous wood-hen or weka could be heard giving their shrill cry, usually before rain. I have seen a weka hen with ten or twelve little chicks following her on more than one occasion among the gorse bushes.

As soon as the stoats and weasels were liberated in the 'nineties these birds began to disappear, and about the end of the century, 1900 to 1903, they were completely wiped out.

On one occasion during a very dry season, when everything was bone dry and the grass burnt up with the hot sun, we were on a hunting trip well up the river-bed, opposite the property of Mr. Marmaduke Dixon, who lived about five miles from us, a rabbit was put up and after a short run took shelter in a dense gorse bush. Naturally, as boys would, we decided to burn him out, so straightway lighted a fire in the bush and waited for Mr. Bunny to come out! He came out all right and so did the fire, which soon got beyond our control although we beat at it frantically with anything we could lay our hands on.

A few chains away was a large gorse hedge, the boundary fence between the adjoining land and the river-bed. In a very short time the flames had spread to this and, before it had burned out, cleaned up a stretch about a mile long.

Naturally, we were greatly concerned with the damage we had been responsible for, and after a consultation as to what was the best thing to do, it was decided that my brother should set off the following morning on horseback with ten shillings of our hard-earned savings and offer it to Mr. Dixon to help pay for the damage we had done. Much to our surprise, the money was refunded to us with the addition of half-a-crown, which proved to us that honesty is the best policy.

In 1886, on my fifth birthday my mother died, leaving my father with a family of four, the youngest boy, Guy, being only thirteen months old. My sister was only nine at the time, and this great blow came at a time when a mother was required most. Housekeepers and governesses were the order of the day for years after, but they could never fill the place of a good mother, and those were indeed hard years for us all.

Although only five, I can well remember the day when the funeral took place. Heavy rain was falling and all the creeks and rivers were running high. My mother was laid to rest in the churchyard at Prebbleton, and as there were very few covered-in vehicles in those days, the Hon. J. T. Peacock very kindly sent his groom with the closed-in carriage to take us children to our Uncle John's at Merlwood, near Prebbleton, where we stood at the window and watched the procession go past in the pouring rain.

On a recent visit to the churchyard after over sixty years, the stone still stands, only with the addition of two more names, that of my great-aunt, Mrs. Parker, and Aunt Ella, the second wife of John Overton, his first wife, who was a Miss Frankish, having died many years before.

When I was about six years of age, the Queen's Jubilee of fifty years on the throne was celebrated. As Kaiapoi was our nearest centre where celebrations were to be held, my father took us there as a treat. I can well remember being thrilled by the presence of the soldiers in their scarlet coats and the playing of the band, but what particularly drew my attention was an old Maori who had lost one eye in the Maori War. He was dressed in the Native style with his large mat round his shoulders reaching to his knees. His feet were bare and in his hand, which protruded from the folds of his mat across the chest, he held a beautiful greenstone mere. The grim old face was heavily tattoed from the top of his forehead to the chin, and as a small boy I stood spellbound before him gazing at the old warrior. Another familiar figure on the platform of the Kaiapoi railway station was an old Crimean veteran called McGary, who always wore his medals pinned on his breast.

III.

DROUGHT

About 1891 and 1892, one of the driest seasons that Canterbury has had was experienced. All the creeks and small rivers dried up, wells had to be deepened, pipes sunk for water, and windmills were erected in many places. Usually in a normal season water could be obtained by sinking a well or driving a pipe, on which a pump was attached, at from fifteen to twenty feet, and on occasions after heavy rain, when the River Eyre was running full, I have seen the water in an open well, where we used to draw water with a windlass and bucket, within four feet of the surface.

During the dry spell we engaged a well-sinker and had to go down fifty-two feet before we obtained water for supplying the house, and while this work was going on it was my job to drive four miles to the deep well at Wai-iti with the horse and buggy and four oil drums of four gallons each to keep the household supplied with water.

One day on the way for a load of water I met the mother of eight children carrying two buckets of water to her home after a journey of two miles to the well, the water from which was pumped by a windmill.

These hardships with the shortage of water for stock started settlers thinking, with the result that the Waimakariri-Ashley Water Supply Board was formed, and eventually water races were constructed and a continual supply of running water brought in from the sources of permanent streams nearer the hills.

One of the leading men in this movement was Mr. Marmaduke Dixon, of Eyrewell. Mr. Dixon held a large area of light land extending from the north bank of the Waimakariri to the south bank of the Eyre River, where the land was of a better class. His idea was to flood the light land with muddy water when the river was at its height, thus covering the surface with a fine silt. When the waters subsided, grass seed and clover was scattered over the surface which provided an excellent seed bed.

As a boy I walked over a large area of this ground with Mr. Dixon, jun., and gained first-hand knowledge of the improvement that had taken place.

Of course, on the heavier classes of soil, flooding was not resorted to, but a system of small races two or three feet wide were constructed and used principally for a drinking supply for stock. The effect of this water supply scheme was to make farmers practically assured of a permanent supply of water and relieve them of a great deal of anxiety.

IV.

WHEAT GROWING

With the low price of sheep prevailing in the early 'eighties and 'nineties, fat lambs fetching only five shillings per head and it being difficult often to sell sound-mouth ewes for more than their boiling down price, I have heard my father say he had difficulty in obtaining a shilling a head for a line of sound-mouth merino ewes at the Ragiora fair. Attention was turned to growing wheat.

Large areas of ground were turned over, and it was a common sight to see two or three hundred acres of golden grain waving in the field.

On Waipapa, the practice was followed of cropping under the share system. That is, the owner of the property let the land to the tenant, who generally had a family of good strong sons, and they did all the work of cultivation, sowing, reaping and harvesting, taking two-thirds or three-fourths of the proceeds as arranged, the owner retaining the balance. In the case of a sixty bushel crop of wheat, which was fairly common, on a fourths basis the owner received fifteen bushels for the use of his land, or on a thirds basis he would receive twenty bushels. No manure was sown with the wheat, and, as a great deal of the soil was almost virgin, fairly good results were obtained. The variety of wheat sown was generally Hunter's white and red chaff, Pearl, Velvet Ear and, later, Tuscan. Two crops were generally taken out of the ground and then the contractor sowed out the paddock into grass, the owner finding the seed.

In many cases more than two crops were taken off the same ground until the land became so impoverished that it took years to recover, and not until more recent times, when a systematic and rotational practice of farming was introduced with the application of lime and manures was the land brought back to a high state of fertility.

The heavier classes of land did not suffer to the same extent as in the Kaiapoi district, where large crops of beans, peas and mangolds were grown after the wheat, which kept it in better heart with the nitrogen-producing qualities of these crops and made it more suitable for continuous cultivation.

Large quantities of wheat at this time were shipped to Great Britain, much of it going in sailing vessels. On one occasion I can remember having tea with Captain Frampton on the sailing ship Earl of Roseberry, which was loading wheat for London. A novelty to us boys was some Danish butter which was on the cabin table, and from what I can remember it was of excellent quality.

About this time, 1889, there was a big strike on the wharves and a call was made for labour from the country. Most of the young men from the country were not going to see their wheat held up, so numbers volunteered to load the ships and flocked to the ports until peace once more was restored and the ships loaded.

Stacking was a great art in those days of wheat growing, the practice being to leave the crop in stook for about a fortnight after it was cut and stacking, or, as it is called in Otago, leading-in operations commenced.

In some cases threshing was done from the stook, drays being employed carting the sheaves to the threshing mill where it was forked off to the feeder, but generally the practice was to put the crop into the stack, where it was safe from any rain or rough weather which might damage the grain. In a good stack, the drying-out process was carried on and the grain, if left for a month or six weeks, became harder and more matured for making into flour.

I have seen as many as forty-five stacks of wheat in a paddock of three hundred acres, and with the threshing mills going until ten or eleven o'clock at night the field presented a hive of industry.

There was no forty-hour week in those days and men were willing to work long hours until the grain was safely in the bag.

A gang of stackers consisted of one stacker and a crow on the stack, one man forking in the field, and two or sometimes three drays carting in to stack. The hours worked were generally from seven o'clock in the morning to eight or nine o'clock at night, with stoppages of one hour for dinner and about a quarter of an hour for lunches in the morning and afternoon. One can imagine that full justice was done to the evening meal, whether it was at eight or nine o'clock after knock-off time. The men with the drays had to attend to their horses and feed them before turning in.

For general harvesting and the above class of work, speaking as one who started as a crow and finished up as a stacker, we received from ninepence to one shilling per hour.

When the crops were ripe it was an anxious time for the farmer, as a heavy north-west wind could do an immense amount of damage in a few hours by shaking the ripe grain. I knew of one case where a crop of Dun oats was completely lost in a nor'-west gale that lasted for three days.

One can easily understand why long hours had to be worked to save the profit that was due after months of hard work and patient waiting for the ripening of the crop.

V.

EARLY SETTLERS

Perhaps before going any further, some mention might be made of the early residents of the locality.

As I have already stated, Wai-iti was owned by the Hon. J. T. Peacock, and while speaking of him I might relate a little anecdote which happened when that hon. gentleman was president of the Canterbury Club in Christchurch.

On a visit by the celebrated humorist, Mark Twain, to Christchurch, the members of the Club decided to make him a presentation of an emu's egg, which had been suitably engraved, to commemorate his visit, Mr. Peacock making the presentation. In rising to reply, Mark Twain stated that he had seen some wonderful things during his lifetime, but he had experienced the most wonderful sight to-night—that was an emu's egg laid before him by a Peacock.

The managers of Wai-iti were W. J. Webb, who afterwards managed Springbank, then his brother, A. J. Webb, both old Christ's College boys, and who, with another brother, E. R. Webb, assisted as pall-bearers at my mother's funeral in 1886.

Eyrewell was owned by Mr. Marmaduke Dixon, who was one of the early pioneers of Canterbury, coming out in 1852. He took up a large area of land on the north bank of the Waimakariri and built his homestead near the bank of the Eyre River. He was elected a member of the Provincial Council and continued to sit in that body till the provinces were abolished in 1876. Eyrewell contained a large area of light land covered with manuka scrub, which has been planted with trees and is now a valuable asset. Mr. Dixon's eldest son, Marmaduke, was one of the founders of the Alpine Club and did considerable exploring in the Southern Alps, being one of the first to climb Mount Cook.

In 1890, in company with Mr. G. Mannering, he paddled his canoe down the Tasman River and down Pukaki lake and river to the Waitaki River. Mr. Dixon, sen., died in 1895, leaving his son to carry on the management of the estate, a large part of which is still in possession of the family.

Swannanoa homestead was first taken up by Yankee Brown and I think later was occupied by the Merton family. In 1881, it came into the hands of Mr. Francis Kelly, who farmed about eight hundred acres on the north bank of the Eyre River and west of the two-chain road.

HOMESTEAD OF SIR JOHN HALL.
Built in the Early 'Fifties of Last Century.

[*See page 37*

ST. LEONARDS, AUGUST, 1904.

[*See page 39*

WAI-ITI HOMESTEAD, ABOUT 1888.

BALMORAL HUNT, AUGUST, 1904.

[*See page 39*

The house was surrounded by extensive plantations and as boys, with the permission of Mr. Kelly, we used to go bird-nesting among these trees. The garden contained a fine orchard of cherry trees and in the season when the cherries were ripe we were generally told to help ourselves, an offer of which we always made full use. A fine cock pheasant took up his abode in this garden and Mr. Kelly threatened to cut off my head and make it into a football if I shot the bird. Needless to say the bird was not disturbed.

The settlers along the railway line in the 'eighties and 'nineties were Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd and family, who kept the Swannanoa Post Office, and Messrs. Grant and Ward. The railway hands were Messrs. Head, Richardson, G. Blackmore and A. Fisher. Michael Ronan lived close to the station on a small farm he leased from my father. On the two chain road were the Daly family and back of that road, a short distance, were two bachelor brothers, Messrs. Thomas and Fred. Hyde.

Coming to the Tram Road in an easterly direction towards Mandeville was the school and church, the schoolmasters being Mr. Dalby and, later, Mr. Silvester. By the way, Mr. Dalby, who was a rather highly-strung individual, always carried a revolver in his pocket. Whether he thought he was coming among savages or not I could not say, but as far as I knew he never had occasion to use the weapon.

Next below the church lived the Atkinson family, and on the opposite side of the road, at Milton Grange, Mr. and Mrs. John Winter with their family of five sons and three daughters. Mr. Winter came to New Zealand in the ship *Lancashire Witch*, in 1863, and settled at Swannanoa in 1865, where he and his sons went in largely for wheat growing.

Coming further east were the White family, who also went in for wheat growing, and then Mrs. Burgin, one of the oldest residents of the district. Her son, Thomas Burgin, had his home close by at the Crosby farm, where he farmed five hundred acres, and with his brother, Arthur, owned the local threshing mill. Mr. Thos. Burgin came out to New Zealand with his parents on the ship *Cameo* in 1860, and carried on the farm on his own account after his father's death in 1878. Other residents were the Burts and Elliots.

To the north and west of Swannanoa lay the Springbank estate, taken up by Mr. Robert Chapman in the early 'fifties. This estate, which originally consisted of fifteen thousand acres, was divided among the sons after Mr. Chapman's death

about 1882, the homestead going to Edward; the part called Lowland Lees, of three thousand seven hundred acres, to Robert. Walter made his homestead near West Eyreton on a block he called the Ranch, and Arthur took a block joining the tram road, which he called Northwood.

Fine homesteads were built on these blocks and extensive plantations were put in, which gave great shelter from the strong north-west winds which swept across the plains without interruption until shelter belts were established. Job's plantation, which had been planted in the earlier days of settlement, was a favourite spot for picnic parties and later on, when Lowland Lees was in occupation, many enjoyable gatherings were held there, the great feature of the year being the annual harvest home ball, which was given by Mr. and Mrs. Chapman in their large woolshed and to which celebration all were invited. On occasions, the Brackenfield Hounds used to meet at Springbank and, as hares were numerous, good sport was obtained and a large following usually turned out. The majority of fences were of wire, so the followers were sometimes thinned out by the spills and sometimes the formidable nature of the obstacles they had to face, but there were many straight goers who stuck at nothing to be first in at the kill.

About 1892, Edward Chapman lost his life while on a wild cattle hunting expedition to Mount White. A bullet fired by one of the party glanced off the shoulder of a wild bull, passing through Mr. Chapman's thigh. The wound was bandaged up, but mortification set in and he died in the hut on Mt. White station a few days later. Word was sent to his wife, who rode day and night on horseback with the doctor to try and reach him in time, but they arrived all too late. Mrs. Chapman was left with three children, two boys, the eldest, Wynn, being killed at Ypres in World War I, and the youngest, a daughter, who married Sir Charles Campbell. Robert Chapman and his wife eventually sold Lowland Lees to Mr. Lance, and retired to live at Sumner, where Mr. Chapman died in 1928. Thomas Chapman, the eldest son, who never married, owned Mt. Palm in the Culverden district, lived to a great old age, and died at Christchurch in his 'nineties not many years ago.

Another well-known property in the district was Inglewood, owned by Mr. P. C. Threlkeld. This consisted of heavy land and lay between the Kaiapoi-Rangiora and Kaiapoi-Oxford branches of the railway line in the Ohoka district.

Mr. Threlkeld came to New Zealand in 1854 and acted as overseer for Mr. R. H. Rhodes for nearly six years on his estate at Purau. In 1862, he took up the property at Inglewood, which in those days was just a swamp. Here he founded a flock of English Leicester sheep which later became famous throughout New Zealand and Australia. He also founded a herd of Shorthorn cattle and bred a number of ponies and other horses. As boys, we frequently visited this property on shooting expeditions. Hares were plentiful among the rushes which grew on the marshy ground and a few pheasants were to be found in the plantations.

Many more old residents in the district could be mentioned, but the above were those with whom we were mostly associated.

VI.

PIG HUNTING IN LEES VALLEY

In 1893, my eldest brother left home and went to school at Christ's College. At the end of the term he usually brought home a schoolmate for the holidays, and it was during these vacations that plans were discussed for hunting and shooting expeditions for the next holidays.

So it was arranged that in January, 1895, we would go pig-hunting to Wharfdale or Lees Valley. Lees Valley consisted of a large plain of upwards of thirty thousand acres at the headwaters of the Ashley River, bounded on the west by Mt. White and the Puketeraki range, and on the east by Mt. Richardson and the Glentui Hills. Wharfdale was the old homestead where the manager, Mr. S. Coleman, lived in the early 'sixties when he managed the property for Lee.

Access was obtained by Esk Head, and there was also a bridle track through the bush over Mt. Richardson, where the sheep were brought out for shearing. This route being taken by us being the shorter of the two. The eastern side of this large plain and the slopes of the range was held by the Glentui Station under the management of Mr. John O'Halloran at the time of our visit and, having obtained permission from the manager for our expedition, we set about making preparations for our departure.

The party was made up of four, my eldest brother, P. J. Overton, George Weston, now a well-known solicitor in Christchurch, C. H. Gresson, the grandson of Mr. Justice Gresson, and myself, then a boy of thirteen years.

As the track we were to take over Mt. Richardson was fairly steep, it was necessary for us to take a pack-horse to carry our blankets and other gear,—this horse, along with a pig spear, was kindly lent us by Mr. Marmaduke Dixon, with whom Gresson was staying for his holidays.

My brother was armed with an old muzzle-loading Lee-Enfield rifle, which, by its appearance, might have done duty in the Maori War; Weston took his pig-spear. Gresson had a double-barrel shot-gun loaded with buck shot, and I carried my single-barrel shot-gun with cartridges which I had loaded myself with a heavy charge of powder and buck shot.

On the appointed morning, Gresson arrived with the pack-horse and, having loaded up our spring trap with all our provisions and accoutrements, we set off with a boy to drive us as far as possible, when we transferred our baggage to the pack-horse.

We called in at Glentui Homestead on the way and Mr. O'Halloran gave us a letter to the head shepherd, Tomlinson, who, with five other shepherds, was camped at Wharfdale for the shearing muster.

Everything went well until we got to the end of the road in the bush and we unloaded the cart, sending the boy back on his twenty-mile drive home, telling him to come and meet us the following week at an appointed time.

The pack-horse was loaded up and we had not gone far when rain commenced to fall in torrents; with the steep and slippery hill ahead of us and the rough roots of the trees under which we had to pass, the going was anything but pleasant. However, all things come to an end, and about four o'clock we reached the top of the hill and were amply rewarded for our labours by the magnificent sight that lay before us.

Stretching away to the west was the great plain that lay far below us and the sun, which had now broken through the clouds, shone on the different streams which looked like strips of silver in the distance as they cut their way through the great plain below us.

Following the track down a steep spur we reached the huts and found the six shepherds, with their twenty-five dogs, installed in the main building which had once been the homestead. We were allotted a spare hut close by, and as it was too late to pitch our tent we decided to camp there for the night. As we had not time to collect any bedding that night

we just spread a blanket on the bare floor and turned in four abreast in the one bed. It was not long before we began to realise that we were not the only occupants of the hut, and what with the hard floor and the annoyance of the other occupants which had been left by some dogs, which we found out had previously been shut up in the hut, we had very little sleep that night.

The next morning, after getting advice from the head shepherd where the most likely place for a pig was, we set off in a northerly direction and, after a walk of about two or three miles, we got on the tracks of some pigs and before long I was lucky enough to get a big black sow.

The following day we spent in improving our sleeping quarters and cutting fern and manuka scrub to make a more comfortable bed. That night we turned in full of expectations for a good night's rest, but to our dismay, after we had put the light out, dozens of walking-stick insects came out of the bedding and commenced crawling over our faces. There was nothing else for it but to put up with the creatures so, putting our heads well under the blankets, we made the best of things till the morning.

At the southern end of the valley the Whistler stream flows into the Ashley River and this was the locality of our most exciting chase. From the slopes of a spur we could look out across the plain and spot anything that was out in the open. In this way we sighted a large black boar rooting out in the open about a quarter of a mile away.

As soon as we got within a couple of hundred yards away, the dogs got wind of the pig and made off, the pig making for the river-bed with the dogs hot in pursuit. We followed on and came upon the quarry baled up on a flat in the river-bed among some large matakouri bushes, and approached cautiously to get a shot when the dogs gave us the opportunity; forming a half-circle at about thirty yards distant from the pig and in front of him.

No sooner had his lordship seen us than he made a charge; Weston, who was in the line of attack stood his ground and received the boar on the point of his spear somewhere about the head. As the spear did not penetrate, the shock of impact was like a battering ram and threw the gallant spearman flat on the broad of his back, the pig making off up the side of a steep terrace flanking the river, the dogs still following.

I ran to get a shot as he passed me going at top about thirty yards away and gave him a broadside of buckshot from the single-barrel gun, which just left streaks of white along his side, the skin being too thick for the shot to penetrate.

My brother then came up with the Lee-Enfield and, as the boar slowly climbed along the side of the terrace, made an excellent shot which went in one side and came out of the other, rolling the pig down to the bottom of the terrace. But his lordship was not done yet although the big bullet had gone clean through him. He ran another hundred yards before baling up below a large rock. The shepherd who had accompanied us then took a hand in the chase when he advanced to within ten yards of the pig and fired both barrels in his face.

The only effect this had was to make the boar shake his head and with a loud snort he charged again turning off across the stream, which was dyed red with blood escaping from the wound. He again baled up in some tutu on the other side of the stream and was then finished off with the spear, but not before making vicious attempts to attack the shepherd who gave him the coup de grace.

I think this was the largest pig I had ever seen, and as he had an excellent pair of tusks we drew lots as to who should have them. I was the lucky one and kept the tusks for many years after as a memento of the chase.

Another white boar fell to Gresson's gun that day, and while going out in the morning we had secured some Paradise flappers, which made a sumptuous meal for us after we arrived back at the huts thoroughly tired out.

VII.

CHRIST'S COLLEGE: JANUARY, 1895–99

In January, 1895, my father took a house in Salisbury Street, Christchurch, and we came to town to live, my youngest brother, Guy, and I going to the College, and my sister being educated privately.

My eldest brother obtained a position in the office of the Loan and Mercantile Company, then under the management of Mr. Staveley.

Not being used to mixing with any other boys to any great extent and being educated by a governess, I found school life not the bed of roses I had expected for the first six months. It was not long before I found out I was not the only pebble on the beach. However, being fond of sport and games, I soon found a place in the football and cricket teams and represented the School in the First Fifteen in 1897 and 1898 and the Cricket XI in the same year.

I am afraid I was not of a very scholastic frame of mind, but paid more attention to the sporting side of life, but it was with great pride that I carried off the first prize for French in my Form at the end of my first year at School. Science was my best subject and I was unfortunate to have an attack of measles at the time of examination the last term at school after being top in marks during the term.

On the sports ground I was more successful, winning the Champion Cup in 1898 and putting up a high jump record which stood for forty years.

My four years at College were some of the best years of my life, many associations being formed which one never loses. One forms an affection for some masters which is never forgotten. Our sports master, Mr. J. U. Collins, was one of these and he exerted an influence of lasting duration on most of the boys with whom he came in contact.

It was extraordinary the eccentricities of some of the masters, and I well remember how one gentleman, when calling the roll in the morning, asked: "Any boy absent to stand up." Needless to say he was of Irish extraction. On another occasion I saw the Head going across the quad to his class room with his gown on and a grey bell-topper on his head instead of his mortar board. Those were the days of the cane and many were the devices used to prevent the full effect of the cane being felt. One well-known character used to come with a long muffler stuffed down the back of his trousers, and one morning he left the end showing which was promptly spotted by the master and hauled out to the amusement of the class.

Another ruse was to put an exercise book down the back of the pants and the rattle of the cane when it came in contact made a resounding smack.

All these little incidents are carried through life and one looks back with amusement and happy recollections of the days at school.

VIII.

JANUARY, 1899, RAUMATI.

In 1898 my father purchased a small grazing run of about fifteen hundred acres in the Waikari Valley for my eldest brother from Mr. Peter Hoban. This was part of the Greta Peaks station which was originally part of Stoneyhurst and later purchased by Sanderson and Studholme in 1864. In 1891 the greater part was sold and let by the Government as small grazing runs, Mrs. Studholme retaining the homestead at Greta Peaks with about five thousand acres, under the management of Mr. Ben Coleman. The property, which we called Raumati, was taken over by my brother in 1898 and, as it was decided that I should go on the land, I joined my brother at Raumati in February, 1899.

The price of sheep was very low at the time we took delivery of the property, and my father purchased sheep from Whiterock Station to stock up with at 6/- per head for good half-bred ewes.

The buildings on the place were very primitive and consisted of a cottage of four rooms and a small shed which served the purpose of woolshed, trap shed and any other purpose for which it was required. There was no paint on the buildings and my first job was painting the house. Later on, we put shelter trees and an orchard in and started a vegetable garden.

Coming out of town and away from school, I found the first winter very quiet, our nearest neighbour being about four miles away. We did not see anyone except on bread day, which was once a week, and on that day we had to ride to Tipapa where we picked up our bread, which had been brought from Cheviot by the Cheviot-Amberley coach. The post office was Motonau, which was kept by Mrs. Gibb, that place being about a mile further on. The winter of 1899 was cold and wet with a fall of snow about four inches deep in July. The Waikari River was in high flood on several occasions, and so to be nearer to civilisation and handier for the mail and bread, we shifted to what we called the farm, a small property which lay between the Scargill Creek and the Waikari and only about three miles from the post office.

Here there was a more comfortable house with shelter trees already planted and, being close to the Waikari Valley road, was more handy in every way. The first few years shearing was done at the Greta Peaks shed until later on when a company shed was built by the settlers at Scargill.

In October, 1899, war was declared in South Africa, and in December, after we had finished shearing, my brother voluntered for service with the Second Contingent and left for the camp in Wellington with the two cousins, T. H. Overton and H. O. Stuckey, leaving me to manage the property while he was away.

It was also in this year that a start was made with the construction of the Waipara-Cheviot railway under the supervision of a very able young engineer, Mr. Archey Jack, later to become a Brigadier-general in World War I. He and his staff, which consisted of E. H. Rodney, W. Simpson, Maddern, Clav. Martin and Nelson Foster and a cook whose name I have forgotten, camped at the foot of the Raumati Road. These men were a welcome addition to our quiet locality and, apart from the good work they were doing, provided entertainment for us on many occasions.

Later on I joined this staff, and my first job was to strip off and go into the Hurunui River, which was then in flood, with a rope round my waist to see how far the rock went out into the river for the foundations of the railway bridge.

After being away for about ten months, my brother was invalided back from South Africa with enteric fever, but after a few months at home to recuperate he obtained a commission in the 7th Contingent and went into camp again in March, 1901. After serving with the 7th Contingent, he joined the 9th with the rank of Captain, being twice mentioned in despatches and receiving the Queen's Medal with two clasps and the King's Medal with one clasp.

On returning home in October, 1902, he returned to Raumati, and in 1903 married Hilda, daughter of Reginald Foster.

About 1905, when Greta Peaks was sold, another fifteen hundred acres on the Hurunui River was added to Raumati. Considerable improvements were added to the property, and the estate is now carried on by R. C. Overton, who runs a fine flock of sheep and some good Hereford cattle.

Our nearest market for sheep in those days was at Amberley, about thirty miles away, and the route taken was a short cut across Glenmark, coming out at the iron gate at the head of the Omihi Valley. I remember on one occasion leaving with a mob of lambs with my brother. I took the horse and trap around by the road while he went across country. At night we slept under the trap and boiled the billy on the roadside close by the accommodation paddock. Later on, when

the Omihi Valley became settled, we generally camped at Mr. Coles the first night and made Waipara the next night.

In 1900 the upper end of Glenmark in the Waikari Valley was all open country, being in charge of an old shepherd, Thompson, who had his hut on the bank of the Scargill Creek.

One morning I had occasion to visit Thompson, who was busy making a batch of bread. While I was there he was preparing to put it in the oven and removed it from under the blankets in his bed where he had placed the dough to keep it warm and make it rise. I have no doubt the batch was a great success. This old shepherd only went to Christchurch once a year, and that was to see the Grand National, which he called the Grand Natural.

IX.

GRETA PEAKS

In 1901 I took a job as shepherd at Greta Peaks, Ben Coleman taking over the management of Raumati with Greta.

After two years of baching, this came as a welcome change, although during those two years we managed to turn out some wonderful dishes. On one occasion we had two or three of the surveyors up for dinner on Sunday. I went to special trouble and to celebrate the occasion spread the only white cloth we had on the dinner table. The menu consisted of roast leg of mutton with vegetables, and a rice pudding and stewed prunes to follow. In dishing up the meat I placed the large meat dish on the table holding the roasting dish with a cloth in my hand. While in the act of lifting the leg of mutton out of the pan, it slipped off the fork and, with a splash, fell back in the pan, sending all the hot fat flying in all directions over the nice white cloth.

These and many other incidents are all part of a bachelor's experience when being initiated into the art of cooking.

In 1900 the Amuri Mounted Rifles were formed and, with Ben Coleman and Lance Lane, of Eastcott, I rode over to Culverden to join up. We were duly sworn in, and Captain R. A. Chaffey was appointed O.C., with the following officers:—Lieuts. Douglas, Waikari; M. Bethell, Pahau Pastures; Wyndham Gray, Hawarden; with Fred Lance, of Horsley Downs, as Hon. Veterinary Surgeon, and Dr. Little, of Culverden, as surgeon.

The first camp was held on the bank of the Pahau River beside a big plantation the same year as the company was formed. Field exercises were carried out, Sergeant-major George Rhodes, of the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry, came up and put us though rifle exercises and foot drill.

The permanent staff-sergeant-major attached to us was an old Imperial man by the name of Evans. Sports were held and competitions of numerous sorts. One event which I was lucky enough to win was a two hundred yards race, the competitors running in full equipment, that is, with boots, spurs and leggings, with greatcoat on and carrying a rifle. Trooper Ted Milan, who by the way was hot favourite, coming in second.

The Camp was inspected by Colonel Gordon, who was then O.C. of the Canterbury Military District. One competition which aroused great interest was that for the Lance Shield, and on April 8th, 1901, the final round was fired, the competitors having to jump a wide ditch on horseback, then gallop about three hundred yards, dismounting and firing at three different ranges, the distance being judged by the competitor. This competition was won by Sergt. Pat Curran, and the final six, among which I was included, received a silver medal.

On February 8th, 1901, a contingent of Imperial Troops under the command of General Sir Evelyn Wood visited Christchurch and the Amuri Mounted Rifles had orders to proceed to Christchurch to receive the troops. On February 7th we trucked our horses at Waikari, arriving in Christchurch at 2 a.m. in the morning. Next day we paraded at the railway station and handed over our horses to the newly-arrived troops, while we marched on foot to the parade ground at Hagley Park. The Imperial troops presented a fine sight with their brilliant uniforms, and especially those of the Horse Guards, which shone in the bright sunshine.

The next day we entrained again for Waikari, and when the train was leaving there a rather foolish act was committed by one of the troopers, who placed a large hook, that was on a wire rope attached to the guard's van, in the picket fence near the platform. The result was that a length of the fence was pulled up when the train moved off.

After six months at Greta Peaks, I decided to have a look round the North Island, but before leaving the district I put in a few weeks at Tipapa with Mr. H. Acton-Adams. During my stay there I helped with the mustering and crutching, this

being one of the few sheds where machines had been installed up to that date.

While there a billiard table was installed, and in the evenings we spent a good deal of our time in trying conclusions. Altogether my few weeks at Tipapa have left pleasant recollections. The head shepherd at Tipapa was McVean, and one other name I remember is that of W. Tulley, the fencer. Neighbours in the district whom we visited were the Manneringsat Greta Vale and the Sawtells at Pinaki, both on the Cheviot Road.

X

NORTH ISLAND

On June 22nd, 1901, the Duke and Duchess of York arrived in Christchurch and a parade of 12,000 troops was held in Hagley Park, where the Duke held an inspection. The day was fine and everything went off well, the town being beautifully decorated by arches across the streets and flags flying in all directions. Perched up in a tree in Hagley Park I had an excellent view of the whole proceedings. The Duke, who later became King, was accompanied by the Prince of Teck, and passed close by the tree where I was stationed.

The following week I left for the North Island by the s.s. *Tarawera*, then one of the Union Company's boats plying between Lyttelton and Wellington and later to become a store ship at the Norwegian whaling base at Stewart Island, where I saw her in 1929.

On arriving at Wellington I took the train for Ormandville, where I had relatives with whom I intended to stay. These people, the Chadwicks, had recently come out from Home and taken up a large block of bush country at a place called Wetikura, a few miles east of Ormandville. As luck would have it, Mr. Chadwick happened to be in the same train and on arrival at Ormandville, as we only had one horse, we took turns riding and walking through the bush for several miles till we reached the homestead, which was then in the making.

Tradition has it that a valuable collection of greenstone had been hidden in a limestone cave by the Maoris, who occupied a pa called Te Reinga O mahura in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. When this pa was attacked and captured by raiding parties from the north, all the valu-

ables had been hidden in the caves, so in company with the eldest son, Ralph, we set off to explore. The treasure hunt, of course, was a failure, but the pa, which occupied a small hill and was approached on one side by a leading spur and on the other side by a steep face terminating in a straight cliff up to the edge of the pa, proved of some interest.

In poking about in the loose soil at the foot of the steep face I unearthed two complete skeletons, one of which had a perfect set of teeth. The leg bones were charred by fire, whether by cooking or otherwise I could not tell, but the position of the two skeletons gave the impression that they had been thrown over the edge of the cliff and had remained there since the slaughter and capture of the pa took place, probably eighty or ninety years previously.

A large part of this country was then in heavy bush, but when I passed through the district in 1941 not a stump was to be seen.

Going on to Napier and Auckland, I spent several months looking round the Waikato and North Auckland districts, but the bush country and cleared ground with its stumps never appealed to me, and I decided that there was no place like the tussock hills of the South Island.

XI.

GLENMARK

About 1898, Glenmark, which at one time was one of the finest runs in Canterbury, began to be settled. This splendid property was taken up in the early 'fifties by G. H. Moore, and comprised over eighty thousand acres of some of the best sheep country in Canterbury.

The beautiful homestead was burnt down in the early 'nineties and the expensive furniture and decorations which had been imported from Paris were all destroyed.

The Waipara-Culverden railway ran along the western side, and when the Waipara-Cheviot line was opened in 1902 to Scargill, this traversed the eastern boundary up the Omihi Valley.

Some of the first settlers to take up land in the Omihi Valley were Messrs. R. B. Luscombe, George Clephane, Thomas Jones and George Cole. Others followed on, and the line passing through these properties considerably enhanced their value.

The first sod of the Waipara-Cheviot railway was turned by the then Prime Minister, the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, in 1900. The occasion was celebrated by a large banquet held in a marquee at Waipara. Through some unavoidable delay, the banquet was postponed, and when the appointed day arrived the poultry, which had evidently been prepared for the original date, was, on account of hot weather, showing signs of coming to life again.

This, however, did not prevent the Prime Minister making a speech which lasted fully an hour. The first sod was duly turned, a bottle of champagne was broken, and everything was set for the construction of the new line.

The Moa.

About 1865 Glenmark became famous through the discovery of large deposits of moa bones, which had been unearthed from a large swamp. Sir Julius Von Haast, who was then in charge of the Canterbury Museum, obtained a large quantity of these bones and had skeletons set up in the Museum, and by exchanges with the museums of Europe and other countries largely built up the exhibits in the Christchurch museum until it became one of the best in the Southern Hemisphere.

Since then, numerous skeletons of these remarkable birds have been unearthed in different localities, notably the Te Aute swamps in the North Island, Pyramid Valley, near Waikari; Waimate Gorge; the Enfield swamp, near Oamaru, and many other places; the latest discoveries being made a few weeks ago from caves in the Forest Hill district in Southland.

Great controversy has ranged round the date of extinction, some scientists maintaining that the birds were extinct before the arrival of the main fleet of the Maoris about 1350.

Possibly, if these scientists had further explored the hinterlands of Otago and Southland before making their deductions, they might have arrived at the same conclusion as Mr. Lindsay Buick, who, in those excellent books of his, has placed on record the findings after careful and very thorough investigations. In his book, "The Mystery of the Moa," in describing the "very best specimen found," he concludes with the following statement: "They were the remains of a bird which, in all probability, was alive in 1820 or 1830. This bird had the head complete, skin unbroken, even tongue preserved. Eyeballs in dry state with portions of neck complete

and windpipe visible." Also one might quote Sir James Park, who said: "It seems now to be beyond dispute that the moa had lived down into what might be called historical times."

In 1948, when on a visit to Manapouri, Mr. Murrell told me that he had sat on his horse on the bank of the Waiau River in company with his father, who pointed out the spot on the opposite side of the river where a live moa had been seen in the 'sixties of last century by one of the station hands, afterwards called "Jimmy the Moa," who came running into the homestead in a great state of excitement stating that he had seen the bird.

On another occasion, two prospectors who had finished their evening meal and were sitting by the fire when a moa appeared on the top of the terrace and stood looking at them for a short time. In the morning they looked for the bird and found its footprints in the soft ground close by.

More recently, in 1920, Mr. Charles Watson, of Centre Bush, with others who were working with him, came across a cave in the face of the hill at Limehills in which was a moa's nest with three eggs in it, two of which were broken and the third was unfortunately broken in removal.

Again, in 1948, Mrs. Waitiri told me that her grandfather, Topi Patuki, who died about 1900 at the age of eighty-one, had often spoken of the moa and described the feathers as being like the kiwi's, only twice as long, and when watching a sheep being killed on Ruapuke Island he made the remark that the sheep's leg was the same shape as the moa's.

Mrs. Topi Patuki, who was a Parata from Karitane, could also give the name of the place where the last moa was killed on the banks of the Oreti River.

Tommy Chaslands, the whaler, claimed to have seen the flesh of the moa and thought it was human flesh as stated by Buick.

The Rev. Richard Taylor records in his book, Te Ika a Maui, how the Government interpreter, Mr. Meurant, stated to him that in 1823 he saw the flesh of the moa at Molyneux Harbour. The Natives told him the flesh of the bird he had seen was from a dead one which they had accidentally found, but that they were still to be found further inland.

Thus, with all this evidence to hand, it seems highly probable that if further investigations had been made the claims that the moa was extinct before the main fleet of canoes about 1350 A.D. could never have been substantiated.

XII.

AMBERLEY

Our nearest doctor was at Amberley, about twenty-five miles from Greta Peaks, and if anything went wrong it was a case of a twenty-five mile ride for help. It was my lot to have to leave at twelve o'clock one night on such a ride.

I was at Greta Peaks at the time with Ben Coleman and an addition to the family was expected, so I had the horse saddled and ready in the stable in case the doctor was required.

About nine o'clock the new arrival made her appearance, but complications set in and the old nurse thought she had better have the doctor. So, setting off in the dark, I took the short cut through the open country on Glenmark. It was too dark to see any track, so I just gave the mare her head. About 4 a.m. I roused up the doctor and he very soon was out and away up the road in his gig. I went along to the hotel to see if I could get a bed and have an hour or two's sleep. Knocking on the door was of no avail, the proprietor thinking I was a drunk, so I tried throwing gravel up at the bedroom window. This very soon brought an irate head out of the window wanting to know what the h—l I was doing at that hour of the night waking everyone up. He, however, let me in after I had explained and I secured a few hours' sleep. On the way home I met the doctor coming back with everything all right.

Amberley was a fine district and, being the centre of a large area of good country, became the chief locality for stock sales between Culverden and Addington, the annual ewe fair being one of the great attractions of the year.

Some of the early day settlers were still alive in 1900, and well-known figures at the saleyards were Mr. Courage, of Seadown; Mr. S. Coleman, of Riverside; who came to the colony in 1856 and was for some time manager of the Wharfdale station for Mr. Lee. Later he joined his cousin, Mr. George Douglass, of Broomfield, another very old settler, who had the second sheep brand registered in Canterbury.

Others were Mr. G. B. Starkey, of Brackenfield, who founded the Brackenfield Hunt Club in 1883; Mr. Innes, of Mt. Brown, and others with whom I did not come in contact.

In 1948 I attended the Amberley ewe fair. None of these old identities were left, and in some cases their sons, who had remained in the district and carried on, were old men.

XIII.

ROCKWOOD

In 1902, in company with my father, we inspected several blocks of country that were still for sale on Glenmark, but as there was no fencing and no buildings on the land we considered the price asked too high for the unimproved property, so in March, 1903, in company with my cousin, T. H. Overton, we purchased the Rockwood run of about eight thousand acres, carrying four thousand sheep, from J. H. Wallace.

Rockwood was taken up by Mr. Henry Phillips in the early 'fifties, the homestead being built on the edge of the bush near the headwaters of the Hororata River. Another early settler in that locality was Dr. Richards, who had a house at Vale Head at the foot of Rocky Hill. His cow bale was in between two large rocks close by the site of the old house. A small patch of bush a short distance off on the bank of the Hororata is still known at Pill's Bush after the doctor.

Later, the Rockwood homestead passed from the Phillips' family to a Mr. Peacock, Mr. T. A. Phillips making his homestead at the Point about four miles away. This fine property was carried on by Mr. Phillips until shortly before his death, when it was sold to Mr. George Gerrard, who subdivided it and resold it in different blocks, Mr. Phillips retaining the homestead with about one thousand acres, where he remained until his death in 1930.

From Mr. Peacock, the Rockwood property passed to Mr. Peter Cunningham, and then to Mr. Goodwin, who occupied the homestead and about twelve hundred acres freehold, the leasehold being taken up by J. H. Wallace.

About 1902, a wealthy Englishman, Mr. Lamb, came out from the Old Country and bought the freehold for his son, Mr. C. O. B. Lamb, who again sold to Mr. Samuel Roseveare, whose son, Mr. Lester Roseveare, now resides there.

This fine old homestead, beautifully situated on the fringe of the bush with fish ponds and tennis lawn surrounded by native and English trees of a great variety, made a fine setting among the hills.

The view from the front verandah looked out on Rocky Hill, a picturesque hill with patches of bush on the sides broken up with rocky ridges running up towards the top. A

short distance from the house, higher up the stream that fed the fish ponds and on the edge of the bush, was a little cemetery, where the deceased members of the Phillips' family were buried in the early days.

As the woolshed was on the freehold, during our occupation of the leasehold, we had the use of the men's huts and sheepyards until the end of our lease in 1907; our homestead was nearer Glenroy.

During the 1904 shearing we had rather an exciting time with one of the shearers, who went off his head.

As I was going to the woolshed after tea one evening to put the sheep in ready for the morning, he came to me in a great state of excitement and asked me to make out his will for him in which he wished to leave everything to me. On asking him what was wrong, he said that someone was after him who wished to kill him, and he wished to have everything in order before he died.

As I could see he was in a state of great agitation, I took him back to the hut where the men were sleeping and told them to keep an eye on him.

The woolclasser and I were sleeping in a small cottage on the edge of the bush about fifty yards from the men's hut. About daylight the next morning the door opened and in walked the lunatic in a highly excitable frame of mind wanting to be driven over to Methven to gain police protection from this man who was going to kill him, stating that he narrowly escaped the night before while the would-be murderer had stopped to sharpen his knife.

The woolclasser, Roberts, then showed great presence of mind and told the excited man to sit down and light his pipe; this he at once did, with the result that in a few minutes he had calmed down considerably, so I told him to go back to his hut and I would come down and see him in a few minutes.

Hurriedly putting my clothes on, I went to the men's quarters only to find the man had disappeared. Our next move was to send word to the nearest police constable, who was stationed at Coalgate about fifteen miles away, while all hands searched the bush at the back of the house. After some time we found tracks of a man's bare feet in a patch of sand in the bed of the creek. Taking his boots off, he had walked up the creek in the water to try and hide all trace of his movements.

All day the search was carried on without result and we waited till the next day hoping he would turn up again, the constable returning to Coalgate. About ten o'clock the next morning word came over from the Point that our man had turned up there, so, selecting one of the biggest of the shearers, a young fellow called Paton, to come with me, we put a rope in the spring cart and set off for the Point, where we found his lordship sitting on the doorstep of the chaff house with his bare feet. Fortunately, with a little humoring, he came away without any trouble, and we eventually got him down to the lockup at Coalgate. The next day he was taken to Christchurch, where I had to give evidence before the doctor, who told me he might have become dangerous at any moment and turned on us.

About six months after I visited him at the Sunnyside Asylum, where he seemed happily housed and had grown a big beard, being employed in the milking shed.

XIV.

SHEEP DROVING

The sheep on Rockwood Run were practically all merinos and, as we had taken over the stock with the property, we carried on the policy of our predecessor, Wallace, which was to cross the merino ewe with the Lincoln ram, selling all the lambs to the farmers on the plains to make up their flocks of halfbreds, which they again crossed with English Leicester or black-faced rams, for the purpose of breeding fat lambs for the export trade. This, of course, necessitated the buying in of fresh sound-mouth merino ewes every year to keep up our flock—a policy that we found out was wrong.

The sheep bred on the country is always the best doer, and we found the bought ewes, coming on to strange country, did not settle down and there was consequently a poor lambing the first year and a heavy death rate. Had we decided to keep our halfbred ewe lambs and build up a flock from them, it would have paid us far better, as later events showed.

The winter of 1903, our first winter of occupation, was one of the worst since the heavy fall of snow in 1895. After a fine spell of weather in June, the change came suddenly and we woke one morning to find fifteen inches of snow on the

ground; frosts followed, and the mantle of white covered everything for a week before bare patches of tussock appeared on the sunny faces.

Other light falls followed later in the winter with the result that when spring came the sheep were poor. At the shearing muster, when the tallies were made up, we found we were eight hundred short.

This was a severe set-back for the first year, and to make up for our death rate we bought a fine line of one thousand sound-mouth merino ewes off Birch Hill Station in Marlborough, which were to be delivered at Hanmer Springs for 13/6 per head.

About a week before the date of delivery I set off with a horse and gig and my dogs to meet the sheep. The journey took four days, and when I arrived at Hanmer, as the sheep were not there, I spent a couple of days enjoying the warm baths and seeing the sights.

On the way up, I picked up a mate at Culverden, and after we had taken delivery of the mob, we set out on our return journey.

The first night we made the Waiau Ferry and stayed at the accommodation house, where now stands the fine homestead of Mr. Godfrey Rutherford.

By a piece of bad luck we lost three sheep the first day, when they fell over the top of the high cutting on the approach to the bridge. These were skinned and used for dog tucker on our journey.

With some days fine and some wet, by steady droving, grazing our mob quietly along the roads where the feed was good, we arrived at Rockwood after eighteen days' travelling with only about four sheep short.

One rather amusing incident happened as we approached Waikari. An old friend, Mr. Crowley, met us on the road and offered a paddock for the sheep and a bed for ourselves for the night, an offer which we were very glad to accept.

On arrival at the house, Mrs. Crowley invited us in for afternoon tea. As we had expected to be coming into decent company, I had changed my old pants while I was in the gig for a new pair which I had with me. While at afternoon tea I happened to look down, and, to my horror, discovered my shirt tail was hanging out. I buttoned up my coat until I managed to get out and complete my wardrobe.

XV.

SOCIAL LIFE

Our neighbours at Rockwood were Mr. S. Roseveare at the homestead, Mr. George Rutherford at Highpeak, Mr. T. A. Phillips at the Point, Mr. Fred Cordy at Steventon, and the large holding of Sir John Hall at Hororata Station on the south. The latter station carried a flock of about thirty thousand merino and halfbred sheep and was sold to a syndicate and subdivided in 1907.

This fine holding was planted with numerous belts of trees across the plain, which proved valuable shelter for the stock from the heavy nor'-west gales which often swept down from the Rakaia Gorge.

As hares were plentiful, we often had shooting parties across these large plains, eight or ten guns taking part, and usually we bagged one hundred to one hundred and fifty hares.*

Social life in the district for us young people was very interesting, the Point proving the centre of attraction, where large parties gathered during the holidays and various forms of sport were indulged in, including tennis, golf and shooting, with a game of billiards in the evening. In winter when the frosts were heavy, the small lake at Windwhistle was frozen over and skating parties were held on the ice.

These were care-free days, and with the hospitality so generously extended by the good people at the Point, they are days to look back on with many happy recollections. Picnics were also held at the Bealey's at Hororata and Homebush, the beautiful home of the Deans', where enjoyable evenings were spent after a day's shooting over the Homebush Hills.

Cricket and football occupied our Saturday afternoons with matches between the teams of the surrounding districts. Glentunnel being our nearest centre, we joined that team and sometimes journeyed as far as Oxford to play a match.

Hororata also had a team which we frequently met, and many enjoyable games were played. One very keen follower of the game in the Hororata district was Mr. Maffey, who always acted as umpire when we were playing there.

*The manager of the station Duncan Fraser, was a champion shot, and great rivalry was shown at these shoots to see who could obtain top score.

Bert Thorne and F. J. Savill were also prominent members of the Hororata team in those days; the latter owned the old Cordy Estate close to the township, and here we generally finished up in the evening after the match was over.

Tara Ghur, the home of Mr. C. T. Dudley, was originally part of the old Glendore Run, and was taken up by General Davidson, a retired officer of the Indian Army. Mr. Dudley purchased this property in 1901, and the large brick house with its wide verandah was the scene of many pleasant gatherings where hospitality was generously extended to all. Further up the Rakaia Gorge lay Snowdon, the home of Bishop Gerrard, whom I remember as a small boy when once there on a visit.

Then Lake Coleridge, the home of the Murchison family, which included Captain Sinclair, Mr. John Murchison and Mr. Sidney Cartmill. This large holding with its fine homestead on the shores of the lake extended as far as the Glenthorne run, the latter beng practically on the western boundary of Canterbury and the West Coast and also held by the Murchisons.

This was the scene of a wild cattle hunting expedition we had in 1904.

In company with Duncan Murchison and my cousin, H. M. Overton, we set out from Glenthorne with a pack horse to carry our tent and provisions, making our camp on the flat near the Wilberforce River about ten miles from the homestead. The first night as we lay in the tent, we could hear a bull roaring not far distant, and in the morning we rose full of expectations for an exciting time.

We followed the bank of the Wilberforce on the west side of the river, where portions of an old road line could be traced, said to have been formed by the gold diggers in the early days.

About mid-day we reached an old hut near the foot of Brownings Pass, where we decided to have lunch. As no signs of cattle could be seen, we retraced our steps down the river again until we came to the valley of the unknown, where, grazing on a large flat near the edge of the bush, we spotted a mob of about twenty head.

As it was then late in the evening, we decided not to disturb them till the morning, so went back to camp with high hopes for the following day. Early the next morning we returned to the flat where the cattle had been feeding, but no sign of the

mob could be seen until we entered the bush, where we disturbed a fine fat heifer which fell to Duncan's rifle as she jumped up out of a patch of fern where she was lying. Making our way quietly through the bush, we came across a large bull with about four or five cows, one of which had a big calf. These made off on hearing our approach, but not before we secured the bull by several well-directed shots, the cow and calf galloping across the flat with bullets knocking up the dust behind their heels as they escaped into the bush.

Another large white bull, on being disturbed by the shooting, came crashing out from the bush close by, but although hit by two bullets in the shoulder as he dashed past us, he continued his flight until lost sight of among the thick undergrowth.

Several fine slices of rump steak were cut from the heifer, which were much appreciated on our return to the camp.

XVI.

HUNTING IN NORTH CANTERBURY

During the winter, generally in the month of August, the Brackenfield hounds spent a week in the Culverden district. The hounds met at different places during their stay, and at the end of the week the bachelors of the district gave a ball. As I had been one of the bachelors when living in the Waikari Valley, an invitation was sent to me every year while I was at Rockwood by my good friends, the Davisons of St. Leonards.

The first meet I attended was held at Balmoral. We drove over from St. Leonards the evening before and were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. W. Thomson. Balmoral was owned by Captain Dalgety and consisted of about sixty-eight thousand acres carrying thirty-five thousand sheep.

Mr. W. Thomson had been manager for many years and was a well-known figure in North Canterbury. One great feature of the place was the fine four-in-hand team which Mr. Thomson handled with great skill. A natural lover of horses, he kept only the best, his services being frequently in demand as a judge at the shows. As a host, Mr. Thomson was one of the best and there was nothing he enjoyed more than the meet of the hounds at Balmoral.

When we arrived the groom was in readiness, and when all the horses had been bedded down a jolly party gathered

at the big house for the evening meal and afterwards round the piano, where, with songs and laughter, the evening soon passed away.

All the bachelors were put for the night in the old house, where skylarking continued till all hours of the night, and when morning came I'm afraid we had not obtained more than three or four hours' sleep. However, after a good breakfast, we were all ready for the start about ten o'clock.

The hounds were cast off not far from the homestead and very soon picked up the scent of a hare, which made off across the road with a wire fence each side. My mount was a big bay called Honour. The first two fences were easy and were no trouble to him at all, but when we came to cross the road the second fence of plain wire offered a greater obstacle.

On my left was a well-known lady from Pahau on a big chestnut called Peter. We both came at the fence together and the two horses jumped like stags, clearing the top wire without a sound, and away we went across a big tussock flat with the hounds in full cry. The rest of the field had thinned out at the road jump and came trailing along behind. After a run of about half a mile, the hounds made a kill and, being a visitor, I was lucky enough to be handed a pad. After another short run we returned to the house for lunch, to which we all did ample justice.

The next day we met at Rotherham, and after a run in the morning without a kill we met at the Achray woolshed, the property of Mr. A. Macfarlane, where a splendid lunch awaited us. The afternoon proved more exciting—several saddles being emptied at a wire fence when jumping out of a plantation. The mare, Molly, that I was riding, was a fairly safe jumper, but in taking this fence she caught her front legs in a loose wire that had been carried partly out of the fence by the previous horse.

This brought her down on her knees, and in this position she blundered along for some yards before recovering her feet. Fortunately I was able to stick to the pigskin, but it was a close go.

Later in the afternoon we came to a big new fence with a barb wire on top. The hounds had jumped through and were away across the next block. None of the horses would take the fence at first, until the lady from Pahau on her big chestnut, Peter, gave a lead, and, with her husband standing up in

his buggy shouting to his wife not to be so foolsh in accents far from sweet and calm, she showed a clean pair of heels to the rest of the field.

The big event of the week was the ball. Before the new hall was built it was the practice to take over the hotel for the night, dancing being carried out in the large dining room.

Derrett's covered-in drag was hired for the night to take us to and from the dance, a distance of four or five miles. On one occasion there was four inches of snow on the ground, and the girls had to be lifted out of the drag on to the verandah. One small-sized gentleman came forward and offered his arms to a stout governess. Seizing her round the ankles, he lifted he bodily from the vehicle, but, alas, her weight was too much for him and over he went backwards with the lady on top of him in the snow, much to the amusement of the rest of the party.

Culverden in those days was still the headquarters of the wool kings, and on a sale day they foregathered to discuss the affairs of the district.

Familiar figures were W. O. Rutherford, of Montrose; Duncan Rutherford, of Leslie Hills; W. Thomson, manager of Balmoral; D. Macfarlane, Lyndon; A. Macfarlane, of Achray; T. Chapman, Mt. Palm; H. Davison, St. Leonards; W. Macfarlane, Kaiwarra; W. Polhill, manager of the Culverden estate; M. Bethell, Pahau Pastures; R. A. Chaffey, the manager of Highfield for Northcote Bros.

Very few, if any, of these men are left now, their estates having been subdivided and in many cases carried on by their sons and daughters, but they helped to lay the foundation of a prosperous district and built up a great reputation for the high quality of sheep that were in such great demand. At one time it was not uncommon to see eighty thousand sheep yarded at Culverden fair.

XVII.

SUBDIVISION OF ROCKWOOD

In 1906 we received word from the Commissioner of Crown Lands that the run was to be subdivided and put up for ballot at the end of the lease in March, 1907.

This came as a shock to us, as members of the Land Board, who had been up and inspected the country, expressed their disapproval of the subdivision. However, in spite of all our requests for an extension of the lease and offers to improve

the property, it appeared that the policy of the Government was subdivision, right or wrong, and the Commissioner told us that it was as much as his job was worth if he opposed the scheme.

So in March, 1907, we mustered all our sheep off the hills and drove them down to Coalgate saleyards, where they were sold at auction. The year 1906-1907 was one of the driest seasons ever experienced in Canterbury. Grass became burnt up, turnip crops failed, and prices of sheep came tumbling down, until they were almost unsaleable. On February 21st, 1907, at Sir John Hall's clearing sale, beautiful merino ewes sold at from 2/3 to 10/- per head; halfbred ewes 16/- to 17/6, and a fine line of 5,000 well-grown merino lambs went for 5/- per head.

With prices like these for high-class sheep, prospects for our clearing sale looked anything by rosy. Fortunately, a heavy shower came before the sale, but not enough rain fell to make any marked improvement, and on March 1st we obtained the following prices for the chief lines:—

1,650	sound-mouth merino ewes at ..	3/6 per head.
514	two-tooth halfbred ewes	15/-
1,454	halfbred lambs	7/9
350	two and four-tooth merino ewes	8/10
200	merino wethers	5/7

As the above prices were considerably less than what we had paid at the time of purchase, a heavy loss of our capital was sustained. The run had been subdivided against the recommendation of practical men on the Land Board and we were forced to look out for pastures new, not having been successful in the ballot for the blocks of land offered. This policy of subdivision was in many cases followed with disastrous results to the runholders, large blocks of good winter country being taken away from the higher ground and cut up into smaller holdings, leaving the sheep on the higher and more risky country to take their chance in a rough winter.

This misguided policy prevented the spelling of different blocks, with the result that the country began to deteriorate —native grasses became eaten out and rabbits began to take possession in many cases, and erosion set in.

Injudicious burning also helped to carry out the process of eliminating the native tussock until to-day, where once we had a fine covering of native grasses, there is, in many places, nothing but bare ground with a stunted growth of vegetation unpalatable to the stock.

In North Canterbury the sowing of subterranean clover on the better classes of hill country has helped in a measure to remedy the position, but for the bulk of the higher country runs this seems impossible to carry out.

Long leases with security of tenure at a reasonable rent is the only remedy. Hill country should be occupied by men who are bred to the game, and sufficient encouragement given to them to improve their properties, breed good stock, plant trees, and leave the land in a better condition than when they took it up for their families to still further improve after them.

As long as political influence enters into the picture, good results can never be obtained. Recommendations from practical men must be adhered to and carried out, otherwise discontent will prevail.

From 1907 on, prices for land began to soar beyond all reason. Speculation was rife and in many cases properties changed hands three or four times without the buyer occupying the place. Second and third mortgages were taken out, and in the North Island as many as six mortgages were held on some properties. This was largely caused by dealers and speculators coming into the business. More money could be made out of buying a farm and re-selling it than by carrying on the genuine operations of farming. Thousands of pounds were made, only to be lost again when the depression came.

Wealthy men who had invested their savings in mortgages, in some cases at 8 per cent., were, in many cases, ruined.

With these uncertain conditions prevailing, we decided to look further south, where land was cheaper and the boom had not taken effect so much as in the north.

About this time, my father, who had bought the Winterslow run in the Alford Forest district a few years previously, decided to sell, and, after this property was disposed of to Mr. H. Phillips, we were offered a block of country in Otago—part of the Clydevale Estate.

XVIII.

CLYDEVALE

This fine property of about thirty thousand acres belonged to the N.Z. and Australian Land Co., and was all ploughable except for about fifteen hundred acres of mixed scrub and tussock country at the upper end at the foot of the Blue Mountains.

The property carried thirty thousand sheep, including a stud flock of Border Leicesters, a large herd of Hereford cattle, and about three hundred Clydesdale and thoroughbred horses.

A team of bullocks was used for shifting the portable engine used for threshing and chaffcutting, and large gangs of men were employed at the upper station and out camps in the busy season.

It was a fine sight to see the plough team leaving the stables in the morning punctually at 7.30, every man in his place with his five horses looking sleek and well groomed: some men with beards down to their chests who had been on the station since the early days.

Each team had to average three acres per day with a double digger plough, and the head man's job ws to follow the ploughs round to see they were all running well and making a good job. Two men cooks were employed, one at the Lower and another at the Upper Station.

Hard tack was the order of the day with bread, meat and potatoes the principal diet. No butter or jam was allowed and every man took his pannikin of tea with a couple of chops and a round of good fresh bread every morning for breakfast. Some provided their own butter and a pot of jam, purchased from the local store, but hunger was the best sauce and everyone seemed contented.

A tale is told of how one of the cooks was found asleep in his trough of dough while making the bread; no doubt that was an exceptional batch.

The leading ploughman received 25/- a week and the others 20/-, and I know one man at least who had £1,500 in the bank. He was, of course, one of the older hands.

A feature of Clydevale was the names of the various paddocks, a number of which had been called after the contractor who broke them up out of the original rough tussock. There was Flynn's, McGregor's, McLeish's, Roger's, Boggy Creek,

Scrubby Hut, The Cattle Ridges, The Barley Ridges, Whitehall, Camp Hill, Macfarlane's, The Burning Plain, The Little Plain, The Engineer's, The Little Engineer's, Washpool Creek, Round Hill, Green Hill, Stockyard Ridges, Rocky Flat, Creek Paddock, Kildrummie, Gilhastie, Hay Paddock, Dalhousie, McKay's Hill, The Mouth Paddock and the Chinaman's, besides many others, the names of which I have forgotten.

Flynn's was called after an old Irishman of that name who had a hut at the top end of the block. A rather amusing story was told to me by Mr. Wilson, who lived at Lambourne at the lower end of Clydevale in the early days. One hot day Wilson was riding round and Mrs. Flynn asked him in for a cup of tea. In the yard close by was a large white bull lying stretched out in the sun.

Says Flynn, "Begorra, and it's a good chance to brand the beast." So, making the iron hot in the kitchen fire, he ran out and clapped it on the bull's rump while he slept. The bull, of course, leapt to his feet with a roar that could be heard half a mile away, but Paddy achieved his purpose. For forty-five years the manager of this fine estate was James Ross Mitchell, commonly called J.R., one of the finest men I have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

The last three years before the station was cut up, Thomas Macauley had taken over the management, Mr. Mitchell having bought a block, including Lambourne, at the junction of the Pomahaka and Molyneux Rivers, where he built a fine residence and retired. About the time of the subdivision, Mr. Macauley was taken ill, and Mr. Mitchell was called on to take over the management until the final sale.

Clydevale was bought by Bowron Bros., of Christchurch, with W. J. Hopkins & Co. as selling agents, in 1907. From memory, the price paid was £4 12s 6d per acre. This syndicate had previously purchased the estate of Sir John Hall at Hororata and had subdivided it into different blocks, which were readily sold at enhanced prices.

With the same object in view, Clydevale was purchased, but owing to a tightening in the money market about that time, some of the blocks hung fire for a considerable time. Canterbury buyers were early on the scene and were the first to set the ball rolling.

The homestead block was the first to go, the buyer being P. Acton-Adams. W. J. Hopkins took the Douglass block of four thousand odd acres; the Macfarlane block of 5,214 acres

was then bought by C. Overton & Sons; the river flat and the paddocks between the Engineers and the Upper Station road went to R. Tout, the manager of Longbeach. Hall Bros. bought the Little Engineers; T. Wilson the Stockyard Ridges; R. & T. Butters, Barley Ridges; Jim Cox, the Green Hill; B. Bunn took the lower Washpool Creek, and his father and E. Bunn, the Upper; J. Tyson, the triangle on the Pomahaka above the Burning Plain; R. Seay, two paddocks on the east side of the Upper Station Pomahaka Road, and his brother, W. Seay, the Round Hill; A. McDonald, the block where the Wharetoa Post Office now stands, and Quaife, the Little Plain. Derenzy Mathias bought a block over the Pomahaka opposite the Big Plain, and Paisley Bros. took Boggy Creek.

These comprised the original new settlers. Other holdings had been purchased by some of the old station hands. J. R. Mitchell added to his Lambourne property, a block of five hundred acres below the homestead. S. Dunlop, the old station blacksmith, took a block near the smithy. D. Copeland, the old station groom, made his home near the dam, and Peter Miller had the store on the bank of the river beside the punt. The puntman, "Cockney Jack," also lived close to the punt.

Later arrivals who took up the blocks that had not gone off were H. Benny & Sons, who took the Camp Hill block of eight hundred acres from Hopkins; H. Snushall, the Big Plain and Cattle Ridges; W. Swan, a block over the Pomahaka; J. Mackenzie also over the Pomahaka; and Cook, who took the upper block opposite Tuapeka Mouth from Hopkins. The Big Engineers paddock lay idle for a long time and was thought to have been damaged by turning too deep a furrow when ploughed by the engine.

The block was afterwards taken up by Mr. Anderson, of Ashley Downs, and by good farming was brought up to a high state of fertility. Lime was the secret of successful farming on Clydevale and, where the land had been reasonably drained, great results could be obtained by the application of a ton to the acre.

Changes in ownership took place as time went on, Hopkins selling the Douglas block to Pannett and Andrews. C. F. Lucas, a Greenfield settler, bought out Cook and the Chinaman's block. George Bunn, of Rongahere, bought part of Flynn's; Tout sold all the Molyneux Flat to David Murray, keeping the land above the terrace, where he built his homestead, and Maindonald settled on one of the Cattle Ridges.

The winter of 1907, except for cold south-west rains occasionally, was a fairly open one. Those settlers who were fortunate enough to have an outstation camp and stables on their property fared well enough, but many were forced to live in improvised camps or huts on wheels or skids until a house was built.

My brother, Guy, and I were lucky to have the use of the Camp Hill buildings, which consisted of a cookshop, dining and bunk room, with thirteen bunks round the walls and a large table in the middle; a leanto on the back of the building contained three bunk rooms with six bunks in each room, making in all accommodation for thirty-one men. The stable had thirty-eight stalls and a good roomy chaff house where the horse feed was kept.

In the cookhouse was a colonial oven and a camp oven, with a small table on which the meals were dished up; with a few forms for seating accommodation. This comprised the sum total of the furniture.

In this building we spent fifteen months until the station carpenter, J. O'Reilly, had finished our cottage on the rise about 250 yards away. Part of the time during our occupation of the Camp Hill buildings, we had the company of the surveyors, who were measuring up the different blocks for the new settlers. Mr. George Slater was in charge of the party of three men, Messrs. Blake, Duff and the cook, H. Davey, who was an old veteran of the Maori War. By arrangement with Mr. Slater, we had our meals with the surveyors, while they were there, thus doing away with the necessity of cooking our own meals.

Many were the interesting tales we listened to in the long winter evenings while old Davey related accounts of his experiences in the Taranaki Wars in which he had taken part.

Another interesting old identity was Pat McVea, who was camped with us while doing some fencing. Pat was an old sea dog and had spent the earlier years of his life in windjammers, had been shipwrecked seven times, and was the only one of the watch below to escape when his ship was run down in mid-Atlantic by a steamship one dark night.

On one occasion after his ship had left Liverpool, they were passing the Isle of Man. Pat was at the wheel and received orders from the captain to steer for a certain light, which he did, with the result that the ship ran ashore on a

sandy beach. The captain came up from the cabin with his box, ordered out his boat, and went ashore. That was the last they saw of him.

It appeared afterwards that the ship was in such an unseaworthy condition that the captain would not take her to sea, so, chosing a nice sandy beach to land, he decided to take the safer course.

After retiring from the sea, Pat went into the bush when Tyson's sawmill was operating. Trees were felled on the slopes of the Blue Mountains, facing the Molyneux River. The logs were then rafted down to Balclutha to be sawn into timber.

During the 1878 flood when Balclutha was under water, Pat and his mate, Tom Williams, or Tom Bowling, as Pat called him, went down stream with a raft of logs for the sawmill. While in Balclutha they gave assistance with their boat in rescuing a number of residents who were flooded out. Evidently there was plenty of grog going, and poor Tom Bowling finished up in the lock-up that night.

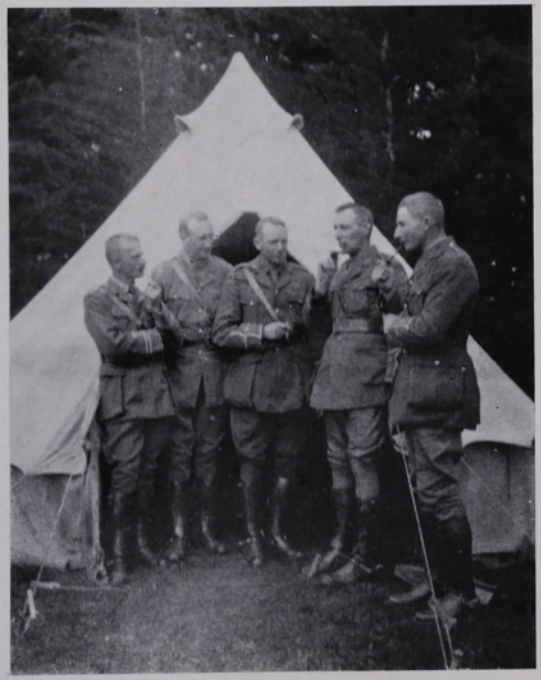
This action was not in accord with Pat's idea of a fair deal, so, with the assistance of some of his mates, they secured a stout rail and tipped over the lock-up, thus rescuing the prisoner. When the constable came out in the morning, the boat's crew were well away upstream.

On another occasion, Pat was felling a tree in the bush when a new chum, who had been sent up by Gascoigne, the head man, somehow got in the track of the tree which was just about to fall. In vain Pat called to him to get out of the way, but the man seemed rooted to the spot, and the tree crashed down right on top of him.

Fortunately, the tree had a forked top and one branch had gone each side of the fellow, who crawled out unhurt.

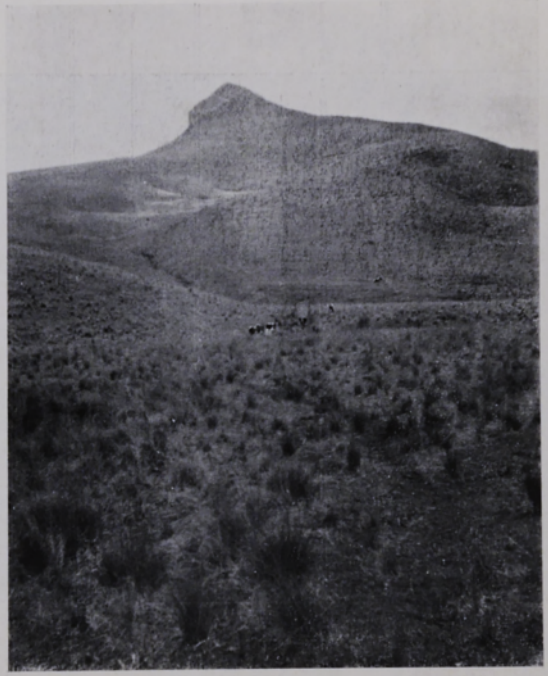
The shock to Pat's nerves was too great, however, and after that he stuck to rafting the logs down stream. To use his own words, he said: "Gascoigne comes up; 'Pat,' says he, 'are you going to kill all the men in the bush?' 'Yes,' says I, 'all such b——s as these,' and I took my axe and threw it down to the bottom of the hill!".

These, and many other anecdotes, helped to while away the long winter evenings in the camp.



McKinlay, Adams, Lucas, Revie, and Winslow, Gore, 1916.

[See page 59



TAIERI PEAK, PALMERSTON, 1920.

[See page 66

Mrs. C. F. Overton, Clydevale, 1916.

[*See page 61*

AT TE ANAU. T. H. PILBROW and J. N. OVERTON, 1929.

[*See page 77*

XIX.

BUILDING OPERATIONS

September, 1908, saw the cottage ready for occupation and, after a trip to Balclutha to secure the necessary furniture, we moved into our new quarters.

As very few of the roads had any metal on them, mud was very bad in the winter, and as better access was necessary for the new settlers it was decided to call a meeting and ask the member for the riding and county engineer to be present.

This was duly arranged, the meeting place to be at the new house, or Macfarlane Downs homestead, which we decided to call it. The county engineer, Mr. Leader, and Mr. Mitchell, the member for the riding, turned up, and about a dozen of the new settlers.

As it was a fine, warm, sunny day, we gathered round a big heap of manuka firewood that was stacked in the yard, the chairman standing up and the visitors sitting on the firewood. Plans were put forward and discussion took place as to where the most necessary work should be done.

Mr. Mitchell explained that if much work was required it would be necessary to raise a loan, but this did not meet with general approval. It was recognised by everyone that the main roads should be attended to first—that was the roads leading from the Clydevale Upper Station Road, which was already metalled, across towards the Pomahaka; the branch roads running east and west were not so urgent.

The result of the meeting was that a promise was made to spend £200 in metalling, about half of this to go on the Upper Station-Pomahaka Road. Metal was very hard to get and was mostly blue rock which had to be quarried at considerable expense, so £100 did not go very far, but still, it was a start, and we were grateful for small mercies.

The house being completed, the next job was stables and woolshed, O'Reilly still carrying on with the buildings.

The first year all the settlers shore in the companies' old woolshed, then owned by W. J. Hopkins, who found the men. All we had to do was drive the sheep down to be shorn and do the branding.

The wool went away in the steamer Clyde, then in charge of Captain Butler, being trans-shipped to trucks at Balclutha for Dunedin.

Prices were poor in 1908, and on January 25th, 1909, the following entry is in my diary:—Keen competition for X.B. sold the whole clip, top price 9¾d. Little did one dream then that wool would soar to the prices of 1948, but costs at that time were considerably lower; shearing was 16/8 per hundred, woolpressing 1/- per bale, woolclassing 20/- per thousand.

A large area of crop was put in during the 1908-9 season. Heavy crops of oats were obtained, and this made it necessary to get in a threshing mill and chaffcutter. Tenders were called, and we eventually obtained a plant owned by J. Bagrie. Later on, Christie Bros. brought in a plant from Taieri, and he was followed by W. Geddes, of Tuapeka Mouth. Prices for oats were low, very little, if any, profit being made out of the crop.

In 1909 we sold 1,400 sacks at 1/3½ a bushel, on trucks at Balclutha, after paying for cartage to the steamer landing, four miles, and freight on the boat.

Stout hearts and strong arms were needed in those days, but we always looked forward to better times ahead.

As soon as the buildings were up, the next question was shelter, so in 1909 we put in 1,200 Pinus Insignus and 500 Macrocarpa trees. These all did well, and before we left, in 1919, were providing a splendid breakwind from the cold south-west winds. Other trees were planted each year with gum and other varieties interspersed.

XX.

RABBITS

Coming from Canterbury where rabbits were looked on as providing good sport, we were astounded to see the whole hillside move when a mob of rabbits ran for shelter to their burrows.

The first time I went out with a gun on Clydevale it was not worth firing at one rabbit, so I waited till two came in line.

The amount of feed that was eaten and destroyed made it necessary that something should be done. The only remedy was to net the boundary and destroy the pests inside the netting fence. As netting was fairly cheap, we set about doing this, and after one or two good poisons we had the back of them broken. From then on, by ploughing in the burrows and runners, the cover they previously had was largely destroyed.

Some difficulty was experienced where the coal had been burning under the ground, large hollows being left, and in the loose soil the rabbits made a honeycomb of burrows.

These places were eventually cleared out by fumigating, or with bi-sulphide of carbon. With the destruction of bunny, the bare patches began to recover and, instead of a crop of oats being eaten down round the head of a gully or the outside edges for a chain or more, the growth was even all over.

Before the Clydevale Estate had been cut up, experiments had been carried out under the supervision of Dr. Gilruth, Chief Veterinary Surgeon to the Department of Agriculture. Rabbits were inoculated with the germ of chicken pox and released, with the hope that whole colonies would be wiped out, but this did not come to pass.

By the way, I believe Dr. Gilruth found his wife in the district while carrying out these experiments, so it was not altogether a failure as far as he was concerned.

XXI.

STOCK AND GENERAL

The sheep on Clydevale were chiefly Romney-Border Leicester cross with a few finer wooled sorts running on the higher ground. Although the Border Leicester cross were better for fat lambs, we decided to go in for the Romney and gradually went out of the Border cross altogether.

As events turned out, we were fully justified in this procedure; the wool clip increased and the Romney, having a better constitution, the death rate was considerably reduced.

The first year we had a fine paddock of eleven hundred acres of young grass which had been sown out by the Company the previous January. This provided a quantity of good feed, and, at weaning time, we drafted five hundred fat lambs, for which we obtained 12/6 per head. This was before the South Otago Freezing Works were started.

In 1918 the same draft of lambs, which were all Romney cross, were sold for 27/-, which clearly justified our change to the Romney.

The year 1912 was one of continual wet. Crops were heavy and harvesting operations were carried on into June. In one case wheat was put into cocks in the paddock and left until September before being fit to thresh.

Great difficulty was experienced in shifting the threshing mills, which frequently became bogged. In one paddock which threshed ninety bushels of oats to the acre, loads of posts had to be carted out to enable the engine to cross over soft places, the wheels sinking right down into the soft stubble ground.

The drays carting off the grain to the wharf were sinking in half-way to the axle, and teams frequently had to be double-banked to help each other out, but no complaints were heard, and men worked early hours and late.

Thus with harvest operations and sheep work, along with the erection of new buildings, sheep yards, dip, fencing, planting, etc., one was kept constantly busy. As the settlement grew, the necessity for a post and telephone office and school at Upper Clydevale became important, and accordingly a meeting was called at the Macfarlane Downs homestead to discuss the question.

After signing the required guarantees we eventually were given a post and telephone office at Mr. McDonald's place, which he had called Wharetoa, and a telephone office at Tiromatau, or the old Upper Station, then occupied by Mr. Hopkins.

Perhaps it would not be out of place here to relate how Wharetoa got its name.

When the carpenter, who professed to know a little of the Maori language, was building the house for Mr. McDonald, had the framework up, there came a strong gale of wind in the night. In the morning, after an inspection, finding that no damage had been done to the building, he remarked to Mr. McDonald that he would have to call the place "Wharetoa," or "Brave House," as it had stood the gale so well, and so the name stuck.

As a matter of fact, the correct meaning of Wharetoa is the house of a chief or brave, but the carpenter reversed the meaning.

At any rate we gained a new post and telephone office, and Mr. McDonald carried the mail from Clydevale as long as he remained there.

The next addition to the district was a school. Mr. Richardson, the Inspector, met us by arrangement and we selected a site on the corner of the Scrubbie Hut paddock, which would be central for all, where a new school and schoolhouse were erected.

A working bee was formed and we all met and planted trees round the school grounds. The school was used for church services and committee meetings, so was a great benefit to the district until the big central school was opened at Greenfield, when all the children were gathered there.

The teachers at Wharetoa were Miss Kean, Miss Dunn, Miss Appleby, Mr. Bremner and Miss Anderson. Others followed later whose names I have not been able to obtain. The school was opened on October 17th, 1910.

We had now reached the stage of a full-blown settlement. Houses had been erected, new settlers had arrived, Mr. Benny and his large family had taken Camp Hill; Mr. Snushall had bought the Big Plain and Cattle Ridges, and altogether things were looking up. The chief drawback was lack of metal on the roads, but by degrees, and with the help of the settlers who assisted in some cases with carting the metal, we managed to get along until the main roads were completed. A loan of £2,000 was floated for roads in 1912.

On the whole, the steamer service on the river was not satisfactory owing to the shoaling of the river; shingle banks were forming and very often the steamer had difficulty in getting up. In addition to this, the constant grating on the gravel had made the plates of the boat so thin that leaks were a common occurrence. Sometimes a bag of flour had to be commandeered by the captain to stop a hole in the boat to enable her to reach her destination.

On one occasion we had shipped eight hundred sacks of oats to go on trucks at Balclutha. The boat left the Upper Station wharf and made off down stream, but when she was half-way down to the Clydevale wharf she ran into a dense fog. This, of course, made navigation impossible, with the result that in a very short time the boat crashed on to the rocks and all the oats had to be stacked on the bank for a fortnight until repairs were effected. On another occasion while tied up at the upper landing at Balclutha, one of the hands who was sleeping on board woke up with the water rushing into his cabin. Fortunately, he was able to escape as the steamer went to the bottom of the river.

Great attempts were made to raise her with wire ropes placed round the hull and attached to two traction engines, but this method did not succeed, and not until a number of tanks were lashed round the boat and the water pumped out was she brought to the surface.

In 1910 a new steamer called the Clutha was built at Port Chalmers by McGregor and Co. to the order of the Clutha River Board. This helped to relieve the congested river sheds of their produce and for a time kept pace with the traffic, latterly carrying sheep as well as produce.

The rather unsatisfactory position led to a movement for a railway from Balclutha up the valley.

The Clutha Valley Railway League was formed and the Minister for Public Works, the Hon. Rhoderick Mackenzie, was banqueted at Balclutha, and taken over the proposed route right up to the Beaumont on August 23rd, 1909.

At that time it was a toss up whether the Otago Central railway to Roxburgh went by Lawrence or up the Clutha Valley. The Lawrence route won in the end and the line was pushed on from the big hill where it had been held up pending an inspection of both routes.

Pressure was still brought to bear on the Government, and the surveyors actually put the pegs in for about five miles up from Balclutha, but that was as far as it went.

Eventually the river road was improved and opened to motor traffic which now serves the districts of Greenfield and Clydevale.

On April 29th, 1910, a meeting was held in Balclutha to discuss the erection of freezing works. A committee was formed to arrange proceedings, and on May 27th a public meeting was held and an address given by Mr. F. Weymouth, the manager of the Canterbury Frozen Meat Co. At this meeting £4,000 worth of shares were booked up and everything looked rosy for the new works.

The provisional committee appointed were:—James Smith (chairman), J. R. Mitchell, R. Tout, John Begg, J. E. Thompson, John Christie, James Begg, J. Duthie, W. Marshall and J. Herbert. The works were opened in 1912 and proved a great boon to the district.

XXII.

DEERSTALKING

Living close to the foot of the Blue Mountains, where fallow deer were fairly plentiful, it was only natural that if there was a day to spare we made for the bush. Roaring always commenced about the middle of April and lasted about ten days to a fortnight.

Occasionally an odd stag came wandering down over the paddocks, either driven off from the herd or else looking for hinds.

It took some time to get into the art of deerstalking and it was more luck than good management if we came home with any venison for the first time or two we were out. Good heads were not plentiful and the old stags were very cunning.

The best method we found was to get into a likely spot where the stags were roaring and keep perfectly still and wait. The noise one made moving through the bush could be heard some distance away, while the noise the stags made could be herd by the stalker if he kept still.

On one stalking expedition I got bushed and putting my rifle down at the foot of a tree I climbed up into the branches to try and locate myself. I had not been there more than a minute or two when two fine stags walked under the tree within a few yards of the rifle. This experience taught me the lesson never to leave my rifle out of reach; a lesson that was soon after to bring its reward.

While seated at the foot of a big birch tree eating my lunch one fine day, I heard something approaching towards me through the undergrowth. Keeping perfectly still I waited, until presently a fine stag walked out in front of me not more than twenty yards distant.

Keeping my eyes fixed on the deer as he stood looking at me, I gently reached for the rifle close by and, taking steady aim, I fired, the bullet going in between his eyes. If not hit in a vital spot, deer take a lot of stopping, and I have shot a stag with an old bullet wound which went in one side of his body and came out the other. The stag seemed quite normal and was running past me when I got him. The neck or shoulder was always a very vital spot.

One morning, just after daybreak, in company with P. Acton-Adams from the homestead, we were crossing the Back Creek. We stopped to let the horses drink before tying them up. As I was in the lead, my horse was first up the bank the other side and straight before me were two stags about eighty yards away on the edge of the bush. There was no time to lose as they were moving off, so I tumbled out of the saddle, unslinging my Winchester .44 at the same time, and, getting in a quick shot, put a bullet through the neck of the leading stag, which dropped him dead. Puck, as we called him at school, came up out of the creek wondering what all the shooting was about. I think this was the luckiest shot I ever made.

That night we had a steak of fried venison for tea which, although cut off the deer while warm, was most delicious.

Latterly, the deer became a pest, and came down into the turnips and oat crops at night doing great damage, until all restrictions against shooting them were lifted and now they are hunted for their skins.

XXIII.

A NIGHT WITH A LUNATIC

Bush districts and their surroundings are very often associated with some queer characters. Stories of whisky stills, murders and whatnot are very often attached to bush-clad hills and rough gorges, the foot of the Blue Mountains being no exception. Whisky Gully on the Tapanui side of the mountain was once noted for its still, and on the Clydevale side close to the Back Creek a murder was committed some years before the estate was subdivided.

In a small cottage in a clearing of the manuka scrub that fringed the foot of the Blue Mountains lived a Russian called Matzin, with his wife. It appears that a young woman who was staying with the couple stole the affections of Mrs. Matzin's husband and, of course, the fat was in the fire.

One day Matzin set out with horse and trap for Clinton, taking the young lady with him. Mrs. Matzin followed on foot, imploring her husband to take her too, and evidently kept on following the cart, until the man, becoming annoyed with her because she would not go back to the house, brutally struck her over the head with a heavy whip. That night when he returned his wife was lying dead beside the track where he had struck her. He then put her body in a sack weighted with big stones, but it is not known whether she was put into a deep hole in the Back Creek or the Pomahaka River.

Search parties were out hunting high and low for the body without success, and it was not until after a big flood that the body was found in the mouth of a small creek in the Little Plain paddock, where it had floated back among some driftwood which had been backed up the creek by the flood waters of the Pomahaka.

Matzin served a term in gaol for manslaughter, having stated that the crime was unintentional. That is the story as told to me by one of the old hands on Clydevale who was there at the time.

Another story was told of an incident that happened to Mr. Thomas Brydone, the general manager for the N.Z. and Australian Land Co. Mr. Brydone and a friend went up the mountain for some wild cattle shooting. Having pitched their tent, they were sitting by the fire boiling the billy when, without any warning, a shot rang out and a bullet went right through the billy. This was a warning to pack up and get out, as the man who was suspected of firing the shot considered he had the sole right to shoot the cattle for their hides.

The same gentleman was afterwards implicated in a cattle-stealing case and when stopped on the road by a policeman, ordered his son to keep the constable covered with his rifle, and to fire if he gave the word.

When the case came before the magistrate, the son was asked if he would have fired if his father had given the word. On the boy replying that he would, the magistrate said that he was a very dutiful son.

These were events that happened before we arrived on the scene, but the following incident occurred about 1911.

About five o'clock one evening a knock came on the door and a young girl of about fifteen, belonging to a settler who lived back in the scrub, said she had been let out of the window by her father to come for help as there was a lunatic in the house trying to kill them.

I immediately rang the police-station at Clinton, but as we were in the Tapanui police district they communicated with Tapanui, which meant a ride of twenty-five to thirty miles for the constable, in which case he could not arrive before the next morning. Putting on a big blue military coat that I had, and taking a heavy hunting crop which had a good brass knob on the end, I set off for the scene of the trouble, a ride of about four miles, picking up a young lad belonging to a neighbour as I went.

On arrival at the house we found the owner had been sitting inside with the family all the previous night with the door locked and a rifle and tomahawk beside him.

The lunatic had been stamping about in the kitchen looking for a gun and shouting out the whole night. Towards morning, on hearing a gurgling sound, the father opened the bedroom door and found the fellow trying to hang himself to a rail at the head of the couch. Evidently, when partly strangled, he had become frightened and was trying with a pocket knife to cut himself loose.

The father in vain tried to take the knife out of his hand, but he refused to let go until struck over the back of the hand with the tomahawk.

This opened an ugly gash from which the blood flowed freely, and when we arrived he was lying on the couch with a gory bandage round the hand.

On seeing my big blue coat when entering the room he evidently took me for the constable, as he said, "Oh, I know who you are!"

For the first few hours he lay fairly quiet, but about midnight became restless and wanted to get up, so putting on the kettle we made him a cup of tea and eventually got him settled down again, but not before he had given us an anxious few moments outside.

At seven o'clock in the morning Constable Dwan arrived leading a spare horse and, after a bit of a scuffle, the handcuffs were put on, we put him on the horse with his legs tied under the horse's belly, and away he went to Tapanui.

To show the varied life of a farmer in the outlying districts, I was once called to a maternity case.

Having the only car in the locality, the husband came for me at the last moment. Hurrying to the house as quickly as possible, we packed the lady in the car with cushions.

In a state of anxiety as to what might happen any minute, I set off for the home of the patient's parents about eight miles away and across the punt. Fortunately we arrived in the nick of time, the child being born about half an hour afterwards.

On another occasion I was asked to come and assist at a case of the same nature, but this time it was a cow.

XXIV.

CLUTHA MOUNTED RIFLES

On January 22nd, 1910, the first parade of the Clydevale section of the Clutha Mounted Rifles was held at the Clydevale homestead. Captain Grigor, as he was then, came up with Sergeant Spiers from Balclutha and gave us some mounted drill and outpost duty.

From memory, the section was made up of the following:—G. Mitchell, R. Dunlop, F. Bunn, P. Barr, A. Hislop and C. F. Overton. A week later, on January 29th, the whole squadron went into camp at Balclutha for seven days' training.

Class firing was carried out and a field day with sham fight was held at Romahapa. An inspection was made by Major Hickey, D.S.O., and on February 3rd the squadron went to Puerua and competed for the Nicholl's Shield. Sports were held on February 8th, in which the Clydevale section carried off two firsts, two seconds and one third.

During the camp, G. Mitchell, who afterwards became lieutenant-colonel with D.S.O. in World War I, was made lance-corporal, and our worthy Captain Grigor was also to become famous, taking over the command of the Otago Mounted Rifles on Gallipoli after Colonel Beauchop was killed, and also gaining the D.S.O.

In 1911 the Territorial scheme was adopted and General Sir Alexander Godley was sent out by the War Office to take command in New Zealand. His first inspection of the C.M.R. was made on May 23rd, 1911, when the squadron paraded on the Balclutha Showground. Under the new scheme the Clutha Mounted Rifles, the Tuapeka Mounted Rifles and the Tapanui Mounted Rifles were formed into the 12th Regiment.

The C.M.R. being A Squadron, Tuapeka M.R. B Squadron and the Tapanui M.R. C Squadron, the Regiment under the command of Lieut.-colonel George Stewart, who afterwards paid the supreme sacrifice on Lemnos Island. Major Grigor was in charge of A Squadron, Captain McKinlay B Squadron and Captain Herbert C. Squadron.

In this formation we held the first Regimental Camp at Balclutha in May, 1912. On April 21st, 1913, the first Brigade Camp was held at Sutton, the 5th, 7th and 12th Regiments, under Lieutenant-colonel J. Cowie Nichols, joining forces. In this camp I was transferred to B Squadron and given a commission.

Heavy rain came on the last few days of the camp and the mud in the horse lines became almost knee deep. When the morning came for us to break up camp the rain was coming down in torrents. I well remember how Major Grant, V.C., walked beside us all the way to the siding, a distance of about two miles, in the pouring rain while we rode our horses.

On arrival of the train at Hindon a slip had come down on the line, so there we were held up without food for the horses till five o'clock in the evening.

We, however, managed to get three bags of chaff from Martin Lister, who had a farm close by, and cut tussocks for the horses to keep them going till the slip was cleared.

The small refreshment room at Hindon was soon eaten out by the hungry men, who had been up since three o'clock in the morning. Eventually we got going and reached Balclutha at 10 o'clock that night.

The following year, 1914, on April 18th, the Brigade went into camp at Matarae, and on the 28th a visit was paid by General Sir Ian Hamilton to the camp.

On the 29th a combined attack of mounted men and infantry was made on Mt. Ross before Generals Hamilton and Godley, after which a march past was held and a few complimentary remarks made by Sir Ian Hamilton, who addressed the troops.

This was the last camp to be held before, in August of the same year, war broke out between England and Germany.

It is not for me to record here the events that took place during the next five years. Many of our gallant fellows went overseas, never to return again: I was one, much to my regret, who was fated to stay behind.

Saddled with the responsibility of carrying on the property for the family, and with a wife and young children, it fell to my lot to stay behind, but my heart was with those men who went away, and many were the letters I received from overseas from the boys I had been in camp with.

My younger brother, Guy, who had gone to Canterbury the previous year to take over the Winterslow property, which had come back on our hands again, until it was sold, joined up with the Canterbury Mounted Rifles and, with my elder brother, Major P. J. Overton, who was second in command, sailed with the "Main Body."

The Major did some particularly fine work scouting on Gallipoli and lay out all one night in hiding in a gully, which bears his name, close to the Turkish lines. He was afterwards chosen as guide to the Australians and Ghurkas when the big attack was made against Chunuk Bair on August 6th, 1915, and was killed while advancing up Arghyle Dere. My younger brother fell mortally wounded on Waldon's Knob when, with other Canterbury men, they rushed and captured a Turkish machine-gun post. He died three days later on board the hospital ship Delta.

Two cousins also lost their lives in this ill-fated expedition —Major Stuckey, while leading the 6th Hauraki Regiment, and Trooper William Overton, of the C.M.R.

XXV.

MARRIED LIFE

In 1913 I met the lady who in the same year became my wife—Miss Mitchell, who had lived with her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. James Paterson, of Popotunoa, for the most of her life. She was thus admirably adapted for country life and made an ideal wife and mother.

Mr. Paterson had been manager of the Waimea Plains Estate when it was owned by the N.Z. Agricultural Company. He also managed the St. Helen's Station in North Canterbury; Blackstone Hill and Moutere runs in Central Otago, and, before settling at Popotunoa, he owned the Te Akatarawa run on the Waitaki.

Popotunoa had been the property of Mr. Logan, of Greenvale, who had built a fine house at the foot of the bush-clad hill where he intended to retire. Unfortunately, he died before getting into the house. The property then passed to his daughter, Mrs. Jock McKenzie, who sold to Mr. Paterson.

After farming here until 1914, he was taken ill and died in December, 1914, leaving the late Sir William Hunt and myself as trustees to wind up the estate. The following year we sold the property to Mr. Alfred West, whose sons now reside there.

Married life meant changed conditions for me. After baching for several years and the varied experience of numerous housekeepers, conditions were vastly improved.

Our first child, James Nigel, was born at the end of September, 1914, and made the home more interesting for both of us. Help was fairly easily obtained at that time, which gave my wife more time to attend to the family.

The second child, Nancy, was born in 1916, at the height of the war, thus both these children became to be called the war babies.

In the meantime, the district had become depleted of all the young men who could be spared. Mr. Benny's boy, Sergt. T. Benny, our nearest neighbour, had been killed on the Somme. Fred Cruickshank, of Rongahere, had also paid the supreme sacrifice, and many others whose names are inscribed on the war memorial at Clydevale.

The strain on those left behind to carry on was considerable, help was almost unprocurable, and neighbours were forced to join forces to help each other.

Some broke down under the strain and others had their health permanently affected.

In my case, I developed asthma, a complaint that stuck to me for twenty years before I threw it off.

It was a joyful day for all when, on November 8th, 1918, the news came through that an armistice had been declared with Germany.

As chairman of the Wharetoa School Committee, in company with Mr. W. Benny, the secretary, I at once proceeded to the school, hoisted the flag, and gave the children a holiday until the following Tuesday.

Thus it was with mixed feelings of joy and sadness that the 1914-18 war came to an end.

XXVI.

FARMERS' UNION

In order to present a more united front in our various requests for the furtherance of the settlement, it was thought advisable to form a branch of the Farmers' Union.

On July 3rd, 1909, Mr. George Stewart, the Provincial president, addressed a meeting of settlers in the school at Clydevale, setting out the advantages of forming a branch.

About twenty persons were present and the following officers were elected:—President, Mr. C. F. Overton; vice-president, Mr. J. R. Mitchell; secretary, Mr. G. Mitchell; committee—Messrs. R. Buttar, J. Tyson, W. Hall, B. Bunn, R. Seay, T. Wilson, P. Miller, G. Bunn, S. Hopkins, D. McColl, W. H. Benny, H. Snushall, R. Paisley.

Meetings were held every two months alternatively at the Clydevale School and Upper Station or Douglas Homestead.

Addresses were given by Mr. McNaught on woolclassing, and others addressed the meetings on different subjects. Altogether the branch did good work in connection with threshing and chaffcutting arrangements, securing better facilities for loading the steamers, with new wharves and landing places.

A new method of contract cooking for the men on the threshing mill, whereby a cook's galley was pulled round with the mill and was a great boon to the farmers' wives, who previously had to find and cook for the men.

A committee was set up to investigate any complaints that arose, and when the big strike on the wharves was on in 1913, a troop of mounted farmers was sent up to Dunedin on the request of the Provincial Executive. Fortunately, the mounted men were not called out for duty, but their presence in camp at Tahuna Park evidently had the desired effect.

The O.C. of the camp was Mr. Edgar Hazlett, and other officers were Messrs. H. Orbell, H. Price, G. Mitchell, C. F. Overton and A. K. Cameron.

Parades were held and troop drill carried out along the beach at St. Kilda, and after ten days in camp we returned home, everything being settled without further trouble.

On June 14th, 1911, I had been sworn in as a Justice of the Peace by Mr. Bartholomew, the Stipendiary Magistrate at Balclutha.

I little thought then that, two years later, I would be again sworn in as a special constable by the same man.

As the progress made in metalling the roads was not altogether satisfactory, I was approached by some of the settlers to offer my services as a member for the Clydevale Riding on the Clutha County Council, as Mr. J. R. Mitchell was retiring.

The deciding factor which led me to consent to the above request happened one night when I was riding down to Clydevale to attend a meeting of the Farmers' Union.

The roads were deep in mud at the time and, while trotting along, the horse stumbled and fell, both of us rolling over in the mud together. I was wearing a fine new pair of riding pants at the time, and when I got up both the horse and myself were plastered pretty well from head to foot.

That was the turning point, and I made up my mind that night to see that that particular road was metalled as soon as possible if ever I got on the County Council.

The election came off on November 11th 1914, and I got in by two votes.

The metalling was completed on the road the following year.

The County Council met once a month at Balclutha and, being new to the game, I greatly appreciated the help of Mr. Angus McDonald, the county clerk, who was kindness itself, being always ready to help in any way he could.

Other newcomers to the council were Messrs T. McGuinnes, for Owaka; H. Steele, Clinton; A. McIntyre, Waikoikoi; and Christie, for McLennan.

The older members of the council at that time were Messrs. John Clark, of Wairuna; Edwards, of Waiwera; W. Nichol, of Kaihiku; John Christie, of Warepa; James Begg, of Clinton; W. North, Owaka; and James Cummings, of Arthurton. The engineers were Messrs. Leader and later J. Ramsay.

Another local body in whom we were greatly interested was the Clutha River Board. The duty of this board was to keep the steamer running up the river and carry the cargo to and from the different wharves and landings to the railway at Balclutha.

With the shoaling of the river, this very often was no easy task, and about 1916 a suction pump was fitted to the steamer with a large mouthpiece, the gravel being pumped out of the river where shallow, and the spoil deposited on the bank for the use of road metal.

Once a year, a tour of inspection was carried out, when members' wives and families and other friends were invited to accompany the party on the trip, thus combining a business and pleasure cruise for the occasion.

The steamer went as far as Tuapeka Mouth and sometimes Rongahere, but beyond that the river shoaled in several places, making further progress impossible. The night was spent at Tuapeka Mouth, the women sleeping in one of the goods sheds and the men in the other.

After a general inspection, a meeting of the board was held on the boat to discuss necessary repairs, etc., and receive deputations from settlers who wished to air any complaints. On one visit to the "Mouth" the ladies were performing their morning ablutions when an elderly gentleman came strolling round to see if they were getting up. His curiosity was very soon rewarded by a shower bath from a basin of water thrown over him by the wife of the then chairman of the board, Mr. Crawford Anderson. Needless to say he retreated in great haste.

The members of the board about that time were Messrs. Crawford Anderson, J. R. Mitchell, John Begg, P. McInerny, D. T. Fleming and C. F. Overton. The captain of the ship was T. S. Tsukigawa.

J. R. MITCHELL and CAPT. TSUKIGAWA,
Clydevale, 1919.

[See page 45

H. PILBROW, R. CAMERON, T. H. PILBROW,
Manorburn Dam, 1923.

[See page 70

C. F. OVERTON and T. H. PILBROW,
With a catch of Atlantic salmon at Te Anau, 1929.
[*See page 76*

OFFICERS OF THE 12th REGIMENT, SUTTON, 1913.

Back Row: Lieuts. Finlayson, Herbert, Overton, Graham.
Middle Row: Lieuts. Adams, Scott, I. Revie, G. Hay, G. Mitchell.
Front Row: Dr. Brugh, Lieut. Wayte, Capt. McKinley, Col. Stewart, Capt. Banks, Major Grigor, Capt. Herbert, Rev. Bush-King.
[*See page 60*

The journey down stream was less interesting and, with the swift current, was made in less than half the time it took to come up. About 1924 a good motor road was opened up to serve the districts up river.

This sounded the death knell of the steamer, and not many years after that she ceased to run, thus giving way to more modern means of transport.

Through the many years of traffic on the river, the names of Captains Butler and Tsukigawa will go down as having played their part in opening up the lands in the Clutha Valley. It would be interesting to know how many tons of cargo the steamers Clyde and Clutha carried during the years they were in commission.

XXVII.

SALE OF MACFARLANE DOWNS

After the war was over, conditions were very different. With the loss of the two boys things were never the same and interest began to wane.

It also became necessary for me to have a change of climate, so, in 1919, we decided to sell Macfarlane Downs.

With the necessary buildings erected and everything required for running the property, no trouble was experienced in finding a suitable buyer, the purchaser being Mr. John Miller, of Balclutha.

On March 26th, 1919, the clearing sale was held, and, although there was an easing in the sheep market at the time, prices were good, the ewes going at 34/- for two-tooths and 30/- for four-year-olds. Cattle went to £10 for Hereford breeding cows, and yearling bulls £10 to £15. Having disposed of everything, the next job was to find another place.

After twelve years of hard work and the associations that had grown up during that time, it was with regret that the day of departure arrived. At a gathering of old friends and settlers in the Clydevale Hall, a presentation of a silver tea and coffee service was made to my wife and myself. Complimentary speeches were made and we said farewell to the district.

As I had always wanted to see Central Otago, it was arranged that a visit should be paid to that district with a view to securing a property if one suitable was offering.

In company with Mr. R. Steele, of Wright, Stephenson, and Co., we set off from Dunedin on a tour of inspection. The first thing that struck me was the barren aspect of the country through which we passed. But the remarkable thing was the good condition of the stock. Cattle and sheep all looked to be thriving and in good condition.

Crops of lucerne and red clover on ground that had been irrigated gave one an idea of the possibilities of this part of the country.

Acres of apple, pear and peach orchards producing some of the finest fruit in the world were a common sight.

One night was spent in company with R. K. Smith, at Tarras, a man who knew his country from A to Z, and considered Central Otago the finest sheep country in the world.

Although still in March, the nights were keen with a light frost in the mornings, but the air was something one could thoroughly enjoy. For anyone with troubles of the respiratory organs the climate seemed ideal.

Unfortunately at that time very few properties were offering for sale and, as the one or two we inspected were not suitable, after a good look round we returned to Palmerston, which was to be our home town for the next seven years.

There I was introduced to Mr. Roderick Cameron, the owner of Taieri Peak run. Originally part of Mt. Royal, this fine little property of sixteen hundred acres was just the place I was looking for, the only drawback being there was no house on it.

However, we overcame the difficulty by renting a house in the township, which was quite handy and suitable for the children going to school.

Delivery was taken of the place in June, stock was taken over at valuation, and Mr. Cameron very kindly arranged for a number of the neighbours to be present to take the sheep out on to the different blocks after I had taken delivery.

The first thing we noticed about Palmerston was the friendly disposition of the people, and during our seven years of residence there friendships were made which have never been forgotten.

It was here the family, now increased to three by the arrival of another son, Guy, first went to school, and later on two more sons, Ian and Bruce, were to appear on the scene.

Mr. Rutherford was the headmaster and Miss Heckler in charge of the junior children.

After the first six months we moved into the manager's house at Mt. Royal, that being empty at the time, until our own house was built on the small farm I had also bought at Bushey.

The stock on Taieri Peak was made up of one thousand Romney cross breeding ewes, three hundred and fifty ewe hoggets, and forty head of cattle. No cultivation was necessary and all the stock wintered on the natural tussock country, which had been surface sown with cocksfoot and clover when part of the Mt. Royal Estate. The Pleasant River stream ran right through the property, providing ample drinking water for the stock.

The buildings consisted of a woolshed and men's hut, with a good set of sheep yards and dip. Fences were all in first-class order with a rabbit-proof fence right round the boundary.

By growing turnips on the small farm at Bushey, which was all river flat, I increased the carrying capacity to fourteen hundred ewes and, with from six weeks' to two months' spell while the sheep were on turnips, the run country had a good spell which enabled the grass to get away earlier in the spring.

The lambing percentage was generally good, and on the warm, sunny faces it was a common occurrence to mark 90 per cent.

After being accustomed to so much agricultural work at Clydevale with two six-horse teams and about five hundred acres under cultivation, it was a great change to come on to a place where only twenty or thirty acres were under the plough. It became difficult for me to find enough to keep myself fully occupied until other interests came along.

On the southern boundary of the Palmerston Borough was a small property of one hundred and twenty acres owned by a Mr. Munro, the nephew of an old gentleman called Dr. Munro who had recently died.

The old doctor had lived in a tent pitched in a hole cut out of the side of the hill. One day the tent caught fire, and a neighbour who was passing rushed in to help the old fellow out with his belongings. In doing so, he threw out a treacle tin which, on investigation, had £1,500 in notes stowed away in it.

The property ran from the main Palmerston-Dunedin road across the railway line and about twenty acres was across the Goodwood road. A large number of bluegum trees had been planted in the early days and offered an excellent opportunity to obtain some very useful timber.

No time was lost in making a deal with Munro, and in a very short time I obtained a local sawmill and we cut about 20,000 feet of timber which we had no difficulty in selling at a payable price, a large quantity going to a local builder.

After the timber was cut the land was sold in three sections, the top block next to the main Dunedin road now being held by the Palmerston Golf Club.

During our occupation we replaced the trees that had been cut down by a shelter belt of pinus insignus along the top of the hill next to the main road. These trees to-day form a fine break-wind for the golf players on a Saturday afternoon. After the timber had been cleaned up and the land sold, I had to look further afield for something to occupy my mind.

A friend of mine, Mr. A. S. Cambridge, had gone into the Goodwood homestead about the same time that we came to Palmerston. This property belonged to the descendants of the late Johnny Jones and had been farmed by different tenants for many years.

The old homestead was beautifully situated overlooking the sea, with fine old orchards and a garden which had at one time been a lovely spot. The sea was the boundary on one side, the Pleasant River on another, and the Goodwood road was the western boundary. The old Goodwood Church, built in the very early days, stood in one of the paddocks surrounded by the graves of early settlers.

As Mr. Cambridge had decided to sell out, and the property offered an excellent addition to the run, we made a deal for the block known as the Church paddock, and another block of eight hundred acres known as Long Bush and the Long Point.

This country provided an excellent change for the run sheep and I was able to run a herd of Hereford cattle as well. The scattered trees of the Long Bush block offered splendid shelter for the cattle, and on a hot day it was a picture to see them lying in the shade of the native bush with abundance of feed all around them.

Dry seasons were the worst feature of Goodwood, the water in the Pleasant River being brackish with the tide, and when the dams in the gullies dried up stock were sometimes hard up for a good drink.

The stock taken over on Goodwood were principally fine Romney cross ewes, of which there were about eight hundred; a Border Leicester stud flock of about one hundred, and a

stud Romney flock of sixty. The Border Leicester flock was carried on for about two years and then sold to go to Australia.

The Romney flock was carried on and won many prizes at the Palmerston and Waiouaiti shows, eventually being disposed of at the clearing sale in 1926.

In passing, I might mention an incident that happened which goes to show what preparation for a show will do to sheep, so that he may catch the judge's eye.

In 1924 I entered a Romney ram at the Palmerston show expecting to get a prize, as he was a very fine sheep in every respect. One can imagine my disappointment when the sheep was passed by without any award whatever.

The next year the same ram was entered, but this time I spent some time in trimming him up and giving the wool a spray with bloom dip.

After the judging was over, I went along to see the result, and found first and champion on the pen. The same sheep, same judge, but different results.

The Palmerston show was always a feature of the year, and many excellent exhibits came from Oamaru and the surrounding districts.

One great asset to the district was the fine flock of Corriedale sheep and stud of Shorthorn cattle started by the late Mr. J. A. Johnstone at Bushey Park, about 1922. This fine stud has since gained almost world-wide reputation for the excellent breed of Corriedale sheep, large numbers being shipped overseas to the Argentine and other foreign countries.

Although Mr. Johnstone took up Bushey Park late in life, it created a new interest for him, and with the fine homestead and buildings he erected, it became the show place of the district.

Situated on the rise overlooking the Shag River, with the picturesque hill of Pukiviti in the foreground and the sea away to the right, the view offered can be equalled by few. This locality in the old days was the happy hunting ground of the Maoris. At the mouth of the Shag River, signs of a large camp could be seen and heaps of moa bones gave evidence of the feasts that had been held in years gone by.

Excavations carried out by Mr. D. Teviotdale and others brought to light many relics of a bygone age when the camp was occupied by the dusky warriors.

As a district to live in, Palmerston has few equals, with its picturesque volcanic cones scattered round about, with the imposing hill of Puketapu, on which stands the McKenzie monument, overlooking the township, and the distant peaks of Mt. Royal, Smiler's Peak, Mt. McKenzie, Taieri Peak and Middle Mount, the district is almost unique in its variety of scenery.

This was the stopping place for the wagons in the days of the goldfields. The coaches passed this way to Central Otago via the Pigroot; the Dunedin-Christchurch coaches changed horses here before the railway was opened, and in the days when Ned Devine held pride of place on his box seat, Palmerston was an important stopping place.

The Shag River provided good sport for the fishermen, hares were plentiful on the tussock hills, and wild duck were to be had on the lagoons near the coast. An odd stag or wild pig could occasionally be shot on the Horse Range; in fact Palmerston seemed to be the starting off place for all forms of sport.

Parties set out from here for Central Otago on quail shooting expeditions, fishermen journeyed to the Waitaki when the salmon were running; hare drives were organised at McRae's Flat, and in the winter evenings men gathered in the little club room to have a game of billiards and discuss the topics of the day.

One acquisition to the district I think I can fairly lay claim to have assisted in obtaining was the Palmerston Cottage Hospital. Great opposition to the project was at first met with, the local Borough Council being strongly opposed on the ground that it would add increased costs to the district in the way of rates.

But seeing there was no maternity home between Oamaru and Dunedin, the need for an establishment of this sort was of prime importance.

With my friend, Mr. Cambridge, who was a member of the Waihemo County Council, we persevered, and with the help of the Waikouaiti County Council, of which I was then a member, we kept up the pressure.

Finally we held a meeting in the Palmerston Town Hall. The chair was taken by the Mayor, the Hon. E. H. Clark. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Cambridge, Dr. Thomas, and myself, and a motion was carried unanimously in favour of establishing a cottage hospital.

The support of the Otago Hospital Board was then obtained, tenders were called, and the building, with accommodation for six beds, was erected in due course, the successful tenderer being Mr. Templeton, of Waikouaiti. The cost of the building was £5,000.

The opening ceremony was held in 1926, when members of the Hospital Board and numbers of doctors were present. Afternoon tea was provided and speeches made. The guests signed the visitors' book, and the building was declared open. The first Matron to take charge was Nurse Arnold, who from then on was kept constantly busy, all the beds being occupied on many occasions.

XXVIII.

EARLY SETTLERS

It would be out of place if at this stage the names of some of the old settlers in the Palmerston district were omitted.

Space will not permit me to go into details of all the early settlers, so I intend to confine myself to those with whom I personally came in contact or whose sons or relatives I met.

The name of Ross is closely identified with Palmerston and the surrounding district as far as Hillgrove. Mr. James Ross came to New Zealand in 1861. He then took a job shepherding in the Taieri district, living in a hut on the property now known as Mt. Allan. He once told me of an incident that happened soon after his arrival at that place.

In the hut with him was a sailor who had evidently been on the property for some time. Being short of meat, they decided to catch a wild pig, which was no difficult job in those days, pigs being fairly numerous.

Having secured the pig, with the help of the dogs, the sailor deliberately cut a leg off the animal and let it go again! Whether this was done to shock Ross or not is not related, but it certainly had that effect.

In the early 'seventies, with his brother David, who came to New Zealand in 1863, he leased the Meadowbank Estate, and the two brothers carried on a large business in sheep dealing, leasing the properties of Tumai, Goodwood and Bushey Park.

When the partnership was dissolved, Mr. James Ross bought Kartigi, where he resided for a number of years until he built his fine house on the Puketapu property where he resided until his death.

Mr. David Ross eventually owned property at McRae's Flat and Terrace Station, where he resided until his death, leaving two sons, Messrs David and George Ross, and one daughter, Mrs. E. H. Clark.

Another well-known figure in Palmerston was Mr. Roderick Cameron, commonly known as Rory. Mr. Cameron was a typical Scot, and could sing a good Scotch song whenever called upon—in fact, no function was complete without Rory.

Of a kindly nature and always ready to help a good cause, Rory was a friend one could always depend on.

He recently met his death, at the age of eighty-one, through an accident in which he slipped and fell, striking his head on the concrete steps on the Town Hall when coming out after an entertainment.

One of the earliest settlers in the district was Mr. W. S. Trotter, who came out to Australia in 1838. He came over to New Zealand in 1840, and was Johnny Jones' first manager at Cherry Farm, Waikouaiti. When he started on his own account, he took up land at Hillgrove, stocking up with sheep supplied by Johnny Jones instead of receiving payment for his services.

In 1859, he purchased the Greenvale Estate, near Lake Wakatipu, which was managed by his son, W. S. D. Trotter, for some years.

Other members of the family were Alex., Dr. N. G., of Riverton, R. A., J.D., of Woodlands, Mrs. Kauser, of Mataura, and Mrs. McPherson, of Totara. Mr. J. D. Trotter recently informed me he remembers when the last coach went through from Dunedin to Christchurch.

On that occasion, the horses ran away when coming through Trotters' Gorge. The coach was capsized and two of the passengers were killed.

XXIX.

QUAIL SHOOTING IN CENTRAL OTAGO

In 1920, Mr. Cameron bought the Hawksburn run, and once a year invited a few of his friends for a week's quail shooting in the month of May.

The Hawksburn property, which joined the Earnscleugh run, lay between the upper reaches of the Fraser River and Bannockburn, the homestead being on a small flat beside the Hawksburn creek.

MRS. HARPER and C. OVERTON,
Karitane, October, 1923.

[*See page 68*

CAMP HILL, CLYDEVALE, 1907.
H. Beaucham, C. F. Overton, D. Neave, J. Smith, C. Overton, G. S. Overton, P. McVea.

[*See page 44*

CLUTHA RIVER BOARD ON INSPECTION TOUR, 1917.

Reading from Left: D. T. Fleming, J. R. Mitchell, P. McInerny, John Begg.

[*See page 6*]

PALMERSTON COLLIE CLUB, 1923.

Back Row: Coutts, ——, G. Ross, C. F. Overton, E. Le Fevre, W. McDonald, J. Anderson, J. Philip, J. McCabe, R. Cameron, Ormsby, McDonald, D. Ross.

Front Row: P. Collins, F. Collins, J. Stewart, H. O'Neil, A. McWilliam, D. Walker, M. McCabe.

In Front: — Phillip, E. Phillip.

[*See page 79*]

The long, sunny gullies fringed with scattered patches of matagouri and silver tussock offered ideal shelter for quail, and when riding around it was a common occurrence to come across coveys of from fifty to a hundred birds in a flock.

Central Otago seems to be the natural breeding ground for game of all descriptions and, in addition to the quail, the chukor, which were liberated in the district about 1920, have obtained a firm hold and are now providing excellent sport for visitors to the district. Recently a notable American visitor described the shooting in Central Otago as the best in the world of its class.

The wonderfully bracing air in the autumn also combines to make it a delightful spot.

The first and most essential thing to have when quail shooting, next to a gun, is a good dog. Of the different breeds I have seen working, the black Labrador, Irish setter, retriever and spaniel were all good dogs when well under command. In fact, I have had a sheep dog that was equally good and would retrieve as well as any of them. The important factor is to have a dog with a good nose, who is a steady worker, and well under command. In some cases the heavier class of dog, when working steep or rocky country, were apt to tire, where one of the smaller breeds, being more active, found the going less difficult.

Quail as a rule frequented the same locality and generally with a couple of scouts out there was not much difficulty in finding the covey.

On being disturbed, the first flight was generally from three to four hundred yards, the birds making for a suitable rough face among rocks or a patch of scrub or fern where they could hide. The best shooting was always obtained when the flight settled in an open tussock gully where, advancing in a line with the two outside guns slightly in advance and carefully working the ground, excellent shooting could be obtained.

Among the rocks or in the gorges the shooting was more of the snapshot type and one had to be very quick to secure his bird, the average of one bird for two shots being considered very good.

The size of shot used was numbers six or eight, and unless the range was inside forty or fifty yards the small shot was very often of no effect, or perhaps the bird escaped wounded.

The best type of gun to use is one with one barrel choke for a long shot and for close range the ordinary twelve gauge.

Big bags were not the order of the day, and if any one of the party secured ten or twelve birds he considered it a good day's shooting.

When the chukor began to appear on the scene about 1930 onwards, this varied the shooting and it was a fortunate man who could add one or two of these birds to his bag. These splendid birds had to be stalked more than quail, and they had a habit of running along the ground just out of gunshot before taking flight. Unless one came on them suddenly, I think on the whole they were more difficult to obtain than their smaller friends the quail. The quality of their flesh is very white and delicate, and would be considered a great luxury on any table.

As a duck-shooting district, Central Otago has few equals: certainly in the quality and condition of the birds, no equal.

Ida Valley, Patearoa, the Styx and Lauder districts, with the numerous lagoons and creeks, are favourite haunts for the grey duck, mallard, spoonbill and Paradise duck.

The first year I shot in Central Otago at Patearoa in 1920, it was only on rare occasions that a mallard was shot. The last year I shot in Ida Valley was in 1943, fully half the birds were mallards or a cross between the two. Pukeko seem to hold their own and are everywhere numerous in the swamps.

Heavy snowstorms have on occasions thinned them out, but before long their numbers increase until in some cases they become a nuisance to the farmers, pulling the stacks of grain to pieces with their powerful beaks.

One day, when shooting with a party in a swamp in the Lauder district, I noticed a stoat tackle a pukeko. Several attempts were made by the stoat to jump on the bird's back and seize it by the back of the neck. Each time the attack failed, and the stoat was shaken off, until, tiring of the attempt, he gave it up, the pukeko flying off unhurt. This self-protective quality of the bird no doubt accounts for its numbers being maintained.

With the introduction of the hedgehog, which has a liking for eggs, I'm rather afraid the quail and chukor will be in for a bad time. The pukeko, being a bird which nests more in the swampy ground, may not suffer so severely.

Some of the finest duck shooting I have ever had was at Mr. L. Barrett's property, Ida Valley. A large pond surrounded by a few stunted willow trees was the favourite resort for hundreds of grey and mallard, with an occasional Paradise and spoonbill duck.

About five o'clock in the morning everyone was up and, after a fine breakfast prepared by our genial host and hostess, gum boots were put on, cartridge bags filled and with the guns all cleaned and made ready the previous night, we set off for the mai-mais.

There was room for from four to five guns round the pond and one had to get the decoys out and get into position before daylight broke.

There were always a few duck on the water when we approached in the morning, but, being too dark to shoot, these birds were allowed to fly away, possibly to return with others when they came in from the feeding grounds where they had been during the night. The general practice was for two men to occupy the mai-mais with perhaps one single position some distance off.

Great care was always taken in shootings, arrangements being made who was to take the birds on the right or left as they flew in. No shooting was permitted until it was light enough to see clearly, as the danger of only wounding birds and frightening others was incurred. When it was clear enough to see what we were doing the flight had commenced and, with other guns going in the distance, the ducks were kept on the move. About nine o'clock shooting began to slacken off and the bulk of the flight being over, the birds came in by twos and threes from then on.

About ten o'clock shooters came out of their mai-mais to compare notes, have a smoke, and a welcome cup of tea which some kind member of the family had brought out from the homestead.

The birds that had been shot were gathered and counted to see if the limit bag had been reached; those who had filled their quota went off to attend to duties on the farm, and from then on the shooting became desultory for the rest of the day.

In the evening, ducks began to come in again in decreased numbers, the majority having made their way up country to the lakes or large dams, where they would be out of reach of the guns.

In the evening, over a hearty meal, the doings of the day were recounted, and while someone described how he had got in a right and left bringing down his birds at eighty yards, others reminded him of how he had fired at a duck and placed the bulk of the charge in the trunk of a tell-tale willow tree, which still bore the scar the following season.

The next morning a few ducks always came back to the pond and enthusiasts were out again to try their luck, but, after an hour or two, very little was doing and the birds were allowed a respite till the following year.

XXX.

FISHING

The first fish I caught was in the Wairarapa Creek in Fendalton, Christchurch, in 1900, but the first decent-sized fish, a fine six-pound trout, was caught with live bait at the mouth of the Waikari River where it runs into the Hurunui, in 1900. This fish, by the greatest piece of luck, was landed with a gaff made out of an eel hook tied to a bamboo stick.

From that time on I have fished in most of the rivers from the Hurunui in North Canterbury to the Waiau in Southland.

The heaviest fish was caught in the Waitaki, a fine seven-pound trout, and the largest catch made in the Shag River. The Pomakaha provided some good catches, but nothing very large.

The Waipahi, I think, is one of the best fishing streams in Otago, and in Southland the Otapiri and Lora streams would take a lot of beating.

Some good catches have been made at the mouth of the Waiau when the run is on, and further upstream some good rainbow and Atlantic salmon have been taken.

In company with my old friend, T. H. Pilbrow, we made several trips to the Waitaki from Palmerston. Once when the salmon were running we were fishing a short distance apart near the mouth and both using the same sort of tackle. My mate hooked, and I landed for him, three fine fish weighing twenty-six, twenty-two and sixteen pounds, in the space of half an hour, while I got nothing.

As I had occasion to return to Palmerston, it was decided I should take the fish, my friend saying he would soon catch plenty more. All through the rest of that day and the day following, not a single bite was obtained, thus showing fisherman's luck.

On another occasion, we were at Te Anau together fishing for Atlantic salmon in 1929. Altogether we took nine fish, the heaviest being nine pounds, with several others six and eight pounds. Out of this catch, eight were taken on my rod and one on his.

The best night's fishing I ever had was on the Shag River. One warm evening with a mild north-west wind blowing, I took twelve fine fish out of a stretch of water fifty yards long on the red Pomahaka fly in about half an hour, several fish weighing two pounds and over.

Good fishing can be had in the Lakes districts, both rainbow and quinnat salmon providing good sport.

The headwaters of the Wilkin and Young Rivers and the Makarora are favourite spots where some good rainbow can be taken readily with live bait or minnow. Horseshoe bend and Rainbow reach on the Waiau between Te Anau and Manapouri are favourite spots.

The Oreti River is a very disappointing stream in the lower reaches from Dipton down. In appearance, an ideal fishing stream, the proportion of small, untakeable fish by far outnumbers those of a takeable size. The large fish seem to move upstream, and in the upper reaches fish up to eight pounds are sometimes taken.

Since the destruction of eels commenced and the canning process started, fishing conditions on this river may improve.

The many thousands of these enemies of the trout that have been taken out of the rivers of Southland during the last three years must have a beneficial effect on the restocking of the streams. Shags take their toll of the trout population and are responsible for the thinning out of large numbers.

I have frequently shot these birds, and on opening them up found the stomach full of trout in different stages of digestion.

I once spent three very good days at the Manorburn dam when three of us took sixty-six fish of an average weight of three pounds.

A rather amusing incident happened there during our visit. With the caretaker of the dam, McEwan we were fly fishing at night, when by a piece of bad luck he hooked himself in the point of the nose, the hook sinking in deep over the barb. On returning to the hut it fell to my lot to extract the hook, so taking a pair of pliers and giving a steady pull the hook was extracted while the tears rolled down the poor fellow's cheeks.

XXXI.

BUSHEY

In August, 1924, the alterations to the house at Bushey being finished, we moved in to our new quarters.

This small farm lay on both sides of the Shag River and consisted of good flat land suitable for growing almost anything, but was used by us for growing turnips and green food for the hill country sheep in the winter.

On rare ocasions this flat land was subject to flood when the melting snow up country and heavy rain made the river rise very rapidly. Once I had to get out in the middle of the night to shift the sheep on to higher ground, but during the six years that I owned the farm we fortunately did not lose any.

In 1923 I decided to try some lucerne and, after top-dressing about eight acres with lime, we sowed the paddock out in rows fourteen inches apart and then across at right angles at the same distance. The first cut was allowed to lie on the ground and was made before the plants had become fully developed. The second cut produced a fine crop of hay, which was stacked and fed out to cows and other stock during the winter—the cows milking particularly well on the hay.

When weeds commenced to appear among the crop, we put the cultivator over the paddock to check their growth without doing any damage to the lucerne. One thing I noticed in particular was that a patch of Californian thistles was completely smothered out by the lucerne.

Some years after selling the property I learned that the lucerne was still holding and producing fine crops of hay: It is surprising to me that more of this splendid fodder crop is not grown.

Situated on the terrace above the river bank facing the sun, the warm loamy soil offered an ideal site for a garden where marrows and other vegetables could be grown without difficulty. The last year we were there we cut forty-five large marrows out of the patch, the largest one taking first prize at the Palmerston Show. Living so close to the water, it was not long before we had a small boat, and when opportunity offered we sometimes made for the mouth of the river with the boat in a spring-cart and netted flounders when the tide was suitable.

This was a favourite spot for Palmerston fishermen, several of whom had nets, and great hauls of mullet, besides flounders, were frequently taken.

About 1923 the Palmerston Collie Club was formed and a course laid off for the trials in Mr. John Philips' paddock on the slopes of Puketapu. Successful gatherings were held here every year, large numbers of dogs coming to compete from a long distance.

One well-known figure on the field for many years was Mr. John Anderson, of Bog Roy, whose capable qualifications as judge always gave satisfaction.

The local farmers' class always provided plenty of amusement for the spectators, who turned out in large numbers to see the sport.

The Palmerston Gun Club was also started about 1923, and proved a very popular sport. A shoot was held every Saturday at clay pigeons, competitors coming from McRae's Flat, Waikouaiti, and occasionally from Dunedin.

Thus, with cricket and athletic sports in the summer months, dog trials and shooting in the winter, the district provided plenty of entertainment practically the whole year round.

One might almost wonder where the work on the farms came in, but, being principally tussock country, very little cultivation was necessary for wintering the stock, and the men that usually gathered at these functions had the time to spare after their sheep work was done.

Although we were comfortably situated with a good home at Bushey, the properties were too scattered. With Goodwood on the sea coast and Taieri Peak about four miles off, a lot of travelling was required to attend to the different properties.

About this time land and stock were selling well, and as I was offered a good property in Southland we decided to sell Taieri Peak and then dispose of the other properties at Goodwood and Bushey later on.

In March, 1926, Taieri Peak was sold to Mr. George Hudson, and in April, after an inspection of the Lora Station in Southland, the latter property was purchased, possesion being taken in May.

XXXII.

LORA, SOUTHLAND

Lora had been originally part of the old Reaby run which was taken up by John Chubbin in 1857, and was originally Run 119B. His partner, George Gunn, taking the northern portion between the Otamita stream and Waimea, which was Run 119A. This information is given by Mr. Herries Beattie in his history of the Southern Runs.

In 1868 the Campbell Brothers came into the picture when they acquired Reaby, the western boundary of which was the Lora stream, although at that time the stream had not been named until Taylor came to live there.

This stream, as far as I can gather from old records, was the eastern boundary of Run 148, Benmore, belonging to Hugh McLean, who leased a block of 25,000 acres to Taylor for a term of seven years.

This took in all the country from the Lora Stream to the Otapiri and down the Otapiri Gorge as far as Dodd's Hill, about half a mile from where Mr. George Wadworth now lives.

Taylor's house was then in the paddock now belonging to Warwick Downs and known as the Chimney Paddock, where part of the old chimney still stands. The old lease which Mr. J. A. Taylor of Lora Gorge lent me some years ago describes the boundaries as follows:—Benmore, Hockanuis, 27th May, 1861.

> Memorandum of agreement between Hugh McLean, sheepfarmer, Benmore Hockanuis, Otago, New Zealand, on the first part and John Taylor, sheepfarmer, Breakfast Creek, Victoria, on the second part.
>
> That is to say that the said Hugh McLean agrees to lease a portion of his station, Hockanui, say about twenty-five thousand acres, and bounded as follows:—
>
> On the West Otapiri Creek running from North to South, on the North Run No. 136 occupied by McCallum, on the East Run 119 occupied by Gunn by a line running South on North Peak and Bare Hill on the South by a line that divides the same from the two thousand acres block, the same as described above.
>
> Hugh McLean agrees to lease to John Taylor for the term of seven years at the rate of £100 sterling per year for the first three years, that is to say from January 1st,

OLD HOMESTEAD, LORA, BUILT BY TAYLOR, 1869.

[*See page 80*

LORA HOMESTEAD, 1940.

[*See page 81*

THE LORA ROAD, 1928.

[See page 83

LORA WOOLSHED, BUILT ABOUT 1870.

[See page 82

1862, to January 1st, 1865, and from the last mentioned date and year to January 1, 1869, say the remaining four years at the rate of £200 sterling per year.

Further, John Taylor agrees to pay the assessment due to the Government for stock depasturing on the said run during the term of his lease.

Signed, Hugh McLean, John Taylor.

Witness to signature, Angus M. Cameron.

John Taylor was the original lessee, and the property was worked by his two sons, Robert and Angus. Evidently another hut was built later on about two miles east of the first; the position being pointed out to me by the late Robert Stuart, and when ploughing a few years ago old mattacks and axe heads were turned up close to the remains of the old chimney.

The Taylors evidently intended to apply to the Government for land in this locality, but at the end of their lease in 1869 the Benmore people bought a long narrow strip of land on which Taylor's hut was built, thus pushing them out.

The two brothers then went across the Lora Stream and made their homestead there, buying a block of the Reaby Run from the Campbell's, which is part leasehold 2,560 acres, and about 4,600 acres freehold.

Robert Taylor lived here until about 1895, when he was practically eaten out by the rabbits, his brother Angus residing on the property in the Lora Gorge district, where his nephew, Mr. J. A. Taylor, now lives.

Lora lay almost idle then for some time, passing through the hands of the N.Z. Loan and Mercantile Company, Mr. Devery, Mr. Kidd and Mr. Blatch.

Mr. Kidd only held the run for two years, but during that time by poisoning and liberating the natural enemy of the rabbit he practically cleared them out.

Mr. Blatch occupied the run for seventeen years, and about 1910 built a new house. About 1922 Mr. Blatch bought part of the old Benmore run, which had been through the hands of John McRae, commonly called Long Johnny, and two others, Collier and Coombes. This added another 1,800 acres to Lora, and in 1926, when Mr. Blatch sold out, that was the extent of the property.

In 1928, I added another 260 acres adjoining, which was held by W. Matthews, and in 1929 we took over another block belonging to the late Robert Stuart of 560 acres.

The system of gridironing in the early days was a practice largely followed by purchasers of land. Strips of land were taken up which made it impossible for an outsider to come in between, this enabling a man to hold a larger area of country than at the time he could pay for. This method was adopted when the Benmore people pushed the Taylors out at the end of their lease.

The wool from Lora in the early days was carted by bullock wagon over to Dipton, the wheel ruts of the old track being still visible when we went to Lora in 1926.

In fact, that was the only road into the station at that time, no formation being made except in the cuttings, and no metal had been laid. Chains had to be used whenever the road was wet, and often the car got bogged and we had to finish up on foot.

Mr. Blatch had a shed built at Warwick Downs, where he left his car in the winter, driving in the six miles to Lora with a horse and buggy. This, however, did not suit me, and with a family of five other means of access was necessary.

The first time I went in to Lora in a car we got stuck at the last creek near the house, and had to get pulled out with a horse, but as the property took my eye from the first, I considered a good road could be obtained later.

We at once set about obtaining this, and applied to the County Council for a grant for formation and metalling. As the reply was very evasive, and the prospects of obtaining anything were very remote, I at once proceeded to Wellington to interview the Minister of Public Works.

On putting the position before him, he said: "It is time you fellows in the backblocks had a turn. You shall have a grant of £600 straight out and some more if I have it to spare next year."

The following year we got £700, and with these two sums available, the road was formed in to the homestead from the end of the metal at Warwick Downs.

By continual requests and deputations to the Southland County Council and different Ministers of Public Works, the metalling right into the homestead was completed in 1938, after twelve years' battling; and whereas in 1926 we could not get a lorry to come all the way in for twenty bales of wool—we had to cart it out in a dray and meet the lorry—in 1938 a lorry came right in to the homestead and took out forty-six bales in one load.

When we moved from Palmertson to Lora an express van was engaged to take the household furniture from one place to the other.

On arriving at Warwick Downs, where an old schoolmate of mine, Mr. Wadworth, lived, the driver of the van refused to go any further. The furniture was unloaded into the Warwick woolshed and had to be carted in by the Lora wagon the last six miles.

The first time the wagon went out for a load of bricks, for the chimney of the new men's quarters we were erecting, the horses got stuck in the mud and the dray had to be sent out to take part of the load off the wagon. Then the dray became bogged and had to be unloaded again before it could be extricated.

For twelve months I had to take to the tussocks, coming over the big hill, as the mud was so bad on the cutting. The car would not go up with the chains on. One night coming home I turned the car round and went up the hill backwards as the chains gripped better that way.

The amazing thing about it all was that the property had been paying rates all those years, and yet nothing had been done to the road.

As the Goodwood and Bushey properties were not sold till September, 1926, Mr. W. Robson, the shepherd, was left to look after Lora until the spring.

In the first week of October we all moved into the Lora homestead. It was a beautiful day and all the daffodils were out, making a fine show on our arrival.

The isolation of the place after being so near the township of Palmerston was very noticeable at first, especially for womenfolk, who had been used to a more social life. This difficulty was overcome to a certain degree later by the establishment of a household school.

At that time the Government had a scheme to assist out-of-the-way places where children were not within reach of a school, by establishing household schools.

With this view in end I had interviewed the Minister of Education when in Wellington about the road, and had received a promise that assistance would be given.

As we were building new quarters for the shearers' accomodation, a large sitting room was erected which was suitable for a school room when not required at shearing time, and in this building school was carried on for four years until the family were old enough to go to town to school.

With the Robson family of three children and five of our own, we had no difficulty in obtaining a teacher who boarded in the house with us. The first teacher was Miss Flynn, and she was followed by Miss Rona May, Mr. Golden, Miss Treloar, Miss Finlayson and Miss McConachie.

In December, 1926, my father, who was then eighty-seven, came down from Christchurch to have a look round and during his visit we rode over most of the run together, a remarkable feat for a man of his age. He lived to see his eighty-eighth birthday, and died on November 27th, 1927, being buried in the Waimari Cemetery, Christchurch.

As the family grew older and passed their examinations they left home and went to boarding schools, Nigel going to Christ's College and Nancy to Archerfield, but as the younger ones grew up we decided to take a house in Dunedin, as the boarding-out of five children was going to be too expensive. And so, in January, 1930, we bought the house in Driver's Road, Maori Hill, where the three boys stayed with their grandmother and from there attended the Maori Hill School and afterwards the Otago Boys' High School, Nancy going on from Archerfield to study Home Science at Studholme House.

It was at this time we began to feel the depression, and having just bought the house in Dunedin, I was at my wits end, like many others, to know what to do.

The only thing was to cut down expenses to the lowest possible degree. All the family was brought home and Nigel left Christ's College after three years there. The smaller members of the family took correspondence lessons and, after one term at home, Nancy was awarded a scholarship and went back to Archerfield.

For the next five years the whole country struggled on in the throes of the worst depression that had ever been experienced. However, we managed to hang on until times improved. The boys went back to school and completed their course at the Otago High School, where they all gave a good account of themselves both in the field of sport and the classroom.

As the two eldest boys came home they were of great assistance on the run and soon had a team of dogs each to give a hand with the mustering.

Chaffcutting was an ordeal we did not look forward to in the early occupation of Lora. We took over an old plant with the place which at one time belonged to the Plains Station. The portable engine had to be hauled about by horses and the old Andrews and Beaven cutter had seen better days.

The first day's operations will always be remembered, having made a lasting impression on my mind.

Loads of wood had been carted out with the wagon from the bush ready for the event, and at six a.m. the fire was lit ready to get up steam in the engine. After breakfast more wood was piled on until the steam pressure was up to 80lbs., which was the maximum allowed on the certificate. Belts were put on, knives sharpened and bearings well oiled.

The signal to go was given and away she went for about five minutes, when the elevator became choked. By the time we had cleared this, the steam had run down to about 30lbs., and we had to set to and stoke up again. Finally we got going again and had just started when the belt broke, which meant another stoppage of a quarter of an hour to rivet the break. The steam meantime had been leaking out in all directions and by this time was again down to 30lbs.

This went on all morning, and when dinner time came we had one sack of chaff cut. The rest of the day was spent in overhauling everything, and then we had to cart more wood for the firing. The second day we got going again and eventually managed to get a small stack cut. Later we purchased a tractor to drive the cutter.

The old engine was later sold to Mr. Robert Stuart, of Glenwood, who wanted it to drive his circular saw. He obtained an expert from Invercargill, who overhauled the engine, putting in new packing and other parts that required repairing.

On the day the engine was to start Mr. Stuart extended an invitation to one or two to be present. Steam was got up and when we arrived the pressure gauge was registering 65lbs.

At first the engine would not start, but after a little coaxing away she went at top, almost jumping into the air with pent-up vigour from her new works. Suddenly there was a loud explosion and steam started to fly out everywhere. Everyone fled for cover, some going behind the woolshed and looking round the corner, others keeping a safe distance.

The big fly wheel, which had been revolving at a great rate, gradually slowed down until it stopped, the steam still continuing to escape in all directions from the pipe which had burst in the boiler.

To-day the old engine sits in the same spot at Glenwood with her wheels off where she nearly frightened three months' growth out of the residents.

While on the topic of Glenwood, something might be said of the man who first took the property up. Mr. Robert Stuart was a bachelor until seventy-six years of age, and was one of Nature's gentlemen.

As a boy he had been in the service of the Duke of Richmond and was very proud of the fact that he had once cleaned Queen Victoria's boots when she was on a visit to the Duke.

Coming out to New Zealand as a young man, he had spent his early days in shepherding on several of the large stations in North Canterbury.

For some time he was with John Macfarlane at Hawkswood, and the other stations where he worked were Cheviot, then owned by Ready Money Robinson; Parnassus, which was then managed by Thomas Robinson, a brother of Ready Money's; St. Leonard's, the property of Wilkin and Davison; and in the North Island he was for a number of years with Mr., later Sir Walter, Buchanan, in the Wairarapa district.

He was an expert at many things. Setting up his own sawmill, he cut a large part of the timber for his own house. The saw was driven by a large water wheel, which was also his own handiwork. On wet days he would be found in the blacksmith's shop where, with a good set of tools, he could turn out many useful articles required on a farm.

The same blacksmith's shop nearly came to grief one day and I was there to witness the incident.

The old gentleman had been to Invercargill where he purchased a new car. On the way home he had tried her out, in his way, and in passing a traction engine on the road capsized in the ditch.

The car was righted again and, not being seriously damaged, he continued on his journey home, with a lump on his head the size of a pigeon's egg and several pieces of skin knocked off his face and hands. When I came along he was sitting in the car at the entrance gate, where the hand brake had become jammed.

I got out to help him and opened the gate, at the same time offering to put the car in the shed for him. Being of a very independent spirit he said he might as well learn to do it himself; so away he went while I walked up to open the door of the shed which was about eighty yards away.

On approaching the shed the car gathered speed rapidly, and by the time the door was reached it must have been travelling at thirty miles per hour.

With a crash that could be heard half a mile away, the brand new car took everything before it, only stopping when the point of the anvil had pierced the radiator and the front end finished up against the stout fireplace.

When I arrived on the scene one of the doors was lying across the bonnet of the car and the old man was crawling out from under the wreckage, saying: " She will be the death of me yet!" Fortunately, no bones were broken and only for the shock no damage was done, but the car was considerably the worse for the accident.

Shortly after that Mr. Stuart married, and after six years of married life died at his home, Glenwood, in 1935, at the age of eighty-two.

Mr. Stuart had some great anecdotes he was fond of relating. On one occasion when he was with Mr. Buchanan they had to take a large mob of cattle down to the sale. On the road they had to cross a large bridge which the cattle stubbornly refused to take. After numerous attempts to force the mob on to the bridge, the cattle broke and, jumping the adjoining fence, flattened out a Maori pa which was close by, women and children running in all directions.

Another time they were taking cattle over the bridge when a big bullock refused to move either way. All efforts to shift him were of no avail, so they decided the only course was to shoot the beast, which they did, and then, to prevent the traffic being blocked, cut the animal in pieces, and threw him in the river. Meat cannot have been so precious in those days as it is to-day.

XXXIII.

CATTLE

One of the first jobs we had at Lora was to clean out the wild cattle that came out of the bush, very often leading the Herefords astray with them when they very soon became as wild as themselves.

The first ride round I had with Robson we took a rifle each in case we ran across something worth shooting.

When we had gone about a mile out from the house we struck a mob of nine wild pigs rooting among the tussocks. We managed to get two of these, and on nearing the top boundary near the Retreat we spotted a wild bull and three

cows. As soon as they saw us they made off into the open as we were between them and the bush. Making a circle round to the left the bull left the cows and tried to regain the bush. We both galloped to cut him off and, not knowing the country very well, I arrived at the top of a steep face round the foot of which the bull was going at top.

Dismounting as quickly as possible, I got in a couple of shots which hit him in the flank, but had no effect whatever. Robson, who had followed round the face of the hill below me, then appeared on the scene and with a well-directed shot from an old Snider carbine, hit the bull in the back just above the kidneys. The beast crumped up like a ball and rolled head over heels and was soon finished off with a knife.

It was several years before these beasts were exterminated, the last were two Jersey cross bulls we managed to yard with the run cattle.

A schoolmate of the boys, Bob Cotton, of Waipori, was staying with us at the time, and was sitting on the rail of the stockyard looking at the bulls. The rail suddenly gave way and Bob fell into the yard. Like a shot one of the bulls came at him, tearing his trousers half off while he lay on the ground. More damage would undoubtedly have been done had not those present attacked the bull with good stout sticks and driven him off. Poor Bob afterwards lost his life while serving in the Air Force over Germany.

For a hardy breed of cattle that will stand up to hill country, the Hereford so far had proved to be the best. The butchers, however, prefer the Black Polled or Shorthorn cross.

Up to 1938 we had stuck to the pure Hereford, but after discussing the matter with several leading butchers in Dunedin, we decided to go in for a Black Polled Angus bull.

The result was quite all right as long as the crossbred heifers were not kept to breed from. They did not thrive so well on the rough country and, if anything, were not so well developed.

The demand for Black Polled Hereford cross cattle remains keen, preference always being given at auction for anything with the Black cross in it.

With calves selling at £6 per head at weaning time, cattle fill an important role on run country. Calves can play an important part on the farming lands on the low country, and many farmers are beginning to find out the value of running a few cattle to keep the rough feed down.

TWO-TOOTH WETHERS, LORA, 1938.

[*See page 90*

LORA HOGGETS, 1948.

[*See page 91*

DUCK SHOOTING, IDA VALLEY, MAY 1, 1943.

[*See page 75*

THE FAMILY, LORA, 1939.

[*See page 92*

XXXIV.

THE COMING OF THE TRACTOR

About 1938 the days of the horse became numbered for team work. Teamsters were difficult to obtain and with the tractor the work could be finished earlier. Except for odd jobs about the place the tractor was relied on for the bulk of the work.

As some of the country was inclined to be hilly, the crawler type of tractor was found to be the most useful and the safest.

With the advent of the tractor the necessity to grow so much oats for horse feed was dispensed with, and this in turn gave us more time to increase the acreage for turnips.

More liming was carried out, pastures began to improve, stock thrived better and the carrying capacity increased. Previous to liming operations, grass that had been sown out in a paddock this year would run out in three years' time, very little clover made its appearance and would not last more than one year in the ground.

With the application of one ton of lime per acre when sowing out the grass, the result could be seen in the pasture eight to ten years afterwards.

Two tons per acre brought better results still, with good strikes of clover and cocksfoot. A paddock that would carry one sheep per acre before liming now carried three, and in addition cattle had to be put on to keep down the rough growth. In a small paddock that had five tons of carbonate of lime per acre over a period of five years, the pasture was quite good eight years later, with plenty of clover and cocksfoot. This paddock was kept for a cow paddock.

Top-dressing with superphosphate was tried after liming, but no actual difference could be noticed in the pasture where strips had been sown. Although the addition of super may have beneficial results on the grazing qualities of the pasture, land on hill country does not respond to the top-dressing of super like the farm lands on the flat.

Carbonate of lime seems to provide the necessary stimulus to the soil on the Hokonuis and, with the addition of turnip and grain manure when putting in the crops, results seem to be quite satisfactory.

By the time the land has received from four to five tons of lime per acre over a period of, say, ten years, the pasture becomes almost permanent.

The wonderful asset Nature has endowed Southland with in her vast lime deposits is assisting year by year to increase the capabilities of the province to produce the finest fat lambs in New Zealand.

The advent of the drain plough, then the use of lime, which became more general when the tractors and lorries came into use, has helped to make Southland what it is to-day. Generally decried by the north and looked on as the Cinderella province of New Zealand, the amount of produce turned off Southland gives this the lie direct.

Southland heads the list for first prize fat lambs on the Smithfield market for the South Island. She also holds the record of 110 bushels of wheat per acre and 140 bushels of oats. As a grass seed growing district she is now self-supporting and during the war exported large quantities of clover and other seeds. One-third of the grass seed grown in New Zealand is produced in Southland and from eight to nine hundred tons of Fescue is harvested annually.

Settlers in Southland never have a complete failure, they are never subject to droughts, and with the average rainfall per annum of thirty-five to forty-five inches, one is always assured of good results with either turnips or white crops.

Twenty years ago the late Sir William Hunt told me that they had great difficulty in selling Southland meat on the London market. To-day, owing to the introduction of the Southdown Romney cross breed, fat lambs from Southland are equal to the best produced in New Zealand and are keenly competed for on the markets of the Old Country.

On the great extent of good farming land in the province, an average of three ewes per acre is carried, and in some cases up to four or five. These ewes produce very often 120 to 150 per cent. of lambs, and where liming and top-dressing has been carried out the bulk of these lambs go away fat off their mothers at weaning time.

I think I am correct in saying that Southland has the highest lambing percentage in New Zealand, and the highest average yield of white crops.

In 1945 the percentage of lambs for the whole Dominion was 92.64, while Southland's percentage was 97.51. In 1946 the figures were: Dominion 89.54, Southland 94.06. In 1947: Dominion 93.11, Southland 97.22. In order to show the increase in the production of the fat sheep and lamb industry in Southland during the last twenty years from 1928 to 1948, the fol-

lowing figures have kindly been supplied by the manager of the Southland Frozen Meat Company:—

In 1928	.. ..	449,621 Total killings.
1948	.. ..	2,023,633 „ „
Increase	.. ..	1,564,012

These figures represent the increase over the province from the works at Makarewa, Mataura and Ocean Beach, besides large numbers sent to northern works at Balclutha, Burnside and Pareora.

This increase of over a million and a-half is due principally to liming, top-dressing and the introduction of the Southdown ram and Romney ewe.

The drain plough has also played a large part in the development of the soil to its present state of fertility. Apart from its productive qualities, the scenic attractions of Southland make it one of the finest localities in New Zealand.

Tourists who have widely travelled consider the rugged grandeur of the Eglinton Valley and the Sounds unsurpassed anywhere in the world, while the beauty of Queenstown, Lake Wakatipu and the Remarkables are sights unequalled anywhere in New Zealand.

As a centre for winter sports, Quenstown is becoming a favourite resort for ski-ing enthusiasts from all over the South Island. The Routeburn Valley and Paradise are other trips that should not be missed by tourists while visiting Queenstown, while Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau, apart from a fishing point of view, offer another variety of scenery that is hard to equal anywhere in the Dominion.

In short, anyone who is a visitor to this country has not seen New Zealand until a trip has been made round the Southern Lakes and Sounds of the South Island.

These pages would not be complete without paying a tribute to the wives and mothers who have played such a great part in the develoument of this country.

Toiling early and late in the home and in many cases helping with the work outside, while at the same time rearing a family, the wives of men on the land are deserving of the highest praise that it is possible to give. Had they been a militant body and demanded payment at award rates for the

hours they work, no payment would have been high enough for them. Content to plod on in order to make a success of the venture, in many cases unable to obtain help, whether in sickness or in health, they keep going for the sake of the home and all that it means to them. Is it any wonder that under this strain they grow old before their time and in many cases do not live long enough to see and enjoy the reward they so richly have earned.

These are no extravagant statements as I know only too well from personal experience, and the lot of the country woman to-day needs seriously looking into. Some method must be adopted to obtain help for the present-day housewife.

Thousands of immigrants who would be only too willing to come to this country should be trained and sent out to the country districts to help in the houses. All the attraction now seems to be in the towns, where high wages and short hours entice young people away from the country districts.

At the same time conditions in the country should be made more attractive and proper quarters provided for domestic help. With a prosperous farming community this could all be arranged if the same building facilities were granted in the country as the town. Hostels should be built where domestic help should be trained and made available to those who require them.

In September, 1939, World War II broke out and my two eldest boys joined up with the Otago Mounted Rifles, going into camp the following April. Later, Nigel went overseas with a commission in the 20th Armoured Regiment and Ian left with the 23rd Machine Gun Battalion.

After two years' service in Italy, during which they were both wounded, peace was declared and they both returned to Lora.

During the anxious period of the war we carried on with the help of the other two boys when not in camp and any other assistance that was available.

In July, 1940, owing to the death of my wife, outside help had to be obtained, and eventually my daughter, who had been teaching at Nga Tawa College in the North Island, came home to keep house for us, until she married in 1942. Her husband, Mr. S. H. Paterson, shortly after his marriage leaving for service in the Pacific.

XXXV.

WAITANGI, FEBRUARY 6, 1940

As the Bay of Islands had considerable interest for me through the operations of my forbears in that locality in the early days of the settlement, I decided to attend the Centenary Celebrations of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi on February 6th, 1840.

The Treaty House itself was an object of great interest, as, in April, 1839, my great-uncle, whose portrait hangs in the room of the house, which has been set apart for the museum, had dined with the Governor of the Colony, Mr. Busby.

Thanks to Lord Bledisloe, the whole building had been renovated and a block of land set apart as a national reserve to commemorate the historical spot where the Treaty had been signed in 1840.

The grounds had been improved and native trees and shrubs planted which in time to come will become an attractive spot for tourists apart from the historical memories attached to the place.

We left Kororareka in the launch on a perfect morning to cross the Bay for the Treaty House where the celebrations were to be held. Crowds of people were gathering in from all directions, some by road, others by boat, and at 11 a.m. the Bay presented a sight not to be forgotten.

A cruiser with the Governor-General, Lord Galway, and staff on board lay at anchor in the stream bedecked with flags from stem to stern, while yachts and boats of every description and size dotted the harbour.

Two large war canoes, one of them manned by over a hundred Maoris in Native dress, made an imposing sight as, with paddles flashing in the sunlight, they circled round the waterfront before taking part in the official landing ceremony on the beach, where, drawn up before them, were lady riders on horseback and early settlers all in old-time dress waiting to receive the official party as they landed.

As the representative of Governor Hobson and his staff came ashore they proceeded along the path from the beach to a site on the lawn in front of the Treaty House, where a table was set out in front of a marquee for the convenient signing of the document. Before the table and seated on the ground were the representatives of the various tribes, who

were in turn called upon to sign, each chief marching up and down with his taiaha in his hand making his speech before signing.

On the right of the stand occupied by Governor Hobson and his staff was erected a large dais, under the shelter of which sat the Governor-General with representatives of the Government, churches, mayors and city councillors, military officers and other notables, some from as far off as Australia.

Inside the roped off enclosure sat relatives of early day settlers, and others acting in an official capacity. Outside crowds thronged every vantage point to get a view of the proceedings. Hundreds of Maoris in their war paint made the sight one never to be forgotten, and when the war dance was performed the ground almost shook with the tramp of the warriors' feet.

In the adjoining trees were perched dozens of young fellows anxious to get a view of the proceedings, two of whom came to grief when a large branch broke about twenty-five feet from the ground. With a resounding thud the two men hit the ground, one of them having to receive medical attention.

After the signing of the Treaty had been completed, the crowd gathered in front of the Ruananga or meeting house, where a haka was performed before the opening ceremony.

Then followed the unveiling of the monument to commemorate the signing of the Treaty, after which the crowds began to disperse, the Natives to their feast round the camp ovens and the others taking launch and boat back to their respective destinations.

While staying at Kororareka, or Russell, as it is more frequently called, I visited the house built for Bishop Pompalier in 1836. With its two-foot thick walls built to withstand the attack of hostile Natives, the old building occupies a picturesque site with its well-kept lawns and beautiful Nikau palm trees in the foreground.

The occupants, Miss Stevenson and her brother, were daughter and son of the late Captain Stevenson and were grand-niece and nephew of the well-known chief Tamate Waka Nene, who was a great friend of my grandfather and who played such a large part in obtaining the signatures of other chiefs to the Treaty.

Another interesting spot was Flagstaff Hill. This was the scene of fighting when the town was sacked by Hone Heke

in the early 'forties, the flagstaff being cut down by the Natives four times before the present one was erected by friendly Maoris, who dragged the present pole to its position on top of the hill.

The church, also erected in 1836, still bears the mark of shrapnel fired from the British warship when the village was occupied by the rebels under Hone Heke.

Altogether the little township of Russell, which at one time was the scene of great debauchery in the whaling days, still presents many attractions to the visitor. Many boats make this their headquarters for the sport of sword fishing, visitors coming from all over the world.

Paihia, just across the bay, is another historic spot. Here the first printing press was set up on the mission station and operated by the Rev. Mr. Colenso. Underneath an old fig tree the site was pointed out to me by an early resident. Here also, the church erected by the Williams' family stands as a monument to the early day missionary of that name who shared the hardship and dangers of those early pioneers.

XXXVI.

CONCLUSION

In these pages I have tried to set out the experiences of an ordinary young man starting on the land without much capital during the last fifty years.

The going has at times been hard and never easy. One buys experience as time goes on and, unless the knowledge thus gained is retained, misfortune is liable to crop up at any old time.

First of all one must know what calling he is going to follow. A young man at eighteen or twenty should then have some idea or ambition to go either on the land or take up a profession.

Farming to-day is not what it was fifty years ago. In 1900, for a small outlay of capital, one could secure a large enough property to start on; and for preference, a leasehold with security of tenure and a long lease offered the best opportunity on pastoral country. This tenure enabled a man with a small amount of capital to get a start. The Cheviot settlement, where the tenure was 999 years, has been one of the most successful settlements in New Zealand.

Having decided what calling you are going to follow, it is necessary to get some knowledge of the task ahead of you and it is very important at this stage to be in touch with capable men who understand their job, in other words, men who have made a success of their calling. Be always ready to learn and keep an eye open for any points that you can pick up to your advantage. Eventually you will reach a stage when you will gain confidence in yourself and your own judgment, and having reached that stage, do not be afraid to act on it.

To be a successful farmer one must be a good judge of stock, and to gain that knowledge it is a great help to attend shows and compare the different classes of animals in the prize ring or pen. Some men have a natural gift for judging good stock, but others may have to study the different types for years and then not become very competent. As a general rule, a farmer should know what suits his country best. For instance, it is common knowledge that Hereford cattle are more hardy than the Shorthorn breed and will thrive on rough country where a Shorthorn would starve. At the same time, a Shorthorn beast will make perhaps better beef if running on suitable country where good pastures and shelter is obtained.

A sound knowledge of implements is also an essential factor for successful farming where any agricultural work is done. The correct setting of a plough so that the right type of furrow is turned is an art in itself.

In these modern times, when so many different implements are in use, one almost needs to be a mechanic to be able to handle them efficiently. In this respect, it is very important to have a man who thoroughly understands his job. Inexperienced men sometimes come on to a place demanding high wages and without the necessary knowledge, the result being that before long through want of oil, or careless handling, the owner finds himself faced with a heavy bill for repairs, which very often have to be attended to in the middle of sowing time, when every hour lost is of such vital importance.

The time is not far distant when every man who claims to have a knowledge of farming and who is seeking employment, will have to produce a certificate qualifying him to do the work which he claims to be able to perform. A term of apprenticeship should have to be served the same as in any trade, before a man would be entitled to expect top wages.

On one occasion, I engaged a teamster to take a five-horse team and do some ploughing, and on going out to see how he was getting on the following morning, I found he had one

horse yoked to the short end of the swing tree and the other four on the long end, yet full wages had to be paid as though the man was a fully qualified teamster.

The same applies to shearing or any other farm work. The inefficient hand has to be paid at the same rate as the fully qualified one. Sheep shearing is one thing where a bad cut or rough handling of a sheep can mean the loss of that animal.

Careful handling of stock is one of the most important points in farming. Sheep, when going through a gateway, should be carefully watched to avoid crushing, especially ewes in lamb, when great damage can be done by crowding against the posts each side.

A rough dog can cause heavy loss by smothering, if care is not exercised when approaching a narrow creek or steep crossing, especially in the autumn, when sheep run freely and are sometimes handled in large mobs. The quieter sheep are handled, the better, and when mustering ewes and lambs for marking, great care should be taken not to mismother the lambs when approaching the yards.

The whole mob should be gathered as quietly as possible towards the wing or opening where the sheep go in, and as soon as those in the lead have started to take the entrance, pressure should then be applied to keep the mob following on. Two or three flax leaves tied together, an old coat or anything of that description that can be used for flogging the ground may be brought into play to keep the lambs from breaking back.

The important point is not to check those in the lead when once headed the right way. Very often a young and keen dog will get away to the head, but this must be carefully avoided, as if the mob turns back, great difficulty occurs in getting them headed the right way again. The lambs bunch together, and if not carefully handled at the right moment, may break and cause no end of trouble. After marking, ewes and lambs should always be turned back on the same block of country they came off, if at all possible; otherwise lambs become mismothered.

On hill country, sheep have their own feeding ground, and if a lamb does not pick up the mother soon after leaving the tailing yard, it will make its way back to the accustomed haunts, where most likely the mother will be picked up. It is not necessary to round up a mob after marking in this case,

but it is advisable, if time and circumstances permit, to look the next morning to see if everything is well with the mob marked the previous day.

Ewes and lambs should not be handled in too large a mob; from two to three hundred at a time is large enough, although it may be impossible at times to limit a mob to this number. Lambs mother up quicker and are more easily handled in moderate sized mobs. There is not so much crushing in the pens, and the liability to break on entering the yard is decreased. In the old days before the runs were sub-divided, large mobs had to be handled, and very often if a break occurred, hundreds of lambs would get away and would cause more trouble again at shearing time.

I heard of one case on a back country run in the Mackenzie Country where nine thousand ewes and lambs were being mustered in one mob.

Through a mistake made by one of the dogs as the mob was approaching the home paddock, the sheep began to circle round a small bush in the middle of the mob; all efforts to prevent the movement failed, with the result that hundreds of ewes and lambs were smothered before the shepherds gained control.

Another case on the Port Hills near Little River happened, where five hundred ewes were smothered through the act of a careless shepherd who did not have his dogs under control. The ewes were approaching a creek with steep sides with only a small track leading across it. Instead of letting the sheep take their own time to cross over, the dogs were allowed to keep forcing the rear of the mob on. In a very short time the gully was filled up with a mass of sheep, and on the occasion of my visit to the locality, the bones of the five hundred ewes were lying bleaching in the sun.

This misfortune was actually the turning point in putting the owner off his place, and I had the unpleasant job of taking over for the firm who were financing the property.

A good dog is worth his or her weight in gold, and should never be parted with, and like a good horse, can be a shepherd's best friend.

In spite of hard knocks and threats of dire punishment, a dog remains loyal to his master. Often footsore, tired and hungry after a gruelling day on the hills, he is tied up until

the next day, when he is asked to take his place on the morning beat. A fine little book entitled "Waylego," gives a very real description of the life of a shepherd and his team of dogs when mustering over different runs in Canterbury. As I know some of the characters mentioned in the book and have been on several of the runs mentioned, I can appreciate the story which the author tells. In fact, one of the runs, Winterslow, was held by my father for some years in the early part of this century.

On some hill country where wild pigs are prevalent, dogs become very fond of going after a pig and leaving the sheep; so much so, that in some cases the shepherd is left without part of his team for an hour or more until the return of the delinquent, very often with a gash or a limp inflicted by a sharp-tusked boar.

Some dogs become very cunning, and will not approach too near an old "tusker," but will just stand off and bark. Other younger and less experienced will rush in and very often pay the penalty with a nasty flesh wound or get killed outright.

I relate the foregoing experiences in the hope that some one of the younger generation may derive some benefit from the same.

After all my years of sheep farming, the advice I give to anyone wishing to follow that calling is to set your ambition on a fixed goal that you are going to aim for in your mind's eye and go for it.

My ambition was always to become a runholder with a fine, tidy homestead surrounded with trees, and a nice garden and lawn attached; to breed good stock, and have a family to carry on when the day came for one to retire.

There is nothing more gratifying than to see the virgin country being broken in and developed, roads being opened, plantations growing, stock thriving and pastures improving, and above all, a healthy and useful family growing up who are ready to carry on where we leave off.

The wife who plays a leading part in the home is above all things essential for the success of the undertaking. In all these things, I can fairly claim to have reached my goal.

Through three wars, various slumps and depressions, the family has played its part, and in some cases paid the full price in the doing.

May the next fifty years see more happy and peaceful times and, like the great men of the day, who do not forget their Maker in all things, I pray that those years may be prosperous and happy ones, both for this wonderful country to which we belong, and for the whole British Empire, and so:—

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes
from whence doth come mine aid."

Park Street,
WINTON.
October, 1948.