

Rangiora
Otago

17th April 1949

My Dear Maurice

We were very pleased and interested to receive your long letter and learn something of your present life. ~~as~~ often when I am working about the place I come upon things connected with you. The goats, sprays & the little bucket that you brought home are all well. I have just done up Robbies feet. Jairo has some pups.

I note from your letter that you may not be back in New Zealand for a long time, so perhaps I shall never see you again.

You are a man now, so there are things I would tell you. About the farm at Puriri.

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I paid a lot of money for that place, and had put in a lot of work in improving it, then came the slump. the wool was almost unsaleable and live stock fetching so small a price, that it became impossible to pay the mortgage interest. I was pressed very hard. there was some legislation passed by Parliament, which was said would help a mortgagor. but in the early stages of this law, so much power was left in the hands of a Judge, that in many cases it depended upon which Judge the case came before. The result was that I and many other owners of businesses or property found ourselves forced out with nothing left. and general conditions in such a state, that there was no chance of employment. As you go through

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life. you may find Booms & Slumps
come. A slump may be caused by
what is known as an "Act of God" that
is the case where there have been very
bad seasons, or disease, that kills of
large numbers of the sheep & cattle.
Then there are the man made slumps,
like the last one in New Zealand,
where there is plenty of all the requirements
of life, but commerce so frozen that
most of the people have to go short
of many things. After the slump
had continued for some time camps
were started by the Government, in
which men, were placed & put to
work, at a very small wage, it is
what I saw of misery in those
camps, that brought fully home to me
the dangers that so often hang over
people, so I would ask you at all

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times to try and help those who are poor or weak, and thus at the bottom of the ladder.

As something had to be done for mother Helen & yourself I went into one of those camps, of the awful conditions I saw I will say little. you have had experience of the booties, and know how ready many of them are to take advantage of anyone who is down. The men from the camps would be sent out to work on the farms, though the Government paid the wages, one condition being that the work done was to be only for the upkeep of the farm, not to be used for the farmer to sell the results of their labour & make a profit, yet there were cases where the men were put to cutting timber & getting it to the saw mill, killing sheep where the farmer was selling

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munition, and such like jobs.

Not only was there the trouble that the small amount of money received by the men was not enough (after sending money home for the family to be kept) to provide decent food in the camps, but the camps themselves were something awful, and on top of all you were often insulted by those in any authority not so much from the head office, where a Mr. Stoughton was in charge, but by the members of the local committee, the head man of which was an army colonel. When complaint was made to him of the insults, we were told that if we made trouble about it, wages would be stopped. The whole thing was most humiliating and all felt like making a stand, but then the smashing blow would

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debt, and wages stopped, and then what would have become of the women & children at home, so no relief could be found. As things got to an awful state, a large meeting was held at the central camp, and a committee set up. I was elected the president. The secretary sent a letter to the Government re the farmers using the men for timber cutting, and thus getting the work done for less than value & at the country's expense, but no reply came to hand. I remember one night a number of us were sitting round a camp fire, patching clothes with sugar bag. I shall never forget the look of despair on the face of each man.

Then one man said, Our president must go to the head office in Auckland and put the matter straight before

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Mr Slaughter. I went, and found that Mr Slaughter was much more reasonable than the local committee, and tried to be helpful. but as manager of a Government Dept. he could not do much. he saw that the matter was serious. he asked me to help all that I could to get a little time for him to act.

Soon after that the riot in Auckland took place. at once an improvement was made in the country camps. The came the election which sent the Government out, and made Mr Savage Prime Minister. the camps soon went out of existence, & employment could be found. I received a nice letter (which I still have) from Mr Slaughter. thanking me for the help. that the good running of the central camp.

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while I was president had been to his office. With the improved times I was able to pull a few of my chestnuts out of the fire, and work things forward, so that now there is a nice home for your mother, and for you & Helen, should you want it, and when your mother has gone, it will be a property of some value, to divide between you. I often pray that the Good Lord, has also lifted back to hope & comfort, all those sad anxious me that I saw in the camps,

I am pleased that you study the ancient forms & ideas, for they often hold much knowledge, I often think that the rock Edicts, at the time of Asoka, hold good teaching. May I pray fervently for blessing, for all those who differ from me in religious

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and political opinions

If you can manage to do so
do not keep mother long without
an address to write to. For should
anything happen to me she would
need to be in touch with you,

I hope you will get as much
pleasure in receiving this letter
as you used to years ago. when you
were in Wellington and I was away
& would write a letter to Helen and
one to you. every other week.

May health & happiness be
with you throughout your journeys
With love & best wishes

Daddy