



## DAVE'S DAIRY

*The Adelaide Stock and Station Journal, 15 October 1945*

**Monday.** Well, I tried to fill in my income tax form over the week-end. You may remember how I used to keep a tin trunk with all my papers in it and the trouble I have when I have to fill in the form and how this financial year I started a sort of system for keeping books. Well, so I have, but that doesn't help me fill in last year's return. So I spent a really awful week-end with papers strewn all over the floors in all the rooms of the house, and Mary padding about trying to be helpful and the kids shut up in the grain room for safety's sake. It wouldn't be so bad if only I could keep cool, but after an hour or so I always start to get in a flap and that is the end of things. So I finally gave up at 12 o'clock last night, and this morning I rang the taxation expert and asked him would he mind filling in my return. He said it was a bit late, really, but I said I couldn't help that and it was actually Clarkson's fault, because he kept me so busy that I didn't have time to do it before. "All right," he said "I'll do it this afternoon. I suppose you have all the necessary documents." "Oh, yes all of them," I said, thinking of all the papers jammed back in the tin trunk, with the lid closed at last. So I took the tin trunk into the chap's office this afternoon, and banged it down on the counter. "You'll find everything here," I said. "I'll be back later." A couple of hours later I came back and peeped inside. He was sitting on the floor, with papers all round him, with a dazed look on his face. I thought I really ought to be getting home to milk so sneaked out again. I rang him up about 10 o'clock at night at his home. "Oh, he's not home yet," said his wife. "He says he has a lot to do yet at the office. Ring the office." So I rang the office, and after a while a weary voice answered. "Getting on all right?" I asked. "Dave," he said, "Dave, old chap, be a sport and come in and explain things to me. It's a bit complicated." I said I was sorry, but I really couldn't, but he would find all the necessary information in the tin trunk. I suppose he'll be there for some days yet; but, after all, he's used to handling figures.

**Tuesday.** I have about 50 lambs which have to be shorn because they are picking up grass seeds. It didn't seem worth while getting a shearer to do a small number like that, so today the Italian and I took them over to Clarkson, who has a shearing machine of his own. On the way over I was thinking that, really, shearing was a terrible price and a fellow ought always to do his own. It always looks so easy, particularly lambs. I told Mary we would finish them easily in a day, because the shearer does about 100 lambs a day, so if the two of us couldn't get 50 between us, well, there was something wrong.

When we got started I told the Italian to watch me for a while to get the hang of things and then I started. But there wasn't much to watch. It would have been all right if only the little devils would have kept still and the machine hadn't been determined to fight against me every inch of the way, or if my back had been double-jointed. The Italian was watching with a nasty grin till I couldn't bear it any longer and told him to get going, too. By dinner time we had done eight, but one of these looked as if it would soon die, and we had broken two combs and my back (in two places) and the Italian was going back to camp tomorrow.

By nightfall we had finished thirty. They looked strange, standing out there in the pen with bits of wool and skin hanging down from odd corners. Quite a lot of them looked as if they would live and that's more than is going to happen to me. It wouldn't be so bad if I could only stand up straight. I tried lying on the shearing board and getting the Italian to walk up and

down on me, but after he had done that my back went back like a hoop again.

Anyhow, I decided I wouldn't worry about shearing the rest, so let them out and managed to climb up in the dray. But when we came to the first gate on the way home the Italian and I had an argument as to who was going to open it. I was lying in the bottom of the dray and didn't care whether we got home or not, so long as I did not have to shift. The Italian felt somewhat the same, but must have been hungrier than me, because after half an hour he got out and opened the gate. When we got home I went straight to bed and thought about shearers/ I've always thought they were a queer lot, and now I know. Fancy only wanting 46 bob a hundred!

**Wednesday.** I managed to get up this morning with Mary's help. She got a long piece of timber and used it as a lever. She thought it would be a good idea if I went on weeding the garden while my back was still bent, but I went down and started the tractor. For a long while I considered the pros and cons of lying out flat on the ground and getting the Italian to drive the tractor up and down me. But I gave up the idea after a while. A rubber-tyred tractor would have been all right, but probably the grips on the crawler would do more harm than good. Anyhow, I managed to get some harrowing done. The later-ploughed ground is very rough and the harrows went around jumping over the clods like a team of staghounds. We could do with a rain to break the lumps down a bit.