



DAVE'S DAIRY

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It's been a hot, dry, miserable week. Some of it has been spent in getting ready to go to Canberra with the Clarkson's, but most of it in trying to dodge young Harold who seems to be determined that we do something about that oaten straw/ I've told him straight out that I would not agree to it, but I've a fair idea that, once I'm off the place, he may do it by himself. People don't really take much notice of me anymore.

Clarkson went to town during the week to buy his bowler hat. It's a lovely black, round, smooth one. It's all wrapped up in tissue paper in a box of its own so that it will carry without being damaged. Clarkson brought it over for me to see and I could see he was kind of hoping that I would go and get one for myself. Then we could both stroll around Canberra together, raising our hats to the other notables; but I didn't think it would suit me.

My main worry of this week is to decide what I should do about pastures for this coming year. There was a time when I didn't have to worry about this because there weren't any pastures. But now we've got quite a decent bit of pasture on the place and it's something else to worry about. I don't think that I'll worry much about the cultivation ground except that I know I should be doing something about that heavy straw cover. Apart from that I think that there's enough seed in the ground to give a good pasture so long as we spray for flea and mite at the right time. But it's the non-arable rough hill paddocks that are giving me some concern.

Some years ago we sowed these with Bacchus Marsh sub clover using a disc drill, and the results were quite surprising in spite of the country being too rough to spray. But in the last few years the Bacchus Marsh has been quite disappointing. Clarkson says that where he had sowed Dwalganup sub clover years ago, it was much better than where he had sowed Bacchus Marsh, although the Bacchus Marsh looked better for the first few years.

He said that he thinks the reason is that Bacchus Marsh does not bury its seed so well because it's a late seeder and the ground by then is too hard for the seed to be pushed far enough into the ground. Anyway, whatever the reason, the Dwalganup is lasting much better than the Bacchus and that's why Clarkson says that I ought to sow some Dwalganup on the Bacchus country. This makes me mad. I would have sowed some Dwalganup when I did the first sowing but Clarkson was so certain that Bacchus was the thing. He said that Dwalganup was too early and so on. And now he wants me to sow Dwalganup. Sometimes I wish he'd gone into Parliament years ago. Then there's this question of when to sow it/ I've learnt that if we sow it with a disc drill, then we must sow it before the opening rains/ I've a vague feeling that there are a few things wrong with the disc drill, and what with going to Canberra and shearing, it looks as if young Harold will have a pretty brisk time in the next month or so. Then there's a bit of discussion going on about how to do the sowing. Clarkson brought us up to use the disc drill for sowing the sub and it has certainly worked well. But now he has the idea that we ought to be thinking about using what he calls a sod-seeder because he thinks we might be able to sow phalaris and other perennials into the hills without doing a proper cultivation. Our hills are too rough to cultivate anyhow. It all sounds queer to me. Anyhow, these machines cost money, about £300, I think.

Anyway, I've gone as far as to get enough Dwalganup to sow at 2lb. per acre on about 50 acres of the hills this year. It is quite a relief to find that the seed is quite cheap, too. Clarkson says that I ought to sow 4lb, but I think that 2lb is enough. You don't get much of a result the first year anyhow, and the second year I can never see much difference between the 2lb and the 4lb sowings. I think I will add a pound of barrel clover because there are some of the hills that are a bit limestony and probably barrel would do better there.

On Friday we set out with the Clarksons for Canberra. It was quite a business getting away on time with all the things that I had left to do till the last minute, and Mary had to ask me to come in and sit on cases so that she could get them done up. The Clarksons came over to pick us up and blew the horn and they only had to wait for half an hour. We packed everything in eventually, with Clarkson's hat right on the top. I've just realised the awful irony of Clarkson's hat being called a bowler hat because bowls is one of those things he is bitter about.

Harold wasn't there to see us off and when we were going out the gate, I could see him running over to Clarkson's, but whether it was to borrow the push-off stacker to do the straw or to see Flo, I don't know.

We called in at the township on the way through and of course, Clarkson pulled right up in front of the bank. I thought that was carrying things a bit too far. I'm not really frightened of the bank manager but still there was no need to overdo things. It's all right for Clarkson. Fortunately, the bank manager didn't come out. Neither did anyone else/ I've an idea that Clarkson was kind of hoping that there would be a kind of a send-off: a few cheering people, so that he could wave and perhaps put on the hat. No one took any notice except that there was a tan dog and he wasn't a very good dog either. I will post this as we go through Adelaide and will write about the trip next week.