

Thursday, June 14th 1923

I have kept an evening free to write in as the mail goes tomorrow. There is really quite a lot to tell you about I should have some photographs ready as I promised - but I've not ~~finished~~ them yet, as I've been pretty busy one way or another.

I am getting quite a lot to do nowadays. The skin season is just beginning. Winter skins are beginning to appear in larger quantities. Kangaroo sales are now fortnightly instead of monthly, which means nearly twice as much work of course & fur & opossum skins are coming in in larger quantities also. The skins used entirely for furs are only really sought after if they are winter - thickly furred & in good condition so during the summer they are very slack. Yesterday we bought over 900 at the market & several thousand Kangaroos. Rabbits are very high in price, small bitten & damaged skins being nearly 2/- a lb & best over anything up to 5/- . We are standing right off waiting for the price to fall. - only they haven't fallen yet.

The sales are held on Wednesdays & on Tuesdays all the skins have to be inspected & reported on. The foreman from the store goes around the brokers stores to do this. Charlie Turner is the Kroo.

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foreman & occasionally I go round with him. On Tuesday morning I did this. I met him out at Pyrmont - a suburb where most of the brokers stores are & went through the three with the biggest catalogues. - Kroo, Fox, Wallaby & opossum. It's very interesting. I find one soon picks up a little knowledge about the skins, but almost at once realises that what one does know is infinitesimal compared with what there is to know. But - as soon as you know even a little you can take an intelligent interest in them - more or less.

On Wednesday Mr Curzon was unwell & Mr Priest told him to go home. I took the rabbit sale whilst Mr Priest went to the Kroo (slat for Kangaroo as I expect you have gathered) sale. Our limits were too low for us to buy rabbits so I confined my activities to taking down purchases & buyers. From these figures we see what market values are & what our competitors are doing. - who is buying & what quantities & grades. I haven't done any buying yet though I have bid up on lots several times till prices went beyond our values for the skins.

I shall probably get shoved off to buy at sales by myself in a short while. After

the sale we work out a
 average prices - 300 for foxes -
 the same day - & sell
 cable them to Curzon
 with the

(Copy of the paper in
 Curzon's file from the Kroo)

numbers of each grade we have bought. On the market prices we base our prices for private purchases during the next week or so. - for skins sent straight to us from the country etc.

Today I went with Charlie to see some Wallaby which were offered us. After seeing them & getting the lowest price we cable the offer to America & get an answer in a day or two as to whether they will buy them or not and what price they will counter-offer if the price is too high.

Andrew wanted to know what I do during the day & this may give you some idea. In the new boarding-house we are worked up shortly after 7 am. with morning tea - quite pleasant to have it again. I should rise about 7.30. - I do when I've not been too late the night before. I have a cold shower, shave & dress & go down to breakfast about quarter to half-past eight. I catch the 8.57 boat into town & get to the office about 20 past nine. Frequently I am first but for the junior office boy who goes to the G.P.O. for the mail. There is a system of private boxes, the owners having a key. The letters are put into them at the G.P.O. & the owners collect them when they like. He do twice a day. I read the mail & take note of things to do with me. Then I do work like I have just

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described & similar jobs till about one o'clock. Sometimes I catch the 1.2pm boat to Neutral Bay & have lunch at the boarding house - ~~saves~~ 2/6! I get back to the office a little after 2. - & work again. Sometimes we have a lot of cable in and out & we're busy coding & decoding & that puts our other work behind. Very rarely we are finished by 5 o'clock. We are supposed to have a system of early night in turn which sometimes works & sometimes breaks down owing to pressure of work. When a shipment is going all the documents have to be prepared & that means a lot of extra work.

I usually catch the 6.2 boat home. We have dinner at 6.30 & after that I either go out or stay in & then you have the day! If I stay in I go to bed about 10.30 & if I go out I go to bed when I come in!

Yesterday I went to dinner with Mrs. Mackay & her family to whom Mr. Miller had given me an introduction. They are very nice people. There is a son & three daughters at home & another son the eldest - is a lecturer in Economics at Adelaide. Two of the daughters are teachers of phonetics & the boy Kim is studying law.

On Monday evening I went to the pictures with Mrs. Clarke & saw Mary Pickford in "Less of the storm country".

Today Benham had lunch with me at the club. They had a room vacant at their b-h the same day I moved in here, but I like this so much I think I shall stay here for a while. Someone has taken the other room already. This house is not full yet & there are at present - rather a lot of "old tabs" as they call them, but one needn't have anything to do with them here as there are two or three lounges where one can sit after dinner so one can keep away from them.

Tomorrow I am meeting Jack Reid for lunch & I am spending the weekend with the Reids at Wadvoonga. I hope it keeps fine for it.

The country has had general rain in the last week & the drought is fortunately ended. It will be interesting to watch the effect it has on prices. I believe hides will go up. Rabbits will probably be scarce for a while & then more plentiful again. - Cattle will be dearer as fewer will have to be "killed to save their lives."

But with the end of the drought snow-storms occurred in the mountains and as the cattle had not been taken down to the plains many were lost that way. It's a curious country isn't it? - But not too bad when you get used to it though!