

## FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME.

### CRICKET AS IT IS PLAYED IN RODNEY COUNTY.

Played in the true spirit there is no better game than cricket, and there are no better players anywhere, in the correct sense, than in Rodney County, if the sample shown the writer on Saturday last can be taken as reliable evidence. Reports confirm the belief that it can.

The fixture was one of the Rodney Association's interclub matches; the locality was Whangateau or "Big Omaha," the site of the contest "Dacre's Claim." A brilliant summer day, a sky of the deepest blue; a soft, cool, easterly breeze from the sea, a landscape, set on the one hand with hills of the greenest pasture and even greener native shrubberies and ferneries, and old "Tamahanga" in the background, loftily and proudly commanding hill, plain, and ocean. On the other hand the incoming tide gently lapping along a sandy shore, wafting in a breath of salty air, and further on, low sandhills, and in the distance the bluest of hills across the gulf, with the Barriers beckoning and bowing the warmest and proudest of welcomes. These are the conditions wished for and sent.

The teams arrive in various vehicles, from limousine, bus, and ton truck, to milk cart. Friends and supporters of all sides, with dainty maidens decked in rich soft "summers," and silks, satins, and sundries of the brightest and most dazzling hues; mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters, from ninety years to as many days, are there. The ladies' are laden with fruit pies and tarts, sandwiches and cakes, etc. These are spread on a long table in the social hall. The lads gather tea-tree and set the coppers a-boiling for tea and coffee.

The teams are from Omaha (local) and Warkworth (fourteen miles away.) Two of the latter come from Kaipara Flats (25 miles distant). They are dairy farmers, and rose at 3 a.m. to milk and get away. The Warkworth captain is a baker—the only pale-face among the twenty-two tanned and eager faces. Umpires are selected from the visitors and the teams take the field—a concrete pitch with matting and an unshorn outfield. Warkworth wins the toss and bats. As umpire we get a close-up view of their faces. They are of all ages. One bowler is forty and the other over fifty. A Warkworth veteran is sixty. Yet they are each and all as active as kittens. The bowlers break, lob, swerve, and send a fast "straight," as the skipper directs. The batsmen respect the "heady" ones, but lift the loose ones for the boundaries—"sixers" being taken in "the ordinary course." For obvious reasons there are no "carpet" boundary hits. A drive for one is about the limit in the crop of grass.

The wicket is fiery and bumps and bruises are part of the fun. A colt who quailed before an express delivery was exhorted by the captain to "stand up to them like a man." Straightway he sent the next "over the ropes." He was immediately credited with "That's more like it."

The gray heads are as lively and alert as the colts. The pace becomes a "cracker." Scarce a word is heard except "over" from the umpire. A wicket falls, a man is caught; hot returns are snapped. Some are held, others bound forty feet skyward. The "wood is on" to the last ounce. The fortunes of the game go up and down. There is no "language" but of the approved vocabulary. A fault or a fluke is part of the excitement. No one is blamed. Enthusiasm is heavenward, and praise is for "the game only" every time. There is doubt about a bump-ball; and a difference of opinion among the umpires. The batsman moves pavilionwards. The fieldsmen cry "come back; you're not out." In our opinion they were right; but it might have been the turning point in the game in some cricket we have seen. The side makes 109. On a smooth outfield the total should have been 350.

After a sumptuous lunch given by the ladies, a speech of welcome from

Mr Ninety, and words of wisdom from skippers, proud of the honours they are endeavouring to uphold, the local side goes in. Home to milk at four p.m. permits of no dallying.

A bowler of fifty goes in at the beach end. He looks 27, which is the age of the other trundler. Mr Fifty takes a wicket early. The ball and the bail soar boundarywards. The victor does a hand-spring—backwards—forward.

"How old are you?" we ask. "Merely fifty," he chuckles, and throws a "double" backward. It is a day of sensation, and the heart gladdens at the evidence of youth in middle-old-age.

"The visitors win by 25 runs," was the way the local paper put it; but visitors and locals scored a greater victory than in runs in the heart of this humble admirer.

There were handshakes all round at the afternoon tea, more wisdom from the wise, and a pleasant drive home in the shadowy beauty of a wondrous picture evening. It was "the end of a perfect day."—Eden Gazette.

### CROWING TIMBER FOR PROFIT.

#### THE WAYS OF THE FARMER AND THE COMPANY PROMOTERS.

Forty years ago a settler at Matakana planted about 2,000 pinus insignis trees for shelter. They were set in irregular belts along exposed portions of a farm of some 500 acres, and also for homestead and orchard shelter.

Recently an Auckland lumber miller purchased the pines then standing for 1/6 per 100 super feet. The quantity felled and trimmed to date amounts to some 350,000 super feet, and it is estimated that a similar amount still remains for future use. Quite a considerable number of the trees will each cut from 800 to 1000 feet, the total length of bole in many cases being 60 to 70 feet.

The logs are being trucked to the Matakana river, where they are chained together and towed to Auckland.

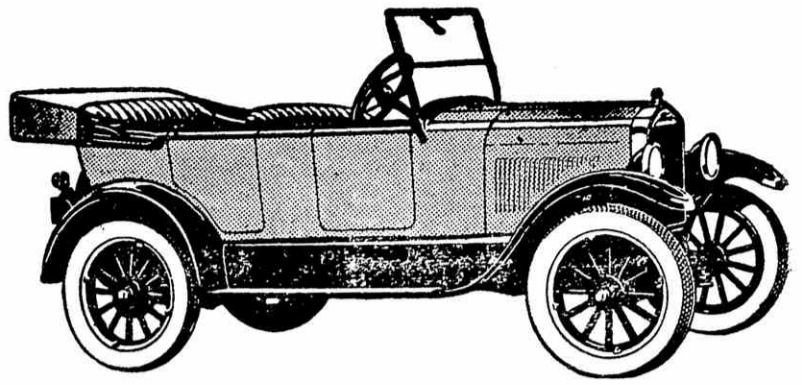
The cheque for this farm product, on which the settler states he placed no commercial value when planting, and only recently when his attention was drawn to it realised their possibilities, will be in the region of £750.

In view of the forestry activities of the last few years, the returns of the Matakana settler may be quoted as an example of the money to be made from such fast growing timber as the pinus insignis; but "all is not gold that glitters." Companies recently formed have paid up to £20 per acre for land for afforestation, much cash has been spent in labour of planting and salaries of selling agents, managers and secretaries. The Matakana land on which the pines mentioned were planted cost about £1 per acre. That was seventy years ago. When the trees were set the land was probably worth £5 per acre. To day it is valued at £20. Taking the area at ten acres, an average value of £10 per acre, the simple interest alone at 5 per cent. would be £200. The interest is probably made good by the value of the shelter, so that there is no loss in that respect. But nothing was paid out for labour for planting and fire prevention. The work was accomplished in slack times. In round figures the return works out at £75 per acre for the forty years, or £1 15s per acre per year. It is not a big return and it shows fairly plainly possibilities of share companies making a profit are remote.

When the land is purchased and the planting carried out at day labour, when the salaries of officials are paid and the forests ranged by paid men; when the official administration and expenses are taken into account there is more likely to be a considerable deficiency in forty years than any satisfactory profit. The farmers' profit is low enough, but afforestation syndicates do not seem to take practical experience into calculation.

Time will tell. Meantime shareholders should look a bit further into the questions of outlay and probable losses after or during the long wait for maturity.—"Eden Gazette."

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