

IFYE David Lapp Reports Experiences In New Zealand

Ed. Note: The following is a series of excerpts from a letter written by David Lapp, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Lapp, Bareville R1. David is spending a six-months visit in New Zealand as a representative in the 4-H Club farm youth exchange program.

The International Farm Youth Exchange or IFYE for short, is a program that brings a better relationship between countries. It could also be called a people to people program.

We, as Rural Youth Participants, not technicians, are

grassroot ambassadors representing the people in our own community and country. We don't have any special training but do receive a week of pre-departure orientation at the National 4-H Center in Washington, D C I call it "brain washing" because we had all sorts of meetings with the Department of State and the Department of Agriculture, including several classes a day on culture of the many peoples of the world. We had so many facts and figures thrown at us in a week that I felt like I had

four years of college shoved at me in one week.

IFYE is more than just a six month trip. It is an educational experience I shall never



DAVID LAPP

forget. Our job on the field is working and learning other people's ideas and methods of doing things. This is only one phase of our experience. The other begins when we return home and share our observations, experiences and ideas

with the people in the community. New Zealand is located in the South Pacific below the equator, just as far south of it as we are north. However, they are surrounded with warm, coastal waters which gives them a fair and warm climate. They receive an average of about 45 inches of rain a year, just 10 more than in Lancaster County.

The Islands are about the size of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania put together. They have a population in both Islands of about 2 1/2 million people, the same as that of Philadelphia. The North Island is only the size of Pennsylvania, so you see, the people down here have plenty of "elbow room".

The people are of British origin, therefore, speak English (Thank goodness! I can understand them). However, they find it difficult to understand me since I'm a Pennsylvania Dutchman with an accent. They call me a fast talking Yankee.

I have just completed my stay with my first host family, who lived on the North Island, along the Tasman Sea at the foot of snow-covered Mt. Edgmont. It's quite beautiful

scenery — looking up and seeing the white mountain, then looking to my right and seeing the sea, and standing on warm ground all the time.

My host family owned 240 acres of land. It was all in pasture which was fenced off into different fields, each from 10 to 15 acres in size.

What I mean when I say "fenced off" is quite different from our idea. Around their whole farm they have box thorn hedges which are quite a nuisance and they find very difficult to control. It grows about 10 to 12 feet high and is full of thorns that are poisonous to some people. They are thick needle-like thorns, one to two inches long. If you're sleepy or don't mind your business and lean against one, you soon wake up!

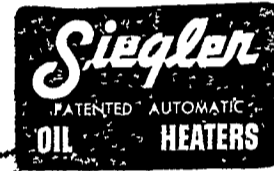
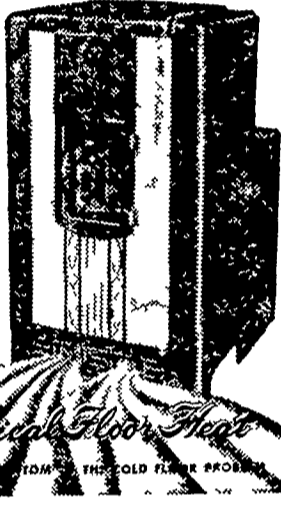
The only way they can check them is to trim them by hand or hire a contractor that will do the trimming. His machine is usually an old army truck with a blade on the side about 15 feet high. This blade whirrs around at speeds sometimes as fast as 600 miles per hour. This chops up limbs and branches that are as thick as six inches. The wheels on the truck are protected by thick

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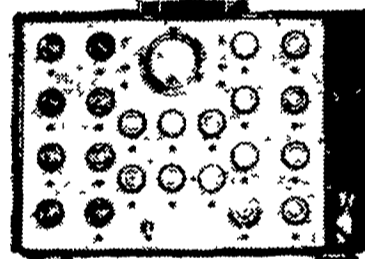
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