

provide a unifying force which had been lacking hitherto, and in the New Zealand Company's report for 1843 it was stated: "It is proposed that the plan of the other colony shall contain a scheme of large endowments for religious and educational purposes in connection with the Church of England. As it is intended that this colony shall be on a larger scale than any hitherto adopted by the Company, the plan of it will not be ripe for publication until next year." But the depressed state of the existing colonies, the parlous condition of the New Zealand Company's finances, and the Wairau massacre reduced the enthusiasm for colonisation in New Zealand. The Otago scheme was also making very slow progress.

The open, tussock-covered South Island did not attract the attention of prospective colonists as early as did the North, settlements around Banks Peninsula beginning, as in most places in the South Island, with the establishment of shore whaling stations. Akaroa was frequently visited by whalers in the 1830's and in 1837 William Hempleman established a station at Peraki, on the south coast of the peninsula. According to his own statement, which is supported by fairly strong evidence, he purchased the whole of the peninsula from the more influential Maori chiefs in 1837. William Barnard Rhodes, another whaler bought a large area of land from the Maoris at Akaroa in 1839 and after bringing some cattle from Australia, installed William Green as his manager in November, 1839. These cattle were not allowed to be sold, but simply allowed to increase as quickly as possible, despite the pressing needs of the first colonists. Eventually, in 1843, the first cow was sold for £43, and such was the beginning of dairy farming in Akaroa.

### Arrival of French Settlers

From 1837 onward numbers of French whalers had visited Banks Peninsula, and in 1838 Captain Langlois, of the whaler Cachelot, made an arrangement to purchase the whole of Banks Peninsula. On his return to France Langlois sold this right to the newly formed Nanto Bordelaise Company, which early in 1840 dispatched the *Compte de Paris* with 59 French and 6 German settlers. These arrived at Akaroa soon after British sovereignty had been proclaimed.

The French settlers did not go far afield, but devoted their time to cultivating the 5-acre blocks to which they were entitled and trying to utilise the large variety of seeds and vines which they had brought with them; the Germans, wishing to live together, moved further up the harbour to a spot known to this day as German Bay. At the end of the first year the immigrants had not procured any stock, but were living on preserved and salt meats with what vegetables they could get from their gardens. There was no grain grown the first year or two, and the colonists were dependent on supplies from outside sources, their lack of capital being a severe handicap.

The first attempt at cultivation in the plains was made by James Herriot, representing a Sydney firm, who selected some land near the present site of Riccarton to grow wheat. The bankruptcy of the Sydney firm compelled his withdrawal, but one McKinnon endeavoured to carry on until March, 1841, when he returned to Akaroa. William Deans, who had become dissatisfied with the prospects of Wellington, secured permission from the Governor to squat (to occupy land without a title) on the Canterbury Plains, and with his farm

workers, Gebbie and Manson, he moved to Port Cooper in the schooner *Richmond* and, after exploring the upper reaches of the Avon, finally settled at Riccarton near the site of Herriot's earlier venture. Shortly after John Deans brought stock from Australia. During 1843 the *Richmond* made two more voyages from Wellington, bringing the Sinclairs and Hays to Pigeon Bay and the Greenwood brothers to Purau.

### Importance of Cows

By 1844 these families were reasonably settled, almost completely self-sufficient farming communities. The Hays had 18 cattle running loose in the bush, including 9 cows, which gave them about 25lb. of butter a week. All through the 1840's they "grew wheat, cut it with a reaping hook, threshed it with a flail, and ground it at night or on a wet day". Gebbie and Manson were dairy farmers and what produce could not be sold to the whalers on the peninsula was forwarded to Wellington by coastal schooner. Cows were indeed the mainstay of all the early settlers.

After the Deans brothers had built the first house on the plains John Deans sailed for New South Wales and returned with 61 head of cattle, 3 mares, 43 sheep, seed wheat, seed oats and barley, lucerne seed, and potatoes. After much trouble all the animals and supplies were landed at Riccarton, and work was started on farming and clearing. The river was bridged, several fields were fenced and cultivated, orchards were established, and a small plantation was begun. In 1843-44 they grew their first grain crops, which consisted of 2½ acres of wheat, 1 acre of oats, and 2½ acres of barley, but as the seed was sown too late, the crops were light. However, the following season the wheat crop of 26 acres, which followed a crop of



[From the Alexander Turnbull Library photographic collection.  
The Deans farm at Riccarton. The first building was completed in 1843 and the others 2 years later. This sketch was made by the surveyor M. T. Cridland shortly before the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1850.