

Sebastopol, Calif.  
July 18, 1944.

Dear Kazuo:

Well, I know you must think we all passed out of the picture, but we are still alive (if you can call it that) and up to our necks in work. I don't know what happened - all of a sudden we find that everything needs to be done and there isn't enough time to do it in. I am going to make this in the form of a telegram to you as time does not permit me to go into any lengthy discussion ~~about~~ about any one subject. The apples are ready to be picked, at least we think they are, but the inspectors say not until about next Tuesday or Wednesday. They are falling badly and we have cleaned the ground once and are going to go over it again tomorrow. We continue to have fogs that last until noon and then wind all afternoon so you can imagine what is happening. The size and color are perfect and the entire crop is beautiful. Yesterday I hauled the first load of boxes from my Dad's place and I had already hauled 400 up from here and scattered them then tomorrow I am going back to Dad's after another couple of hundred. I was going today, but the Chev truck needs a little work done on the slow speed jet so it won't die continually and the Studie is at the service station getting serviced completely. We got it out three days ago and the battery was strong enough to put a little glare in the lights, but of course not enough to start the engine. Joe drove it down and put the battery on our charger and yesterday she started right off. Yesterday I used it for one load of boxes and it nearly broke my arms and back trying to steer it so we decided to have something done about it. I like to drive it after I get it started, but I surely hate that damned button starter system. The tractor is working perfectly and I can crank it like a top now. We are using nothing but Mexicans and I have to handle all the equipment when Joe can't go so I am able to drive about anything now. We fixed our orchard truck up pretty good and are going to use that and the tractor like we did last year. It is impossible to get under those limbs with any other vehicle and we have the limbs propped as high as we dare every four rows to drive through. Across the ditch it isn't so bad, but on this side it just can't be done without doing too much damage. We had hoped to start picking this Monday, but I nearly died when they told me yesterday that it would be another week before they would let them through. We didn't pick any green excepting at Johnny's and there was a reason for that. A large amount of the stuff there was hollow cored and terribly out of shape so if it didn't go for green it would never get through. Here on the ranch our crop is not enough to worry about and we were afraid these Mexies would knock off too many that would bring us money later so we didn't turn them loose on them. At Forestville it would be out of the question to put them at work there trying to get just 2 and 3/4 stuff - the damage they would do on the smaller stuff would be too much so we just have to wait until we can really pick apples. The size is so good this year that we can really make a killing and to our surprise they are very free from worms. When we sprayed it looked as though there were going to be a lot of worms but after getting them thinned, etc. they turned out swell. We are going to hit the late stuff again tomorrow - they look fine so far. There is a beautiful crop of all that stuff and they got thinned well this year so we should be able to have a lot of nice stuff for packing.

Now, the dryer situation - Sam and a gang are running it, or are going to run it when they get the apples. We had to make a lot of improvements but thought it best to do it than to let the Pure Food outfit know that it didn't run this year. Then they would have more to kick about next year and perhaps condemn it completely. Sam is not bashful about asking for this and that and when he found out that certain things had to be done, then he went as far as he could. We had to finish lining the dried apple bin with white pine, put a screen door where the sliding door is and put a ladder

in so they can come down from inside instead of tracking in dirt on the fruit. I got them 100 trays that were only used last year and in good shape yet...they are costing me 2/3 of the original price, which I haven't verified as yet. It was impossible to get 100 new ones and this was the next best bet. Upstairs they haven't done much, but they had to make water flumes for the water from the tray tank and they ran a culvert past the oil tank into that ditch. Now they are waiting for the lumber for the apple bin floor. Sam cried about that for two weeks and finally I went up to see how bad it was. Well, it has been picked to pieces and there are three or four bad knot holes where the ground can be seen. It could probably get by this year with the inspector, however, if splinters were found in the apples they would raise heck and then we might have to go to work on it in the middle of the season. I told them to go ahead and get the lumber if they could find it and they told me that Diamond Match expected to get it in sometime this week. We haven't had time to do a thing, but there are at least 15 of those fellows around there and they have all been working like the devil, cleaning up and hammering nails. More shakes had fallen off of the South roof and they patched that up. I told Sam when they came to rent the dryer that they could have it for \$7.50 per dried ton, but that after it was fixed up to meet the demands of the Pure Food Law I didn't want him or anyone else of the bunch coming after me for something every time they took a notion. Now everytime he wants something else he sends Julian to see me. I had to order a new fan from Haines - the other one was burned terribly and didn't run true on the shaft. Joe removed it when he found it looking that way and took it over there, hoping they could do something to it, but they said nothing could be done to it and ordered a new one from the factory. They told us that in the shape it was in it wouldn't draw more than one half the necessary air through. Unless they get a lot of apples around there I don't imagine they will pay me more than enough to cover all this expense, but at least the dryer will be kept in good shape and better to put it in there than in income taxes. At least you will have the building in pretty good shape when you need it yourself. Next year we will have to make more improvements, no doubt, but it will not be so hard to do after doing so much this season.

I don't know when we will start the dryer here, we are running the first pickup over the belt today and saving out anything that is good enough to run through - the rest I am hauling out to Graton for vinegar. We could start this week, but don't think we could run over two days and then would have to lay off so believe we will wait until Monday when we will have more stuff on hand. Competition will be keen around here this year with all these big dehydrators around us. Guess you are keeping up with all the activities with the town paper so you know pretty well what is going on. The boys have been up to the valley and we can get a lot of stuff if we can make up our minds to some definite price, but so far the Gov't has not named dried apple prices and it is hard to make a guess.

I am taking a sample of your apples to Santa Rosa tomorrow to have tested and try to talk them into letting us start before next week. I hate to see them drop so badly and the market on green is badly shot - no use wasting money picking for that. If we can get enough boxes together we can really go to town next week with the amount of help we have. It is going to be a headache keeping them in tow and doing what is right, but they can't walk out on us so that is a consolation. I am having them pick up for the second time tomorrow and then when they are busy picking I am going to use the same bunch of kids from town that I used last year. The only sticker with them is having to go after them and deliver them when through.

Tonight we are having an association meeting on whether or not to put the Mexicans on piece work. I don't know what the trend will be, but personally I think it is a mistake. Those who put them on piece work in the cherry pits had a hard time of it. They don't know anything about trees or the

cherries the fruit and what they can do is nobody's business. I would rather



have the job cost a little more and not have too many culls coming back when apples are a good price. We are going to try and find some one guy who will take the responsibility of bossing them and seeing to it that they do a day's work and do it right. If we can't get someone to do that then either Joe or I will just have to be with them. We have two fellows that have been with us nearly a year and they are swell, but neither of them will take the job because they say they have to live in the same house with the bunch and don't want hard feelings to exist between them. Well, a couple of days more and then we will know just how bad off we are - there is one thing about it, if they are absolutely impossible we can have them taken away...then, the only problem will be to find someone to pick the apples. There are quite a number of white folks traveling around the country right now, but they are holding high ideas of wages and keeping their noses in the air. I think they are learning a lesson right now and maybe one that they will remember when they find that nobody needs them. As it is now there are about 1200 Mexicans in this county and that will cut a lot of whites out of work. Personally, I am fed up even with the Mexicans and will be glad when this whole mess clears up and our own folks can get back to their jobs, but nevertheless, they have been and still are, a lifesaver and it is keeping those fruit tramps from eating us out of a house and home.

Well, I had intended to give you just highlights and make it snappy, but it is always the way with me when I get started. Oh yes, another party called me asking for your washer and I made it pretty snappy with him, after having had that other experience, I knew just what to say this time.

None of the dryers have started as yet - Oehlmann, I understand, will run some chops this week. There are none of the others that are ready to start as yet and I think we will be as early as anyone.

I have been listening to the radio and feel kinda sick over that awful mishap at Port Chicago. Imagine you heard about it over the air and in the papers. We didn't only hear about it, we felt it. I was scared to death because just over a week ago a plane fell and exploded near Frei's ranch and the whole house shook, but not as bad as this time. Honestly, the windows rattled and I thought they would break, then the house shook for a while longer. It must have been terrible. I saw the Arnett girl from Forestville when we were up there and she said they were in their trailer quite a ways from the wharf, but it wrecked the front part of their house and shook them up badly. Now she and the kids are up there with her mother and Dad. She said the whole town is flattened and that there were pieces of flesh scattered all over the place.

Now I just have to quit because I want to get into town and mail this at the same time. Joe still needs things to finish fixing the dryer and if I don't run after the supplies he never will finish the work. We blew a gasket out of our sprayer and the stuff leaks all over the ground so I have to buy a new one of those things and also a new gas line for our tractor - it got so bad I disconnected it the other day and plugged the hole coming from the carburetor. Our Buick went on the fritz last week and we just got the gas line straightened out on that so that it is able to be around again. Then Joe's Ford battery went completely dead and yesterday we put out \$11.00 for a new one - cheapest one we could buy. Had to get a new water hose for the Studie truck, boo. I filled it about every stop the other day when I hauled boxes - so now that is fixed. Gosh, this machinery makes one grey-headed and the mechanics just don't know their stuff. Guess we will live through it, but we'll never look the same, I can tell you that!

Hope this finds you all feeling good and please pardon me for waiting so long to give you any news - the way the work is coming along now it will probably be another spell before I write again, but don't worry, we will see it through and I think it will be another good season when the smoke blows over and the cash is counted.

Best regards to everyone there, from all of us  
As ever,