

Dec. 11, 1944.

Dear Kaz:

I am taking a chance on your being home by the time this stuff gets there. Meant to answer your letter before this with information on the ranch deal, but time goes somewhere around here and I don't get anything done. Everything is pretty well settled - Sam and about a dozen more are going to handle it on a 60-40 basis. He is to have use of the tractor, disc, harrow, sprayer, ladders, picking bags, boxes and whatever other necessary equipment is available, with exception of the Studie. He said they didn't need that, anyway, as they have a truck of their own. He wanted to have me stipulate in the contract that they could use the washer and packing house, but I stopped that right away. In the first place, it isn't in the cards for them to wash the apples there and haul them to the city and make any more than if they put them in the Union, especially if the ceiling is on. In the second place, I don't want to withdraw from the Union because I can't get back in and when they give up the place I will be stuck. In the third place, I told them if they could guarantee me the same returns as the Union pays I would be willing to withdraw in February, but otherwise, I would stay right in there and they would have to deliver as per the contract. I pointed out the fact that Sagu is close by and saves them on hauling, etc. Before talking with Sam I did some inquiring about terms, etc. from others who run ranches and I found that quite a number of them are being run this year on a 75-25 basis and one I know is on a 70-30 basis. None of these are furnished with equipment except boxes and ladders where they have them. I also found out that the owner always buys the fertilizer and the renter puts it on. I told Sam that you wanted the fertilizer put on and he agreed that they would, but wanted it fairly early so they could be sure to have it on before they started tying hop strings. Well, I got busy and we were able to get 3 tons last week and Joe hauled it up there immediately. Now they can scatter it whenever they want to.

I still haven't got together with them to sign the contract, but we agreed on what was to be in it and everything is understood. One of the partners is going to borrow prune boxes from his boss, but he can't get enough of them for the heavy part of the harvest so I am going to try and buy about 500 lugs if it is possible to get them. With what he can borrow, 500 of your own, and what we can spare at that time, we should get by. Joe and I are going to try and buy 350 for ourselves at the same time. We heard that the Geyservill Growers have them much cheaper than Jim Glaszer so we have been waiting to take a run up there and find out before placing the order here.

Dried prices are supposed to be announced tomorrow so maybe we will get our money within the next few weeks. Hope we can have all the account settled by the first of the year this time.

(OVER)

The boys haven't started pruning up there as yet - there are about eight of them pruning up the road here a ways for that friend of ours that bought the place last year and then Sam told him that they would all come here and do ours in a week or so and then go to work at Forestville. He didn't think the trees had shed their leaves quite well enough up there as yet.

I haven't heard from Ted for a long time - is he still at the same camp? Would like to send him a Christmas card, but have no idea where he is now.

I hope the two boxes get there in good shape, especially the persimmons. The crop was small this year, but I don't mind, because they are awfully hard to get rid of. I have delivered two L.A. Lugs to one of the stands and they are moving terribly slow. In town they have lots of them at the larger stores and don't want any more and the small stores are not interested at all. Those younger trees across the ditch had about two dozen this year, but the trees near the house had very few, although they are nice size.

Well, Kaz, I owe you more of a letter than this, but I want to get into town with these boxes and have a big day ahead so will have to make this do for the time being. I am a wreck for some reason or other - had Tommy home three days with tonsillitis and I think that got me down so low. He was pretty sick for one day and night and from then on has just made life very miserable for me. I am hoping to be able to take enough time to have those things out after the first of the year, then maybe we will all get a bit more rest and quiet around here. He just lives on his nerves and I am the same, so we really have quite a time. when I go to bed so darned late, I fall right to sleep, but he goes to bed hours before I do and then keeps calling me from his room through the night so you can imagine how much rest I get. He has bad dreams, or wants a drink, or has a sore arm or leg, or something else each time, but nevertheless, it keeps me from having a decent night's rest. That has been going on for so long that one would think I was used to it. Instead of that, I am bothered by it more and more and my nerves are just about shot to pieces, what with that and all that goes on around us in the world.

I am going to shut up now and will try to write you fully a little later on when I have more time and patience. Oh yes, got a notice from the bank for rent on the safe box your Grandad has and I think I will just pay for it out of your account - save him the trouble of doing it.

Hope this finds everyone in good health...

As ever,