

PERSONALITIES

NINETY NOT OUT

Ninety years ago last month, there sailed into Wellington harbour the ship *Oriental*, with immigrants from home. Three days earlier the ship *Aurora* had dropped its anchor also but the sight of the Maoris on the Petone beach in great numbers had deterred the passengers from landing. The arrival of the *Oriental*, however, was the signal for a rush of ship's boats for the shore, to see who would be the first to land. In the following boats from the *Oriental* was the mother of a boy who was to see the first light of day a month later. The little chap was christened Tom Rodgers and tomorrow he celebrates his 90th birthday on the same farm that, when grown to manhood, he bought in 1873 on Rangitikei Line, adjacent to the Mangaone stream, and after the passing of all those years young Tom has become old Tom but in name only. To see him as a Times representative saw him yesterday and extended the customary birthday wishes, one would never dream that he had so many years to his credit. He was actively engaged in mending a fence and before the reporter left the latter learnt that this man who, in normal circumstances should be more or less an invalid, kept his own garden. Tom's birthday is really on February 29th, but when there is no leap year he gets in a day ahead. Who can blame him?

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