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SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR

Grey-Green Southland

by "SUNDOWNER"

I WOULD like to know a little more about Topsy, the performing pony the Queen was shown in Brisbane. According to the newspapers Topsy added and subtracted accurately, not only when given questions by her owner, but when tested by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. By pawing the ground she told how

MARCH 21 many buttons there were on the front of Lady Pamela Mountbatten's dress, how many were above the belt and how many below.

For a pony that was a good performance, even though the answers would not be astronomical figures. But to be a real wonder-horse Topsy would have to multiply and divide, and then, to hold her place in history, proceed to square and cubic root. It has been done before by horses, and will be done again when the world has forgotten everything that happened at earlier performances, and the cloud of suspicion in which such miracles faded out. I have forgotten some of the details in the Elberfeld story, but I remember that there were horses in it which could make complicated mathematical calculations and master new processes in arithmetic faster than the brightest boys at school and university—until a psychological

Senator McCarthy investigated them. I don't recall that he actually exposed them: his method, I think, was to show how far we would have to wander from common sense to believe in them. He may never have discovered the point at which trickery took charge. But he removed the horses from the psychological map.

The brightest horse is a clod by comparison with a smart dog, and I have not met the shepherd whose dog could count sheep. Topsy's counting was just obeying a set of signals hammered into her with infinite patience.

* * *

IT is surprising how easy dipping is without sheep; in other words, when it lasts only half an hour or so. I was not able to be present when Jim dipped his own flock, and when I arrived next day with my own little handful, dipping them (with Jim's help) was just a pleasant diversion. It is the long day that kills—dragging

MARCH 23 heavy sheep hour after hour when they know all the corners and footholds. My 22 survivors of the drought were all innocents except the three rams; 12 ewes that were too poor to sell and seven

(continued on next page)

MORE WEALTH FROM THE LAND

ALTHOUGH dairying and beef production on the North Island plains has increased tenfold in the past 50 years, very large increases are still possible. This is one of the themes discussed by Dr. W. M. Hamilton (below), Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, in a series of three talks on *The Future of Animal Production in New Zealand*

being heard from 2YA. Surprisingly small areas of our grasslands have been sown with the new high-producing strains of grasses and clovers, he says, and less than ten per cent is sown with certified seed. Although the Grasslands Division has shown that 400 pounds of butterfat per acre is well within possibility on North Island pastures, the average for a region such as Waipa County is only 160 to 180 pounds per acre.



Dr. Hamilton speaks authoritatively of what can be done, and what is already being done, on all types of country in New Zealand, to increase animal production. The achievement at Ribbonwood in doubling the yield from South Island tussock country, and the slow conquest of Waikato peat and the sand podsols of North Auckland are further subjects about which he has much of value to say. In general, his theme is that we must try to increase production from animal industries by 50 per cent in the next 20 years if we are to keep up with New Zealand's rapidly-expanding population. There is much sound, practical sense in his approach to the special problems of animal husbandry and grassland farming in this country.

His talks are now being broadcast in 2YA's *Farm Session* at 7.15 p.m. on Mondays.

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 15, 1954.