

"Some one hoped to make a haul at Easter"

(continued from previous page)

pets that we are not sensible enough to send away.

So when the sheep were all through I sent Tip after them to keep up the old tradition, and not for any good or ill that dipping does dogs. If they are verminous, their kennels and stamping grounds are verminous, too, and will re-infest them before morning if re-infesting is necessary. But that, I think, is not often the case. It takes a prolonged and very thorough wash with insecticidal soap to kill the last flea on a house dog, and I am sure that half a minute in a dip once a year does little or nothing to a sheep dog. It, however, does something to us—gives our noses a change for a day or two and our consciences another blanket.

IF I were young and sensible I would settle in Southland, where land, in spite of a recent jump, is still cheaper than anywhere else. But I would not settle there if I were sensitive to wet feet, raw winds, grey skies, and half-way English. Southland is for the tough; for the early riser and the late worker; for the man who gets annoyed when his chimney smokes, because that is wasting

wood, but who does not notice it when his boots sink an inch into the ground. I think some farmers in Southland like the heavy walking because it saves them from the sin of indolence. If you are a lazy lump of dough don't settle west of Gore.

But I found myself yesterday at a farm near Forest Hill, where every member of the household was romantic. The mother wrote poetry and bred fancy rabbits, ground her own wheat and added soya beans to scones, experimented with rare vegetables, and spiced her cooking with pious curses on the makers of atomic bombs. The father's world is Romney sheep, but he kept disappearing from the family circle and returning with two-gallon buckets of peas, carrots, or piebald potatoes. The daughter bred cats and collected golf trophies. The son worked three farms,

amused himself on week days by playing hide-and-seek with missing tools in a 60 x 10 engineering workshop, but wandered off at intervals to talk to his stud of white and golden palominos, who are his first thought in the morning and the only disturbers of his sleep by night. It was a strange household in that sober Southland setting; but exceptions, if they don't always prove the rule, throw a lot of light on it.

G. C. A. W., when he came to visit me one day, deplored the absence of geese from Canterbury and the almost universal lack of interest in them among Canterbury farmers. If he had been with me on my run through Southland he might have felt some encouragement. On a hill overlooking the Pomahaka River I saw a group of 72

MARCH 30 more geese in one gaggle than I had ever seen before. I stopped and watched them at a distance of about a chain, but they were finding the grass too interesting after the rain to return my curiosity. A few miles from Gore I saw 34, and on the way to Winton from Mataura a third group that I was too far away to count, but estimated at 40 to 50.

I don't know what these numbers indicated, but I can hardly suppose that they were without significance. Geese cost little to buy, and almost nothing to feed. They foul pastures, if their range is restricted, but that is not a serious nuisance if they have a whole farm to explore. They make weight quickly, and are cheap to eat when they are not easy to sell. At present they are very easy to sell, and I find myself wondering if what looks like a sudden increase in numbers is designed or accident. Have Southland's farmers who in general don't like geese, been unable to resist the lure of easy money, or did the mild and favourable weather in Spring reduce the mortality among the goslings? The three or four farmers I consulted had either not noticed the increase or thought that "some one hoped to make a haul at Easter."

(To be continued)

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 15, 1954.

## TESTS PROVE NEW METHOD WASHES GREASIEST DISHES WITH HALF the EFFORT, HALF the TIME

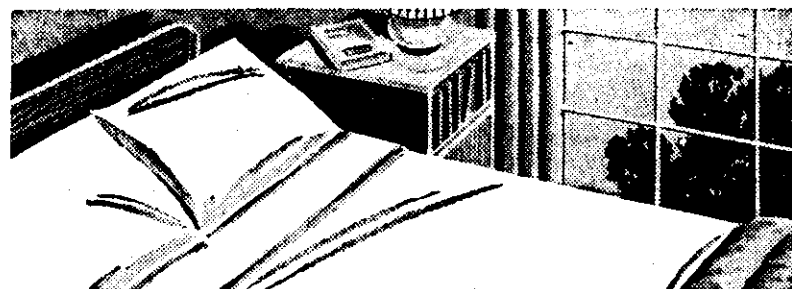
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