

# FUNCTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

I HAVE always thought sires and dams a little ridiculous in modern times, but breeders don't seem to be ready yet for fathers and mothers. However, I was not myself ready for a variation. I saw today in the catalogue of a Queensland country show: SIRE and DAMNED. If it was a misprint, it was a rather happy accident, but I am not going to call it illiteracy. I think it was veracity: that the catalogue was compiled by a secretary who could not lie for breeders who could be too easily bluffed. Farmers have always been slow to realise that well-bred mothers are as necessary as expensive fathers, and that mongrel mothers take money out of their pockets for five generations. I take off my hat to the first Show Committee to proclaim this simple truth in language that farmers can understand.

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**JULY 14** UNTIL today I was afraid I would return to New Zealand without seeing as many sheep as I can see any Wednesday at Addington: and it may still happen. But we ran into sheep when we were about 200 miles west of Rockhampton, and when we were about 300 miles west we had the luck to be delayed while a mob of perhaps 2000 Merinos were hustled over the railway and the road. I was so pleased to see them that I forgot to count the drovers and the dogs, but I realised once we were on our way again, and they safely on theirs, that there had been a minimum of barking and no shouting at all. They were young sheep in good condition, small but very active, and it seemed only minutes before they were all over the line and moving rapidly away to the south.

They could have been a muster for shearing, since we found the hotel full of waiting shearers when we stopped for the night about 50 miles farther west. Most of these were young men, some of them mere boys, and I would not have guessed their occupation if they had not been identified for me. I suspect that about half of them were city lads who had been attracted to the shearing sheds by the money to be made there in the now generally comfortable conditions. It amused me all the same to read in the local paper that one of their demands had been sentic tanks—in a State with at least 200,000 comfort stations built in the style popularised by the pioneers.

I DON'T suppose Queensland has more lavatories in proportion to its population than any other country in the world, but I could easily be persuaded that

it has. We are squeamish about lavatories in New Zealand, hide them, camouflage them, and sometimes lie about them; as we do about so many other necessities. Here they glorify them. I have not yet been north of Capricorn, but I have been from Brisbane to Rockhampton, and for hundreds of miles to the west, and I have yet to see a lavatory hidden in bushes, covered with creepers, pushed into the remotest corner of the section, or made to look like something else. I understand the absence of creepers, which would mean the constant presence of spiders, hornets, wasps and other insect aids to distraction and terror, but I can't explain the siting and the design. The simplest explanation is that Queenslanders are too honest to pretend and too pious to mock: God made them and God made Queensland, and it is not for them to reason why He made elimination the joke of vulgarities. But I am not sure that this is the true explanation. I think Queenslanders have exalted lavatories into a symbol of independence, and sat too long at the feet of Chic Sale.

When I first saw Brisbane eight years ago I was some thousands of feet in the air, and I remember how extraordinary it seemed that every household kept bees. Now that I have seen the bee boxes at ground level I still think it extraordinary that so little thought has been given to their appearance. If climate and geology have condemned a million people to play pits and pans into the second half of the 20th Century, that does not seem a very good reason to a visitor why the play-houses should represent the lowest common denominator of ugliness to which unpainted wood and iron can be reduced. But if he were a wise visitor he would keep his nose in the air and his eyes over his shoulder and his pen-til untouched in his pocket

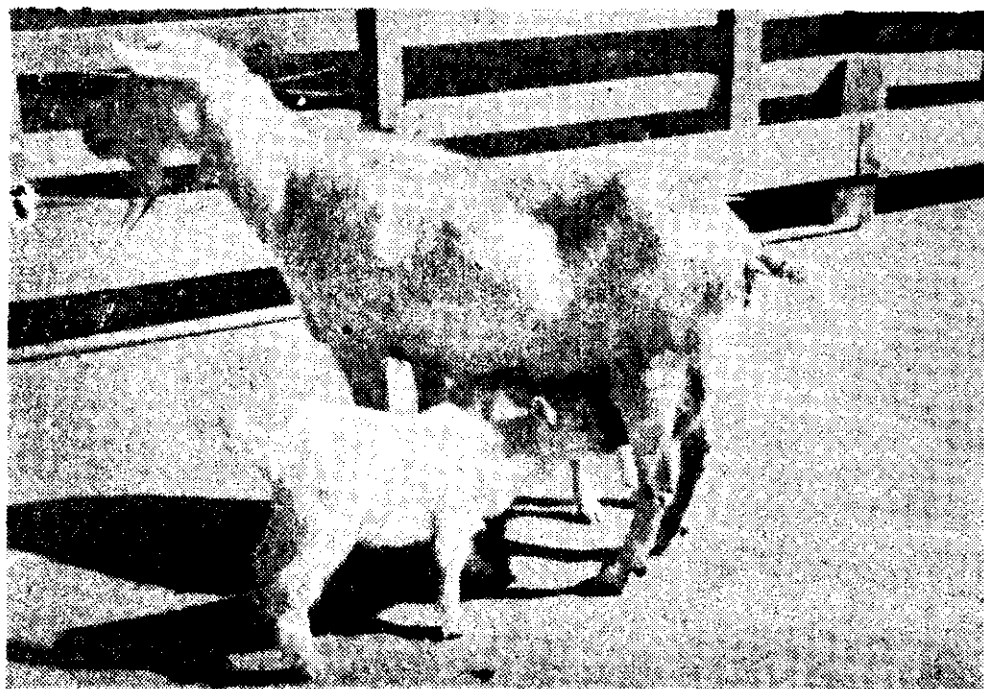
by "SUNDOWNER"

ONE of the sights of the small inland towns of Queensland are the goats that roam the streets and watch the open gates. In Longreach, which I have just visited, I was struck by the quality of the goats, and the reason for this, I was told, is that they

**JULY 16** are not allowed to breed indiscriminately. They are, in fact, not allowed to breed at all except to pedigree Billies controlled by the Shire Council. I was not long enough in the shire to get the official story, but an intelligent woman in one of the town's thirteen hotels told me that there is a milk problem in Longreach for at least six months every year; that in the dry winter season the local dairy farmers have just enough milk for the hospitals and other essential services; that there is no alternative source of supply except from goats; and that mothers of young families who are not willing to milk goats must draw their supplies from tins. The problem, however, is to find goats that are worth milking, and to make this easier the Shire Council controls all the goats in its area, destroys or sterilises the male kids, and makes pedigree billies available for those who want them.

The result already is that a considerable proportion of the town's hundreds of goats are half-bred Saanens, or better, and although this is the worst part of the year for green feed I saw many nannies roaming the streets and the open range outside the town that looked as if they would yield a quart at least. It, in fact, occurred to me suddenly that it was goats' milk I had just poured on my porridge, but on this point the lady was non-committal. She was, she said, no authority on milk, but she had never seen a cow about the place, or a milkman!

(To be continued)

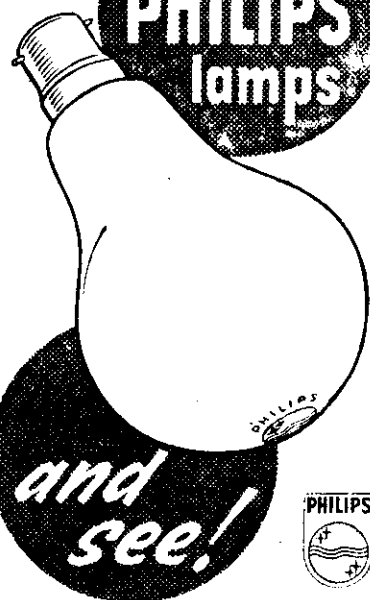


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