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# PHILIPS

PHILIPS ELECTRICAL INDUSTRIES  
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## Shepherd's Calendar

# DEATH BY THE TON

by "SUNDOWNER"

SINCE I have seen no denial of the newspaper report that thirteen tons of 1080 had been dropped on a small area of bush to poison opossums, heard no shout of alarm from bird-lovers, and none of rage from deer-stalkers, I must suppose both that the report was true and that very few people read it.

**OCTOBER 7** Thirteen tons is more than twenty-nine thousand pounds; twenty-nine thousand pounds is nearly three hundred and fifty thousand ounces and that is enough poison to kill every bird in Canterbury.

The poison was reported to be in pellet form and to have been dropped from the air by officers of the Wild Life Division, assisted by officers of the Forestry Service. No one knows or can know where it fell and lodged, what living things will find it first, what proportion of its intended victims will not find it at all. An aeroplane in flight is as precise an instrument as Canterbury's east wind and pellets would have to be loaded with lead to come down where they were directed.

Perhaps they were painted pellets—painted a colour which we are told birds will not accept. Perhaps they were big pellets—bigger than birds could comfortably swallow. Perhaps they were hard pellets—difficult to crumble and rain-resistant. Perhaps they were dropped where birds were not numerous—and will now be less numerous. There are many possibilities, but no chance at all that this was a harmless operation, scientific sensible, or beneficial. Either the report was false or the facts are an abomination before the Lord.

**SO** far my percentage of lambs born has been 75, and of lambs tailed 71, in the best lambing weather I can remember. Though a few more will come, the total will not exceed 80 per cent and may be less, in spite of what I think is a bigger than usual number of twins. It is not a comforting result in a season for low lamb prices.

But what interests me most is the probable explanation. For the first time last autumn I decided to forget farming tradition and listen to the men of science. One ram having chased the other out of the paddock, and right over the horizon, I decided not to replace him—partly because it was difficult at the time to find a replacement, but chiefly

because the new doctrine is that one ram for seventy ewes is more than enough.

Now I question that doctrine. One may be enough if he is not the only one, as my Irish great-grandfather might have said. It

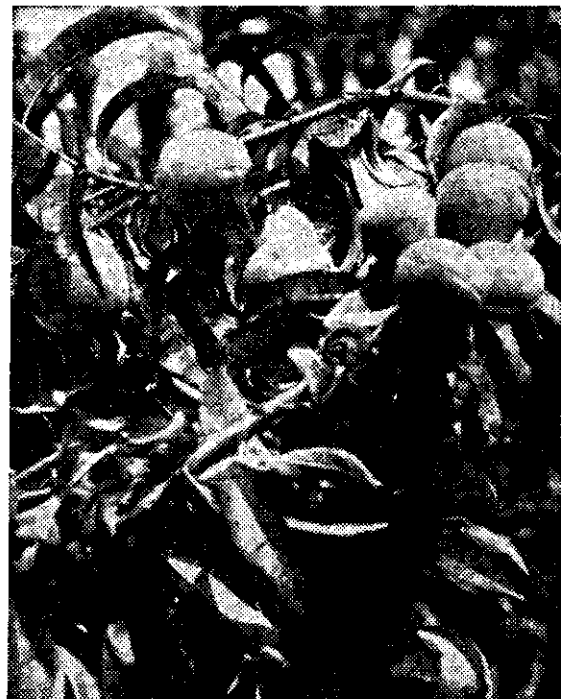
**OCTOBER 9** is not enough if there is no other gentleman in the field. In other words two may be enough for 150 ewes but one is not enough for 75. My Shropshire lad has in fact done well to have given me 50 lambs at the average rate at which ewes produce lambs, but two rams would have done better.

This is not the place to carry the argument further; to consider its psychological as well as its physiological aspects. But I have seen what I have seen, and know what I know, and will not again leave one poor ram to respond, in the time I can allow him, to all the advances of 70, 60, or even 50 enterprising ewes.

**I** HOPE the secretary of the Fruit Growers' Federation is not a mathematician. I hope he has had no scientific training and can't count. I hope he has never before heard fruit-growers say that they have lost all, or nearly all, or so much of their crop that what is left will not pay for the picking. I hope he has never seen a hail storm, or felt a frost, or read the newspapers the next day.

Because I don't want to be compelled to believe what he is reported to have

(continued on next page)



"Without birds we might have no fruit. With them we have some and lose some"

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