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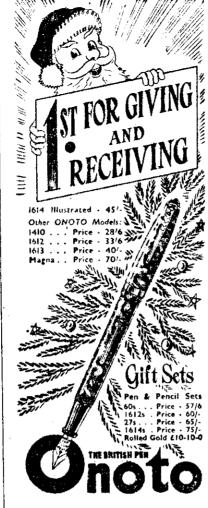
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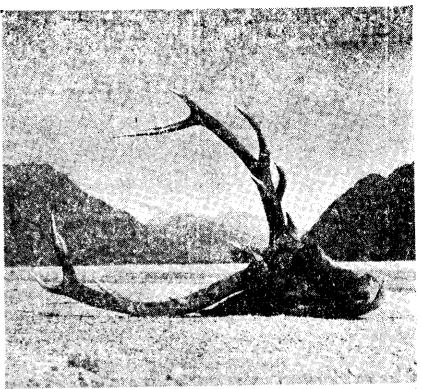
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National Publicity Studios photograph "Cruelty to wild animals in New Zealand . . . means shooting, trapping and poisoning"

## SURPHERD'S CALENDAR

## Hunters and Trappers

PIVE months after it was printed and published I have seen today a summary of the report of a Committee appointed two years ago by Mr. Attlee "to inquire into practices and activities which may involve cruelty to British wild mammals." I have also seen in the Countryman some comments by

NOVEMBER 13 are politely but provocatively con-

tradictory. Those who want restrictive legislation seem convinced that they will not get it, and those who fear legislation seem to be afraid that it will come. Until I have seen the report itself I can't pretend to have opinions about it, but I have a very strong wish that our booksellers will import and circulate it (Cmd. 8266, H.M.S.O., 3/6).

The "wild mammals" of New Zealand have, of course, all been imported -rabbits, deer, opossums, chamois, and thar; with the few cattle and horses, and thousands of pigs and goats, that have gone wild since they were domesticated. We have no foxes and badgers, and therefore no fox and badger hunting. We have hares, and on a certain social-financial level a few groups of men and women who hunt them with horses and hounds. I don't think they disturb the hares much, inflict much cruelty on them, or appreciably reduce their numbers. Cruelty to wild animals in New Zealand-if in the meantime we except biological warfare-means shooting, trapping, and poisoning, and it would be the best news of the century

(in the domestic sphere) if someone

could tell us how to stop.

IT is clear, I think, from the comments in the Countryman, that Mr. Attlee's Committee has nothing to say about the steel trap that will cause its disappearance from New Zealand. It suggests—perhaps recommends—perhaps urges—perhaps strongly demands (I await the full report)—that the gin trap should be banned by law on account

NOVEMBER 14 of its admitted cruelty, and that the design of any

other spring trap used should have Ministerial approval. That sounds like a step forward, and in Britain probably is. But means next to nothing here. Whatever the Committee's precise words are about traps, its guiding principle is that cruelty begins when more suffering is inflicted on wild animals than is necessary in protecting the farmer's crops and the nation's food supply. We must read the two clauses together, and as soon as we do that in New Zealand we are back where we have been for 70 years. Traps are used here not because they will eradicate rabbits, not because we are indifferent to cruelty (though habit and necessity have calloused most farmers), not because they are an easy or convenient or certain method of control, but because they give farmers some degree of control when other (also cruel) methods fail. They will disappear when rabbits disappear or some easier and cheaper method is found for eradicating them. In the meantime, I am disappointed to

N.Z. LISTENER, DECEMBER 14, 1951.