



LEFT: Fronds of the giant kelp—a photograph taken at Preservation Inlet by Dr. R. A. Falla, Director of the Dominion Museum

Shepherd's Calendar

LARGEST OF ALL?

by "SUNDOWNER"

I THOUGHT I was finished with bats until one emerges from my own caves and is captured under my own hat. But two more correspondents have written reporting colonies in or near Stewart Island, and in one case the indications seem to be that the bats survive there in hundreds.

Reports like these, however, though most interesting to me personally, are the stillest of still small

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voices beside the roar that reached me this week from New York. According to *Life* there is a colony of bats in Texas which blackens the roof of a cave for a quarter of a mile, numbers eight millions (I don't know how they were counted), and takes three hours of continuous flying to come out into the night to feed. Though the individuals are only an inch or two long, a photographer who visited the cave to get a picture had his hat (or it may have been his head, or both) nearly blown off by the cumulative blast of their wings, and was temporarily deafened by their multitudinous squeakings. Standing near the mouth of the cave as they came out was like being in the centre of a hurricane, and just as Uncle Sam is the only man rich enough to afford the Mississippi, Texas is the only State big enough to take the daily coming and going of these bats without losing its position on the map. I think I had better agree not to say any more about our own two or three hundred bats for at least a fortnight.

WHEREVER my ewes picked up Organism K, the onlie begetter of footrot, they have given it a warm welcome. A month ago I had five or six lame sheep, only two lame enough to go down on their knees to feed. This morning I found four walking on three legs and five or six others noticeably tender. All when I examined them showed swelling and heat. The

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cripples showed suppuration as well, with the hoof lifted or lifting from the pad. I may be able to stop the suppuration, and get the fourth foot back on the ground, but it will not again be a healthy foot.

I know, too, that at this stage the fault is my own. I have not done what

the Department of Agriculture tells us to do, and the little I have done has not been done with sufficient care. I have not used enough bluestone, I have not used it often enough. I have not isolated the lame sheep. And I have not pared away all the harbouring horn in which active germs could hide.

For none of these failures have I an adequate excuse. The Department has not only circulated its knowledge through the *Journal of Agriculture* and made it available in free pamphlets. It has sent me a photograph of a foot showing lesions in the horny tissue which could not have been detected without deep paring or treated until the protective cover had been removed. Finally, it has told me about properties, one of them the most famous farm in Canterbury, on which footrot has been completely eradicated by the methods recommended in Dr. Filmer's bulletin. If I felt like excusing myself I could only say that I am too poor to farm efficiently—to give myself better yards, better fences, a more effective foot-bath and draining pen. The answer would then be that I am too poor not to do those things—that muddle is the luxury of the rich.

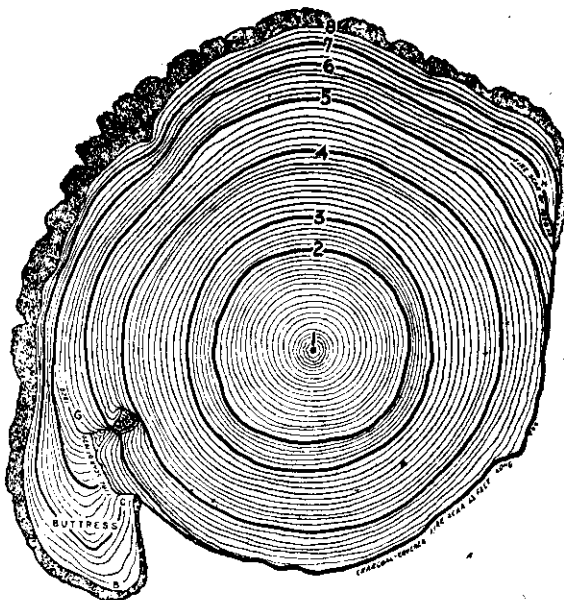
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I HAVE had another note from H.M. (Dunedin), as surprising as his first but a good deal more comforting. H.M. likes authorities, and so do I, but if I felt sceptical in this case I would be impressed by the

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JULY 23 and F.R.S. of the author of the publication from which H.M.'s quotation comes. Here it is:

The coastal waters of California and of Southern Peru, Chile, Southern Argentina, the Falkland Islands, New Zealand, and Tristan da Cunha...



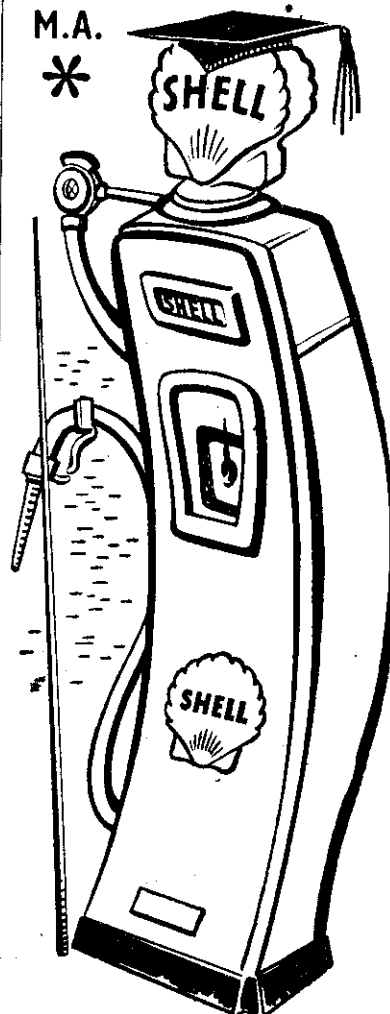
(1) 728 A.D. Tree then about 15 feet high (sprout started about 700 A.D.); (2) 1066, Norman Conquest; (3) 1215, Magna Carta signed; (4) 1492, Discovery of America; (5) 1776, Declaration of Independence; (6) 1861, Civil War began; (7) 1914, World War began; (8) 1932, last growth ring formed (the tree tell the following year)

support the famous buoyant giant kelp (*Macrocystis pyrifera*), which is the largest plant in the world, exceeding in height even the Redwood trees of California.

H.M.'s comment is that this "surely is a little known fact." My own is that if it is a fact, it is a good bracer of our morale. I have walked through the famous redwood in California that on a finer day I would have driven through, have stood at the foot of "the world's highest tree" (without feeling the height because of the low and crowded position), and I have shopped in the burnt-out bole of a redwood whose bark, leaves, and upper branches were indistinguishable from the surrounding forest of redwoods though the hole inside was 50 high and more than 30 feet across, and provided enough floor space for a well-stocked curiosity shop with seats, counter and shelves. If we have something bigger than those monsters, something to throw at the next American who thrusts a redwood in our face, I am all for letting the fact be known—even though we have to share the glory with six other countries, including California. But we shall have to travel some distance before we eliminate the Californian lead in publicity. You don't have to look for someone in the redwood country to tell you about the trees. You have to look for an opportunity to read the publicity matter they slip into your hands if you pause long enough to give them a chance. And it is good publicity—scientifically accurate and aesthetically satisfying. We have certainly got as far in New Zealand as a fence round two or three of our biggest kauris. But I can't think of much in addition except the plates and dates on Royal plantings in our public gardens and parks. What could be more stimulating to the imagination than a kauri equivalent of this fallen redwood, with a key to the things nations were doing while the tree was growing:

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M.A.



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