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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

14 June 1945

from Oliver

Egypt

Dear Miss Cartwright

Had we a well prepared here - The Egyptian Press Commission, I was I expect, your Gazing article on Tarnment & where a prominent feature over the next few months. However, my only hope is illiterate, consequently no potential subscribers. Once only, for a few months, was I actually interested in journalism. The idea was a weekly to be named "The Shore Line" & it was to appeal to all shore-dwellers in [or Coast-line] British Territories everywhere. There is no element

in populations more isolated than the shore-dwellers - lines of communication don't actually run that way. The Cromer - Blakeney - Hunstanton road is exceptional. Politically, shore dwellers are swamped by the inland voters of the parliamentary constituencies of which the shore is a negligible strip. Incidentally, these people, politically naive, were to be grouped in long, narrow coast-line constituencies, at least 2 or 3 miles deep. The big parts are different. They get their own representatives, but their interests are different, in large degree, from those of the non-urban shore-dwellers.

Such a paper I am sure wd. have been widely taken up because their interests all the world over are substantially the same thing, for different angles. One agent wd. have been the local chairman of parish councils, school-teachers, ministers of religion, publicans, doctors & leading fishermen, with here & there a local squire & farmer.

I was just getting on terms with Lord Overthorpe abt. 1911 when he went ill, & died abt. 23 yrs. ago. Himself, I sh. have taken no editorial share, but might have had a cut of watching brief as a member of the board. So that's that.

Your remark - "There is a tremendous amount of erosion" - tree-felling & overgrazing - impressed me. An island abt. the size of Scotland, with a climate comparable to that of the British Isles, & a population not exceeding that of Leicester or Croydon. This shd. not be. The map of T. in my atlas is abt. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. across & appears to show a very well-watered country. Perhaps the forestry dept. may be able to issue an air-survey making plain the amount of felling in progress. My only source of informⁿ is Whitehead's Memorandum for 1938, where it is stated that "a company has been formed with options over large areas" i.e. for pulping - if so, the operations of these gent^ls will need watching.

I think that your various "legislative bodies" are very small - 18 in the "Council" & 30 in the "Assembly" - this ^{opposite} ~~is~~ the Government very great powers of abuse. I know nothing of Tasmania, but a New Zealander told me how things were arranged in his country. Where the constitutions are relatively few it is easy to pick out the "doublets", & in advance of an election appoint a ~~few~~ sufficient no. of officials, or plausible jobs in such districts, so to ensure the party in power being returned on the next occasion. A relatively few constitutions rigged in this way appears to suffice.

All these free forests you tell me about need financing, & one presumes this underlies the options to the pulp^{ing} Co. In an island with poor road comm^{un}it^{ies} one supposes logs will be floated 10th five months - i.e. if the rivers are capable of floating down the timber-rafts. If this is so it means that felling will occur mostly in the river valleys, which as they are denuded will become liable to erosion - more & more - i.e. an insidious form of suicide.

Oliver to Curtis 14.VII.1945

The "bush-mill" at Adventure Bay is presumably
a euphemism for saw-mill!

The Wotho Fagus Cunninghamii is lovely timber.
V. Threlles in his "Selected extra-tropical Plants" (under Fagus)
is eloquent as to its virtues. I envy your father the combination of talents he is able to focus on the same front. He reminds me of the father of my old friend Sydney Chapman, a mathematical professor at the Imp. College of Science, who (I think this was in Sydney) has been chairman of the War Office scientific advisory Committee. He (the father), quite as old man, keeps the establishment, at Womboldon, furnished with every conceivable garden product, besides having a variety of ~~other~~ side lines. I take off my hat.

What I wonder is the actual standard rate of income tax in Tasmania? With me everything is based on England so that available income to spend is abt. 2/5 what one once foolishly hoped it might have been! I don't recall capital, as many do people do, as that makes a bit more on my income. Cost of living is high with the tax has mounted x 3; I don't think there's nothing to pay on the house, & no rates as the district does nothing - absolutely nothing - for residents. So I rule along mostly living on fruit. Oranges ran out a month ago, but I still have grape-fruit - ever since December. Next month & then till (mid-end) Sept. come our local figs, which are magnificent, grown on the isolated dunes by the shore. Locally they cost very little, 2^d a pound, I don't know on Blex market they sell at 3 times + that. It's the "Sultani" strain & a lucrative exploited for the more far-sighted Belouiss. One man told me he cleared last season over 2/400 fr. his patch - a small strip on the sheltered side of the dunes, perhaps 500 yds. long. A useful feature is that their skins are tough enough for travelling without deterioration. There are Pomgranates,

when fire I drink - Shakes makes a good cocktail
with drops of gin (when procurable!) - then follow
dates, & by now oranges once more - with Cape pomegranates
& Camphats (delicious) to fill interstices -

Yes, like you I had Shaw's new book & enjoyed it,
though everything he says may not be gospel. It did
lead Shaw to tell me that no private person should own
land absolutely, that he should be given every security, short
of this, so long as he treats it properly. I have since
read Jauch & Whyte, "The Rape of the Earth" - Fabers - 1939?
You should get hold of it. The more general chapters by Jauch
are splendid. He seems to believe that in the distant
future all land will be treated along Soviet lines.

The great idea there is to bring the water to the land. So
harvest all rivers (at suitable cost) so that water can be
distributed like, e.g. electricity, & grow primarily for the home
markets. This also will largely cure erosion - but you should
read the book, at present there is some industrial pollution
in the river.

Through the good office of an American judge I had
been a first lot of tyres, so am on the road once more.
Mainly it is used for essential local taxiing, whilst I take
my walks abroad on foot as far as possible -

End Feb. I went cruising with Capt. S. - circus - 4
days on realistic exercises in these waters: most interesting.
One day was spent on a "Caric" watching pilots doing their dead-
landings, who are ^{definitely} ~~rather~~ ^{thrilling} ~~thrilling~~ - I was most impressed by
the efficiency of the R.N. all round. Com. Collis, of the
R. Australian Navy, who did well in our waters with the
"Seymour" (since lost), once stayed with me on B. Point
& taught me how much longer is really played by the Chinese.

I am sending a few separate by ^{the post} ~~some~~ ^{the post} - The dust
screed dealt only with the earlier days. It full of ^{new} ~~old~~
material in the Geogr. Journal (London) - You probably have the
"Horn of Manacles" (1938)? A further contribution: ^{has appeared} ~~has~~ ^{appeared} ~~only~~
last year. I don't know what you are doing, but don't
send too much, as a little tells one a lot.

Bill & I are about ready to go. I have a little more to write. I am sure you will find it interesting. I am sure you will find it interesting. I am sure you will find it interesting.