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T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE.

PROGRESS REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION IN VICTORIA.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Chapman, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
September 16, 1874.



FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE.

PROGRESS REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION IN VICTORIA.

To His Excellency Viscount CANTERBURY, K.C.B., Governor-in-Chief of the Colony of Victoria, &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

THE Commission appointed by Your Excellency to enquire into the existence of Foot and Mouth Disease in this Colony, and into the best means of extirpating the same, and preventing its further introduction, providing such disease shall have been found to exist, have the honor to report for Your Excellency's information:—

First. That this alarming disease did actually break out in Victoria, in the beginning of May last, in the farm of Mr. Cobbledick, in the Werribee district.

It made its appearance there first in a shorthorn bull called "Achmet," imported from England in February last by the steamship *Northumberland*, and from thence was conveyed to the Red Hill farm, nine miles distant, by an animal which had been in contact with the aforesaid "Achmet;" but your Commissioners have no conclusive evidence before them to connect the introduction of this malady to this colony by this animal, nor by the rest of the consignment of cattle (eight head in all) which arrived by the *Northumberland*, nor yet to such other importations of cattle as took place during the past season, since all these have been certified by competent and professional witnesses to have been landed in a healthy condition.

Secondly. So far as your Commissioners have been able to ascertain from the evidence collected, they have every reason to believe that this was the first outbreak of "Foot and Mouth Disease" which ever took place in this colony; and they take the earliest opportunity of expressing their entire approval of the measures adopted by the Government in at once ordering the destruction of the infected herds.

Thirdly. The result of this prompt action on the part of the Government, together with the continued surveillance of the inspector in charge of the district in which the disease manifested itself, enable your Commissioners now to express their hope that the disease is already suppressed.

They nevertheless beg to recommend that the utmost vigilance be continued on the part of the inspectors, lest a fresh outbreak of the disease should occur; a calamity the magnitude of which can scarcely be calculated in a colony like ours, where large herds of wild cattle would be wholly beyond the reach of treatment, and where, from the nature of the pasture grounds, animals suffering from the disease would certainly perish from their inability to obtain water.

Fourthly. That your Commissioners, having received information of outbreaks of disease in various parts of the colony, have investigated, or caused investigation to be made respecting such information; and have found, in each instance, that the disease supposed to be "Foot and Mouth Disease" has been either rheumatism or pleuro-pneumonia.

Fifthly. From the evidence of professional veterinary surgeons, of observant practical individuals, as well as from that of scientific men, your Commissioners are led to believe that the germs of "Foot and Mouth Disease" may be carried in various ways from one district to another, and more particularly from farm to farm; yet they have not been able to learn that the disease has ever been

conveyed from one country to another, across the sea, in the absence of what may be called its natural conductor—horned cattle; and they are of opinion that, by this means, its introduction is mainly to be dreaded.

Sixthly. That your Commissioners therefore suggest that all horned cattle arriving in the colony from foreign parts, and from colonial ports where this disease is known to exist, should be subjected to a quarantine of not less than six months on Duck Island, or some isolated position; provided that, in the event of the disease existing in an active state on arrival, or having existed during the voyage in any cattle on board, your Commissioners would recommend the destruction of all cattle, fodder, fittings, clothing, and appurtenances belonging to the whole of such shipment.

Seventhly. Your Commissioners are of opinion that the expenses of quarantine, or compensation for imported cattle slaughtered, should be borne and made by the Government, on all cattle shipped before or on the first day of August next from England or elsewhere; but that the said expenses and loss of cattle should be borne by the importers on all such cattle as may be shipped after that date.

By adopting the above recommendations, under such regulations as may hereafter be framed, your Commissioners have every reason to expect that an immunity from this disease may be enjoyed by this colony.

Eighthly. Your Commissioners, at this stage of their proceedings, would express their thanks to Inspectors Curr and Kerr for their active co-operation, and to state for Your Excellency's information that these gentlemen have necessarily been subjected to an increased expenditure and a larger amount of work in connection with the discharge of the duties entailed upon them by the unfortunate outbreak of the disease which has called into existence this Commission.

Your Commissioners have the honor to subscribe themselves,

Your Excellency's obedient Servants,

(Signed) JOHN WHITEMAN, *Chairman.*
THOS. WRAGGE.
ROBERT M'DOUGALL.
THOS. P. FALLON.
J. HOLLOWAY.
A. E. WALLIS.

(Signed) ABRAHAM LINCOLNE, *Secretary.*

Custom House, Melbourne,
15th July, 1872.