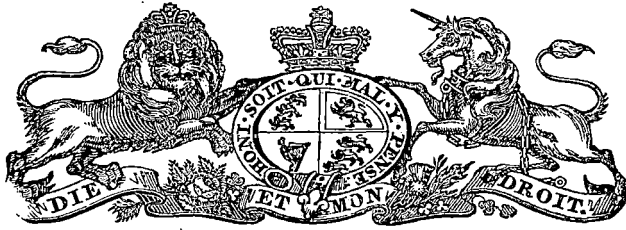


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1892.

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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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AUSTRALIAN STOCK CONFERENCE, 1892 :

REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVE FOR TASMANIA.

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



*Office of Inspector of Stock, Hobart, 29th November, 1892.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to furnish my Report upon the proceedings of the Australian Stock Conference, held in Wellington on the 25th October, 1892, at which I was deputed by the Government to represent Tasmania. Mr. Archibald Park, V.S., was also present.

The Hon. Sir John Hall, K.C.M.G., was unanimously appointed Chairman, Mr. John Roberts, C.M.G. acting in that capacity until his arrival.

After the preliminary business had been disposed of I read a paper on "The Periods of Quarantine on Stock," which was considered in conjunction with the framing of regulations relating to the introduction of foreign stock.

The following Resolutions were passed by the Conference to be recommended to the Governments of the colonies represented.

It was proposed to reduce the term of quarantine on cattle and sheep from places outside the Australian colonies from 120 and 90 days respectively to 60 days.

I used my utmost endeavour to have the period upon sheep reduced to 30 days, but the voting being equal—New Zealand and Tasmania for, and N.S. Wales and Queensland against—the Chairman ruled that the period stand at 60 days.

The Conference determined to recommend the removal of the prohibition upon pigs, and the imposition on those animals of a quarantine term of 60 days.

It was determined that no change was desirable in the period of quarantine of dogs, but that such term should be passed in a Government Quarantine Ground only. Before the regulations upon the interchange of Australasian Stock were considered, I tabled a motion to the following effect:—"That the Chief Inspector of Stock of New Zealand be requested to furnish the Conference with the particulars of all proclamations issued by the New Zealand Government declaring it a clean colony. Also the dates of subsequent outbreaks of 'Scab,' the history of such outbreaks, and the means that have been and are being taken to arrest the spread of the scab disease."

After considerable discussion it was determined, "That in view of the fact that no scab has been found to exist in sheep in New Zealand since the 30th June, 1890, and that during this period a regular and proper system of inspection has been carried on, this Conference recommends the different Australian Governments to remove the restrictions at present in force against the importation of New Zealand sheep if after next shearing the flocks in the latest infected districts are on inspection found to be free from 'scab.' The Conference also recommends that in such case the restrictions on intercolonial steamers be removed."

It was moreover resolved, that "Sheep shall only be conveyed by vessels that have traded to clean colonies within the next preceding three months, and not by vessels that have within that period had on board sheep from any colony or country other than a clean Australian colony."

"18. That no stock, other than sheep, shall be imported by vessels that have, within the next preceding three months, had on board any infected stock or any stock from any colony or country other than a clean Australian colony, and the Captain of the vessel shall, when required, make a declaration to that effect: Provided, that cattle may be imported into any colony for immediate slaughter in quarantine and under proper Quarantine Regulations."

"19. That all stock intended to be landed shall be accompanied by a declaration from the owner and a certificate from an Inspector or Veterinary Surgeon at the port from which such cattle are shipped, that they are not infected and had not, during the next preceding twelve months, been infected. Also, that unless they are intended for immediate slaughter in quarantine as provided by the last preceding Resolution, they are from a clean colony."

The Conference have scheduled a list of infectious and contagious diseases—Pleuro-pneumonia being one of those named.

I beg to draw your particular attention to the above Resolutions 18 and 19 quoted. They have a most important bearing upon the future imports of stud cattle from Australia, meaning, as they do, in substance that stud cattle from Australia are prohibited from being introduced into Tasmania, and that only cattle for slaughter will be admitted. I strongly support the views held by the Conference for the following reasons; viz.—That although up to date no evil has resulted

from the importation of cattle for stud purposes on a six months' quarantine, still the fact remains that importers are never safe, and veterinary surgeons cannot diagnose the insidious Pleuro-pneumonia when it takes the form of an encysted lung. An outbreak may occur, when such a condition exists, from an apparently healthy animal. During one month's examination of the lungs of imported cattle at the Hobart "abattoirs," the records of this Department show that 5 per cent. were affected with chronic lesions of Pleuro-pneumonia.

The foregoing observations lead me to entertain the hope that the Government will accede to the Resolutions of the Conference, and prohibit Australasian cattle being imported to Tasmania, other than for slaughter.

Another important aspect is that such a prohibition will likely induce the importation of stud cattle from England. The facilities now offered by the various shipping companies are most complete, combining quick transit with good accommodation. Added to this the reduction of quarantine upon English cattle from 120 to 60 days must attract importers, especially when they are aware that Pleuro-pneumonia is all but stamped out in England, whereas in Australia it is rife, and frequent outbreaks occur, causing heavy and ruinous losses. I have no hesitation in remarking that the stockowners in Tasmania who turn their attention to stud breeding of cattle must have an encouraging future before them. Our absolute immunity from cattle disease is already recognised by New Zealand owners, so that in a short space of time, instead of that colony importing from England, with 60 days' quarantine, breeders will come to Tasmania for stud cattle which would enter free of quarantine, thus causing the latter to become a depôt for stock of every kind and breed.

New Zealand would naturally supply herself with pedigree cattle to keep her prosperous dairying and freezing industries in the foremost rank. I may remark that from personal observation my opinion is, that in many breeds of cattle the Tasmanian standard of excellence in 1892 is higher than that of New Zealand. At this I was astonished, as my inspection of stud cattle exhibited at the Christchurch show six years since caused me to express the opinion that the stud industry in New Zealand was far in advance of Australia and Tasmania.

I am informed by practical gentlemen (stockbreeders) whose opinions are unquestionable, that the degeneration in cattle has resulted from the immense stride the dairying industry has made in New Zealand, causing, as it has, the intermingling of supposed milk with beef-breeds. Hence both alike have suffered by injudicious crossing.

The exhaustive reasons given for opinions will, I hope, receive the support of the Government.

"24. That sheep imported into any colony and certified by an Inspector of that colony as free from infection may be introduced into any other colony if found to be free from infection by the Inspector of the latter colony into which the sheep are being imported."

I must comment upon this Resolution, as it may possibly be the cause of introducing into Tasmania a pest, *Æstrus ovis* (Sheep Bot-fly.) Should New Zealand be proclaimed free from "scab" I would suggest that for at least twelve months all sheep arriving from New Zealand in Tasmania be subjected to immediate dipping from ship-board in sulphur and lime and killed out of yards proclaimed a quarantine ground for the time being. This would be a protection if "scab" alone was to be feared, but seeing that the Members of the Conference, including myself, were not aware until after the Conference closed its deliberations that *Æstrus ovis* had a large and extended existence in New Zealand (specimens of which I secured in that colony), I hesitate to recommend the introduction of New Zealand sheep into Tasmania, whereby another pest may be added to the already too long list. I beg respectfully to suggest that the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria may be communicated with, impressing upon them the gravity of risking the introduction of a pest which might more than counterbalance any commercial benefit they may derive by introducing long-wool stud rams with the object of producing mutton for freezing purposes more adapted to the English market. And again, through the New South Wales channel, may not our colony be attacked by the "Bot-fly?" Fortnightly we receive large consignments of sheep for our food supply, and in this way a great risk is incurred of introducing a pest which would undoubtedly jeopardise our sheep-breeding industry.

This question must be seriously considered, both as affecting direct imports from the seat of the pest, New Zealand, and also indirectly through New South Wales. The last paragraph of Resolution 25—"In the event of any colony or colonies not carrying out the regulations requiring foreign dogs to be quarantined in Government Quarantine Grounds only, all dogs arriving either by sea or land from any such colony or colonies shall be deemed foreign stock"—will effectually deal with the Victorian system of private quarantine for dogs, which is open to serious abuse, and which still exists in the face of the attention of the authorities having been directed to its objectionable character. I strongly recommend the Government to consent to the framing of regulations giving effect to the Resolution.

#### Miscellaneous.

"28. That the travelling, selling, or offering for sale, or slaughtering for food, of any animals affected by the diseases known as tuberculosis and actinomycosis, or the using of cows affected by tuberculosis and actinomycosis for dairy purposes, be punishable by law; and that there be a more thorough inspection of dairy cattle in use in populous districts."

This Resolution will show clearly the necessity for the appointment of a Government Veterinary Surgeon. The health of the city and colony demands that the slaughtering of cattle for food and using milk from animals suffering from tuberculosis or actinomycosis must be prohibited, or it is likely to lead to an outbreak of disease from seemingly unknown causes; but with such an officer, who can microscopically detect the organisms of either of these diseases, the public would have confidence that when either eating or drinking they are not sowing the germs of an insidious and lingering disease.

The Conference recommend that each colony should legislate for itself, when practicable, on the subject of fluke, worms, and foot-rot in sheep.

I have made considerable enquiries regarding the New Zealand treatment for worms, and the general opinion is that frequent change of pasture with provision made for winter feeding has had the most beneficial results. Drenching has also had good result when the stomach worms exist in large numbers. Hoggett's in New Zealand are the class usually attacked, and the loss is invariably heavy.

Resolution 35 recommends the several Australian Colonies to thoroughly eradicate ticks and lice in sheep. The present Stock Act gives a permissive power to the Chief Inspector to cause dipping. The fact that the destruction of ticks increases the price of wool from 1*d.* to 1½*d.* per lb. conclusively proves that a Compulsory Dipping Act should be upon our Statutes, and would have the support of breeders. I have correspondence in my office at the present time urging legislation upon the subject.

"37. That it is desirable that an efficient staff of Inspectors of Stock be maintained in each colony to prevent the introduction and arrest the spread of infectious and contagious diseases, and also to give other colonies confidence that the stock asked to be introduced are free from infection. If this is not carried out, restrictions will be imposed by way of guarantee that such stock are not infected."

It was proposed that a joint bonus should be offered by the Governments of all the Colonies for a scheme that will lead to the more rapid extermination of rabbits. It was resolved that the responsibility of rabbit destruction must rest upon the landholder; the Crown assuming the responsibility upon Crown lands; that no finality will be obtained without the erection of wire netting fencing being made compulsory; that all landholders in rabbit infested country be compelled to join in the cost and to take simultaneous operations for rabbit destruction. (These are exactly my own opinions on the rabbit question.)

It was also decided that the system of "trapping" and that of "state bonuses" are radically bad.

That with such important subjects as were submitted to them it was considered desirable that the Conference should be held triennially.

"49. That as no disease exists in cattle in New Zealand the Tasmanian Government be requested to allow New Zealand cattle to enter their Colony without imposing any period of quarantine."

I cannot oppose this, being aware that the Resolutions provide, as I have before stated, that no colony can supply New Zealand with cattle but Tasmania, and it is hardly probable that New Zealand owners will forward consignments alive for slaughter, the risk being too great. A few stud "Ayrshires" might find their way to our colony, although I hardly think this probable after the disappointing result of shipments that have, unfortunately I think for our herds, been forwarded hitherto.

The Conference respectfully recommended that the various Governments make enquiry through their Agents-General as to the most suitable months of the year to ship cattle from the United Kingdom to the Colonies to prevent the introduction of so serious a pest as the Gadfly (*Æstrus bovis*), and that this pest be included among the diseases to be dealt with.

It was recommended that the Governments of Australasia be urged to foster and develop the dairying industry throughout the various colonies under their charge.

The Conference considered it desirable that a uniform code of Regulations, embodying the Resolutions passed, be adopted by all the colonies, and that such code come into force on and after the 1st January, 1893.

In conclusion, I have to inform you that Mr. Park and myself received all possible information and attention from the Minister of Agriculture and the Delegates appointed by the Government to be present at the Conference, and for which I personally desire to tender my appreciation.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

*The Hon. the Chief Secretary.*