

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
21st February 1873.*

No. 140. From the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue, and Commerce, (Studs, etc.,) to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Calcutta, 31st January 1873, No. 1-15.

In forwarding copy of a despatch (Sanitary), from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 27, dated 6th November 1872, with enclosure, offering remarks on the report of the Commissioners appointed to investigate the origin and nature of Indian cattle plagues, I am directed to enquire what steps His Excellency the Governor in Council would suggest in the direction indicated in paragraphs 5 to 8 of the Memorandum by the Army Sanitary Commission, whether in the way of investigating the present hygienic condition of cattle in India or in that of improving their hygiene.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, (Sanitary,) to the Government of India, dated India Office, London, 6th November 1872, No. 27.

I FORWARD, herewith, for the consideration of your Lordship in Council, copy of some remarks* by the Army Sanitary Commission on the report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the origin, nature, etc., of Indian cattle plagues, 1871, and would direct your Excellency's special attention to the practical suggestions contained in paragraph 5 of the Memorandum.

* Dated 16th August 1872.

Memorandum by the Army Sanitary Commission on the Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the origin, nature, etc. of Indian cattle plagues, 1871.

This large volume contains a report by the Commissioners, and a number of local reports and other documents affording information regarding various cattle-diseases, including "rinderpest," prevalent over India.

This report and evidence contain rather a first instalment of the results of enquiry than a complete solution of all the questions arising under it.

2. The Commissioners themselves, say, (p. v.) "local attention, investigation, and action, by one skilled agent, or by a committee of persons locally interested, is the first and principal recommendation we have to offer, and we would very strongly urge that mere reporting is a very small part of what ought to be done, and that reporting prompt action adopted with success in staying mortality is the only sort of report which should in future be made."

3. The volume contains much interesting information, and also advocates certain forms of procedure usually considered to be advantageous in saving cattle. But the investigation itself, together with the recommendations made by various reporters, appear to be based mainly on the contagiousness of cattle plagues. The course followed in India appears to have been much the same as in European countries, with the practical result that little has yet been accomplished in measures of cattle hygiene, or in ascertaining why cattle plagues break out at all.

4. Generally speaking, in India as elsewhere, action has to be taken suddenly on the appearance of the disease, and the measures generally adopted are dispersing healthy herds, separating and segregating diseased cattle, disinfecting cattle-sheds where disease has shown itself, and, in Europe, killing all affected animals,—a measure which cannot be adopted in India, on account of religious reasons.

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5. The Commission, while abstaining from giving any opinion on the course usually pursued on emergencies over so large a country as India, cannot refrain from calling attention to the fact that real measures of hygiene, such as might be ~~expected~~ to render cattle less susceptible to murrains, occupy a very small portion indeed of the attention bestowed on this class of diseases in these reports.

The entire subject is yet open for enquiry. Information is required on such questions, for example, as the effect on the health of cattle of enforced herding, while the cattle, if left to themselves, would spread themselves over a large area.

The effect of enforced occupation of particular pastures and of wet and unwholesome ground.

The influence of meteorological conditions

The nature of fodder.

The quality of water, which is as important an element to the health of animals as it is to the health of man.

The nature and amount of work done by cattle, especially during unhealthy seasons.

The nature of shelter provided for stalled cattle and milch-kine.

Its ventilation.

Surface, area, and Cubic space per animal

Nature of paving and draining.

Methods in use for removing urine and dung, and disposing of them.

State of cleanliness of sheds themselves.

State of cleanliness of cattle.

Arrangement of cattle in the sheds (for instance, a not uncommon arrangement is placing cattle head to head, so that they breathe each other's breath).

Information on these and cognate points should be fully detailed in reports on murrains.

6. Improvements have been going on in Europe in some of these particulars. But the account given in the municipal report for Calcutta (1871) of the cattle-sheds and their vicinity where milch-kine are kept, and the great losses from cattle plague in them, show that improvements in these matters are still in their infancy in the East.

It is not many years since the science of hygiene attracted attention even in England as affording the means of saving human life and diminishing the ravages of epidemics.

Hygiene, as applied to the animal creation, has a great work yet to accomplish. At present our chief reliance appears to be in destroying affected animals, a practice which presupposes that hygiene is important against epizootics just as it was formerly neglected as a means of mitigating the ravage of epidemics.

7. This Commission would venture to suggest that in giving effect to the recommendation of the Indian Cattle Plague Commission regarding local investigation and action, that this question of cattle hygiene should form a very prominent element in all such proceedings and reports.

There can be little doubt that many important facts would in this way be ascertained by skilled inquirers, which would afford a far safer basis on which to rest the prevention of cattle plagues and saving of stock than slaughtering or any other measure applied when the diseases are committing ravages.

Enquiries of this class would also lead to improved principles of management of stock and to their introduction gradually among the rural population.

8. In the way of encouragement the Commission conclude this Memorandum with the statement just made to them by the Principal Veterinary Surgeon of Her Majesty's Army, regarding what used to be considered a typical contagious disease among horses, viz., glanders.

Referring to improved arrangements for horses in stables recommended by the Army Sanitary Commission, and improved ventilation connected with it, this officer has stated:—"I look to it as the main cause of the immunity from glanders and pneumonia which we now have."

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It is surely better to prevent glanders than to kill glandered horses. And as the principles of physiology are the same everywhere, it may be safely said that it is surely better to try the effect of cattle hygiene in preventing cattle plague than to trust for safety to killing affected animals after the pest has appeared.

WAR OFFICE, LONDON;
16th August 1872.

(Signed) J. J. FREDERICK,
Secretary.

(True Copy)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.

Exd. G. A. Turton.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT,
FORT ST. GEORGE,
21st February 1873.

No.

No. 141.

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,

REVENUE, AND COMMERCE,

Miscellaneous.

SIR,—In acknowledging your letter
No. 1-15, dated 31st January, ultimo,
communicating a Memorandum from

the Army Sanitary Commission regarding the present hygienic condition of cattle
in India, I am directed to state that the only high authority in the matter for
Southern India, Dr. Thacker, is now absent on furlough, that he is expected to
arrive at Madras in May next, and that as soon as he does so, the Memorandum
will be placed in his hands for the preparation of a full report on it.

2. As to the improvement of the hygiene of Indian cattle, I am to add that
everything that a Government can do has been done, by the gratuitous circulation
of compendious pamphlets in the Vernacular languages, giving instructions for the
prevention and cure of cattle-diseases. The rest must be left in the opinion of
His Excellency in Council to the self-interest and intelligence of the owners.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.

Exd. G. A. Turton.

21st July 1873

W. 204

To Secy Govt of India
Dept. of Agriculture

Sir,

In acknowledging your letter No. 150
of 31st Jan^y ulto, communicating
a Memorandum from the Army Sani-
tary Commission regarding the
present hygienic condition of Cattle
in India & the improvement of their
hygiene, and inquiring what steps
Government has to make on the

subject, I am directed to state that
the only high authority in the matter
~~of the disease prevalent in the cattle~~
for Southern India, Dr. Thacker, is
now absent on furlough, but he
is expected to arrive at Madras
in a few days, and that as soon
as he does so, the Memorandum will
be placed in his hands for the prepa-
ration of a full report on it.

Yr. 10/2/73.

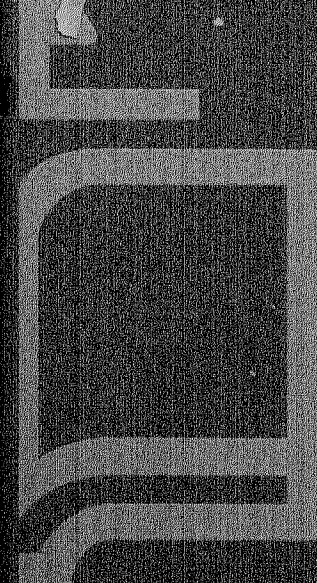
Copy to Secy

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