

## PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF STOCK-DISEASES.

### FUNCTIONING OF STATE VETERINARY SERVICES.

Presidential Address by Professor H. A. WOODRUFF, of Melbourne, to the Veterinary Section, at the Annual Meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Wellington, N.Z., January, 1923.

In accepting the invitation to act as President of this Section owing to the very regrettable absence of my friend and colleague Dr. S. S. Cameron I was not unmindful of the duty devolving upon me of preparing an address for your consideration. The choice of a subject was by no means an easy one, but for a number of reasons the one selected was thought to be appropriate: Firstly, because the stock interest, both in New Zealand and in the States of the Commonwealth, is a very important interest, and in relation to world requirements of food and clothing is one of growing importance; secondly, because of the absence of many of the most serious contagious diseases of animals in Australia, and even more in New Zealand (to use the words of an old writer, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"); thirdly, because of the necessity for the introduction of purebred stock from abroad for the maintenance and improvement of the excellence of our stock here; and, fourthly, because we as a profession have the responsibility of advising the Governments of our respective States in this matter, and with every increase of our scientific knowledge of the incidence and causation of stock-diseases our advice will require to be modified and adjusted to fit the known facts.

There is little need to spend time in reminding the majority of my audience of the ravages made by some of the more virulent contagious diseases of animals in the older countries of the world, but it may be that some of my hearers are not familiar with the magnitude of the losses which have occurred, and which have compelled Governments in all civilized countries to institute and organize a veterinary sanitary service.

"In Great Britain up to the time of the invasion of the cattle-plague in 1865 it may justly be said that veterinary sanitary science, except in the Army, had no existence so far as the prevention of contagious disease is concerned. In 1865 cattle-plague was introduced into England on 24th June. In October it was calculated that 17,000 cattle had been affected. In November only four counties in England were exempt, and the malady was present in nineteen out of the thirty-three Scotch counties. Further, during 1865 and 1866 some 279,000 cattle were reported sick, and 233,000 died or were killed."\* But in addition to cattle-plague other stock-diseases were taking toll of the national wealth. "Up to 1869, for thirty years since the introduction of the two contagious maladies, foot-and-mouth disease and bovine pleuropneumonia, it was estimated that the loss from these alone amounted to five and a half million cattle, roughly valued at eighty millions sterling."\*

\* *Veterinary Sanitary Science and Police*, vol. 1. (George Fleming.)