

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE IMPORTATION OF CATTLE.

INTERIM REPORT.

YOUR Committee beg to Report that it having come to the knowledge of the Committee that the Disease called Rinderpest is now raging very seriously in the Isthmus of Panama, the Committee strongly recommend the Government to take instant measures to absolutely prohibit the importation of Cattle, Sheep, Pigs, and Poultry, and any part thereof, from Panama.

R. CAMPBELL,
Chairman.

21st August, 1866.

THE Committee appointed to consider and report on the existing law affecting the introduction of cattle and other animals from foreign countries, report the following Resolutions to this House:—

1. That the powers of delegation to the Superintendents of Provinces under the Diseased Cattle Acts 1861 and 1865, be repealed.
2. That it is inexpedient to make the laws affecting the introduction of cattle from beyond the seas uniform in all parts of Colony; but that if cattle be allowed to be introduced into any Province from an infected locality beyond the seas, that Province shall be declared an infected district.
3. That the Superintendent of any declared infected Province, by and with the advice of his Executive Council, may make regulations for the removal or otherwise of cattle from one part of his Province to another, or may define certain boundaries within each Province across which cattle shall not be allowed to pass.
4. That immediate steps be taken to absolutely prohibit the importation of cattle from Europe, America, or any other country where the rinderpest is known to exist, until satisfactory evidence has been shown that such countries are free from such disease; and that the same rule be applied to sheepskins, hides, horns, hoofs, or any other parts of cattle, in their raw and unmanufactured condition.
5. That it is inexpedient under existing circumstances that sheep, pigs, or poultry should be allowed to be imported from any country where rinderpest is known to exist; but that the Governor in Council should be empowered to relax or repeal this restriction, if he receive sufficient information to justify him in so doing.

The Committee considers it desirable that the powers with respect to importation of cattle from beyond the seas should not be delegated to Superintendents of Provinces, because the introduction of diseased cattle and other animals into one Province may inflict a very serious injury on the Colony at large. In order, however, to meet the wishes and requirements of such Provinces as Auckland, Taranaki, and that portion of the Province of Canterbury called Westland, the Committee recommend that in any Bill to be prepared for giving effect to these Resolutions, the Governor in Council should be empowered to permit the introduction of cattle, sheep, &c., from neighbouring Colonies to those districts in New Zealand in which the supply of animal food is not at present equal to the demand; but that in order to prevent unnecessary risk and injury being inflicted upon the rest of the Colony, steps should be taken to prevent cattle being removed from any districts into which such importation is allowed.

It has been generally supposed that rinderpest does not affect sheep, and that therefore it is unnecessary to place any restriction on their importation. The Committee however adduce, as an argument in favor of their recommendation, the following extract from a Report of the Privy Council, of date 22nd of June last, and which will be found in the *Times* of the 25th of June:—"The epidemic has also extended to a considerable number of sheep, and since the commencement 4463 are officially reported to have been attacked. Of these, 4002 died or were killed, and 461 recovered or were unaccounted for." Assuming then that this disease attacks sheep equally with cattle, and that only ten per cent. of those attacked recover, it is evident that equally stringent precautions to prevent their future importation should be taken.

In urging the expediency of absolutely prohibiting the introduction of cattle and parts thereof from countries where rinderpest is known to exist, and of only allowing sheep to be imported with the express sanction of the Governor in Council, and under certain restrictions as regards inspection and quarantine, the Committee call attention to the enormous amount of property at stake, to the ruin that would inevitably follow if this disease were once introduced amongst the large herds and flocks of the Colony, and they suggest that, although some little inconvenience may be experienced through temporarily prohibiting bulls, rams, and other valuable stock being imported, in their opinion, the advantages so derived would be far outweighed by the liability, or almost certainty of the disease called rinderpest being introduced.

It must also be borne in mind that those anxious to improve their herds and flocks by the introduction of pure stock can obtain animals necessary for the purpose from the neighbouring Colonies in the meanwhile, and ultimately from England, should this disease prove only of a temporary character.