

1902.
NEW ZEALAND.

JOINT AGRICULTURAL, PASTORAL, AND STOCK COMMITTEE:

REPORTS ON THE STUD BILL, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(HON. MR. ORMOND, CHAIRMAN.)

Report brought up on the 3rd October, 1902, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the Legislative Council.

THURSDAY, THE 3RD DAY OF JULY, 1902.

Ordered, "That Standing Order No. 162 be suspended, and that a Select Committee be appointed to consider all matters pertaining to agricultural and pastoral industries and stock, with power to sit and confer with any similar Committee that may be appointed by the House of Representatives, and to agree to a joint or separate report; with power to call for persons, papers, or records: to consist of ten members—viz., the Hon. Mr. Bowen, the Hon. Major Harris, the Hon. Mr. Johnston, the Hon. Mr. T. Kelly, the Hon. Mr. W. Kelly, the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Ormond, the Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith, the Hon. Mr. L. Walker, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER.)

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

TUESDAY, THE 8TH DAY OF JULY, 1902.

Ordered, "That a Committee be appointed, consisting of ten members, to consider all matters pertaining to agricultural and pastoral industries and stock, with power to sit together with any similar Committee which may be appointed by the Legislative Council, and to agree to a joint or separate report; the Committee to have power to call for persons, papers, and records; three to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Bollard, Mr. Buddo, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Lawry, Mr. Lethbridge, Mr. T. Mackenzie, Mr. Massey, the Hon. Major Steward, Mr. Symes, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. DUNCAN.)

TUESDAY, THE 19TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1902.

Ordered, "That the Stud Bill be referred to the Joint Agricultural, Pastoral, and Stock Committee."—(Hon. Mr. DUNCAN.)

REPORTS.

THE Joint Agricultural, Pastoral, and Stock Committee, to whom was referred the Stud Bill, have the honour to report that they have considered the said Bill, and recommend the Minister to withdraw the Bill until next session, and that a sub-committee has been set up to consider and report as to how best to give effect to the objects proposed in the Bill.

26th August, 1902.

THE Joint Agricultural, Pastoral, and Stock Committee have the honour to report that, having given careful consideration to the report of the sub-committee referred to in their report of the 26th August last as having been set up to inquire as to how best to give effect to the objects proposed to be achieved by the Stud Bill, they recommend that there be forwarded to the agricultural and pastoral societies, the farmers' societies, and the owners of the principal horse-breeding establishments in the colony—(1) the Stud Bill as originally submitted; (2) the Stud Bill as subsequently submitted to your Committee; (3) the evidence taken by the sub-committee. These papers having been sent out to the several bodies interested, they be invited to forward to the Minister for Agriculture their view as to what legislation on the subject is desirable and practicable.

11th September, 1902.

THE Joint Agricultural, Pastoral, and Stock Committee have the honour to report to your honourable House that they recommend that the evidence taken by them, and accompanying this report, on the subject of the Stud Bill be printed.

3rd October, 1902.

J. D. ORMOND, Chairman.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 1902.

J. A. GILRUTH, M.R.C.V.S., Chief Government Veterinary Surgeon, examined.

Mr. Gilruth, on being examined, pointed out that the inception of the Stud Bill arose from the number of horses rejected on account of unsoundness by the Government Veterinary Surgeons when remounts were being purchased for the various South African contingents. Anticipating that the House would decide that some means should be adopted to prevent stallions affected with what are classed as hereditary unsoundnesses reproducing their kind in the present unsatisfactory manner, at a Conference of nearly all the members of the veterinary staff, held recently in Wellington, the opportunity was taken to discuss the question of hereditary unsoundness, and a decision was arrived at after full consideration as to those diseases which would be considered hereditary in the ordinary acceptance of the term by the profession in the colony. It was here explained that the term "hereditary" might be misleading. A "hereditary" unsoundness was not transmitted directly from parent to offspring—that is, the foal was not born with the unsoundness, but it was born with a tendency to ultimately develop certain unsoundnesses from which one or other of the parents might have suffered. The list of hereditary unsoundnesses was given as follows: Bone-spavin, ringbone, side-bone, roaring and whistling, navicular arthritis, shivering, stringhalt, multiple recurrent fibroids, and bad hooves.

In reply to *Mr. Buddo*, witness stated that "shivering" was a nervous disease, and that "multiple recurrent fibroids" were hard fibroid tumours which had their situation frequently (especially in draught horses) in the region of the fetlock. In one instance he had removed a tumour 28 lb. in weight from the fetlock of a stallion which was being used as a sire.

To questions by the Chairman and *Mr. Buddo* regarding "bad hooves," *Mr. Gilruth* explained that the Conference fully discussed the question of bad feet generally. Under this head would come a weak nature of the horn manifesting itself in bad sand-cracks, shelly hooves, seedy toe, &c. In cases of slight sand-crack—or, rather, splitting of the hoof-horn—the general conditions of the horn would naturally be taken into consideration. It would be manifest, however, that an owner of a horse with sand-cracks in the feet due to carelessness and inattention would only have himself to blame were the horse refused a certificate. Assuming the condition to be curable, it was his business to see to that before bringing the animal up for examination. He pointed out that "curb" was not included, for the reason that a curb might develop on the hock of an animal such as a steeplechaser through sudden strain, and that, provided the hock was otherwise strong and well formed, the unsoundness was of little moment comparatively. Curbs were only serious in weak hocks known as "curby hocks." That condition was certainly hereditary, but being chiefly a question of conformation the Conference decided that it be left out of the list in question. "Bog spavin" was omitted from the list partly for similar reasons, and partly because it is frequently developed in heavy aged stallions through strain in covering mares, the hocks being known as "boggy."

To the Chairman, *Mr. Gilruth* stated that he understood that in France all stallions were required to pass an annual examination. In France about three thousand stallions were owned by the Government and used throughout the country, and certainly all these had to be free of hereditary unsoundness. In Belgium he believed all the black Belgian stallions had to pass periodical examinations as to soundness—that is, those used for breeding purposes. In England there is no compulsion, but the King's premiums are only given to the winners after they pass a veterinary examination, and in practically all the show-rings prizes are refused to horses possessing in any degree hereditary unsoundness. All the previously mentioned diseases are considered hereditary by the profession in Great Britain and in Europe generally. In England there does not exist the same necessity for compulsory examination as in this colony, for the reasons previously noted, and because it is rare that a horse of any value over £50 is bought without a veterinary examination and certificate being given. In the colony it is rare that any certificate is asked for. Only recently a case came under his notice where a stallion had been bought for £150 that would not have brought £40 in the Old Country, for the reason that he possessed very bad "side-bones."

Regarding "roaring," the Chairman instanced the famous horse Ormonde, a confirmed roarer, used in England, and bought for America for £35,000, being ultimately repurchased by an English owner. In reply, *Mr. Gilruth* pointed out that horses were generally raced young, and the majority were off the turf before they had time to develop this disease very badly; that in the early stages roaring did not interfere very much with a horse, especially in short races, but that it was impossible for a bad roarer to stay out a long race. Roaring is caused by atrophy of the muscles of the left side of the larynx, which prevents free passage of air into the lungs, and this is bound to interfere with the animal's usefulness. The diseased condition was fully explained by the witness. It was admitted that a horse might be sound and perfectly useful for all ordinary purposes, and yet might not be able to stand training so well as another horse which was a "whistler" or "roarer," but only when the latter was in the early stage of the disease. The disease gradually increased in severity, and it was only a question of time when training would have to be stopped. Even an animal with a "bone-spavin" might win a race, provided the lameness were worn off before starting; but half an hour's rest after the race would see the lameness more pronounced than ever. As a matter of fact, racing is not necessarily any criterion. Witness had seen a decidedly lame horse win a race, but no one would have preferred the animal for a hack or a trap-horse in that condition. Witness believed that if the Bill were passed at least a tenth of

the stallions would be debarred from travelling on account of possessing hereditary unsoundness, perhaps even many more.

Asked whether, if the diseases were to be scheduled in the Bill, it would be necessary to include the whole he had mentioned; Mr. Gilruth stated that certainly the whole must be included, adding that no member of the profession would give a clean certificate to any animal affected with any one of the diseases specified, whether they were scheduled or not. Witness did not agree with the opinion reported by the Chairman as being current in America that roaring was due to training in the early hours of foggy mornings. The disease being one primarily of the nerve, the weather and climate could have no effect. No scientific authority supported such a theory. He agreed that a noise might be produced after strangles, occasionally due to swollen glands, or a similar impediment which could be detected by the examiner. As stated by the Chairman, roaring frequently followed strangles or influenza; but this was more apparent than real. These diseases only hastened the development of unsoundness—they did not of themselves cause the roaring, unless as previously stated.

Mr. Buddo stated that he did not find much fault with the list of diseases, except in the case of "side-bone." Mr. Gilruth agreed that, in the case of plough-horses, side-bones occasionally resulted from treads; but with stallions the same causes were hardly operative, and frequent treads, or, rather, injuries, were very unlikely to be received. In any case, one could not say that a stallion affected with side-bones was free from "hereditary unsoundness."

Asked about racing-stallions, Mr. Gilruth (rather than see the Bill dropped) did not think it absolutely necessary to include them in the Act, provided they were only used for racing-mares. Racing was a business by itself, and owners could look after themselves; but it was different with the general public, the majority of people knowing nothing about horses. In fact, few knew when a horse was lame, unless it was almost going on three legs only.

Witness agreed with Mr. Buddo that farmers often described roarers as "broken-winded"; but, as a matter of fact, the two diseases were different, and had no connection, the latter being due to a diseased condition of the lungs. Witness had never seen a roarer get within 25 per cent. as much as a sound horse from a man who knew that he was a roarer. Would be surprised to see a good farmer riding a horse badly affected with roaring, unless he could not avoid doing so, and agreed that a hunting-man would be soon laughed off the field if he rode a roarer. Would not consider the fact that a horse won a race any proof of his soundness. Did not think a purchaser—even a colonial purchaser—of a valuable horse at Home would be satisfied with the seller's certificate of soundness. The practice of purchase at Home was to have an examination by a veterinarian after the bargain had been made, and if a "sound" certificate was not given the bargain would be off. For animals imported into the colony at present the only certificate required was one to show that the animal was free from "contagious" disease.

To the Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith, Mr. Gilruth stated that, so far as he knew, the tendency to the reproduction of these unsoundnesses was about equal in both sire and dam. Hunters were usually sold in Britain with a guarantee of soundness if at auction, or permission was given for examination before the sale. At Tattersall's, so far as witness was aware, opportunities for examination were available before the sale. On Mr. Lee Smith stating that he did not understand such to be the usual practice, the witness stated that he had frequently known buyers to take their own veterinary surgeons to the sale when purchasing. The Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith stated that in the early "sixties" he had seen twenty-five thousand pounds' worth of horses sold at Lord Stamford's place without any guarantee; at another sale he saw one sold for £750 which was a roarer.

To Mr. Massey, Mr. Gilruth stated that he would permit a private owner to use any stallion for his own mares, but would prevent an owner travelling an unsound animal for use by the general public. A roarer might win the Liverpool Grand National, but not if he were badly affected. To win would be impossible except in the very early stages of the disease, probably when only an examination by a skilled person could detect it. Did not agree that some of the very best steeplechase horses had been bad roarers, or even roarers at all.

To the Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith witness admitted that the great point in connection with a horse was conformation, but that was a matter into which the Bill as now before them did not go. The first idea was to have a Board of two lay experts with a veterinary surgeon, and decide on conformation as well as soundness. There was no doubt that breeders under certain circumstances used stallions which possessed unsoundnesses, and even were roarers; but as the progeny were generally sold before reaching the adult stage, when the unsoundnesses were more likely to develop, they were not the people to suffer, but the unfortunate purchaser. The breeder got the stallion cheaper and took his risk. The Bill would not interfere with him, but it would prevent him selling the services of such a stallion to the general public. Witness considered it was certainly to the advantage of the country that the Bill should become law, and added that there were probably more "crops" in this country than in any other under the sun, as could be seen by the reports of its veterinary officers.

To Mr. Massey, Mr. Gilruth stated that the clause in the Bill dealing with unsoundness was an error in the drafting; that he himself had only seen it when it came to the Committee, but that it was intended to only apply to hereditary unsoundnesses.

Mr. Ritchie, Secretary for Agriculture, supported this statement.

Mr. Massey urged that the Bill did not discriminate between hereditary and accidental unsoundness.

Mr. Ritchie stated that the Bill was virtually as recommended by the Agricultural Conference in Dunedin, with the exception of this point which had been accidentally omitted.

To Mr. Massey, *Mr. Gilruth* stated what he knew of the King's premiums, the Hunters' Improvement Society, and the methods of selecting horses by the agricultural societies in Britain, who gave a premium and guaranteed so-many mares to the horse they selected.

The Chairman asked *Mr. Ritchie*, We are compiling something now to submit to agricultural and pastoral societies: what is your idea of what a satisfactory Board should be?

Mr. Ritchie: When we submitted the Bill first to the Conference in Dunedin we had a Board composed of veterinary surgeons and two laymen appointed by the agricultural societies from certain areas. We cut up the whole of the North Island into three districts, and out of the South Island we got three districts. There were two districts in Auckland—all the agricultural societies north of Auckland. We had it all cut up into districts, and the agricultural societies within those districts appointed two men to act with the veterinary surgeons. That was the machinery in the Bill first submitted. The Conference thought that very few members would agree to act on that Board, as it might bring them into conflict with the pastoralists, and they preferred to have it taken out, and instead two veterinary surgeons were put in instead of one. That was practically the unanimous wish of the Conference at Dunedin, and we thought it should go back into the Bill as a matter for the agricultural societies to decide now.

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