

*Cattle.*

With regard to cattle, the attention of your Committee has been drawn to the prevalence in New Zealand, to a considerable extent, of the disease known as tuberculosis, and to a less extent of cancer. It is very desirable that the probable danger to human beings arising from these causes should be brought prominently before the public, and very stringent measures taken to prevent the possibility of meat or milk of diseased animals being used for food in any way. The Cattle Bill referred to above is intended to provide the necessary authority for inspection of cattle, and the destruction of such as are diseased; but, until the establishment of public slaughter-yards, under proper control, there must always be considerable risk of diseased meat finding its way into the markets.

The very able report of the Departmental Committee appointed in 1888 to inquire into the nature and extent of pleuro-pneumonia and tuberculosis in the United Kingdom contains much useful information, and your Committee considers that the Government have acted wisely in causing that portion of the report referring to tuberculosis to be reprinted in the colony for distribution by the Live-stock Department, but does not think it has been sufficiently circulated.

When it is generally understood that tuberculosis in animals is virtually the same disease as that known as consumption in man, that it is communicable to human beings by the use of either meat or milk of diseased animals, and that calculations based upon the statistics of the Registrars of various countries go to prove consumption to be "the cause of from ten to fourteen per cent. of all deaths among human beings," the serious importance of checking its spread in every possible way cannot but be recognised.

Believing, then, that nothing but a generally-diffused knowledge of the evils here referred to, and their causes, will ever effectually lead to their prevention and cure, your Committee recommends that full information regarding tuberculosis and cancer in stock be circulated by the Government as widely as possible.

*Rabbits.*

The rabbit-nuisance still continues to spread, and, although in some districts the actual number of rabbits seems to have somewhat decreased, the infested area is ever increasing. The number of skins exported during the year ended the 31st March, 1890, was 10,295,217, of the value of £87,218, being a decrease in number of 2,297,960, and in value of £10,414, upon the returns of the previous year.

Your Committee desires again to draw attention to the enormous annual loss that the colony is suffering from the rabbit-pest—a loss probably equal to the interest on our national debt; and seriously to point out the shortsightedness of a policy which allows session after session to pass without providing the means for introducing the natural enemy in sufficient numbers. This has now been amply proved to be one of the most effectual means of permanently grappling with this gigantic evil. Your Committee has discharged the functions imposed upon it: on the Legislature must now rest the responsibility. Experience still points to poisoning and to fencing as most valuable aids in dealing with the pest, and your Committee, confirming the recommendations on this subject contained in the report of the Joint Committee of last session, strongly urges,—

1. That the Government should encourage the breeding of ferrets in every possible way, and should continue the introduction of stoats and weasels in large and continuous numbers; and

2. That, taking into consideration the trouble and hardship that small settlers in the neighbourhood of large tracts of uncultivated land are subject to from the incursion of rabbits, the Government should afford assistance to enable such settlers to protect themselves by supplying them with wire-netting for fencing on easy terms.

11th September, 1890.

[The evidence, &c., was not ordered to be printed.]

[Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,250 copies), £2.]

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBUKY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1890.