

of the Empire respecting the importation of animals from the United Kingdom, with special reference to the recent amended regulations issued by the Government of the Dominion of New Zealand as shown in the enclosed copy of a letter dated the 5th January, 1915, and enclosures, which the Board have received from the Department of the High Commissioner for New Zealand, and they desire me to offer for the consideration of the Secretary of State the following observations thereon.

As will be seen from the enclosed statement, there is a wide degree of divergence in the regulations which certain of the colonial Governments have made with a view to guarding against the risk of the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease from this country by means of imported animals, and it appears to the Board that it would be advantageous to the trade in animals that some general decision should be come to as to the principles upon which such restrictions should be framed, so that a measure of uniformity may be introduced in respect of the action to be taken where a colonial Government considers that precautions of the character above indicated are necessary in the interests of the particular colony.

It occurs to the Board that advantage might be taken of the presence in this country of representatives of the various colonial Governments in connection with the next Imperial Conference, which may be summoned to come to some more satisfactory arrangement, and that if the attention of the Governments which now impose such restrictions were called to the matter in advance some agreement might then be reached for action to be taken on the following lines, regard being had to the administrative procedure adopted in this country when outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease occur, as set out in the enclosed statement—viz., that for a period of, say, one month from the date of completion of slaughter in the latest confirmed outbreak shipment for the colony should, if thought necessary, be entirely suspended, and that subsequently for such further period, not exceeding two months, as may seem to the Government concerned desirable, the representative of the colony in this country should be authorized, after consultation with officers of the Board, to sanction the shipment of any animal or animals as regards which there did not, in the opinion of the Board, exist any reasonable danger in authorizing such shipment on account of the locality in which the animals then were or had recently been kept.

By such means the necessity might be obviated of specifying in the regulations any particular area as regards which the extended restrictions should apply, as is now done in the case of the regulations of the Australian, South African, and New Zealand Governments. Such a provision, especially when, as in the case of the New Zealand regulations, the radius to which it applies is as great as fifty miles, appears to the Board to go beyond what is either reasonable or necessary. In the case, for instance, of the outbreak at Deal, Kent, on the 18th October last, the effect of the provision is to prohibit for six months the exportation to New Zealand of animals from, say, the district of Harwich, in the north-east of Essex, although there is no reason whatever for supposing that any special danger would be involved in the exportation of animals from that locality on account of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease at Deal.

Further, the regulations might easily be found to operate prejudicially to the interests of the New Zealand importers with regard to the purchase of pedigree stock from one of the principal cattle shows—*e.g.*, that of the Royal Agricultural Society of England—should such show be held within fifty miles of premises on which an outbreak of the disease had occurred some four or five months previously, and as regards which the restrictions imposed by the Board had been for a considerable period entirely withdrawn.

The enclosed sketch-map shows the effect of this particular provision in the New Zealand regulations in relation to the four most recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in this country. So far as the Board are concerned, they feel that the effect thereof is to impose restrictions which it would be difficult to justify on the score of risk, and they are of opinion that a much more effective security would be obtained by procedure on the lines set out above, to the benefit of all concerned.

Moreover, a revision of the arrangements as regards the trade with the United Kingdom might pave the way for securing some modifications of the regulations of foreign Governments on similar lines to the advantage of stockowners in this country.

I am to add that reference as to the desirability of the regulations of colonial Governments as regards the importation of animals from Great Britain being of a uniform character was made by representatives of the Board who gave evidence before the Dominions Royal Commission (Cd. 6517, question 4739).

The Board would accordingly be obliged if the Secretary of State would take the matter into consideration and take such action thereon as appears to him desirable.

I am, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

SYDNEY OLIVIER, Secretary.

Westminster Chambers, 13 Victoria Street,
London S.W., 5th January, 1915.

SIR,—

I am directed by the High Commissioner to inform you that authority has now been received from the New Zealand Government to recommence, under certain conditions, the shipment of cattle, sheep, and pigs from this country to the Dominion, and to enclose herewith copy of a circular letter setting forth those conditions, which is being sent by the Veterinary Officer attached to this Department to shipping firms and others interested in the matter.

I am, &c.,

C. WRAY PALLISER,

Secretary to the Department.

The Secretary, Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, 4 Whitehall Place, S.W.