

Speech of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, K.G., Lord President of the Council, on presenting the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill : delivered in the House of Lords, Tuesday, February 12, 1878.

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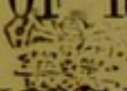
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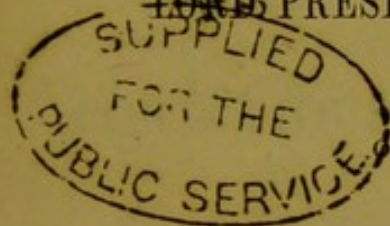
S P E E C H

4.

OF THE

DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON, K.G.,

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL,



ON PRESENTING THE

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) BILL.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1878.

LONDON:

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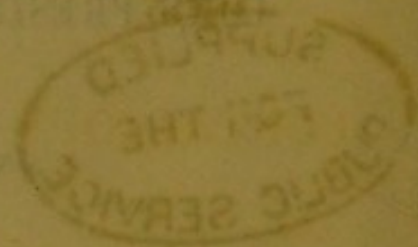
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IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

THURSDAY, 14th JANUARY 1874

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1874

1874

S P E E C H
OF THE
DUKE OF RICHMOND & GORDON, K.G.,
IN THE
HOUSE OF LORDS,
Tuesday, 12th February 1878.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) BILL.

The Lord President.—My Lords, notwithstanding the great interest which is taken at this moment in the affairs of Eastern Europe, I feel certain that your Lordships will not consider any apology due from me in calling your attention to the Report of the Select Committee which sat in the other House of Parliament last session upon the subject of cattle plague, and the importation of live stock. I am sure that it will require no apology from me, because the subject is one which affects the interests of all classes of the community, and at the outset of the remarks which it will be my duty to make to your Lordships I wish to lay this down as a proposition upon which I shall base the arguments which I shall have to bring forward, and the statements which I shall make, that the interests of all classes are involved in this subject; that I can draw no distinction between the interests of the consumer and the interests of the producer, and that I consider them in this matter to be entirely and completely identical. I think that upon all occasions it is very unadvisable to set up class against class in this country, more especially with regard to the matter to which I shall have to call your attention.

My Lords, it may be useful that I should touch shortly upon some of the previous inquiries, and the legislation which has taken place with regard to this subject; but I do not think that there will be any necessity for me to go further back than the time of the cattle plague which visited this country from the year 1865 to the year 1867, a period which, in the recollection of your Lordships,

was most fatal to our flocks and herds. The outbreak of cattle plague which decimated our flocks and herds at that time was so great and so alarming that it was thought advisable that a Royal Commission should be issued, and Her Majesty was graciously pleased to issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the cattle plague which at that time had recently made its appearance. I think, amongst others of my noble friends, my noble friend the Secretary of State for India was a member of that Commission, and I believe that Commission inquired most fully into all matters which came before it.

In 1866 two Bills were passed relating to cattle disease, one of them affecting England and Scotland and the other applying to Ireland, and all the enquiries which had previously taken place culminated in 1869 in an Act which was passed in that year dealing with the diseases of animals, but applying only to England and Scotland. The principle of this Act, as applied to foreign animals, was that it regulated the foreign importation. It gave power to the Privy Council to prohibit the importation from any country where disease existed; it gave the Privy Council power to define the ports where foreign animals should be landed, and to order the slaughter of the animals at those ports, if they thought fit, but it also provided that foreign animals on arriving, if found healthy, should be allowed to go at large after a detention of some 12 hours.

Under the provisions of the Act of 1869, since the year 1872, no cattle have been allowed to come to this country from Russia, and since the outbreak of cattle plague in the last year the same prohibition has been extended to Germany and Belgium. The principle of the Act of 1869 with regard to our home stock was, I may say briefly, that every thing was left to the local authority in the country. It is true that the Privy Council had a general supervision over the action of the local authorities, but practically that was the principle upon which the Act was based, and when I remind your Lordships that in England and Scotland there are no less than 411 different local authorities, it is by no means surprising that the rules and regulations passed by those local authorities should be very diverse, and that there was, in fact, with regard to the regulations made by the local authorities, a total want of uniformity in the rules which they laid down.

My Lords, I am not here by any means to find fault with the operation of the Act of 1869. I believe, indeed I know, that that Act did contain many valuable provisions,

and that much good has been done under the provisions of that Act, but I do not think it is unreasonable to conclude that during the period of nearly 10 years which has elapsed since that Act passed, some defects may have been brought to light which would seem to require legislation in order to put them right. Notes have been kept at the office from time to time, both during the time of my predecessor and since I have had the honour of being there, of matters which required to be dealt with, in order to remedy such defects in any legislation that it might be thought necessary to introduce. My Lords, those defects which have from time to time been shown to exist we hope and believe we have remedied by the Bill which I shall present to your Lordships at the conclusion of my remarks.

In the year 1873 a committee was appointed to inquire into the working of the Act of 1869, and that committee made certain recommendations. Shortly after I had the honour to occupy the post which I now hold (I came into office shortly after that committee made its report) it became my duty to look into their report carefully, and see what provisions ought to be made in pursuance of its recommendations. Some portions of its recommendations I thought it advisable to carry out, notably that relating to appointing travelling inspectors throughout the country. The appointment of those inspectors had been recommended by the committee presided over by the right honourable gentleman the Member for Bradford, and the benefit that has accrued from that appointment has been very great. There has been a marked improvement in the disinfecting and cleansing of railway trucks and pens, and vessels employed in the cattle traffic, and in many instances we have obtained verdicts against railway companies when they have not adhered to the provisions of the Act of 1869. At the same time there were certain provisions of the report of that committee which could not be carried out except by legislation, and I did not think that the time had arrived for coming to Parliament for further power to carry out the suggestions of the committee; I preferred to wait for a little time, in order that if it were necessary more comprehensive measures should be brought in and carried, because I think that in matters connected with the food of the country piecemeal legislation is very much to be deprecated, and that it would be better to deal with it as a whole and in a large and comprehensive manner. My Lords, between 1874 and 1876 there was a considerable amount of foot-and-mouth disease and pleuro-pneumonia

throughout the country, and constant complaints were made at my office, and more stringent measures were pressed upon me. The want of uniformity throughout the country especially was very much dwelt upon, and I was asked during that period whether the time had not arrived when we should legislate to prevent and correct those abuses. During the early part of last year (1877) there was an outbreak of cattle plague. The alarm which had previously existed throughout the country was very much increased; reports reached me from all quarters; the cattle plague made its appearance in Deptford and in Hull, having been brought there by cargoes of foreign cattle, and the disease spread through the metropolis. At that time the Privy Council passed Orders dealing with foreign cattle, and the local authority, in accordance with the power given them under the Act of 1869, attempted to deal with the disease. They did exert themselves in a very highly exemplary manner; they did as much as they could, but after the disease had existed some time in the metropolis it became perfectly clear that the local authority had no means properly to cope with it, and the disease continued to spread. Her Majesty's Government thought that the time had arrived when the Privy Council ought of themselves to take measures with regard to it. My Lords, that was done, and we did adopt very stringent measures. I am not at all certain that in some cases I may not somewhat have strained the powers which belonged to us; indeed, I am not certain whether in some instances I may not have exceeded them somewhat, but we thought the matter was of so much importance to the whole community that it was better that I should assume the responsibility and endeavour to stamp it out by every means in my power. The result was that the disease in a comparatively short time was stamped out, and in the course of the year there was no more cattle plague reported to exist in the country.

My Lords, whilst the disease was in progress I was much urged to exclude all foreign animals from the country, not only because of the cattle plague, but on account of other diseases. Memorials were presented to the Privy Council; I received deputations from various bodies in the country, and we were very much urged to exclude all foreign animals. I was not prepared to accede at that time to those proposals, indeed, I did not think that it would be right to do so without further inquiry upon the subject, and without getting further information than I was then in possession of. I am not sure that I had not the power to act, indeed,

I think it is possible that I had under the 75th section of the Act of 1869, but I felt that although it might be within the letter, it was not within the spirit of the Act of 1869, and therefore that I should not have been justified in exercising the power which possibly, I only say "possibly," I may have had under that section. At that time also there was a new feature which arose in dealing with this matter, and that was the importation of dead meat from America. That trade had only recently commenced, and it did not appear that we had sufficient information with respect to the subject, so that Her Majesty's Government considered that the time had arrived when it was advisable that a committee should be appointed to inquire into the whole question, and accordingly a committee of the other House of Parliament was appointed; it was constituted most fairly and impartially; representatives from all parts of this country were upon it; there were honourable members representing Scotch and Irish interests; there were county members upon it; there were members representing some of the largest manufacturing towns in the Kingdom, and we felt that the committee was one which was so constituted that the report would command the attention and respect of Parliament. My Lords, the terms of the reference to that select committee were:—"To inquire into the causes
 " of the recent outbreak of cattle plague and the measures
 " taken for its repression, and into the effect which the im-
 " portation of live foreign animals has upon the intro-
 " duction of disease into this country, and upon the supply
 " and price of food."

Those were the points which the committee was desired to enquire into, and before I proceed with my observations, I desire to draw your attention to the distinction between cattle plague and other diseases, because there appears to be some confusion in the public mind between those two things. I wish to deal first of all with cattle plague proper, or rinderpest, as distinguished from cattle diseases which include lung disease, pleuro-pneumonia, foot-and-mouth, and other diseases to which I need not allude, but it is not unfrequently the case that they are all mixed up together, and that sufficient distinction is not drawn between them. My Lords, with regard to cattle plague, I had made up my mind, from the experience I acquired last year, that it ought to be dealt with by the central authority. The committee came to the same conclusion, and I have embodied in the Bill all the recommendations which the committee have made with regard to

cattle plague, as I shall have the honour to explain when I go through the Bill; therefore I dismiss for a moment the subject of cattle plague.

Now, with regard to the other diseases to which I have alluded, namely, foot-and-mouth disease and pleuro-pneumonia, there are three things which I desire to ask; first of all whether those diseases do inflict so much injury upon the community as to make it worth our while to stamp them out; secondly, whether there is any reasonable prospect of success; and, thirdly, what are the restrictions necessary for stamping them out. Now, my Lords, it has been proved by many competent witnesses examined before that committee, that both pleuro-pneumonia and foot-and-mouth disease are far more injurious to this country than even cattle plague itself. One of the reasons which have caused them to come to these conclusions is this, that the cattle plague is not of frequent occurrence in this country; that it is rare to have an outbreak of cattle plague, while both now and for some years past foot-and-mouth disease and pleuro-pneumonia have been very prevalent, and still are very prevalent, in the country.

My Lords, I do not wish to weary you with more quotations from the evidence than I am obliged to do, but the matter is of considerable importance, and therefore I feel constrained to put before you some of the evidence, for it might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, which induced the Government to come to the conclusion which they have in drawing up the measure which I shall conclude by introducing to your Lordships.

Now I will refer to the evidence of one of the most eminent of our agriculturists, and I am going to give you his evidence, and that of one or two more, as men of great eminence in agriculture, whose every day life is connected with the rearing and breeding of stock, as the testimony of men which ought to carry considerable weight with your Lordships. I turn to the examination of Mr. Booth, who is examined at very great length, and I find that he is asked "Have you experienced, during the time that you have bred stock, great losses through foot-and-mouth disease?" (and your Lordships will allow me to say he is one of the greatest breeders of cattle), to which he replies, "From foot-and-mouth disease especially I have experienced very great losses." And then he is asked, "It, in fact almost ruined your herd, did it not?" and he says, "Between 1869 and 1872 my herd was reduced by the foot-and-mouth disease by more than one half.

“(Q.) You have had it more than once, have you not?
“(A.) I had five separate attacks in my herd in less than
“three years.” Then he is asked, “You said a few moments
“ago that between 1869 and 1872, owing to foot-and-
“mouth disease, your herd dwindled down to half; how
“did you lose those animals?” To which he replied,
“Breeding animals are particularly liable to abortion by
“disease. I will give an instance: In 1872 I had 17 cows
“in one pasture, and they all went down with disease, and
“the produce of the whole of those 17 cows was one calf.
“Against that I may set the present year, when we are
“perfectly healthy, and I have upwards of 40 calves on the
“farm at the present time.” Then he is asked whether
he attributes that to the foot-and-mouth disease, and he
says that the whole of that was traceable to foot-and-
mouth disease, and to nothing else. Then, my Lords, I do
not want to rest entirely upon Mr. Booth, I will take the
evidence of another gentleman very well known in the
north of England, a friend of mine, a practical agricul-
tunist, and a gentleman very well known by every one
who takes a part in the operations of agriculture in this
country, I mean Mr. Jacob Wilson, who lives near Morpeth.
He says that he had bought some animals, and “A very few
“days after their arrival foot-and-mouth disease broke out,
“and instead of getting fat during that summer they dragged
“their weary length along until the following spring, and I
“lost three months of my keep. Instead of my then being
“able to sell them, pleuro-pneumonia appeared amongst
“them, and especially amongst those which had been most
“severely handled by foot-and-mouth disease;” and then he
is asked, “That represents, then, to the consumers of the
“country a clear loss of nearly a year of the feeding proper-
“ties of your farm?” to which he replied, “Very much like it,
“because I only got three-fourths of the value at the finish.”
Then he is asked, “But, looking at it from the consumer’s
point of view, that strengthens your argument that
these diseases reduce enormously the food of the people,”
and his answer is “Yes, and not only so, but instead
“of my having two lots of cattle fed off in the time,
“I could only get one lot fed off;” and then he is asked,
“With dairy stock I suppose the loss is very severe,”
and he says, “Very severe. There is no saying where
“the end of it is, because not only do you sacrifice the
“breeding power of your valuable cows, but you lose
“your produce, you lose your time, and the consequence is,
“that the country loses its stock.” And then he is asked

(I will not detain your Lordships by reading more of his evidence, except this) whether it has any effect upon the breeding of animals in the country, and he says, "In the face of all this disease people dare not go into breeding, and I may say that, following up the question with regard to the outbreak of 1865, we are well aware that a great many farmers have never since pursued the same system which up to that time they had been accustomed to pursue; they dare not do it; they prefer going to a market and buying other cattle, which are probably nearer the butcher, so that in case of an outbreak they are prepared to send them off on the shortest notice, the risk being less, rather than keep valuable cows and risk the loss of the cows themselves, and also of their produce."

Then there is another gentleman whose evidence upon this point I should like to quote (I will not quote another), a gentleman who was a member of Parliament. I think he is not a member of Parliament now, but a gentleman who sat for Bedford, and is well known as an agriculturist and manufacturer. I mean Mr. Howard, of Bedford. He is asked, "Have those complaints been general in your county as well as in your own herd?" and he says, "Yes; in one year we had, in the small county of Bedford, 38,000 animals attacked with contagious diseases. (Q.) 1872 was the time when the last outbreak of cattle plague occurred in this country? (A.) Yes; I could not charge my memory exactly, but I know that it was four or five years ago. At the lowest estimate it would entail a loss of 60,000*l.* upon the county;" and then he is asked, "I understand you to say that you believe that the supply to the consumer has been very much diminished in consequence, not only of the losses by disease, but of the smaller amount of cattle that have been kept for fear of those diseases," to which he replied, "These diseases, as every member of the committee must see, are deterrent; farmers who have suffered serious losses are naturally deterred from keeping on with the system which entails upon them such very serious losses, and many have adopted the plan of buying in their store stock instead of breeding. That has been done to a very considerable extent. Many farmers who used to breed and rear cattle have abandoned that practice for the comparatively safer plan of buying in their store stock." Therefore, my Lords, according to the evidence of these gentlemen, and their testimony is testimony which cannot be controverted, there is considerable loss not only to the

producer of the stock, but also to the consumer of the food, and it must be recollected that this does not affect the produce in meat alone, because the production of milk and butter and cheese is very much affected by the loss of cattle in the country, and I am sure that those of your Lordships who recollect the cattle plague in 1865, 1866, and 1867 may recollect what a very disastrous effect it had upon Cheshire, where there was a great quantity of pasture land rendered entirely useless, and where persons travelling through at the time could see numbers of places where heaps of cattle had had to be slaughtered and buried.

Therefore, I say, having this testimony (and testimony like that which I have quoted to your Lordships might be, as I said before, multiplied *ad infinitum*), it is not surprising to find the following paragraph in the report of the committee :—

It was abundantly proved in evidence that the ravages of cattle plague since the Act of 1869, and the diminution of the breeding herds of the kingdom from the fear of breaking out of cattle plague, are as nothing compared with the losses inflicted and the enterprise checked by pleuro-pneumonia and foot-and-mouth complaint. In addition to the losses to the community of animals actually destroyed by either of those diseases, or slaughtered to prevent the spread of pleuro-pneumonia, the agricultural and other witnesses laid great stress on the fact that whatever loss fell upon the farmer from the deterioration of his stock through foot-and-mouth complaint reacted injuriously on the consumer by the diminution in the number of fat stock which the farmer was able to place on the market in a given time.

And your Lordships will recollect that one of the witnesses whose evidence I quoted, it was, I think, Mr. Wilson, stated that it took him twice as long to fatten a given number of bullocks as it would have done if they had not had foot-and-mouth disease, and I think, if I recollect rightly, Mr. Booth told me on one occasion, that having put up a lot of bullocks in the month of May to get them ripe for the butcher by August, he was offered 34*l.* a piece for those bullocks, but that having in a few days got the foot-and-mouth disease he had to take them back and had to keep them till Christmas, and then only got 35*l.* a piece for them, and those were bullocks which ought to have been in the market four months before. I think I have shown you that owing to the loss which is inflicted upon the breeding stock of the country, and the consequent loss of meat and other

products, it is worth while to endeavour to stamp out these complaints.

Now I come to the second point, namely, whether there is any reasonable prospect of success, and fortunately I have upon this matter the experience of what has taken place in past years, which enables me to speak with some sort of certainty, because I find that from 1865 to 1867, when the cattle plague restrictions were in force, this country was never so free from disease as during those years. That has been proved in evidence before the committee. The same was the case during the past year, because in the year 1876, towards the close of the year, I was told by the professional adviser of the Privy Council Office that foot-and-mouth disease was commencing to show itself through the country, and that, judging from the experience of past years, if it went on as he had every right to expect it would, this complaint would have been at its height in the following, that is to say, last summer. Then came the cattle plague of last spring and the restrictions which were necessary to be put in force in the country in consequence of the cattle plague, and the result was this, that though according to our experience foot-and-mouth disease ought to have been at its height during the summer, yet during the months from March to November there was not a single case of foot-and-mouth disease in the metropolitan market, and very little in the country.

Then, my Lords, having first of all endeavoured to show you that the ravages which these diseases make in our flocks and herds renders it advisable to get them stamped out, and having endeavoured to show you that it can be done under certain conditions, it now becomes my duty to point out the restrictions that would be necessary. Now, my Lords, I will take, first of all, what would be necessary in the way of home restrictions. I have already referred to the effect of the cattle plague restrictions in checking disease, and I think there can be no question, if we could stop the movement of all cattle throughout the country, that in the course of 12 months probably the disease might be stamped out; but, at the same time, I am perfectly aware that, from the inconveniences and the loss attending such a measure as that, it could not be carried out, and, therefore, I certainly am not prepared to ask your Lordships to adopt that course. My Lords, I believe that, without adopting the wider and larger scheme that I have pointed out, it would be quite sufficient to deal in this matter with the disease in each district where it

breaks out. I would have the most stringent regulations carried out in a given area, and so far I would follow the recommendations of the report of the committee, for I find that in paragraph 20 they recommend that—

In every district where either pleuro-pneumonia or foot-and-mouth disease existed, all movement of cattle would be prohibited, except under license; fairs and markets would be under similar restrictions, and absolute prohibition of movement would be enforced against infected farms for periods varying from two months in pleuro-pneumonia to 28 days in outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease.

My Lords, I am quite aware that these restrictions to be imposed, as I should suggest, on infected areas must press very heavily upon the agriculturists at home, that is quite certain, and I am quite aware that the farmers will be very sorely tried when these regulations are enforced, but at the same time I feel that they would willingly submit to those restrictions if they felt that it would be for the good of the community, indeed many of them have said so in the evidence which they gave before that committee. They stated that so sorely were they pressed, and so severely were they tried and not only they but the consumers themselves, by the existence of these diseases, that they would willingly submit to such restrictions as I have suggested if there was the prospect of getting rid of these diseases by such means, and accordingly I am prepared to recommend your Lordships to adopt the recommendation of the committee which I have quoted.

Then, my Lords, it is obvious, I think, that it would be perfectly useless to impose upon the holders of stock such provisions for declaring these areas infected and putting farmers under such restrictions, indeed, I do not think it would be fair upon them or upon the community, unless means were taken for preventing the introduction of disease from abroad. My Lords, it is perfectly evident that so long as disease can come from abroad, so long it is useless to put farmers under the restrictions which I have mentioned.

Now, my Lords, that disease comes from foreign countries, I do not think any one will be inclined to dispute. I have here an extract from the last report of the veterinary inspectors to the Privy Council; they say that in 1876 the number of animals arriving from abroad in which disease was detected amounted to 11,662, and the countries from which they came were Germany, Belgium, Holland, France, Spain, and Portugal. The total number

imported from abroad in the same year, 1876, amounted to 1,416,956, and it is obvious that if out of that number 11,000 were detected as having disease, it is perfectly impossible, under any system of inspection, I do not care how good, that in dealing with so large a number of animals coming from abroad, some animals shall not escape detection, even by the most experienced eye, and one cargo escaping with an infection of the foot-and-mouth disease might spread the disease in half a dozen counties in less than a fortnight. Therefore it is, I think, proved conclusively that the disease is a disease which does come from foreign countries. And I have another report upon the subject in the shape of a return moved for by the honourable member for Northallerton, from which it appears that in the three years ending the 31st March 1877 there were landed 12,308 cargoes, and that the number of those cargoes having diseased animals was 1,458, that is to say, about one tenth of the whole number of these cargoes had disease in them which was detected, but there might be many in which it was not detected, and in those cases the beasts would go forth through the country and spread the disease.

Now, in view of the danger of spreading disease through the country, I have been urged more than once to prohibit any live stock coming from abroad. It has been suggested that it ought only to come in the form of dead meat, and, no doubt, to say that nothing but dead meat shall come in would logically be the safest course. At the same time I do not think that we have sufficient experience to justify our adopting that course, and I do not think that at the present time our experience of the dead meat supplies from America and the continent is sufficient to warrant the recommendation of so grave a change in the trade. But then, in order to make the home restrictions to which I referred bearable in this country, I think it is absolutely necessary for the purpose of getting rid of the foot-and-mouth disease and of pleuro-pneumonia, that all foreign animals shall be slaughtered at the port of landing, and accordingly a provision is inserted in this Bill, that all foreign animals shall be slaughtered at the port of landing. My Lords, it may interest your Lordships to know that the quantity of foreign cattle which comes to this country is not so very large. Now I find that the total number of animals in the United Kingdom in 1876 was 38,179,325, and the total number of animals which were imported from abroad in the same time was 1,416,956, or about $\frac{1}{37}$

of the whole stock in this country, and it is a very remarkable fact that whilst from abroad we imported 1,416,956 animals we imported from Ireland a larger number than we imported from abroad, because I find that the number imported from Ireland was 1,866,452, so that we really are not by any means altogether dependent upon foreign supply. I mention that because I find that sometimes persons are alarmed at the idea of severe measures being resorted to at the port of landing, and say that we require and ought to promote a foreign supply.

Now, my Lords, I think that in view of the recommendations which it is my duty to prescribe in the Bill there are two points which I ought not to pass by. One is the effect which these restrictions are likely to have upon the supply of the country, and the other is the probable effect of these restrictions on the price. Now I find that in 1877, whilst there was a loss in live cattle in this country (less than in 1876) of 353,298 cwt., during the same time the gain in the import of dead meat amounted to 509,927 cwt.; so that the amount of dead meat which we got in this country in 1877 was greater than the amount lost in weight of live animals, showing that the trade had accommodated itself to the altered state of circumstances, and that the consumer therefore was none the worse. (Hear, hear, and cheers.)

Now, my Lords, there is a gentleman who gave very valuable evidence in these matters, and a gentleman very well known in the city. I think, if I mistake not, he is a member of the Corporation of London, Mr. Rudkin, who was the chairman of the Markets Committee; he is asked, "You think that, in fact, all foreign countries should be treated as scheduled countries, and that animals from those countries should be landed at certain defined ports in England, where they should be slaughtered?" To which he replied, "Yes, I think so; and I do not think that under those circumstances there would be any real detriment either to the trade or to the consignor." And then further on he is asked, "You can assure the committee almost positively that, taking such a town as Leeds, for instance," (of course in dealing with these towns it is right to say that they will not suffer, and I think from the evidence before us it is conclusive that they would not) "it would not suffer so far as its supply from London was concerned if it could only get dead meat from London without getting live meat from London," to which he replied, "Simply with the exception of the offal, and that

“ difficulty, I say, can be very readily overcome if the trade
 “ will only turn their attention to it in a practical form.”
 Then he is asked, “ With that exception, you feel sure that
 “ as much beef or mutton would arrive at Leeds from
 “ London as arrives there now ?” to which he replied,
 “ Quite so ; in fact they are now receiving large quantities ;
 “ van loads after van loads go away from Deptford every
 “ day. The vans are so constructed that the sheep are
 “ slaughtered, and they are placed on hooks on rails in the
 “ vans ; they come from the slaughterhouse, and they are
 “ sent straight away by rail at once.” “ Therefore,” he is
 asked, “ You do not anticipate any difficulty in the great
 “ centres of industry if the animals are all slaughtered at
 “ the port of embarkation ?” to which he replied, “ The
 “ fact that London is now supplied from the country with
 “ 175,000 tons of meat per annum proves that meat can
 “ fairly and properly be killed in the country and brought
 “ to London to be consumed.”

My Lords, I have got another piece of evidence which I will read, which shows what quantity of meat can be carried and is carried at the present time from various parts of the country to other parts of the country by the railway companies. I have only got the report from one of the great railway companies, because the other railway companies to which I applied said that their accounts were rather mixed up, and that it would take some time before they could undertake to separate the articles in their returns of what they carried, but I have from the Great Northern Railway Company the following returns. The total weight of meat carried by the Great Northern Railway from all places in 1876 was 18,118 tons ; in 1877 they carried 21,236 tons, or an increase over 1876 of about 3,118 tons ; and the amount carried in 1877 represents upon the average something like 60,000 bullocks. I think, therefore, there can be no fear that the restrictions which I have pointed out would have any effect whatever upon the supply of any of the towns ; in fact one of the witnesses stated before the committee that at the present moment mutton goes from London, where it is killed, to Wales, and then it comes back to London in the shape of Welsh mutton. I do not know whether that is absolutely true, but I know it was stated by one of the witnesses before the committee who is well acquainted with the trade.

Then my Lords with regard to the price, I have here the wholesale price of meat in the Metropolitan Meat Market for two years, that is to say, for 11 months in 1876, and for 10

months in the year 1877, and I find that the average price of beef per stone in 1876, when there were fewer restrictions (because in 1877 your Lordships will recollect was the time when the cattle plague was rife, and that some foreign countries were scheduled, and some are not now sending any animals at all); in 1876 the price was 5s. 1d. per stone, and the price of mutton was 5s. 7½d., and in 1877 the price of beef was 5s. 2d. and mutton 6s. 2d. a stone, so there was a difference in respect to beef of only about ⅓th of a penny, and in mutton $\frac{7}{18}$ ths of a penny per pound, and your Lordships will no doubt be aware that it is much safer to take the average price of beef than it is of mutton, because the price of mutton so greatly depends upon whether it is sold in the wool or out of the wool, and therefore no one can give so accurate an account of the price of mutton as he can of beef. My Lords, this committee having therefore carefully considered the matter came to the conclusion :—

That compulsory slaughter at the port of debarkation is not likely either to discourage foreign importation, or to diminish the supply of our large towns, or generally to raise the price of meat. The change, however, would be a considerable interference with the present system of trade carried on by butchers and salesmen. For this reason, and because proper arrangements would in many cases have to be made at the ports selected for debarkation, your committee feel that it would be well to postpone the commencement of the change for a time sufficient to enable the necessary preparations to be carried out.

And therefore it is in accordance strictly with the recommendations of that committee that we propose that this bill should not come into operation till the 1st January 1879.

Now my Lords before I proceed to the bill there is one point which I should like to touch upon, and that is, the operation of the measures as affecting Ireland. My Lords, the 38th paragraph of the Report of the committee states—

That the restrictions applicable to Great Britain should be extended to Ireland, or else that ports should be specified in Great Britain by the Privy Council to which alone importation of live animals from Ireland should be lawful, the animals not being permitted to be taken inland unless examined and passed by a Privy Council inspector at the port of debarkation.

My Lords, I am bound to say I am not impressed with the alternative regulations there proposed. The object of the Government in dealing with this question is to deal with

Ireland exactly as it has dealt with every other part of the Kingdom. We can draw no distinction between Ireland and Scotland; we wish the trade between England, Ireland, and Scotland to be equally free; we trust, therefore, that the restrictions in infected districts which are to be set up in England will be equally applied in Ireland, but we do not propose in any way to accept the alternative proposal stated in that clause. My Lords, if, as we hope, we shall be able to stamp out by the operation of this Bill the disease throughout this country, it would naturally follow that the disease would not be sent to Ireland. We are told that we get the disease from Ireland, but I have a very strong impression that in earlier days the country from which disease went was this country; therefore it follows that if the disease could be stamped out in this country, then it could be equally stamped out in Ireland, and I have every hope that after a time there will be no necessity for putting either this country or Ireland under these severe restrictions, which, I believe, are necessary for stamping out the disease. Then again, I must insist that it is absolutely essential that you should not impart from foreign countries that disease into this country. My Lords, I will only just now mention that there are in existence at the present time eight Acts of Parliament relating to cattle diseases in Ireland, and one of the measures, which will be found in the Bill to which I hope your Lordships will ultimately agree, is that those Acts of Parliament which apply to England and Scotland, and those which apply to Ireland, will be consolidated into one Act.

My Lords, I would before I sit down venture to run over briefly some of the principal provisions which are contained in the Bill which I have the honour to present to your Lordships. In the first place the Bill, as I said just now, repeals all the existing Acts of Parliament; they are 10 in number, eight affecting Ireland and two relating to England and Scotland; therefore we shall have the whole legislation with regard to cattle diseases in one Act. I propose that the Act should come into operation in the year 1879, in order to give time for the new arrangements.

The first part of the Bill contains general preliminary provisions; it is more like a large interpretation clause, setting out what is meant by certain terms and modes of procedure, and the second part applies to England, and contains generally the principal enactments in the Bill, which are afterwards applied to Scotland and Ireland. The first part of the Bill deals with cattle plague, and the

second with the places which are to be declared infected places and districts, and with the slaughter of cattle there. The whole of the powers to deal with cattle plague are proposed to be vested in the Privy Council as the central authority, and the compensation in respect of cattle plague is to come out of the imperial funds. I need not go into details as to the amount of compensation. One half of the amount of the value, not exceeding 20*l.*, is to be given for the animals which are slaughtered as being infected, and in the case of a healthy animal being slaughtered in the infected district, the full value of the animal, not exceeding 40*l.* Now, with regard to the second part of the Bill relating to pleuro-pneumonia and foot-and-mouth disease, there is a declaration relating to infected places and districts, a restriction of 56 days to apply to all cases of pleuro-pneumonia, and of 28 days for foot-and-mouth disease. Those restrictions are contained in the schedule, and they are very stringent restrictions; in fact, they are the restrictions which were recommended by the committee, and amount really to a stoppage of the movement of stock in all infected districts; and there is a very important provision which I think now for the first time has been introduced for the purpose of prohibiting removal *into* infected places. Slaughter in cases of pleuro-pneumonia is to be compensated for out of the local rates, and the effect of defining the districts, the power of slaughter, and the compensation, are also set out in this part of the Bill. There are provisions prohibiting the exposure of diseased animals in the market. There is also a provision for regulating the notice of the disease and other matters connected with the slaughter of animals affected with disease.

Then there is another question with which we propose to deal in this Bill which is of very great domestic interest, and one which has not previously been dealt with, and that is that we should have some greater security for the milk supply of this country, and the Bill contains provisions for regulating dairies and matters connected with the milk trade.

My Lords, the next clause is one dealing with foreign animals. Now I will mention very shortly how we propose to deal with them. We do not altogether carry out the recommendations of the committee. The committee recommended—

That as a statutory arrangement, the importation of all animals from Russia, and of cattle from Germany (except Schleswig-Holstein) and Belgium be prohibited, whilst that

of other animals from these last two countries, and of all animals from the rest of Europe, should be subject to the provisions of the same schedule.

However, they reserve it to the Privy Council to prohibit importation from any other country if they think fit. Now we do not think it desirable by statutory enactment to declare that Russia should not send any animals into this country, neither do we think it right by statutory enactment, as recommended by the committee, that cattle should be prevented from coming from Belgium and Germany. The powers which the Privy Council have are sufficient to enable them to prevent them, and, as a matter of fact, since 1872, by the Orders of the Privy Council, no cattle have been allowed to come from Russia, and since last year Germany and Belgium have been put in the same position since the last outbreak of cattle plague. I venture to think that if the Privy Council are sufficiently capable of being trusted to declare that no animals shall come from any other part of Europe, then they are perfectly competent to say no animals shall come from Russia if it be necessary. There can be no doubt that if they are to be trusted in the one case they may be trusted in the other, and it does seem to us inadvisable to put in the statute any limitation either against Russia, or Belgium, or Germany, if the Privy Council would exercise the powers which have been already given them in preventing cattle coming from countries where there is cattle plague. But, with this exception, the recommendation of the committee in other parts of the report we generally adopt.

Then there is a provision for the slaughter of all foreign animals at the port of landing, and there is also provision for a quarantine of stock intended for dairy and breeding purposes, where they can be deposited for a certain time in order that they might not be altogether sacrificed. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are exceptionally dealt with, and the next part of the Bill deals with the administrative powers. The third part applies to Scotland, some of the provisions of which, as to authorities and other local matters, are different from those in this country. The fourth part of the Bill applies to Ireland.

I think I have now gone through the Bill, and I hope that I have not altogether exhausted your Lordships' patience in taking it at such length, but the matter is one of great importance, and it is one which cannot be dealt with either in a scanty or brief manner, and I thought it advisable in bringing forward a measure of this kind to

put before your Lordships all the reasons which induced the Government to take the step they have thought it necessary to take. We have had three objects in view—one is, that there should be consolidation of the law; the second is, that we should insure uniformity of practice; and the third is, that we should, if possible, effect the extinction of disease. With regard to the question of consolidation, I think no one will be found to dispute the advantage of putting into one Act, and that Act not at all a long one, the 10 Acts of Parliament which now exist separately. Then with regard to uniformity, if one thing has been impressed upon me more than another, since I have had the honour of presiding over the Privy Council, it is the want of uniformity. The differences in the rules which have been set up by various local authorities throughout the country have been so great that I have been pressed upon all sides to secure something like a uniform system. I think the measures proposed in this Bill will tend to promote such uniformity. Then, my Lords, with regard to the extinction of disease, I do entertain a strong hope that if the Bill is passed, as I have presented it to your Lordships, if its restrictions be stringently enforced, if the obligations of stopping fairs and markets in infected districts be observed, and if foreign animals are killed at the port of landing, the time is not very far distant when we shall have stamped disease out of this country, and I feel certain that when we have stamped it out of the country we shall have conferred very great benefit upon all classes of the community.

In reply to questions from the Earl of Kimberley and the Marquess of Huntly.

The Lord President.—I would beg to answer my noble friend's questions, by saying that there can be no distinction drawn between store and fat cattle; they must all be slaughtered at the port of landing; the only exception that could be made would apply to animals for dairy purposes and for exhibition. The rules under the Bill would apply to cattle imported from America as well as to those imported from any other foreign country, and I may add that it is intended to treat the local authorities in Scotland with regard to cattle plague in the same way as they are treated in England.

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