

Development of Veterinary Work in India.*

IN his address to the Veterinary Research Section, Indian Science Congress (Calcutta, 1938) Col. Oliver traces back the record of Veterinary work in India to the year 1799 when the East India Company drafted to this country Veterinary Surgeons trained in London for the purpose of organizing cattle and camel breeding and the establishment of studs for the breeding of cavalry horses. The early Veterinary work in India is said to have been done by the veterinary officers of the British and Indian cavalry.

William Moorcroft was one of those early veterinarians who while holding responsible posts under the East India Company, endeavoured to establish the value of veterinary knowledge in horse breeding and the care and management of breeding studs. He wrote a small book on Shoeing and was the first to introduce machine made shoes. In fact his interests were so wide that among other things a mass of valuable information on veterinary matters was left by him through his records. Those worthy of mention are his familiarity with the symptoms and progress of such conditions as *Variolar disease* and the operation of *Neurectomy* performed by him for that disease, the clinical features of *Glanders* and *Strangles* and the great frequency of generalised *Strangles* in India. He also recognised *Glanders* and *Farcy* as being caused by an identical poison and made a comprehensive record of a fatal disease of live stock in the Punjab which from the post mortem appearances described by him, has since been identified as *Anthrax*.

Griffith Evans of the Army Veterinary Department, is another of the early pioneers deserving mention on account of his widely known scientific enthusiasm. In 1881 he demonstrated for the first time, a large flagellated organism now known as *Trypanosoma evansi*—in the blood of horses and camels affected with *Surra* and his findings have since proved to be an epoch making advance in the knowledge of protozoan diseases.

The next important event in the advancement of veterinary work in India was the recommendation by Hallen of the formation of an Indian Civil Veterinary Department with schools for the training of students. He organized the Bombay Army Veterinary Service and established an Army Veterinary School at Poona. He also organized the horse breeding operations in India and was made the President of the Commission appointed by the Government of India in 1869 in connection with cattle plague enquiry.

Col. Pease is the next outstanding personality who will be remembered for the valuable services rendered by him in disseminating veterinary knowledge in this country. He raised the Lahore School from very humble beginnings to the outstanding position it holds to day, translated text books into Urdu for the use of students, originated and edited the *Journal of*

Tropical Veterinary Science and conceived the formation of an Imperial Bacteriological Laboratory and appears to have been the first to diagnose the existence of *Dourine in India*. He has also published a valuable treatise on the 'Breeds of Indian Cattle'.

The obvious step for the advancement of Veterinary Science in India was the establishment of suitable colleges and schools for the training of veterinarians and the first Veterinary School to be opened is said to be that at Babugarh in 1874, a similar one being established at the same time at Rangoon. The Babugarh School was afterwards transferred to Lahore and formed the nucleus of the present College. Subsequently, Veterinary Colleges were established at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Ajmer (Merwara)—this was closed later—and at Patna.

As the value of veterinary work in India became established suitable Provincial Veterinary Services were gradually organized by Officers transferred from the Army Veterinary Department. Men trained in the Indian Veterinary Colleges were entertained in the subordinate service. The superior veterinary services were, however reserved for veterinarians with M.R.C.V.S. qualifications.

In spite of the rapid development recorded above Col. Oliver felt that there is still a dearth for fully qualified veterinarians in India. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India recommended 300 officers and 6,000 subordinate staff for British India but in 1936-37 the strength was only 109 and 1,646 respectively.

One of the most important steps ever taken for the development of Veterinary work in India was the appointment in 1891 of an Imperial Bacteriologist whose headquarters were in the first instance at Poona but was transferred later to the Veterinary Research Laboratory at Muktesar. Lingard, a medical man, who was the first to hold this position discovered the specific affinity of arsenic for the *Trypanosoma* of *Surra*—a discovery which proved to be of very great importance. From the day of its inception, the Muktesar Laboratory has indulged in research work of greatest value to the Indian livestock owners, the most outstanding of which has been the control of *Rinderpest* through vaccination with goat adapted virus. Advance has also been made in the study and control of other diseases such as *Hæmorrhagic septicaemia*, *Black quarter*, *Anthrax*, various forms of *Schistosomiasis* of which *Nasal granuloma* is an important and often fatal manifestation, *Cutaneous filariasis* and *Piroplasmoses*. Some research work is also carried on at the Indian Veterinary Colleges, notably at Lahore and Madras. Very good work is being turned out for the past five years by the Veterinary Investigation Officers provided by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research in all Provinces and some big States and the systematic investigations undertaken by them have brought to light a number of disease conditions due to malnutrition and other causes not previously understood.

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