

OTTAWA, May 1, 1909.

SIR,—I have the honour to transmit the accompanying bulletin on Rabies by Dr. George Hilton, Chief Veterinary Inspector, and to recommend that it be printed for distribution.

Although occasional cases of rabies have from time to time been reported, it is only within very recent years that any actual authentic outbreaks have occurred in Canada.

Rumours of its existence in that portion of the province of Saskatchewan lying along the International boundary obtained currency in 1905 and 1906, but in every instance investigation failed to discover any good ground for these reports.

In the last two years, however, a number of outbreaks have been dealt with in Ontario and the disease has also been detected in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. I am glad to say that the prompt and thorough manner in which the regulations of this branch have been enforced has, in every instance, prevented the spread of the disease, and that, so far as can be ascertained, no loss of human life has resulted and very few animals, other than dogs, have become infected.

The knowledge of the general public as to the true nature of rabies and its manifestations is so defective and so much clouded by tradition and nervous dread, that any dog acting in a peculiar manner is very apt to become an object of suspicion and to be hunted down and killed as mad. Under ordinary circumstances, the death of the animal in this way destroys all possibility of confirming the facts as to the existence or non-existence of the disease.

This lack of definite evidence constitutes one of the greatest difficulties encountered in dealing officially with reported outbreaks, and it is with the view of enlightening the public as to what rabies really is and how to deal with suspected animals, that this bulletin has been prepared for general circulation.

It is to be hoped that its distribution in Canada will assist in dispelling from the minds of some exceedingly well-disposed and humane persons the hallucination that there is no such disease as rabies and that the officers of this department are guilty of heartless cruelty in ordering the destruction of affected animals and the tying up or muzzling of dogs which have or may have been exposed to infection.

This mistaken view, most laudable, and properly so, from the standpoint of those who hold it, undoubtedly owes its origin to the fact already stated that, as a result of ignorance, many dogs are cruelly treated and destroyed as mad, when suffering from other ailments or perhaps only from exhaustion or excitement.

Any nervous dog, in a strange place or under abnormal conditions, when worried or hounded as such animals too often are, is liable to act in such a manner as to cause great alarm to persons uninformed as to the true nature and symptoms of rabies.

People who like and understand dogs naturally resent the way in which these unfortunate animals are treated and, going to the other extreme, believe and would have us all believe, that there is no such thing as rabies and that it is quite unnecessary, if not foolish, to take any precautions against it.

Science and fact, however, prove the contrary, and, if an illustration is needed, it is only necessary to point to Great Britain, where, by the adoption, in the first place, of general muzzling orders and subsequently by the enforcement of a rigid quarantine, the disease formerly very prevalent, and causing annually the deaths of numbers of bitten persons, has been eradicated and is now quite unknown.

With the disease existing as it does to an alarming extent in the United States, to which country nearly all our outbreaks can be directly traced, and with a land