

The Freeman's Journal

August 19, 1912

Annenhof, Mitterdorf, Murzthal

Styria, Austria

13th August, 1912

Dear Sir --

I have this morning received from my friend, Professor Joyce, a letter in which he gives me your address. I therefore waste no time in giving you all the particulars about which I am acquainted, as to the treatment of foot-and-mouth disease in the Province of Austria. I must premise that I am an Irishman without politics, except a sincere desire to serve my country with any means in my power, and as far as I can in a practical manner. Many years ago I was in County Meath when there was a sever outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. Then, as now, all afflicted beasts were destroyed. I was surprised last autumn to learn that a case of this disease was cured in eight or nine days, not half a mile from my house. When therefore I learned that the outbreaks in the British Isles had assumed so vast a proportion I determined to do the best I could to bring the method of cure, adopted in Styria, to the knowledge of my countrymen. I will not waste time in enumerating all the railway journeys I have taken, or the letters I have written on the subject, but will as briefly as is consistent with clearness, put you in possession of all I know with reference to the method of treatment here. The methods adopted in Austria are by a serum of inoculation, which is brought here from Berlin. There are varying opinions among the Veterinary Authorities here as to the efficacy of the remedy. In any case it deserves a trial in Ireland. The case in the Alpine village where I live was treated, I believe, exclusively with Pyoktanin as a disinfectant followed by tannic acid. The case was cured in about nine days. I can give you full details taken down from dictation from Mr. Alois Rafer, the farmer to whom the diseased beast belonged. I sent on the 9th inst. a registered letter to the County Veterinary Surgeon for the County of Down (where I was born) giving him full particulars of the chemical composition of Pyoktanin, the mode of treatment, and many other particulars. I did the same to Mr. Runciman, Minister of Agriculture, on the 7th instant, sending him a sample of Pyokatanin and any information I could obtain on the subject. On the 10th instant, I wrote to the Department of Agriculture in Dublin at their request, in answer to an offer on my part to give them information as to the Styrian mode of treatment of foot-and-mouth disease. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to allow of my having any reply or acknowledgment.

With regard to your question in Parliament as to the Styrian treatment, I am naturally at a loss to understand Mr. Runciman's reply, which seems to me evasive. The Pyoktanin treatment is entirely an external one and of the antiseptic type, and certainly could have no deleterious ultimate effect on the cattle so treated. What may be the effect of the Berlin serum on the health of the cattle I cannot as yet inform you. With it there may be some constitutional disturbance. I think my letter and sample of Pyoktanin cannot have reached Mr. Runciman at the time he replied to you. When I wrote to the C.V.S. in Downpatrick I sent him particulars of the chemical

composition of Pyoktanin and recommended him to obtain a supply from Grattan and Co., of Belfast, a firm well known for the purity of their drugs. In point of fact, Pyoktanin is nothing more nor less than Rosanilin, prepared by a firm in Durmstadt, Germany, and sold by them under that name for commercial motives. It is prohibited for exportation to the U.S.A. and Canada. I conclude also from politico-commercial motives. There is a large export trade in cattle from Germany and Austria via Hamburg; therefore, anything tending to benefit the Irish cattle trade in competition with them is naturally discouraged. I hope you will not regard me as an enthusiast who imagines that he has found a specific for this disease. I do not go so far as that, but I say that in the hands of experienced veterinary surgeons Pyoktanin is, in an enormous percentage of cases, absolutely successful and, therefore, save a great deal of money to cattle owners. The most absolute quarantine and isolation of the diseased cattle is imperative, enforced, if necessary, by police or military intervention, a proceeding unpopular, probably, in Ireland but very necessary on this occasion. There are two points in this question which should not be lost sight of. First, the cure may be quite successful in the case of Murzthaler or the Murthaier breeds, the two breeds which are here best known, and yet with [illegible] and higher bred cattle less successful. Anyway, it should have a trial in Ireland. There must be plenty of mountain-bred cattle in Ireland which, if attacked, would be cured [by] Pyoktanin. For your information, I may state that tubercle and pneumonia are almost invariably resisted by the constitution of the two Styrian breeds. Second, a great deal depends upon experienced veterinary treatment. I am in almost daily communication with three gentlemen who had great success in the Pyoktanin treatment of foot-and-mouth disease. They are all three quite ready to go to the British Isles without pay, only a liberal allowance for traveling and other expenses. I mentioned their names to both Mr. Runciman and the Irish Department of Agriculture. They are as follows:

1. Herr Otto Rezarke, Tier Arzt. in Austria. Long experience [illegible] Long experienced [illegible]. Very intelligent. Has [illegible] with Englishmen. Understands more English than his modesty will admit.
2. [illegible]
3. [illegible]

I have absolutely nothing of a personal interest in this matter. My friend, Mr. Jas. Joyce will tell you I am not that sort. I am not acquainted with the terms of the Act of Parliament dealing with the destruction of diseased cattle, neither do I know what epidemics have occurred since that time about 1870 or 1880, when I was in Ireland. The county V.S. for County Down will send you the particulars I sent him re the Pyoktanin cure. [illegible] I can send you a copy if you like but my time is very much taken up.

Kindly acknowledge receipt and ask me for any information on the subject which you are desirous of obtaining.

I am, sir, yours faithfully,
HENRY N BLACKWOOD PRICE, M.I.E.E.