

MAX HENRY DSO, VD, BVSc, MRCVS.

Max Henry was born in Sydney on June 30, 1883. His early education was at the King's School, Parramatta. He went to London for his veterinary training and qualified for membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in July 1906. On his return to Australia he was appointed Veterinary Inspector to the Board of Health, and took up duty in the Bega district of New South Wales. This early work as a field officer, involving visits to dairy farms and inspection of cattle, had a lasting influence on him.

In 1908 Henry transferred to the New South Wales Agricultural Department as Government Veterinary Surgeon. In 1910 he received his commission as Lieutenant in the Australian Army Veterinary Corps (AAVC) and attended annual camps for training of the Light Horse Regiments. In 1912 he submitted a thesis to the newly formed veterinary faculty at the Sydney University and obtained the degree of B.V.Sc.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 he volunteered for service in the A.I.F. and with the rank of Captain, took charge of the veterinary hospital at Liverpool Camp. He went to Egypt as Officer Commanding the 1st Veterinary Section and established a field hospital near Heliopolis. With the expansion of the A.I.F. to five infantry divisions for service in France in 1916, Henry was appointed Deputy Assistant Director Veterinary Services (DADVS) 5th Division, with the rank of Major. His service in France was marked with distinction. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and was mentioned in dispatches four times. After the armistice he was appointed Senior Veterinary Officer of the troops in Belgium.

He returned to Sydney in 1919 as Senior Veterinary Officer of the Stock Branch of the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture. Henry realized that the main task of the veterinary graduate was to safeguard the great flocks and herds that were Australia's main asset. Throughout his professional life he emphasized the importance of management in relation to health and insisted that every veterinarian should receive adequate training in animal husbandry. In 1923 on the retirement of the S.T.D. Symonds, Henry was promoted to the position of Chief Inspector of Stock and Chief Veterinary Surgeon. For the next 24 years he remained Chief of the veterinary services of the Department and was appointed Chief of the Division of Animal Industry when the Department was reorganized.

In 1923 the Glenfield Veterinary Research Station was opened as a research and diagnostic centre. The officer appointed to take charge, H.R. Seddon, D.V.Sc., like Max Henry, saw the importance of disease control and prevention and a close liaison between the field and laboratory was developed. On Henry's insistence Stock Inspectors were graduates of the Sydney University Veterinary School. Henry arranged for N.S.W. to be divided into districts, each under the control of a District Veterinary Officer to whom Stock Inspectors became responsible for disease control activities.

A Board of Tick Control, consisting of local graziers with a departmental veterinarian as Chairman, took over the control measures for the cattle tick.

Henry was a great administrator with the ability to inspire his staff with his own ideals. He took a leading part in interstate conferences held to review border regulations between States, to make action uniform in all Australian states. As Chief Quarantine Officer (Animals) for N. S.W. he gave strong support to the Federal Director of Veterinary Hygiene in protecting Australia from the introduction of exotic infections and took a leading part in the consideration of new regulations to meet alterations in the overseas animal-disease position.

In the swine fever outbreak of 1942-43 in N. S.W. Henry marshaled his forces and before the diagnosis was confirmed, had set up a 'Swine Fever Command' in Sydney, and alerted every officer. With the help of police and local government inspectors, response was rapid and the disease quickly eradicated.

In the professional sphere, apart from his departmental and military duties, Henry was indefatigable. He was most anxious to see the profession unified and strengthened throughout Australia. He initiated the move when he attended the meeting in Melbourne of Section L of ANZAAS in January 1913. It was agreed there that professional associations should be formed in each State with a view to their amalgamation to form an Australian Veterinary Association.

Henry believed that the next step in forging the chain of unity was the establishment of a journal devoted to professional interests and to the dissemination of knowledge. He worked toward this end, and in spite of the small numbers in the profession and the financial obligations involved, the first issue of the Journal of the Australian Veterinary Association appeared in 1925. Henry was the first editor. He served the profession for many years as a councilor of the Australian Veterinary Association, was twice elected to the presidency and was elected a 'Fellow'. He was also a President of the N.S.W. Division of the A.V.A. and of Section 'L' of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. With Professor J.D. Stewart, Henry was the recipient of the first award of the Gilruth Prize in 1953. For many years he was a member of the Royal Society of N.S.W.

In his official capacity he was at different times President of the Veterinary Surgeons Board, Chairman of the Stock Medicines Board, Member of the Federal Cattle Tick Commission, and Chairman of the Commission of Enquiry which recommended the establishment of country killing works. He was a member of several joint committees of the Department and of such bodies as the University of Sydney and the C.S.I.R.O.

Before his retirement from the public service in New South Wales, Henry became afflicted with a chronic illness, but in spite of this medical problem, on leaving the Department, he undertook the task of first paid secretary of the A.V.A.

Max Henry was a man with great ideals of service to the community and to the profession he had adopted. From the time he took up duty in 1906 as a veterinary inspector with the Health Department until his retirement from the position of secretary of the Australian Veterinary Association in 1949, he was a driving force and an inspiration in movements to advance his profession wherever possible.

Max Henry died on 9 June 1959 after a long illness. He played an outstanding part in the advancement of Veterinary Science and of the Veterinary Profession in Australia