

Batteries Put On Crippled Beasts In Railway Trucks!

After long hours of misery and suffering, Death at last steps in as an instrument of mercy for many beasts that lie injured and without water in the cattle trucks bound for Cannon Hill stockyards.

But others, it seems, are not so fortunate. They lie with broken legs and other injuries, dying of thirst in the hot trucks, and, as long as they show some signs of life, they are subjected to still worse forms of cruelty by some accompanying drovers, who use batteries to give them electric shocks to make them get back on their feet.

This is yet one more new angle uncovered by "Truth" in the course of its investigations into the wanton cruelties associated with the slaughter of cattle for the State's meat supply. Much of the cruelty, the investigation has shown, could be avoided, and this seems particularly to be the case in regard to the use of batteries on stricken and suffering animals.

Mr. Thomas Byrnes, of Alexandria - street, Balmoral, told "Truth" during the week that he was a railway guard for 40 years before he retired.

He had often seen bullocks stretch out their tongues in agony, as the "live" wires from batteries were applied to them by drovers. Use of the battery was quite common, he said.

The method the drovers used, he explained, was to have a leather-cased battery in front of them, supported by a strap over the shoulder. Wires from this battery ran to the end of a long pole, which the drover held.

When the drover saw a beast that had slipped in a truck, he touched it with the end of the pole, and the "live" wires from the battery.

Sometimes, the shock from the battery would force the beast on to its feet, but in other instances it would serve merely to add to the pain the unfortunate beast was already suffering, without having the desired effect. "For a beast badly crippled cannot possibly get up, no matter how it is tortured," said Mr. Byrnes.

Whether or not the "shock" treatment has the desired result, there can be no doubt that it is a most cruel method, and one that should be banned immediately.

Mr. Byrnes said, "I have seen bullocks stretch out their tongues in agony — and the drover still applying the battery! Yet the Railway Department will not try to bring in a regulation to prevent this cruel practice.

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"If a jockey on a racecourse uses a battery, he is sent 'out' for life: yet the racecourse battery is only a miniature, compared to the battery in use by drovers on stock trains."

Mr. Byrnes said that a method he used with a great deal of success, if a beast had slipped but had not been injured, was to get a bucket of water from the guard's van, and pour the water over the animal's head.