

The smallest outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease could be the greatest economic disaster to hit Australia since the depression. Despite stringent precautions against the introduction of exotic or foreign animal diseases to Australia, animal hygiene authorities do not minimize the present danger.

The disease, regarded among veterinarians as the world's worst animal plague, would be even more of a disaster for Australia than for England because of Australia's greater cattle and sheep population and the country's dependence on the export of their products.

Australian meat, wool and dairy produce exports would be immediately affected. For instance, if an outbreak occurred anywhere in Australia, including Tasmania, the United States would at once declare all of the Commonwealth a foot-and-mouth infected country and refuse to accept Australian meat until the country had been declared completely free of the disease.

The greatest peril of the disease entering Australia could be through the border from West Irian into the Australian-administered Territory of Papua-New Guinea.

One of the biggest cattle stations in Papua-New Guinea has now been placed in quarantine following an outbreak of the disease brucellosis. More than 100 cattle have been slaughtered. Papua-New Guinea had previously been almost free of brucellosis. The disease had probably been brought into the Territory by cattle imported from Australia. Australia does not permit the importation of cloven-footed animals from anywhere in the world.

### Tea Plants From Quarantine

Tea plants grown in Canberra will soon be established in the Territory of Papua-New Guinea. The Federal Minister for Health, Dr. A. J. Forbes, reports that nearly 200 of the plants, which had been growing in quarantine for the past year, have left Australia for the territory by air.

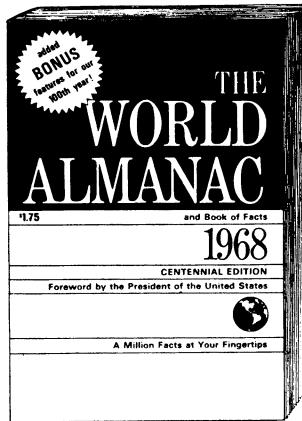
This is the second large consignment of tea plants to be handled in Canberra on behalf of plant quarantine authorities in Papua-New Guinea.

Developed in a special quarantine screen house at Canberra from unrooted tea cuttings imported from Kenya, the tea plants had been under constant observation during the growing period to ensure that they were free of disease, particularly Tea Blister Blight.

Tea Blister Blight, which causes considerable losses to tea crops in many parts of the world, is not known to occur in Papua-New Guinea.

*W. A. Scholes*

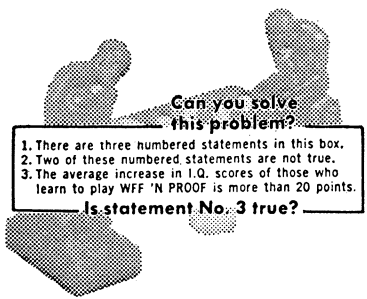
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