

either side of it if any hon. member can find twenty farmers who are broke I will buy him the best hat in Ottawa; I admit he should not pay more than \$2.50 for it because there are no good hats in Ottawa; their stores are all very much the same.

Our people have had their difficulties, and many difficulties, but we are not all broke and crying to eastern Canada to help us. People down here speak of Ontario as "the old milch cow", and say that we have been living on the old milch cow. We have been doing no such thing. We have kept up our end; we have bought the things they made; we have bought them by exchanging them for what we could raise. The best cow I ever knew only had four teats, and you chaps down here take care of those four pretty well; there is no doubt about that. But we have been carrying our end in our economy, and we will continue to do so.

I agree that a stabilized policy is what we need. The day has gone when someone could take a piece of land and become a farmer. As farming is now it is a specialized job: the specialists have succeeded and the others have gone. The same thing happens in any other industry one may care to mention.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Including law.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): While we do seek equality—I think that is all that most of us out there want, and of course we want it—we do not come begging. We have taken care of our end in the development of this Canada, and all we ask from you is a chance, not a cinch.

Mr. ARGUE: The matter I wish to deal with to-night is not under the civil estimates and that is why I am bringing it up. It has to do with special products.

Some time during July last the special products board of the Department of Agriculture agreed to purchase some 40,000 horses in Canada on behalf of the governments of Holland and France. The specifications were for mares and geldings ranging from 1,300 pounds up, in good health and sound, age from three to nine years, prices to range from \$80 to \$160. It is estimated that at the present time there are between 200,000 and 250,000 head of surplus horses in Saskatchewan and an equal number in Alberta. The farmers, because they have more horses than they can use on their farms, and because in large areas of Saskatchewan and Alberta there is this year a very poor crop, are looking forward to disposing of thousands of their horses.

Then into this buyers' market came the special products board, proposing to buy

40,000 head of horses. The farmers felt that they would have a chance of receiving something like \$4 million in total of sorely needed money. Needless to say, the price which was offered by the special products board looked lucrative to the farmers. The farmers came to believe through press reports that the purchases would be made by the special products board direct from farm owners, and that there would be no place for speculators to buy from the farmers at fire-sale prices and to sell to the special products board, making a lot of money in that way.

According to sessional paper No. 214, tabled November 16, the special products board up to October 25 had purchased only 2,936 head of horses. Of this number 786 head were purchased at Montreal. I believe, if the facts of the purchase at Montreal were known, the horses bought there were not in the main owned by farmers but were bought from buyers who had previously purchased the horses in western Canada and who no doubt made a handsome profit by acting as middlemen.

Whether or not the government policy has met with satisfaction at all points, I do not know, but from detailed information I have, I wish to point out what occurred at the Lafleche sale on September 5, 1945. Certainly in this case the action of the buyers of the special products board was anything but satisfactory to farmer owners in that vicinity.

I have three specific complaints to make and have complete information to support them.

The first complaint is that the buyers of the special products board did not buy horses in conformity with the policy set out in the bills and the radio announcements advertising the sale. A news account in the *Lafleche Press* following the sale states:

The much publicized trip of government horse buyers to LaFleche Friday, September 5, was made but not to the very great satisfaction of all concerned. The poster issued under the authority of the government regarding weights of horses which would be desirable was not adhered to in any way. According to reports, and even after publicity was given to the fact that horses under 1,450 pounds would not be acceptable the minimum weight on the date set proved to be 1,550 pounds.

In correspondence I received from M. C. Howe, Lafleche, he states:

On the 4th day of September, a sale of horses was held at LaFleche at which certain government representatives were purchasing horses on behalf of the government for shipment to the Netherlands. Prior to the sale, the same was advertised by radio, newspapers, and public notices which stated that horses would be purchased with weights ranging from 1,375 pounds and upward. But, at the sale the buyers refused to purchase horses weighing less than 1,550 pounds.