

the act. I do not suppose the Minister of Trade and Commerce knew there were any such provisions in the live stock products act, and he certainly does not seem to have passed on this information to the unfortunate shippers. I think that either the Minister of Agriculture should hand over all the rest of the Department of Agriculture which the Minister of Trade and Commerce has not swiped off or else the Minister of Trade and Commerce should shake the dust of the Department of Agriculture off his feet and let the minister operate his own department. That is what caused this difficulty, and the only way I see out of it is for the government to cover up that loss, because certainly by their fooling around with this boat they left the impression on the shipper that all was well with regard to both the boat and the owner thereof, who was a cattle exporter as well. That is all I want to say in regard to that matter. I cannot understand any government for three years keeping these farmers out of their money. Dating back to Doctor Robertson's time, many years ago, every precaution has been taken to secure the farmers from loss through scallywagging dealers in cattle who were not worth the load of cattle and must be bonded before anybody would be justified in entrusting his property with them. But that was not done, and I would draw the matter to the attention of the Prime Minister. What is the use of haggling over technicalities? The Minister of Justice will tell them there is no obligation. He will be prepared possibly to tell them anything they want to be told. It is easy for him to ask them: What do you want? We think we are not responsible, the government say, and it is very easy for the minister to say: Well, you are not. That is the way it goes. But there is a question of equity in this at all events.

There is one thing sure. While the farmers have been almost giving their cattle away in the last four years, and in twenty months they were giving away one out of four on account of the adverse exchange, now these fellows are giving them all away, and I wonder if they had also to pay freight and insurance in advance? I do not suppose they did. Surely the cattle would be good enough to cover that.

It is just the same old story so far as this government is concerned. This may be their last session and the longer it goes the more it exposes their incompetency, hopelessness and helplessness. It shows at every turn of the tide as we find out more about these things. No wonder the government wanted to pro-

rogue last Saturday. I think they should have prorogued a month ago and saved us a lot of this blooming legislation which they have been trying to strangle the opposition with in the last thirty days.

Mr. SPOTTON: Mr. Chairman, someone has said "save us from our friends". The hon. member for West Middlesex (Mr. Elliott) and myself were called in some four months ago on this matter. We worked upon it as a business matter and I can say for him and his colleagues that they have kept anything savouring of politics absolutely out of the matter. I am very sorry that the last speaker (Mr. Motherwell) has striven to inject some political prejudice into it.

The facts as I see them are these. The farmers in the counties of Huron, Perth, Lambton and Middlesex had a meeting at Ailsa Craig or somewhere in the county of Middlesex and passed a resolution asking me to introduce a delegation to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens). They came to Ottawa and the Minister of Trade and Commerce gave us a very kindly reception indeed. We presented this matter to him as best we could, and those farmers that night were abundantly fair. They gave the Department of Trade and Commerce a great deal of credit for fitting up ships to assist in the passage of cattle to England. I myself with other members have waited on the Minister of Trade and Commerce and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir) asking that some assistance be given by way of fitting up ships. The ex-Minister of Public Works and myself, instead of acting like children, stubbing our toes and running to a parent, decided that we would go in and try to clean up the matter first. This we did. We had a meeting in Montreal and this firm was taken into bankruptcy. Then we had the Clarkson firm, a reputable firm of auditors, go into their books. A padlock was put on the door and Clarkson's were put in charge.

We find that there are no assets. There never were any assets, and we are not trying to place blame upon the Department of Trade and Commerce particularly, but we would ask the Department of Trade and Commerce not to assume the attitude that they cannot make mistakes. While this government is as free from making mistakes as any government I have ever known, yet I have never known any men who were perfect, and my plea to-night with the administration is not to assume the attitude that these farmers are the men who made the whole mistake. I think that is most unfair.