

operation I believe a number of shippers in my constituency will become practically bankrupt.

Mr. BENNETT: Did they make any down payment when they took the cattle?

Mr. BOYES: None at all, I understand. I have been interested in this matter to the extent of attending with a number of deputations before ministers, and going to Montreal in the interests of the shippers. Yet we have been unable so far to accomplish anything of real value. I know that the producers are unable to furnish sufficient funds to go ahead in a lawsuit, or to arrest the men at Montreal. I suggest that the government should take some action along these lines. If after furnishing funds to take action against these men it is proven that they have stolen the cattle—and at the present time that seems evident—the men should be severely punished. It may be that the men involved have receipts from these cattle which would enable them to pay something on account. However, if the government were unsuccessful in procuring any funds, I suggest that action could be taken similar to that which on former occasions has been taken, when compensation has been made. We remember what happened after the great Halifax disaster. In recent years we remember that the farmers in the dried out areas in Saskatchewan were assisted when they were unable to produce wheat. If we are unsuccessful in gaining financial support from the men in Montreal, while I do not feel the government is financially responsible, as has been stated by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, yet in the interest of those producers and farmers I appeal to the government seriously to look into the matter and, if possible, to give compensation, as has been done in other cases. I am sure the producers would greatly appreciate such action and certainly I should appreciate it.

Mr. SANDERSON: I wish merely to go on record as agreeing with the hon. members for West Middlesex (Mr. Elliott), North Huron (Mr. Spotton), South Huron (Mr. Golding) and East Middlesex (Mr. Boyes). Two or three farmers in the constituency of South Perth, which I have the honour to represent in this house, unfortunately have lost their money through the shipment of cattle. I have not attended any conferences with any of the ministers. I have not given the matter the close attention which has been given it by the hon. members I have mentioned, because unfortunately when the deputation first came to Ottawa I had been called home. Never-

theless I am vitally interested in the matter and should like to place my remarks on record along with those of the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett), the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens) and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir).

I am pleased the discussion has been free from political bias. This is not a political question, but one of justice to farmers who have lost their money because, as the hon. member for North Huron has said, the Department of Trade and Commerce gave a diploma to the Richelieu Corporation to buy cattle and to ship them overseas. I have several reasons in mind as to why I believe the government should compensate the farmers. The Minister of Trade and Commerce admits that his department paid \$13,000 to the Richelieu Corporation to equip two boats for the shipment of cattle to Great Britain. When that was done the officials of his department must have satisfied themselves and forwarded the information to the minister that these boats were seaworthy. If that was not done, then the minister made a grave mistake.

Mr. STEVENS: Obviously there is no official in my department who could pass judgment upon the seaworthiness of any ship. The vessels were equipped according to the British Board of Trade regulations and the overseeing was done by experts in shipping matters. We had the assistance of the Department of Marine in that respect.

Mr. SANDERSON: Surely the minister will admit responsibility in this matter, even if his experts did advise that these ships were seaworthy. I think he must shoulder the responsibility when they turned out not to be seaworthy.

Mr. STEVENS: That has not been asserted except in this chamber.

Mr. SANDERSON: I am now bringing the matter to the attention of the minister. I should like to know if the minister made any inquiry through his officials or through the officials of any other department as to the solvency of the Richelieu Corporation when they entered into an agreement to pay them \$13,000.

Mr. STEVENS: The firm was shown to have a capital of \$20,000 and to be engaged in the exportation of cattle. I have the Dun and Bradstreet report here but I do not think it should be used in this house. However, I shall quote from the report in part. It states that the company is well spoken of in personal respects and that Mr. Richardson is