



# FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

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## Canadian Horses for Military Purposes

### Why are they not Wanted in Greater Numbers? Are Agents of Great Britain and France Forbidden to Purchase Horses in Canada? If so, Why? The Subject Discussed in the Dominion House.

THERE is a growing feeling among the farmers of Canada that they are not reaping the advantages that should naturally accrue to them, due to the enormous demand for horses for military purposes. A conservative estimate placed the number of horses in active service in Europe the first of December last, at well over 1,000,000 head. The number must since have been considerably augmented. At that date it was estimated that anywhere from 250,000 to 300,000 horses had already perished. In previous wars the life of a cavalry horse in active warfare has been estimated at only four months, but in this war horse casualties have been much heavier, and the estimate has been placed down as low as four weeks. Even for such a comparatively small war as that against the Boers, Great Britain took over 100,000 horses from the American continent; and the losses to horse flesh in that war were as nothing compared with the losses in this worldwide conflict. And yet the horse market in Canada, depressed as a result of present trade conditions, has not been stimulated to any extent by demand for military purposes. In fact, purchases, in view of the evident need, have been comparatively few. Why?

#### Is This Charge True?

In their annual convention last February, the United Farmers of Ontario, made charges and passed a resolution that, if its premises are correct, would throw some light on the situation. The resolution read:

"Whereas, the Dominion Government has recently placed an embargo on the export to the United States of horses suitable for military purposes, and has prevented purchases from the British and French military war departments from making purchases in Canada;

"Whereas, the effect of this action is restricting home producers to one market, and is tending to depress a branch of agriculture sufficiently depressed already;

"Therefore, be it resolved that this convention respectfully urge the Dominion government to remove the restrictions in question to the end that production be given its greatest possible stimulus."

The restrictions apparently have not been removed and the subject came up for discussion a few days ago in the Dominion House in connection with the agricultural estimates. Mr. Neely, member for Humboldt, Sask., asked for information as to the expenditures for the distribution of pure bred sires throughout Canada. He strongly commended the policy of spending several hundred thousand dollars in this manner, but questioned the wisdom of encouraging the production of better horses and more horses, and at the same time restricting the market for the horses once the farmer has raised them. He

charged, "that not only had no special assistance been given by the government in securing markets for horses outside of Canada, but on the contrary, buyers of horses for foreign countries had actually been warned off Canadian soil.

#### British Purchasers in United States

"I am told that purchasers for the British government have been requested by those acting in authority for this government, to leave Canadian

they may purchase horses cheaper than they otherwise could."

In replying to the charge of Mr. Neely, Sir Robert Borden spoke in part as follows: "The allied powers, in regard to horses, as to which the wastage is enormous, had to look pretty far ahead in the early months of the war, and certain arrangements were made, which I am not free at the moment to disclose to the House, but which I would have no objection to mention to my honorable friend, or to any other honorable gentleman on the other side of the House. \* \* \* Arrangements had to be made, as I understand, between the powers as to where the provision of horses that would be required, could be obtained, and with those arrangements, which were arrived at under a very distinct understanding, we could not very well presume to interfere. \* \* \* The arrangements and conditions which have been brought to our attention, are not only of a confidential, but of a very complex character, and I hope my honorable friend will do us the justice of believing that it has been our greatest desire to bring about a condition of affairs under which the farmers of Canada, whether in the East or in the West, will have an opportunity to dispose of their horses at remunerative prices."

#### British Govt. Agents, But—

Mr. Neely was not inclined to take the Premier's reply as satisfactory. "My information," said he, "was that the British Government actually sent their agents to Canada to purchase horses and that the Canadian government wishing to retain the Canadian horses for itself, had requested the British buyers not to pursue the purchase of horses on Canadian soil, until the Canadian government had itself secured, at fair and reasonable prices, a sufficient number with which to equip the Canadian contingent."

Sir Robert Borden replied: "There is no doubt whatever that persons who have been commissioned to purchase a certain number of horses to provide for the needs of the first and second expeditionary forces, wished to be in a position in which they could be absolutely sure of securing a sufficient number of the requisite type, not only to supply the needs of the first contingent, but also to make good the enormous wastage that must necessarily take place as soon as these forces arrived at the front." The Premier went on to state again that there was another reason for the withdrawal of British buyers, which he was willing to communicate to Mr. Neely privately, but not publicly.

The discussion waxed vigorous at times. Mr. Robb of Huntington, Que., and Mr. Bennett, of Calgary, Alta., taking part. Mr. McMillan of Glengarry, told of an interview that he had had

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### Why Are Our Horses Not in Greater Demand?

#### Some Questions that Farmers are Asking

MILLIONS of horses are needed for military purposes. And yet comparatively few have been purchased in Canada. Why?

Our weekly ago the United Farmers of Ontario charged that representatives of the horse buying departments of the British and French armies had been warned out of Canada by the Dominion Government and requested that such restrictions be removed. Some days ago the question was discussed in the Dominion House. The Government practically admitted that British buyers were not operating in Canada, due to "special confidential arrangements."

These arrangements may have been formulated on a broad imperial basis. Their actual effect in operation, however, has been to lower the price of horses below what it would be with free competition. The farmers of Canada are willing to make sacrifices for the Empire, but they may be pardoned if they asked this question, "Why should a product of the farm be singled out for special restriction?" If manufacturers may sell freely of their products to any of the allied powers why should not the farmer be permitted to do likewise? These are points on which the debate in the House does not throw any light.

sell and confine their purchases of horses to the United States and other countries. They were told to leave the Canadian horse market alone until the Canadian government had secured all the horses they required so that the price should not be advanced. \* \* \* For some reason or other while French and English buyers are plentiful in the United States down as far as Texas, in Canada there is a woeful dearth in the demand for cavalry and artillery horses. If there is such an embargo placed on purchases from outside, it is up to this government to take that embargo off at once. \* \* \* Surely the stock breeder and farmer are not to be deprived of this opportunity to get a good price for their surplus stock, simply because the Canadian government wishes to monopolise this market for themselves, so that