

to try to obtain more ships in order to make it possible to ship more of these horses before spring or during next summer than we otherwise shall be able to ship.

The facts are that the horses required by the Netherlands—I am speaking now from memory and I may be a few pounds out, but I think I am correct—must weigh at least 1,450 pounds, not at Lafèche but at Montreal. Anyone who has ever shipped a horse from Lafèche to Montreal knows that any shipper must take a margin of at least seventy-five pounds, and probably he would be much safer to take a hundred pounds. Therefore, if the buyers were buying horses at 1,550 pounds in Lafèche, when they reach Montreal those horses would be in accordance with the specifications as set down. France was prepared to accept a limited number of horses at 1,350 pounds, a lighter weight, at Montreal. There was no specification made either by the French government or by the Canadian government that these horses were to be bought in any particular way or by any particular person. There is nothing anywhere in the arrangement which prevents the government from buying horses from any private dealer or from the farmer direct or in any other place they desire to buy them. The only specification is that we shall deliver the horses up to standard at the boat, and, as surmised, the different governments have hired inspectors and placed them at the boat to see that the horses are up to standard. Some of the horses which have been brought down from western Canada have been turned down. We have not objected to their being turned down in spite of the original understanding which we had with the governments, because we would have turned them down even if they had not done so. As a matter of fact, most of them were turned down by Mr. McCallam of our own department rather than by any other inspector, because they did not reach specifications.

Mr. WRIGHT: Has the minister the numbers turned down?

Mr. GARDINER: I can get them; I have not them before me at the moment.

Mr. SENN: Did they have to be sound in wind and limb?

Mr. GARDINER: Yes, and all the usual things that you get in buying a horse from a farmer—every horse dealer and every farmer knows pretty well what these things mean. They had to have more than that; they had to be of a certain type. They did not want the kind of horse which I like, which is the Clyde with long hair. They wanted the clean-legged horse. They preferred those to anything else. That was the situation. I am

[Mr. Gardiner.]

not going to accuse anyone of having any designs upon us, but I must say I was a little concerned about some things which did happen in western Canada.

I was in the west during the summer trying to get a little vacation, while at the same time looking after my own farm, when I picked up a Regina paper and saw in big headlines on the front page that the Saskatchewan government was proceeding to organize the province of Saskatchewan to purchase horses. You had to read the article very carefully to find that the dominion government had anything whatsoever to do with it. I went into Regina myself and interviewed some of the members of the government and the men who were representing my own department who were there discussing the matter. What was reported to me was that the special products board had sent a man from Ottawa to report to the three governments of western Canada, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, confidentially the fact that there were negotiations under way between the two governments of which I have spoken and this government to purchase some 35,000 or 40,000 horses, and that in view of the fact that there was a drought district in western Canada extending through the southern part of Saskatchewan and the eastern part of Alberta, it would be the desire of the government to purchase as many of those horses this fall from that section of the country as possible in order to make it unnecessary for farmers to carry them through the winter on the limited feed which was there. Well, the government of Manitoba did not say anything about it. They treated the information as it was intended to be treated. The government of Alberta did likewise; but the government of Saskatchewan put it on the front page of the paper within ten hours after the information was given to them.

An hon. MEMBER: What was secret about it?

Mr. GARDINER: An hon. member over there asks, what was secret about it? I have always found it good practice in government, as in business, when you are given advance information and asked to cooperate in doing any particular job, during the period the contracts have not been completed, to act in accordance with the suggestions which are made.

I wish to say that I do not lay any blame upon the ministers of the government of Saskatchewan; because I had occasion to check the matter still further. I was in the district my hon. friend is speaking of on the day of the Assiniboia fair, in his own town. It was the day after I had checked in Regina and