

Further down it says:

Already an agent of the federal agriculture department has been through the west contacting provincial agriculture departments with regard to the horse purchases.

Mr. McIntosh emphasized that the purchases will be made from farm owners.

The method of purchasing will be conducted in the following manner, according to Mr. McIntosh:

Agricultural representatives will first make a survey of the "short crop" areas to find out the available supply of the animals required. It was expected that these "short crop" areas will be able to furnish sufficient horses for the number required this fall.

Once this has been done, farmers with animals for sale will be asked to bring them into designated urban centres where a dominion government buyer and a veterinarian will arrange purchasing. The animals will then be shipped east to seaboard to await shipment to the Netherlands, their sea voyage dependent upon the availability of shipping.

Then it goes on to indicate the kind of animals required. That was the first announcement that went out, on July 20.

Mr. BURTON: Did the issuance of that statement interfere with the arrangements the minister's department was trying to make with the Netherlands government?

Mr. GARDINER: As a matter of fact I said last night that our department had not completed any arrangements at that time. As is suggested in this item, we have sent a man to inform the three provincial governments in the west as to a possible plan, and have that matter discussed with them. As I said last night, he discussed it with all three governments and the only one that put anything in the press about it was the government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. BURTON: But the publication of this statement did not interfere with the arrangements the minister was trying to make with the Netherlands

Mr. GARDINER: It was put out before we had any plan finally evolved at all. It was a possible plan which was discussed with the governments of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba; and the only government that published it was the government of Saskatchewan. As a matter of fact it had not been discussed with me at all up to that time. An official was sent out from Ottawa to discuss the matter first with these governments; then he was to come back and discuss it with me. It had not been discussed and there was not a plan at all at that time.

Mr. BURTON: What I am trying to find out is this: has the minister any reason to

believe that the publication of this statement interfered with the agreements he was trying to conclude?

Mr. GARDINER: I did not suggest that last evening. What I said was that at that time we had not an agreement signed with anybody. The agreement was just something in the offing. Later on we did get an agreement with the Netherlands, but as yet we have not come to an agreement with France. I do not suggest that it interfered with the making of the agreements at all; I simply say it was announced in advance of our own plans having been completed and that they had to await signing of the agreement with the Netherlands. This made it more difficult for us to do anything else than congregate these horses in the towns and villages, as announced in this statement.

Mr. FAIR: Would the minister explain how he has been able to ship some 600 horses to France if he has not come to any agreement with that country?

Mr. GARDINER: We will come to that, but first let me finish this statement. I repeat, this article appeared in the press on July 20. As I said last evening, I interviewed the persons in Regina who were dealing with the matter, I think on Wednesday of the week of July 28. On July 28, in any case, which was Saturday, a further statement was put out headed, "Horse purchasing centres selected." This again was put out by the department at Regina, giving a list of places throughout the drought area at which horses would be congregated. One of these places is LaFleche, about which we were speaking last evening, together with quite a number of other places where we finally purchased horses. Then on July 30 this statement was put out:

Agriculture Minister Gardiner said Sunday night the federal government was preparing to buy horses for both the Netherlands and France, and that only well-broken weighty horses were wanted. As soon as plans were complete the agriculture department would announce them in full.

"The special products board is setting up an organization to purchase and assemble horses," the minister said. "It is the desire to take as many as possible from the drought area. It has been decided to purchase the first boatload as close as possible to the assembling pastures at St. Lazare and Rockham, Manitoba."

"The experience gained there will immediately be utilized to set up a plan which can be extended to every dry area where suitable horses can be obtained. The desire is to work out some plan which will not require farmers to move horses any considerable distance until they have been actually purchased."

I may say that this article was put out after I had some conversations with officials