

*Supply—Agriculture*

torily. We are, therefore, developing new plans with regard to any future activities in that direction.

About August 24 a press statement of the policy that we were following was put out, and I think I should read that to the committee in order that it may be on the record as well. It was as follows:

The Minister of Agriculture has completed arrangements with the governments of the Netherlands and France under which the Department of Agriculture agrees to purchase about 40,000 horses between now and October, 1946, to be shipped to those countries for use on farms and elsewhere.

The horses purchased must be clean-legged and well-broken and sound of limb and wind. They must weigh not less than 1,375 pounds for France and 1,450 pounds for the Netherlands. Those purchased immediately will be for the Netherlands.

The minister has announced that the area which is short of feed in Saskatchewan and Alberta will be combed carefully for every available suitable horse. To make this possible, a committee composed of George Spence, director of P.F.R.A., and Mr. O. Freer, who is in charge of community pastures, and Mr. J. J. Bowlen, a rancher of Calgary, Alberta, has been set up to organize these districts. They have called in the secretary-treasurers of the association of rural municipalities in Saskatchewan, and will call in the secretary-treasurers of the same organization in Alberta to assist in making a survey of the numbers of suitable horses available in each rural municipality. It is planned to ask each secretary-treasurer in the poor crop areas to assemble information as to the number and owners of suitable horses for sale in each poor crop municipality. The Prairie Farm Assistance inspectors when they visit these municipalities will assist in organizing the assembling of these horses in numbers, preferably at farms where they can be properly cared for and fed, to be examined by a purchasing party. The purchasing parties will be under the direction of Mr. Jack Byers of the agricultural department.

Farmers who have suitable horses to sell in the area west of the Soo line and south of the Saskatchewan river in Saskatchewan and throughout the poor crop areas on the east side of Alberta, should apply to the secretaries of their rural municipalities for circulars indicating the type of horse and the possible prices. Other poor crop areas will be covered as soon as possible. They should then notify the secretary as to the number of such horses he could supply at some convenient assembling place to be reviewed by a purchasing party. Each purchasing party will have on it a qualified veterinarian to examine the horses, and notice will be given to all those desiring to sell horses as to the time and place at which horses are to be assembled.

A survey has been made of certain areas east of Regina in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which shows that there are sections where quite a number of suitable horses can be secured.

These areas will be utilized to provide horses required on short notice to fill boatloads in the early stages of the plan and when the poor crop areas have been fully combed will, in common with other parts of Canada, be covered to obtain horses to fill the contracts. An effort is being made to get available horses out of the areas where feed is short before winter.

[Mr. Gardiner.]

It is suggested that farmers who intend to bring horses to the assembling place should whenever possible visit one of the previous sales to acquaint themselves with the types required and thereby save themselves the experience of taking horses in which would not be acceptable.

Mr. BURTON: Was that statement issued to the press?

Mr. GARDINER: Yes, it was issued to the press and published I think in the *Regina Leader-Post*, and I do not know what other papers. It was given to the press and published generally.

Mr. BURTON: Was the Department of Agriculture at Regina acquainted with the matter?

Mr. GARDINER: Yes; as a matter of fact I held a meeting with the secretary of the rural municipalities, Mr. Bryden, and with the representatives of the treasury in Regina, and the departmental officials. I have here a letter which was sent out by the department at Regina, indicating what the plan was. They took the trouble to send out a letter to all their own employees in different parts of the province, telling them what the plan was, stating that it would be announced from Ottawa, that the old plan which had been talked about earlier, and which I referred to last night, had been dropped, and that the new one would be announced; and it was announced as I have indicated here. They asked their own people to make a check on these notices that were put up with regard to purchases, and to assist in every possible way, and I wish to thank them for their efforts in that regard.

Mr. BURTON: But how does what the minister mentioned last evening, in regard to the plan having been prematurely advertised in the Regina newspaper, work in with the statement he has just made?

Mr. GARDINER: If my hon. friend wants that, I will give him the whole thing; I have it all here. The first article put out was on July 20, and read:

Province to Sell Horses in Europe

Agricultural representatives of the provincial agriculture department next week will begin a survey of an available supply of work horses which may be suitable for sale to the Netherlands government.

The Saskatchewan department is working in cooperation with the federal government in the sale of these horses.

The sale will be confined at this time to the "short crop" areas of Saskatchewan, agriculture minister L. F. McIntosh said Friday.

The Netherlands government, Mr. McIntosh said, wants a supply of the work horses this fall, and possibly a further supply next spring.