

The horse sale turned out to be a regular farce and was a great inconvenience and expense to the farmers in this locality. Some of these horses were broken and brought as far as thirty miles to this sale. In rough numbers there were approximately 300 horses brought to this sale and of this 300 only fifteen horses, as far as we know, were bought directly from the farmers by the government.

The news item in the Lafleche paper says on that point:

Out of some 300 horses brought to LaFleche only seventeen were purchased direct from the farmer.

We have here, in the first instance, the government buyers not adhering to the specifications that were advertised prior to the sale. I wish to say this, that if the specifications were changed immediately before the sale, then proper advertising should have been done to make the changed specifications known by the farmers. More than that, if time did not allow any changes in specifications to be advertised, then special products board buyers should have adhered to the specifications advertised prior to the sale and should have bought direct from the farmers all horses that conformed to these specifications.

Such was not the case. Here we have a spectacle of farmers spending their time and money to bring 300 head of horses to the Lafleche sale and, according to all reports, and in them I include the statement from the Minister of Agriculture, at most not more than 18 of the 300 horses were purchased from farmers. It can be said and no doubt will be said that almost none of the 300 horses brought to the sale conformed to specification, but I have more faith and confidence in the judgment of farmers than to believe that eighteen out of 300, or six per cent, were all that conformed to specification. All the horses brought to the sale that complied with specifications as advertised should have been bought from the farmers and, if these specifications had to be changed at the last minute, then the farmers who in good faith brought horses to the sale should have been properly reimbursed.

The second charge I wish to make is that at least half of the total number of thirty-six horses bought at Lafleche were purchased not from farmer owners but from Mr. Walter Stern, who, from information I have, is a Montreal resident. According to a return tabled in the House of Commons under my name, at the Lafleche sale eighteen horses were bought in various numbers from thirteen individuals who, as far as I know, are probably all residents of the Lafleche district and eighteen horses were bought from Mr. Walter Stern. The Lafleche article states that only

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seventeen head were purchased direct from farmers and the remainder of two carloads was purchased from a private buyer.

I have received a letter from a Lafleche resident to the effect that private buyers were at Lafleche; that the two government men and private buyers had twenty-one head of their own horses in one of the pens of the stockyards; that they took two of these horses out of these pens on the day of the sale and placed them in the government pens with the government brand put on them with white paint, and that in the evening after the sale was over, after supper, some private buyers and government officers went to the stockyards and placed the government brand on the eighteen head which the private buyers still had in their yards.

Surely the practice of government buyers in buying at least eighteen or perhaps more of the thirty-six head of horses from a private buyer was against government policy. Certainly it was against government policy as it was known to the farmers. That practice was detrimental to the farmers to the extent that over 270 of 300 head of horses brought to the sale by farmers had to be taken home. The eighteen head that were purchased from a private buyer had no doubt previously been purchased from farmers in the Lafleche area, and the private buyer by selling them to the government buyers was able to make a lot of money in that deal.

On the third irregularity which was brought to my attention, the information I have states that a farmer from Melaval, which is a town a few miles from Lafleche, presented to the government buyers a dapple grey gelding, eight years old, weight 1,710 pounds, and the government buyers refused to purchase this gelding. The farmer then sold the horse to one of the private buyers for \$60; on September 6, the day following the sale, the same horse was seen in the corral among the horses purchased by government buyers, and this animal had the government N-brand marked on it. This horse was included among the thirty-six animals, all of which had the government N-brand on them.

This evidence, to say the least, reflects badly on the practices of the buyers and the special products board at Lafleche, and, in turn, on the government. This horse had been turned down by the government buyers on the ground that it did not conform to the government specifications. The farmer then sold the horse to a private buyer for \$60. I am sure, from the schedule of rates I have been given, that this horse was worth between \$135 and \$150. Somebody made a good deal of profit on the sale of that horse to the special