

Letter from Samuel McKennan to T. C. Power, April 23, 1915

*Helena, Montana
April 23, 1915*

One of the interesting sights which came to my attention at the Miles City stockyards was the inspection of horses by representatives of the French Government The morning I was present they were selecting light weight horses for the cavalry and were paying an average price of \$135 per head for horses approved. As the horses were led into the yards, the officers looked them over critically and after say five minutes examination either accepted or rejected the animal. If accepted, they passed immediately into the branding chute, where they were branded with proper brands of the French Army. They are able to pass on from 40 to 60 horses per day, I am told. . . .

Last week was an interesting one at the yard. Three countries were purchasing—Great Britain, France and Italy. Great Britain and France were purchasing artillery horses at an average

price of about \$175 per head and Italy was purchasing lighter horses at about \$140. The stock was first offered to the English inspectors and all those not accepted by the English were then offered to the French and those not accepted by the French were later offered to the Italians. The result was that . . . over 900 horses were accepted during the week. At an average price of \$140 per animal, the week's purchase amounted to \$126,000. . . .

Approximately 225,000 horses have already left the United States for the foreign countries now at war. The average life of a horse, they tell me, is but seven days from the time it enters the army service at the front.

S McKennan

Source: *Thomas Charles Power Papers, 1868–1950. Manuscript Collection 65* [box 72 folder 60]. Montana Historical Society Research Center. Archives. Excerpted in *Not In Precious Metals Alone: A Manuscript History of Montana* (Helena, 1976): 225.