

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): This question is before the courts for decision and in the meanwhile we cannot give a very direct reply.

Mr. KENNEDY (Glengarry): What islands are involved in the controversy?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): We have not that information, but we shall be glad to get it for my hon. friend and send it to him to-morrow.

Item agreed to.

Indians—Indian education, \$1,943,702.

Mr. MANION: Would the minister explain the increase of over half a million dollars?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): This appropriation is for buildings, and includes the following: new school building at Edmonton, \$145,000; Blood reserve, residential school, conducted under the auspices of the Church of England, to be rebuilt at a cost of \$125,000. Coqualeetza industrial school, improvements, \$115,000. This institution has had a most successful career under the auspices of the Methodist church; it enjoys popularity among the Protestant Indians in British Columbia. Keeseekouse, a Roman Catholic school which has been closed for some years is to be reopened at an expenditure of \$40,000. We are spending on St. Mary's mission school, British Columbia, \$20,000. Birtle school, at Birtle, Manitoba, new wing, \$15,000; Cross Lake, northern Manitoba, addition to main building, \$10,000; Portage la Prairie, additions to main building, \$5,000. We are also constructing barns at a number of the schools. There are also two items, one of \$35,000 and one of \$27,000, with which it is proposed to purchase, from the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches, two Indian residential schools in Saskatchewan. These buildings are adequately equipped and modern in every respect.

Mr. MANION: The minister spoke of a school being reopened. How did the Indians get along without that school, and why is it that just at the present time it requires to be opened? I am only asking for information.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): There have been a number of cases in which day schools have been found to be entirely ineffective because you could not get an attendance. That applies in connection with the reopening of this particular school. The department attempted to carry on the educational work on some of these reserves by day school,

[Mr. J. W. Kennedy.]

but it was found that proper results could not be obtained except by the boarding school method.

Mr. MANION: The teachers are mostly white girls and men, are they not?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Yes. They are practically all qualified teachers.

Mr. MANION: Some of the Indians have taken teachers' courses and are teaching in the schools?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Some in Ontario, but none in the West.

Mr. MANION: The cost of building materials is now from 60 to 70 per cent in excess of pre-war prices. There is no doubt that within the next two or three years these prices will drop very considerably. In many parts of Canada both private and corporation building is being held up for that very reason, and I was wondering whether, by occupying other buildings temporarily for a time, there could not be a great saving to the country by not proceeding with these building operations just now. I do not suppose the prices will ever come down to a pre-war basis, but they will undoubtedly be reduced by 30 or 40 per cent in the next two or three years. It would be well worth while, I should think, for the minister and his department to consider holding these buildings up for the present, when costs are so very high.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I have exactly the same ideas as my hon. friend, but this is an acute situation. I have pointed out to the committee that not since the beginning of the war have any improvements been made to any appreciable extent to any of these buildings. As to the building at Kamloops I am sure my hon. friend would not house his stock in the building there in which they are attempting to carry on educational work, and I think my hon. friend for Calgary will bear me out in that. I examined the building myself. Many of these appropriations that I am asking for so far as buildings are concerned are being asked for because the buildings are absolutely tumbling down. I have no reason to doubt the word received by letter from a good Catholic priest who is doing a splendid work in northern British Columbia when he declares that the building there will not stand for another year, that the work has been put off repeatedly and the school is likely to fall down upon them at any time. I did not see that building myself, but having seen some of the others I am willing to take his word for it. In the