

Mr. JACOBS: The hon. member for York-Sunbury said he was a man of more than ordinary intelligence.

Mr. CALDWELL: Then he should have supported me as a matter of course.

Mr. MARTELL: There was no Liberal candidate, so he was the next best thing.

Mr. CALDWELL: However, the chief of the Indian tribe at Tobique point wrote me something over two years ago stating that green timber was being cut on the reserve without a permit. I reported the matter to the department, and they got in touch with the Indian agent, who reported back that there was no such thing going on. All this will be found, I am sure, on the departmental files. I received a communication to this effect from the deputy minister, a copy of which I sent to the chief, thinking there must have been some mistake. By return mail I received another letter from the chief saying that at least 600 green logs had been cut, as well as a large amount of green pulpwood. I again communicated with the department, and I think they sent an Indian agent from another reserve to look into the matter. They found that it was true that this cutting had been going on, although the agent at that reserve denied it. I am convinced that he did not know anything about it, because I know the man; he is very conscientious and an excellent man in every way—and a very good friend of mine, by the way. As I say, I was surprised to learn that he did not support me in the last election, because a man of his good judgment would naturally, I should think, follow that course. If the minister looks into the files I think he will find that that is the reason Mr. Wootten's services were dispensed with. Mr. Wootten was leaving the locality, I believe; he is up in northern Ontario at present.

Mr. HANSON: He left this month; he was dismissed a year ago. I should like to ask the minister if any complaint was ever made against Mr. Wootten, and if so, whether it was investigated by the department?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I am informed that this timber transaction was about the only thing concerning which his occupancy of the position was questioned. I am also informed he did not give his full time to Indian affairs; that he was engaged in other business.

Mr. HANSON: How could you expect him to do so, on the miserable salary you paid him?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): We expect to get service, even for miserable salaries.

Mr. HANSON: Not his full time.

Mr. MICHAUD: I know something about this gentleman, and if the hon. member for York-Sunbury wants to know in what respect he did not fulfil his duties, I can enlighten him on the subject. In the first place, the hon. member will know that Mr. Wootten got the position of Indian agent as a reward for his activities as Conservative organizer in the county of Victoria. I know that county very well; I had the honour of representing it for some time. Then, Mr. Wootten was so active as an insurance agent that he had hardly any time to give to the affairs of the Indians on the Perth reserve. As he was not doing his duty in connection with the work on behalf of the Indians, he was, therefore, dismissed for a good cause.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It would look as though he had been dismissed by the hon. member for Miramichi instead of by the minister. The minister did not know anything about the reason for the dismissal, but—

Mr. MICHAUD: Who is the member for Miramichi, I would like to know?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Restigouche—they are pretty close together.

Mr. ARCHAMBAULT: The Miramichi is an old boat.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I would like to ask the minister what is doing and what he proposes doing in regard to the greater production work in the West.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I have not changed my mind with respect to the matter since last year. With the single exception of the farm near Regina, we propose turning those lands over to the young Indians who qualify as farmers. Of course that cannot be done in a moment; we shall have to continue until such time as these young Indians are in a position to take over the lands. Each year will show, I think, a very substantial reduction in our farming operations.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I read in a return brought down in answer to some questions a statement which indicated very gratifying results from the greater production operations. I think it would be well if these were made known to the committee. I do not object to the gradual closing out of the enterprise, but I would not want to see it closed out any more rapidly than suitable Indians were available to utilize the lands that have been brought under cultivation. Otherwise