

Supply—Indian Affairs

Mr. GOULD: Can we ascertain from the figures given by the minister regarding the total productions of reservations during the past year, which reserve showed the best returns? Are the various amounts given separately? I have in mind the White Bear reserve in my own district, and it seems to me that these Indians should be given better school facilities on the principle laid down by the member for Prince Albert (Mr. Knox). Last year I believe the minister did make visits to many reservations throughout the western country, but I find that the White Bear reservation was passed over. He did not honour that reservation with a visit. There are many things there not altogether connected with the Indians that might come under the department. There are three or four questions correlated to the Indian reservations, such as pleasure resorts and so on, which the department might consider. I might state that on that reservation the Indians have, in my opinion, facilities for production which are better than can be found on the average reservation. They have an open area for the growing of cereals as well as a bush which provides pasturage facilities for the raising of cattle, an industry which the Indians go in for extensively in that locality. The public make one complaint particularly in regard to that reservation. There are large sloughs on which there are vast quantities of hay, but outside of that area there is very little. The white people, when the Indians do not show any desire to put the hay up, endeavour to rent these hay areas from them, but in all cases they have been refused, with the result that hundreds of tons of hay are frozen each year in these sloughs. I do not know whether the minister has any jurisdiction in this matter, or whether the agent is wholly responsible. However, I rose merely to say a word for these Indians. I think it would be found, if the various returns were segregated, that per capita the White Bear reserve stands well to the head of the list in the matter of production; and when Indians show such a state of progress I think they should be given greater consideration in the way of school facilities than is evident now in the quality of the buildings that are to be found on that reservation. While I am about it I wish to extend to the minister a hearty invitation to come this summer and pay this reservation a visit.

Mr. KNOX: Is there any expenditure on what is known as the Round Plain band of Sioux Indians north of Prince Albert?

[Mr. Meighen.]

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): We have an expenditure in the Carleton agency of \$552 in respect of that particular band.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Does the minister contemplate any reorganization of his department in the West? Has he in mind any change of status of any of the inspectors out there?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Not at the moment. The inspectors appear to be doing good work. I speak particularly of the two who operate from Regina. I think some change might be made which would be beneficial to the service, but I have not arrived at a definite conclusion about it yet.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I would like to say this, and it has to do with what the hon. member for Victoria City (Mr. Tolmie) impressed upon the minister a few moments ago in relation to the improvement and the multiplication of cattle upon the reserves and the general farming success of the Indians. Every thing, or nearly everything, depends upon the efficiency, energy and fidelity of the agent. Our Indian agents are appointed by the Civil Service Commission, and I think, taken all through, the commission are as likely to get efficient agents as the minister would be if the appointments were made in his hands—in fact more so. They are just as liable to make a mistake—no more so; but they are not subject to the same pressure to appoint some one who is not efficient. But unless there is an official of extraordinary competence, and not only a good judge of the success or failure of an agent, but with the backbone to see that the agent, does his work or, if not, to recommend to the minister that his services be dispensed with, there will not be any multiplication of Indian stock and there will not be any improvement of Indian farming. I have in mind, of course Mr. Graham. I learned to know something of the actual work of Mr. Graham in that regard, and the minister is very fortunate indeed in having a man who has the mastery over agencies that Mr. Graham has. An agent who fails should be discharged, because a whole lot results from his failure, and consequently there should be no principle of mercy whatever in dealing with him.

An agent ought to succeed or he ought to be discharged. The minister himself cannot, nor can a deputy or anyone else in Ottawa, be a correct judge of the work of an agent. You can tell a lot, I know, from the reports sent here, but it is only by being in constant touch with the reserves themselves