

not guarantee that they will be sold to the local farmers, but at least they will be given an opportunity of bidding upon the various parcels that constitute this rather large hay meadow. In the meantime as soon as the lease expires we will offer this year these various parcels to parties who may wish to lease them and get the hay, as it will be impossible to arrange for a sale before the hay harvest.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Would the land be leased by favoritism or by tender?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): We will lease the parcels by tender.

Mr. MEIGHEN: What will be the difference between that condition and what has already prevailed? The present lessee got his lease by tender—he was the highest bidder. I understand that what the hon. member complains of is that the lands are not available for farmers in the neighbourhood. They will not be available to them after the minister leases them by tender this year, nor, after he sells them.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I do not wish to get into a controversy between my right hon. friend and the hon. member for Selkirk—

Mr. MEIGHEN: There is no controversy.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): —But I know of no other system by which the department can protect itself.

Mr. BANCROFT: I would suggest that the lands be leased in small lots, not in one whole block as was done before. In the latter case the lands will inevitably pass into the hands of speculators. If these lands are leased under what is known as hay permits every man who has stock can obtain so much of the land according to the number of his stock. This method would help the local stock-raising industry and would keep the lands out of the hands of speculators.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is not the tender system; that is the permit system.

Mr. BANCROFT: Well, that is the system the local settlers want.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is what the minister says he is not going to do.

Mr. BANCROFT: The people there want the permit system.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: Has the minister had any complaints from the residents living near the St. Pie reserve in regard to the fencing of the reserve? A road has been cut through

[Mr. C. A. Stewart.]

this reserve, and in the fall many of the settlers left their cattle out on the road. Trouble resulted, the cattle straying into the Indian reserve and being impounded by the Indians, which put the settlers to considerable cost and a great deal of inconvenience. I suggest to the minister that some fencing should be done on that reserve. There are very few Indians there, and they have had a great deal of trouble. Has the minister had any complaints?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No.

Mr. HANSON: Shortly after the last election the Indian agent at Perth, New Brunswick, under whose immediate care the Tobique band of Indians came, was dismissed from office without any reason being assigned. I happen to know that he is a man of more than ordinary intelligence and that he was perhaps one of the best Indian agents we ever had in that part of the country. Will the minister inform us why he was dismissed?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The information I have is that the services of this gentleman were not satisfactory.

Mr. HANSON: No such reason was ever assigned. But I can tell the minister the real reason; it was because he did not support the hon. member for Victoria and Carleton (Mr. Caldwell). I do not know that he was very active against him, but that was the reason. Were any complaints against Mr. Wootten on file in the department, and if so, were they investigated by the department?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I cannot answer offhand whether or not there were any complaints.

Mr. HANSON: The secretary of the department is right in front of the minister; he knows Mr. Wootten personally.

Mr. CALDWELL: Perhaps I may be able to help the hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr. Hanson) a little.

Mr. HANSON: I want the information from the minister.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that this vote is for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories. However, if the committee has no objection I suppose a brief explanation might be made.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No objection.

Mr. CALDWELL: I am surprised to learn that this man did not support me. I understood from him that he did.