

make a single block. Does my hon. friend suggest that that land would be as valuable to me as if I could have bought the whole 160 acres in one lot?

Mr. FOSTER. Yes, if you knew you could get it all put together.

Mr. OLIVER. How could you know? There was no way you could know. If Brown, Jones and Robinson each held single patents for 16 acre lots of land, how are you going to ensure that Brown, Jones and Robinson are going to lump their sections together at your convenience, unless you pay them for it? So I say if that land was sold in blocks of 160 acres it is surely more valuable than the land that was sold in 16 acre pieces.

What is the inference to be drawn from that? The inference drawn by the minister was that all these Indian allotments were sold in 16-acre lots. The minister knows better to-day. He may not have known then, I do not think he did, but I want to state to the House that the Indian lots averaged within a few acres of the same size as land sold by public auction. The allotments to heads of families were 80 acres and suppose there were 400 other allotments and that there were 23,000 acres that would divide up into something over 58 acres to every patent; so when the minister made that argument in the House it was entirely misleading and calculated to entirely mislead the House and the country into the idea that the Indian lands were sold in smaller parcels, while the land sold by auction was sold in large parcels.

Speaking of the receipts for patents, I am forced to read another letter:

St. Peter's, December 14, 1909.

Without any doubt the majority of St. Peter's band of Indians never made applications for their patents and how could they sign receipt for such patent which they never saw.

With regard to the sale of land made by Indians of St. Peter's, Frank, Heap & Funk, and others bought land before even the land was subdivided; they were the party that selected the choice land. Of course, they had the chief and councillors under their thumb to help them out in the selection of land. When buying they were careful to have a certain Indian that would sell to have his name to a particular piece of land. At this time it was impossible to describe the land properly. It is most likely they waited until such time the subdivision was made or after the issuing of patents and then made out a proper deed.

That is exactly what is done. I think this Indian has summed it up pretty well, because it is an Indian that has written this letter.

The Indians that did not want to sell were debarred from securing the choice land, for the reason as above stated.

Every acre of these Indian allotments was picked. The Indians who had been given allotments had the first choice out of

this 48,000 acres, so that it was picked land.

I wish to point out several instances: James William Asham was working at Fisher river under the employ of the Indian Department; during his absence his patent came at the Indian office. I went up to the Indian office several times and made inquiry whether the patent was there. I said then that they were aware that the boy was away from home and that no one was to be allowed to take the patent away from the office until such time the boy would come. When he came we went to the Indian office after the patent but to our annoyance no patent was to be found; couldn't even get any information who took it away.

Frederick Asham was out at Lake Winnipeg, while being away his patent came out at the Indian office; on his arrival went to the Indian office for said patent and found that some person had taken away the patent; then demanded who this person was and who would dare to do the likes without first obtaining his permission. Finally he received a copy of a receipt of his patent, signed by William Henry Prince, councillor. I saw the copy of the receipt myself.

I have no hesitation in saying that these receipts for these patents that are in the department to-day purporting to be signed by the Indians are, in a majority of cases, forgeries. There is no question about that. They were never signed by the Indians themselves, knowingly. Here is one case, and this man goes on to say:

I mention these two persons in order that you may know that it was a matter of impossibility to sign receipt of receiving their patents from the hands of the Indian agent. Many more instances similar to this could be brought to light if the matter was to be investigated.

I have already a copy of a letter ready for signatures, whenever is completed will forward same to your address.

(Sgd.) WILLIAM ASHAM.

This proves the statement I have made that neither an application for these patents was taken or a receipt given, and yet the Indian agent, upon whom the minister, I presume, depends to see that these things are done, is still retained in office at Selkirk. During my campaign, that man told me on the train that he had resigned his position; yet, he is drawing his salary whether he is doing the work or not.

Just for a few minutes I want to refer to the auction of this land. Fifteen thousand acres of this land were sold by public auction. I have a letter from the department which tells me that the average price secured for this land was \$5.68 per acre. Further on the writer of this letter says:

I may say that the average price of the lands sold by public auction at Swan Lake on the 9th ult. amounted to \$17.62 per acre.

This land at Selkirk, less than 26 miles from Winnipeg, was the best available land