

had applied for the lower half of the reserve at \$2,500 straight.

Mr. OLIVER. Is that more?

Mr. LAKE. I could not state, because I do not know the circumstances of the land. Another gentleman offered \$5,000, Mr. J. F. McLaughlin. I see that he was to place 10,000 head upon the reserve and pay 50 cents per head.

Mr. OLIVER. Is that a better offer than the other?

Mr. LAKE. Yes, that is a better offer than that of Mr. McEwen, because he only offered to place 7,000 head at 50 cents a head which would be \$3,500. It is a simple matter of arithmetic.

Mr. OLIVER. When the hon. gentleman is through I will show him that it is not a better offer.

Mr. LAKE. The minister had a number of applications, one following the other, and he apparently gave no opportunity insofar as the papers show, to the other applicants to compete for this reserve which in my opinion he was bound to do if he had the interests of the Indians at heart as their trustees. He apparently, in a hole and corner way, had the lease drawn up between the Indians and this applicant, the Indians acting through their agent and the lease was given without the knowledge apparently of the Indian office at Winnipeg which should have been informed upon this subject. The papers show that the department did not act in the way it should have acted if it had had the best interests of the Indians at heart.

Mr. OLIVER. It is rather a pity to take up time at this hour on a hot night in threshing over straw that is five years old.

Mr. LAKE. The minister started it.

Mr. OLIVER. No, the minister did not start it. The hon. gentleman undertook to revive an alleged scandal of five years ago, which has been threshed out in this House by a very much more able man than himself and which never brought any result. In regard to the respective values of these different applications, there is a very serious difference between an offer of \$3,500 for 7,000 head and an offer of \$5,000 for 10,000 head. My hon. friend does not understand it. That is the great difficulty with him. There are so many things about this matter that he does not understand, and he is ready to jump at the conclusion that he has found a scandal when he does not understand the question. The Blood Indians themselves occupy this reserve. They have a large amount of stock, both cattle and horses. They must use this reserve for the pasturage of their own stock and it must be elementary to any person

who understands the situation that they could not afford to allow the reserve to be leased for such an amount of stock as would prejudice the pasturage of their own stock. They preferred to accept an offer of \$5,000 for 7,000 head rather than of \$5,000 for 10,000 head because it would leave sufficient pasturage on the reserve for their own stock. My hon. friend is only absurd when he suggests the auctioning off of the privilege of grazing under these circumstances. The object is to get a lease at a fair rental for as many head of cattle as the reserve will carry. To let the grazing privilege for a smaller number would not be advantageous because the grazing right would not be occupied and to let it for a larger number would not be advantageous because the Indians would lose the pasturage of their own stock.

Mr. LAKE. The minister himself was at one time of the opinion apparently that the leasing of this tract to outsiders was not quite the correct thing because amongst these papers I find a letter of his dated April 30, 1903, in which he says:

I shall insist that the interests of the several hundred Mormons who live adjoining the reserve of this part shall be considered in preference to these outsiders.

Mr. OLIVER. I want to say that that is exactly my position, that as a question of policy I did not approve of the leasing of the reserve. I did not consider that it was good policy in the interest of the surrounding settlers. But there is quite a difference between the suggestion that the leasing was the subject of a scandal and objecting to the leasing on the ground of public policy and guarding the interests of the surrounding settlers who were my constituents.

Mr. BENNETT. May I ask the minister who is cutting the timber on the Christian Islands? How is it being cut, and to what extent?

Mr. OLIVER. I do not know of any timber cut on Christian Islands last winter, unless it was cut under permit by the Indians or under trespass.

Mr. BENNETT. To what extent was timber cut last year?

Mr. OLIVER. I am not able at the moment to give the exact amount but the Indians get a permit year by year to cut a moderate quantity, ranging from 500 to 1,000 cords.

Mr. BENNETT. I will tell the minister something of the real conditions and perhaps he will have the evil remedied. A number of lumbermen in that country wish to obtain in open competition the valuable timber on that island and it is grossly unfair that they should be treated as they