

maintain continuity. If the lease is to be cancelled the lessee ought to be notified in order that he may not suffer loss by the sudden termination of his lease. In fairness to him I think that ought to be done. It is when the renewal is about to be executed that the provincial governments are notified.

Mr. McTAGGART: I bring this to the attention of the minister because of the situation created in recent months in connection with the Big Stick forest reserve. At the time of the transfer of this reserve to the Timber and Grazing branch the various stockmen's associations in that reserve, rightly or wrongly, were under the impression that they were closely approximating the community pasture idea and that their application for leases in the reserve would receive favourable consideration at the hands of the department. There are a number of these stockmen's associations in the Big Stick forest reserve, and I am informed that at the time of the transfer, when notices were posted up in the reserve advising the lessees or permit holders that the reserve was to be taken over by the Timber and Grazing branch, it was understood that their applications would be given priority. I am not certain that that is so, but that has been represented to me as being the case. Two at least of these associations, the Lemsford stockmen's association and the Big Stick stockmen's association, made application to the department for the lands which they had formerly held under permit, but the application was not granted. I am not blaming the departmental officials; I am making a study of the question at present, because a very difficult situation has arisen in this connection. When the inspector went on the ground to make an allotment of the various lands as between the different parties who had made application for them, what was it he had in mind in the matter of departmental policy? Was he led to believe that that policy favoured the encouragement of the private rancher rather than the stockmen's associations or the community pasture idea? The inspector, by the way, was from Kamloops. Perhaps he had the wrong idea in his mind when he went out to make that inspection; perhaps he thought he was sent there by the department to the end that the private ranching industry might be encouraged rather than the development of the community pasture idea. I would like to be satisfied on that point.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): So far as forest reserves are concerned we lease them more or less on the community basis. There

are private ranchers in forest reserves who have considerable areas under lease. Generally speaking, in order to satisfy that demand, wherever a forest reserve is within a reasonable distance of a farming community we have encouraged the people to put their cattle in. Sometimes, of course, demands are made upon us that are embarrassing. Sometimes a rancher who has had a considerable area of forest reserve under lease for years feels that an injustice is done when he is forced to give up that area and the land is leased on a basis of so much per head of cattle.

Mr. McTAGGART: The lands I refer to are not in the forest reserve; they are now under the Timber and Grazing branch

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): In this case is it a private owner who is given the preference?

Mr. McTAGGART: Yes.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): We are not in any way trying to discourage stockmen's associations; in fact, we rather encourage them. But it is difficult to undertake the responsibility of community grazing upon lands that are adapted for leasehold, and for the most part these lands are removed from the agricultural areas. However, I shall be glad to look into that matter. I think the hon. member has already brought it to my attention and I have had some investigations made. It would seem that some injustice was done there, because former leaseholders were deprived of improvements, and we ought to see if some adjustment could not be made to remedy that.

Mr. McTAGGART: I am very glad to hear the minister make that statement, because a very undesirable situation has been created as a result of the giving of these leases. This reserve lies in an ideal position for the development of the community pasture idea. To the east, to the west and to the north of this reserve there is splendid agricultural land, and these farmers will be unable to carry on on a mixed farming basis, that is, they will be unable to carry any quantity of stock, unless they have access to this area. The area is known as the Great Sand Hills, and it is not fit for anything but grazing. It is an area about forty miles long and perhaps twenty-five miles wide, and is a splendid area for the development of this idea. I have been very sorry to note that these associations, some of which have been carrying on for a number of years, have felt