

*Supply—Indian Affairs*

600 tons, or twice the requirements of the agency, and in 1931 it produced 3,085 tons. The minister explains the fact that the agency invited tenders—of course from certain selected individuals—in August last by the statement that coal was not being supplied by the mine on the reserve. The minister says that at that time the mine on the reserve was not open and operating, but may I submit to the minister that the Midland coal mine was not open at the time either? Most of the domestic coal mines in Alberta are closed during the summer months, and in all probability at the time tenders were called for most of the mines in the Drumheller valley were not operating. The department must have had knowledge that this mine in the reserve would be producing approximately 3,000 tons that year, and it would know about the time it would require the coal. The Indians were available for labour, and in my opinion they could have supplied themselves from their own mines. When the minister is answering this question, I wish he would state if it is the general custom of the Department of Indian Affairs not to invite tenders by advertising but simply to invite one or two selected individuals to make a tender.

Mr. MURPHY: I have now before me the answer given to the question asked by the hon. member for Bow River with regard to the production of this particular mine. As I stated a moment ago the production in 1929-30 was very limited, the Indians doing a certain amount of drift mining. As the department has no one in charge of that mine at all times, the figures given are only approximately correct. In 1929 there was mined 260 tons; in 1930, 600 tons and in 1931, 3,085 tons. The wire from the agent which I quoted a moment ago shows that this mine was not operating this year until about October. Prior to that time the agent had called for tenders to cover the requirements of the reserve, not for individual Indians particularly but for the agency buildings.

Mr. GARDINER: On whose authority?

Mr. MURPHY: I do not think any particular instructions were given this year. The agent would simply carry out the practice he had followed in other years and at a certain time of the year ask for tenders.

Mr. GARDINER: When was the coal delivered in 1931-32?

Mr. MURPHY: Some bills are dated January 5, 1931, for deliveries in December, 1930; some are dated February, 1931, for

[Mr. E. J. Garland.]

delivery in January; some are dated March, 1931, for February deliveries. I have no bills for 1931 or 1932 showing deliveries last winter.

Mr. GARDINER: When were the tenders called for the 1930-31 supply?

Mr. MURPHY: Tenders were called for on August 29, 1931, and on September 26, 1930.

Mr. GARDINER: In the year when the mine was likely to be operated by the agency, why were tenders asked for so much earlier than in the previous year?

Mr. MURPHY: As I said a moment ago, no special instructions are sent out to agents with regard to the purchasing of supplies; these matters are in their hands and they carry on as a matter of business. The agent selects the time to ask for tenders.

Mr. GARDINER: Can the minister give any information as to the business qualifications of this agent?

Mr. MURPHY: I am informed that he is considered to be one of the best agents we have. His father carried on the duties of Indian agent before him.

Mr. GARDINER: What kind of coal was delivered in 1931-32, and from what mine?

Mr. MURPHY: Double screened lump coal.

Mr. GARDINER: From what mine?

Mr. MURPHY: Neither the tender forms, the abstract or the accounts give that information.

Mr. POULIOT: Has an Indian agent been appointed recently at Cacouna?

Mr. MURPHY: I have not received any advice of an appointment at that place.

Mr. DUFF: Will the minister give me an answer to my question?

Mr. MURPHY: The position at Chapel island is vacant at present.

Mr. DUFF: How long has it been vacant?

Mr. MURPHY: I am not certain as to the exact length of time, but I believe a matter of a few weeks.

Mr. DUFF: The complaint which I received is that it has been vacant quite a while. I understand that this is because there is no Conservative doctor near the reserve. If there is a Conservative doctor close to the reserve I have no objection to his being appointed at a time when the Conservative