

ing in many important particulars the statements which appeared in the papers, and generally indicating that they were unreliable. However, a number of convictions were secured against people for selling liquor to Indians on the Kamsack reserve. The arrests were brought about by the action of the Indian Department and the cases were tried and the fines inflicted by the Indian agent.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Am I correct in understanding the minister to say that there are only two Indian schools under the control and supervision of the government, and what is the standard by which he pays out moneys from the Indian fund towards the maintenance of the schools that are under church control?

Mr. OLIVER. There were at one time three schools under the direct responsibility of the government—one at St. Paul's, Manitoba, another at Elkhorn, Manitoba, and the other at Calgary. The St. Paul's school was burnt some years ago and has not been rebuilt, the school at Calgary is about to be closed, and the school at Elkhorn is carried on. The schools under the direct control of the churches are aided by the government by a grant per head of the pupils in attendance, varying from \$72 to \$130 according to the circumstances of the school.

Mr. MACPHERSON. I would like to ask the minister if any attempt is being made by this government and the government of British Columbia to settle the vexed question as to whether or not the province has a right to Indian lands. If nothing has been done to settle that question, I am of the opinion that it would be a very wise thing on the part of both governments to make a test case and carry it to the Privy Council if necessary, so as to decide once for all who has control of the Indian lands after the Indians have ceased to use them as reserves. A great many reserves in British Columbia are contiguous to large centres, and it would be much better for the Indians themselves and all concerned if they were removed from the centres of civilization. There are also some very fertile valleys in British Columbia which are nominally Indian reserves, but which as a matter of fact are not occupied by Indians and never will be; but they are kept unused, by the Indian Department, I presume through no fault of theirs, and settlement in the surrounding country is retarded in consequence. As an instance, I may mention Squawmish valley, one of the most fertile valleys of the province. Very few Indians are there, and if they were removed and that valley opened for settlement, a considerable quantity of land would be brought under cultivation by white people, who would do something for the country. I make the suggestion to the government, not with the view of provoking an acrimonious dispute with the

Mr. OLIVER.

provincial government, but with the view of the two governments getting together and settling the question of the ownership of these lands, so that some arrangement could be made for buying out the claims of the Indians.

Mr. OLIVER. The question which my hon. friend has brought up is one of very great importance. It is of much greater importance in the province of British Columbia than in any of the other provinces, because though the area of that province is very great, the amount of agricultural land is comparatively small, and of that land, scattered all through the province, the Indians have taken their pick, with the result that the development of the province is undoubtedly very seriously retarded. When the reserves were set apart, and subsequently, in the negotiations between the province and the Dominion for the entrance of the province into the Dominion and for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, the question of the Indian reserves was dealt with, and the conditions respecting the reserves in British Columbia were made different from those respecting reserves in other parts of the Dominion. In other parts of the Dominion the Indians have an absolute right to the land, and when the land is disposed of the proceeds accrue to the Indians. But in the province of British Columbia, under the arrangement made between the province and the Dominion, the ultimate right in the land, the reversionary interest, is in the province. This is the agreement between the province and the Dominion. While, when this arrangement was made it looked like a preservation of the interests of the province, and as being in the best interests of the people of that province, as it came to be worked out it was found that instead of being for the benefit of the province in securing its development it has so far prevented the alienation of Indian lands, which are now unused, because it is perfectly clear that if the Indians are not going to get the benefit of the lands which they are not using, but which they might alienate, they are not going to alienate them or permit them to be alienated, and as a consequence the Indians all over British Columbia have been sitting tight and holding their thousand reserves in a thousand places in that province. The British Columbia government was not in a position to displace the Indians and neither was this government because, as the guardian of the Indians, being charged with the responsibility of their protection, it was not for this government to say to the Indians: you have too much land in this place, you must get off. On the other hand, the British Columbia government was not in a position to assert any right or authority to compel the Indians to get off and the result has been the holding up of the province. It was not the fault of either the Dominion