

Supply—Indian Affairs

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The school was closed simply for the purpose of remodeling and repairs. It is now open again and in operation.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): How long has it been in operation?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): About two months.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Is there any age at which the children are supposed to leave the school? I am informed, but I rather doubt it myself, that when the children reach the age of from thirteen to fifteen they are discharged from school and told to go to work.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I can scarcely believe that because those I spoke of who are making such a splendid success in Saskatchewan went direct from the school to carrying on farming operations on their own account. They are kept at the school until the age of eighteen. I can hardly believe that any such order as my hon. friend mentions would have been issued in connection with the schools. I am free to admit that perhaps there is some ground for complaint in Alberta. On the Morley reserve Indian education was becoming expensive and in some cases they closed the boarding schools and attempted to educate these children in day schools. The department, however has abandoned that idea altogether because it seems to be a waste of money. The children are not kept in school regularly and during their absence go back as far as they have progressed practically, in their educational instruction. The only effective way is to get them into a boarding school where you can have some control over them and keep them under supervision until they have had an opportunity to get an education.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): I have seen two crews of Indians at work threshing last fall. I stayed a week in one district where one of these crews was working and they gave immense satisfaction. They were more satisfactory even than the white man, and I am glad to say that the employer paid them exactly the wages of the white man. They did splendid work. Can the minister give to the committee the terms of the agreement entered into with the Indians in regard to ploughed land, that is the land left when the greater production schemes ceased?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Where the Indian is equipped and ready to farm the land he is charged at the rate of \$6 an acre.

[Mr E. J. Garland.]

for broken land, land that is broken and brought under cultivation under the greater production scheme. In regard to what my hon. friend has said with respect to selling supplies, harness, implements, etc., I may say that a considerable proportion was turned over to the younger Indians who gave evidence of a desire to go farming. In some cases these things were sold, but in the majority of cases they were given to the Indians as an encouragement. One of the difficulties I found when I took charge of the department was that as soon as the young people graduated and were ready to begin farming operations there was no provision for loaning or giving money to start at farming; and one of the rather vicious things that was happening was that the Indian would go out and get credit from the merchants in the vicinity. This led to considerable difficulty in getting adjustments made. Now we are adopting another method. The department are loaning sufficient funds to these young Indians to start farming in a moderate way, and in that manner we hope to maintain them on the reserve and encourage them in agricultural pursuits.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): In the first place, under the greater production scheme, the land was leased for five years. The chiefs endeavoured to make an agreement for \$10 a head—that is \$10 for each Indian on the reserve. Objection was taken to that sum, and it was cut to \$6, which was accepted. However, on the expiry of that lease the department went ahead and re-leased without asking the consent of the Indians.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil) That is re-leased to white men?

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): I think so. The Indians objected, and subsequently a further agreement was arrived at—with the local agent at any rate, although I think it must have been with the departmental officials—that, in return, the sum of \$4 per head would be paid for these second leases. Is that substantially correct?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I am afraid not.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Well, what are the facts?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I would like to say to my hon. friend that I cannot speak with authority regarding what has been done in the past, but the policy pursued now is this: The moment an Indian is ready to take this land we are prepared to turn it over to