

and are used for the management of Indian affairs, and there might be sufficient to pay the amount of expenses generally, or are we short this \$1,250,000 annually?

Mr. OLIVER. That is correct.

Mr. LAKE. With reference to the letter about the Pasqua reserve, I have a long statement here of the different complaints of the Indians, and among other minor complaints is one that the instructor gets the loan of the fields of the Indians to put in crop, and when the Indians have broken the land he puts in a crop on his own account and so on. Perhaps the best thing I can do is to send the letter to the minister and ask him if he will inquire into it. The gentleman who writes me is not a man who takes notice of things which he thinks are of small account. He is a gentleman of judgment, and I will send his letter over to the minister.

Mr. OLIVER. I shall be very glad to take the information and have an inquiry made.

Mr. BENNETT. Is the Blood Indian reserve under lease, and to whom and for how long?

Mr. OLIVER. The grazing rights have been leased for five years to the McEwan Cattle Company and the lease will expire in 1913.

Mr. BENNETT. Is that an incorporated company?

Mr. OLIVER. I am not aware whether it is or not.

Mr. BENNETT. Is it one McEwan alone?

Mr. OLIVER. In the books of the department the lease of the grazing privileges stands in the name of the McEwan Cattle Company, and the person who represented the company to the department is D. McEwan. We have no further knowledge of the matter. In the Toronto 'News' of the 27th of November last appeared the following item:

Want forty per cent share—Suit of Peter Ryan, Charles Beck and others regarding a ranch.

Peter Ryan, of Toronto, and Charles Beck, of Penetanguishene, have issued a writ against James T. Gordon, William H. Fares and Gordon Ironsides & Fares, Limited, of Winnipeg; Donald McEwen, of Brandon; Robert Ironsides, of Montreal; and Charles Millar and Walter McKeown, of Toronto. The claim is for a declaration that the plaintiffs and the defendants Millar and McKeown are entitled to a forty per cent interest in the net profits of a certain ranching enterprise on the Blood Indian reserve, leased by the Dominion government to McEwen.

An accounting of the ranching moneys is also sought.

There was considerable discussion on the question in the House, and I think this item

Mr. W. WRIGHT.

throws a little light on some facts that did not come to the surface at that time.

Mr. LAKE. This seems to be a case in which the department has not been considerate of the rights of the Indians. The lease consists of about 219,000 acres, one of the most valuable grazing leases in the whole country. There were a number of applications for the lease of this reserve. One man after another applied for the lease, some of them being local ranchers in the neighbourhood. They offered considerable sums for the right to lease this land. I have before a number of offers which were made, and some of which were certainly as good as the offer which was finally taken by the minister. I have a list of eight or nine different applicants, all offering within a very short time, and all offering sums of money for the property. Under the circumstances, one would think that the proper thing for the government to do was to put the lease up at auction and try to get the best results for the Indians. But instead of that, we find that the contract was made with this D. McEwen and Company without the others knowing anything of what was taking place. The last application before that was dated April 30, offering a good sum of money for the reserve, and on the 16th of the following month the government made an agreement with Donald McEwen, of Brandon, who had only recently appeared as one of the applicants for the lease. The agreement was drawn up and signed with the Indians, acting through their agent, for the sum of \$5,000 rent for ten years, and the agreement was ratified on the 6th of June. It was quick work, considering that at that time there were a large number of applicants, good strong men, for the land. I saw in the papers laid before the Public Accounts Committee that the assistant Indian commissioner at Winnipeg, a few days later on the 20th June, stated that he had accidentally learned when he was at Macleod that this lease had been entered into, showing that the commissioner's office at Winnipeg was not the first to know of this arrangement, as it ought to have been. A month later there was some trouble going on in the party camp, for we find that the Hon. Clifford Sifton takes a hand in, and asks that the whole lease should be cancelled because it had not been entered into with his authority. So the matter stood. The Department of Justice was consulted, and they decided that the agreement was valid and would have to stand. We find that there were other people than the applicants who had been unable to get their tenders in, and who were dissatisfied with this lease. But the people who were most dissatisfied were the Indians themselves. Still, the lease has to stand. My hon. friend from Simcoe (Mr. Bennett) just now brought attention to the fact that an action at law had been taken to ascertain who had