

Mr. OLIVER. In that work we can give the Indians employment and probably the Public Works Department could not do that.

Mr. GEO. TAYLOR. Why not?

Mr. SPROULE. The minister said some time ago that this expenditure comes out of the consolidated revenue of the country. Is there any account in which the expenditure for the Indians is chargeable against what we get out of the Indians?

Mr. OLIVER. An exact account is kept of the money which comes from the sales of Indian lands, or other moneys upon which the Indians have a special claim; but that has nothing to do with the votes we are asking. In cases where the Indians have not money of their own to carry on their business or meet their requirements, we ask for money from the consolidated revenue for this purpose. Where the Indians have money of their own we administer so as to meet their requirements as economically as possible.

Mr. SPROULE. Take the case now in litigation, have the Oka Indians no money of their own?

Mr. OLIVER. The capital of the Oka band amounts to \$4,000. It is so small that it is not of any advantage and would not be sufficient to carry on their suit. In the case of the Oka Indians it is the ownership of the lands themselves which is in question. These Indians have not had the opportunity of acquiring a fund. Should they succeed in their suit, they would shortly be in a position to have a substantial fund, but until they establish their rights they have not that source of revenue.

Mr. SPROULE. There are roads made in the Manitoulin Islands over what is at present Indian reserve. Application has been made to the department, and I understand that they have granted certain sums for making and improving these roads. Would that not be taken out of the Indian fund?

Mr. OLIVER. The Manitoulin Island was all Indian land, and of course the Indian fund gets the benefit of any sales of that land. Therefore it was considered reasonable that the fund should bear the charges of the development of the land by the construction of roads.

Mr. SPROULE. Is that different from the erection of a wharf in Prince Edward Island? In the latter case, would the money be taken from consolidated revenue regardless of the source it came from, while in the former case it would be taken from the Indian fund?

Mr. OLIVER. That is the position exactly. The Indians of Prince Edward Is-

land have no fund; therefore we have to come to their assistance for what they require and what we think they should have. But in the case of the Manitoulin Island the Indians have the benefit of the sale of large tracts of the island, and they still hold considerable tracts which are for sale; so that they have money available for these works. We do not come to parliament for that, but take it out of the fund that belongs to the Indians themselves.

Mr. GEO. TAYLOR. Has the construction of that wharf in Prince Edward Island been begun yet?

Mr. OLIVER. No.

Mr. GEO. TAYLOR. Is it the intention to build it this year?

Mr. OLIVER. Yes.

Indians—Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Northwest Territories—annuities, \$173,200; increase, \$12,005.

Mr. ROCHE. Is this increase due to an increase of the Indian population?

Mr. OLIVER. It is due to the adhesion to treaty of the Indians of the territory lying between Manitoba and the Hudson bay, which adhesion was taken last year.

Mr. ROCHE. Is the Indian population in these three provinces stationary from year to year?

Mr. OLIVER. It is about stationary at the present time.

Implements, tools, &c., \$8,432; increase, \$3,867.

Mr. SPROULE. What is the explanation of that increase?

Mr. OLIVER. It is occasioned by provision being made for a larger number of Indians, who formerly lived by hunting, turning to farming, especially on the reserves near the North Saskatchewan.

Mr. LAKE. Might I ask the minister as to the responsibility in which the department stands when an agent gives orders to a merchant to sell agricultural implements or other goods to Indians? This is a question which I know has created a good deal of interest amongst local merchants. Usually, when they come at first, they begin to sell to Indians without orders, and as a rule they lose their money. When the Indians bring the orders, does the department assume full responsibility for paying for the goods, and paying for them at an early date?

Mr. OLIVER. No. The department does not assume absolute responsibility; but the order is issued in good faith, and it is the business of the agent to use all reasonable measures to collect the money. That is to say, if the Indian has money passing