

is to let him take it, but save for that, and only as the work is invaded by the Indians, I would say continue the greater production operations. In that way some use is made of otherwise almost abandoned land, the very best waste land in the West. There is need of the greater production operations for the purpose of utilizing that land. Why, the minister could get a very considerable sum towards his Indian estimates by continuing this to the utmost degree consistent only with not shutting out any Indian ready to farm, and at the rate of increase of these estimates I would think that would appeal to the minister as a very advisable thing to do.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I just might say in reply that when farming under the greater production scheme you might have a period of years when you would be very successful, and then you might strike a period of years in which your expenditure would far outbalance your revenue.

Mr. MEIGHEN: You would hardly strike any worse than we have had lately.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Do not make any mistake. That could be done very easily. These bad cycles fortunately did not strike the greater production area very seriously.

Mr. MEIGHEN: They struck it right between the eyes. The big greater production farms were hailed, and drought came and brought down the yield to about seven bushels per acre on the largest farm on the Blood reserve and on the second largest nearby. I think it encountered pretty nearly everything that western farming encounters and still it has succeeded.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): It has succeeded largely because they have been very successful in Saskatchewan. They have been very fortunate in getting splendid crops, and this year again there was a magnificent crop in Saskatchewan; I saw it. But on the whole it is rather a precarious undertaking. These lands were broken at a time when stress was being put upon the government to increase production in Canada, and it was a laudable scheme to enter upon at that time, but so far as I am concerned when my hon. friend points out that this is a way in which we might obtain revenue I would say that we are obtaining all the revenue we can from the rentals of these lands. But after all I am fearful whether this is not a doubtful way of obtaining revenue taking one year with another, breaking up these lands and taking chances on leasing them. I am speaking of

lands the Indians would not otherwise be able to utilize. Part of the difficulty complained of by my hon. friend from Bow River arises from the fact that these lands during the period of inflation were leased at high rentals, and the leaseholders were unable to pay. The Indian knows what these lands were rented at and he is disappointed and thinks somebody has been retaining what rightfully belongs to him. I have gone pretty thoroughly into all these matters with the chiefs themselves, and I know that that is partly the cause of their complaint, whereas the rancher, and in many cases the renter, has lost all that he put into the enterprise. Take the case of the leases, the very Gleichen reserve that my hon. friend from Bow River is speaking about. The rancher who had that lease is practically bankrupt owing to the severe drop in the price of cattle and the very high rental he was foolish enough to pay for the lease. Yet the Indian expects to get that money.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It is not so much a matter of what the Indian expects as what is best for him. Suppose the minister does see that he gets the benefit of the money; all well and good. Better do the best that can be done with the land and let the money go to the Indians as far as I am concerned. I would not want to see the land simply given up and the whole enterprise abandoned even if somebody did pay too much. That is always going to happen and, of course, the man who loses has to take his risk. I do not want to see everything simply put aside, the tractors stacked up, and the enterprise left in the lurch, any more rapidly than is necessary to take care of the Indians.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I am not sure that my right hon. friend realizes exactly what is being done. I assure him that we are trying to make the best use of every acre of land that cannot be utilized by the Indians. I would like to see the Indians out there encouraged, as far as possible, to utilize their grazing land. There is no use blinking at the fact that they have not nearly the number of cattle they had some years ago and we must get busy and encourage them to own and raise their cattle on these reserves. Not only that but we must encourage the young men to engage in agriculture in order that they may maintain themselves. It can be done. I pointed out this afternoon a very clear evidence of that in Saskatchewan where the Indians are making splendid progress, and I see no reason why the same thing cannot be done on every one of these western reserves.