

change—at least that is my impression after having talked the matter over with a number of them. The council have also investigated the matter and they have found that it meets with the consent of the great majority of the band. I hope, therefore, the minister will look into the matter.

Mr. CALDWELL: Before the resolution carries I would like to ask the minister a question with regard to a matter which I brought to the attention of the department last year, in regard to the illegal cutting of lumber on the Tobique Indian reserve, in Carleton county, New Brunswick. I would like to ask whether the damage assessed has ever been collected from the parties who cut the timber, and just what the final outcome of the matter was?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I promise the hon. gentleman I will give careful consideration to the matter suggested by him. The officials of the department are on the way here. I have no knowledge of the question myself, and have no memorandum in regard to it, but when the officials arrive I shall be in a better position to make a statement.

Item agreed to.

Indians—Ontario and Quebec, \$183,115.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We should have the information that is usually given on the voting of the estimates as to the amount spent last year with respect to each of these items. I observe that in three of the votes for Indians there is a considerable increase, commencing with this item, and that in the case of the general vote and the vote for Indian education there are two decreases. The minister has contrived to make the decreases tally to a cent with the increases so that the total amount of all the items is the same as last year. Now apparently there is to be more expenditure in administration in Ontario, in the western provinces, and British Columbia by approximately \$140,000 than previously, and in order to recoup the treasury the minister is going to take it out of Indian education. I do not know whether the minister believes in education or not. I expect that some of the reduction is owing to the contraction of the "greater production" work—perhaps I am wrong in that. Anyway my point is this: The Indian Department estimates expanded largely because of the increased cost of the supplies that we have to provide the Indians with. As prices increased the estimates expanded accordingly.

[Mr. Hanson.]

I have not the figures before me but last year, I think, we managed to make a little reduction. This year we have no reduction at all. But this is the year of rapid deflation of prices—perhaps I should not have said "rapid" but of constant, and undoubtedly of certain, deflation of prices—and with even an academic intention to retrench I think the minister could have found an opportunity in these estimates to make some reduction. But he comes before Parliament with the same figure as last year, notwithstanding the fact that there is undoubtedly an opportunity to reduce because of decreased cost. There may not be opportunity in relation to the salaries—it may not be possible to reduce them at all—but there are certain production costs where there would be an opportunity, and unquestionably there could be a very substantial saving in respect to material.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Repairs to roads and bridges and drainage are largely responsible for the increase. I am told by the officials that there has been rapid road development both in Ontario and Quebec by the municipalities and provincial governments and in many cases repairs have been needed to roads leading through the Indian reserves otherwise the continuity of the roads would be broken up, and requests have been insistent that the department should carry out its share of these needed improvements. I have no personal knowledge of the matter but that is the information the officials give me with respect to that particular item. Practically the whole increase is made up of expenditure of that character. Where it is not particularly needed for the benefit of the Indians themselves it is required in the interest of the general public who travel across the reserve, and the money is intended to complete road work undertaken by the province and by the municipality, I expect conjointly. The matter of education is one that I want to make some explanation about, because although through desire to keep down the appropriations the cause of Indian education appears to suffer, yet actually such is not the case.

I intended to make plain to the committee that while the estimates were prepared in that way, I find, on careful examination of the situation later, that that sum will be required for educational purposes, and that there will be a general increase, and the committee will have to pass it, because it will come up in the supplementary estimates for Indian Affairs. Had I been more familiar with the estimates