

That was transmitted on the 10th April by Mr. Laird, and during the seasons of 1877 and 1878 special surveys were made of Prince Albert and at St. Laurent. The *Saskatchewan Herald*, of the 25th August, 1878, contains this statement :

"Mr. Montague Aldous and Mr. J. L. Reid are engaged in surveying the old settlement belt. They take, as a starting point, the front corner post, agreed upon by the owners of the respective claims as being their boundary, from which a line is run north and south, giving each farm an average depth of two miles, with whatever frontage was originally claimed."

There is a report from Mr. Russell, which is not brought down, but which is frequently alluded to, in the year 1877, and which, from the allusions made to it, obviously contained detailed statements of the condition of the settlers of Prince Albert, and possibly of St. Laurent. There is also a detailed report of Mr. Aldous for 1878, which is not brought down, but is alluded to as if it contained such information. That was the condition of things in 1878, that the survey of the special settlement has been gone through, and the papers show that the survey of St. Laurent—not, of course, the whole neighborhood of St. Laurent, but of St. Laurent parish—the special survey—was approved by the Government in March, 1879, obviously, therefore, having been completed during the season of 1878. On the 30th November, 1878, land agent Duck writes to the Interior Department as to the Prince Albert settlement survey :

"I ask advice as to the amount of river frontage allowed individual settlers: that is, can I allow a settler to homestead and preempt two quarter sections, both having a river frontage?"

He goes on to say there are a large number of settlers anxious to make the necessary entries to secure themselves. The Department replied, on the 14th January, 1879 :

"The rule with respect to river front lots is that they are ten chains in width; one of these can be taken as a homestead claim and another as a preemption by the same person. In surveying the townships fronting on the Saskatchewan, all river lots will be posted in ten chains widths, with a depth back from the river of two miles. The departure from this rule that has been made in the case of the holdings of older settlers in Prince Albert and other places was made in view that the intention of the Government so to lay out the lands on the river had not been made generally known previous to their occupation. But, in the present and all future time, people are to understand that no one can hold, in any manner, more land on the river than I have above indicated, that is to say, twenty chains as homestead and preemption."

I wish you to mark this statement, given for the information of the people as to the general plan which was adopted with reference to the river lots. It was that each lot should be 10 chains by 80 chains, and that no one in future time could hold more than 10 chains as a homestead and 10 chains as a preemption :

"A petition was given me to lay before the Minister of this Department, from certain settlers eastward of the main Prince Albert settlement, to be permitted to retain their lands with the half mile width of frontage, in which manner they had taken up and occupied them. I have not yet succeeded in having this granted, although I have favorably recommended it, in view of the reason before stated, that in taking up the lands they did so in accordance with the published regulations of the Dominion Lands Act, setting forth the system of their survey. Should any enquiry be made of you by the parties interested, you may inform them that the matter is still in abeyance."

You will observe that we get no more information about that particular petition, but it is a petition of persons who had taken up their lots according to the general law, according to the quarter-section principle; and they said: Let us have them; but at that time the Government had a settled policy as to granting only river lots on rivers, and although the officer thought they ought to have them, having taken them up before the notice was given, he had been unable to obtain that concession for them; but the general principle is perfectly clearly stated. In the Dominion Lands Act of 1879, the 16th section, after declaring: "That nothing in this Act shall be construed to prevent the lands upon the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, surrendered by the Indians to the late Earl of Selkirk," from being surveyed, and so on, proceeds :

Mr. BLAKE.

"Or to prevent fractional sections or lands bordering on any river, lake or other watercourse, from being divided, or such lands from being laid out in lots of any certain frontage or depth, in such manner as may be desirable, or to prevent the sub-division of sections, or other legal sub-divisions, into wood lots, or from describing the said lands upon the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, or such sub-divisions of fractional sections or other lots, or wood lots, for patents, by numbers answering to a plan of record, or by metes and bounds, or by both, as may seem expedient."

So that that principle which I have read you as laid down by the Department was expressly authorised by the Dominion Lands Act, which created an exception in the case of lands bordering on rivers, giving to the Department power to survey them as might be deemed advisable. In 1879 Mr. W. F. King, who was in charge of a special survey, reports that he began work on the 19th June, and then he says :

"Having received no instructions on winter work, I left Lac la Biche on the 8th October."

The *Saskatchewan Herald* of the 3rd November, 1879, thus observes in regard to this :

"Mr. W. F. King, of the special survey, lately passed east on his way to Ottawa. It seems wasteful and injudicious, in view of the rapid extension of settlements westward and the urgent necessity that exists for laying out Indian reserves, to keep surveyors tramping up and down from Ottawa half across the continent every year, causing the loss of the best working part of the season. There are many kinds of work that could, at a very trifling expense, be done as well in winter as in summer. In coming from Ottawa to Edmonton district, a party just gets nicely settled to work when it is time to start home. Supplies cannot be furnished here cheaper than they can be freighted out by the Government."

On the 5th July, 1880, the *Saskatchewan Herald* further observes, on the mode of conducting the surveys :

"If no party can be despatched from Ottawa this season in time to do the work, it might be entrusted to some of the special survey staff who will be wintering in the country. Every consideration of progress favors the encouragement of settlement to that point elected by the people; but when the impulse of the people agrees with the plans of the Government, it is difficult to find a reason why the neighborhood should not be surveyed at the earliest possible moment."

About this time, in the year 1880, certain inhabitants of Prince Albert petitioned, and in their petition they asked :

"The same consideration as is extended to settlers on river lots in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, and to other settlers on the Saskatchewan; saying that some have improved in 1874, some in 1879, and some in the present year; and asking for a speedy survey of 2 chains front and 80 chains depth, as others hereabouts."

On the 27th September, 1880, the *Saskatchewan Herald* says :

"The Government has ordered the survey of a quantity of land in the Carrot River country, so as to have it ready for the expected emigration next year. It is wise policy to afford every facility to incoming settlers at the points on which public attention is centreing; and the principle might be advantageously extended so as to take in those settlements in the west whose chief drawback is that they are not surveyed, and where, for that reason, extensive and permanent improvements are kept back. The land at Prince Albert, St. Laurent, Carlton and Duck Lake has been surveyed for some years; much has been taken up by settlers squatting upon it; yet the land office at Prince Albert has not been opened for the receipt of applications for homesteads, to the great detriment of these settlements. The survey of the town site of Battleford, and of a few townships around it and Edmonton, would contribute, in no small degree, to the benefit of the country at large, by providing on the spot much of the supplies required for the Mounted Police and the Indians."

On the 15th September, 1880, the *Saskatchewan Herald* contains a description of the handsome shop just finished by Batoche, at Batoche's ferry, and it states that :

"Crops at Duck Lake are generally of the most satisfactory character and the settlement is progressing rapidly. Most of the lots are taken up. Great inconvenience and no small amount of unpleasantness among neighbors are due to the impossibility of making the homestead entries, although the land has been surveyed for some years. Steam grist and saw mill, and steam threshing mill, just brought in."

Now, Sir, I would like, had I the time and strength, here to tell you the story of the Battleford surveys. It is really a most interesting episode, for it indicates the character of the dealings of the Department; but I pass it by, and proceed to deal with the question of the half-breeds at Duck Lake and vicinity. In June, 1881, a petition was presented