

history of the North-West have been written on so fully that it is unnecessary to do more than to refer to them thus briefly. Miles Macdonell in his later years lived at Point Fortune, on the Ottawa, where he died in 1828, in the sixty-second year of his age.

A letter by Lord Selkirk, dated 29th June, 1811, addressed to Captain Macdonell whilst he was still at Yarmouth, is of interest as showing some of the plans entertained by His Lordship. After expressing regret at the delay in the setting out of the expedition, which would probably prevent the emigrants from reaching Red River that season, he suggests as a last resource certain employment for them. His Lordship says:

"There is an object which the company have much at heart, but which they have not hitherto had sufficient strength of hands to accomplish, viz., the erection of a new factory in place of York, upon Seal Islands, near the mouth of the Nelson River. If your people were employed in that object for the winter, the company would be willing to pay their wages, and perhaps it may be more advisable to do this, than to make an abortive attempt to reach the interior; as by this means you could set out by the first of the navigation in spring, and reach Red River in the best of the season. After all, this would be a disagreeable resource, as losing a season, but it would be better than to run a risk of being frozen up before you reached the point of destination.

"If this resource is to be adopted, you will of course concert the details with Mr. Auld. I believe I mentioned that I am anxious to have the soundings of Nelson River taken, from Seal Islands down to the open sea. I beg that while you are at York, you will try to induce some of the officers of the ships to go and make the survey. I will pay a handsome premium to the individual who accomplishes it."

Great uncertainty exists as to the dates when various public works were constructed in Canada. This arises largely from the fact, that these were executed by the Imperial authorities, and that therefore no records exist in our departments which can throw light on the subject. In dealing with the documents relating to the Selkirk settlement, it was necessary to investigate some of the contemporary events bearing upon the history of Lord Selkirk's enterprises. In the course of this investigation, a plan and documents were found among the *Military Correspondence* (series C) in this branch, showing that in 1797-8, the North-West Company had built a canal on the Canadian side of the Sault Ste. Marie. This canal being one of the earliest built on this continent, I thought it desirable to investigate the whole question of the construction of the first canals in Canada, the result of which I now beg to submit.

The report of the Commissioner of Public Works for the year ending 30th June, 1867, being the last report of the old Province of Canada, contains a general account of the most important public works of Upper and Lower Canada, previous to the constitutional change which was about to take place.

At page 566 of this report, is the following account of certain of the canals, in these words: