

J. L. Reid, D.L.S., who are now on the ground, be instructed to proceed with the agent and assist to carry it out, as he thinks time would be saved by so doing—expense also. All of which is respectfully submitted."

There was the suggestion of the man on the ground who had knowledge, who had seen the land and discussed the question with the people, who knew the facts and the difficulties, and who suggests two methods; but I find no statement in these papers of any action being taken on the subject after the report of Mr. Pearce. This was, mind you, in the spring of 1884, and after the Prince Albert settlers had been settled with. The question of the survey of the neighborhood of St. Laurent, in the half-breed settlement, was still undecided. On 26th April, 1884, Mr. Louis Schmidt wrote to the Minister as follows:—

"I am one of the settlers in the South Saskatchewan, in the electoral district of Lorne, who during the last 4 years, have sent petitions upon petitions to your Department to have their lands surveyed in 10 or 20 chains frontage by 1 or 2 miles long, as the same has been done for the Prince Albert settlement on both the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan. I regret to say that so far our prayer has not yet been granted, nor even an answer of any kind has been given, and I feel bound to say that such a state of things is almost intolerable.

"The most part of those settlers, and I am among the number, have lived on and cultivated their lands for over three years, and ought to be entitled to a patent from the Crown, yet as they have taken up their land close to each other, and in the hope of having them sub-divided in river lots, they have not been able to enter them in the lands office. You see, Sir, in a glance, the real state of things, and I need not occupy your valuable time any longer in entering into more details. I pray you, therefore, most earnestly, to have the matter remedied for the satisfaction of so many loyal subjects of her Majesty and

"Your humble servant,

"LOUIS SCHMIDT."

That letter was written on the 26th of April, 1884. It was not answered until 15th July, 1884, and the answer was as follows:—

"I have to inform you that immediately upon the return of the Deputy Minister of the Interior from the North-West, which is expected to be within a very few days, your letter will be brought to his attention with a view to immediate action being taken in the matter."

So that even on the 15th of July Mr. Pearce's suggestion as to satisfying these people had not been accepted, nor any method devised for dealing with the question. The Saskatchewan *Herald* of the 3rd of May, 1884, announced that the Government had rescinded the Order making the system of narrow river lots, as laid down in Red River, applicable to the principal rivers in the North-West. It goes on:

"When the older settlements on the Saskatchewan were founded, land was taken up, regardless of any other consideration than that there should be a river frontage, and every one accommodated his lines to the peculiarities of the location. This plan was found to interfere seriously with the Government survey in the Territories, and was disregarded, except in the case of some settlements, to which it was conceded. Last winter the Edmonton delegates pressed for its application to the settlements they represented; and the Government, believing that their arguments held good, as regarded the rest of the country, granted their request and extended the plan to all the rivers. With the progress of surveys, however, it became evident that the disadvantages were greatly in excess of any benefits or conveniences to be derived from the extension of the system of narrow frontages, and its discontinuance has therefore been decided on. There is a great deal of broken land on the banks of the Saskatchewan, so that in many places a man might have a river front and yet be unable to reach the water. There will always be broken and irregular lots on the rivers, and we believe an adherence to the rectangular system will, in the end, give the greater satisfaction."

There you have the announcement of the discontinuance of that practice. I am not now engaged in discussing the policy of that discontinuance, as applied to the Saskatchewan district, with a view of dealing generally, but I am dealing with the policy of the discontinuance of that practice, as applied to those who had settled while the practice was otherwise, who had been told it was the rule, who had settled according to the ancient custom of the country, who saw this privilege granted to the people at Prince Albert in 1878, and 1879 at Edmonton, at Saskatchewan, in 1883, and who saw it refused, or, at any rate, not granted to them in 1883 and 1884. On the 17th of July, 1884, *Le Manitoba*, after discussing the half-breed claims to the Indian titles, says:

"The great difficulty that the Métis have met with is in obtaining first, the survey of their lands, according to the actual limits and form of these lands. The slowness in the confirmation of their titles and the quasi refusal to accord them the grant asked for the extinction of their Indian rights are to-day the cause of all the discontent. Many petitions have been addressed to Ottawa, even delegates have been sent to the capital, at great cost, and still nothing has been accomplished."

Well, then, Sir, this was the state of things in the middle of 1884, when Louis Riel was asked to come: and now I turn back to the spring of that year, and the winter of that year—to February, 1884, when Mr. Pearce had gone up, after these long delays, to settle the claims at Prince Albert and St. Laurent. His mission was to deal with those places. He dealt with the case of Prince Albert, but he did not deal with St. Laurent, or Stobart, Duck Lake, Batoche, Grandin, St. Antoine de Padoue and St. Louis de Langevin; and why did he not? As I have told you, the cases of the white settlers of Prince Albert, after being investigated in January and February, were reported on in March; the proposed settlements were approved by the Minister in April, and if the settlements were just and reasonable the question was ended. But why did Mr. Pearce not go down to St. Laurent and these other places and dispose of their fewer claims? It was this question of the surveys and plans which prevented him. I will read you his telegram from Prince Albert in February, 1884:

"Have taken the evidence of all claims excepting St. Laurent and vicinity. Plans not received. As claimants there speak French, propose agent take evidence, when plans received and forward land board. I intend proceeding Winnipeg Wednesday, unless otherwise ordered. Made no report as yet."

Upon receipt of that telegram Mr. Hall writes to Mr. Deville:

"In what state is the survey of St. Laurent, on the Saskatchewan? Mr. Pearce says that the plans have not yet been received at the Prince Albert agency, and until they are of course the claims of the settlers cannot be enquired into."

We have no answer to that letter, and no information as to when those plans were received. The secretary of the Department writes to Mr. Pearce in acknowledgment of his telegram:

"The suggestion contained in your telegram received here from Prince Albert, that the agent of that district be named to take the evidence in regard to the claims of settlers at St. Laurent, is approved of.

"Mr. Gauvreau has had considerable experience in the business of the Department, and ought to be quite capable of taking the evidence. I have sent to the chief inspector of surveys, enquiring in what state of progress the survey is, and when I hear from him I shall let you know."

I do not know whether Mr. Pearce ever heard from Mr. Burgess, but there is no letter brought down informing Mr. Pearce of the result of the enquiry. Now, the special survey at St. Laurent was approved by the Government in March, 1879, and that special survey was open for entry only in March, 1884, after Mr. Pearce had left the settlement altogether, I presume because the plans never had been sent up, and I suppose that they had been sent up on learning of this mistake; but for four years the special settlement was in the hands of the Government approved, but yet the lands were not opened. As to the settlers whose claims were investigated later, between forty and fifty were on that special survey, and between thirty and forty were between Gabriel's Crossing and Batoche, so that the great bulk of those dealt with were on the special survey—who were about one-half of the settlers—were not allowed to enter, although the surveys were approved in 1879, until after Mr. Pearce left the settlement in 1884. These other townships, or at least most of them, were approved in September 1881; one in November, 1883, and the other in December, 1883. Now, I have no answer to give you as to why the St. Laurent survey was not sent up before. But as to why no entries were made in the other townships I have already shown you that it was because the inhabitants were persistently asking that the method and practice under which they settled should be recognised and conceded to