

"if they are not, and no impartial person will suppose they are, they not only allow but approve of the conduct of their governors, from a conviction of its being beneficial to the interests of the company; a proper reward for the labors of their servants, or from some other motive, which because it is adopted by men so respectable, and so much above reproach, must be allowed to be wise and prudent."

We are also presented with a doleful picture of the harsh and cruel conduct of the company's governors towards the "trembling varlets," their servants. The same authority that we have quoted above, fortunately, knew some of Mr. Ralph's "trembling varlets," and this is the result of his enquiries on their condition.

\* \* \* "By way of refuting the charge of cruelty and oppression, I need only add, what none, I think, will deny, that they (the servants) have been so well satisfied with the conduct of their superiors that many of them have continued in the service more than twenty years. I believe upon the whole, it will appear that the conduct of the superiors at home and abroad, is perfectly consistent with the true interests of the Company, and that any other mode of behavior would tend to anarchy and confusion, and I must declare for my own part, that I never heard of that personal disgust which Mr. Robson (one of Ralph's witnesses) so much complains of, but have rather found an anxious solicitude to be employed in their service."

After what has gone before one almost expects the startling statement that Joseph La France "told his tales to Arthur Dobbs, who made a book of them!" It is enough to make that venerable writer turn in his grave to hear his scarce and valuable "Account of the countries, adjoining to Hudson's Bay," (1744) called a book of tales, and that because he devoted barely 17 pages to the journal of the "French Canadese Indian," as he quaintly terms him. Fie, Mr. Ralph, a book of tales! As the writer of an historical sketch on the Company you are ungenerous to your predecessor.

And then why branch off into that little irrelevant and speculative disquisi-

tion on the origin of the name Peace River, when you might have consulted the best and earliest authority, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, on the point? Here is his derivation:

"On the 13th October (1792) we came to the Peace Point, from which, according to the report of my interpreter, the river derives its name; it was the spot where the Knisteneaux and Beaver Indians settled their dispute; the real name of the river and point being that of the land which was the object of contention."

On page 386 will be found the following remarkable statements explanatory of the grant of Assiniboia to Lord Selkirk, by the Company, in 1811:

"No one, therefore, will wonder that when this grant was made several members of the governing committee resigned;" and "a queer development of the moment was a strong opposition from holders of Hudson's Bay stock, who were also owners in that Company's great rival, the North-West Company."

In regard to the first of the above assertions, Mr. Ralph is quite correct in saying that no one will wonder at the resignation of "several members of the governing committee" for the simple reason that no such resignation took place. Even the N. W. Co. did not make such a claim in their semi-official "Narrative;" presumably it was left for Mr. Ralph to make the discovery. In regard to the second it is regrettable, but none the less true, that the "queer development" does not develop, for the "strong opposition" on the part of certain H. B. C. stockholders was nothing more or less than a determined effort on the part of certain agents of the N. W. Co. to burke Lord Selkirk's enterprise by purchasing stock about forty-eight hours before the meeting; not long enough to entitle them to vote indeed at the general court of proprietors, but enough to give them an opportunity to make an insidious protest. This attempt is so well known and appreciated in this province, and is such "ancient history" that an apology is almost due for giving it even the slightest consideration. The familiar story of the cruel massacre of the estimable Governor Semple is told again, out space and inclination both pre-