

of these settlements on the North Saskatchewan could have been surveyed. The House will get a better notion of it if I take a single case of the special survey party No. 4. I will pass over the other three, because I do not wish to trespass upon the indulgence of the House longer than necessary to state the facts connected with the neglect exhibited by the hon. gentlemen in the survey of the various settlements of the North-West Territory. Mr. Aldous, in his report of survey No. 4, says that he made a careful traverse of the river along which a careful survey would extend; and he did this the better to determine along which legal sub-divisions the line in the rear should be run so as to conform as near as possible to a uniform system of lots two miles deep. The report goes on to say:

"In every case where land was occupied and improved and there existed any dispute between the occupants of adjoining claims, I had them to agree together before me on some point which was to be established as their common boundary, in the majority of instances they requested me to decide between them. Their post was then planted where, under the circumstances of the case, I considered it best, divided their claims and they mutually agreed to it as their boundary line.

"When the land was unoccupied and unimproved, merely having been taken up I surveyed it in ten chain lots and entered the claimant's name for it on the plan, stating my opinion to them that such claims could at most merely give them a preferential right to purchase."

"On the 6th of September the survey of Prince Albert settlement was completed, and on the day following we moved to St. Laurent. This settlement extended along both sides of the South Saskatchewan River from its intersection with the 3rd principal meridian south to Gabriel's Crossing, a distance of over twenty miles. I saw that it would be impossible to make a complete survey this season, and therefore determined to work in that portion of the settlement where it was most immediately required.

"A careful instrumental traverse was first made of the river between the points before mentioned. Also a preliminary survey showing all the improvements from which it was evident that the most important part of the settlement lay on the east side of the river below Batoche's Crossing. Here I decided to commence work. I started from the 3rd principal meridian at the north-east corner of section 12, township 44, range 1, west, producing the section line west of the river. From this line the lots are laid out conforming as nearly as possible to 10 chains in width and two miles in depth, one mile north and eight miles south along the east side of the river. Road allowances being left as in the Prince Albert survey.

"Plans of these surveys accompany the report.

"The entire population of St. Laurent consists of French half-breeds, who, with few exceptions, live by buffalo hunting. They simply farm sufficient land to provide themselves with grain and vegetables for winter use. They nevertheless fully understand the advantage of securing land, being well aware that in a few years the buffalo will be exterminated, and that they will be compelled to turn their attention to agricultural pursuits.

Now, the surveyor goes on to state that he has run a base line out to Carrot River, and he recommends the survey of the settlement on Carrot River to the east to Prince Albert, and this same plan was adopted with regard to the settlement on the Saskatchewan. There is a report of the latitude and longitude, of the plan of settlement in the Department, and I ask the Minister to have brought here these plans of every one of these settlements that were sent to the office in the fall of 1878. We find that they also fixed the latitude and longitude of Battleford, that the work of making a special survey of that place was completed on the 8th October, 1878. Yet I find an address some four years later presented to His Excellency Lord Lorne, when he visited that place. Now, I ask the indulgence of the House while I read that address, to show how the people of these settlements regard the course that was pursued by the Government. The address of the people of Battleford is as follows:—

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

"We, the citizens of Battleford, wish to lay before you the following statement concerning land in this settlement and humbly pray that Your Excellency will cause the matter to be brought before your honorable Ministers at Ottawa, in the hope that more attention may be paid to a petition passing through Your Excellency's hands, than representations sent to the Department have hitherto received.

"Six years have passed away since the first settlement was made here by white men. The spring following such settlement the Government passed an Order in Council declaring a town site reserve of four square miles (or 10,240 acres) at the junction of the Battle and Saskatchewan Rivers. This was followed by a railway reserve of twenty miles on each side of this surveyed route of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which passes

through Battleford. The town site reserve included land taken up by settlers above mentioned, and who are promised protection in these holdings by the Dominion Lands Act.

"Petitions have from time to time been sent to the Department requesting a survey and a settlement of the matter, but with no result. Some of these petitions have not even been acknowledged.

"Government buildings have been placed on said land and large portions of the claims enclosed for agricultural and other purposes by the officials, under authority, it is supposed, from the Department. To such an extent has this been done on some of the claims that no ground has been left for the settler to farm. Surveyors have at different times wintered here, with full parties under pay, doing nothing, when they might have been blocking out townships and surveying the settlement. This was not done because the surveyors were under pay from the Indian branch, while the lands are another branch of the same Department. With due respect to Your Excellency, we suggest that carelessness or red tape should not be allowed to put the people of Canada to such unnecessary expense, nor the settlers of Battleford to such annoyance. Many good settlers have passed here to go further and fare worse, because the question of land was unsettled, and to-day we are without a mill because no one will risk the necessary expense to put a mill in a settlement where nobody knows how soon he may be ordered off by some of the numerous owners of land in the North-West.

"Your Excellency has doubtless noticed that the houses in Battleford are hardly such as might be expected in the capital of the North-West. The cause is the same, viz., that there is not title to land, and people will not put up expensive houses on land that is in dispute.

"A person would naturally suppose that having made a town site reserve at Battleford, having put up the buildings and located the capital here, having built barracks and filled them with police, the Government would survey the land, settle the disputed claims, and make an attempt to build upon their own town site. But no; having looked up the most advantageous location for a city in the North-West from sale and settlement, they refuse to sell the land themselves or to let any body else sell it and calmly see the settlements on either side of it flourish, but seem to hope that all enterprise here may be choked and Battleford returned to its previous condition as a rendezvous for Indians and buffalo.

"Appeals to the Department in person are met with the astonishing answer that if the railroad comes to Battleford, and the land is valuable, the Government will take it, but if it is not worth anything the settler can keep it.

"While surveys are being made all over the country for the Indians, white men cannot get even a civil answer from the Department. Why is this? Because the white men can be depended on to keep the peace, and the red men cannot.

"In conclusion, we humbly pray that your Excellency will kindly take an interest in our case, and by using the influence which your position gives and your abilities grace, and our trouble and confer a great boon upon a struggling community. We are cut off from many of the commonest pleasures of life and labor under disadvantages enough without having such hindrances thrown in our way."

I might give instances of other settlers and other parties who made similar complaints to those made by the settlers at Battleford. I will refer to another instance, somewhat similar, in dealing with the half breed settlement at Qu'Appelle. Those half-breeds addressed Governor Morris as early as May, 1873, asking the protection of the Government to their holdings. That assurance was given them the following year and the Lieutenant Governor and Minister Laird went there for the purpose of negotiating a treaty with the Indians. A treaty was made with the Indians who claimed the whole country about that region, and this assurance of security in their holding was renewed to the people. In the summer of 1881, 112 of those inhabitants petitioned the Government that surveys of their holdings might be made and that that survey should be made on the same principle that had been recognised in the French settlements of Manitoba and the other settlements of the North-West. They asked for a narrow frontage and great depth, and they also asked that the Government would give them hay privileges at the back of their lots as had been conferred on early settlers in the vicinity of Manitoba. No action seems to have been taken. Somewhat later the whole of the lands occupied by those people seems to have been transferred to a colonisation company, and the company warned off those men, some of whom had been in the country since 1876. On the 29th August, 1882, Lieutenant Governor Dewdney telegraphed from Qu'Appelle to Sir John A. MacDonald as follows:—

"Half-breeds holding old claims in valley waited on me to-day, and complain that Osler Land Company are warning them off and claiming their lands. Would recommend that this company be notified not to interfere with them, have written."