

*coureurs des bois*, whose life has been made the subject of romances and novels, which, no doubt, some of the members of this House have read. Cooper, for instance, has given, in some of his novels, the most striking features of that life, romantic as well as pleasing to every adventurous man. It is natural to suppose that of these 5,000 people, some settled, or at least spent the best part of their life in those distant parts of the territories; no doubt they formed unions with the only women who were then to be seen in that part of the Territory, and from these unions sprung up the race of half-breeds. At that time the Red River forts and those established on the Assiniboine, as well as westward, became the headquarters of the inland trading posts of both companies. The posts on the Red River, especially, at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, became of the utmost importance, and from their isolated position, from the various circumstances in connection with that trade, they became one of the principal scenes of contention between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Trading Company. Feelings of rivalry between these two companies ran so strong as to lead to bloodshed on more than one occasion. From that period of the history of the North-West Territories—and, when I say that, I include all the region situated westward of Lake Superior—we come to the first attempt that was made to plant a settlement of settlers in that distant part of Canada. That took place in 1811. It was attempted by Lord Selkirk. He was a shareholder in the Hudson's Bay Company, and I suppose, in his view, by planting a colony on the shores of the Red River, at that most important point, at the junction of the Assiniboine and the Red Rivers, he thought that the Hudson's Bay Company could get a ready supply of servants from that colony, in order to be able to better compete with the Canadian North-West Company. In that year Lord Selkirk brought out a certain number of families from the county of Sutherland, in Scotland. Now, Sir, all historians are unanimous on this point, that though it may have been in the interests of the Hudson Bay Company to have such a colony settled on their land, yet it led to hostility with the Indians, and also with the North-West Company. These settlers were regarded as invaders by the rival companies and the Indians. The Indians were exasperated because so much of their territory was taken up for agriculture. Matters grew worse, and property was destroyed. I suppose many members of this House have heard of the North-West Company. In the rivalry between this company and the natives, serious disturbances took place. Settlements were attacked, forts were taken, men were captured and lives were lost, troubles of which we heard during the debate on the boundary question. The title to the property of the half-breed population in the North-West Territories is connected with the establishment of that colony on the Red River. Lord Selkirk had to treat with the Indians, in order to get peaceable possession of territory upon which to establish his colony. The treaty that he then made with the Indians provided, besides mentioning certain geographical limits, that so much territory as could be seen between the legs of a horse, by looking under his belly, was to belong to him; so much of the territory was to be ceded by the Indians upon certain conditions. Here is what I find concerning this event in Morris' book, "The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba, the North-West Territories and Keewatin":

"In the year 1817 the Earl of Selkirk visited his wide domain, and entered into negotiations with the Indian tribes, for the extinction of their title to a tract of land described as follows:—

"All that tract of land adjacent to Red River and Assiniboine River, beginning at the mouth of Red River and extending along the same as far as Great Forks at the mouth of Red Lake River and along Assiniboine River as far as the Musk Rat River, otherwise called Rivière des Champignons, and extending to the distance of six miles from Fort Douglas on every side, and likewise from Fort Doer, and also from the Great Forks and in other posts extending in breadth to the distance of two English statute miles back from the banks of the river."

"The Indians then inhabiting the region were described as being of the Chippewa or Saulteaux and Killistine or Cree nations. They were made to comprehend, the depth of the land they were surrendering, by being told, that it was the greatest distance at which a horse on the level prairie could be seen, or daylight seen under his belly between his legs. The consideration for the surrender was the payment of one hundred pounds of good merchantable tobacco, to each nation annually.

"The treaty was signed by Lord Selkirk and by five Indian chiefs, who affixed thereto drawings of the animals after which they were named, by way of signature, a *fac simile* of which will be found elsewhere. The surrender was to the Sovereign Lord, King George the Third. The treaty was accompanied by a map which shows that the tract surrendered extended to Grand Forks in what is now United States territory."

In 1836, the Hudson's Bay Company bought back the whole tract from the heirs of Lord Selkirk for the sum of £84,000, the rights of colonists who had purchased land between 1811 and 1836 being respected. Now, so far as we can judge from this and other historical accounts, that is the origin of the titles to the property which the half-breeds claimed from the Hudson's Bay Company, and which the Canadian Government undertook to guarantee to them by the Manitoba Act of 1870. In 1817 the forts of the Hudson's Bay Company were captured. The North-West Company of Montreal displayed great energy in order to overcome the competition of the Hudson's Bay Company, and some of the most troublous times in the history of that country belong to that period. In 1816 a battle was fought on the shores of Red River, a little below what is now the city of Winnipeg, in which Governor Semple, of the Hudson's Bay Company, and 26 of his men, were killed by the men employed by the North-West Company. It was then thought that the Hudson's Bay Company had lost their hold on the territory south and south-westward of Manitoba. But the year after Lord Selkirk came from Montreal, with part of the regiment of the Murons, and recaptured all the forts. During these troubles trade became demoralised in the rivalries of competition, and both companies came to the verge of bankruptcy; when, in 1821, there was a combination effected by which the two companies were united, and the North-West Company disappeared. I have alluded to that hostility between these two companies in order to show that the North-West Company of Montreal was accustomed to employ all its servants from the Province of Quebec. Numbers of those men in its employ settled in distant parts of the territory. The Hudson's Bay Company, on the other hand, brought nearly all its servants from Scotland or the Orkney Islands; and when the two companies were combined, of course a great number of these servants were thrown out of employment, and there you have the date of the first agricultural settlements in that region. The union between the servants of the North-West Company and the Indian women was the first origin of the half-breed people. It was about that time that Lord Selkirk, with the ideas of a statesman and the founder of a people—because, after all, he may be regarded as one of the founders of that country—Lord Selkirk, disregarding altogether his own religious ideas, applied to the Catholic bishop of Quebec for some priests, in order to establish French Canadian half-breed parishes in the settlements he had founded on the shores of the Red River and the Assiniboine. The Rev. Messrs. Provencher and Dumoulin were sent by the Catholic bishop of Quebec, in 1818, to that Territory. And, Sir, Lord Selkirk, when requested to do so, did not hesitate one moment to endow the Roman Catholic Church, that is to say, to give to those priests the means of endowing a church, the means of subsistence, and the means of extending their faith amongst the people of that country and assisting them to set up parishes alongside of the Scotch settlements which he had organised in that territory. It was only two years afterwards that Revd. Father Provencher visited the country. In 1822 St. Boniface became the nucleus of a large settlement. Lord Selkirk had brought with him, as I have stated, the remnant of the Murons regiment. That regiment was one of those foreign regi-