

"I, myself, caused Mr. Duck, the Dominion land surveyor, to write several times to Ottawa, and always without success, until finally I became discouraged myself, and several people were obliged to leave the settlement, some selling their land for a nominal price, and others abandoning it without any compensation.

"In February, 1883, the Rev. Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney were deputed by the settlement to set forth our complaints and present our demands to the Government. They were given a written promise that the lands we occupied should be surveyed in river lots of 10 chains frontage by 2 miles in depth, and that this survey should take place in the autumn following, (1883).

"The autumn has passed, and winter is coming. What has become of the promises? Has any surveyor been instructed to do the work, and has he failed in his duty? That is what we ask of you to-day.

"I do not put these questions to you, Sir, in my own name alone, or in the name of the two missions that I have established upon the right bank of the south branch of the Saskatchewan. I repeat what Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney have said to the members of the Government in the winter of 1883. I tell you again what our settlers have said to the land agents at Prince Albert. I am the faithful interpreter of the sentiment of the population. Please consider the consequences of a painful delay. The settlers have formed and are every day forming settlements, without knowing where the limits of their future properties will be. These limits being right lines and inflexible parallels, will cut up fields, will pass through houses and will separate fields for convenience of access to which the houses have been built—these will be the inevitable consequences to those who have already built, or who may build hereafter, until a survey is made. What great inconvenience, what deplorable consequences! However, three-fourths of these troubles might have been avoided if the survey had been done when it was asked for and when it was promised.

"I hope, Sir, that the misfortunes which bear so heavily upon our population will soon come to an end, and the more so, as a word from you will suffice. You have the kindness to remind the surveyors charged with this work that it is more necessary in this part of the country than elsewhere, in places where settlement has not yet commenced. If the surveyors have not yet been selected, there are enough others in the country to enable you to name a staff, who could go upon the spot and make the people happy and satisfied, so far as circumstances will permit. I understand you to tell me to have patience; that everything will come out right in the end. Those are words which, permit me to say, I can no longer accept. There is a double proof of it. Prince Albert was settled the same time that this colony began. The inhabitants of Prince Albert have had their lands surveyed a long time and have received their patents. In the second place, I do not want it to be said that there is in this country places were the emigrants are treated like helots."

"Opposite to the mission which we have established, that is to say, on the north shore Tp. 45 E. 27 and 28, W. 2, there are only two families, and already in the two townships the river squares have been changed into river lots. I see them marked on the map. For the last ten years a few families have been living on the north shore; there are about thirty at present. Next summer there will not be enough room for a part of those who have promised to come, and there is not a river lot which is surveyed. What would the immigrants do if they knew that in this country they can be treated with such unheard of partiality?

"If I was on the spot I could get this letter signed by the fathers of families, representing a population of 2,000 souls; but I prefer to send it to you immediately, hoping to receive your answer before the departure of Mr. Pearce."

On 14th February Mr. Deville, to whom that letter was addressed, transmitted it to the Deputy Minister, and in doing so, said:

"I beg to draw your attention to the clause stating that last year the Rev. W. Leduc and Mr. Maloney obtained from the Government written assurances that the lands occupied by French settlers on the south branch of the Saskatchewan would be laid out into river lots. I am not in a position to state whether or not such is the case, but I am aware a similar promise was made for the Saskatchewan, Edmonton and St. Albert settlements."

So we have evidence, in these papers I have read, of the fact that this promise was made for the settlement represented by Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney:

"The wishes of the settlers could easily be met without inconvenience or prejudice to the Government by adopting the following course: (1.) If the inspector of agencies, when on the ground, should be satisfied that the great majority of the settlers in a township desire river lots, then he should have power to direct that every homestead fronting on the river in that township shall be composed of four quarter sections, forming a lot of twenty chains in width by one mile in depth. (2.) Except when all occupants of a section prefer having it allotted into quarter sections, in which case their request should be complied with. (3.) Except when all the occupants of two sections desire that the lots should be ten chains in width and should extend two miles, to the depth of the two sections, in which case their wishes should also be complied with.

"A lot twenty chains wide by one mile deep would be described in the patent as composed of four quarter sections. A lot ten chains wide by two miles deep would be described as the western, eastern, northern or southern halves of eight quarter sections. The areas could easily be found by reference to this office."

MR. BLAKE.

On the 10th March the secretary of the Department wrote Mr. Deville a letter, as follows:—

"A copy of your letter and a translation of that of the Rev. Mr. Vegreville have been sent to Mr. Commissioner Walsh, with a statement that the Minister approves of your suggestion, and a request that the inspector of Dominion land agencies be instructed accordingly."

Meantime, other correspondence was going on on the subject, and Mr. Pearce himself, on the 17th January, 1884, had written to the Minister of the Interior. He says:

"I have the honor to report that I was this day called upon by the Rev. Father Vegreville and Hon. Charles Nolin, in reference to the survey into river lots of the land bordering on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River, in townships 45, ranges 27 and 28, west 2nd meridian, and townships 44, and ranges west 3rd meridian. They state that the Government promised that sub-division into river lots would be made last year, and that it has not been done. At their request, I promised to submit the matter for your consideration. They will themselves communicate with you on the subject."

On the 10th March, 1884, the secretary of the Department wrote to Mr. Deville, enclosing a copy of that letter, and making this enquiry:

"Will you please state, for the information of the Minister, how this matter stands and what promises have been made to the petitioners?"

On the 12th March Mr. Deville answers:

"Some river lots have been laid out in the above townships, but the greater part of the river fronts has been sub-divided into sections. Rev. V. Vegreville and Hon. Chas. Nolin refer probably to a promise of the Minister to Rev. W. Leduc and Mr. Maloney, that certain lands would be laid out into river lots. I do not know whether or not such a promise has been made. As to the proper course to be adopted, I would refer you to my letter of the 14th ult. to the Deputy Minister."

That is the letter which I have already read. Mr. Pearce's report on the Prince Albert settlement contains this statement:

"Two classes of settlers have entered the Prince Albert district from Manitoba, namely, the English-speaking settlers, largely composed of half-breeds, and the French-speaking settlers, who are probably wholly half-breeds. The latter class settled in the neighborhood of Stobart, Duck Lake and the south branch. Those in the latter district have not yet made entry to their lands, nor have any claims been preferred by them, owing to the fact that they anticipated a re-survey of the district into river lots. When this re-survey is completed, the settlers will, no doubt, prefer their claims."

Mr. Pearce received from the Department Mr. Deville's plan which I have already read, and on reply he writes in March, as follows:—

"That if he (Mr. Pearce) personally had time to make a survey of these settlers' holdings he has no doubt that entries could be granted in legal sub-division or fractional parts thereof, so that each person's interest would be as well protected as if laid off in river lots, but that he has not time to do as that suggestion would demand, much as he would like that kind of work. He also states that he thinks, owing to the points and bays on the river, it will be found that no regular width of lots will meet the wishes of those people; that their improvements are in all corners; that they seem determined to have their holdings laid out in river lots, and it will be found that they will expect the lines between every lot plainly defined on the ground at least. That is what Mr. Pearce states he inferred from interviews he had with them. Further, he tried to explain to them how their wishes could be met by means of a legal sub-division survey or fractional portions thereof; but he fears they did not comprehend what he desired to impart. In fact, it was a matter which he took particular pains to discuss with others, and the better educated portion of the community, and the answer invariably was: That is plain enough to you as a surveyor, but it is Greek to us." Those parties are *bonâ fide* settlers and as such have or will acquire title; and if they wish their land laid off in a certain way, why should the Government object; in fact, it is the duty of the Government to survey it as requested."

"Mr. Inspector Pearce further states that neither the agent nor his assistants are sufficiently conversant with surveys to go to the ground and allot these lands by land survey or fractional portion thereof, and would recommend one of two courses to be adopted: (1) To send with agent on the ground a surveyor who can make a rough traverse of improvements on each section, and then entries can be given by legal sub-division, so as to preserve to each man his improvements, as far as possible. (2) To lay out in river lots on ground, employing a surveyor of considerable experience in that kind of work; if he or his assistants spoke English so much the better, and give him sufficient latitude in his instructions, so that he could make the lot of such width as to preserve to each claimant, so far as possible, his improvements. In both cases he would suggest the township road allowance to be kept open. If the first course is adopted, he begs leave to suggest that Col. Sproat or