

experience of five years in the Territories has convinced me that there can be no better country for settlers, with even a slight knowledge of farming and a small capital, or where a comfortable home can be secured at so small a cost and in so short a time."

Then we come to the year 1885. The report for the year 1884 is presented for this year of 1885, in which the same reference is made to the claims of the old settlers:

"At the time the offices of Deputy Head and Surveyor-General were separated, and Mr. Lindsay Russell was charged with the duties appertaining to the latter position, it was provided that he should also investigate and settle the claims to land by virtue of long occupations advanced by the old settlers along the North Saskatchewan. When it was found that Mr. Russell's health did not admit of his visiting the settlements, an Order in Council was passed remitting this portion of his work to the Land Board. Accordingly, early in the year, Mr. Pearce went to Prince Albert, and from thence to Battleford, Edmonton and St. Albert, and made a careful personal enquiry into all the claims of this class at those places, with the result that all, with one or two exceptions, at Battleford and Edmonton, have been finally and satisfactorily disposed of. The only claims of old settlers remaining unsettled are at Lac la Biche, Victoria and Battle River. The necessary investigation at the two latter places will be made early next spring, but the claims at Lac la Biche cannot be properly adjusted until the surveys reach that point."

Then, turning to the report from the Dominion Land Commissioner of the Saskatchewan claims I find:

"The question of the claims of old settlers on the Saskatchewan is one of long standing; but, with the exception of the claims in the immediate vicinity of Prince Albert, nothing could be done in the matter until the surveys were completed. These surveys were not finished until this summer, and could not have been completed at an earlier date; for, had these been prosecuted in any other way than the one adopted, it would have been at a great sacrifice of both accuracy and economy.

"Very full reports accompanied the evidence forwarded to the Minister so soon as the investigations were completed. The claims at Prince Albert have been finally disposed of. Those at the other points may reasonably be expected to be settled within a few weeks.

"The most liberal construction possible under the circumstances was put upon all the claims; and, judging by the result at Prince Albert, it is confidently anticipated that the percentage of claimants who will be dissatisfied therewith will be very small—probably not 5 per cent.—and of these more than one-half will be only on the grounds that their claims have not had as liberal treatment as the claims of others. It may be said of these claimants—upwards of seven hundred in number—that, as a class, the 'land shark' formed a very small number.

"The difficulty in obtaining explicit evidence has been referred to in the special reports; and in this it need only be mentioned that this difficulty did not arise from unwillingness, but from inability.

"It is somewhat remarkable that, out of the large number of cases investigated, but few were advanced through a residence on and peaceable possession of the land on the 15th July, 1870; the only points at which such were preferred being Prince Albert and St. Albert—some half dozen at the former, and about forty at the latter. This would go to demonstrate that it has been only within the past few years that any idea of making a livelihood by husbandry has occurred to the inhabitants of the district; and, when this fact is considered, the progress they have made is really wonderful."

Now, these are all the statements which I have been able to find bearing on this subject, with the exception of one, and that is an allusion, in a report two or three years ago, in reference to the claims to be treated in a manner analagous to that which was accorded to the half-breeds of Manitoba—one slight allusion to that subject; and it is the only allusion that you find in these reports. But you find a statement that a process of adjustment, slow indeed, procrastinating, has been going on with reference to those in actual occupation; and as to the other part, it is going to be considered with a view to reasonable treatment being administered. Now, Sir, it does appear to me that it was the duty of the Government long ago to have disposed of these questions. It seems to me that they have been complicated, and the difficulties have been enhanced by a systematic delay or neglect of their treatment; and that only after the statements which I have read, after the statements from the Government organs; which admitted a chronic state of dissatisfaction to have existed in that country for years, which also admitted territorial grounds for that state of dissatisfaction—the one circumstance was added that Louis Riel had been asked to go into the country. But when the Government felt that the situation was so serious that it was necessary to act in some way or other in order to preserve the peace by the occupation of Fort Carleton, whatever impressed it on their

minds as a thing still more essential—and I admit that it was essential; I admit that their prime duty was to see that the forces at their disposal were so placed as to be enabled to the utmost to preserve the peace—I say it was their prime duty to have addressed themselves to the removal of these causes of discontent, to have addressed themselves to such measures as would prevent this festering sore from festering still further, and this outbreak from taking place. Force is no remedy there any more than elsewhere. But what they did was to appeal to force, to put 100 men of the mounted police into Fort Carleton, and we hear that they did nothing more. We did not hear of the situation being grave, of any difficulty existing. The report speaks of nothing but peace, prosperity and contentment, and they tell us in those reports, this year, in respect to the only claims which they admit at all, which they think worth mentioning in the reports, that they are almost all settled, and settled in a manner eminently satisfactory. From outside, I hear a report that a very considerable number of persons, insignificant indeed, compared with the armed forces which are advancing to meet them, but a considerable number of persons, with their families, settled within a recent period on lands which belong to some colonisation company, or which had been assigned to some colonisation company, which had not been surveyed and which the colonisation company would not take possession of because they had not been surveyed. And there has been a difficulty going on for some time past, the colonisation company calling on the Government to give them their lands after being surveyed, because since then they have been surveyed, and the Government declining to exercise their powers of ejection, whatever they may be, over settlers on those lands—I say a difficulty existed. I have no doubt whatever that there is correspondence upon this subject, that there are reports on this subject; and I cannot conceive, with the hoards and hosts of officials, from the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West down, with the inspector of colonisation companies, with the commissioners and assistant commissioners in the North-West, that the Government has not demanded or, even without demand, has not received reports from time to time, informing them as to what the condition of the country was, as to what the nature of the feeling was, of what the difficulty was which grew up and culminated in this disturbance. Now, Mr. Speaker, that the Government should have allowed this matter to get to this head, having had a warning when Riel came into that country last summer, having accepted the warning by putting in a force within striking distance, as the hon. gentleman says, of the scene of action—that the Government did not take intelligent and well-concerted measures to remove the causes of grievance, whatever they may be, is, in my opinion, an act worthy of very general condemnation. It certainly demands explanation at the hands of the Government to this House, because they could not have inflicted a more serious blow upon our prospects in the North-West than they have done by permitting this outbreak to get to this head. I do not care what its proportions are; I trust they are as insignificant as some of the newspapers tell us they are. I have not ventured myself to estimate them. I have given the account which the Ministerial organs give of them, and that alone. That they are considered important is shown by the fact that you have a force of some 580 armed men, of whom 190 are mounted, and half a battery of artillery in full array marching toward the scene of action, with General Middleton, commanding the forces of Canada, as we are informed by the newspapers, on his way to join those forces and see that everything is well and rightly done. I say that the circumstance that the Government should have thought this of sufficient importance to demand such a demonstration in force and such action as this, is, of itself, though I do not,