

doubt as to their legal possession of their property. The letter is as follows:—

“ PRINCE ALBERT, 17th December, 1885.

“ DEAR SIR,—It having been reported to the Minister of the Interior during his late visit here that there were a large number of claimants to lands within the parishes of St. Laurent, St. Louis de Langevin and in the vicinity of the South Saskatchewan River, more particularly among the French-speaking population, whose claims to the land had not yet been investigated and who therefore could not obtain entry, this statement is based on insufficient data, as the lists of those claimants which I have assisted you in preparing will show.”

These lists are attached to the report of Mr. Pearce, which has been submitted to the House.

“ Upon receiving your instructions in March, 1884,—

That was some months before Riel came into the country.—

“ to investigate these claims I consulted with the Reverend Père André, the superior of the district, as to the best time to carry out the investigation and obtain the information desired. He told me that as many of the claimants were then away from home engaged in freighting, I had better postpone my visit until after Easter, when they would all be at home putting in their crops. I did so and left here for Batoche early in May. On my way up I called in at Grandin, where I met Père André who told me that he had been waiting for me to tell me that the people had been holding a series of meetings throughout the settlement and they had decided among other things that they would make no applications for entry for their lands in the office here. After consultation with him I thought it advisable to secure his services to explain fully and clearly the nature of my mission and to show to the people the futility of any such resolution on their part. He went with me to Batoche, and at an interview held in the house of Emmanuel Champagne explained fully my object and advised me to file affidavits in support of their claims. The investigation was then proceeded with in as careful and thorough a manner as possible, and it will be seen upon reference to the list numbered 2 before referred to that of the 138 claimants 99 were included in the investigation held by me and whose claims were reported upon, 20 had settled upon lands and had not then or afterwards made entry in accordance with the section survey, 2 had settled in 1884 and made no application for entry or filed any evidence of occupation, leaving 17 claimants whose claims were not investigated, which number includes the names of Moïse Ouellette and others who refused to prefer any evidence in regard to their land matters. It was reported to me as long ago as 1882 that these people even those who had settled and claimed their lands in accordance with the existing survey, had been advised by certain interested parties not to make entry for their lands, for what reason I am unaware unless to coerce the Government into another system of survey on the banks of the river. From the schedule prepared you will see how few were then settlers, on the river, some 42 in all, of whom 22 could have obtained entry if they so desired at that time.

“ With reference to the list numbered 1, which includes the names of 75 claimants, 55 have made entry, 1 (Cardinal) has settled on a school section subsequent to the plan of the township being received at the office here, leaving 19 who have never applied for entry but who could have made entry if they had so desired. In accordance with your instructions to Mr. Gauvreau, the assistant agent here, in August, 1883, that gentleman visited the different parts of the district in lists numbers 1, 2 and 3, and explained to them fully the Lands' Act as bearing upon their claims. Upon his return he informed me that the chief reply that he had received from the people he visited was that they were poor and had not the money to make entry. There were no other complaints of any nature.

“ With reference to list number 3 of the schedule containing the names of 45 claimants, 7 have made homestead entry, 24 filed evidence of claim before me in July last, 9 were filed before you, this month, of whom the majority were absent at the time of my visit, while the remainder failed to represent their claims although requested by me to do so. Of the remainder, 5 have failed to make any application at all before anyone by reason of their absence either as refugees in the United States or as prisoners at Regina, on account of the recent outbreak, this number includes the claim of the Roman Catholic mission, and as so much has been said about this land I might say that no claim has ever been preferred by any of the Oblats for this land.

“ I might state that in reference to the question of hay permits representation was made by me to the Department in June, 1884, to the effect that whereas the hay question was not of that character to warrant the imposition of dues for the protection of the small settler as against the stockman, instructions were sent me not to collect any such fees, and no permits have been issued in this district.

“ I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,  
“ GEO. DUCK.

“ WILLIAM PEARCE, Esq.,  
“ Superintendent, Land Board, Winnipeg.”

That is the letter from Mr. George Duck, showing that in 1883 Mr. Gauvreau was sent there to impress on these people the necessity of procuring their patents and to instruct them as to the manner of obtaining them; that in 1884 Mr.

Duck procured the assistance of Father André, and again attempted to explain to the people how they could get their lands, and that the difficulty in their obtaining their land was not due to any act of the Government, or anything over which they had control, but was due in the case of some of them to their poverty and in the case of others to their unwillingness to make entry at all. There is no doubt so far as the patents to the land are concerned, that if the half-breeds have not their patents to-day, to them and to them alone is due that fact. Then, Sir, we had the statement made—not to-night, it is true, but we have had it discussed all over the country, we have had it discussed in Parliament, and on the hustings, that the Government had actually driven the people to rebellion, by granting a portion of the lands upon which they were settled to a colonisation company, and that by doing that they had driven the people off the land or, at any rate, had attempted to frighten them off their land. Well, I have here the affidavits of every settler in the parish of St. Louis de Langevin, with one or two exceptions. I shall not trouble the House with reading them. But with these exceptions every one of the settlers on that tract of country, which was supposed to be given to the Prince Albert Colonization Company, declared either that he did not know of the existence of such a company, and therefore could not know that the land had been awarded to the company, and in the case of one or two who did know it, they had been assured by the agent that they need not be in the slightest degree alarmed, because the company had no power to turn them off the land, being simply the agents of the Government for the settlement of the land, and they were guaranteed by the Government the possession of at least 320 acres like other settlers.

Mr. DAVIES. Will the hon. gentleman lay the affidavits on the Table.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). I will put them in *Hansard*, which is better, and will save time.

Mr. DAVIES. Better put them on the Table first.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). I am endeavoring to comply with the rule of the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), whose resolution I entirely approved of, in relation to short speeches, and will therefore not detain the House by reading all the affidavits. With its permission I will hand them to the reporters. Here is one affidavit which was made by Mr. Norman McKenzie. You heard it read this morning, so I do not think it is worth while reading it again.

An hon. MEMBER. The House was not in Session this morning.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). True; so I will read it.

NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES: { I, Norman McKenzie, of Sec. 12, Tp. 45,  
To Wit: { R. 27, W. 2nd M., make oath and say:—

1st. In the autumn of 1883 I purchased the claim of one Osborne to a portion of sections 12 and 13, in township 45, range 27, west of 2nd, and during the visit of Mr. Pearce to Prince Albert in January and February, 1884, when adjusting the claims of settlers in the Prince Albert district, I spoke to him about that claim, stating I understood that portion of township 45, R. 27, W. 2, lying south of the river, had been handed over to the Prince Albert Colonization Company, and asked if I would be safe in going on and improving the claim. His reply was that I was perfectly safe in going ahead, that so far as settlement in advance of their opening their agency, and even afterwards, when on even sections, was just the same as any other lands in the Prince Albert district. That, so far as the even sections were concerned, the Colonization Company was merely agent for the Minister of the Interior, to grant homestead and pre-emption entries thereon, and any settlers on odd sections, in advance of the Colonization Company establishing their agency, the Minister of the Interior reserving in the agreement with the Colonization Company the right to grant to each and every such settler, land to the extent of 320 acres, and in my case, if I was a *bona fide* settler, I would most certainly be protected.

2nd. I never was told by anyone that I would not obtain my entry as desired. In fact, it was always represented to me by the Department