

CROFTER COLONIZATION.

Quorn Rancho, Okotox, P.O.,
Calgary, Canada,

DEAR LORD LOTHIAN,

June 18, 1888.

As I understand you were the originator of a scheme for the immigration of the Crofters who have lately come out to settle near Killarney, Manitoba, I have no doubt you will be glad to hear good accounts regarding them since their arrival. When in New York last May, I heard such bad reports about the district they have come to, that I resolved to visit, if possible, the new Crofter settlement while travelling through Canada.

Last Tuesday, my wife and I arrived in Killarney, and, having an introduction to Mr. Scarth, I drove with him the next day to the settlement, a distance of about 12 miles. The Crofters had only left Killarney the day before for their new home.

The road (as yet) is only a track across the rolling prairie, but every now and then considerable portions of wheat-sown land are visible on either side, with settlers' houses adjoining. On the way we passed six Crofters (the very picture of health) with bullock waggons, going to Killarney for lumber (wood) for building their houses, who reported they had all spent a most comfortable night.

On our arrival at the encampment, composed of four large tents, somewhat similar to army hospital marquees, most of the people came out, glad to see us. Among them was a carpenter from the neighbourhood (a Scotchman by birth), who had come to help (gratis) in planning and building their homes. I had a long conversation with several of the men, who assured me they were well and happy, and, as far as they could judge at present, the Government promises had been fulfilled, and that the location and apparent condition of the land was better than they expected. All they wished for was a school in the vicinity to educate their children, and the opportunity, perhaps, of hearing now and then in the future the Presbyterian service preached in the Gaelic language. Mr. Smith, a settler from Ontario, whose father originally came from Newcastle-on-Tyne, and whose house was within a short distance of the encampment, has let the Crofters an acre of his cultivated land for one dollar, so that they have already been able to plant their potatoes for the season.

Smith and wife settled on the homestead of 160 acres, which he had obtained free from the Government about four or five years ago. His house, with garden attached, appeared comfortable, built of wood, with a thin partition, making an additional small room to sleep in; there was a cellar below, and a large cooking stove in centre of house. The whole cost of building was about 100 dollars (20*l.*) He assured me it was quite sufficient to prevent any hardships being felt from the cold in winter. A fire, which consumed a considerable quantity of his grain a year ago, and which was uninsured, had prevented him making many improvements lately, but still, he maintained, his finances were year by year on the increase. Mr. Smith took me over most of the cultivated portion of his farm (about 80 acres or so). Last year the wheat crop brought him 50 cents. the bushel, and the average quantity 30 bushels to the acre, weighing 63 to 64 lbs. For a few acres he got as high as 45 bushels the acre. The cost of the wheat production, viz., cultivating the land, sowing, reaping, thrashing, and taking to market, &c., came to nearly seven dollars the acre, or about 23 cents. the bushel; but as his own manual labour must be added, and a small taxation, the net cost for production might be put down at nine dollars per acre, or 30 cents. the bushel, making a profit on the acre of six dollars, or 20 cents. the bushel, which would mean in our British money 25*s.* an acre, or 10*d.* a bushel profit. He said he generally found where wheat did not grow well, oats would yield a