

FOURTH REPORT

OF THE

COLONISATION BOARD.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY:

WE, the undersigned Commissioners appointed under Your Majesty's Sign Manual for the purpose of carrying out a scheme of colonisation in the Dominion of Canada of crofters and cottars from the Western Highlands, and the islands of Scotland, and from the congested districts of Ireland, desire humbly to submit to Your Majesty the following Report:—

Reports have been received from the agent of the Board in Canada relating to the settlements at Killarney, in Manitoba, and at Saltcoats, in the North-West Territories, for the year 1892. The former was established in the summer of 1888 and the latter in the spring of 1889.

Statements are appended giving extracts from the reports of the agent (Appendix A) and summaries of the statistics (Appendix B.), showing the position of the various families in 1892, with the particulars of the acreage under wheat, oats, and potatoes in the years 1890, 1891, and 1892, of the live stock on the farms, and other information.

With regard to the Killarney Settlement, it will be seen that it continues to develop in a satisfactory manner, that the area under cultivation increases year by year, and that considerable attention is also given to the raising of stock.

The total area of land at present under cultivation is 4,196 acres, of which 2,565 belong to the heads of families—an average of 85½ acres each family—and 1,630 acres to the younger members of families who have taken up farms, which represents about 43 acres per person. Altogether the average of the 30 families is nearly 140 acres per family.

The estimate of the crops in the settlement in 1891, and the prices which it was expected would be realised, turned out to be somewhat excessive, for reasons which are explained in the agent's report.

On a low computation it will be seen that the value of the crops last year was greater than in any previous year, notwithstanding the low prices which have prevailed for produce of all kinds.

There is no doubt that the position of this settlement should be satisfactory. The families are not only self-supporting, but they ought to have, in most cases, a surplus with which to meet the obligations they have incurred. They are certainly in a position to which they could not have attained in the parts of Scotland from which they came.

We regret we are obliged to report that the first instalment of the advances made to the Killarney Crofters, which became due in the autumn of last year, has not been met.

The position of each family is being inquired into, as well as the reasons which they give for their inability to carry out their agreement, and the Board will take any measures that may be necessary for the protection of its interests.

The security which the Board holds is believed to be far in excess of the liability of the settlement. This is proved by the informal offers which have recently been made by Land and Investment Companies to consider the transfer of the Board's indebtedness to them.

In some cases, also, the settlers are making inquiries as to borrowing money of these Companies, with a view to clear off entirely their indebtedness to the Board. One of the younger settlers has repaid the entire sum advanced to him.