

been made in the accomplishment of such conditions. But these instructions were never followed, except under the administration of Lord Dalhousie, who ordered Surveyor-General Bouchette to make such inspection. Mr. Bouchette published the information collected in the course of his inspection in his works, especially in the Topographical Description of Lower Canada.

In practically abolishing the system of land grants, according to the seigniorial method, the act of 1791 introduced into the country all the evils and troubles which the British Government sought to avoid by the instructions of 1663 and give rise to the plague of large land-holders which has so greatly hindered the settlement and material advancement of the Province. Under the seigniorial regime an individual might, without any trouble, obtain large grants of land inasmuch as he was obliged to concede land to any *bona fide* settler who applied for it. But under the system of free grants and free tenure, as established by the act and instructions of 1791, owing to the neglect or connivance of the provincial authorities, a single individual could obtain a whole township and close it to settlers; this has unfortunately happened in a considerable portion of the Eastern Townships. It was under this regime that the system of township leaders and associates originated, which, in less than 15 years, from 1796 to 1809, gave 1,457,209 acres of the best Crown Lands into the possession of about seventy persons, one of whom, Nicolas Austin, obtained in 1797 a quantity of 62,621 acres of land in the township of Bolton.

The system was carried on as follows: A person wishing to thus take possession of a portion of the public domain, first came to an understanding with the members of the Executive Council and the officers occupying the highest positions, to secure their concurrence and that of the Governor. He afterwards came to an understanding with a certain number of individuals, picked up at hap-hazard, to get them to sign a petition to the Governor, praying for the granting of the land he desired. To compensate them for this accommodating act on their part, he paid his associates a nominal sum, generally a guinea, in consideration of which they at once retransferred their share to him as soon as the letters patent were issued. Sometimes one or two of the associates kept a lot of 100 or 200 acres on a grant covering several thousands of acres, but this was the exception, not the general rule. For that purpose stationers sold blanks of such re-transfers, the form of which, as shewn in 1821 before a