

## GOVERNMENT LAND GUIDES IN THE NORTH-WEST.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron) moved for a return showing the names and nationality of all the Government land guides in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, the residence and former occupation of each such guide at the time of the appointment; how long they had been residents in such last named place; if any removed or their services dispensed, with the date and cause of such removal. The salary or allowance paid to each; a detailed statement of all costs and expenses connected with this branch of the public service; the particular locality assigned to each guide for the discharge of his duties; together with any Order in Council or instructions respecting the duties of such guides. He said: I do not object to land guides. I think it is wise and politic to appoint them; because in that country, where there are no roads, but trails over the prairie, it would be impossible for the emigrants to find their way to any given locality unless they had the assistance of some guide. But what I object to, from my experience in the North-West, is the kind of men the hon. gentleman selected for the purpose. A guide is perfectly useless unless he knows something of the country through which he proposes to conduct the emigrant, the trails and various localities. I was credibly informed in Manitoba—and I cannot doubt my information—that some of the guides knew nothing of the country or of the localities to which they were taking the emigrants, or of the trails by which they wished to reach their destination. I, myself saw, about twenty-five miles west of the Portage, on the South Saskatchewan Trail, a number of English emigrants in charge of a guide supposed to know something of the locality and of the country; but he had taken them on the wrong trail, and when I saw them there were two large waggons in a bog, utterly unable to get out. I was told that this guide had never been in that locality before. A few miles further west, I met a number of Scotch emigrants, whose destination was south of the junction of the Souris with the Assiniboine. They were sent round by way of Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie, to the South Saskatchewan tract, a roundabout way of at least 150 miles, to reach their destination. They ought to have got off at Emerson and gone south-west, and so avoided this long, useless detour. I asked them why they took that route, and they said they were sent that way by the guide. If so, that is a system that should not be allowed to continue. A very serious loss in time and money was occasioned these poor people by this unnecessary travelling under the instructions of one of the Government guides. Instructions were given last spring to take a party of English emigrants to the border of Pelican Lake. The guide never had been there before from all I could gather. In the first place it took him two weeks to reach the Pembina crossing 50 or 60 miles from Emerson, and some 30 days to get from Emerson to Pelican Lake, some 100 miles distant. So ignorant was the man of the outfit that was suitable for emigrants that the waggons were loaded with twice what they could carry, and every mile or two they were stuck in the slews and the mud holes there and detained at very considerable expense for a very considerable length of time. I assert from information I have received, whether true or not I do not know—I hope it is not true—that when these emigrants reached their destination each family was charged \$12.50 a piece. It may be all right. I do not know how these men are paid. He may be paid so much a head. I do not know how that is, but I was informed by one of the emigrants that they had to pay \$12.50 per family for being guided out from Emerson to the shores of Pelican Bay.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Can you give the name of the guide?

Mr. CAMERON. Yes.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Will you give it?

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Mr. CAMERON. Yes; and the name of the person who gave the information. This guide was instructed—I do not know whether he was instructed or not by the Government, but I presume he was—to prepare some small buildings and have them stationed at given distances, out in the open plain, where the emigrants might lodge through the night, instead of camping out in the open prairie. The idea was not a bad one, if properly carried out; but, instead of procuring the lumber at Nelsonville and building at the localities, the houses were built in the city of Emerson, taken out in the depth of winter in a sleigh. A storm arose, a regular blizzard, and the result was that four of these shanties, six feet by twelve, which should have been stationed at distances of from twelve to twenty miles apart, were all stationed at Pancake Lake. I suppose the Government has had to pay the expense of constructing these houses and taking them down there. I was also informed that every man who has to sleep on the floor of one of these houses has to pay 10 cents a night—I do not know if this is with the sanction of the Government. I know, as a matter of fact, that a charge was exacted from these emigrants, and was so exacted last spring. That is not exactly as it ought to be. If it was by order of the Government that the houses were constructed I have no objection to it, but I object to having four of them placed in one locality and that the poor emigrant should pay a charge for sleeping on the floor of one of them. The information I want by this motion is for the purpose of ascertaining, to some extent, how these guides are paid, what their duties are, whether they have a right to exact these charges or not, whether they are the kind of men who ought to be there. As to my own opinion, I saw one or two of them, and fear very much the Minister has been unfortunate in the selection or rather unfortunate in acting on the recommendations made to him, for I presume he knew nothing personally about the men, but acted on the recommendation of some of his supporters.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I know nothing of the circumstances stated by the hon. gentleman here now for the first time. Certainly I must state that if there have been any charges made of any kind from the emigrants for having been guided in any place, way or direction, which was improper, it will be enquired into without delay. There were no guides for the purpose of assisting the emigrants until 1880. It was represented in Parliament that it was a forlorn sort of thing for emigrants going to Winnipeg to have to set out alone to find their locations, as they could not be expected to find their lots by only looking at the maps in the office of the Crown Lands Agent, and the task of the guides was clearly to aid them in finding their lots. The gentleman who was chosen for the purpose of acting as superintendent of the guides and managing the whole organization, is a gentleman known to hon. members on both sides of the House—I mean Mr. Hayter Read. He has been in that country for a good many years—since it was first occupied as a portion of the Dominion. He is a gentleman of education and standing, he is a member of the Ontario Bar, and he speaks the Indian language freely. He has made himself so universally popular there, from his high standing and character and his knowledge of the country, that there has been an application signed by all the Catholic hierarchy and all the Protestant hierarchy, asking that he should be appointed Stipendiary Magistrate from his acquaintance with the country and the people. He was entrusted with the duty of organizing a small body of guides in that country, he being the only man sent from the eastern portion of the Dominion; all the others were found on the spot, and I shall be very much disappointed if I find, upon examination, that Mr. Read has been so unfortunate in the selection of his guides in that part of the country, as from the hon. gentleman's speech one would be