

"Your memorialists also pray for more extended surveys in the country of the North Saskatchewan; that the special settlement survey in the South Saskatchewan, in the parish of St. Antoine, made by Mr. Aldous, D. L. S., be approved; and that the land agent at Prince Albert be instructed to receive entries for such lands; that the land in the parish of Grandin, St. Laurent and St. Louis, and fronting on the South Saskatchewan, be surveyed in ten chain lots, it being occupied by settlers in this manner."

These are the townships on the scene in question. That was despatched on the 9th October, 1883, and referred by the Privy Council to the President of the Council and the Minister of the Interior, on the 18th October, 1883, but nothing, so far as we can find, came of that reference. Nothing is brought down. In October, 1883, there was a mass meeting of the inhabitants of Prince Albert, at which over 150 were present, and the 4th resolution endorsed the recent memorial of the North-West Council, embracing, among other things, this:

"Insisting on the necessity of more surveys in the North Saskatchewan district."

The 5th resolution referred to a question of wood lots:

"That this meeting has heard with alarm that the lands on the north side of the Saskatchewan River, immediately opposite the town of Prince Albert, which it had been understood would be laid off as wood lots for the use of the settlers, and which, for some time, have been reserved for unknown purposes, are now being surveyed and sub-divided into townships and sections, it is said either for settlement or railway reserves—the effect of which will be to deprive the settlers of the means of obtaining wood for domestic purposes except from a great distance and at a great expense."

But nothing is brought down. And a copy was ordered to be sent to Sir John A. Macdonald. On the 19th November, 1883, a petition was sent, signed by 31 persons from St. Louis de Langevin—that is the parish on the river front of which the lands of the Prince Albert Colonisation Company are situated—to Mr. Duck, in these words:—

"Sir,—The undersigned farmers, residing in the parish of St. Louis de Langevin, on the south branch of the Saskatchewan, have the honor to make you the following recital of their wrongs, with regard to the lands which they occupy.

"Several amongst us are here since the years 1873-74, and '75; others, more numerous, since 1880. We have all of us taken possession of our lands, according to the mode formerly followed on the Red River and Assiniboine lands, to wit: river lots.

"In the fall of 1880 we petitioned the Minister of the Interior at Ottawa to grant us a special survey in river lots, such as was granted to the Prince Albert settlement and to part of that of St. Laurent. We all of us have signed the said petition, not excepting Mr. Michel Canny, who has since entered his land at your office in a square lot, and against whose act we strongly protest by these presents."

I have not seen this petition, which they say they sent in 1880. It is not brought down:

"Since then we have sent new petitions for the same object at different times, supporting our case with the influence of all the persons of high standing who took an interest in us, as Mr. Joseph Royal, M.P., S. H. Macdowall, M.C., N. O. L. Clarke, S.G., His Lordship Bishop Grandin, and the Rev. Father Leduc.

"Finally, last spring, the Rev. Father Leduc, who had been sent as delegate to Ottawa by the populations of Edmonton and of St. Albert, showed us the answer of the Government, which promised a special survey for all the inhabited lands of the Saskatchewan. Since then we have been waiting in vain."

We want to see that letter that Father Leduc showed these people. But it is not brought down.

"As we have said at the beginning, several amongst us have occupied their lands long enough to have a right to a patent, and nevertheless it is impossible to have them even entered at your office.

"We therefore humbly beg you to communicate to the Government which you represent the wrongs which are partly indicated above, and to beg it to put an end to them as quickly as possible, for the greater welfare and tranquillity of the loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen of England, the undersigned.

"Your very humble servants."

There are thirty-one signatures to that petition, of whom sixteen were on the colonisation company's tract. On the 9th December, 1883, Mr. Louis Schmidt and Mr. Baptiste Boucher, who was one of those wounded in the fights, addressed a letter to Mr. Duck, with reference to this petition saying:

"Since the annexed petition has been made and signed, some circumstances well calculated to redouble the anxiety which we already felt with regard to our lands, have taken place. To our knowledge, a certain Thos. Salter has again gone and entered a quarter of a section of land at your office, and this parcel of land, situated three-quarters of a mile from the river, was already taken as part of the river lot, with work done upon it on the river shore. We regret that the Government has not communicated to you their intention to grant river lots, so that you might thus enter at your office the lands comprised in the river lots. We hope that you will make your Government understand the true position in which we are placed, so that it may put a stop to it."

So that the petition reached Mr. Duck with this added circumstance of difficulty, and among the signers were Maxime Lépine, a prisoner; Baptiste Boucher, wounded; Isidore Dumas, killed; Charles Lavallée, wounded; William Swain, wounded, in the recent engagements. This petition and letter were enclosed to the Department on the 17th December, 1883, by Mr. Duck, who says:

"I have the honor to enclose herewith file No. 924 of this office, covering a letter from Mr. Louis Schmidt and others, as also a petition signed by a number of the inhabitants of the parish of Louis de Langevin, praying for a re-survey of the lands on the River Saskatchewan, within the parish into lots of ten chains frontage, on a plan similar to that adopted in the parish of St. Laurent. As I have already expressed my opinion as to the desirability of such a re-survey, I have the honor to refer you to my previous letters on the subject."

So that you find Mr. Pearce and Mr. Duck repeatedly expressing their views as to the desirability of this re-survey, but no heed is given. No answer is returned. Well, Sir, the difficulties connected with the lands began to grow great, and on the 1st of February, 1884, a meeting of the settlers residing at St. Catharines is reported as being held on the 21st of January, 1884. A committee consisting of William Kennedy, James Isbister and Thomas Swain were appointed to draft a petition to the Government, setting forth the grievances under which the people were laboring with regard to land matters, and praying Inspector Pearce to take them into consideration, and requesting him to forward the petition to the Government. A resolution was passed to the effect that the half-breed population of the North-West were unjustly treated, in not having the same privileges as regards land grants and scrip extended to them which had been enjoyed by their brethren in Manitoba. At a subsequent meeting at Lindsay school house, Red Deer Hill, these resolutions were endorsed, giving power to the committee to add any others. Thomas Millar, Charles Adams and Wm. Platt, secretary, were appointed a committee. A meeting of the settlers of the south branch was held on the 29th January. Mr. Andrew Spence was called to the chair, and Mr. Phillip Turner was appointed secretary. The resolution passed at St. Catharines and the ridge were read and discussed. A committee was appointed to draw up a memorial to the Government, namely, Messrs. A. Spence, W. McCorrister and Robert Stevens. Mr. S. J. Jackson was authorised to obtain the co-operation of the French settlers in carrying out the resolutions passed at various meetings; but so far as I have been able to observe, I do not find any of these petitions or resolutions amongst the papers produced. Then, on the 19th January, 1884, Father Vegreville, missionary at St. Louis de Langevin, wrote to Capt. Deville, chief inspector of surveys:

"I have just seen the inspector, Mr. Pearce. To my great surprise, this gentleman was unable to answer, in a satisfactory manner, the questions I put to him. He confined himself to advising me to write to you, promising to do so himself immediately. About a dozen years ago some settlers established themselves upon the bank of the branch of the river Saskatchewan. Towards the end of the winter of 1881 the missionary at St. Laurent (west side of the river, section 21, township 44, range 1, W. 3) no longer able to serve the whole population, which was growing and extending to a distance, I was called upon to establish a new mission at Batoche Crossing, township 43, range 1, W. 3, about eight miles above St. Laurent, and on the opposite bank, which was becoming more rapidly populated. The presence of the missionary, combined with the local advantages of good land situated on the banks of a great river, led those poor people to ask that their lands should be surveyed, in order that they might enter them, and be enabled to obtain possession by means of patents.