

"manner, for some reason or other they failed to do so. Some were deterred through ignorance, thinking that they would have to pay taxes; others have stated that they feared if they did so the Government might call upon them to bear arms, but against what foe does not appear to have been very clear to them. Like all ignorant people, a few designing, mischievous men who have their ear, can work on their ignorance and prejudices for the advancement of their own selfish ends. This is particularly noticeable in the case of those who settled subsequent to survey along the South Saskatchewan River."

Further on Mr. Pearce says:—

"In March 1884, I instructed Mr. George Duck to proceed to the parish of St. Laurent to take evidence in support of those claims there, and all others above and below the same. He engaged the services of the Rev. Father André to assist him in explaining to these people the object of his visit; he obtained applications from nearly all the claimants, from the upper part of the settlement down to the south limit of Township 45, Range 1, west 21d. In this Township, owing to a bend in the river, there were several disputed claims, which at the time could only be arranged by making a traverse of the improvements, which is now being done. If, at the time of survey, these claimants in said portion of Township 45 had furnished the surveyors with the information necessary to adjust their claims, they could have been settled so soon as this Township was open for entry, viz., September, 1881; but, since then, through transfers and settlement by others thereon, they have become very complicated. If, at any time since then, these parties in said portion of Township 45, had united and furnished the Department, by means of survey, with the information necessary, the whole matter might have been arranged and entry granted long since. Below that point the settlers had taken up their claims in such a way that, with the information on the Township map, the river keeping across the entire lands claimed in an almost due easterly course, it was not deemed necessary to visit them on the ground to adjust the claims; these parties it was thought would be able to state, on application at the office, what lands were claimed by them. Many, although notified to make their applications for entry, refused to do so, in some cases purposely leaving their houses when visited for that purpose, and acting in this manner although urged by their priests and others to do as requested."

Is there not here an evident proof of culpable negligence, not of bad faith, for which the Government can in no degree be held responsible? The result has proved that if the Government were slow in giving effect to the claims of the half-breeds, there were excellent reasons.

Thus the petitions addressed by the half-breeds to the Government from 1872 to 1884, bear altogether 854 signatures. These different petitions did not all come from the neighbourhood of Batoche nor from the scene of the rebellion; on the contrary, those which were sent from Qu'Appelle, from Cypress Hills, from the Blackfoot Crossing and from Edmonton, localities more than 500 miles from the Prince Albert District, had 615 names, leaving 241 names for the Districts of Batoche, Duck Lake, St. Laurent, St. Louis de Langevin and Prince Albert.

Of the 241 petitioners, 99 had received many years before, land and scrip in Manitoba, and consequently had no claim, 40 took their letters patent before the Commission of 1885, and the other 102 have not been able to prove their claim.

In presence of such a state of things, can it be reasonably maintained, that the Government would have been justified in granting the demands of the half-breeds without examination, and simply on their petition?

2. The half-breeds protest against the system of surveying their lands, and demand that in future they shall be divided into river lots of two miles long by ten chains wide.

This question raised most serious difficulties and a new survey would have been very expensive; on the other hand, the settlers did not agree on this question, and the Government did everything possible to bring them to a practical understanding.

On the 19th November, 1883, a certain number of the settlers protested to the Government against the action of one of themselves, Michel Canny, who had made an entry for his land as a square lot, whilst they wished theirs to be laid out in river lots, and asserted that they had all come to an understanding not to make entries. This disposition of the settlers had the inevitable effect of multiplying the difficulties and hindering the action of the Government agents.

The third claim had no reason for being put forward, as the state of things was exactly that asked for, only the half-breeds neglected to conform to the regulations.

4. That the lands upon which they had long resided had been sold to others. This statement is unfounded; for no half-breed has ever been disturbed or dispossessed of his property, although more than one subsequently installed himself on Canadian Pacific Railway.