attention to the two classes of claims in Prince Albert district, in order that a decision may be reached at once. So you see that the surveys were not reported for three years, and the people were unable to secure entries. A man named Moore bought a lot of another party, who had improved over 100 acres and been in possession for seven years; yet he was unable to obtain his patent. Then Lawrence Clarke bought lands of Isbister, in 1877, and was subjected to similar annoyance. There were several other similar cases in Prince Albert, Battleford and Edmonton, which should be referred to the land board and adjusted without further delay. Mr. Pearce, in his communication to Mr. Walsh, says that: "Parties now claim that their claims should count prior to date of entry." The office at Prince Albert was opened on 21st September, 1881. The regulation requires that entry be made within three months from this date. Only five persons so entered. Between 200 and 300 were then settled within the limits so opened. The Dominion Lands Act, 1879, also 1880, makes it imperative that entries should be made within three months. Let me now give some of the reasons for this delay. I desire to call attention to these facts: that in the Birtle district two limits of each township had been defined, and most of the entire survey completed, though not open for entry; and that on 7th July, 1883, Mr. Walsh requests instruction in reference to farm instructors in the Souris district. On 13th September, 1883, Walsh sends Pearce's report to the Minister of the Interior. Pearce asks: "But when these parties fail to comply with the law as to entry within three months, there being nothing to prevent their doing so, and since the Act clearly states that entry must be made before application for patent can be received, should they not lose the time prior to entry? This, however, is to be taken into consideration in their case. As a class, they are very ignorant of the rules and regulations embodied in the Dominion Lands Act." This letter explicitly states entry must be made within three months, and evidence filed of prior residence and improvements. The Order in Council provides that entry may be antedated, so as to cover the time of investigation, and not the time land has been resided on and improved. The Prince Albert claims were not covered by the Order in Council; Miller's case was not within the rule. His entry was made on 12th April, 1882, seven months after the office was opened. If the three months' rule is overlooked, all, says Mr. Pearce, will claim they were ready to make entry three years ago, and are now entitled to be recommended for patents. I have called the attention of the House to an Order in Council of 19th October, 1882, and it must be remembered that the vast majority of the settlers did not make application within the three months allotted.

Mr. McLELAN. Why so?

Mr. MILLS. I have told the House the reason. The Government had demanded $2 an acre for pre-emption lands, and that demand was made although the settlers had been on the lands adjoining and were entitled to the pre-emption at $1. If the land office had been opened in proper time a large number of entries would have been made long before the Order in Council was passed increasing the value of the pre emption lands.

Mr. McLELAN. What reason had they to expect to obtain the land at $1 per acre?

Mr. MILLS. That had been the rule everywhere in the North-West.

Mr. McLELAN. Established by whom?

Mr. MILLS. Established by the Government.

Mr. McLELAN. Established by which Government?

Mr. MILLS. It was the rule when we were in office, and when hon. gentlemen opposite were in office, down to July, 1879.

Mr. McLELAN. Is not that in the forty-mile belt, that you prohibited anyone from going into, and in which you prohibited homestead settlement, but in regard to which you finally said to the people: You may go in and settle, and pay $1 per acre, cash, and such further sum as we may fix upon hereafter.

Mr. MILLS. The hon. gentleman knows that the Government reported to the people of Prince Albert that they were not within the railway belt. The hon. gentleman knows that the regulations to which he refers had no reference to Prince Albert. The Order in Council to which the hon. gentleman refers only refers to settlers in the portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway reserve within the limits of Manitoba, in the immediate vicinity of Selkirk. The hon. gentleman has but to look at it, in order to know precisely to what particular lands it refers. I have gone over the whole of the papers brought down by the Government. There is not, from the beginning to the end, any intimation that they are within the railway belt; on the contrary, they are informed that they are not, and that the regulations do not refer to them. The North-West council urged on the Government that immediate steps be taken to determine the question of title to land over three years in cultivation. A meeting of the Prince Albert settlement, reported in the Prince Albert *Times*, of the 17th of October, was held, of which Mr. Miller was chairman, and Mr. Fitzcochrane secretary. Let me call attention to what was said at that meeting. They complained of the grievances on account of the land policy; that the Government had failed to provide any machinery for the management of their internal affairs; that no attention had been paid to their remonstrances, prayers and memorials; that the so-called amendments of the Land Act had increased the injustice and the evils complained of by these settlers. It will be seen that up to this time no patents were issued. The lands were surveyed, a town was laid out, buildings were erected, of considerable value, and the settlers asked for the opportunity of mortgaging their property to raise money to carry on their business. But they could not get it, they could give no security, because the Government refused to issue patents. They insisted on the rule that the time should run from the date at which entry was made, and they refused to antedate the time for the improvements of these people, although some of them had been in possession for more than ten years. Now, Mr. Walsh, on the 9th of October, reports a number of other cases, and on the 10th of October, 1883, he writes to Mr. Duck, that the Surveyor General's letter was clearly a misinterpretation of the Act, but only in so far as having the residence prior to entry count as a part of the three years required. He also informed Mr. Duck that there was nothing in the Surveyor's letter forbidding or even deterring parties from making entry within three months after the land was open for entry, and furnishing evidence. This is perfectly true. They might have done so. But who could expect that ordinary settlers of the country, who were not lawyers, seeing a notice, that by law they had no right to antedate the entry, would contest the validity of the decision of the Department, and insist on the Dominion lands agent taking the evidence. And because they did not do so they are to be denied the opportunity of doing so when the Department admits that it was mistaken, and that the law had been misconstrued. Some months later information was communicated to the land office, that these cases might be antedated, and that the land agent might take evidence and enquire into the merits of the cases of those parties who were making application. But when application was