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# THE TRADE REVIEW

Untercolonial Journal of Commerce.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1868. 

#### THE FREE GRANT RESOLUTIONS OF ONTARIO.

HE subject of free grants continues to agitate Ontario. The Hon Mr Richards, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, on a recent occasion, stated that there were three great interests affected by the management of the Crown Lands-the agricultural, which he said was represented by settlers, the timber interests, represented by lumbermen, and the mining interests, represented by miners. The free grant resolutions, referred to by us last week, he stated had reference only to the agricultural interests of the Province—the lumbering and mining interests remaining for the further and future consideration of the Government. Having thus sub-divided the interests of the Province, which after all are really only one-namely, the peopling and settling of our unoccupied lands, and the development of their wealth and resources—the honorable commissioner explained his resolutions. The first affirms the principle that it is desirable to give free grants of land to actual settlers. The second referred to the localities between the Ottawa and Georgian Bay, in which these free grants lie. With regard to the third, the commissioner alters it so that persons 18 years of age—not 21 years—may be allowed free grants. The quantity of land to be given to each settler is fixed at 100 acres. The fourth resolution is rather ambiguous. It has been amended and reamended, and now it provides 'that after a continuous actual settlement on his lot of five years next after the date of his location, and the clearing and cutting of not less than fifteen acres, whereof there shall be cleared at least two annually, for a period of five years next after such location, and the erection of a house thereon of at least 16 by 20 feet, and the compliance with the regulations aforesaid, the locatee shall be entitled to a patent of such land." We certainly think that any locates complying with all these conditions and regulations ought to get the patent for his land. Indeed we might go further and say that any man who can explain off-hand what the above resolutions means ought decidedly to receive a free grant of land, timber and mines included, for his pains.

The fifth resolution contains the homestead principle, This resolution has also been considerably MORLAND, WATSON & CO.,

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FRED. COLE, Secretary.

Inspector of Agencies-T. C. LIVINGSTON P.I. S. 9-1y

amended. The following appears to be its provisions: "That to give greater encouragement to occupy and improve free grant lands, it is expedient that such lands shall not be liable for any debt or cause of action accrued or incurred at any time before or within twenty years next after the date of such location, while such lands are owned by the locatee, or his widow, heirs or assigns, and that the locatee shall not have power to allemate, mortgage or pledge such land before the issue of the patent." It will be seen that this resolution has been improved in some respects, and that some objections we pointed out last week have been modified and renewed. The exemption is confined to the locatee, his widow, heirs or assigns. It would appear, however, from the remarks of the Government, that it is not the attention to extend the exemption so indefinitely as to include the locatee's assigns, but to confine it to the widow and heirs. The inability of the locatee to alienate his lands has been circumscribed by the period at which the patent shall be issued. The homestead principle has not been extended to old settlers who have paid for their land; but the Government have announced that they look upon the introduction of homesteads as an experiment, and if the country desired it they will apply the principle to the entire Province.

The sixth resolution declares that free grants shall be confined to those lands which are adapted for agricultural purposes—it being the policy of the Govern-ment that the timber and mineral lands of the country shall be reserved for agricultural purposes. As passed so far, the resolutions declare "that locations for free grants shall be made only upon lands suitable for actual settlement and cultivation; and not upon lands valuable chiefly for their timber or mineral resources; and that all merchautable timber, mines, minerals, &c. upon any lands located or granted shall be reserved. A great many questions were put to the Government regarding this resolution, and piece-meat the following important information was elicited. As to the timber on the free grants, it is intended when the patent is-sues after the lapse of five years, that the patentee shall be entitled to the timber on his lot; and in the meantime he is to be allowed to use all the timber he may require in building and fencing, and of course for fuel and other necessary purposes. The timber cut down by the settler in clearing his farm, according to the settlement conditions, he is to be allowed to sell, if he pays the timber dues-the amount of which was not stated in the debate.

Such are the resolutions of the Ontario Government, embodying their policy regarding free grants. And it must be confessed that they are more liberal than was at first anticipated, although at the same tima many will say that they flo not go far enough.