

is granted him, at the expiration of which period he is expected to satisfy the local agent that he is on the land, in bona fide occupation. But perhaps he fails to do so, and neglects his subsequent obligations. Then someone hunting for a homestead marks him down, goes to the agent, takes an affidavit that the duties are in default and files an application for cancellation. The agent gives John Smith notice to show cause within 60 days why his entry should not be cancelled. If he fails to do so he loses the land by default. If he files a defence the papers are referred to H. O. and are fully considered by officers experienced in such matters. Perhaps an investigation is necessary, so the Homestead Inspector visits the land, takes evidence under statutory declaration, makes his own report, and the agent submits all to H. O. Here the case is laid before the Commissioner or his Deputy, and John Smith's entry is cancelled, or he is triumphantly vindicated, or more often allowed to go on doing his duties "cautioned by the Bench". Supposing then that he retains the land and fulfils the requirements as to residence and cultivation he in due time, after three years, appears with his witnesses before the local Sub-Agent or Agent and submits evidence under oath, answering questions on a prepared form calculated to extract the truth from the most evasive of mortals. If the Agent is satisfied that everything is all right he recommends it and sends it to Ottawa. Here it is subjected to the closest scrutiny, the whole history of the case being carefully reviewed and should there be discrepancies they must be inquired into. Sometimes a Homestead Inspector's report is found to be necessary, and when all is well and in good order the application for patent is accepted as satisfactory, receives the signature of the commissioner or his deputy and then is passed over to the Patents Branch where the preparation of the

patent itself is proceeded with. Then may the homesteader like the Peri before the gates of Paradise sing:—"Joy! joy for ever! My task is done. My work is finished and Heaven's gate won!"

This is a single case, but there are many in which all sort of difficulties and complications arise, resulting in corpulent files, showing memorandums after memorandum, legal opinions, rulings, appeals, further considerations, until at length a final decision is arrived at. Some such files have a historic reputation in the Department and are looked on with awe by the uninitiated.

Many weary hours "after five" are devoted to long and intricate cases involving questions of policy or practice, the result of which may be far reaching, leaving its mark on the great north west. And when long afterwards we hear it commented on in public, or see it criticised in the press, we think with a sigh of how familiar we were with its growth and development and how much time we devoted to helping it along.

The correspondence of the Branch has for years been increasing greatly and as shown by the last annual report, amounted to 271,184 letters—a good record, involving as it does answers and counsel on an infinite variety of subjects—not always directly connected with lands. As may readily be supposed we hear from "all sorts and conditions of men", often in strange languages requiring translation. Very characteristic are many of them, sounding strangely in our ears, and one of the most significant signs of assimilation is the difference a few years of Canadian life brings about in the writers. They soon acquire our habits and ideas—a change, let us hope, for the better.

There is a story told of a farmer coming across a newly arrived settler from the old country whom he found planting potatoes in the month of August. He good natured-