

These explorations, of which I have given a brief outline, attracted the attention of adventurous traders, who soon pushed their way beyond the farthest point reached by the explorers, and in the year 1700 fur traders from France are known to have penetrated as far as the Assiniboine Valley in the prosecution of their calling. In 1766 many traders from Montreal pushed their enterprises throughout the whole of British America, even to the Pacific shores. In 1784 the North-West Company of Montreal was formed, and carried on trade through Canada *via* the lakes to the head of Lake Superior, and thence across the continent to the Pacific Coast. Although the Prince Rupert Charter was granted by King Charles II. in 1670, it was not till the beginning of the eighteenth century that the Hudson's Bay Company entered the Saskatchewan and Assiniboine country to trade, and not till 1814 did they set up their claim of exclusive rights under their charter. The effect of this latter act, however, was to arouse the animosity and resistance of rival fur companies, and it was not long ere the Hudson's Bay Company found themselves opposed by powerful organisations, such as the North-West and X. Y. Companies of Canada. So great then became the competition, and so bitter the rivalry between the three fur companies, that great loss of property and life ensued; and finally there was every prospect of ruin falling on them all. In 1820, however, a union of the companies was effected, which resulted in their trading together under the original charter of the Hudson's Bay Company. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1821, which gave the company, as reconstituted, the exclusive fur trade for 21 years throughout the whole British North-West territory clear through to the Pacific. In 1838 a new arrangement was entered into by which the Canadian Companies, whose interests had been before united, and the stockholders of the Hudson's Bay Company, became entitled as nearly as possible to equal shares. A renewal of the license granting the right of exclusive trade was then applied for and granted to the Company for a term of 21 years from the 30th May, 1838.

The attention of the Canadian Government was first attracted to the country in 1816 by the conflict of interests between the Canadian Fur Companies and the Hudson's Bay Company, but no decided action was taken by Canada to acquire the North-West till 1868, although previous to that time negotiations on the subject had been going on between the Canadian and Imperial authorities.

The first attempt at settlement in the North-West was in 1811, when the Earl of Selkirk secured a tract of land from the Hudson's Bay Company for the purpose of planting thereon a colony of Scotch settlers, and in 1812 the first batch of these immigrants arrived in the country by way of Hudson's Bay and York Factory. The Scotch colonists at first met with many vicissitudes and trials in their new home, and it was not till 1827 that their settlement on the banks of the Red River began to show real signs of prosperity.

Lord Selkirk's colonisation scheme did not prove, so far as he was concerned, a financial success, and in 1835 the executors of his estate sold back the land to the Hudson's Bay Company for £84,111, although it had cost his lordship in the first place nearly £200,000. The Scotch settlers named their settlement Kildonan, and at the time when it passed into the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1835, the population