

remedied. The Government have seen fit to throw open for actual settlement the vast and fertile tracts of land south of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Government in that respect acted wisely and well. The great mistake committed was that it ought never to have been withdrawn from actual settlement, but should always have been left open for homesteading and pre-emption. As I said before, I do not propose to discuss the merits of these different complaints, but I propose to draw the attention of the House and the attention of the Government to these complaints. I propose fortifying the position of the North-West Council where I can fortify it, by the utterances of the supporters of hon. gentlemen, and by the utterances of the organs of hon. gentlemen opposite. Hon. gentlemen will find that one of the grounds of complaint is the locking up of the Mile Belt. I say it was a terrible mistake to have left a reserve of two miles in width through that country, from Brandon to the summit of the Rocky Mountains. It was a mistake that ought never to have been made. I say that those who went there, the early pioneers of the country, were entitled to every advantage that would result from a favourable location. I have not objected—I never did object—to the Government availing themselves of the location of town sites, and securing all the financial benefits that can be secured from the location of those sites. I think the Government were perfectly justified in so doing, in respect of town sites, and securing the proceeds of the sale of town lots; but when a reserve of 2 miles in width, extending through the whole of that territory, is made, I say it was an unwise and an injudicious reservation, and the quicker it was opened up the better. I know that many settlers went there—*bona fide* settlers went there—before they were aware of this reservation, and it is said—I believe it is capable of proof, I am sorry to say—that some of these settlers who went there, ignorant of those regulations and of this reserve, either lost their lands, lost the improvements they had made upon them, or were compelled to pay a very high price, in order to secure the lands they settled upon in good faith, and made improvements upon in good faith. I say it is an unsatisfactory condition of affairs, that the whole administration of the law in the North-West for the last two years has been of the most unsatisfactory character. I copied a letter from a paper published in the Old Country, a communication written from Canada and addressed to a Scottish newspaper, drawing the attention of the people of the Mother Country to the mode in which they were treated there. The letter is important in this sense, that it is apparently the expression of the opinions of a disinterested party, a settler from Scotland, who proposed making his home in the North-West, and does not appear to have been treated there with that consideration he ought to have been treated. It is addressed to the *Alloa Advertiser*, written to a friend, apparently:

"Sir,—I briefly drop you a few lines to warn your readers or their friends against being taken over-much with the Manitoba fever. This country has been much over-estimated and bepraised, and when we consider the manner in which emigrants are treated on the way, and left to find out how much they have been deceived when struggling amidst the mud of the North-West, they had better bethink themselves in time and stay at home."

"The climate and seasons of Manitoba are enough to contend against in farming there, and if to this we add the stones, bogs and endless swamps—the beautiful lakelets of some of our penny-a-liner writers—it will be found a country not quite a farmer's paradise. Then again, to crown all, the contemptible treatment of settlers by the Government. I was one of a party of five who went west as far as the Fort Ellice Trail, over the Pipestone Creek, and though we saw nothing to induce one to be in love with the country, took up a section of land as squatters, so as to have an undisputed claim, when the land office should open, to enter it. On going to the front again, however, for the rest of our goods—over a hundred miles distant—we learned for the first time, that in our absence among the mud, snow, brush and swamps of this mighty country, far from civilization or any chance of getting news, official or otherwise, an order had been issued from Ottawa to give squatters no mercy if found within a mile or a mile and a-half of any existing or projected railway."

Mr. CAMERON (Huron).

Now, Sir, that is a letter sent from the Dominion of Canada to a Scottish newspaper. Of course, it would have the tendency, published in a Scottish newspaper, seriously to affect the very class of people that we wish to secure in the country.

Mr. FERGUSON (Leeds and Grenville). Name. What name?

Mr. CAMERON. I do not agree with all the statements made by the correspondent. I think some of them are over-drawn, but I think some of them, on the other hand, especially with reference to the policy that has been pursued last year, are absolutely correct. Now, Sir, such a letter as that—

Mr. FERGUSON. Give us the name of the writer.

Mr. CAMERON. Is calculated to do very serious damage to the country. I will read you still further what is said by a Rev. Mr. Hay.

Mr. FERGUSON. I ask the hon. gentleman to give the name of the writer of that letter in the Scottish newspaper.

Mr. CAMERON. The Rev. Mr. Hay is a Presbyterian clergyman, who has been in the North-West, and I will also read you a statement made by the Rev. Mr. Wright, I believe a Methodist Minister. I do not know either of them, but they give their impressions of the effect of the policy of making this reserve two miles from the boundaries of Manitoba to the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The Rev. Mr. Hay says:

"Even abundance amid solitude is unendurable. Mr. Hay reports, in the district of which we are speaking, about ten settlers, that is ten families, to the township, as the average number. Very often it is much less than this, and in not a few instances settlers are separated many miles from their nearest neighbours. The intervening land, though it would be quickly and gladly taken up if only the Government had not forbidden it, is lying waste and vacant, either held by the Government or by speculators who have, in a very few instances, purchased it at the auctions where it has been offered for sale. No improvement can be looked for under such circumstances."

Then Mr. Wright says:

"Next morning at ten o'clock we left for the west. We passed Brandon, Broadview and Regina, intending to visit them, if possible, on our return, and early next morning arrived at Moose Jaw. The country through which we passed is, for the most part fertile, and nearly all more or less fit for agricultural purposes. The Mile Belt reserve and other restrictions on settlement tend to make the line of travel somewhat dreary, and one fails to get a true idea of the progress the country is making. Only here and there you see a settler's cabin in the distance, with a patch of grain in its vicinity, or a few acres of newly-turned sod. I conversed freely with men of all political stripes, but not one had a word to say in favour of the land regulations of the Government. They believe the land policy is seriously retarding the settlement of the country, and with singular unanimity they condemn it as unrighteous and unpatriotic. With regard to Manitoba especially, the sentiment is fast ripening into conviction that the Province must be allowed to manage its own lands in the same way as Ontario and Quebec. And why should they not? Having become a Province, why should provincial rights be denied them? They believe they have ability and honesty enough to manage their own affairs, and that having attained their manhood, they should no longer be treated as children."

Now, Sir, this all goes to show the very injurious consequences of the policy pursued by the hon. gentlemen opposite with regard to this reservation. I recollect the First Minister stated in the House here that not a single man ever lost his squatter's rights by reason of his having settled upon one of these reserves. Here is a person, by the name of Mr. Livingston, who writes this letter in the *Winnipeg Sun*:

"I see in your issue of to-day that Sir John Macdonald, in the debate on the Address, denies that any *bona fide* settler has ever been dispossessed. This I am in a position to contradict, for after residing on and cultivating my homestead for nearly nine years, and having improvements to the amount of \$20,000, my land was sold by the Government, and I have been dispossessed. Hundreds of others can tell the same story."

I do not doubt the truth of that statement. Mr. Livingston states, over his own name, that after settling upon a farm