

Ministers know that they have well nigh ruined hundreds of those who, before they went into that country, were their political supporters and friends. If there has been a half-breed insurrection, if there has been Indian massacres, if men have been butchered, if settlers have been robbed, if their dwellings have been destroyed, if their wives have been ignominiously treated by savages, how came it about? Has it not been because that men have in vain prayed and petitioned and entreated the Government for years to listen to their complaints and to redress their grievances? There is not a life that has been lost, there is not a cow or a horse that has been driven away, there is not a dwelling that has been burned, that would have been molested had Ministers given attention to the duties that devolved upon them in connection with the administration of the affairs of the North-West Territories. We have heard a great deal of late about the white traitors of Prince Albert settlement, and not a little has been done by organs of the Government to turn away the indignation from the Ministers to the settlers of Prince Albert, whom they had wronged. Here are men who have for four years been imploring the Government to do them justice and to redress their grievances. They demanded no aid. They were asking for nothing that would cost the country a farthing. They simply called upon the Government to do its duty; and how was there request met? Let me narrate the facts connected with that settlement. Prince Albert settlement was begun by the establishment of a Presbyterian mission there in 1866. The residents were largely half-breeds and Indians at that time. In 1873 there were ten white settlers. In 1874 there was a further accession, some of whom came from Canada and some from the United Kingdom. It was supposed that the Pacific Railway would be constructed on the line surveyed by the Government, and this was regarded as a favorable district for settlement. In 1879 they asked to have their land surveyed. During that year the special survey was pushed on to the Prince Albert settlement, so as to make it possible to comply with their wishes, and in 1878 the survey was made. During that same year Mr. George Duck was appointed agent for Dominion lands, and he went from Winnipeg to Prince Albert in August, so as to be ready, without delay, to enter upon his duties. But it does not appear that anything was done for more than two years; for I find that it was not until the 8th October, 1880, that he received any instructions from this Government, and then he was directed to obtain evidence by statutory declaration of all claims based upon occupation before the transfer of the country to Canada. He is instructed to include in his inquiry all cases at Fort Carlton and at Fort à la Corne, as well as those at Prince Albert. The agent reported, on the 5th March, 1881, that there were twenty three lots in Prince Albert settlement that had been occupied before the transfer of the country, but there were none in the vicinity of Carlton, and he believed there were none at Fort à la Corne. The great majority of the settlers of Prince Albert came later. A large number of them came and chose their locations in 1879, returned east for their families, and took possession of their locations the following year. There were white settlers who were English, and half-breeds partly English and partly French. They did not enquire into the terms of the Dominion Lands Act. They believed the Government was only too anxious to secure the settlement of the country. They expected when it was set out for settlement they would obtain entry without difficulty, and that they would be allowed to date their occupation from the time they entered upon the lands. Many of them, especially among those who squatted before surveys were made, as they made improvements, sold to other comers, as they had opportunity and as they found it to their advantage. It never occurred to those who purchased that any

objection would be made to the acquisition of the improvements of those from whom the purchase was made. They did not doubt that if they could show possession, as well on account of prior occupants as on their own, that they would be allowed to count the aggregate time and obtain their patents without difficulty, where the time was sufficient. On the 12th February, 1877, Governor Laird wrote to the Minister of the Interior that it would seem, from the wording of the Dominion Lands Act, that the settlers who located before the lands were surveyed would require to wait three years after having made entry before they could get their patent; that this would seem to be harsh to those who had been many years in the country, and to meet this legislation was promised by the then Minister. On the 9th September, 1878, the Lieutenant Governor visited Prince Albert settlement. On the following day a deputation of settlers presented an address to him. In it they spoke of their progress in agriculture, of their churches and schools; and they expressed the opinion that, should no untoward accident turn aside immigration, they will always hold the first place among the settlements of the country. They had confidence in the future prosperity of the settlement; they hoped for steam communication by land or water to hasten their progress. They informed the Lieutenant Governor that they feared trouble from hungry Indians, and they urged the establishment of a small detachment of police at Prince Albert, for the purpose of maintaining peace. They spoke of the propriety of having a representative in the Government of the Territories. About sixty of them had signed this address. This address shows the state of public feeling at that time. They were still contented. They took a cheerful view of their future prospects. They desired communication with the outside world. They wished security for life and property, and they wanted representation in the North-West council. Mr. Laird told them that the subject of representation had been already considered. That the census of the settlements at Prince Albert, Duck Lake and St. Laurent would be taken, and if the requisite number of people were found they would be called upon to elect a representative. The chairman, Mr. Lawrence Clarke, assured Mr. Laird that the people had the utmost confidence in the Government of the Territories. So far, they were contented and hopeful, and relied upon the Government doing them justice without undue delay. In the *Saskatchewan Herald*, of the 25th August, 1879, there is a report of the Lieutenant Governor and others having visited earlier in the month St. Albert and the settlements on the Upper Saskatchewan. The *Herald* says:

"The country between Edmonton and Prince Albert is settled, and the magnificent crops of wheat tell of the industry of the settlers and the fertility of the soil."

The same newspaper says that about a hundred people from Manitoba have located upon the South Saskatchewan and at Prince Albert early in the month. It says they are well off, and are well supplied with implements and live stock of all kinds. That numerous other small parties are on the road, on their way to the settlement. On the 30th November, 1878, Mr. Duck, the land agent at Prince Albert, writes to the Department as follows:—

"I have much pleasure in informing you that a large quantity of land outside the Prince Albert settlement survey has already been settled upon during the past season. There are, so far as I am aware, very few cases of disputed claims. The settlers are all anxious to make the necessary entries to secure themselves."

On the 22nd November, 1879, the Surveyor General writes Mr. Duck, that it has been brought to his notice that in cases where occupancy and improvements have preceded homesteading, the period of settlement has been counted from that date, and not from date of entry. This practice, the Surveyor General says, is contrary to the Dominion Lands Act, and cannot be allowed, and he advises the land agent