

THE IMPERIAL COLONISATION BOARD: BRITISH ADMINISTRATION ON
THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES, 1888-1909

by

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ABSTRACT

For twenty years after 1888, the British Government conducted an experiment in colonisation on the Canadian prairies. Hoping to avoid a radical redistribution of land to alleviate distress and disorder in Scotland's Western Islands, the Salisbury Government attempted an emigrationist policy. In 1888 it authorised the expenditure of public funds to establish colonies of Highlanders in Manitoba and Assiniboia.

Adverse economic and climatic conditions combined with inadequate planning to severely hamper the progress of the settlements. Problems associated with administration from London compounded existing difficulties. By 1893, a Liberal administration less inclined to favour state-aided emigration abandoned all commitments to such schemes on the basis of the experience of the struggling Highland settlements.

The Canadian Government was unable to adopt a consistent policy toward the British scheme. The Department of the Interior was frequently at variance with the Office of the Canadian High Commissioner in London. The settlements received much publicity and required much administrative attention before the British Government, with financial integrity, was able to conclude the settlement scheme in 1908.

It is argued that the experience of the Canadian settlements played a far larger role in determining British policy toward state-aided colonisation than has previously been acknowledged. It is maintained that the publicised difficulties of the settlements contributed to the Canadian perception that British agriculturalists made unsatisfactory settlers and to the subsequent policy preference for continental European emigrants. It is suggested that the episode stands in sharp contrast to the orthodox view of the Scottish experience in Canadian historical writing.

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INTRODUCTION

In the historiography of the British experience in Canada, the Scots are in a unique position. Unlike the English, the Welsh, and even the Irish, the Scots have attracted sufficient specific attention to create a distinct historiography quite apart from the generalised "British" variety.¹ It is not necessary here to catalogue the contributions of Scots to Canadian history in order to establish a justification of this separate treatment. Those contributions are so numerous and so widespread that few episodes in Canadian history can be said to have contained no Scottish component. But it is this very ubiquity which has caused the most serious problems in the consideration of the Scottish role in Canadian history. That consideration began as an exercise in filial pietism and even recent treatments have clearly been unable to leave that approach behind.² Moreover, the frequency with which Scottish names appear in nineteenth-century Canadian history has tended to emphasize the roles of individual Scots in the nation-building process with which Canadian historians have been so largely concerned until recently. Politicians and professionals loom large in this pantheon, but it is the entrepreneurial Scot who has emerged as the representative of the supposedly typical Scottish experience in Canada.³ While Canadian history, in

¹J. M. Bumstead, *The Scots in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Society, 1982); and W. Stanford Reid, *The Scottish Tradition in Canada* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1976) demonstrate both the extent and the difficulties of the attempts to treat Scots separately in Canadian history. So, too, does the spasmodically published *Scottish Tradition* from Guelph University.

²J. M. Gibbon, *Scots in Canada* (London: Musson Book Co., 1911); Reid, *Scottish Tradition in Canada*; Douglas Hill, *Great Migrations: The Scots to Canada* (London: Gentry Books, 1972).

³The extent of Scottish participation in government is apparent even from a glance at J. K. John, ed., *The Canadian Directory of Parliament* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1968). For business activity, see Gerald Tulchinsky, *The River Barons: Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977) and especially, David S. Macmillan, "Scottish Enterprise and Influences in Canada, 1620-1900." in R. A. Cage, ed., *The Scots Abroad* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 46-79. Even studies of

general, has long abandoned the "great man" and "nation-building" style of analysis, the Scottish-Canadian historiography has not.

Without attempting to disparage the Scottish entrepreneurial experience in Canada, it will be suggested here that most Scots did not step straight from the decks of the *Hector* into the boardrooms of the developing nation. Wage labour in industrial centres or the pursuit of an agricultural living provided the core experiences of the Scots in Canada as they did for other immigrant groups. If the Scots are still contained within the "British" grouping by labour historians, as agriculturalists they are perceived distinctly. But this perception is sustained by remarkably little academic attention.⁴ Enjoying the same reserves of tenacity and perserverance as their entrepreneurial counterparts, agricultural Scots are traditionally portrayed as overcoming adversity by dint of characteristics associated with their ethnicity. The agricultural image, therefore, combines with the entrepreneurial to present an image of prosperity and success that is almost seen as the inevitable consequence of Scottish emigration to Canada.

As with most stereotypes, the image contains some truth. Though it is one that any ethnic group would find flattering, it must be asked to what extent the stereotype accurately reflects the early experiences of unskilled immigrants to this country. It must further be asked to what extent the experience of Scots in other regions of Canada accorded with an image drawn largely from the rural townships of Ontario and the cities of central Canada. It is worthwhile to note that virtually all consideration of Scots in Canadian history has focussed upon

³(cont'd) business "failures" are chronicles of the rich and famous. Douglas McCalla, *The Upper Canada Trade 1834-1872: A Study of the Buchanans' Business* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

⁴A recent and welcome exception to this is Alan R. MacNeil, "An Examination of Scottish Agricultural Stereotypes", *Histoire Sociale* vol xix no. 37 (May 1986), pp. 39-56. See also J. K. Galbraith, *The Scotch* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1966); Charles Dunn, *Highland Settler* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953).

the pre-Confederation era. Evidence was therefore sought from a period falling after the principle migrations of Scots to Canada and from a region other than central Canada.

Well into the post-Confederation era, from 1888 to 1909, the British Government conducted a scheme of colonisation on the Canadian prairies specifically for Highland Scots. This study of the small number of families settled near Killarney, Manitoba in 1888 and near Saltcoats, Assiniboia in 1889 was initially undertaken to determine how closely the actual Western experiences of these settlers accorded with the prevailing central Canadian stereotype. The extent to which that stereotypical experience and the actual experience diverge perhaps accounts for this settlement scheme being the forgotten episode in the history of the Scots in Canada. However, it was recognised that the limited size of the settlements created methodological problems for a traditional settlement study.⁵ Other questions are therefore primarily addressed relating to family selection, the actual administration of the scheme, the role of the government and the effect of the scheme on public policy on both sides of the Atlantic. Because the scheme was a British social experiment arising from British political circumstances, and because the administration was based in London, considerable attention will be given to British developments. It must be stated at the outset that this is not primarily a study of settlement; it is primarily a study of the administration of a settlement scheme conducted by British authorities on Canadian soil.

The scheme has attracted some attention in the historiographies of both Scotland and Canada. In the recent British literature, it is seen as an incidental

⁵The historical geographer, Marilyn Lewry, has grappled with these problems and has revealed a great deal about the settlement process near Saltcoats. Marilyn Lewry, *A Study of the Locational Changes Among Hebridean Immigrants in Southeast Saskatchewan, 1883 to 1926* (M.A. Dissertation, University of Regina, 1985).

and insignificant outcome of the clash between capitalist, commercial agriculture and the Highland attempt to retain a traditional way of life based upon subsistence agriculture.⁶ Understandably, no attempt has been made in this literature to assess the role of the administration of Canadian settlements within the context of British social, economic and political developments. But curiously little attempt has been made to relate the actual history of the scheme to those developments. It will be argued here that this omission is due to a failure to acknowledge the considerable potential that existed for emigration from the Highlands in the late 1880's and to a failure to recognise the ultimate influence the scheme had on national emigration policy in the United Kingdom.⁷

The incidental references to the settlement scheme in the Canadian literature all indicate an acceptance of the view that the scheme's originators had a philanthropic purpose.⁸ Even the substantial dissertation by Marilyn Lewry,

⁶ J. P. D. Dunbabin, *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974); Dennis R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); Eric Richards, *A History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions 1746-1886* (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Andrew Charlesworth, ed., *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain 1548-1900* (London: Croom Helm, 1983).

⁷ James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1976); Howard L. Malchow, *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth Century Britain* (Palo Alto, California: Society For The Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1979). The recent article by Stuart Macdonald, "Crofter Colonisation in Canada 1886-1892: The Scottish Political Background," *Northern Scotland* vol. 7, no. 1 (1986), pp. 47-59 has acknowledged, to some extent, the effects the Canadian settlements had upon emigration and public policy.

⁸ Adam Shortt and A. G. Doughty, *Canada and Its Provinces, Volume 7* (Toronto: Publishers' Association of Canada, 1913), pp. 548-549; Stanley Johnson, *A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America* (London: Frank Cass, 1966), (originally published 1913) pp. 240-243; W. A. Carrothers, *Emigration From The British Isles* (London: Frank Cass, 1965), (originally published 1929), p. 235; A. S. Morton and Chester Martin, *History of Prairie Settlement and Dominion Lands Policy* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1938), p. 87; Gordon Donaldson, *The Scots Overseas* (London: Hale, 1966), pp. 79-80; Douglas Hill, *Great Emigrations: The Scots to Canada*, pp. 121-122; Alan R. Turner, *Scottish Settlement of the West*, in W.S. Reid, *op cit.*, pp. 82-83.

though critical of the Imperial Colonisation Board, essentially views Lothian's scheme as an act of late Victorian philanthropy. It will be contended here that the charitable impulse had little to do with the origin and administration of the settlement scheme. The Canadian literature also reflects a general confusion about the details of the scheme and repeats much misinformation.⁹ It will be suggested here that this confusion derives from a combination of the mis-reading of the scheme's motivations and of the absence of a comprehensive assessment of the role of the Imperial Colonisation Board. A primary purpose of this study is to provide that assessment.

Such confusion is hardly surprising. Examination of primary sources revealed that, on the Canadian side, misapprehension of the scheme was shared by both local populations and government departments. Neighbouring settlers and villagers regarded the crofter colonies as being favoured and even financially guaranteed against failure by both British and Canadian governments. The memorandum prepared by departmental officials in 1897 for the new Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, unintentionally but completely misrepresented the nature of the advances extended to the settlers.¹⁰ In Britain, so contradictory were contemporary statements concerning the settlements that even the Select Committee on Colonisation, after two years of hearing evidence, could not report accurately on the number of families involved.¹¹ So rapidly were the families

⁹Prior to Lewry's work the only considerations of the Canadian settlements were Kent Stuart, "The Scottish Crofter Colony, Saltcoats, 1889-1904," *Saskatchewan History* vol. 24, no. 2 (1971), pp. 41-50; John L. Tyman, *By Section, Township and Range* (Brandon, Manitoba: Assiniboine Historical Society, 1972), pp. 124-29; and Eileen Garland, *Trails and Crossroads to Killarney* (Altona, Manitoba: Killarney and District Historical Committee, 1967), pp. 105-15.

¹⁰Public Archives of Canada (hereinafter PAC), Records of the Department of the Interior, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(2), A. M. Burgess to Clifford Sifton, 25 February 1897.

¹¹Great Britain. *Report From the Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C152] 1891, p. xiii. It is stated that forty-three families were sent out in 1888.

dispatched that arithmetic errors were made and repeated for twenty years by the Imperial Colonisation Board.¹² Another Parliamentary Committee added to the misinformation in 1906.¹³

The major primary sources consulted in this examination of the Imperial Colonisation Board were British Parliamentary Papers, relevant Canadian departmental files held by the Public Archives of Canada, and the Agriculture and Fisheries files, series 51, (hereinafter AF 51) held by the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh.¹⁴ Only when considered in conjunction do these three sources reveal the complicated context in which the work of the Colonisation Board was carried on. The richest source is undoubtedly the AF 51 series. Containing much of the information and correspondence upon which the Board's reports were based, these files attest to the general accuracy of the information conveyed by the "official" reports. Moreover, these files contain much of the key correspondence between the Board's secretary and its Canadian agent over a period of fifteen years, as well as some of the surviving letters and petitions reflecting the opinions of the settlers themselves.

Finally, this study will demonstrate that the settlement scheme was not the historically insignificant footnote that it has been judged to be. The idea of assisted emigration from the Highlands was a highly-charged political issue, and the fate of the small groups of settlers sent out in 1888 and 1889 was not a

¹²Great Britain. *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Carry Out A Scheme of Colonisation in The Dominion of Canada of Crofters And Cottars From The Western Highlands And Islands of Scotland* (hereinafter *Report of The Imperial Colonisation Board*), [C-6067] 1890, p. 1. It is incorrectly stated that 183 people were sent out in 1888.

¹³Great Britain. *Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed to Consider Mr. Rider Haggard's Report on Agricultural Settlements in British Colonies*, [Cd-2978] 1906, pp. 3-4. It is incorrectly stated that only twenty-eight settlers remained at Pelican Lake.

¹⁴The Scottish Record Office files, with few exceptions, have recently been purchased by the PAC.

secondary, but rather the primary factor in determining the outcome of the political debate not only in Scotland, but for the entire United Kingdom. More speculatively, but no less significantly, it will be suggested that the highly-publicised scheme contributed to the change in Canadian immigration policies that came with Clifford Sifton to the Ministry of the Interior after 1897. The effects of the scheme on public policy, perceptions and populations on both sides of the Atlantic were invariably the opposite of those sought by the scheme's originators.

CHAPTER I. ORIGINS

In confidential reports submitted in 1886 to the newly-created Scottish Office, a Poor Law official described the social, economic and political conditions in the troubled Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Acknowledging that the tenant population was solidly opposed to leaving their home parishes, the official nevertheless included in one report an outline of a scheme of state-aided emigration.

It may not be out of place here to describe the mode in which I should propose to conduct a State-aided scheme...

The leading features of the scheme should be made known by advertisement, proclamation from the pulpit, and printed notice throughout the Highlands; I should then take no further steps to entice applicants, but should proceed to select suitable families from Benbecula, South Uist, and the Lewis. These families I should embark, in the principal port of their district, in a specially-fitted steamship, which would be thrown open to inspection, and to which I would convey the emigrants and their baggage, from outlying townships, in a tender. After providing for all the suitable families anxious to remove, I should take no further steps to popularize emigration, except by circulating printed information, and by visiting the townships to confer with those who preferred personal interviews. I should rely on the effects of letters from the first emigrants, and, if this were as I anticipate, the selection of suitable families would remain the only duty of any importance.¹

The reports had been requested by an administration uncomfortable with the approach taken by its Liberal predecessor to deal with continuing distress and disorder in the Western Islands. The recommendation regarding emigration, and the Poor Law official who made it, would not go unnoticed.

The causes contributing to Highland discontent in the 1880's were essentially the same as those that had resulted in the extensive migrations and

¹Scottish Record Office (hereinafter SRO), Lothian Papers, GD 40/16/32, Confidential Reports to the Secretary for Scotland on the Condition of the Western Highlands and Islands by Malcolm McNeill, October 1886, pp. 19-20.

emigrations of the previous century. The new political order after 1745 had produced classes of diminished social utility. The tacksmen² the first to find the new order intolerable; they were also financially capable of leaving the country, often with significant numbers of followers. The remaining population found itself in a new, direct tenant relationship with the estate owners. The new economic order that these landlords imposed rarely attempted to integrate the tenant population into the overall Scottish economy, and never succeeded in doing so in any more than a marginal way. Commercial cultivation was not contemplated, pastoral organization excluded the bulk of the population, and the kelp industry provided only a temporary respite from chronic cash shortages. When the other "solutions" to Highland destitution (namely, the increasingly ubiquitous potato cultivation and cash wages from the finishing industry) failed, as they did in the late 1840's and the early 1880's, the tenant populations were again brought face to face with the threat of starvation.³

The mid-century crisis was dealt with by means of private philanthropy and a combination of voluntary and enforced emigration. The crisis of the 1880's did not readily admit of this traditional treatment. A century's erosion of respect for the landlords, the example of the Irish tenantry, and the emergence of the Highland Land Law Reform Association⁴ (hereinafter HLLRA) all contributed to

²Historically fulfilling a military and "middle-management" role, the tacksmen were usually related to the laird and rented land from him to sub-let to the tenant population. See J. M. Bumstead, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America, 1770-1815*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982), pp. 34-5.

³For economic conditions in the Highlands, see Malcolm Gray, *The Highland Economy 1750-1950* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957); and James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1976); and T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People* (London: Fontana Press, 1987).

⁴By 1886 the HLLRA had been renamed "The Highland Land League". See James Hunter, "The Politics of Highland Land Reform, 1873-1895", *Scottish Historical Review* vol. 53 (1974), pp. 45-68 and D.W. Crowley, "The Crofters' Party, 1885-1892", *Scottish Historical Review* vol. 35 (1956), pp. 110-126.

an atmosphere that demanded a domestic prevention of destitution rather than a further depopulation. The demand of the people was for more land, for the enlargement of existing agricultural holdings, and for the return of land previously cleared of human population for the purposes of sheep and deer. From 1882, when a force of Glasgow constabulary were humiliated at the Battle of the Braes until the improvement of economic conditions after 1888, the Highlands, and especially, the Western Islands witnessed a constant series of rent strikes, deforcements and invasions of deer forests. A general breakdown of law and order was perceived to be occurring. HLLRA membership reached 15,000 in the Highlands by 1885 and, enfranchised for the first time in that year, the crofter and cottar population expressed its political will in the return of four "Crofter M.P.s" from the Highland constituencies. Particularly in London and Edinburgh, active HLLRA chapters drew constant attention to the Highland land issues. The problem of Highland discontent would not simply go away and Government was forced to seek a solution.⁵

The response of the Gladstone Government, though hesitant, was to appoint, in March 1883, a commission to enquire into social conditions in the Highlands and Islands and to make recommendations for the improvement of those conditions. Under the chairmanship of Francis Baron Napier,⁶ the Commission organized quickly and began its first hearing at the Braes in Skye on 8 May. By the time the hearings concluded in Edinburgh in late October, the Commission had held seventy-one meetings in sixty-one locations and had heard

⁵H. J. Hanham, "The Problem of Highland Discontent 1880-1885", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 19 (1969), pp. 21-65; James Hunter, "The Politics of Highland Land Reform, 1873-1895", *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 53, nos. 155-56 (1974), pp. 45-68.

⁶*Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 22, Supplement (London: Oxford University Press, 1937-8), pp. 1090-93. Highly regarded in the Diplomatic Service, Napier became involved in charitable organisation upon his return to Britain in 1872.

evidence from 775 witnesses.⁷ It won the confidence of the crofter population by demonstrating that it would tolerate no persecution as a consequence of evidence given and, especially in the Western Isles, expectations were high that the Government would enact legislation to benefit the tenant population.

These hopes were severely dampened by the public and parliamentary reception given to the Napier Commission Report presented on 28 April 1884.⁸ The Report was unable to offer a focussed proposal to deal with what was a diffuse problem, and was marred by three separate dissenting opinions on its main recommendations. Avoiding radical solutions such as the cancellation of deer forests and the redistribution of land, the Report proposed that a variety of measures be taken, ranging from the creation of townships to public expenditure on piers and communications, and to security of tenure for those paying in excess of £6 annually in rent.⁹

Two points - one a recommendation, the other a definition - contained in the Napier Report are crucial to the purposes of this study. Noting that a willingness to emigrate had existed in the past amongst Highlanders and arguing that the then current opposition to the idea was not "an ineradicable sentiment",¹⁰ the Report recommended that "the last of remedial measures" should be a scheme of state-supported family emigration from the overcrowded crofting districts.¹¹ Citing the *Canadian Dominion Lands Act* and the "success" of the seven families sent to the North-west Territories by Lady Gordon Cathcart

⁷Great Britain. *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry Into The Condition of The Crofters And Cottars In The Highlands And Islands of Scotland* (hereinafter *Report of The Napier Commission*), [C-3980] 1884, p.1

⁸Great Britain. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (3rd series)*, 1884, col. 1604-39. See also J. P. D. Dunbabin, *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 198.

⁹*Report of The Napier Commission*, [C-3980] 1884, pp. 59-109.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 101-104.

from Benbecula in the summer of 1883,¹² the Napier Report stated the Commissioners had contacted colonial dependencies in the Southern Hemisphere to enquire whether similar arrangements could be made.¹³ Commissioner Charles Fraser-Mackintosh dissented from this recommendation in general, but did acknowledge that such a scheme could be justified in relief of the congested population of the Lews and other minor Hebridean islands.¹⁴ As applied to those locations, therefore, the proposal had the unanimous support of the Commission.

Though the Commissioners struggled with working definitions of the classes with which they were concerned, the result of their efforts are approved of still by the crofting community's most eminent historian.¹⁵ Acknowledging that the distinction between crofters and cottars was "more easily felt and understood than delineated", the Report nevertheless defined the two groups thus:

By the word crofter is usually understood a small tenant of land with or without a lease, who finds in the cultivation and produce of his holding a material portion of his occupation, earnings and sustenance, and who pays rent directly to the proprietor.

The term cottar commonly imports the occupier of a dwelling with or without some small portion of land, whose main subsistence is by the wages of labour, and whose rent, if any, is paid to a tenant and not to the landlord.¹⁶

Particularly as a description of the small crofter, the emphasis on agricultural occupation was questionable. As early as 1851, it had been noted that it was inappropriate to regard them "as a class of small farmers who get...their living, and...pay rent from the produce of their crofts. They are truly labourers, living chiefly by the wages of labour, and holding crofts or lots for which they pay

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 105 and Appendix A, pp. 125-135.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁵ Hunter, *The Making of The Crofting Community*, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Report of the Napier Commission*, p. 3.

rent, not from the produce of the land, but from wages".¹⁷ The categorization of the crofters as cultivators would subsequently be used to advantage by emigrationists to coincide with Canada's proclaimed preference for British agriculturalists.

By the 1880's, the numbers of small crofters had increased substantially, particularly on Lewis, where they were no longer distinguishable from the cottars. Moreover, especially with regards to the Western Islands, both Napier definitions failed to identify the particular nature of the labour through which cottars and small crofters gained their livelihoods. That labour was in the fishing industry. Barra and Lewis were the heart of the annual herring fishery which employed the majority of the male population and, ashore, a significant portion of the female workforce, during its short season from mid-May to late June. Many small crofters and cottars also took part, on boats owned by East coast fishermen, in the North Sea fishing during July and August.¹⁸ In 1890, the Walpole Commission toured the Highlands and Islands taking evidence on the question of state support to the fisheries as a solution to prevailing destitution. The Poor Law officer who had submitted the 1886 confidential reports was a member of the Commission. Elsewhere, he wrote, "...the herring fishery is the main source of wages open to the great majority of the inhabitants of Skye and the Long Island."¹⁹

The Napier Report did acknowledge that the fishing population was "largely intermixed and identified with the farming class" and that by far the

¹⁷*Report to the Board of Supervision by John McNeill on the Western Highlands and Islands*, British Parliamentary Papers, vol. XXVI (1851), p. 6.

¹⁸*Report of the Napier Commission*, p. 54.

¹⁹Malcolm McNeill, *Blackwood's Magazine* (October 1889), p. 527. McNeill was fully aware of the central and traditional importance of fishing occupations for the populations of the Western Isles.

majority of both crofters and cottars were "wholly or largely dependent for their subsistence on their earnings as fishermen."²⁰ In urging state intervention on their behalf as a "special case", the first argument the Commission advanced was their importance in the fishing industry, and the second was their utility for naval defence.²¹ But, because fishing was not practised methodically or exclusively by either crofters or cottars, the Commission believed it "must regard the mass of the people as small agricultural tenants",²² and shaped its definitions to reflect that belief. The definitions accorded well with the aspirations of the crofters and cottars and with the programme of the emerging Land League, and were influential in the subsequent legislation enacted to secure and enlarge agricultural holdings. However, the Duke of Argyll, highly critical of Napier for viewing the crofters as a farming class, wrote that this mistake was "the parent of a thousand other mistakes on every other aspect of the question."²³ The Canadian settlements, to some extent, can be legitimately viewed as offspring of this "parent."

The response of the British Empire's colonies of settlement to Napier's recommendation on emigration was immediate. Even before the Report's presentation to Parliament, Australia responded informally to the Commissioners' enquiries regarding possible crofter settlement, and Cape Colony was said to be considering a scheme specifically for Skye crofters.²⁴ The Canadian Government briefly appointed Immigration Agents, in September 1884 and July 1885, to promote crofter emigration. It advised the first of these not to render himself

²⁰*Report of the Napier Commission*, p. 10 and p. 53.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 108-09.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 14.

²³Duke of Argyll, "A Corrected Picture of the Highlands," *Nineteenth Century* (November 1884), p. 692.

²⁴*Report of the Napier Commission*, pp. 106-07.

"liable to the reproach of having misled" and not to encourage emigration of "the pauper class."²⁵ The most concrete proposal was received by the Colonial Office from the Government of New Zealand by December 1884. The New Zealand legislature authorised the Governor in Council to set aside 10,000 acres on the coast of the North Island between Catlin's River and Maitāwhiri as "a special settlement, to be offered to such of the crofters...as may be disposed to emigrate to New Zealand; one-third of such land to be free-granted, in areas not exceeding 10 acres for each adult male."²⁶ Although the proposal did receive Cabinet consideration, action was not taken owing to the introduction in the British Parliament of crofting legislation in 1885 and again in 1886.²⁷

The last enactment of Gladstone's short-lived third administration, the *Crofter Holdings (Scotland) Act* was the reluctant and belated Liberal response to the recommendations of the Napier Commission's Report. Mindful of its dependence upon the support of the Crofter M.P.'s, and ever mindful of Ireland, Gladstone's administration framed its response to the continuing discontent in the Highlands in terms of land reform, though not along the lines advocated by Napier. No reference was made in the Act to the cottars, and crofters paying any rent whatsoever were accorded a statutory security of tenure. A Crofters Commission was established to tour the Highlands and Islands on an ongoing basis in order to determine the fairness of rents and to adjust those rents where

²⁵Public Archives of Canada (hereinafter PAC), Records of The Department of External Affairs, RG 25, vol. 10, John Lowe to D. Beaton, 11 September 1884. Beaton was appointed for a period of four months from September 1884. D. J. McIntyre, the M.P.P. for Lindsay, Ontario, was appointed for two months from July 1885. RG 25, vol. 12, Lowe to McIntyre, 2 July 1885.

²⁶Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, p. 1.

²⁷SRO, AF 51/188/36, Minute dated 6 July 1887.

necessary.²⁸ Although hostile to the Act itself, the Crofter M.P.'s were cognisant that, for the first time, the crofting community had received legal recognition of its "special case" status and that the instincts of a Liberal administration were to base its consideration of a response to Highland problems, if not on land redistribution, at least on questions relating to land tenure.

As predicted by those who criticised the Bill for doing too little too slowly, events in the Highlands would not wait upon long-term outcomes. The geographic focus of Highland discontent in 1887 became the island of Lewis, the only part of the Highlands that had not shared in the general depopulation since the 1850's.²⁹ In fact, the population of the Lews was still increasing and, according to the census figures of 1886, had risen to 27,000. The serious decline of income from traditional fishing occupations had continued and the response of both the crofter and cottar populations to the scarcity of provision was again the demand for increased agricultural holdings. This demand found expression in a highly publicised raid on the Park Deer Forest in November.³⁰ Forcefully making a political point on land use, the raiders also secured a short term food supply in slaughtering a limited number of deer. A meeting of concerned Stornaway residents petitioned the Secretary for Scotland to conduct an inquiry into conditions on the Island. Lord Lothian,³¹ the new Scottish Secretary, acted quickly in appointing Malcolm McNeill, Visiting and Inspecting Officer for the

²⁸ For discussion of the Act, see Hunter, *The Making of The Crofting Community*, pp. 161-64 and T.C. Smout, *A Century of The Scottish People*, pp. 73-4.

²⁹ Michael Flinn *et al*, *Scottish Population History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 436.

³⁰ Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-73. The Park Raid did not escape notice in Canada. See, for example, *The Morning Herald*, Halifax, 23 November 1887, p. 3 and 24 November 1887, p. 3.

³¹ Schomberg Henry Kerr, the ninth Marquis of Lothian remained as Secretary for Scotland until the Liberal victory of 1892, though he was never to attain Cabinet rank.

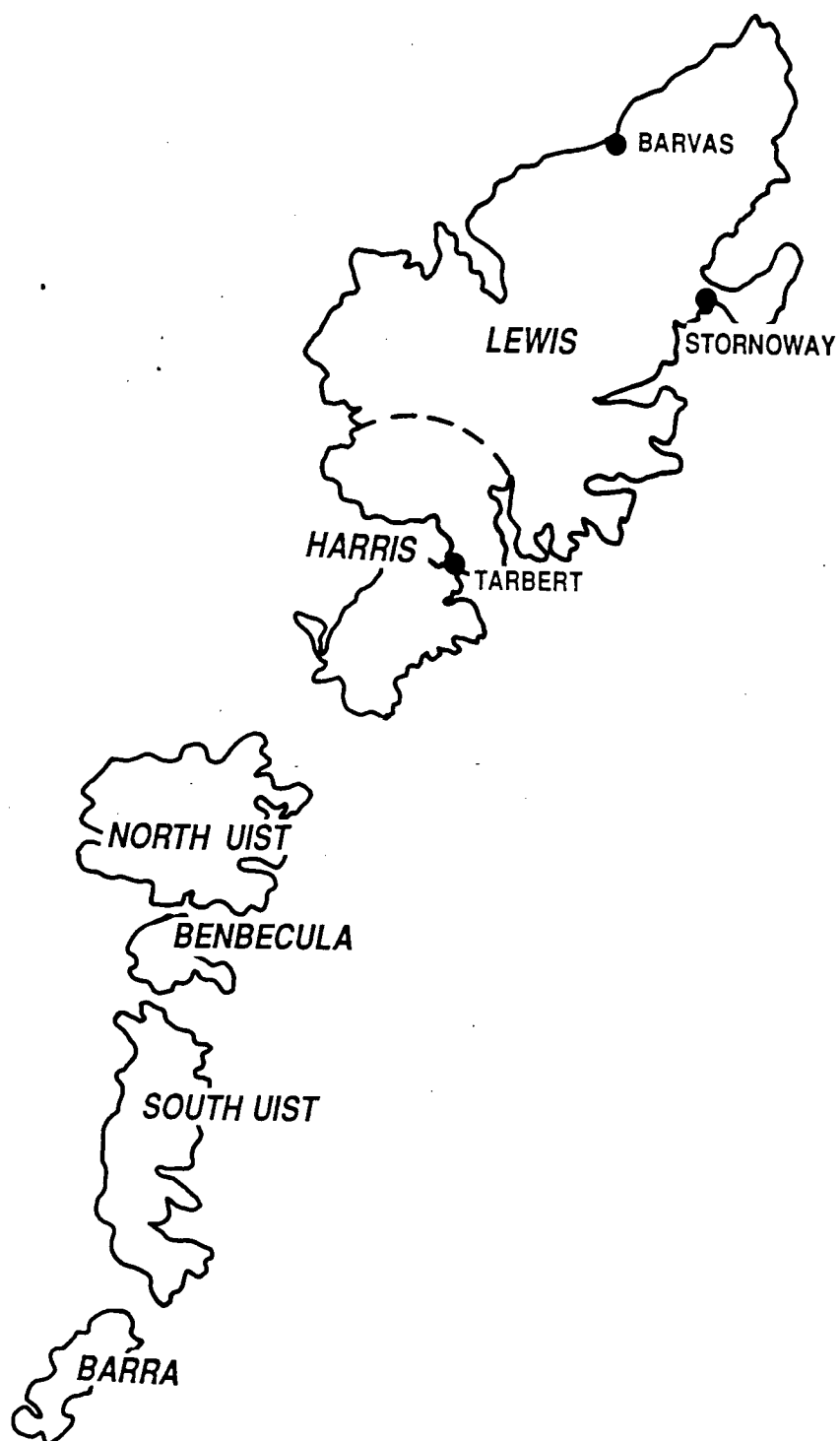


Figure 1. The Western Isles of Scotland

Western Highlands and Islands for the Edinburgh Board of Supervision^{3 2} and author of the Confidential Reports of 1886, and Alexander Fraser, Sherrif in the Lews, to conduct the inquiry. Their report was received by Lothian towards the end of January 1888 and was unequivocal in its description of the grim social conditions on the island and in recommending a single solution to remedy those conditions. Although acknowledging that destitution did not prevail at the time of the inquiry, the report stated

that actual starvation in the Lews has only been averted during the present winter by the exceptional abundance of last season's crop, and will almost certainly occur before the crop of next season is available.^{3 3}

Strongly urging a substantial reduction in population as the only adequate means to avert starvation, the Report concluded with two pages of "Emigration Extracts" including the Napier Report's call for a scheme of state-aided immigration. The Report, therefore, did not confine itself to description; it was an undisguised attempt to guide policy.

If Lothian had not overtly invited such a statement, he cannot have been surprised by it. In appointing Malcolm McNeill to conduct the inquiry, he had selected a perennial champion of emigration. The nephew of Sir John McNeill (whose 1851 Report had espoused emigration as the solution to the Highland's ills),^{3 4} Malcolm McNeill joined the Board of Supervision just as his uncle was retiring in 1868.^{3 5} As Visiting and Inspecting Officer, McNeill was

^{3 2}The Board of Supervision became increasingly responsible for the centralised administration of the Scottish Poor Law after its creation in 1845.

^{3 3}Great Britain. *Report to Her Majesty's Secretary For Scotland on The Condition of the Cottar Population in the Lews*, [C-5265] 1888, p. 7.

^{3 4}*Report by Sir John McNeill, op. cit.*

^{3 5}*Who Was Who 1916-1928*, (London: A. and C. Black, 1929), p. 686. McNeill remained with the Board of Supervision until its absorption by the Local Government Board in 1894. He became Vice President and Chairman of the

employed with supervisory responsibilities in connection with the Poor Law in the Highlands and Islands and became further familiar with social conditions there as secretary to the Napier Commission in 1883-84.³⁶ Following his work with the Napier Commission, McNeill made it clear what he believed the nature of that remedy should be when he reported to the Board of Supervision advocating the assisted emigration of the entire population of St. Kilda to Australia.³⁷ The strongly pro-emigration language of McNeill's report on the cottars in 1888 clearly did not disappoint the Scottish Office.

By late 1887, at the time of the Park Deer Forest raid, the Scottish Office in general, and Lothian in particular, had become frustrated by the difficulties encountered in organizing an emigration scheme, and, on at least one occasion, Lothian threatened to resign over the issue. Eighteen months of correspondence, proposals, and negotiations had failed to produce a plan that could win Government approval. Even before the passage of the Crofters Act, the newly-established Scottish Office had begun enquiries concerning crofter emigration. Lord Dalhousie, briefly Secretary for Scotland in 1886, held discussions with the Government Agent for New Zealand and re-submitted to Cabinet the plan embodied in New Zealand's legislation of 1884.³⁸ The Government did not act upon this proposal and in December 1886, at the direction of Dalhousie's

³⁵(cont'd) Local Government Board and was knighted in 1904.

³⁶Great Britain. *Report from the Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, p. 18.

³⁷Thomas Ferguson, *Scottish Social Welfare* (Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone, 1958), pp. 50-52. The Board concurred and urged the landlord, Macleod of Macleod, to consider the proposal. The Board consistently supported the cause of emigration. It reported in 1887-88 that it feared the collapse of the whole system of poor relief in the Western Isles and urged "some effectual and permanent" remedy. See J. P. Day, *Public Administration in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (London: University of London Press, 1918), p. 121.

³⁸Great Britain. *Report From the Select Committee on Colonization*, [C-274] 1889, pp. 1-2.

successor, A. J. Balfour, the Scottish Office wrote to the government agents of New Zealand and Canada asking what arrangements each country would be prepared to make if a crofter emigration scheme were approved. Specifically, the agents were asked what commitments could be made with regard to selection of emigrants, assisted passage, supervision in the colony, land grants and the collection of advances.³⁹

In reply, Sir Francis Bell, again drew the attention of the Scottish Office to the 1884 New Zealand legislation, noted that his country had urged concerted action on behalf of the crofters, and expressed annoyance that his government had received no response whatsoever to its proposal.⁴⁰ The only anticipated expense required of the Imperial Government was to be one half the passage money. The Canadian High Commissioner, Sir Charles Tupper, in responding for Canada, promised assisted passages, an extensive land grant in Manitoba or the North West, and Canadian involvement in disseminating information and selecting emigrants. He stated that the proposed supervisory agent would have to be an Imperial responsibility and declared that Canada would not undertake to collect advances made.⁴¹ Significantly, however, he included with this letter, copies of the 1883 and 1884 amendments to the *Dominion Lands Act* as evidence that the money advanced could "be secured upon the land."⁴²

This was undoubtedly the crucial factor which persuaded Lord Lothian,

³⁹SRO, AF 51/7, Scottish Office to Charles Tupper, 13 December 1886. See also AF 51/188/36 and AF 51/15.

⁴⁰SRO, AF 51/188/36, Francis Bell to Scottish Office, 11 January 1887.

⁴¹This was perfectly consistent with the response of the Canadian Government gave to Mr. Kimber's colonisation scheme. Great Britain. *Correspondence Respecting A Scheme of Colonisation Referred in 1887 For The Consideration of Colonial Governments*, [C-5361] 1888.

⁴²SRO, AF 51/7, Charles Tupper to Scottish Office, 17 December 1886.

who took over as Secretary for Scotland in March 1887, to concentrate upon the Canadian option. The New Zealand proposal, though involving less expenditure, did not provide for recovery of that expenditure by the British Treasury and, although both public and parliamentary opinion were moving towards acceptance of the principle of state aid for emigration purposes, neither would have countenanced the outright grant of public money.⁴³ The emigration scheme that emerged over the next two years was therefore firmly grounded in a sense of contemporary fiscal propriety that was determined to prevent notions of philanthropy from extending beyond the legitimate parameters of the Local Government Board.

Having committed itself to the principle of a state-aided scheme, the Scottish Office turned to consideration of practical arrangements. The example of Lady Cathcart's emigrants in the Canadian North-West had been closely observed by the Scottish Office. Between 1883 and 1885, sixty-seven families were assisted under the terms of the *Dominion Lands Act* amendments permitting security for advances to be taken upon the emigrant's free land grant. The experiment was widely held to be a success in official circles as well as by the crofting community.⁴⁴ A petition Lady Cathcart received from other tenants on her Benbecula estates requesting her assistance in their emigration "to some British Colony" was conveyed by Malcolm McNeill to the Lord Advocate in

⁴³ Similar concerns had been expressed in connection with earlier proposals that Government become involved in emigration. See, for example, Stanley C. Johnson, *A History of Emigration*, (London: Frank Cass, 1918); W. S. Shepperson, *British Emigration to North America*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957); and H. J. M. Johnstone, *British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830: "Shovelling Out Paupers"*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

⁴⁴ See, for example, SRO, AF 51/6 for the 1885[?] prospectus of the Scottish Canadian Land and Settlement Association, and AF 51/7 for a speech by Sir Charles Tupper to the Associated Chambers of Commerce in London in 1885.

October, 1886.⁴⁵ The land company responsible for these settlements in Canada was the Edinburgh-based Canada North West Land Company, and negotiations were entered into to determine if it would fulfil the same function for a government-assisted scheme. At least two other companies, the Commercial Colonisation Company of Glasgow and the Canadian Pacific Railway, were also invited to submit proposals. Files held by the Scottish Record Office indicate that plans concerning the immediate emigration of as many as 3,000 families were seriously contemplated.⁴⁶

At no time during 1887, was a government administration considered for the proposed scheme. Sir George Stephen, president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, urged that neither the Canadian nor the British Government could "safely become the creditor of the settler."⁴⁷ Proposals from the land companies were taken to Cabinet in May and July of 1887 but were rejected due to the Government's refusal to allow certain of the financial requirements of the companies. When requested to submit proposals again in December, precisely when Lothian was most concerned about discontent in the Long Island, the land companies refused to do so.⁴⁸

By this date, Lothian was becoming even more apprehensive of what the future could hold for the entire Highlands. He regarded the 1886 Crofters Bill as highly unacceptable and was confident that a Conservative administration would

⁴⁵SRO, AF 51/3. This petition indicates that private communication from Lady Cathcart's Canadian settlers to relatives and friends were favourable and that the "pull" of successful settlers was functioning as an inducement to emigrate before the Government scheme was launched.

⁴⁶SRO, GD 40/16/33/23, George Stephen to Scottish Office, 16 February 1887 and Peacock Edwards to Scottish Office, 19 March 1887.

⁴⁷SRO, AF 51/8, Sir George Stephen to Secretary for Scotland, 15 February 1887.

⁴⁸Great Britain. *Report From the Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C 274] 1889, pp. 2-3. See also SRO, AF 51/188/36, Scottish Office Minute, 6 July 1889.

never willingly contemplate similar measures. He was nevertheless aware that further disturbances in the Highlands could only lead to increased demands for legal adjustments in landlord-tenant relationships along Irish lines.⁴⁹ His worst fears and his highest hopes were excited by the organized "lobby" Malcolm McNeill orchestrated from Stornaway. McNeill followed the submission of his official report on conditions in the Lews with a letter to the Scottish Office urging government support for the twenty to thirty local families who were desirous of moving to "Manitoba".⁵⁰ He stated that such support would "result in a satisfactory solution of the difficulties of this district."⁵¹ Another letter written on behalf of twenty "householders, cottars and squatters" declared that they were "prepared to promise repayment in full of any sums that may be advanced."⁵²

With the desire to emigrate apparently increasing, the Scottish Office continued to be frustrated throughout the Spring of 1888 by its inability to formulate a scheme that would excite the speculative hopes of a competent land company and, at the same time, satisfy the political and financial requirements of the British Government. Although subject to increasing demands that it involve itself in assisting impoverished urban populations to emigrate, the government was reluctant to enter a field it thought best left to private philanthropy and was acutely aware that the approval of any single scheme would encourage

⁴⁹James Hunter, *The Politics of Highland Land Reform 1873-1895.* *Scottish Historical Review* vol 53, nos 155-56 (1974), p. 60.

⁵⁰The identification of Manitoba was reflective of both the reputation of the Cathcart settlements and the widely-held belief that Manitoba and the entire Canadian West were synonymous.

⁵¹SRO, AF 51/17, Malcolm McNeill to Scottish Office, 24 January 1888. Significantly, information concerning this petition was obtained by the fiercely pro-emigration *Scotsman*. McNeill enjoyed a close working relationship with this newspaper in 1888. See below, Chapter 2.

⁵²SRO, AF 51/17, John Campbell and Hugh Murray to Scottish Office, 24 January 1888.

demands for others.⁵³ Precedent and caution were therefore critical from the government point of view. If state involvement was conceivable, financial orthodoxy required that any sums voted by the British Treasury for emigration purposes ultimately would have to be repaid. This proved to be the major obstacle from the point of view of the land companies. Not one would agree to guarantee the repayment of imperial funds advanced to individual emigrants and, as the Scottish Office had long been aware, neither would the Canadian Government.⁵⁴ Further complicating the attempt to set forth a coherent emigration scheme was the activity of the British Columbian agent, Alexander Begg. Highly adept at generating publicity, Begg conducted both private and public negotiations in December 1887 for a scheme of settling 1250 crofter families on the coastlines of British Columbia for purposes of commercial fishing. He created considerable interest in his proposals and considerable confusion in various government departments, including the Scottish Office.⁵⁵

Abruptly in April 1885, the government accepted a proposal from the Scottish Office for a scheme of crofter colonisation in the Canadian West. The Government apparently saw in the rural and "special case" status of the crofters a convenient means of deflecting the persistent demands for state involvement in schemes of urban emigration. A resolution of the financial difficulties with the land companies had certainly not been achieved. However, at this critical moment

⁵³ Great Britain. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates* (3rd series), 1887, col. 767-68. See also Lord Brabazon, "State-directed Emigration: Its Necessity", *Nineteenth Century* (November 1884) pp. 764-87; H. S. Northcote, "Work For Willing Hands: A Practical Plan For State-Aided Emigration", *Blackwood's Magazine* (February 1888) pp. 273-78.

⁵⁴ See above, p. 12.

⁵⁵ See SRO, AF 51/151 for the British Columbia scheme. See also SRO, AF 51/88 for the surprising number of applications which specified British Columbia as the preferred destination. For the fate of the B.C. proposal, see Jill Wade, "The Gigantic Scheme: Crofter Immigration and Deep-Sea Fisheries Development For B.C.", *B.C. Studies*, no. 53 (Spring 1982) pp. 28-44.

Lothian was able to present to Cabinet a memorial signed by most Highland landowners urging state support for public works and emigration. This unquestionably provided Lothian with the kind of eleventh-hour evidence he needed to impress the Government that a desperate situation existed. Fully cognisant of the security provisions afforded by the Canadian *Dominion Lands Act*, the Government agreed to advance £10,000 towards a scheme of emigration, on the condition that £2,000 would be raised by private subscription. It agreed to the appointment of Board of Trustees to administer the scheme and to "collect the instalments of capital and interest" from the settlers.⁵⁶ The involvement of private philanthropy lent moral legitimacy to the scheme while the possibility that private concerns could profit from public money was apparently eliminated by the promise of "gratuitous co-operation" that had been received from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian North-West Land Company. The Canadian Government undertook to "render every assistance...in connection with the selection of the land for the emigrants, and their preliminary settlement", and required only that it formally approve of the selected emigrants.⁵⁷

The entire focus of the negotiations conducted by the Scottish Office during the preceeding sixteen-month period had been with the land companies. The Canadian High Commission advised the Scottish Office in May 1887 that the expenses involved in mortgage registration could be charged against the homestead and Tupper forwarded the July scheme to his Government in August 1887.⁵⁸ No records of formal or informal communication between Canadian

⁵⁶ SRO, AF 51/22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ SRO, GD 40/16/11/69, Colmer to Scottish Office, 4 May 1887, and GD 40/16/11/17, Tupper to Scottish Office, 8 August 1887.

authorities and the Scottish Office from 8 August 1887 and 10 April 1888 have survived. At the instigation of a suddenly frantic Scottish Office, questions and directions demanding urgent attention were almost daily directed to Canadian authorities by the Colonial Office after 11 April. Having announced his intention to proceed with the emigration that spring, Lothian sought the official sanction of the British Treasury and the Canadian Government. The Colonial Office was requested to urge Canadian acceptance of the scheme and in its letter to Lord Lansdowne, Governor-General in Canada, stated

..that no pecuniary liability will attach to the Canadian Government, and that the duty of collecting the installments of capital and interest will rest on the proposed Board and not on the Dominion officers.⁵⁹

Legislation that would "constitute the Board a corporation capable of suing and being sued" was also requested.⁶⁰

Treasury approval was given on 12 April; the Canadian reply to the Colonial Office request was not received until 26 April. It promised Canadian co-operation in the "manner suggested", but asked for clarification of the nature of the legislation required. The Scottish Office conferred with the Lord Advocate, but quickly realized that negotiations between Canada and the Colonial Office would require some considerable time. On 28 April, it wrote to the Treasury begging that the scheme's "ratification by Act, warrant, or otherwise" be accomplished by the British Government to avoid a further delay.⁶¹ The letter

⁵⁹SRO, AF 51/25, Knutsford to Lansdowne, 11 April 1888.

⁶⁰*Ibid.* Canada was also asked to grant the free lands and to make an appointment to the proposed Board.

⁶¹Great Britain. *Memorandum of Arrangements Entered into With the Canadian Government, the Principal Land Companies, etc. for the purpose of Starting a Colonisation Scheme for the Crofters and Cottars of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland and Relative Correspondence*, [C 5403] 1888, p. 6, Cochran-Patrick to Treasury, 28 April, 1888.

further noted that if the work of selecting the emigrants were not begun immediately, the scheme would of necessity have to be abandoned "until next year."⁶²

Lothian was not prepared to wait "until next year." With legalities unclear, with questions of finance unresolved, with less than £700 raised by private subscription, with the simple assent of a barely interested Canadian Government, and with negotiations still incomplete with the various land companies, the Scottish Office launched its single-minded plan calculated to bring peace to Lewis. Ignoring the respectfully expressed concerns of the Board of Supervision in Edinburgh that a Poor Law officer may "not be in the most favourable position either to select or to persuade emigrants,"⁶³ verbal instructions were given to Malcolm McNeill on 3 May to leave at once for Stornoway.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ SRO, AF 51/27, Board of Supervision to Scottish Office, 23 April 1888.

CHAPTER II. DEPARTURES

The scheme approved so unexpectedly in April 1888 was sustained by no practical arrangements whatsoever. The co-operation of the Canadian Government had been promised, but beyond the confirmed land grant, the form of that co-operation had not been discussed. Though efforts were being made, no agreement had been reached between the Scottish Office and a settlement company. To implement the emigration experiment, Lothian selected the man whose energy and idealism had first persuaded him that the Highland land problem could be solved. With only general instructions, Malcolm McNeill would be obliged to improvise details of both policy and practice. In a number of significant areas, controversy was to emerge between the emigrants and the scheme's originators as to what had and what had not been promised. Until the settlers were in Canada, the extremely short interval between government sanction and emigrant departures concealed from all concerned the contradictory expectations that had been created.

A series of delays on both sides of the Atlantic prevented the appointment of the administrative board until late December. Until then, the Scottish Office, though reluctant to set policy on behalf of the anticipated board, dealt with the issues arising from the settlement of the first two groups of emigrants. From its appointment at least until its fourth meeting in July 1889, the Imperial Colonisation Board (I.C.B.) attempted only to implement and to supervise decisions taken before it had been constituted and for which it was suddenly responsible. Both the settlers and the scheme's administrators would be obligated for two decades to operate within the framework that evolved so rapidly during the spring and summer of 1888. In order to understand their subsequent relationship, a thorough examination of that framework's evolution is

necessary.

The Island of Lewis was not in a constant state of turmoil in May of 1888. An unusually prosperous spring fishery and the continued presence of sixty marines at Stornoway had combined to end the series of serious land raids that had begun with the Deer Park invasion of the previous November.¹ However, the acquittal of the Deer Park raiders by an Edinburgh jury and the severe sentences subsequently given to those arrested during another attempted invasion in January enhanced the uncertainty on the Island with regards to both the Government's intentions and the Land League's tactics. A nervous Scottish Office was relieved that the imminent opening of the herring fishery was about to provide cash income for the majority of the Lewis population but recognised that the social and political conditions that let Lothian to daily expect the occurrence of fresh disorder were unchanged. It recognised the numerically increasing cottar population concurred with the crofter population that landlessness was the cause of distress, and that both cottars and crofters were willing to act beyond legal restraint when that condition became severe. Despite Malcolm McNeill's contention that an emigration scheme would be warmly received in the Long Island and despite being in receipt of a considerable number of petitions, the Scottish Office was anxious lest its scheme be thwarted by the proponents of radical land reform. The parliamentary announcement of the scheme on 1 May was restricted to a general outline of the proposed plan and no official notice was given, in parliament or elsewhere, that the Scottish Office had sent an agent to Stornoway for the purpose of selecting thirty families for immediate emigration.²

¹James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1976), pp. 170-77.

²As late as 11 May, Parliamentary spokesmen for Land League views seemed unaware of McNeill's activities on Lewis. Great Britain. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, vol. 325 (1888), columns 1031-34; vol. 326 (1888), columns

Malcolm McNeill found himself charged with a major responsibility in the prosecution of the solution to Highland distress that he had consistently advocated. He was instructed to familiarise the people of Lewis with the details of the scheme, to accept preliminary applications for assistance to emigrate, and to await the arrival of a representative of the Canadian Government in conjunction with whom he was to select twenty-five families for emigration as soon as was practicable.³ His services had been obtained only after the Scottish Office had over-ruled objections by the Board of Supervision that its employees should not be involved in activities unconnected to their official duties.⁴ Though McNeill did not share the reservations expressed by his employer and though he approached his assignment with vigour, he was not without misgivings. Since the scheme was made public in mid-April, the Scottish Office had professed its intention to proceed with the embarkation of a number of families during the emigration season of 1888. This was despite a widely shared perception, amongst both the plan's critics and proponents, that practical difficulties in establishing administrative machinery, in making family selections, and in arranging for departures would prevent the implementation of actual emigration until 1889.⁵ McNeill did not accept that these deficiencies were grounds for postponement, but he did constantly draw the attention of the Scottish Office to the complications caused by the haste with which he was compelled to act.

McNeill arrived in Stornoway on 5 May without any printed information to circulate amongst the local population. He requested the ministers of the churches to advise their congregations of his presence and to request that those

²(cont'd) 44, 332-33, and 538.

³Scottish Record Office (hereinafter SRO), AF 51/34, Correspondence between McNeill and Scottish Office, 4 May to 7 May 1888.

⁴SRO, AF 51/27, Board of Supervision to Scottish Office, 23 April 1888.

⁵See, for example, *Glasgow Herald*, 25 April 1888.

interested in receiving assistance to emigrate should contact him on the morning of Monday, 7 May.⁶ The pulpit announcements having been made, McNeill busied himself with the preparation of the dozens of manuscript forms he anticipated he might need, listened to the doubts expressed by local officials whether any applications could be secured on such short notice, and allowed himself the admission that "complete failure" was a possibility.⁷ Seed potatoes purchased through a Queensland subscription had arrived and gutting and kippering crews were already engaged for the approaching herring fishery. McNeill's concern was that the relief these afforded would deflect consideration of emigration as a more permanent solution to distress.

The concerns proved groundless. Over the next three days, McNeill interviewed so many applicant families that he was able to cope only with the assistance of Sheriff-Substitute Alexander Fraser and a local Poor Law official. Applicants arrived at Stornoway from all parts of Lewis. McNeill several times advised the Scottish Office that 100 families could easily have been obtained and requested an assistant to help with the unexpected work-load. Confident of success, McNeill announced on 7 May that, in order to embark from Glasgow on 19 May, the Lewis emigrants would leave Stornoway the following Monday, 14 May.

Though he heard "on all hands complaints of short notice",⁸ McNeill's convictions about family composition prevented the majority of those who embarked on 14 May from having the benefit of even seven days to arrange their affairs. He was firmly convinced of the paramount importance of maximizing the number of potential wage earners and of potential farm hands

⁶SRO, AF 51/57, McNeill to Scottish Office, 4 June 1888.

⁷SRO, AF 51/34, McNeill to Scottish Office, 6 May 1888.

⁸SRO, AF 51/34, McNeill to Scottish Office, 7 May 1888.

within each family. Even before leaving for Stornoway, he advised the Scottish Office

I don't intend to listen to any applicant with young children; looking at the risks of this venture, we must confine ourselves to people who will be able to earn wages during next winter, otherwise much of the advance will be wasted on subsistence.⁹

Of the fifty families considered by him on 7 May, most were rejected solely on grounds of having young children. Seven families were selected on 7 May and only three more on 8 May. When he received instructions to double that number, McNeill reviewed previously rejected applications and added mature siblings or cousins to re-constitute a "family" and, in several cases, added an unrelated "partner". Though the process resulted in more young children than he would have preferred, the twenty-one families committed to departure when the lists closed on the evening of 10 May included fifty-two males and twenty-eight females over the age of eighteen. Only two were nuclear families.¹⁰

The time available to the selected families to conclude their affairs on Lewis between their dates of acceptance and the date of departure ranged from four to seven days. It immediately became apparent that arrangements to profitably dispose of personal possessions could not be completed in a few days and that neighbours and relatives of the prospective emigrants simply did not possess the cash with which to make any purchases. With very little cash of their own, the selected families found themselves unable to generate income to pay their debts to the suddenly insistent merchants of Stornoway. McNeill reported that, prior to the lists closing, several families had withdrawn as a result of this situation and, though others came forward to replace them, the

⁹SRO, AF 51/34, McNeill to Dunbar, 4 May 1888.

¹⁰SRO, AF 51/35, McNeill to Dunbar, 11 May 1888.

failure of three entire families to embark on 14 May is directly attributable to the difficulties encountered in making financial arrangements in such a short time. Eight other adults also failed to embark.¹¹ The eighteen families who did embark all required cash advances from McNeill that averaged nearly £20 per family. One account, under threat of legal action, was settled only on the morning of the day of departure. Sixteen families declared £17 in private assets amongst them; the other two families declared £40 and £32. The Lewis families, therefore, left with minimal cash resources and after having expended a considerable portion of their individual £120 advances in settling debts. When he subsequently appeared before the Select Committee on Colonisation, McNeill attributed the need to expend additional government money to provide for their subsistence in Canada as being wholly due to the haste with which the emigrants departed.¹² Yet on 8 May, when the Scottish Office suggested that the departure date be postponed by one week, McNeill responded that the 14 May date must be adhered to as a change in plan would sow too much "doubt and dissatisfaction".¹³

The Canadian Government authorities played only a formal role in the selection process. McNeill had originally expected that a Canadian agent would accompany him to Stornoway on 5 May. Only on 7 May did the Canadian High Commission advise the Scottish Office that it was instructing its Glasgow agent, Thomas Grahame, to proceed to Stornoway as soon as he was advised that the families were "ready for inspection on behalf of the Canadian Government".¹⁴ Grahame arrived at Stornoway on the evening of 10 May after the lists had

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Great Britain. *Report From the Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, p. 19.

¹³ SRO, AF 51/57, McNeill to Scottish Office, 4 June 1888.

¹⁴ SRO, AF 51/34, Colmer to Scottish Office, 7 May 1888.

been closed. He accompanied McNeill on the final "tours of inspection" on 11 May, approved of all selections, and left for Glasgow with McNeill and the eighteen families aboard the *S. S. Claymore* on 14 May.¹⁵ Canada's formal obligation had been nominally fulfilled.

If Canada's priority in 1888 was to accept any potential agriculturalist that Great Britain chose to send her, the priorities of the Scottish Office were equally clear. The *Claymore* had barely left Stornoway before Lothian was enquiring about the amount of land released by the emigrants' departure.¹⁶ Arrangements were made for the families while in Glasgow to stay at the Allan Line's Sailors' Home. At the request of the Scottish Office, Gaelic-speaking officers of the District Police Force met the *Claymore* on the morning of 16 May and plain-clothed officers "guarded" the emigrants until they left for Canada aboard the *S. S. Corean* on 17 May.¹⁷ Ostensibly being protected from the "socialistic influences" of Glasgow, the eighteen families were, in fact, being sheltered from exposure to any last-minute efforts by Land League sympathisers to persuade them to return to Lewis. Though by no means coerced, the emigrant families were uncertain that their abandonment of Lewis was in their own interests and in the interests of those left behind. Their decision to leave Lewis, though in keeping with the Scottish Office's strategy of easing population pressure on the land and thereby weakening political pressure for land reform, meant the abandonment of both land and principles deeply held. The decision had been spontaneous, necessitous, and anxious.

Evidence is not conclusive, but so rapidly was the scheme implemented,

¹⁵Canada. Sessional Papers vol. 22 (1889), *Report of the Department of Agriculture*, Paper No. 5D, Report of Thomas Grahame, p. xli.

¹⁶SRO, AF 51/39, Dunbar to McNeill, 15 May 1888.

¹⁷SRO, AF 51/39, Allan Line to Scottish Office, 15 May 1888.

it appears that the Lewis emigrants left Glasgow on 17 May unaware of their destination. The inability of the land companies and the Scottish Office to agree upon specific terms continued well into May. The newly-formed Commercial Colonization Company of Manitoba was intended by the Scottish Office to act as its Canadian agent, but on 9 May the company's financial requirements were found to be excessive and were forwarded to the Treasury only in anticipation of rejection.¹⁸ However, a working arrangement was developing with the Canada North West Land Company's office in Edinburgh - a development that grew out of Scottish Office enquiries about the arrangements made by that company for the Cathcart emigrants in 1883 and 1884. The extent of the Canadian Government's role in the early development of Lothian's scheme is revealed by the fact that McNeill obtained the Canadian Department of Interior's applications for homestead entry from Peacock Edwards, an official of the Canada North West Land Company (hereinafter CNWL Co.) in Edinburgh, and not from either the Canadian High Commission or the Canadian agent in Glasgow.¹⁹

An embarrassed but grateful Scottish Office found the CNWL Co. willing to act. As a result, the company was asked to urgently direct its Winnipeg agent to

...select good Government 160 acre sections in Manitoba for Emigrants, to meet them on arrival and to make all other necessary arrangements...Please keep matters as private as possible.²⁰

The company cabled its Canadian Commissioner, W. B. Scarth, to that effect on

¹⁸SRO, AF 51/30, Minutes and correspondence between Scottish Office, Commercial Colonisation Company and Treasury.

¹⁹SRO, AF 51/69, Edwards to Scottish Office, 17 August 1888.

²⁰SRO, AF 51/35, Scottish Office to Peacock Edwards, 11 May 1888. The involvement of private land companies in placing homesteaders on government lands was common practice. The companies believed that such settlement enhanced the value of their own adjacent lands which were held for sale.

11 May and advised the Scottish Office that it was mistaken about the sailing date. The *Corean*, assumed to be embarking on 19 May, was in fact scheduled to leave on 17 May.²¹ Scarth first considered the Moosomin area as a possible location, but decided upon the Killarney area upon advice that sufficient good government land was available there.²² The CNWL Co. received his telegram stating "Ts 4 and 5, Range 16, W 1...Pelican Lake..." on 17 May.²³

By mid-May, the Office of the High Commission in London began to awaken to the implications of the emigration scheme. It suggested to the Scottish Office on 15 May that it was "rather late" in the emigration season to contemplate the despatch of more settlers,²⁴ and declared more emphatically on 18 May there was no time to be lost in making arrangements in Canada.²⁵ But Lothian was not to be dissuaded. Malcolm McNeill and Thomas Grahame arrived in Harris on 19 May to select one dozen families for emigration from Glasgow on June 1. Local clergy again agreed to make announcements from their pulpits and had done so on 13 May. McNeill and Grahame conducted interviews on Monday, 21 May and by Thursday, 24 May had inspected and approved twelve applications for government assistance to emigrate.²⁶ The group was to leave Harris on 28 May. To make practical arrangements, therefore, the Harris emigrants had no more time than the Lewis group had had - namely, seven days at best. Eleven of the twelve heads of families received cash advances averaging just under £10. Nine families declared no private means; one family declared £45. The only departures from the Lewis selection process were

²¹SRO, AF 51/35, correspondence and telegrams between Edwards and Scottish Office, 11 May 1888.

²²SRO, AF 51/39, Edwards to Scottish Office, 15 May 1888.

²³SRO, AF 51/41, Scarth to Edwards, 17 May 1888.

²⁴SRO, AF 51/39, Colmer to Scottish Office, 15 May 1888.

²⁵SRO, AF 51/41, Colmer to Scottish Office, 18 May 1888.

²⁶SRO, AF 51/57, McNeill to Scottish Office, 4 June 1888.

the involvement of a local philanthropist in recommending nine of the twelve families and her provision of extra clothing at no cost to those nine families.²⁷

The households selected were subject to the same addition of potential wage earners as the Lewis "families", but the resultant family size was considerably larger. One included the family head's seven brothers and sisters aged between fourteen and twenty-seven; the "head" of the family was thirty years of age. Nine other families included collectively sixteen other brothers, sisters and relatives.²⁸ In contrast to the departure from Lewis, no entire family failed to embark when the packet left Harris on 28 May. Two adults refused to go at the last minute and a third was not permitted by McNeill to board the ship when it was learned he would be leaving a destitute father behind. McNeill was seeking a reduction in the rates, not another dependent upon them.²⁹

Delighted that the Radical newspapers had no local correspondents on Harris, McNeill accompanied the ninety-seven Harris emigrants to Glasgow, arriving on 30 May. The sailing of the *Buenos Aryan* had been postponed to 2 June allowing the Harris emigrants to learn before sailing of Scarth's 1 June decision to locate them close to the Lewis settlers.³⁰ In correspondence with his supervisors at the Scottish Office, McNeill expressed his hopes that the Canadian Government would make a "supreme effort" and that it was aware of "the *absolute necessity* of making these first lots a big success".³¹ In making his

²⁷SRO, AF 51/55. The selections made by "the redoutable Mrs. Thomas" were all accepted by McNeill.

²⁸SRO, AF 51/56, "Applications For Assistance to Emigrate" and "Schedules for Emigration Officer".

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰SRO, AF 51/55, Edwards to McNeill, 1 June 1888.

³¹SRO, AF 51/41 and 51/55, McNeill to Scottish Office, 15 May and 24 May, 1888.

report, he declared that, apart from the failure to embark of the three Lewis families, "[T]he first experiment under the Government Colonisation Scheme..is completed..without a single unfavourable incident..."³² He anticipated that a thousand families from Lewis alone would be prepared to emigrate the following spring.³³ Though the experiment had barely begun, McNeill banished any doubts he may have entertained about Canadian commitment to Scottish Office objectives and returned, warmly commended, to his position at the Board of Supervision on 6 June.

Eager to proceed with its mandate, the Scottish Office insisted, only three months later, that the Board of Supervision grant McNeill another leave of absence. Under instruction to select forty families for emigration to the Canadian North West in the Spring of 1889, McNeill was to return to Stornoway in mid-September.³⁴ It was the intention of the Scottish Office that the entire process leading to the emigration of 1889 should be conducted in a more efficient and more calculated manner. Throughout the entire 1888 selection, McNeill had had no printed information to make available to applicants, and only in Harris was he able to use printed official application forms. By 3 September, information was available for distribution in both Gaelic and English and posters in both languages were forwarded to the offices of Registrars throughout the Western Isles.³⁵ It was believed that an early selection of families would allow for the sale of goods and chattels thereby avoiding both the necessity of cash advances in Scotland and the complaints of cash shortages in Canada that formed the only serious complaint emanating from the emigrants of May and

³² SRO, AF 51/57, McNeill to Scottish Office, 4 June 1888.

³³ Canada. Sessional Papers vol. 22 (1889), *Report of the Department of Agriculture* (Paper No. 5D), Report of Thomas Grahame, p. xlii.

³⁴ SRO, AF 51/77, Board of Supervision to Scottish Office, 8 September 1888.

³⁵ SRO, AF 51/45; AF 51/73; and AF 51/89.

June.³⁶

The extent of Lothian's commitment is revealed in his nervous acquiescence in the withdrawal of the marines from Stornoway on 7 September. The Admiralty would agree to make *HMS Seahorse* available to McNeill only if the marines could return to headquarters in the south of England. Though Lothian feared further outbreaks of disorder and affirmed his right to recall the force when necessary, he agreed. The *Seahorse* was made available on 20 September.³⁷

McNeill left Glasgow on 14 September in the company of Thomas Grahame. By the time the selection process was completed on 5 October, they had received 161 formal applications and claimed to have received an equal number of verbal applications. Stating that 100 suitable families could have been obtained in Lewis alone, McNeill was nevertheless perplexed that a number of ministers had refused to make pulpit announcements and that the posters "were almost instantly torn down."³⁸ The forty families selected were subject to two conditions that had not been applied in the May selections. McNeill was instructed not to approve of families whose expenses before arrival in Canada were likely to exceed £50. The Scottish Office also determined that no cash advances would be permitted and encouraged the application of families with some private means. Evidence suggests, however, that this group was to arrive in Canada with less private resources than did their predecessors and McNeill later testified that he always selected the poorest families he could obtain.³⁹

³⁶ See below. Chapter 3.

³⁷ SRO, AF 51/71, Scottish Office to The Admiralty, 31 August 1888.

³⁸ Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, p. 23. See also SRO, AF 51/93, McNeill to Scottish Office, 8 October 1888.

³⁹ Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, p. 20.

In reporting to the Scottish Office, McNeill stated

I continue of opinion that, if due care be exercised in selection here and in settlement in the Colony, our tentative efforts surely indicate the least costly and most effective means of restoring peace and contentment to the Western Highlands.⁴⁰

He had considerable grounds for optimism. The political battle, outside the Highlands, was clearly being won by those favouring emigration as a solution to discontent in the crofting counties. When the Treasury authorised the advance of £3,500 from the Civil Contingencies Fund on 10 May, the Scottish Office proceeded on the belief that the full £10,000 would be approved after Parliamentary formalities.⁴¹ The Government delayed bringing the question before Parliament and the crofter party were not the only Scottish M.P.'s enraged at public funds being spent without Parliamentary approval. The Government had little difficulty in ignoring the objections raised⁴² largely due to the welcome accorded the scheme by the National Association for Promoting State-Directed Emigration and Colonization whose many parliamentary members viewed the scheme as the harbinger of a much more considerable Government involvement.⁴³

The Highland newspapers joined with Glasgow's *North British Daily Mail* in remaining highly skeptical of the scheme, if not overtly critical. But in September 1888 the Scottish Office and McNeill engaged in successful manipulation of the Scottish press that effectively silenced all but their most

⁴⁰SRO, AF 51/93, McNeill to Scottish Office, 8 October 1888.

⁴¹SRO, AF 51/32, Treasury to Scottish Office, 10 May 1888.

⁴²Great Britain. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, vol. 326 (1888), cols. 44, 332-33, 538 and vol. 329 (1888), cols. 181-82.

⁴³H. L. Malchow, *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth Century Britain*, (Palo Alto, California: Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1979), Chapter 7. See below, Conclusion.

virulent opponents. The newspapers were cordially invited to print an optimistic account of the crofters' prospects at Killarney by a recent visitor to the area and most major papers willingly complied. The *North British Daily Mail* prefaced the account with its own comment, but only the *Highland News* of Inverness demanded payment before doing so stating the letter was "...distinctly of the character of an advertisement."⁴⁴ McNeill procured copies of favourable letters from the Killarney settlers to their relatives in the Long Island and *The Scotsman* published two of these on 21 September, precisely coinciding with McNeill's arrival in Stornoway to make the new selection of emigrants.⁴⁵ *The Scotsman* also provided McNeill with 100 printed copies of another letter McNeill himself had received and which he wanted to distribute to prospective applicants during the autumn selection process.⁴⁶ The forty families selected responded to the favourable letters sent home by the earlier emigrants precisely as McNeill had predicted they would. With the precedent before them, they sought to join their successful relatives and friends nearly Killarney; the "magnet" in Manitoba had been created and the expected wave of resultant emigration was beginning to develop. The plan was working perfectly.

Standing in sharp contrast to the rapid family selection process was the slow evolution of an acceptable administrative framework. The scheme authorised on 17 April 1888 called for the creation of a Board consisting of appointees representing the British and Canadian Governments, the major land companies and the private donors. An inquiry to the Colonial Office resulted in the reply that no precedent existed for such a Board and the suggestion that all

⁴⁴ SRO, AF 51/75, P. McLeod to Scottish Office, 10 September 1888.

⁴⁵ *The Scotsman*, 21 September 1888.

⁴⁶ SRO, GD 40/16/18/38 and GD 40/16/18/40, McNeill to Lothian, 13 September 1888.

appointments be made by the respective interests.⁴⁷ Recognition of the difficulties that could arise if two Board members were Canadian residents resulted in the Scottish Office submitting to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 1 October the proposal that, *ex officio*, the Secretary for Scotland, the Canadian High Commissioner, and the Lord Provost of Glasgow be appointed to the Board, with Peacock Edwards representing the land companies.⁴⁸ But again the Canadian authorities delayed. Unofficially, the High Commission Office intimated on 30 August, that Sir Charles Tupper would agree to serve; officially, Tupper did not accept the appointment until 25 October. Significantly, he stated that he accepted only

...on the understanding that neither [he] nor the Canadian Government incur any pecuniary liability in consequence of [his] doing so.⁴⁹

The Canadian Governor-General's formal approval of the appointment did not reach the Scottish Office until 10 November 1888. By that date, as a result of numerous accounting disputes with the Scottish Office over the Killarney settlement process, the CNWL Co. had resolved to have nothing more to do with government-assisted crofter emigration and Mr. Peacock Edward's nomination was withdrawn. The possibility existed that a government-proposed Select Committee on Colonisation could result in the cancellation of the entire scheme.⁵⁰ Ultimately Tupper was able to persuade Thomas Skinner, a man of various interests in the City, and incidentally, a director of the CNWL Co., to sit on the Board as representative of the land companies. Skinner accepted on 22 December, the

⁴⁷SRO, AF 51/72, Colonial Office to Scottish Office, 1 September 1888.

⁴⁸SRO, AF 51/72, Scottish Office to Lord Knutsford, 1 October 1888.

⁴⁹SRO, AF 51/72, Tupper to Scottish Office, 25 October 1888.

⁵⁰W. H. Smith made the proposal in the House on 22 November 1888. Great Britain. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, Fourth Series, vol. 330 (1888), cols. 1932-44.

Board was officially proclaimed on 26 December and arrangements were made to hold the first meeting on 7 February 1889.^{5 1}

When it met, the Board faced an agenda severely complicated by political difficulties. The proponents of emigration at the Scottish Office had lost their propaganda advantage in mid-November when Glasgow's Lord Provost received a petition signed by all eighteen of the Lewis emigrant family heads. The petition alleged that the promise of a year's subsistence had been broken and that as the advances were all spent, the settlers faced destitution.^{5 2} Though McNeill and Thomas Grahame adamantly denied having made such a promise and though knowledge of the petition was apparently not made public, the argument that the Highland population would necessarily be better off materially in Western Canada had been dealt a serious blow.^{5 3}

Breach of promise would prove to be the major argument the opponents of emigration in Lewis and Harris would use over the course of the winter of 1888-89. The forty families who had been recruited to emigrate in the Spring of 1889 shared the extreme misgivings opponents of their departure expressed and, as early as 21 October, one prospective emigrant withdrew stating that his wife was suddenly "out and out opposed" to leaving Lewis;^{5 4} another family was regarded as doubtful by 8 November.^{5 5} The death of one of the Harris emigrants in Killarney in late November added to the sense of unease and several other families withdrew during the winter. However, private letters from

^{5 1}Board meetings were almost always held at Dover House in London with the Secretary for Scotland in the chair. Great Britain. *Report from Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, p. 41.

^{5 2}SRO, AF 51/111, Killarney Crofters to Sir William Collins, 4 November 1888.

^{5 3}McNeill suggested that the petition was nothing less than an attempt at extortion. SRO, AF 51/111, McNeill to Scottish Office, 18 December 1888.

^{5 4}SRO, AF 51/100, McPhail[?] to McNeill, 21 October 1888.

^{5 5}SRO, AF 51/95, McNeill to Scottish Office, 8 November 1888.

the settlers generally contained "such good encouragement"⁵⁶ that applications for assistance to emigrate addressed to McNeill far outnumbered the withdrawals by the end of January 1889. McNeill earlier had advised the Scottish Office that vacancies should not be filled until January because "by that time the 'pinch' will begin to be felt and there will be no difficulty in selecting."⁵⁷

That the replacement selections had not been made by the time the Board met on 7 February was due to difficulties in securing both the private and the parliamentary funding. The response to the public appeal for £2,000 had been disappointing and, after deductions for printing and advertising, the Lord Provost of Glasgow was able to forward to the Scottish Office £1,000 only.⁵⁸ This sum was sufficient to justify the parliamentary vote to settle the Killarney crofters, but clearly would not allow for any further emigration. W. H. Smith, First Lord of the Treasury and Unionist House Leader, advised Lothian that a further parliamentary vote would not be possible until the remainder of the £2,000 private subscription had been raised. Lothian pointedly reminded Smith that the inclusion of a private subscription had been ill-advised in the first place and that he was not himself responsible for that aspect of the scheme.⁵⁹ It cannot be stated whether this unresolved dispute resulted in the exclusion of the emigration scheme from the debate on the Scottish Estimates, but when debate ended on 13 December, no further money had been voted for crofter emigration.

The Board at its first meeting therefore faced the possibility of having to withdraw the offer to assist the emigration of the families McNeill had selected in October. Even McNeill was beginning to discourage fresh applicants

⁵⁶ SRO, AF 51/121, Alex Grahame to McNeill, 11 January 1889.

⁵⁷ SRO, AF 51/95, Scottish Office Minute, 15 November 1888.

⁵⁸ SRO, AF 511/66, James King to Scottish Office, 6 July 1888.

⁵⁹ SRO, GD 40/11/58, Lothian to W. H. Smith, 30 November 1888.

for assistance to emigrate advising them "no funds" were available.⁶⁰ However, Lothian had not been idle. In early December, he had written making a personal appeal to numerous Scottish landowners and had been successful in receiving pledges for at least £700.⁶¹ Sir Charles Tupper urged W. H. Smith to make a quick decision in order to avoid the difficulties associated with the late arrival at Killarney the previous year.⁶² Once convinced that the full £2,000 private subscription would be raised, Smith and the Chancellor of the Exchequer decided to agree upon the proposed emigration and so advised the Scottish Office on 23 February.⁶³

Arrangements moved rapidly forward. The Estate managers for South Harris and North Uist and the Chamberlain of the Lews were advised on 25 February of the names of the forty families selected from their districts the previous autumn. The Board of Supervision was advised that Malcolm McNeill should again start at once for Stornoway, and the Colonisation Board's secretary was instructed to make arrangements for a 3 April departure. An offer from the Montreal and Western Land Company to locate the anticipated emigrants near Churchbridge, on the Manitoba and North Western Railway line, was declined because it was too distant from Pelican Lake.⁶⁴ Through Edgar Dewdney, the Canadian Minister of the Interior, a Gaelic-speaking agent was appointed at Winnipeg on 1 March and ordered to select sufficient government land for an anticipated forty families.⁶⁵

⁶⁰SRO, AF 51/132, McNeill to Scottish Office, 6 February 1889.

⁶¹SRO, GD 40/16/58, AF 51/146-48, and AF 51/210/111 all pertain to these solicited donations.

⁶²SRO, AF 51/139, Minutes of Second Meeting of the Imperial Colonisation Board, 15 March 1889.

⁶³SRO, AF 51/135, Memo to Scottish Office, 23 February 1889.

⁶⁴SRO, AF 51/96, A. T. Drummond to Tupper, 22 September 1888.

⁶⁵SRO, AF 51/139, Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Imperial Colonisation Board, 15 March 1889.

McNeill initially had little difficulty in filling the places vacated by some of the original families, but he was unable to officially advise those selected that their emigration was a certainty until the Parliamentary vote finally occurred on 20 March.⁶⁶ He was faced with a new wave of desertions after 15 March when he was informed that the destination of the prospective emigrants was to be Wolseley Station, in the North West Territories, and not Pelican Lake with their friends and relatives.⁶⁷ McNeill's task was not made any easier when Lothian over-ruled his under-secretary and insisted that the Parliamentary vote did not limit the number of families to forty, but rather that fifty-five families could be emigrated with the funds available.⁶⁸

The ten days between the official confirmation of departure on 20 March and the embarkation from Stornoway were at least as hectic for the 1889 emigrants as the similar period had been for those departing in 1888. The attempts to settle affairs at such short notice was complicated by the Scottish Office's insistence that, unlike the previous year, no cash advances were to be made. That insistence was entirely due to an opinion expressed by the Canadian Minister of Justice that attempts to secure on Canadian land money used to pay Scottish debts would constitute fraud.⁶⁹ McNeill's instructions, for the first time, were very precise on this point. McNeill advised the Scottish Office on 26 March that nineteen families had withdrawn over time and that he doubted that all of

⁶⁶Great Britain. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, vol. 334 (1889), cols. 213-230.

⁶⁷SRO, AF 51/144, Donald McLennan and Angus Stewart to Lothian, 19 March 1889.

⁶⁸SRO, AF 51/142, Scottish Office Minute, 16 March 1889.

⁶⁹Public Archives of Canada, Records of the Department of The Interior, RG 15, vol. 575, file 176811(1), Sir John Thompson to Edgar Dewdney, 29 November 1888.

the fifty-two families then on his lists would embark.⁷⁰ On 25 March, Colmer had advised the Winnipeg agent that fifty families could be expected, but that preparation should be made for only forty-five.⁷¹ As late as 29 March, two Harris families withdrew and replacements were found.⁷² Of the twenty-six Lewis families selected in the autumn, sixteen had withdrawn. While the Treasury, Scottish Office and Colmer sought desperately to settle administrative and financial details, forty-six families left Stornoway on 31 March, stopping at North Uist to pick up three more families waiting there. Four men were "accidentally left at Tobermory," but travelling via Oban rejoined the party on 3 April in Glasgow.⁷³

The forty-nine families who left Glasgow aboard the *Scandinavian* on 3 April 1889 were seen off by Malcolm McNeill and the Colonisation Board's secretary, J. G. Colmer.⁷⁴ In a letter to Lothian, Colmer noted that, unlike the 1888 emigrants, the 1889 group had "avoided the disagreeable necessity, and expense, of their spending a day or two about Glasgow."⁷⁵ He was impressed that the funds available in Canada to the Wolseley crofters would be nearly £85 per family, nearly £18.10 more than the money available to the Pelican Lake families. He did not mention that thirty-three family heads had declared no private resources whatsoever and that only three took with them assets of over £10. Though the average family size was considerably lower than that of the 1888 emigrants, the 1889 group was markedly poorer than their predecessors.

⁷⁰SRO, AF 51/132, McNeill to Scottish Office, 26 March 1888.

⁷¹SRO, AF 51/142, Colonisation Board Minute, 25 March 1888.

⁷²Angus MacKay, Roderick MacKay and their families therefore had twenty-four hours at most to make preparations for their departure.

⁷³SRO, AF 51/188, McNeill to Colmer, 4 April 1889.

⁷⁴Secretary to the Office of the Canadian High Commission in London, Colmer was also the I. C. B.'s secretary from 1889 to 1905.

⁷⁵SRO, AF 51/188, Colmer to Lothian, 10 April 1889.

The twenty-nine families selected in March declared only £48 amongst them.⁷⁶ Colmer noted that "the very satisfactory tone" of letters from the Pelican Lake settlers had carried the day against the scheme's opponents and concluded that with "ordinary industry, energy and perserverence" the emigrants were bound to succeed at Wolseley where land had already "been secured for them."⁷⁷

The forty-nine families were not yet at Halifax when the British Government ordered the appointment of a select committee to assess the colonisation scheme it had so reluctantly sanctioned.⁷⁸ The twenty-one member Select Committee on Colonisation was ordered appointed on 12 April 1889. It was comprised of members holding widely divergent views on the principle of state aid for emigration, and included members of the National Association for Promoting State-Directed Emigration and Colonization as well as the Lothian Scheme's harshest Parliamentary critic. The emigrationist lobby saw the Committee as an indication that the Government was moving towards involvement in emigration and anticipated a strong endorsement of its views. The Committee's mandate was to look at various schemes of colonisation, but the Government's clear intention, in addition to subjecting all such schemes to close scrutiny, was to postpone any further commitment to the crofter colonisation venture. All plans for state-assisted emigration were required to wait upon the Committee's Report. But the only practical large-scale scheme the Committee could examine was Lothian's "experiment" with crofter settlements on the Canadian prairies. For the next two years, therefore, the fate of not only the crofter scheme, but of all schemes of state-aided emigration were dependent upon the progress of the

⁷⁶SRO, AF 51/188, "Particulars relating to the 49 families sailing from Glasgow in the *SS Scandinavian*".

⁷⁷SRO, AF 51/188, Colmer to Lothian, 10 April 1889.

⁷⁸Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, p. ii.

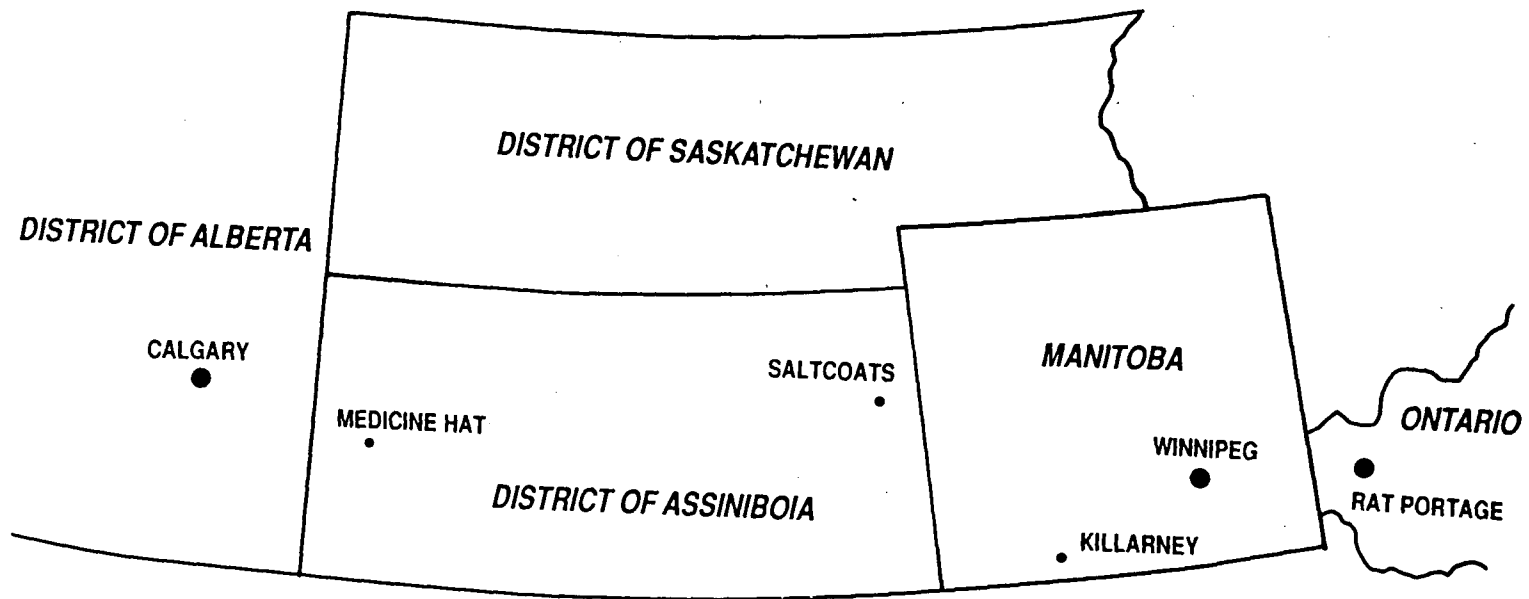
people so hurriedly despatched from the Western Isles.

CHAPTER III. ARRIVALS

The arrival in Canada of the seventy-nine crofter families in 1888 and 1889 presents a complicated mix of personality and event that must be discussed at considerable length in order to assess the subsequent administration of the settlements. To a very great extent, the difficulties experienced at Killarney and Saltcoats, though often not identical, were the logical outcomes of an emigration scheme that was flawed in conception and rushed in implementation. The families who came to Canada under Lothian's scheme all left Scotland with only the most preliminary preparation having been made to receive them. These arrangements were modified at considerable expense, but with some success, at Killarney; settlement at Saltcoats was achieved more economically, but less successfully. At both locations, land companies provided the direction and supervision required; at Saltcoats, the Department of the Interior assisted in the settlement almost against its will. The Scottish Office and the Imperial Colonisation Board controlled only the purse-strings and appeared to be helpless witnesses to events and developments beyond their control until the late summer of 1889. At that time, the Canadian Government insisted that the crofter settlements were an Imperial responsibility and that responsibility was accepted, practically speaking, by the Imperial Colonisation Board.

When the CNWL Co.'s office in Winnipeg received instructions to select government land for twenty-one crofter families, the request would have been regarded as almost routine. Three separate parties from the Western Islands had been settled at Wapella, Moosomin and Regina and the Orkney-born Winnipeg agent of the CNWL Co. had been personally involved in all three. W. B. Scarth initially considered Moosomin as the location for the twenty-one Lewis families

Figure 2. Western Canada 1890



but found that a sufficient quantity of government land was not available.¹ The Canadian Government, at Colmer's request, instructed its Land Commissioner at Winnipeg to act in conjunction with Scarth.² The decision was taken to settle the Lewis families at Pelican Lake in south-western Manitoba and, on 19 May, a private rail car containing Scarth and other officials was left at Killarney, the village closest to the proposed settlement location.³

The Canadian Government made 150 homestead locations available at Pelican Lake for crofter settlement. Upon inspection, however, Scarth considered that only five of these were fit for settlement. In a move that was later to be criticised by other directors of the CNWL Co., Scarth decided that the shortage of time would not permit the inspection of government land in another locality and made arrangements to settle the immigrants on his own company's lands near Pelican Lake. Before the eighteen Lewis families arrived at Killarney, Scarth had received the written authority of the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, that the CNWL Co. would receive equivalent government lands elsewhere as compensation.⁴

On 1 June, the ninety-eight Lewis emigrants arrived at Quebec where they were regarded by the immigration agent as having been "brought to Canada under the auspices of charitable societies and individuals."⁵ As promised by Sir George Stephen, they were met by members of Quebec City's St.

¹Scottish Record Office (hereinafter SRO), AF 51/39, Peacock Edwards to Scottish Office, 15 May 1888.

²Public Archives of Canada (hereinafter PAC), Records of the Department of The Interior, RG 15, vol. 575, file 176811(1), Burgess to Acting Commissioner of Dominion Lands at Winnipeg, 12 May 1888.

³*Manitoba Free Press*, 22 May 1888, p. 1.

⁴SRO, AF 51/69, Scarth to Edwards, 26 July 1888.

⁵Canada. *Sessional Papers* 1889, vol. 22, Report of the Department of Agriculture, Paper No. 5, p. xxvii.

Andrew's Society, given food and advice, and then immediately departed for Manitoba.⁶ The party arrived at Killarney on 4 June and began the process of selecting homestead sites. Fragmentary evidence suggests that, although some settlers were initially dissatisfied with their locations,⁷ the crofters left the village of Killarney for their respective locations one week later, after a selection process that had been amicable and conducted in an atmosphere of co-operation. Selections were made by Scarth "in conjunction with a committee of the representative men among the crofters" and apparently were not forced upon any individual against his will.⁸ The homesteads were located in Townships 4 and 5 of Ranges 16 and 17, West of the prime meridian, between Killarney and Pelican Lake.⁹ With the assistance of local tradesmen, houses were being erected and potatoes had been sown on rented land by the time the ninety-five Harris emigrants arrived at Killarney on 17 June. The new arrivals were reported to be enjoying a sandy beach on Pelican Lake and were to be located on Townships 5 and 6 of Ranges 15 and 16, north-east of Pelican Lake in the District of Argyle.¹⁰ The process of homestead selecting proceeded less smoothly with the Harris arrivals. Apparently without advising Scarth, one father and son exchanged their locations, and three of the twelve family heads simply squatted on sites they desired, in two instances displacing younger men.¹¹ But Dominion Day activities planned by Scarth and his officials provided a celebration of their

⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 June 1888, p. 1.

⁷ Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-354] 1890, Evidence of Mr. Colmer, p. 381.

⁸ SRO, AF 51/188/24, *Report by the Canadian of Commissioner of Dominion Lands*. See also SRO, AF 51/75, Wilkie to Lothian, 18 June 1888.

⁹ See Figure 3. For the purposes of this dissertation, the Lewis emigrants will be referred to as the "Killarney" settlers, and the Harris emigrants as the "Argyle" settlers.

¹⁰ *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 June 1888, p. 2.

¹¹ SRO, AF 51/104, *Report by the Canadian Commissioner of Dominion Lands*.

prospects in this "better land" and symbolised the spirit of optimism that prevailed amongst both Lewis and Harris settlers.

If the settlers therefore concurred with the opinions of Malcolm McNeill and the Scottish Office that this well-considered scheme of settlement could only succeed, officials of the CNWL Co. on both sides of the Atlantic were rapidly developing a less optimistic viewpoint. The establishment of effective communications proved a serious difficulty. Both the Scottish Office and the CNWL Co. were determined to minimise costs and therefore were inclined to cable brief messages that often confused as much as they informed their recipients.¹² Authority for the settlement scheme rested with the Scottish Office in London. Instructions emanated from there, were conveyed to the CNWL Co.'s Edinburgh office, and were transmitted thence to the independent-minded Scarth who did not hesitate to express his opinions when he felt those instructions were inadequate.

As the CNWL Co. was acting as the business agent in Canada for the Scottish Office, it was with reference to financial arrangements that Scarth increasingly expressed his concern. The hasty implementation of the scheme in the U.K. meant that the Scottish Office had no practical plans to meet the financial requirements of settlement in Canada. On 29 May, it was agreed that Scarth would advance money to the settlers and make all necessary expenditures; he would then debit the Edinburgh office which in turn would bill the Scottish Office.¹³ But because the records of expenditure in Scotland had been mistakenly surrendered to the Quebec immigration officer, Scarth made these Canadian expenditures unaware of the extent of the Scottish advances to each family head.

¹²See, for example, correspondence in SRO, AF 51/58 and 69.

¹³SRO, AF 51/58, Edwards to Scottish Office, 29 May 1888.

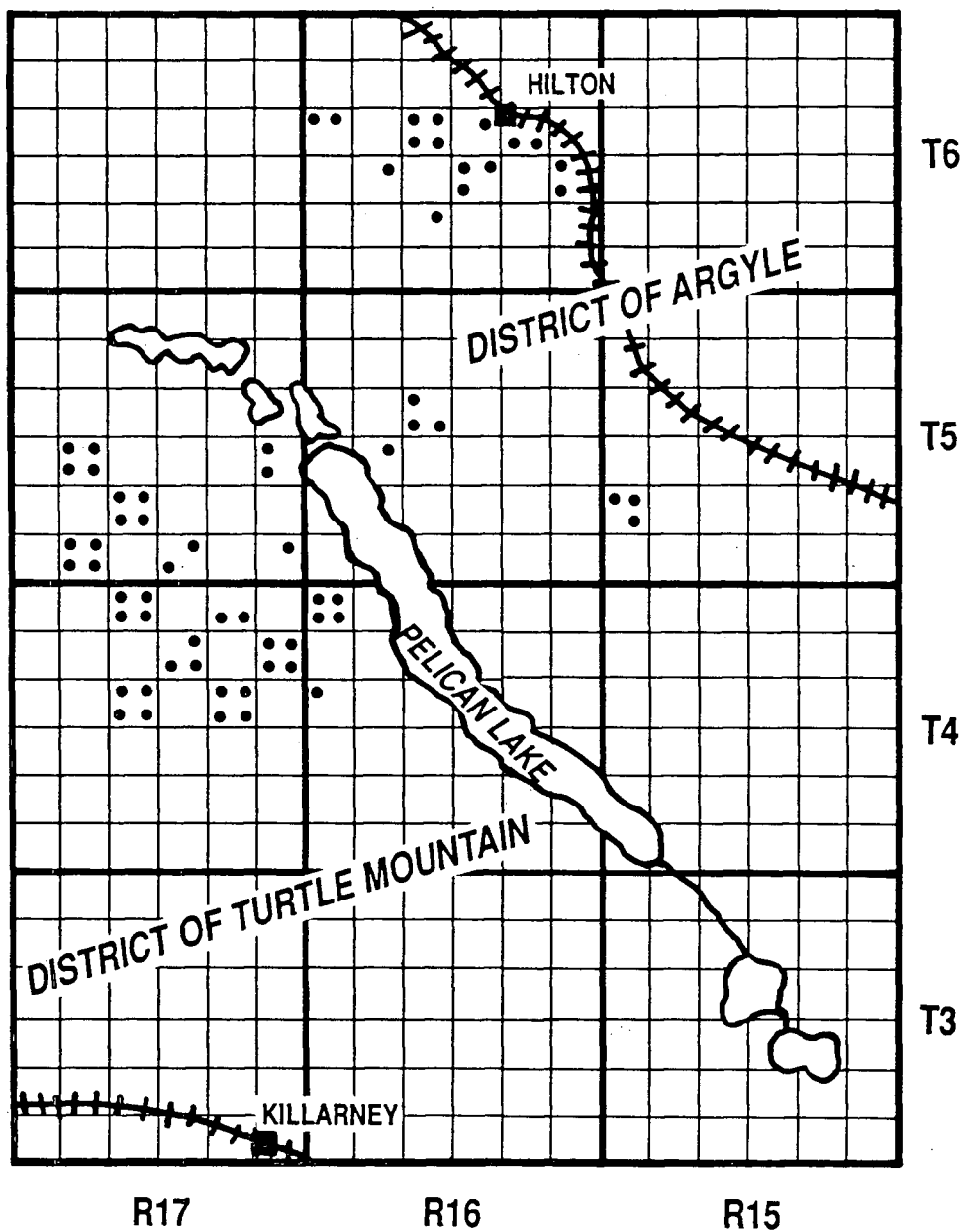


Figure 3. Homestead Locations Near Pelican Lake, 1888-1906

When he finally managed to obtain the statements on 14 June, the purchase of materials, implements and livestock for the Lewis settlers was well advanced and the Harris group was nearly at Winnipeg.

As individuals involved not only with crofter colonisation, but with Western settlement in general, both Scarth and Edwards were appalled at what those statements revealed. While Scarth, as a result of his experience with the Cathcart crofter settlers, had stated repeatedly that crofter colonists required "at the very least £100 on their arrival at their destination,"¹⁴ he found that the average sum remaining to the Lewis families was less than £69. With a credit of just over £86, John McKay's small nuclear family came closest to satisfying Scarth's financial expectations; with less than £50 to their credit, John Nicolson's party of four fell far short of possessing sufficient funds "to be properly settled."¹⁵ Scarth realised that the Scottish Office retained unexpended funds as a result of the refusal of three families to leave Lewis. On 14 June, he cabled Edinburgh seeking permission to "divide £360 for the three families who did not embark among unmarried homesteaders taking usual security."¹⁶ Edwards realised that this was a departure from the scheme approved by the Treasury, but reminded the Scottish Office of the political reality that it was

...of the utmost importance at the start that these pioneer settlers should have sufficient to establish them under conditions likely to ensure their success...¹⁷

Lothian obtained the agreement of the Exchequer and Scarth was notified by 22 June 1888.

¹⁴SRO, AF 51/69, Scarth to Edwards, 24 July 1888.

¹⁵SRO, AF 51/58, Scarth to Edwards, 23 June 1888.

¹⁶SRO, AF 51/58, Scarth to Edwards, 14 June 1888.

¹⁷SRO, AF 51/58, Edwards to Scottish Office, 19 June 1888.

By that date, Scarth was in possession of the financial statements of the Harris emigrants and found their situation even more serious. The average sum available to the family heads was less than £63. Three of the twelve had less than £50 remaining to their credit and one of them, Donald Mackinnon, had less than £35.¹⁸ Scarth advised Edwards that it was impossible to arrange settlement under the circumstances and suggested that males over eighteen be given homestead locations, with liens held by either the U.K. Government or the CNWL Co. The maximum lien that legally could be taken on a single quarter-section had recently been raised to \$600.¹⁹ Scarth was not overstating his case when he argued that it was "impossible" to settle families who had just over half that amount available.²⁰ His plan was to transfer a portion of the debt incurred by family heads, prior to their arrival in Killarney, to the other family members, and to secure that portion by taking liens on homesteads granted to those relatives and partners. Further expenditure to establish the heads' farms would then be allowable under the Dominion Lands Act up to the \$600 maximum.

Both measures required more money. On 23 June, Scarth advised Edwards that \$4000 extra would be necessary to settle the crofters adequately.²¹ Edwards responded that no more money was possible, expressed reservations about granting homesteads to the younger men and advised Scarth to concentrate on the establishment of the family heads' homesteads. Scarth cabled tersely: "In that case must make some settlers return oxen and waggon,"

¹⁸Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, appendix no. 1, p. 185.

¹⁹Canada. *Statutes* 1886, Vic. 26, Chap 11.

²⁰The exchange rate at that time of settlement in 1888 was \$4.87 Canadian to £1 sterling.

²¹SRO, AF 51/58, Scarth to Edwards, 23 June 1888.

increasing agitation."²² Scarth later explained that he meant such action on his part would result in increasing agitation in the Highlands. The more immediate agitation created at the Scottish Office by this cable resulted in a meeting between Edwards and Lothian and a promise to commit a further £360 to the Manitoba settlers.²³ Financial demands continued to escalate. On 22 July, Scarth advised his startled Edinburgh office that he must have "at least extra fourteen hundred pounds." When pressed for a full explanation, he cabled: "Have written fully. Impossible to explain by cable. Fault entirely your side Atlantic."²⁴

Much of the difficulty experienced by Scarth is certainly attributable to the speed with which the scheme was implemented and the inadequate analysis of the cost of establishing farms in Manitoba. Significantly absent from the Scottish Office's Immigration Records is any critical examination of statements that £100 to £120 would prove sufficient. Until the scheme was underway, no one expressed the concern that U.K. expenditures could jeopardise the success of the Canadian colony. The Scottish Office, with the fiscally orthodox Treasury at its back, thought exclusively in terms of sums that could be secured, not of sums that might be required. A second aspect inadequately addressed was the strategy which family units were intended to adopt in Manitoba. McNeill had inflated both "family" size and travel costs by adding extra adults to most nuclear families. His avowed intention was to create functional economic units that would allow for farm establishment as well as outside work for wages. Yet, at the same time, he clearly intended that each male over eighteen years of age should be granted a homestead and sent Scarth precisely the correct number of

²²SRO, AF 51/58, Scarth to Edwards, 30 June 1888.

²³SRO, AF 51/69, Edwards to Scottish Office, 17 August 1888. See also SRO, AF 51/58, Edwards to Scarth, 2 July 1888.

²⁴SRO, AF 51/58, Scarth to Edwards, 22 July 1888 and 26 July 1888.

homestead applications required for that purpose.²⁵ Two or more homesteads per "family" would certainly have the effect of dividing the labour and financial resources of the family. Edwards and the Scottish Office were surprised that homesteads for younger males were even contemplated; McNeill and Scarth assumed they were part of the scheme.

Scarth's cryptic cables caused much consternation in the Scottish Office during May and June. But ultimately there was little choice but to trust the judgement of their "man on the spot." By the time he returned to Winnipeg on 22 July, the financial structures he had suggested were in place. Each of the family heads was settled on a homestead and all but three were secured by liens for the Canadian equivalent of the full £120.²⁶ The largest settlement costs were incurred in the purchase of oxen (\$120 to \$130), cows (\$37), waggons (\$67.50) and ploughs (\$22.50). Other costs were for basic provisions, construction materials, railway fares from Winnipeg to Killarney; also included were charges for breakfasts provided in Winnipeg and Killarney.²⁷ By virtue of bulk buying, the settlers were supplied at cheaper rates than those then prevailing in the district.²⁸ There is also evidence that Scarth minimised costs by obtaining Canadian Pacific Railway agreement to charge only half the usual freight rate, and no carpenters' costs are recorded as being charged.²⁹

That no oxen or waggons were re-possessed is entirely due to the assignation of homestead entries to thirty-eight other individuals, including a widow of fifty years of age, a male of sixty and, illegally, three males under

²⁵SRO, AF 51/69, Scarth to Edwards, 24 July 1888.

²⁶*Ibid.*, Appendix II. The exceptions had all reached the maximum by late August.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸SRO, AF 51/75, Wilkie to Lothian, 18 June 1888 and SRO, AF 51/104 *Report by the Canadian Commissioner of Dominion Lands.*

²⁹SRO, AF 51/69, "Specimen Details of Advance" for William McLeod.

eighteen. Scarth advised Edwards that the young men from both Lewis and Harris all maintained that they had been promised homesteads before they left Scotland. No objection was raised by them to Scarth's attaching each family head's excess debt to their entries and £504 was thereby charged amongst them. Individual debts ranged from \$50 to \$250 and were therefore well below what Scarth regarded as market value at \$4 per acre. No livestock or material were provided. Before leaving Killarney, Scarth had taken liens from only eight of the thirty-eight as most of the young men were away at work.³⁰

The advantages of locating the crofters in a settled area were well demonstrated in the summer of 1888. Bumper crops were expected and wages were high. A survey conducted at Tupper's request by a Dominion Lands official in September reported that forty of the homesteaders were "out at service" or "working for wages." A few daughters were also reported as earning wages. The Lewis settlers were able to rent communally a potato field from an established settler. They expressed contentment that Presbyterian churches were in their localities and only regretted that a Gaelic-speaking minister or teacher was not in residence. Letters sent to Scotland and the Dominion Lands report fully supported Scarth's declaration that he left well-satisfied and contented crofter settlements near Pelican Lake. Optimism was so high that one Lewis settler wrote to the *Glasgow Herald* and spoke of sending gold home soon.³¹ Scarth was confident that he had fulfilled his instructions not to locate the crofters too close together and assured Edwards

...there is no risk of combination for political or other purposes, as the Crofters are well interspersed with good Canadian Farmers and are anything but in a body, as they extend over a district 20 miles

³⁰ SRO, AF 51/69, Scarth to Edwards, 24 July 1888, Appendix II.

³¹ *Glasgow Herald*, 22 August 1888.

in length and by 12 miles in breadth.^{3 2}

One issue, however, remained unresolved and was to result in precisely the type of political combination the Scottish Office most hoped to avoid. That issue was the question of how the nearly 200 settlers were to be provided for during their first year. Almost completely without private cash resources, their late arrival precluded any possibility of a crop in 1888 and, as indicated above, the settlers' remaining public funds had been entirely used up in the preliminary settlement process. Each family unit therefore had to be sustained by its own wages, further public assistance or a combination of the two. Scarth's demand for an additional £1,400, while including the £720 already agreed to and his company's \$1,000 "settlement fee," was explained as being required to pay all costs including one year's maintenance which all Lewis crofters claimed they had been promised.^{3 3} Malcolm McNeill firmly denied that any such promise had been made; Scarth was advised "not to give too ready credence to the statements of the Crofters as to promises made" in Scotland, and the settlers were told that their maintenance was to be covered by the £120 loan each had already received. The report made by the inspecting agent of the Dominion Lands Branch in September recorded several expressions of dissatisfaction on this point, but the generally prevailing prosperity experienced by the settlers still sustained their optimism.^{3 4} On 15 September, a letter signed by all the Lewis heads of families appeared in *The Winnipeg Morning Call* categorically denying that they were dissatisfied with their situations in Manitoba as a recent correspondent had

^{3 2}SRO, AF 51/69, Scarth to Edwards, 26 July 1888.

^{3 3}SRO, AF 51/69, Scarth to Edwards, 24 July 1888.

^{3 4}SRO, AF 51/104, *Report by the Canadian Commissioner of Dominion Lands.*

suggested.³⁵

But the contentment was short-lived. The general failure of the potato crop and the curtailment of threshing work due to an early frost altered the optimistic outlook, particularly of the Killarney crofters. Deciding to press their claim for a year's maintenance, the family heads met at the home of John Nicolson on 4 November 1888. All eighteen family heads signed a petition addressed to the Lord Provost of Glasgow alleging, along with other grievances, that the promise of a year's provision had been broken and that it would soon be necessary to sell the implements and livestock they possessed to buy food.³⁶ The petition succeeded only in provoking virulent denials from Malcolm McNeill that provisions had been promised, and resulted in the Scottish Office demanding of McNeill a written guarantee that future emigrants would receive no advance to pay Scottish debts.³⁷ In Winnipeg, Scarth decided to send his secretary in the company of the editor of the *Nor-West Farmer*, Mr. Richard Waugh, to Killarney to investigate grievances. Both had reported back to Scarth by 14 November, and while neither recorded any sympathy for the settlers' situation, they noted the bitter and unanimous complaint amongst the Lewis crofters that the promise of provision had been broken. Waugh stated that "about one half of the crofters" would require assistance until a crop could be harvested.³⁸ Scarth notified the Commissioner for Dominion Lands in Winnipeg, H. H. Smith, who immediately forwarded Waugh's report to Ottawa. On 26 November, the Canadian Minister of the Interior, Edgar Dewdney, cabled Tupper in London

³⁵SRO, AF 51/98, *The Winnipeg Morning Call*, 15 September 1888.

³⁶SRO, AF 51/111, Killarney crofters to Sir William Collins, 4 November 1888.

³⁷SRO, AF 51/113, Scottish Office Minute, 4 December 1888.

³⁸SRO, AF 51/108, Scarth to Edwards, 30 November 1888.

Some crofters likely to suffer this winter for food. Imperial Government should forthwith provide supplies. Deeds from North West Land Company not given Crofters[,] therefore can give no lien.³⁹

This "disquieting telegram" arrived precisely at the moment when parliamentary funding for the settlement scheme was most in doubt and the Under-Secretary for Scotland admitted that "the whole question of colonization to the Manitoba districts" could be affected.⁴⁰ To further complicate matters, one of the Harris men died on 21 November, and the Imperial Colonisation Board had not yet been appointed. The Scottish Office felt it was in no position to ask the Treasury formally for more money and another flurry of letters and telegrams followed with North West Land Company officials in Edinburgh and Winnipeg. The Canadian Government, as indicated in Dewdney's telegram, claimed it was legally unable to act because, without title to the land, the settlers could give no security for provisions, and because, as the homestead sites were still legally CNWL Co. holdings, they were not subject to federal jurisdiction.⁴¹

The matter was handled "unofficially." At the request of W. H. Smith who personally undertook responsibility for the expenditure, Tupper cabled that the necessary assistance should be provided.⁴² H. H. Smith visited Killarney and was able to secure the assurances of local shopkeepers that the crofters would receive all necessary credit during the winter.⁴³ The visit was pivotal. Both the local shopkeepers and the CNWL Co. considered that the burden of Smith's discussions in Killarney was that the British and Canadian Governments were

³⁹SRO, AF 51/108, Dewdney to Tupper, 26 November 1888.

⁴⁰See above, Chapter Two, pp. 35-6. See also SRO, AF 51/108, Scottish Office to Edwards, 27 November 1888.

⁴¹SRO, AF 51/108, Edwards to Scottish Office, 28 November 1888.

⁴²PAC, John A. Macdonald Papers, MG 26 A, Vol. 31, W. H. Smith to John A. Macdonald, 22 December 1888, pp. 147963-966.

⁴³Canada. Sessional Papers, vol. 23 (1890), *Annual Report of the Department of the Interior* (Paper No. 14), Report of H. H. Smith, p. 10.

committed to the success of the colonization scheme. The company and the shopkeepers extended credit particularly to the Killarney group which, significantly, made no further protest during the winter about broken promises. Whether the obligations of repayment were understood by the crofters is uncertain, but clearly they concurred with the shopkeepers in the opinion that this was not to be a source of concern.

That the Argyle crofters at no time acted in concert with the Killarney crofters during this crisis deserves comment. With the exception of Roderick Mackay who declared private resources of £45, the Harris emigrants had arrived in an even more destitute condition than those from Lewis. But their group of twelve families contained seventeen females of working age who were not listed as wives whereas the Lewis group contained only seven among eighteen families. In 1889 three of the Argyle seventeen were reported to be married and nine were reported to be working for wages; in 1889 at Killarney, four of the seven unmarried females were working for wages.⁴⁴ Fragmentary evidence strongly suggests that this pattern was established very soon after their arrival. The Argyle settlers could therefore depend on a significant income from female family members that most Killarney crofters could not. When the early frost curtailed male employment on the threshing gangs, the Killarney settlers felt the wage reduction much more severely than their neighbours to the north. Richard Waugh also noted that, even in early November, most young men from the Argyle settlement were still out earning wages on the threshing gangs despite the early frost.⁴⁵ Significantly, when interviewed by the Imperial Colonisation Board's agent the following April, the Harris families almost invariably referred to the

⁴⁴ Great Britain. *Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-6067] 1890, Appendix A, pp. 13-20.

⁴⁵ SRO, AF 51/121, *The Canadian Gazette*, 10 January 1889, p. 345.

"kindness" of neighbours and Pelican Lake's bountiful supply of fish; the Lewis families, closer to Killarney, referred only to the "kindness" of the merchant, T. J. Lawlor.⁴⁶ On 10 December, 1888 a letter from Kenneth Macmillan of the Argyle settlement appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*. It commented very favourably on the settlement scheme and stood in sharp contrast to the petition from the Killarney settlers. Whether solicited or spontaneously-written, the letter indicated that the two very closely related settlements were perceiving "Manitoba" very differently.⁴⁷

The promise to supply the crofters appears to have applied to provision only. One Killarney merchant, T. J. Lawlor, found it necessary to contact H. H. Smith in Winnipeg to have arrangements made to supply seed grain. Lawlor wrote later

Fancy a people taken away from fishing scenes and dumped upon the prairie--and no provision made for seed. Gaelic may be a very nice and expressive dialect but you cannot raise wheat from it, and these people had nothing else.⁴⁸

Smith reluctantly sought and gained approval for a further advance. The seed was supplied and crofters, later than their neighbours, began to plant for the first time. The cost of the winter's provision and the spring advance for seed grain totalled nearly £400. This sum, unlike the £720 granted at Scarth's request, was distributed fairly equally amongst the thirty families.⁴⁹ However, by April, 1889, instead of the £3,600 originally contemplated, £4,720, or an average

⁴⁶PAC, RG 15, vol. 575, file 176811(1), Report of Grant McKay, 12 April 1889. This report was found in a basket of arrears in the Minister of The Interior's office on 25 June 1890.

⁴⁷SRO, AF 51/110, *Glasgow Herald*, 10 December 1888.

⁴⁸SRO, AF 51/198/514, T. J. Lawlor to Sir George Trevelyan, 21 January 1895.

⁴⁹PAC, RG 15, vol. 575, file 176811(1), Report of Grant McKay. Amounts ranged from \$28 to \$35.

of over £157 per family head, had been spent.⁵⁰

Attention in the spring of 1889 shifted to the forty-nine families reported to be about to leave Scotland on 3 April. The refusal of the CNWL Co. to have any further involvement in the settlement scheme and the Department of the Interior's recommendation that land selections be made by "a duly-accredited agent" resulted in the appointment of a Gaelic-speaking Calgary resident, Grant McKay, as the Canadian agent of the Imperial Colonisation Board. Beginning his duties on 18 March, McKay was instructed to maintain a strict economy and to work closely with H. H. Smith.⁵¹ As Dominion Lands Commissioner at Winnipeg, Smith had been involved in the protracted correspondence over the winter required to settle questions that had arisen over the liens taken from the Pelican Lake crofters and the exchange of lands with the CNWL Co. Neither question had been settled by the time the *Scandinavian* left Glasgow, but Smith was urging that "the trouble and confusion" of the previous year not be repeated.⁵² In February, seventy-six quarter-sections had been reserved at Wolseley. The delay in Parliamentary approval in the United Kingdom however meant that no practical preparations for settlement had been made before McKay's appointment. When McKay met Smith in Winnipeg in early April for the first time to make arrangements for land selection, the forty-nine families were already en route.

Complication arose immediately. The I.C.B. had been embarrassed by charges that the 1888 settlers, by locating on company-owned lands, had been deprived of their right under the "pre-emption" provisions of the *Dominion Lands Act* to acquire a second quarter section after three years residence. A substantial

⁵⁰Great Britain. *Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-6067] 1890, p. 1.

⁵¹PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Colmer to McKay, 16 March 1889.

⁵²PAC, RG 15, vol. 575, file 176811(1), Smith to Burgess, 14 March 1889.

and extended debate on this point occurred in the Montreal press.⁵³ More importantly, the Board had been convinced by Scarth that the government advance was better secured on 320 acres than on 160, and instructed McKay that each family head should therefore receive a half section. Sir Charles Tupper, travelling to Vancouver, told Smith on 8 April in Winnipeg that the pre-emption provision had been promised to the emigrants. Inspectors' reports from Wolseley confirmed that the government lands were inadequate to satisfy this requirement. In a frantic series of cables, Smith attempted to persuade the Ministry of the Interior to exchange certain sections with the CPR and to make available for settlement the sections reserved for schools.⁵⁴ On 10 April, the request for school sections was firmly denied. On the morning of 14 April, The Department of the Interior received telegrams from Smith stating that only three CPR sections were suitable and that settlement at Wolseley was impossible without the school sections. It received another from Halifax stating that the crofter party was leaving immediately for Wolseley.⁵⁵

For the second time, a land company stepped forward. The Manitoba and North West Railway Company⁵⁶ (hereinafter the MNWR CO.) brought to Smith's attention two townships in an area further west than the previously rejected Churchbridge. The company promised the assistance of its agents in settling the crofters and persuaded Smith to visit the lands in question. At 9:23 a.m. on 15 April, Smith again advised Dewdney that Wolseley settlement was

⁵³ See the exchange between the *Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Gazette*, September and October, 1888.

⁵⁴ PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Smith to Dewdney, 14 April 1889; Smith to Burgess, 14 April 1889; Borradaile to Dewdney, 14 April 1889.

⁵⁶ Ironically, the MNWR Co. was intimately connected with the Commercial Colonisation Company of Glasgow whose plans for the 1888 emigration had been rejected in May 1888.

impossible; at 9:25 a.m., from the same office, the MNWR Co. renewed its offer.⁵⁷ The Department of the Interior had no choice. Less than twenty-four hours from Winnipeg, the new immigrants were told that their destination was no longer Wolseley, but rather Saltcoats, at the terminus of the Manitoba and North Western Railway, in Assiniboia.⁵⁸

Sir Charles Tupper inspected the land upon his return from the West coast and sang its praises when he personally welcomed the crofter train at Winnipeg. The emigrants were in the care of George Betts Borradaile, who had been appointed, at Tupper's suggestion, to meet the *Scandinavian* at Halifax and to supervise the party en route. At Winnipeg, Grant McKay and E. F. Eden, land commissioner of the MNWR Co., joined the train which then proceeded to Saltcoats, arriving on the morning of Sunday, 20 April 1889. The residents of Saltcoats village welcomed the new arrivals by providing a hot breakfast, and a Gaelic sermon was delivered by a minister present at the request of the Canadian Government officials. Two days later, one of the new arrivals married her fiancé from Killarney in a ceremony conducted in the Saltcoats railway station. The celebration ended with the giving of gifts and a speech of appreciation to the townsfolk by Grant McKay. In a fine example of civic boosterism, the Saltcoats correspondent of the *Manitoba Free Press* wrote

Three cheers were given for the young couple, for the Crofters, the musicians and for the Queen, bringing to a happy close a red letter day in the history of the rising city of Saltcoats.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Smith to Dewdney, and F. H. Brydges to Dewdney, 15 April 1889.

⁵⁸ Surprisingly, Tupper failed to advise British authorities of the change of location. The Scottish Office was informed on 16 May by a smug agent of the Commercial Colonisation Company; Colmer first learned of the change from newspaper reports in mid-May. SRO, AF 51/88/366, Grahame to Scottish Office, 16 May 1889; Colmer to Scottish Office, 20 May 1889.

⁵⁹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 April 1889, p. 2.

The outlook of the new settlers was far from the spirit of optimism conveyed by the wedding report. Having endured the political debate in Scotland, having had their destination changed twice in two months, and having just completed a journey that many later recalled as particularly arduous, the crofter party arrived at Saltcoats sick and dispirited.⁶⁰ The medical doctor who located at Saltcoats at E. F. Eden's particular request at the end of April wrote that a "combination of seasickness, brainsickness and homesickness bedevilled the immigrants."⁶¹ One adult and two children died shortly after arrival and treatment of others was not aided by their complete inability to pay for doctor's fees and prescribed medicine. The often irrational and inconsistent behaviour of many of the settlers subsequent to their arrival is best viewed as an attempt to re-establish control of their own destinies and to convince themselves that leaving the Islands had been their best choice. At almost every turn, the evidence was contrary.

A. F. Eden ordered the company's Saltcoats agent, Thomas MacNutt,⁶² to suspend all other business in order to assist with the settlement of the crofters.⁶³ MacNutt, Eden, McKay and Borradaile all were involved in the settlement though surviving records give little indication of the roles played by Borradaile and MacKay. The MNWR Co. officials appear to have initially decided upon the homestead locations with little regard for the settlers' preferences. Each family was conveyed to the site chosen for him approximately ten miles north of

⁶⁰ Great Britain. *Report From the Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-354] 1890, p. 368.

⁶¹ T. A. Patrick, *Pioneer of Vision*, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980). Marilyn Lewry, who has seen Patrick's original manuscript, cites this more plausibly as "trainsickness".

⁶² Thomas MacNutt was to become Conservative M.P. for Assiniboia East in 1911.

⁶³ Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-152] 1890-91, Appendix 6, p. 80, Thomas MacNutt to Borradaile, 19 July 1890.

Saltcoats; forty-six initially refused to accept the selections. MacNutt later stated that the parish groups wanted to settle together and Lewry's study on locational selection demonstrates that the ultimate settlement pattern did reflect Scottish parish origins.^{6 4} Fourteen families insisted on locations of a more purely prairie character than those the company was offering and settled in a group in an adjacent township on land the company had not intended to offer. As much as a month was taken up by the process of site selection. Eden stated that in all his not inconsiderable experience, he had "never found a more difficult lot of men to satisfy."^{6 5} When the process was finally complete, only twenty-four families had entered for pre-emptions.^{6 6} Twelve families ultimately accepted the sites originally chosen for them; twenty-four made selections on lands not originally offered; eleven chose sites rejected by others. Lewry indicates that the twelve who accepted their original sites were located on the best soil in the area; many of the original sites rejected were broken up by large sloughs.^{6 7} Two families left the area before making selections to join relatives at Moosomin and Killarney. Twenty-four were located on government lands, twenty-three on lands belonging to the MNWR Co.^{6 8} Two distinct colonies had been formed. Fourteen families were clustered in Township 24, Ranges 2 and 3, northwest of Leech Lake, and became known as the King Colony; thirty-three families located in Township 25, Ranges 1, 2 and 3, the area originally offered by the company, and became known as the Lothian colony.

^{6 4}*Ibid.* See also Marilyn Lewry, *A Study of The Locational Changes Among Hebridean Immigrants in Southeast Saskatchewan, 1883 to 1926*. (M. A. dissertation, University of Regina, 1985), pp. 79.

^{6 5}PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Eden to H. H. Smith, 3 July 1889.

^{6 6}*Ibid.*

^{6 7}Lewry, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

^{6 8}No records have survived to indicate whether the MNWR Co. expected, requested or received compensation comparable to that received by the CNWL Co.

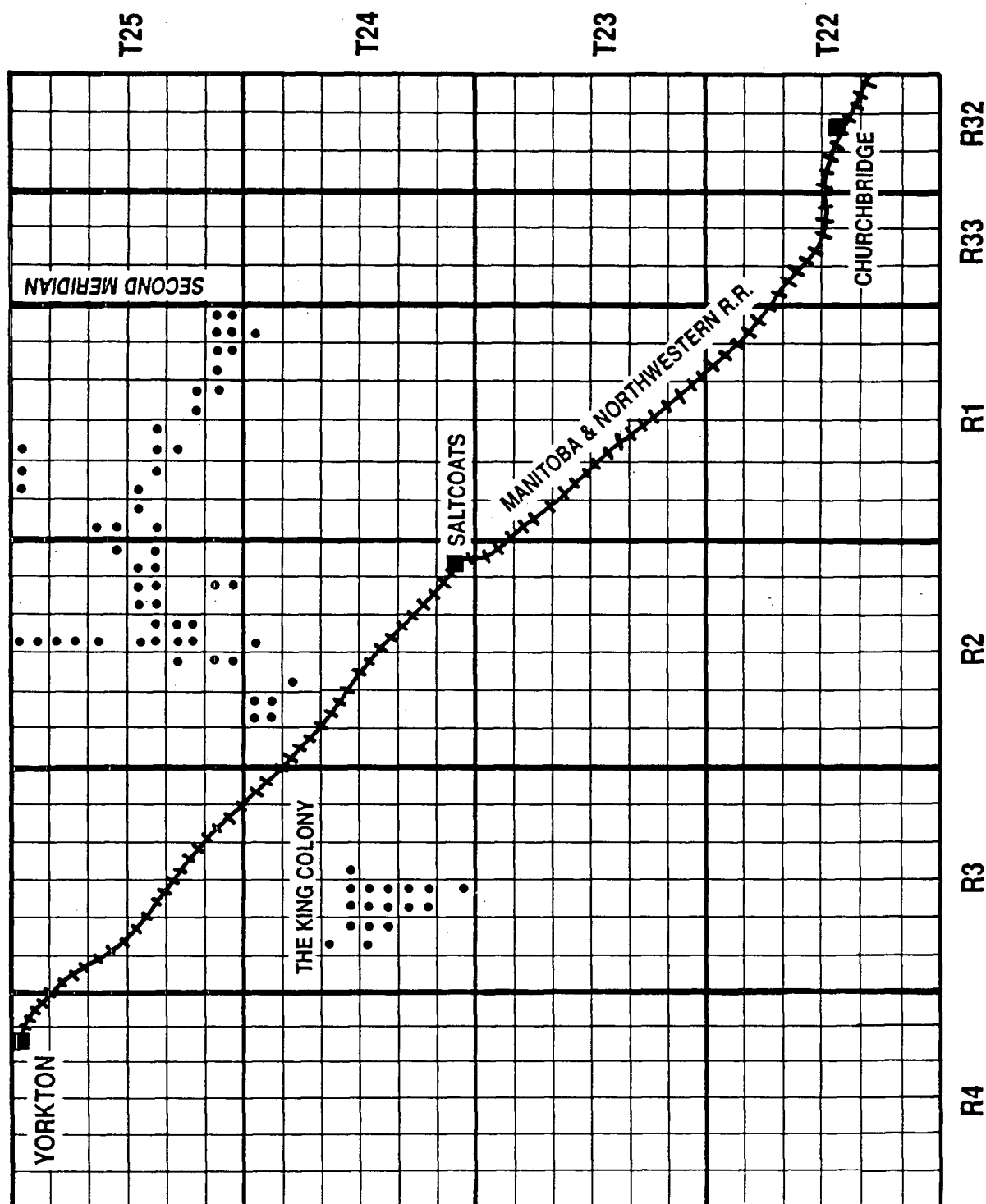


Figure 4. Homestead Locations Near Saltcoats. 1889-1906

The inadequacy of available funds was soon revealed even more clearly at Saltcoats than it had been at Killarney. Despite Scottish Office attempts to reduce family size and to select families with private means, despite fare reductions from the Allan Line and the CPR, despite the example of the Killarney experience, the Saltcoats settlers were seriously underfunded. This was severely complicated by the instruction to MacKay not to advance funds to any individual family member other than the family head.⁶⁹ Whether the I.C.B. was concerned about the legality of such advances or whether the decision was linked to the promise of pre-emption rights cannot be stated. However, the practical result was to restrict funds to designated family heads and to prohibit any increase in those funds as had occurred at Killarney. Though the average amount available to each family head was nearly £85,⁷⁰ MacKay was informed that seventeen would have less than £80, that he should initially restrict his expenditure to £70 per family and that out of that sum, he was to have "particular regard to the first winter's requirements."⁷¹ Exclusive of provisions, \$300 was determined as the maximum sum available per family for settlement purposes.⁷²

MacKay and the MNWR Co. officials were obliged to economise wherever possible. Later complaints from the crofters that the food and livestock provided them were inferior were always vigorously denied by the I.C.B. However, smaller houses than those originally contemplated were erected; they were constructed with third grade lumber and were intended to last only a few years.⁷³ MacKay

⁶⁹PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Colmer to MacKay, 16 March 1889.

⁷⁰SRO, AF 51/188, Colmer to Lothian, 10 April 1889.

⁷¹PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Colmer to MacKay, 16 March 1889.

⁷²*Ibid.*

⁷³PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Smith to Burgess, 9 July 1889. Colmer later told the Colonisation Committee that if these houses were draughty, it was the fault of the crofters. Great Britain. *Report From the Select Committee on*

attempted to follow his instructions closely and, much to the irritation of the supplier, Buchanan and Company of Saltcoats, issued hundreds of itemized vouchers, as required, rather than approve a general provision of a few weeks' supply.⁷⁴ A system of sharing oxen, ploughs and harnesses was attempted with each head being charged only half the cost of each. Even before the settlers' arrival, it had been anticipated that this system would prove unworkable. Sir Charles Tupper, while in Winnipeg, arranged that the MNWR Co. would provide the additional funds to allow each family head a yoke of oxen and a waggon. Tupper agreed to attempt to secure additional Imperial funds, but if he was unsuccessful, the company was to re-possess the oxen and waggons.⁷⁵

The chaotic settlement process at Saltcoats was considered by Tupper to have gone "less smoothly" than it should have done.⁷⁶ Perhaps not unexpectedly, the I.C.B. agent, Grant MacKay, was deemed to be lacking in energy and good judgement and was dismissed by 18 June.⁷⁷ By mid-June, H. H. Smith advised Ottawa that MacKay had given advances in excess of available funds and that unless the additional money Tupper sought arrived immediately, the colony's failure was inevitable.⁷⁸ When it was realised that MacKay had not taken liens on chattels before his dismissal, Borradaile's appointment was extended to the end of July by a grumbling Department of the Interior which inadvertently found itself responsible for his \$75 monthly salary.

⁷³(cont'd) *Colonisation*, [C-152] 1890-91, p. 78.

⁷⁴PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Eden to Smith, 3 July 1889.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, Colmer to Burgess, 10 July 1889.

⁷⁷In the report submitted to Tupper on the Killarney seed grain distribution dated 14 April, MacKay had permitted himself the opinion that to create expectations in Scotland and to fail to meet them in Canada was "breaking faith with the people." Evidence suggests that Tupper and H. H. Smith may have discussed the dismissal in Winnipeg in April. *Ibid.*, Smith to Tupper, 24 April 1889.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, Smith to Dewdney, 12 June 1889.

With MacKay's dismissal, the Winnipeg Dominion Lands office found itself bearing once again the prime responsibility for the entire scheme. During the first few days of July, H. H. Smith received a letter from E. F. Eden alleging that the Saltcoats settlers were grossly underfunded and a letter from the doctor at Saltcoats stating that he and the druggist had "indulged in all the philanthropy and charity" they could afford. As well he received notification that several Killarney families claimed destitution was upon them, and he read in the *Manitoba Free Press* a petition from the Saltcoats crofters stating that his Department was breaking faith with the settlers.⁷⁹ By early July, it became apparent that the 1889 crop would be light due to the drought. In late June, just as the Colonisation Committee in London called its first witness on crofter emigration, Borradaile placed a public notice at the Buchanan store in Saltcoats stating that all credits to crofters were suspended.

Smith was thoroughly alarmed. He warned the Minister of the Interior that trouble was imminent and suggested that if the person superintending the settlements was in the employ of the Department of the Interior, the Department would be held responsible. Though Borradaile had not impressed him at all favourably, Smith urged that the I.C.B. should be pressed to appoint him as its agent, as he was the only one sufficiently familiar with the settlement's affairs. The Department agreed. Burgess wrote to Dewdney

The position we occupy at the present time is an embarrassing one in every respect. We are made to shoulder the mistakes of the Imperial Government, who apparently turn a deaf ear to our representations;...I think they ought to bear the whole responsibility themselves, and the expense as well. At all events, neither the

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, Eden to Smith, 3 July 1889; T. A. Patrick to Smith, 3 July 1889; Ronald McKay *et al* to Scarth, 3 July 1889. See also *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 July 1889, p. 2.

responsibility nor the expense properly belongs to this Department.⁸⁰

Dewdney cabled Tupper on 9 July

Smith represents necessary immediately appoint Borradaile agent Colonization Board finish up Crofters' business, otherwise grave complications certain.⁸¹

On 10 July, Dewdney was informed that the British Treasury had agreed to the appointment of Borradaile at \$1,000 per year plus the expense of a horse. Once again, the I.C.B. had taken up its only available option.⁸²

On 15 August 1889, the Scottish Office finally received the Treasury's reluctant agreement that £1,500, the unexpended portion of the original £10,000 voted in April 1888, would be included in a Supplementary Estimate. Pointedly stating the "awkward matter" of varying a Parliamentary Minute, the Treasury argued that only the peculiar nature of the emigration experiment permitted an expense that would otherwise have been unjustifiable. The request for £385 administration expense was also allowed.⁸³ Tupper claimed that he had personally lobbied every important Government figure in order to secure these amounts.⁸⁴ Colmer advised Borradaile on 2 August before official confirmation from the Treasury, that his appointment was confirmed and that £1,800 would be sent in a few days. The MNWR Co. was to receive \$4,085 for the oxen and ploughs it had provided and T. J. Lawlor at Killarney was to receive nearly

⁸⁰PAC, RG 15, vol.590, file 198738(1), Burgess to Dewdney, 8 July 1889.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, Dewdney to Tupper, 9 July 1889.

⁸²*Ibid.*, Tupper to Dewdney, 10 July 1889. The telegram was an attempt to placate the Canadian officials; the Scottish Office did not even formally request funds to appoint an agent until 23 July. Colonisation Board minutes of 2 July 1889 indicate that Borradaile's appointment was approved on 2 July. Whether this was intended as an appointment for July only or as a permanent position is not indicated. See also SRO, AF 51/188.

⁸³SRO, AF 51/188/4200/43, Treasury to Scottish Office, 15 August 1889.

⁸⁴PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Tupper to Dewdney, 28 August 1889.

\$2,000 for the seed grain and the provisions personally guaranteed by W. H. Smith. The remaining \$3,000 was intended to pay overdrawn accounts at Saltcoats and to provide for maintenance during the coming winter at Saltcoats.⁸⁵

With questions of liens and land transfers at Killarney still unresolved and with the Saltcoats settlement so problematic, Tupper decided to send Colmer to visit Ottawa, Winnipeg and the settlements in the autumn of 1889. At Ottawa, Colmer found the Ministry of the Interior adamant that it bore no responsibility for Lothian's scheme, doubtful that debt-ridden settlements had any chance of success, and inclined to compare the crofters with "helpless" North West Indians.⁸⁶ The Department was, however, willing to involve itself in an advisory capacity and agreed that its Land Commissioner at Winnipeg would continue to assist Borradaile and to act as a signing officer for the I.C.B. In Winnipeg, Colmer met with representatives of the land companies and suggested the establishment of an honorary sub-committee to assist the I.C.B. in administration. The land company officials all expressed a willingness to further the immigration interests of the North West in this manner. As negotiations between the CNWL Co. and the Canadian Government over the land transfers at Pelican Lake were still proceeding, Colmer was unable to complete arrangements to transfer the liens to the I.C.B. He found that, in fact, the CNWL Co. liens themselves were far from being complete and, at his insistence, company officials remained at Killarney until all but three were completed by 2 November.⁸⁷

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, Colmer to Borradaile, 2 August 1889. Borradaile was also authorised, out of administrative funds, to pay Grant MacKay who had not received a penny since his March appointment.

⁸⁶PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Dewdney to Tupper, 31 July 1889; Burgess to Colmer, 22 June 1889; Burgess to Dewdney, 18 July 1889.

⁸⁷SRO, AF 51/189/56, CNWL Co. to Scottish Office, 21 November 1889.

At Killarney, Colmer visited all the homesteads of heads of families. He reported that their houses were warm and comfortable, all being double-boarded, packed with clay or soil, and measuring fourteen feet by sixteen. Each family head had approximately forty acres ready for seeding, though eighteen were reported as having problems securing a water supply. Due to drought conditions, crops had not been marketable, but were thought to be sufficient for the settlers' own needs in the coming winter. Twenty-six adults (including one family head) from the Lewis portion of the settlement were reported to be working for wages; twenty-two adults from the Harris portion were reported likewise. Apart from a concern about seed grain for the coming year (expressed, significantly, by two family heads without adult help), Colmer told the I.C.B. that he heard of no complaints of a significant nature from any of the settlers and that, with "ordinary good fortune", the success of the settlement was assured.

Of the settlement near Saltcoats, Colmer could not express the same degree of optimism. The two month delay in site selection, the resultant postponement of ploughing and planting, and the drought conditions had combined to leave the settlers with no crop whatsoever. Winter provision was to be provided by Borradaile from the Board's \$3,000 remaining credit. Clothing supplies were found to be inadequate for the approaching winter; Colmer arranged a charitable collection of clothing in Winnipeg. The drought had created difficulties in securing winter hay supplies and in sinking wells. In October, fewer than a dozen houses were stated to be ready for winter and one family head was still living in a tent. A sum of \$300 for public works had been secured by Tupper from the Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Territories specifically to provide local employment for the crofters on railway bed

preparation.⁸⁸ But local employment was scarce. At least nine younger men had left for employment at Portage la Prairie by 12 May, and were later joined by others. Forty-nine adults were recorded in October as working for wages in locations ranging from the Rockies to Rat Portage. Significantly, thirty of these are listed as having sent no money home. Only ten family heads were recorded as having broken more than ten acres and very little of this was backset.⁸⁹ Numerous complaints were made to Colmer. Demonstrating a chilling lack of understanding of what is significant to both experienced and novice farmers, Colmer reported that these complaints

...were more or less of an unimportant nature, relating to the quality of the provisions, to the cattle supplied to them, to the prices charged, and other similar matters.⁹⁰

As Colmer gave Borradaile instructions on how to deal with these "minor" complaints, it is unlikely that either man realised that the responsibility for managing the crofter settlements at Pelican Lake and Saltcoats, for the next fifteen years, would primarily be theirs.

⁸⁸ PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Smith to Burgess, 9 July 1889.

⁸⁹ Backsetting is the dry-farming technique of an autumn ploughing to trap and retain winter moisture.

⁹⁰ Great Britain. *Report of The Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-6067] 1890, *Report to The Colonisation Board*, with appendices, by J. G. Colmer, p. 7. Unless indicated otherwise, information in this, and in the preceding paragraph, is drawn from Colmer's report, pp. 4-33.

CHAPTER IV. SETTLEMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION TO 1893

As indicated in the previous chapter, welcoming committees and celebrations awaited the crofter immigrants in the Canadian West. At Killarney, the settlers received community assistance taking the form of leased potato land and gratuitous carpentry work. At Saltcoats, the much less numerous population was unable to provide a similar welcome to the new-comers. But the disappointment expressed by Wolseley residents at the last minute change of location indicates that the arrival of such a large group of settlers would have been favourably regarded by any white settler community in the North West during this period of disappointingly low immigration. There is no reason to believe that the residents of Saltcoats or Killarney would have dissented from the good will expressed by the "Welcome to the Crofters" editorial that appeared in the *Manitoba Free Press*.¹

Though evidence is highly fragmentary, a sufficiency exists to suggest that relations between the host communities and the crofters became strained very soon after the settlers arrived.² Coming from the Western Isles, the crofters had left a political environment that had, for several years at least, encouraged the articulation of protest and grievance. Believing that the contract that placed them on the Canadian prairies entailed obligations on the part of the British Government and believing that some of those obligations were being avoided, the settlers did not hesitate to voice their concerns to any who would listen. Even when the grievances were expressed in the form of letters or petitions to Scottish dignitaries, such as the petition of November, 1888 to the Lord Provost of Glasgow, the local population would necessarily be aware of the

¹*Manitoba Free Press*, 4 June 1888, p. 2.

²Neither Killarney nor Saltcoats supported a local press during the period covered by this chapter.

problems either because a local enquiry would be made by government officials or because the crofters themselves did not hesitate to publicise their activities.

The Killarney area resident who had rented the potato ground to the Lewis crofters in June, 1888 expressed the opinion in November that the Hebrideans had "lowered the character of the settlement."³ Visiting the area in November 1888, just as the settlers' concern over their winter provision was prevalent, the editor of the *Nor'West Farmer* found that the crofters were full of claims and grievances. He did not hesitate to state the Nativist opinion that

The men who have been sent out are clearly not the class of people wanted out here...[They] are full of their own importance...and cannot be made to recognise the fact that any one good live Canadian is worth more than two of them.⁴

Humour was found in the fact that the crofters complained of not getting milk from cows suckling calves and in having chickens freeze to death in the winter.⁵

The aloofness maintained by the crofters could well have arisen from language barriers and the recognition that they were unschooled in the agricultural methods of prairie farming. Evidence suggests, however, that they were eager to accommodate themselves to their Canadian neighbours. Almost every family, through employment, had some contact with non-crofters. At least four marriages with non-crofters occurred within the first two years of settlement; children were reported to be attending school regularly and to be fluent in English.⁶ They were encouraged in this by the fact that the region, apart from Icelandic settlement in the Argyle District, was overwhelmingly British

³*The Canadian Gazette*, 10 January 1889. Report of Richard Waugh.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*The Globe*, 9 August 1890, p. 5.

⁶*Ibid.*

in origin.⁷ The Pelican Lake region was noted for the widespread use of agricultural machinery,⁸ and most of the crofters emulated the example of their neighbours in mortgaging crops in order to acquire mowers, rakes and self-binders.

But even these contacts created disharmony. Though Protestant, the strict Free Church Sabbatarianism of the Crofters strained relations with their "irreligious" neighbours and employers. One family head chased fishermen from Pelican Lake on Sundays threatening to bring charges against them; three young men quit jobs because an employer "swore" at them; at a Killarney hotel, one young woman refused to peel potatoes on Sunday, that task "not falling under the works of necessity and mercy."⁹ The crofters were numerous enough to form a distinct group within the Presbyterian Churches and, with the arrival of Reverend Gollan at Hilton in 1889, attended regular service in Gaelic.

There was no comparable isolation from the local business community. In 1891, the Killarney merchants began to bring suits against individual crofters for debts ranging from \$5.45 to \$200. The debts had been variously incurred, but were mostly for store bills and farming equipment. By 1894, fourteen individuals or firms had brought twenty-five actions against sixteen Crofters in the County Court of Killarney.¹⁰ Total judgements amounted to nearly \$3,000. It is significant that even John Nicolson, the acknowledged "leader and spokesman" of the Lewis crofters, was sued for debt twice in 1893. Though "words" do not survive to indicate the opinion of the crofters held by the local merchant

⁷Canada. *Census 1891*, vol. 1 p. 228, S. D. Argyle and S. D. Riverside.

⁸*Manitoba Free Press*, August-October, 1888.

⁹Scottish Record Office (hereinafter SRO), AF 51/114, T. McNaught to Scottish Office, 17 December 1888.

¹⁰SRO, AF 51/199/584, Document submitted to the I.C.B. by John Nicolson and Allan Morrison.

community at this time, these "actions" indicate the usual disfavour with which a creditor views an unsatisfactory debtor.

At Saltcoats, the settlers were prevented from becoming the debtors of local merchants. In the summer of 1889, the Imperial Colonisation Board told the business community that it would refuse to be held responsible for any debt in excess of £120 per family.¹¹ Though the Board subsequently made an additional \$3,000 available, the Saltcoats merchants themselves extended very little credit to a population already mortgaged beyond the security it could provide. By 1894, the Saltcoats Crofters collectively owed less than \$800 to local shopkeepers and implement dealers; by that date, the Killarney and Argyle crofters owed more than thirty times that amount.¹²

If the litigation that occurred at Killarney was avoided at Saltcoats, resentment of the crofter settlers was not thereby contained. The Hebrideans settled in an area sparsely populated by settlers primarily of British origin.¹³ They were located amongst a population many of whom were assisted settlers of the Commercial Colonisation Company, most of whom were themselves struggling to establish homesteads, and most of whom could offer no employment but rather were competing with the crofters for what small wages were available. Sir Charles Tupper in 1893 recommended that in future the Board should settle crofters in groups of no more than six families in order to avoid competition for scarce employment and more significantly, to prevent the development of a "local prejudice against them."¹⁴

¹¹Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C152] 1890-91, testimony of A. F. Eden, p. 7.

¹²Great Britain. *Fifth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-7445] 1894, p. 4.

¹³Canada. *Manuscript Census 1891*, SD "A 14", Broadview.

¹⁴SRO, AF 51/196/438, *Correspondence Respecting the Crofter Settlements* (unpublished) 1894, p. 23, Tupper to Trevelyan, 13 December 1893.

That a local prejudice existed against the crofters at Saltcoats is supported only by fragmentary but highly suggestive evidence. When complaints of overcharging were being investigated, Thomas McNutt stated that older settlers wished they could claim to be crofters in order to benefit from the low prices at which the crofters were supplied.¹⁵ When complaints that crofters' mail was being tampered with in Canada were being investigated, the postmasters near Saltcoats and Killarney could only have been displeased at having to defend their integrity. One newspaper report displayed no sympathy for one crofter's frozen feet, preferring to comment on his stupidity in not wearing available footwear;¹⁶ another expressed anger that winter clothing had been unnecessarily collected for those already so heavily favoured.¹⁷ The glare of publicity that followed the crofters, particularly until 1891 while the British Committee on Colonisation was hearing evidence, was not appreciated by the local communities. At Saltcoats especially, a steady stream of British and Canadian newspaper correspondents and Scottish travellers was augmented by visits from dignitaries and officials including Colmer, tenant farmer delegations, Department of the Interior officials and ministers, land company commissioners, Sir Charles Tupper, British M.P.'s, and Governor-General Lord Stanley accompanied by a ceremonial contingent of Mounted Police. The Saltcoats correspondent of the *Manitoba Free Press*, as early as October 1889, wrote that the people of the community

...do complain of every "High Muck-a-Muck" coming to Saltcoats to "visit the Crofters." Let them visit the Crofter Colonies near Saltcoats if they will.¹⁸

¹⁵SRO, AF 51/196/420, Borradaile to Colmer, 31 August 1893.

¹⁶*Regina Leader*, 28 January, 1890, p. 8.

¹⁷*Winnipeg Colonist*, April 1890. Reprinted in *Saskatchewan History*, vol. 16, no. 2 (Spring, 1963), p. 78.

¹⁸*Manitoba Free Press*, 8 October 1889, p. 4.

The international celebrities no longer had an appreciative local audience.

With the emphatic withdrawal of the Department of the Interior, the Board's agent acquired the sole responsibility for the administration of the settlements in Canada. George Betts Borradaile assumed the role of Crofter Commissioner for the Imperial Colonization Board on 1 July 1889. He was appointed not because he had the confidence of the Department of the Interior and not because the crofters' petition heavily influenced Board members; he was appointed because no one else with any familiarity with the Saltcoats situation was available after Grant McKay was deemed to be unsatisfactory. With an annual salary of \$1,000 plus the keep of a horse, Borradaile was also to receive up to \$300 per year for office expenses and travel expenses to Killarney once or twice a year.¹⁹ By the time his wife joined him from Halifax in late November, he had located on a quarter section in the Lothian Colony and was already preparing the first of the quarterly reports the Board in London expected from him. He was also attempting to deal with the host of administrative demands for which, in Canada, he was solely responsible. To avoid the necessity and expense of constant communication between Borradaile and London, a Winnipeg-based sub-committee of the I.C.B. would be created within a year. Originally consisting of H. H. Smith, Scarth, Eden and L. A. Hamilton of the C.P.R., the sub-committee was gratuitously to play an advisory role to secure the "success of the present experiment, in anticipation of an extension of the colonisation scheme...."²⁰

The Board realised, during the chaotic summer settlement process, that the funds available to each family were inadequate. At its fourth meeting on 7

¹⁹SRO, AF 51/189/73, Colmer Memorandum, 3 March 1890; AF 51/189/85, Colmer to Scottish Office, 3 April 1890.

²⁰SRO, AF 51/190/4200/108, Colmer to H. H. Smith, 23 July 1890.

July 1889, it reconsidered its earlier decision to refuse advances to family members other than designated family heads.^{2 1} But partly because no funds were made available specifically for this purpose, and partly because nearly all the other family members eligible to enter for a quarter section had left the Saltcoats area by July in search of wages, only four additional entries had been recorded by December 1889.^{2 2} In contrast to Killarney where only two eligible males did not take up homesteads, fewer than half the eligible family members were to enter for homesteads at Saltcoats during the life of the colony.^{2 3}

The instructions Borradaile received from the I.C.B. included the warning that the Board required security for "every cent of the money" advanced to the crofters because the Imperial Treasury would be auditing the accounts.^{2 4} Borradaile's primary responsibility was "to consist in looking after the interests of the Board,"^{2 5} and it is apparent that both he and his employer did not doubt that this meant the vigilant protection of the securities taken for monies advanced. Though he would advise the settlers on farming practices, he was not, in an agricultural sense, the practical man of the country the I.C.B. claimed him to be. Through the terms of his appointment and, through no fault of his own, he was certainly not the advocate of their interests the settlers initially thought him to be.

The conflicting expectations were clearly revealed during the winter of 1889-90. Delays in planting, drought, and low cash incomes meant that both

^{2 1}SRO, AF 5/188, Minutes of Fourth Meeting of Imperial Colonisation Board, 2 July 1889.

^{2 2}Public Archives of Canada (hereinafter PAC), RG 15, vol. 603, file 212189(1), Report by G. B. Borradaile, 8 February 1890.

^{2 3}PAC, RG 76, series V (Records of Entry), Reel C-4514; first seven *Reports of the Imperial Colonisation Board*.

^{2 4}PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Colmer to Borradaile, 2 August 1889.

^{2 5}Great Britain. *Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-6067] 1890, Report of J. G. Colmer, p. 8.

Lothian and King Colonies required assistance with provision until a crop could be harvested in the fall of 1890. The Board knew this and made funds available to Borradaile. No shopkeeper at Saltcoats could extend credit without Borradaile's permission and this permission was not granted until the money required was secured through chattel liens and mortgages. Though this was found acceptable by the crofters, a reduction in rations was not. Uncertain that available funds would be enough to support the colonies even until the Spring, Borradaile advised settlers and shopkeepers in October of a ration reduction. Citing over-rationing and waste, Borradaile stated that a ready market for firewood existed at Saltcoats for any who found the reduced rations inadequate.²⁶

The crofters, arguing that work was scarce and complaining especially that rations were denied to any able-bodied person over thirteen years of age, petitioned Lord Lothian in mid-December. Borradaile, informed by Colmer on 15 January 1890 of the complaints, responded aggressively. He told the Crofters that all rations would cease on 20 March.²⁷ He wrote to Colmer stating that he was attempting to minimise costs, emphasising that "...the only way to render these people self supporting is to deny their right to any supplies."²⁸ A. F. Eden, requested to investigate the petitioners' complaints, admitted that work was scarce, but advised H. H. Smith that he agreed completely with Borradaile's policy on rationing.²⁹ However, before this endorsement reached the Board, reports appeared in the Toronto newspapers that the crofter communities in the

²⁶ Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-152] 1891, Appendix No. 6, p. 78. This appendix is attributed to Colmer, but pp. 78-80 contain letters from Borradaile to Colmer.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ PAC, RG 15, vol. 603, file 212189(1), Borradaile to Colmer, 9 February 1890. Curiously, some of Borradaile's correspondence to the Board was sent to H. H. Smith in Winnipeg who forwarded it to London. This letter, for example, was forwarded by Smith on 12 February, 1890.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Eden to Smith, 11 February 1890.

North West were suffering from destitution and starvation.³⁰ The charges were quickly repeated in the Scottish newspapers, questions were asked in the British Parliament and Sir Charles Tupper postponed a trip to the Italian Riviera to attend an emergency Board meeting held on 25 February. With a series of letters from the Saltcoats crofters cataloguing their complaints appearing in Inverness' *Scottish Highlander*, the Board found itself involved in a considerable crisis.³¹ Borradaile, chastised for having failed to anticipate the situation, cabled that destitution rumours were "exagerrated", though he admitted children's clothing would be welcome. A letter signed by sixteen Saltcoats crofters stated that on 14 April, Borradaile re-affirmed that no more provisions would be provided even though only ten day's supplies remained to them.³² On 10 May, Borradaile advised Colmer that he had "sent" fourteen family heads to work,³³ having secured employment at Rat Portage for them and probably having arranged for reduced rail fares. Evidence provided by Colmer to the Select Committee on Colonisation and records of the Scottish Office reflected no disapproval of the stern paternalist approach adopted by their Canadian agent. For its part, the Board, at its 25 February emergency meeting, decided to approach what it knew would be an irate Treasury with a request for £500 for "extra maintenance" to provide for the Saltcoats settlers until the harvest of 1890.³⁴ Lothian and Tupper, pleading institutional poverty, made personal

³⁰*The Globe*, 8 February 1890, p. 6.

³¹The letters appeared in issues dated 27 February, 26 April and 15 May 1890. The letters were sent by a "crofters' committee" chaired by Charles Docherty, formerly of North Uist. Thus identified as the leader of the dissidents, Docherty was disparaged by Colmer in testimony before the Colonisation Committee. Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-354] 1890, p. 367.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*, p. 369.

³⁴SRO, AF 51/189/4200/73, Memorandum, 4 March 1890.

appeals that the Saltcoats Crofters be provided with seed grain under the Canadian scheme resulting from the 1889 drought.³⁵ The Department of the Interior, reluctant because the Crofters lands were already mortgaged to the legal limit, finally agreed, placed liens upon the anticipated crops, and provided the seed on April 2.³⁶

Textual extracts and the statistical portion of Borradaile's first annual report were published as appendices to the second I.C.B. report.³⁷ Though offering criticisms of the agricultural habits of his wards at Saltcoats, Borradaile expressed the opinion that the crop of 1890 "had made hopeful North-West farmers of them all." He anticipated a substantial increase in land being broken for 1891, noted that a few settlers had jointly purchased farm implements and that most families had secured some cash income during the summer and fall.³⁸ He could not conceal his dismay, however, that thirteen of the fourteen family heads sent to work in May refused to return for the harvest. Preferring the uncertainties of casual labour to the uncertainties of prairie farming, they had been joined by their own families and by three other King Colony families, leaving only a recent widow and her family in King Colony.³⁹ The Board, clearly perplexed by this development, appended to their second report a letter from one of the tenant farmer delegates of 1890 indicating "what men with a

³⁵PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(2), Tupper to Dewdney, 22 February 1890; SRO, GD 40/16/59, Lothian to Stanley, 5 March 1890.

³⁶PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(2), Burgess to Smith, 2 April 1890.

³⁷Great Britain. *Second Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-6287] 1890-91, pp. 7-8 and 12-19.

³⁸*Ibid.* Twelve families had members employed in Manitoba and North Western Railway work; three others were employed by the Canada Settlers' Loan and Savings Company, the successor company to the Commercial Colonisation Company.

³⁹Marilyn Lewry has established a link between family demographics and out-migration at Saltcoats. Lewry, *A Study of Locational Changes Among Hebridean Immigrants in Southeast Saskatchewan*, (M. A. dissertation: University of Regina, 1985), pp. 178-88.

moderate amount of brains and energy" could accomplish in Canada.⁴⁰ Borradaile, taking security, distributed what he could of the abandoned goods and chattels amongst the eleven other family members who had taken out homesteads by the end of 1890 and sold the rest to other Saltcoats-area residents. The Board took possession of the abandoned quarter-sections and wrote to the Canadian Department of the Interior forcefully requesting legislation "of a restrictive character" to prevent settlers from abandoning obligations to their sponsor in such a "free and easy fashion."⁴¹

For the remainder of the period covered by this chapter, Borradaile was hard pressed to repeat even the strained optimism regarding the Saltcoats settlements that he projected in his first report. Though the 1890 crops were sharply reduced by harvest rains and improper stacking, they provided sufficient income to pay store debts and, for the first time, to sustain the settlers during the approaching winter.⁴² The 1891 crops were severely damaged by a severe, local frost in late August. The crop of 1892 was partially devastated by hot winds and electrical storms while a discouraged crofter population allowed livestock to forage over what remained. As a result, Borradaile was obliged to request renewed assistance in the purchase of seed grain; the Board demurred and though it did finally sanction the expenditure for seed grain, at least one crofter felt that the grain arrived too late and fed it to his cattle.⁴³ Discouraged by the succession of poor seasons, and deterred by the low prices

⁴⁰*Second Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, Letter from George Brown, p. 11.

⁴¹PAC, Records of the Department of Justice, RG 13, vol. 79, file 1326, Colmer to Dewdney, 1 November 1890.

⁴²Great Britain. *Third Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-6693] 1892, Appendix "A", p. 6.

⁴³*Fifth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, Appendix "C", p. 9. See also SRO, AF 51/196/438, Correspondence Affecting the Crofter Settlements, p. 14.

prevailing in the early 1890s, many of the Crofters determined that livestock were more suited to the area than grain and reduced their acreages under cultivation after 1892. Others, despairing that any form of agriculture could allow the repayment of their loans, simply abandoned their homesteads. In the Autumn of 1892, only eighteen heads and thirteen other family members remained on their homesteads. Not one had acquired the pre-emption by the end of their third year on the land. By the Autumn of 1893, only twenty-three settlers remained on the land.⁴⁴

Throughout this period Borradaile engaged in a constant preparation of accounts and correspondence with Colmer regarding accounts and accounting practices. Unexplained or missing vouchers, unauthorised expenditures, and even discrepancies of a few cents invariably resulted in Scottish Office demands for explanations and revisions from Colmer who, as Board secretary, was constantly berating Borradaile for imprecision and tardiness while trying to placate a Scottish Office attempting to meet Treasury deadlines.⁴⁵ The transfer of abandoned goods and chattels to the remaining settlers in 1890 caused considerable dismay as to legal and financial proprieties at the Scottish Office; accounts submitted by Borradaile in February 1892 required five months' correspondence before being submitted to the Treasury in July.⁴⁶ If Borradaile needed no reminder, he constantly received them nonetheless that his responsibility was primarily that of a financial custodian.

Though he was never to satisfy his employer in that respect, the crofter settlers at Saltcoats perceived him as enforcing his instructions almost ruthlessly. After removing to Winnipeg in the summer of 1892, Borradaile found it

⁴⁴ *Fifth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, p. 8.

⁴⁵ SRO, AF 51/190-92.

⁴⁶ SRO, AF 51/192/203-06.

necessary to engage a "sub-agent" to carry out his instruction at the Saltcoats settlement and selected his former neighbour, crofter Charles Docherty, for this purpose. Docherty's duties entailed taking charge of abandoned animals and securing lumber from abandoned homesteads, but also included legally restraining the other crofters from acting against the interests of the Board.⁴⁷ In the winter of 1892-93, that restraint entailed threatening to arrest for larceny any crofter selling the natural increase from I.C.B. livestock without express permission.⁴⁸ Alexander Young sued Docherty in a related dispute over oxen.⁴⁹ The widespread resentment against Borradaile was forcefully expressed in a petition addressed to the new Secretary for Scotland, Sir George Trevelyan, on 31 May 1893.⁵⁰ With twenty signatures, the petition sought relocation on better lands and was accompanied by individual statements alleging mistreatment by the climate and by George Betts Borradaile. Organised by the school teacher, Colin McLeay, the petitioners sought redress of grievances dating back to their arrival at Halifax on 14 April 1889. But, led by Docherty, eight settlers did not sign the petition.⁵¹ The settlement was sharply divided and again apparently in turmoil. As a result, Sir Charles Tupper was asked to investigate the complaints during a proposed visit to Canada on private business during the Autumn of 1893. In another petition to Trevelyan, the McLeay faction announced its complete lack of confidence in the objectivity of Tupper and stated that the

⁴⁷ Scottish Office records indicate that Docherty received a total of \$278 from administration funds for these services from 1892 to 1894. SRO, AF 51/198/509 and 546.

⁴⁸ SRO, AF 51/195/351, Docherty to Kenneth McIver and Son, 19 December 1892.

⁴⁹ SRO, AF 51/196/438, *Correspondence Respecting the Crofter Settlements*, pp. 57-67.

⁵⁰ SRO, AF 51/195/351, Robert McKay *et al* to Trevelyan, 31 May 1893.

⁵¹ SRO, AF 51/196/438, *Correspondence Respecting the Crofter Settlements*, Borradaile to Trevelyan, n.d., p. 39.

pressures of work would prevent their having time to see Tupper during his visit.^{5 2}

The detailed rebuttals of every charge against him with which Borradaile, not without complaint, provided the I.C.B. confirmed the impression Tupper formed through interviews with him during his Canadian visit. Quite correctly, Tupper concluded that Borradaile was acting with complete integrity in protecting the Board's interests and offered no criticism whatsoever of the Canadian agent.^{5 3} Equally so, he pointed out that many complaints had been gone over thoroughly in testimony before the Colonisation Committee in 1890 and 1891, that some of the recent petitioners denied the truth of assertions made in the petition, and that Colin McLeay sought to replace Borradaile as I.C.B. agent.^{5 4} Curiously though, he thereby characterised the complaints as having "little or no foundation" and concluded that the scheme could not "in any way be described as a failure."^{5 5} Yet between signing the petition in May and Tupper's visit in mid-September, four signatories abandoned their homesteads and one died. Of the twenty-four settlers remaining, Tupper spoke personally to ten; only three gave him good accounts of the North West. John MacKay told Tupper bluntly, "We should never have come."^{5 6}

At Pelican Lake, the settlements initiated in 1888 and developed along such different lines, provided better support for Tupper's positive judgement of the colonisation scheme. The date of Borradaile's first visit is unrecorded though it is possible he accompanied Colmer in October 1889. The Board's intention was

^{5 2}SRO, AF 51/195/393, Colin Mcleay to Trevelyan, 31 August 1893.

^{5 3}SRO, AF 15/196/438, *Correspondence Respecting the Crofter Settlements*, pp. 11-25, Tupper to Trevelyan, 13 December 1893.

^{5 4}SRO, AF 51/195/392, McLeay to Trevelyan, 6 September 1893.

^{5 5}SRO, AF 51/196/438, *Correspondence Affecting the Crofter Settlements*, p. 23.

^{5 6}SRO, AF 51/196/420, Scottish Office Minute, December 1893.

that its agent should visit once or twice a year to report on progress and to eventually collect repayment installments. It is important to note that Borradaile's status there was always that of an occasional visitor on official business; he was not, even temporarily as at Saltcoats, a resident amongst the people he administered. With seed grain provided through the municipality by the provincial government, the Pelican Lake crofters in the autumn of 1890 harvested their first satisfactory crops.⁵⁷ This performance was repeated in 1891 and in 1892, though prices remained severely depressed. The I.C.B. Reports for these years indicated, with an obvious delight, always increasing figures showing acreages under cultivation, crop productions and livestock possession.⁵⁸ Though minor individual differences were indicated, both the Killarney and Argyle portions of the settlement were shown to be sharing equally in the progress. Low agricultural prices and poor agricultural practices were regularly cited by Borradaile as inhibiting the settlers' progress, but the consensus of the agent and the Board was that that progress was gratifying and that the Imperial funds were well-secured.

But severe difficulties existed due to the amount of external debt owed by the crofters to local shopkeepers and implement dealers. H. H. Smith's report hinted that unauthorised debts had been incurred even as the crofters were being settled in 1888.⁵⁹ Killarney merchant, T. J. Lawlor, wrote to Smith about store debts in June 1889; Borradaile, in his first report, expressed concern at the "weighty obligations" undertaken to acquire farm machinery.⁶⁰ In his 1891 report, Borradaile advised the Board of the precise debts of each crofter to the

⁵⁷PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(2), Scarth to Dewdney, 1 March 1890.

⁵⁸Second, Third and Fourth *Reports of the Imperial Colonisation Board*.

⁵⁹SRO, AF 51/104, *Report by the Canadian Commissioner of Dominion Lands*, p. 7.

⁶⁰*Second Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, Appendix "A", p. 7.

implement agents. Only fifteen of the thirty-nine "other" family members were free from these obligations. Each of the family heads was in debt to implement dealers; debts ranged from \$106 to John Nicolson's \$415.^{6 1} The total debt to implement dealers was \$8,779.56. Attention shifted to debts for taxes and seed grain advances when, in September 1892, thirty-five properties were nominally seized and sold by the municipality. The average debt in this regard for the thirty-five properties was \$34 and totalled nearly \$1,200.^{6 2} Borradaile's report dated 11 December 1893 included individual statements of debts to the Board the municipalities, the shopkeepers and the implement dealers. External debts were shown to exceed by over \$1,000 the \$23,799.37 that was collectively owed to the Board.

The total amount of external debt would have been shown to have been even higher had the *Fifth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board* been prepared with a rigour comparable to those that preceded it. But the long-standing dispute over settlement expenditures with the CNWL Co. had finally been resolved. The land company reluctantly assumed responsibility for nearly \$2,000 advanced without authorisation from the Scottish Office and accepted a reduced sum on other expense claims.^{6 3} As the land exchange with the Canadian Government was also formally sanctioned in October 1890, the I.C.B., three years after the settlement at Killarney, took legal possession of the liens against fifty-five properties.^{6 4} The CNWL Co. retained possession of thirteen properties assigned

^{6 1} *Third Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, Appendix "B".

^{6 2} Great Britain. *Fourth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-7226] 1893, p. 4.

^{6 3} SRO, AF 51/191/188, Colmer to Scottish Office, 23 December 1891; AF 51/193/280.

^{6 4} PAC, RG 15, vol. 575, file 176811(2). This file also shows that the land exchange with the Canadian Government had details unresolved as late as June, 1897.

primarily to other family members of the Harris contingent. The *Fifth Report* did not state that the debt figures applied only to the settlers for whom the Board held security. The average debt of the thirty family heads, exclusive of interest on the Imperial advance, was also not stated in the report. According to Borradaile's figures, it was \$1,272.20 in December 1893.⁶⁵

Tupper was concerned. He wrote to Trevelyan that

...the Crofters have burdened themselves with a lot of machinery which they ought not to have had, and they have run up debts at the stores which they should never have incurred, and have had, of course, to give mortgages on their crops in order to meet their indebtedness.⁶⁶

But nowhere in his reports does Tupper suggest that the extension of credit could have been precisely what the progress or prosperity at Killarney was based upon. Eventually, creditors must be paid. Even as he was in Winnipeg in September, at least five new legal actions were in progress in Killarney to secure proceeds from the crops of individual crofters.⁶⁷ Before he had received Borradaile's December report, Tupper recommended to Trevelyan that, for reasons quite distinct from those that applied at Saltcoats, the Killarney settlers should not be pressed to begin repayment of Imperial funds for "a year or two."⁶⁸ Though they were prosperous, he regarded their prosperity as fragile. At both Saltcoats and Killarney, therefore, what was regarded as the only true measure of the settlement scheme's success or failure - namely, repayment⁶⁹ - was to be

⁶⁵SRO, AF 51/196/438, *Correspondence Respecting the Crofter Settlements*, pp. 68-72, Tupper to Trevelyan, 24 January 1894.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁶⁷SRO, AF 51/199/584, Document submitted to the I.C.B. by John Nicolson and Allan Morrison.

⁶⁸SRO, AF 51/196/438, *Correspondence Respecting the Crofter Settlements*, p. 24, Tupper to Trevelyan, 13 December 1893.

⁶⁹Great Britain. *Report From the Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-274] 1889, Evidence of J. G. Colmer, p. 42.

postponed.

By the autumn of 1893, several indications of how Lothian's scheme was being judged in various quarters were apparent. The British Select Committee on Colonisation, after two full years of hearing evidence, finally reported in March 1891. While the Committee was more enthusiastic about the New Zealand and British Columbian proposals for crofter colonisation, it recommended that parliamentary funds should be made available for "a moderately numerous party" of crofters to emigrate to the North West under the auspices of the Imperial Colonisation Board.⁷⁰ It warned that false expectations, however, amongst prospective emigrants should be strictly guarded against and further recommended that the congested districts of Ireland should benefit from such a scheme. Lothian welcomed this qualified endorsement. The Board was duly re-constituted to include Irish members,⁷¹ and Parliament, in June 1892, voted £7,500 for the use of the I.C.B.⁷² The Board made plans to spend £300 in the autumn to break ten acres per family in the Oxbow District of the North West Territories, and applications were invited in August from crofter families who were advised to expect an advance of up to £150 upon embarkation in March 1893.⁷³ Apparently the fundamental lessons of 1888 and 1889 had been well learned.

The Canadian Government delayed the designation of a reserve of land in the Oxbow region and, when the Townships were finally chosen, Borradaile

⁷⁰Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-152] 1891, p. xii.

⁷¹SRO, AF 51/191/162, Royal Warrant, 18 November 1891.

⁷²SRO, AF 51/192/234. For the first time a salary was to be paid to Colmer. Remarkably, in February 1892, Lothian appears to have contemplated another hurried selection and emigration from both Irish and Scottish districts. See SRO, AF 51/191/198, Scottish Office to Treasury, 15 February 1892.

⁷³SRO, AF 51/192/243.

judged them to be unsuitable "to the requirements of settlers of so little knowledge and experience of farming as the average Crofter."⁷⁴ In his final month in office, Lothian was denied the services of Malcolm McNeill for family selections by the Edinburgh Board of Supervision. Though sufficient numbers of applications had been received from the Highlands, the Orkneys and the Shetlands, the new Secretary for Scotland delayed consideration of the matter until the Board's thirteenth meeting on 16 May 1893. The decision not to proceed with the proposed emigration was based upon the fact that, as the Board sadly admitted in its Fourth Report, no applications had been received "from families in the districts from which the settlers at Killarney and Saltcoats came."⁷⁵ If Sir Charles Tupper did not understand John McKay's message, the islands of Lewis and Harris had heard it clearly. On a visit to the Western Isles in April 1893, the new Under Secretary for Scotland reported that Lothian's 1892 posters were never seen in Lewis and that six Saltcoats families had returned to the Long Island.⁷⁶

The Winnipeg Sub-Committee, perhaps in an attempt to influence the May I.C.B. meeting, resigned *en masse* on 27 April arguing that with no further immigration planned, there would be no purpose for it to serve.⁷⁷ Tupper was able to revive the sub-committee on his September visit, but it ceased to play a significant intermediary and advisory role to either Borradaile or the I.C.B. After his return from Saltcoats, Tupper was embarrassed by reports in the Winnipeg papers of Trevelyan's statement to Parliament that the crofter colonisation scheme

⁷⁴ SRO, AF 51/193/286, Borradaile to Winnipeg Sub-Committee, 18 August 1892.

⁷⁵ *Fourth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, p. 5. The decision was controversial and revealed a clear Scottish-Canadian difference of opinion. See below, Conclusion.

⁷⁶ SRO, AF 51/194/331, Scott-Moncrieff to Trevelyan, 14 April 1893.

⁷⁷ SRO, AF 51/194/345, H. H. Smith *et al* to Colmer, 27 April 1893.

was an utter failure.⁷⁸ Trevelyan added

I believe that the people who were sent out were not natural emigrants; and not only so, but that when they had energy and self-reliance, they were so cockered, under this system that they lost it...⁷⁹

If the new Secretary for Scotland was not a champion of the crofting community, he certainly did not see his constituency as including the landed interests associated with Lothian. Gladstonian principles of *laissez-faire* had returned to the Scottish Office. With no financial evidence of the success of Lothian's scheme before him, Trevelyan declared that public funds could not have been worse spent, refused to hold a Board meeting specifically to consider the results of Tupper's inquiry, and arranged for an early presentation to Parliament of the bleak *Fourth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*.

⁷⁸ *Manitoba Free Press*, 20 September 1893, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Great Britain. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates* 4th Series, vol. XVII (1893), col. 1437.

CHAPTER V. SETTLEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION TO 1906

The announcement that the British Government would countenance no more assistance to emigration schemes had no effect whatsoever on the Colonisation Board's administration of its Canadian settlements. Though differences emerged between the Scottish and Canadian interests amongst Board members, the fulfillment of financial obligations to the British Treasury remained the primary consideration. The collection of debt repayments from the settlers was, therefore, the focus of the Board's actions and deliberations after 1894. The I.C.B. found itself in an adversarial position with its settlers (especially those at Killarney), with creditors of the settlers, and increasingly, even with its own Canadian agent. After some hesitation, it imposed a change in its legal relationship to the settlers in 1897-98 which, at the same time, established the paramountcy of its own claims over those of all other creditors. The return to power in 1895 of a Conservative Government in Britain entailed no renewed interest in colonisation, and by the end of the century, the perfunctory I.C.B. reports reflected a desire to wind up the Commission's affairs. After 1894, no emigration from the congested districts of Scotland or Ireland was contemplated by the I.C.B.

In two respects, the liens taken by the CNWL Co. in 1888 proved to be illegal under the *Dominion Lands Act* of 1886. Whereas Lothian's scheme and the liens taken under it required repayments to begin in July 1892, after four years on the land, the Canadian legislation provided for repayments at the end of the fifth year after settlement and prohibited collection until after the harvest.¹ The Canadian Government passed amending legislation in May 1889

¹Canada. *Statutes 1886*, 49 Vic. Chap. 27.

permitting repayment to begin after four years.² A frantic exchange of letters between the I.C.B., the Scottish Office and the Treasury occurred from June to November of 1892 in an attempt to answer legal questions and establish the terms upon which repayments could be expected. Treasury officials severely chastised the Scottish Office for launching a scheme in such haste that its provisions did not accord with Dominion law and pointed out that even the interest rate upon which it had based its calculations was incorrect.³ Payments were initially due from the Killarney family heads on 1 July 1892, and from other family members on 1 November 1892. From family heads and other members at Saltcoats, the dates were 1 November 1893 and 1 November 1894 respectively.

All dates passed with Borradaile being unable to collect any repayments whatsoever except from one younger man at Killarney.⁴ The Treasury expressed its extreme disapproval that the Parliament-approved scheme had been so widely departed from and that so little effort had been expended in the pursuit of collections.⁵ In his defence, Borradaile stated that he had visited Killarney three times for collection purposes and had sent to each debtor four notices "explaining in a lucid manner the amount due."⁶ As early as 18 March 1893, he urged the Board to consider legal action to compel payment, stating that some of the

²Canada. *Statutes 1889*, 52 Vic. Chap 27.

³Scottish Record Office (hereinafter SRO), AF 51/193/255, Treasury to Scottish Office, 7 September 1892; AF 51/193/274, Treasury to Scottish Office, 19 October 1892.

⁴Andrew Graham paid his Board debt of \$98.74 in the summer of 1893, sold the land and returned to Lewis where he died in 1894. SRO, AF 51/211, Individual Report 1894.

⁵SRO, AF 51/193/274, Treasury to Scottish Office, 19 October 1892; AF 51/197/471, Treasury to Scottish Office, 11 May 1894.

⁶Great Britain. *Fourth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-7226] 1893, Appendix A, p. 7.

Killarney settlers clearly had the ability to pay. It was recognised that the remaining Saltcoats settlers possessed no comparable ability and their failure to meet repayment deadlines was viewed with more indulgence by both Borradaile and the Board.⁷

It must be emphasized that the abandonment of plans for further emigration resulted in no change in the Board's administrative policies. The I.C.B. continued to see the protection of investment and the recovery of debt as its sole mandate. Behind this unity in policy, however, lay a division of purpose. Trevelyan sought the retrieval of Imperial funds in order to formally end the colonisation experiment and to dissolve the Board. Sir Charles Tupper sought a successful conclusion in order to encourage an increased private emigration to the North West, if not a renewed interest in government assistance to immigrants. As secretary to both the High Commissioner's Office and the I.C.B., Colmer was ideally placed to assist Tupper in this. The Under-Secretary for Scotland, Colin Scott-Moncrieff, was a member of the Board after August 1893 and continued to see emigration as the only solution to the problems of the congested crofting parishes. Tupper was able to convince his fellow Board members that the settlers should not be pressed for immediate repayment. The annual reports, issued in June 1894 and April 1895, certainly criticised the settlers for failing to meet financial obligations but offered adverse weather conditions, severely depressed agricultural prices and even primitive agricultural practices as explanations for that failure.⁸ The Board, to the evident annoyance of Borradaile, did not join

⁷*Fourth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, p. 4; Great Britain. *Fifth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-7445] 1894, p. 4; SRO, AF 51/211, Individual Reports 1894.

⁸*Fourth and Fifth Reports of the Imperial Colonisation Board. The Fifth Report* noted for the first time that the Harris settlers did not require seed grain assistance in 1890, had substantially less external debt than the Lewis settlers, and had no properties seized for non-payment of taxes.

the Killarney merchants in repossessing chattels or in resorting to legal action to compel payments.⁹

The Treasury insisted that the indulgence should cease. After six years of expressing dissatisfaction with the Board's accounting practices, the Treasury finally intervened to dictate policy in March 1895. It authorised the Board to pay the taxes on the thirty-five properties at Killarney and it insisted that the crofters be advised that they would lose their homesteads unless municipal tax, seed grain accounts, and "some portion of the instalment due to the Board" were paid by November 1895.¹⁰ All homesteads of other family members were to revert to the Board unless two years instalments had been paid by that date and proceedings were to be launched against selected family heads. Continuing the more lenient treatment of the Saltcoats settlers, proceedings there were to be launched only where a "*bona fide* attempt" to meet obligations had not been made.¹¹ Essentially, Borradaile's 1893 recommendations were to be acted upon in 1895. The difficulty in adopting a common policy derived from the fact that circumstances varied widely at the three separate colonies. Because those circumstances were to diverge even more sharply after 1895, each settlement warrants a separate consideration.

In recognition of a succession of disastrous agricultural seasons and due to continued discomfort over the settlement fiasco in 1889, the Board continued to treat the Lothian colony at Saltcoats with a degree of indulgence it did not extend to the Argyle and Killarney settlements. In 1895, under instructions from the Board, Borradaile personally advised the fourteen family heads and the eight

⁹SRO, AF 51/211, Individual Reports 1894. Particularly with reference to the Lewis portion of the Killarney settlement, Borradaile urged legal compulsion in several instances.

¹⁰SRO, AF 51/198/520, Treasury to Scottish Office, 19 March 1895.

¹¹*Ibid.*

other family members still resident on their homesteads of the Board's intentions.¹² The settlers by 1895 were reported to be practically debt free apart from their I.C.B. obligations, having continued to earn wages where possible and having achieved some success in rearing livestock. The twenty-two settlers had practically the same acreage prepared for cultivation in 1896 as they had in 1890, but had substantially increased their livestock and poultry.¹³ The response to the Board's demands by several settlers was a humble and judiciously-worded request, transmitted to the Board through the office of its agent, that they be given permission to abandon their homesteads. Basically, their proposal was that the Board would accept their properties as payment of debts, while the settlers would be permitted to enter for new homesteads further north of Saltcoats in an area more conducive to stock-rearing.¹⁴ The Board, at its seventeenth meeting on 29 November 1895, directed Tupper to request the Canadian Government to comply with Borradaile's recommendation that second homesteads be permitted, but only if the settlers gave liens to the I.C.B. for the difference in value between the amount owed and the assessed value of each homestead. Pending a decision by Canadian authorities, legal proceedings launched on 2 November against all Saltcoats crofters were suspended.¹⁵

In the interests of "general emigration work" Tupper strongly urged the Minister of the Interior to allow the I.C.B. proposal.¹⁶ As in all previous matters concerning the settlement scheme, the Canadian authorities acted slowly

¹²Great Britain. *Seventh Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-8220] 1896, Appendix A, p. 7.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴Public Archives of Canada (hereinafter PAC), RG 15, vol.590, file 198738(2), Borradaile to Colmer, 15 October 1895.

¹⁵SRO, AF 51/198/564, Minutes of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Colonisation Board, 29 November 1895.

¹⁶PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(2), Tupper to Daly, 30 November 1895.

and inefficiently. Colmer urged a quick decision in February 1896 lest another year be lost.¹⁷ The Department of the Interior advised the I.C.B. of its approval, but announced delays in formalities in March and September.¹⁸ Another enquiry by Colmer in February 1897 finally resulted in legislation by the new Laurier Government in July.¹⁹ The Saltcoats settlers were told by Borradaile that they would have to leave their homesteads by the following Spring. But the legislation required an evaluation of the first homesteads by the Ministry of the Interior and by January 1898, this had still not occurred.²⁰ By the end of 1897, seven more settlers (including Charles Docherty and his son) simply abandoned their homesteads. The Board regretted that not one settler would agree to take advantage of the legislation passed specifically for them and began again to talk of protecting the Board's interests at Saltcoats.²¹

The ninety-five individuals settled in the Argyle district north of Killarney had distinguished themselves from the Lewis settlers by consistently avoiding involvement in petitions, by not requiring seed grain assistance in 1890 and by acquiring substantially smaller debt loads than their neighbours nearer Killarney. After the settlement with the CNWL Co., the I.C.B. held the mortgages on fifteen properties belonging to twelve family heads and three other family members.²² None of these properties was sold for taxes in 1893. Two of the three properties belonging to the other family members had no external debt

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Colmer to Tupper, 26 February 1896.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Burgess to Colmer, 30 March and 11 September 1896.

¹⁹ Canada. *Statutes 1897*. 60-61 Vic. Chap. 29, Section 16.

²⁰ PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(2), McLeay to Sifton, 12 January 1898.

²¹ Great Britain. *Ninth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [C-9140] 1899, p. 5 and Appendix B. An enquiry in 1897 suggested land values ranged from \$1.50-\$2.50 per acre. A Board-sanctioned move would therefore have meant that each family head would carry to the second homestead debts in the range of \$600-\$750. See SRO, AF 51/202/713, *Report by Professor Rankine*.

²² Donald Fraser (No. 51) is listed as an I.C.B. settler in 1893; but in 1894 his property was assigned to the CNWL Co. SRO, AF 51/200/629.

recorded against them. One family head had no external debt and was reported to be lending money at interest to neighbours.²³ None had paid debt instalments to the I.C.B. and in his 1894 report, Borradaile urged that no leniency be shown the money-lender. Early in 1895, proceedings were launched against him, and on 2 November, foreclosure proceedings were launched against all fifteen property-holders. By March 1897 all fifteen had agreed to the Board's terms and had signed the necessary leases.

The course of action adopted by the Board was entirely consistent with the fiscal requirements of the Treasury. At the same time, it was not a draconian attempt to dispossess the crofters of their Canadian homesteads. The I.C.B., as landlord, was to collect annual rent payments from its "tenants." When, after eight years, those payments equalled the debt to the Board, title to the property was to revert to the settlers.²⁴ Because rent formed a "first charge" upon the land (after taxes), there is no doubt this system recommended itself to the Board as one through which I.C.B. claims took precedence over those of other creditors.²⁵ The system was adopted smoothly in the Argyle district and postponed at Saltcoats. The reaction of the Killarney settlers contrasted sharply with those of their fellow-crofters and was, typically, overtly political.

Advised in April 1895 of the Board's intentions should the November payments not be received, the Killarney crofters by mid-May had forwarded lengthy and high literate petitions to the Secretary for Scotland and, for the first

²³ Roderick McKay arrived with £45 in declared private assets; his house was valued by Borradaile in 1894 at \$300 whereas most others were valued at \$10. By 31 March 1896, McKay had paid the I.C.B. \$300 on account. SRO, AF 51/202/707.

²⁴ SRO AF 51/198/535. Memorandum by Colmer, 22 June 1895.

²⁵ SRO, AF 51/198/543, Colmer to Borradaile, 26 July 1895; AF 51/198/535, Memorandum, 22 June 1895.

time, to the Manitoba Government. Arguing that circumstances of settlement, climate, and agricultural necessity had combined to create a position of indebtedness over which the settlers had no control, the petitions sought a satisfactory resolution to the payment of external debt and the placement of a "resident agent" at Killarney.²⁶ The Scottish Office and Colmer firmly believed that the Killarney merchants had instigated the petition.²⁷ The document was prepared at the office of a Killarney attorney and Lawlor and Finlay Young, the local M.P.P., were both present at a later crofter meeting. The Manitoba Government advised the Scottish Secretary that it endorsed the petition and offered its assistance in selecting a suitable agent; without advising British authorities, it later provided \$400 from the provincial treasury for a crofter delegation to visit London in support of the petition.²⁸

On 2 November, the Killarney settlers were issued notice of the Board's foreclosure proceedings. With provincial funding secured, they met on 30 January 1896 and, with T. J. Lawlor as secretary and Finlay Young in attendance, elected John Nicolson and Allan Morrison, their Manitoba College student-missionary, as their delegates to London.²⁹ The meeting generated another petition which was conveyed to London by the delegates who "temperately" presented their case to the Secretary for Scotland, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and caused the I.C.B. to seriously consider assuming the external debt.³⁰ Local interest rates at Killarney were said to be in the range of 12 to

²⁶ SRO, AF 51/198/530, John Nicolson *et al* to Trevelyan, 1 May 1895.

²⁷ The argument of the petition is strikingly similar to a letter sent by T. J. Lawlor to the Secretary for Scotland. SRO, AF 51/198/514, 21 January 1895.

²⁸ Manitoba. Sessional Papers 1897, *Public Accounts*, (Sessional Paper No. 12), p. 117.

²⁹ SRO, AF 51/199/583, Minutes of the meeting held at Bellafield School, 30 January 1896.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Memo by Colmer, 16 March 1896.

24 per cent and some crofters were without resources to purchase seed grain for the coming season.³¹ John Nicolson, described by Borradaile as "without exception the best crofter assisted by the Board"³² so impressed the Secretary for Scotland that he was chosen to head a crofter committee to distribute the seed grain assistance needed. After making a series of allegations against the Board's Canadian agent, the delegates returned to Killarney in late March confident of having created in London a renewed sympathy with the settlement's difficulties.

Through another series of misunderstandings amongst Nicolson, Balfour, Borradaile and Colmer, a great deal of ill will was created by the distribution of the seed grain, though the twenty-one settlers who received the assistance expressed their gratitude.³³ Borradaile's response to the new charges against him drew from the Scottish Office the rare assertion that he "had done his work well, and has had a most unsatisfactory set of men to deal with."³⁴ If Borradaile's reputation was rising at the Scottish Office, it diminished even further amongst the Killarney crofters. Nicolson was surprised to learn that foreclosure notices had been served on all during his absence and received one himself upon his arrival in Winnipeg. He wrote to Balfour demanding to know why he hadn't been told of this development while he was in London.³⁵ Accusation and counter-accusations were exchanged until by December 1896,

³¹ Borradaile's report confirmed livestock was being repossessed and that some settlers had no credit with which to obtain seed grain. *Seventh Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, Appendix A, p. 6.

³² SRO, AF 51/211, Individual Report 1894.

³³ SRO, AF 51/199/596, Nicolson to Balfour, 15 April 1896. The assistance was evenly distributed to the Killarney and Argyle settlers.

³⁴ SRO, AF 51/200/602, Scottish Office Minute, 12 May 1896.

³⁵ SRO, AF 51/200/610, Nicolson to Balfour, 27 April 1896. Nicolson's surprise is highly suggestive of the nature of his mandate as a delegate and suggests that the foreclosures were not even discussed with Balfour and Colmer.

Nicolson had lost all credibility with I.C.B. officials and Balfour determined that an independent inquiry should be launched. In February 1896, the Treasury approved the expenditure of £200 for this purpose.³⁶

Before the enquiry was undertaken, the I.C.B. received news that another crofter delegation, again financed by the Manitoba Government, and comprised of Nicolson and Lawlor, was en route to London.³⁷ Borradaile had telegraphed that sixteen Killarney crofters, under advice from Lawlor and Nicolson, refused to sign the leases. But the special Board meeting convened on 17 May 1897 heard from a sharply divided delegation. Lawlor and Nicolson agreed only that harvest profits were being seized by creditors without overall debts being appreciably diminished. Lawlor presented Killarney merchants' accounts totalling nearly \$38,000 including interest and legal fees, and an offer to settle for seventy-five cents on the dollar.³⁸ Nicolson disputed the merchants' claims, challenged the necessity of the legal costs involved in the foreclosures, and asked a series of questions concerning Borradaile's instructions and legal authority.³⁹ The only effect the representations had was to add to the list of issues to be investigated by John Rankine, the Edinburgh University professor appointed to inquire into the position and prospects of the Board's settlers.

Rankine's report was received in October 1897. Though it acknowledged that ill-feeling against Borradaile was firmly held by a few Killarney crofters, the Report endorsed the agent's actions on every point at issue, stating that any

³⁶SRO, AF 51/201/662, Treasury to Scottish Office, 8 February 1897. The new weekly paper at Saltcoats reported that the Imperial Government voted "about \$50,000" to conduct the inquiry. *Saltcoats Siftings*, 22 July 1897, p. 6.

³⁷SRO, AF 51/201/675.

³⁸SRO, AF 51/202/711, Minutes of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Colonisation Board, 17 May 1897.

³⁹*Ibid.* Though Tupper secured a nearly 40% reduction in charges from his son's law firm, each crofter was originally charged \$75 for the foreclosure procedure. SRO, AF 51/202/708.

mistake he had made "was the outcome of zeal in the service of the Board."⁴⁰ Rankine wrote that the remaining fourteen settlers who refused to sign the lease all claimed that high external debts would make them unable to pay high annual lease payments. He regretted that a proposal involving *pari passu* collection of external debt on fifty cents on the dollar had ultimately been rejected by the creditors, and forwarded their counter proposal of an immediate sixty per cent payment by the I.C.B.⁴¹ T. J. Lawlor, by far the largest creditor, led the opposition to Rankine's proposal.⁴² After a meeting of all creditors with Rankine in Winnipeg, Lawlor wrote to Smart, the Deputy Minister of the Interior urging Sifton's intervention to convince Rankine that the proposed "settlement" of 25-50% was "not at all in line with inducements, or what the creditors were led to hope for."⁴³ He characterised Borradaile as a political foe of the Liberal Party, and asked

How can Sir Donald Smith continue to advocate further immigration schemes when he has a colony of his own flesh and blood apt at any moment to transplant themselves across the boundary line.⁴⁴

The Treasury subsequently approved a *pari passu* collection scheme.⁴⁵ Though all other creditors wanted to accept the plan, Lawlor and F. S. Moule (also of Killarney) rejected it.⁴⁶ But without Lawlor's consent, no agreement was possible and the Board could report no resolution when it issued its *Ninth Report* in December 1898.

⁴⁰SRO, AF 51/202/713, Report by Professor Rankine, p. 2.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁴²Of the \$37,988.15 claimed, Lawlor's claim was \$16,491.48. SRO, AF 51/202/714.

⁴³PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(2), Lawlor to Smart, 27 August 1897.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵SRO, AF 51/202/728, Treasury to Scottish Office, 14 January 1898.

⁴⁶SRO, AF 51/202/745, Colmer to Scottish Office, 25 March 1898.

At the same time, the Board was able to report that all Killarney crofters had signed the required leases. Increasing legal pressure and substantial easing of terms⁴⁷ had reduced the number of holdouts, and when the Board launched eviction proceedings in July 1898, Nicolson and his six remaining followers signed the leases and were forced to pay the full legal costs.⁴⁸

The process had been bitter. Borradaile, very much the Board's agent, had won no new friends amongst the crofters or the Killarney merchants. The alliance of merchants and crofters vis-a-vis the I.C.B. had been shattered as the Board re-asserted that its own financial interests preceded all others. The struggle had not gone unnoticed by the local community. Early in 1897, an appeal for funds to aid in the construction of a Gaelic church at Bellafield caused the new local weekly, *The Killarney Guide*, to print an article on the evils of assisted immigration as well as a letter from "A Canadian" stating that crofters

...lack pluck and industry, as well as truthfulness and honesty; it can be proven right here in Killarney or Bellafield...[T]hey are neither willing or[sic] able to pay their debts.⁴⁹

Reporting on one of Borradaile's visits, the newspaper described the crofters as "the chosen people."⁵⁰

If the Board believed that the landlord-tenant arrangements would of themselves facilitate debt collections, it was immediately forced to revise that opinion in November 1898 when collections amounted to virtually nothing. The

⁴⁷SRO, AF 51/202/728, Treasury to Scottish Office, 14 January 1898; AF 51/202/733, Colmer to Borradaile, 4 February 1898. The amount collectively owed by the Killarney and Argyle settlers was reduced by over \$9200 (a sum representing the accrued interest on the original advances), and by 50% of the legal costs of the foreclosure proceedings (a reduction valued at nearly \$2000).

⁴⁸SRO, AF 51/203/754, Borradaile to Colmer, 7 August 1898.

⁴⁹*The Killarney Guide*, 12 February 1897, p. 8.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 7 October 1898, p. 5.

Canadian climate was not subject to legal regulation, and snow and rain severely reduced crops in both the Killarney and Argyle settlements. Nevertheless, Borradaile reported five settlers had purchased additional lands while claiming an inability to pay their lease instalments and argued the necessity of legal action against all forty-one of the settlers who had failed to fulfil their lease requirements. The legal threats appear to have had the desired effect; by 31 March 1899, Borradaile was able to report the collection of nearly \$3,000 in lease instalments. He asked for and received discretionary legal power to enforce the terms of the lease agreements without seeking prior Board approval for each action.^{5 1}

Under the power-of-attorney he received, Borradaile appointed a "watchman" in 1899 at Killarney in the belief that some of the crofters intended "to dispose of their crops and chattels to the prejudice of the Board."^{5 2} This unauthorised step was justified by Colmer as further evidence of the agent's zeal on the Board's behalf and was forgiven due to an impressive annual lease collection totalling over \$4,700 to 30 March 1900.^{5 3} Grain prices in the Killarney area had begun to improve in 1896 and by 1897 briefly regained their 1888 levels. After 1897, prices remained firm at fifty-five to sixty cents per bushel. During the period when the leases were in effect, the amounts collected each year were necessarily dependent upon agricultural productions, with the poor harvests of 1900 and 1903 resulting in considerable Board-initiated litigation or

^{5 1}SRO, AF 51/203/799, Minutes of the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Colonisation Board, 24 April 1899. The power of attorney he received was renewed and strengthened in 1902.

^{5 2}SRO, AF 51/204/834, Scottish Office to Treasury, 8 May 1900. The Scottish Office was aghast at the expense (\$112.50) and the impropriety of the appointment. Records do not reveal the identity of the "watchman".

^{5 3}SRO, AF 51/204/813, Scottish Office Minute, 4 January 1900.

threat of litigation.⁵⁴ Ability to pay was therefore the key factor. Significantly, the Board after 1898, no longer regarded a poor harvest as sufficient to justify non-payment. Significantly, too, whenever litigation was undertaken, all costs were charged to the settlers.

At Saltcoats, the obvious inability to pay continued to gain the few remaining settlers preferential treatment. Without exception, livestock and poultry were registered in the names of family members not indebted to the I.C.B. Interference in the management and sale of stock was thereby avoided as was the possibility of I.C.B. legal claims.⁵⁵ By 1900, Borradaile's reports indicated that grain growing had been completely abandoned by all twelve settlers remaining in the Lothian colony, the only cultivation being of potatoes. To the Board's evident dismay, not one settler was willing to enter for a second homestead under the terms of the special legislation enacted for that purpose preferring to have eligible family members enter for homesteads unencumbered by debt.⁵⁶ Finally, in late 1900, the Scottish Office declared that no more concessions were to be extended and that the Saltcoats settlers were to be "treated with the extreme rigour of the law."⁵⁷ The lease arrangements imposed at Killarney in 1896 were to be imposed at Saltcoats in 1900. Scottish Office files do not indicate whether the leases were signed or refused. But by May 1901 eviction notices had been issued and bailiffs involved. A letter to Sifton, hurling the usual invective against Borradaile's "evil intentions" suggests that the

⁵⁴ SRO, AF 51/203/785; AF 51/207/980.

⁵⁵ This practice had become almost universal amongst the crofters at both Saltcoats and Killarney by 1894, and was undoubtedly a response to Borradaile's initial legal opinion that the natural increase of I.C.B. stock was I.C.B. property. See above, chapter IV.

⁵⁶ Great Britain. *Ninth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁷ SRO, AF 51/204/842, Scottish Office Minute, 16 August 1900.

process was not a pleasant one.⁵⁸ By September 1901, the Board reported that seventy-one of its seventy-two Saltcoats properties had been abandoned.⁵⁹

If the Board considered that the limits of its indulgence had been reached, by 1900 it shared with the Treasury an increasing concern over administrative expenditure. Each year seemed to require extraordinary costs beyond those for approved salaries and correspondence. At Saltcoats, the costs of Local Improvement Taxes and school taxes in the Eden and Tupper School Districts amounted to \$246.80 for the financial year ending 31 March 1900; the filling of wells and cellars on abandoned properties cost \$330.⁶⁰ The same bills amounted to \$452.42 for the year ending 31 March 1903.⁶¹ The Canadian Government insisted that the Board was responsible for the seed grain advances of 1890. Inclusive of interest, over \$1,100 was paid to the Department of the Interior by a reluctant Board in October 1903.⁶² At Killarney, the Board's legal expenses could not all be charged against the settlers and the more frequent visits by its agent increased incidental costs considerably.

The Board therefore sought to extricate itself from its responsibility for its Canadian settlements. Initially, it was felt that the sale of abandoned lands at Saltcoats would recover practically the whole of the sums advanced to the settlers. Yet the lands valued by Tupper at \$3.50 an acre in 1893 could not be sold, even when Borradaile advertised them in 1899, at \$2.00 per acre.⁶³ As

⁵⁸PAC, RG 15, vol. 603, file 212189(1), M. Matheson to Sifton, 17 May 1901.

⁵⁹Great Britain. *Eleventh Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [Cd-456] 1901, p. 7. The statement reflected the legal position, not the actual one. Certificates of abandonment had been signed, but in the same report Borradaile stated that eleven settlers were still on the land.

⁶⁰SRO, AF 51/204/859, Financial Statements to 31 March 1900.

⁶¹SRO, AF 51/207/957, Balance Sheet to 31 March 1903.

⁶²PAC, RG 15, vol. 603, file 212189(1), Stewart Tupper *et al* to Department of Interior, 17 October 1903.

⁶³PAC, RG 15, vol. 603, file 212189(1), Borradaile to Department of the Interior, 22 February 1900.

late as September 1901, not one I.C.B. quarter section at Saltcoats had been sold.⁶⁴ The Board offered selected Canadian mortgage companies the opportunity to take over the Board's interests completely in April 1901, but all the companies responded that their business did not encompass such an undertaking.⁶⁵ By early 1904, it was calculated that the process of collection at Killarney would take five or six years and that legal and administrative expenses during that time could be as high as £3,000.⁶⁶ Upon Colmer's recommendation, the Board decided to offer a reduction of 20 per cent to the Killarney settlers upon condition that payment in full be received by 31 October 1904, and to seek a quick sale of the Saltcoats lands.⁶⁷ In May 1904, the Under-Secretary for Scotland, summoned to appear before the Committee of Public Accounts was able to agree that there was "a prospect of this tedious business coming to an end."⁶⁸

When it was learned that the Pelican Lake settlers were responding favourably to the Board's offer, the Treasury provided £75 for Colmer to visit Canada in December to wind up the affairs of the Commission.⁶⁹ Colmer reported to the Board that with only two exceptions, all outstanding obligations had been paid, and that the Board's lawyers had purchased the two claims. The I.C.B. no longer had obligations at Killarney.⁷⁰ At Saltcoats, sixteen properties,

⁶⁴ Great Britain. *Twelfth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [Cd-812] 1902, p. 4.

⁶⁵ SRO, AF 51/205/892, Thos. Skinner to North of Scotland Canadian Mortgage Company, 2 April 1901.

⁶⁶ SRO, AF 51/208/1008, Minutes of the Twenty-sixth Meeting of the Imperial Colonisation Board, 16 February 1904.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ SRO, AF 51/207/982.

⁶⁹ SRO, AF 51/207/983 and 989. The Treasury did state it begrudged "sending £75 good money after so much bad."

⁷⁰ A dispute over taxes with the Ontarian purchaser of one property was resolved by the end of 1905.

all in the former King Colony, had been sold at \$3 per acre by 1903 and one young crofter had paid a portion of his debt.⁷¹ Colmer stated that three heads of families were in residence and that, though "considerable leniency" had been shown them due to their advanced ages, none had paid taxes or lease instalments. The three were to be offered the opportunity to purchase their homesteads "at a moderate price" or face legal proceedings.⁷² Borradaile was dismissed as of 31 March 1905 and given a year's salary as a gratuity on Colmer's recommendation. The Royal Trust Company, at a yearly fee of £50 and a promise of a 5 per cent sales commission, was made trustee of the Saltcoats lands and instructed to sell as soon as possible for a minimum price of \$4 per acre. The Board was determined not to sustain a loss on the "settlement experiment," and with prices rising in the Saltcoats area, was confident that it would not. An offer from Stewart Tupper of \$20,000 for the remaining Saltcoats lands in March 1906 was rejected as it would involve "paying too dearly for the opportunity of practically closing up the Board's work at once."⁷³ The Imperial Colonisation Board held its final meeting on 17 July 1906 and issued its *Fifteenth Report* in August. The document was largely self-congratulatory. An agreement had been signed by the Charles Sexton Company of Minneapolis to purchase all the remaining Saltcoats properties at \$4 an acre. The Treasury would therefore receive more than the £13,120 of public money it had authorised since 1888. The Saltcoats settlers were said to have been "led away by bad advice" but were pronounced to be far better off in Canada than they would

⁷¹SRO, AF 51/206/925, Saltcoats statement, 30 November 1902.

⁷²No evidence exists in Scottish Office or Public Archives files that these legal proceedings were undertaken. However, two of the three properties were included in the sale to the Sexton Company. The resident of the third, Archibald Ferguson, offered \$600 in full payment of his debt only in 1908.

⁷³SRO, AF 51/208/1026, Colmer to Scottish Office, 21 March 1906.

have been had they remained in Scotland. The Killarney settlement was judged to be "fairly successful", but the Board added

that the results might have been more satisfactory, both at Killarney and Saltcoats, had the Commission been given the opportunity of formulating its own scheme, and of personally selecting the families sent to Canada under its provisions.⁷⁴

The principle of assisted emigration was thereby upheld while Lothian's scheme and the settlers themselves were found lacking in the essentials required.

The gloss alleged by the editor of the *Scottish Highlander* to have existed on the Board's first report is clearly discernible on its last.⁷⁵ No mention was made of the £8,584 spent in administration up to 31 March 1906.⁷⁶ More significantly, statistical information is missing on the settlements themselves. The report did not state that of its fifty-six quarter sections near Pelican Lake, only forty-one original locations had passed to the assisted crofters or their successors, though as many as five others were sold to other members of the families assisted by the Board; at least nine properties belonged to people who had not come to Pelican Lake under I.C.B. auspices.⁷⁷ The report did not state that of the nearly one hundred individuals eligible to enter for homesteads near Saltcoats, only seventy-two had done so, and by the date of the report, only two were in legal possession of the land.

However, the Board's responsibilities did not end in 1906. In fact, the I.C.B. was continued as "still engaged upon the business entrusted to them" upon

⁷⁴ Great Britain. *Fifteenth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [CD 3145] 1906, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁵ Great Britain. *Report From The Select Committee on Colonisation*, [C-354] 1890, Testimony of Alexander Mackenzie, p. 332.

⁷⁶ SRO, AF 51/209/1087, Colonisation Board Administrative Charges.

⁷⁷ The last two figures cannot be stated more emphatically because family relationships are often unspecified in surviving records.

George V's coronation in 1910 and was never to be officially disbanded.⁷⁸ After 1906, the work of the Board was entirely conducted through correspondence by Colmer and the Scottish Office. Decisions were required concerning unexpected legal bills from Tupper, Phippen and Tupper and the unexpected full payment from one family head at Saltcoats in 1908.⁷⁹ Twice, the Charles Sexton Company asked for extensions of its instalment dates as many of its settlers were failing to make their payments on time. Both requests were firmly denied and on 1 November 1908, the Sexton Company made its final payment. The Scottish Office, for years afterwards, considered whether to return the £2,000 private subscription. On 13 January 1921, at Treasury insistence, Colmer finally paid the entire Board bank balance of £3262.18.1 into Treasury coffers.⁸⁰ A few months later, with the Empire Settlement Scheme about to begin, recent reports by Poor Law officials on emigration prospects from Lewis and Harris were being examined at the Scottish Office.⁸¹

For all its emphasis on finances, the Board was not an impersonal bureaucracy and the two men most concerned with its operation, therefore, deserve a final consideration. George Betts Borradaile, despite his strict concurrence with the Board's paramount concern with finances, never gained the trust and respect of the Scottish Office. His reports were almost invariably received later than the Scottish Office though appropriate, his accounting methods were consistently thought to be deficient and his actions often considered to have been taken without due authority. On one occasion, Colmer referred to him as "Booradaile" and a Scottish Office official facetiously suggested, on the basis of

⁷⁸SRO, AF 51/210/1113, Royal Sign Manual, 2 June 1910.

⁷⁹SRO, AF 51/209/1100, Stewart Tupper *et al* to Colmer, 21 July 1909; AF 51/209/1083, Tupper *et al* to Colmer, 26 February 1909.

⁸⁰SRO, AF 51/210/1111, Treasury to Scottish Office, 10 November 1920.

⁸¹SRO, AF 51/212.

his accounts, that he should be thrown in prison.^{8 2} At the same time, Borradaile resembled no one so closely as the factor of a Highland estate in the eyes of many crofter settlers. After a series of extended illnesses, Borradaile moved from Winnipeg to Medicine Hat early in 1902 and from there conducted his administration of the settlements for over three years. He refused to assist the Board in any way after 1906 and had to be asked by Colmer if he had ever received his gratuity.^{8 3}

J. G. Colmer, on the other hand, was held in the highest regard by members of the I.C.B. The Secretary for Scotland in 1908 wrote that disaster had only been averted as a result of Colmer's skill and conduct.^{8 4} Colmer ended a career of twenty-three years at the Office of the High Commission in 1903 to take up employment in the City. His salary as I.C.B. secretary ended in 1905, but as late as 1927 he was still communicating with the Scottish Office in connection with the Board. He yearned for a formal conclusion to the Board's work, and for several years urged a meeting of the Board to consider the Sixteenth Report he had prepared. Though the Scottish Office occasionally considered recommending him for an Honour in connection with his work as Board secretary, records indicate he received only a brief letter of appreciation from the Under-Secretary for Scotland in 1926.

^{8 2}SRO, AF 51/204/848, Scottish Office Minute, 22 November 1900.

^{8 3}SRO, AF 51/208/1015, Colmer to Scottish Office, 17 March 1906.

^{8 4}SRO, AF 51/209/1087, Scottish Office Minute, 25 November 1908.

CONCLUSION

Considering the historical significance of the work of the Imperial Colonisation Board, the absence of an assessment in the historiographies of both Scotland and Canada is surprising. From the Scottish viewpoint, the fact that the Board administered settlements located in Canada may account for this lack of attention in part. Yet the settlement scheme was formulated to address one of the most intractable and long-standing issues in the entire history of Scotland. From the Canadian viewpoint, the settlements were small, were established prior to the flood of immigration that occurred later, and have not been perceived to have influenced the course of Canadian immigration history. But, on both sides of the Atlantic, Lothian's scheme had an immediate and profound influence on public policy that has yet to be acknowledged.

Lord Lothian indicated no interest in the widespread national debate on state-aided emigration in the 1880's. He was not a member of Lord Brabazon's National Association for Promoting State-Directed Emigration and Colonisation and made no attempt to link his proposals for crofter emigration to the wider agitation.¹ His settlement scheme was endorsed in April 1888 by a Cabinet which expected daily to receive a mature proposal from the National Association and was aware that 160 M.P.'s and Lords supported the Association's objectives. A recent study fails to explore the connection between the National Association lobby and the surprising endorsement Lothian's scheme received from Cabinet.² Even if the Scottish and the national schemes were unrelated in origin and in

¹Howard L. Malchow, *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth Century Britain*, (Palo Alto, California: Society For The Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1979), pp. 279-83. A Liberal Unionist, Lord Wolseley, urged that National Association plans for state-aided emigration be extended to "the Scot crofters." Wolseley to Brabazon, 8 January 1887, cited by Malchow, p. 215.

²*Ibid.*

politics, their destinies were bound by the Select Committee proposed by W. H. Smith on 22 November 1888 to examine crofter settlement schemes. By the time it was ordered appointed in April 1889, the Committee's mandate had grown to include all assisted emigration schemes. But the bulk of the testimony it received concerned the crofters settled in the Canadian West under Lothian's scheme because that was the only substantial scheme then under trial. Ostensibly reporting on the principles of assisted emigration, the Report of the Colonisation Committee dealt primarily with the practice and prospects of assisted emigration from the Scottish Highlands. The difficulties experienced at Pelican Lake and, especially, at Saltcoats were so thoroughly examined that the proponents of state-aided emigration were consistently on the defensive. The Report finally issued in 1891 contained only an insipid endorsement of Lothian's scheme, and its general tone was a considerable discouragement to the emigrationists. The consequent withering of the lobby for state aid for emigration was due at least as much to the specific experience of the Canadian settlements as it was to the improvement in the British economy. George Trevelyan had no difficulty in 1893 in announcing the absolute termination of consideration of state aid for all colonisation schemes using the crofter experiment in Canada as his sole justification.³

Lothian, in contrast to Trevelyan, was encouraged by the Committee's meek endorsement and took the opportunity to make a rare speech on his scheme in the House of Lords.⁴ With a fresh parliamentary vote of £7500, he sought to re-activate the channels and processes of 1888 and 1889. The Board of Supervision, however, refused to allow Malcolm McNeill or any other of its

³See above, Chapter 4.

⁴Hansard *Parliamentary Debates* (Third Series) vol. 352 (1891), cols. 1311-13.

officers to impair their influence through the implication of a "direct connection with the scheme."⁵ It is indicative of how heavily dependent upon McNeill Lothian was that no alternate "selector" was contemplated before Lothian relinquished office in October 1892. His successor, Sir George Trevelyan, found that Lothian's circular of 1892 had failed to elicit a single application from the parishes from which the Saltcoats and Pelican Lake settlers had been drawn. Rejecting all applications from elsewhere in the Highlands and Islands on the grounds that the scheme had been conceived to apply only to the Western Isles, Trevelyan insisted that the proposed 1893 emigration should not take place.

Ironically, nothing more clearly demonstrates the absolute correctness of the thinking behind the McNeill-Lothian scheme than the complete absence of applications from Lewis and Harris in 1892. In 1888-89, with the initially favourable reports from the Killarney settlers, a widespread interest was expressed throughout the Western Isles in the government scheme despite a concerted Land League opposition. The number of families emigrated in April 1889 was nearly the maximum possible under the scheme for that year. The disappearance of that interest has been variously attributed to the escalation of Land League activity, improving economic conditions in the Islands, increased employment opportunities due to Government projects, the work of the Crofters Commission and the traditional disinclination of crofters to emigrate.⁶ While the influence of all these factors must be acknowledged, it is necessary to state that they were all as operative in 1889 as in 1892. The key discouragement to emigration with government assistance in 1892 were the persistent public and

⁵SRO, AF 51/192/245, Board of Supervision to Scottish Office, 13 August 1892.

⁶T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*, (London: Fontana Press, 1987), chapter 3; Valerie Ross, *Factors Affecting Emigration From Scotland 1841-1896* (M.A. Dissertation: McGill University, 1957); James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1976), pp. 177-79.

private reports of the trials and disappointments of the emigrants of 1888 and 1889. The precise opposite of the inducement envisioned by McNeill and Lothian had been created.

The role of the Canadian Government in the settlement scheme was, from the very commencement, confused and inefficient. The inability of the Ministry of the Interior to provide land for homestead locations in 1888 was largely a consequence of the precipitous implementation of the scheme. Other difficulties encountered were attributable to the same cause, but problems were compounded by the consistent Canadian governmental inefficiency. Apart from the land selection, the formal British request for co-operation in April asked the Canadian Government to act immediately upon appointing a Board member and upon granting the Board full legal powers under Canadian law.⁷ Only after much prodding by the Colonial Office did the Canadian Privy Council agree in October to Tupper's appointment; it then neglected to inform British authorities of its decision.⁸ The legislation requested was passed in May 1888, but was immediately found to be inadequate.⁹ Once the settlements were established, the only legislation requested of the Canadian Government was that sought by the I.C.B. in 1895 to enable the Saltcoats settlers to select second homesteads under Board auspices. The amendment to the *Dominion Lands Act* was not enacted until eighteen months after it had been agreed to, and even then, the

⁷Great Britain. *Memorandum of Arrangements Entered Into With The Canadian Government, The Principal Land Companies, etc., For The Purpose of Starting A Colonisation Scheme For The Crofters And Cottars of The Western Highlands And Islands of Scotland And Relative Correspondence*, [C-5043] 1888, Knutsford to Landsdowne, 11 April 1888, p. 5.

⁸Public Archives of Canada (hereinafter PAC), RG 15, vol. 575, file 176811(1), Burgess to Dewdney, 25 June 1889.

⁹Canada. *Statutes 1888*, 51 Vic., Chap. 21. See also SRO, AF 51/92, Colmer to Scottish Office, 15 March 1889.

Department of the Interior did not act under its altered provisions.¹⁰

Despite the formal involvement of the Canadian Government, despite the numerous visitations of Canadian dignitaries to the colonies, and despite the active participation of Dominion Lands officials in 1889, the Canadian authorities were curiously content to leave the scheme's administration in British hands. The refusal to commit Canadian Government funds to the experiment and the undignified severance by the Department of the Interior of its active involvement with the Saltcoats settlement in 1889 have already been referred to. The desire to disassociate from the "Imperial experiment" was so strong that Tupper was forced to enquire if withdrawal of Canadian participation was contemplated and to lecture the Minister of the Interior on the wider implications of the settlement scheme.¹¹ The lesson was apparently still unlearned by the Department of Agriculture as late as 1890. John Lowe, the Deputy Minister, had stated in 1888 that the "whole effort" of the Department was to bring out immigrants to people the Canadian West.¹² Yet when questioned two years later by the Canadian Select Committee on Agriculture and Colonization on the reports of destitution in the crofter settlements, Lowe was clearly surprised at the line of questioning, stating that the scheme was

...not in any way aided or particularly invited by the Department. It is purely an Imperial tentative effort.¹³

When the Committee pointed out that British Columbia's effort to attract crofter

¹⁰Canada. *Statutes 1897*, 60-61 Vic., Chap 29. See also PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(2), McLeay to Sifton, 12 January 1898.

¹¹PAC, RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1), Tupper to Dewdney, 28 August 1889.

¹²Canada. *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. 22 (1888), Appendix No. 5, p. 18.

¹³Canada. *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. 24 (1890), Appendix No. 5, p. 41.

immigration could be jeopardised by destitution reports, Lowe undertook to launch an investigation. It is apparent that while the Scottish Office was fully aware of the implication of such reports upon its proclaimed policies, Canadian authorities (with the notable exception of the Office of the High Commission in London) were remarkably naive as to the effect the crofter settlements could have upon the prospects of settlement in the West.

This naivety was abandoned as negative reports of the Saltcoats settlement continued to receive wide publicity and as emigration from the North of Scotland failed to fulfil expectations. In 1892, Lowe stated before the Canadian Select Committee on Agriculture and Colonization

The immigration market is exceedingly sensitive, and the least thing in the shape of bad reports will incite a very important drawback. One bad report will do a great deal more harm than fifty good reports will do.¹⁴

In 1892, the highly parsimonious Department of the Interior appointed an agent in Inverness, against the opinion of Sir Charles Tupper that the additional expense was unjustified.¹⁵ Especially until 1895, the agent reported a widespread interest in the crofter settlements and a strong aversion in the crofting parishes to further emigration to Canada.¹⁶ Though improving economic conditions and the raised expectations created by Liberal Highland Commissions are credited with severely depressing the numbers of prospective emigrants,¹⁷ Canadian authorities after 1892 acknowledged that the burden of responsibility for the public perception of Canada in Britain rested with Canadians, even with regard to an

¹⁴Canada. *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. 26 (1892), Appendix No. 2, p. 147.

¹⁵PAC, RG 76, vol. 33, file 742(1), Tupper to Dewdney, 12 July 1892.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, Reports by W. G. Stuart to Colmer, 1893-1895.

¹⁷*Ibid.* See also George Brown to Colmer, 3 November 1894 and Valerie Ross, *op. cit.*

"Imperial tentative effort" at colonisation on Canadian soil.

Of the Canadian authorities, only the Office of the Canadian High Commission understood, clearly and consistently, the implications of Lothian's scheme for Western settlement. Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Colmer repeatedly impressed upon the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior the need to look beyond the immediate settlement problems to the broader Canadian interest in encouraging immigration. Until 1892, the success of the I.C.B. settlements was sought to permit the further expenditure of Imperial funds; after 1892, that same success was required to encourage a private emigration. With the change of government in the United Kingdom in 1892, the British authorities argued that difficulties experienced in the Canadian settlements were attributable to inherent weakness in the Tory scheme. The High Commission had no such easy explanation. It urged recognition of the hardships imposed upon the settlers by adverse economic and climatic factors, but could only press such an argument to a limited extent without injuring the prospects of the very emigration it sought to encourage. The disappointing results, especially at Saltcoats, were therefore attributed to the class of settlers involved - the crofters themselves.

This explanation was forcefully proffered at the same time the Board was seeking applications for the proposed 1893 emigration. Thought it accorded perfectly with long-held prejudices of Scottish Office officials, it produced the sharpest division of opinion that was ever to occur amongst the scheme's administrators. Malcolm McNeill angrily rejected Colmer's assertion that the Saltcoats settlers were inferior to the Pelican Lake settlers. He attributed the problems at Saltcoats to the "gross and shameful apathy of the Canadians" in failing to select and prepare land as promised.¹⁸ The Under-Secretary

¹⁸ SRO, AF 51/194/331, McNeill to Scottish Office, 14 April 1893.

memorialised Trevelyan that it was time the settlers looked to Canada for help and later authorised the seed grain advance of 1893 only because he agreed with McNeill that "the Canadian Government did not act fairly to these people."¹⁹ The Scottish Office insisted on removing from the draft of the *Fourth Report* prepared by Colmer the strongly-worded statement on the inferiority of the Saltcoats settlers.²⁰ When the exchange culminated in Trevelyan's denunciation of the scheme and its settlers during Tupper's investigation of the Saltcoats complaints in September 1893, both Tupper and Colmer would have been fully aware that Canada's reputation as a field for settlement had received a calculated and serious setback.²¹

The reputation of the Scots, as settlers, also experienced a serious, if temporary, reversal. When a parliamentary member of the Britain's Emigrants Information Office visited Killarney in 1894, he found a local community which "could not say anything too bad" of the crofters, regarding them as poor workers and "thoroughly bad farmers".²² This is not to suggest that this bitter opinion was anything more than a local phenomenon. Yet, in 1895, when the return of the Unionists to power in Britain led to renewed interest in the British Columbian crofter settlement scheme, the Minister of the Interior was informed by the British Columbian Government that it had no intention of encouraging "such a class of settlers" to come to British Columbia.²³ Alexander Begg received no official encouragement in his attempts to revive the scheme in 1896.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Scottish Office Minute, 1 May 1893.

²⁰ SRO, AF 51/194/341, Scottish Office Minute, 12 May 1893.

²¹ See above, Chapter 4.

²² Great Britain. *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Departmental Committee Appointed to Consider Mr. Rider Haggard's Report on Agricultural Settlement in British Colonies*, [Cd-2979] 1906, p. 203, H. L. Lawson during evidence of Mr. Colmer, 21 November 1905, p. 203.

²³ PAC, RG 76, vol 33, file 742(1), Provincial Minister of Immigration to Minister of the Interior, 8 August 1895.

For the first time in Canadian history, Highland Scots had become classed with such undesirable groups as the Irish and East-end Londoners. While the British Columbian opinion derived partially from local politics,²⁴ the reputation of the prairie settlements would necessarily have contributed to such a view.

More speculatively, it may be stated that as a comparatively large and well-publicised scheme, the reputation of the crofter settlements contributed to the growing opinion that the British did not make good settlers. The Barr colonists were certainly not the first British group to receive widespread publicity for their agricultural shortcomings; the crofters gained that reputation more than a decade earlier. Though many smaller groups of British settlers abandoned homesteads in the 1880s and 1890s, those settled under Lothian's scheme were more numerous and their shortcomings more publicised. Moreover, their reputation cannot have escaped the notice of Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior after 1896. The crofter settlements near Pelican Lake were in the provincial constituency adjacent to his own and, as Manitoba's Attorney-General, Sifton would have been aware of the many legal actions brought by implement makers against the crofters there. As a member of Greenway's cabinet, Sifton would have been aware of Manitoba's concerns over the crofters becoming public charges in 1895 and of the decisions to finance the delegations to London in 1896 and 1897. When he took over as Minister of the Interior early in 1897, Sifton instituted sweeping changes in personnel, organisation and policy.²⁵ H. H. Smith at Winnipeg and Thomas Grahame at Glasgow lost their positions in the departmental re-organisation.²⁶

²⁴Jill Wade, "The Gigantic Scheme: Crofter Immigration and Deep-Sea Fisheries Development for B.C. (1887-1893)", *B.C. Studies* No. 53 (Spring 1982), pp. 28-44.

²⁵Harold Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, (Toronto: Griffin House, 1972), pp. 13-20.

²⁶Smith promptly sought to replace Borradaile as I. C. B. agent. SRO, AF 51/201/689, Scottish Office Minute, 6 May 1897.

His settlement policies changed the face of Western Canada. His aversion to assisted settlements as well as his preference for non-British settlers are both highly suggestive that the difficulties of the crofter settlements were well known to him. Organised British settlement would never again be expected to play a significant role in the Canadian West.²⁷

Though not a settlement study, it is necessary to comment to some extent upon the settlers themselves. If the emigrants sought a continuation of their Highland way of life, the Canadian West in the late nineteenth century did not prove as conducive as the Maritime provinces had been in the late eighteenth century.²⁸ The traditional combination of agricultural pursuits with externally-earned cash wages was continued, but the demands of commercial agriculture and the necessity of debt repayment required a rapid change in cultural norms. Yet the most persistent theme in Borradaile's reports to the I.C.B. is his criticism of the settlers agricultural methods. Even when reporting on the bumper crop of 1901, he complained that production would be higher if the settlers would not "insist on sowing the same seed year after year".²⁹ Nonetheless prosperity was such that nearly all remaining settlers near Pelican Lake were able to discharge their obligations to the Board and gain title to their properties between 1901 and 1905. At Saltcoats, a Canadian Government agent reported younger family members as adapting much more readily to the ways of

²⁷Both Sifton and his deputy minister later expressed their opposition to assisting the Barr Colonists lest they came "to expect a great deal from the Government." Donald Hall, *Clifford Sifton: A Biography* Vol. 2 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), p. 75.

²⁸J. M. Bumstead, "Scottish Emigration to the Maritimes 1770-1815: A New Look at an Old Theme", *Acadiensis*, vol. X, no. 2 (Spring 1981), pp. 65-85.

²⁹Great Britain. *Thirteenth Report of the Imperial Colonisation Board*, [Cd-1395] 1906, p. 6.

the country than their "too conservative" parents by 1902.³⁰ The persistence of a Hebridean colony prior to World War One to the north of the original I.C.B. locations has been noted elsewhere and it is significant that this colony attracted some of the Killarney crofters.³¹ Lord Lothian's scheme, therefore, did ultimately succeed in establishing crofter colonies in the Canadian West. But the fiasco at Saltcoats destroyed any illusions he may have had that Canadian settlements could resolve questions of Scottish politics. The Scottish Office remained perplexed at the sharply contrasting fates of the Canadian settlements, and in 1905 Colmer stated that he could not account for the differences.³² Lewry has suggested that the uniformity of social class amongst the Saltcoats crofters may have contributed to the initial failure of the colony.³³ This Wakefieldian analysis does not account for the differing histories of the Saltcoats and Killarney settlements, both of which were entirely comprised of the same small crofter and cottar class.

Essentially, the game of "emigration roulette" initiated by Lothian at the Scottish Office dealt three advantages to the Killarney and Argyle settlers and none to the Saltcoats settlers. The lands around Pelican Lake upon which the 1888 immigrants were located were well-suited for the production of cereal crops. Situated amongst established farmers, the 1888 crofter groups had available to them extensive, if fluctuating, local wage earning opportunities. In the early years of the colony's life, the local merchant community at Killarney did not

³⁰PAC, RG 76, vol. 108, file 20013, C. W. Speers to Frank Pedley, 9 July 1902.

³¹Marilyn Lewry, *A Study of the Locational Changes Among Hebridean Immigrants in Southeast Saskatchewan, 1883 to 1926*, (M.A. Dissertation, University of Regina, 1985), pp. 100-05.

³²*Minutes of Evidence on Agricultural Settlements in British Colonies*, p. 203.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 32-41;203.

hesitate to extend credit to the settlers in the belief that both Canadian and Imperial authorities had undertaken responsibility for debts. In short, the material advantages of the Pelican Lake crofters were immense when compared with the situation of the Saltcoats settlers who were located upon land of questionable quality, were competing for scarce local employment in an undeveloped economy, and were denied credit with local merchants by order of the Colonisation Board. The two settlements faced the years of adverse economic and climatic conditions following their establishment from dramatically different perspectives.

If the reasons for the failure of the settlement scheme were clearly inherent in the scheme itself, questions raised during this examination of the scheme strike at the heart of the traditional view of the role of the Scot in Canadian history. There is no evidence here to suggest that Scottish birth brought an easy success or facilitated the adaptation to Canadian circumstances. In fact, the evidence strongly suggests that the attitudes and practices brought from the Western Isles distinctly inhibited that adaptation. So, too, did the conservatism with which the settlers clung to the social and political traditions of the Highlands. Their agricultural methods were disparaged by a number of observers. The tendency to remain socially distinct from other settlers and to seek redress from Scotland of their many grievances contributed to the difficulties of adaptation. The extreme lengths to which the Canadian Government went to avoid responsibility for them indicates that Canada offered no special considerations to these settlers based upon their ethnicity. The lingering impression is that Canada was simply a reluctant host to uncertain settlers.

The problems encountered by the seventy-nine families of Highland immigrants had a profound effect upon the policies of both the British and Canadian governments. Not until after the First World War could a British

Government again contemplate involvement in emigration. Under the auspices of the Empire Settlement Scheme, the British settlers who arrived in the Canadian West in the 1920's entered a society in which the ethnic makeup had changed dramatically over the previous thirty years. The altered circumstances were the direct result of the major shift in Canadian policy and opinion concerning British agriculturalists that occurred at the end of the nineteenth century. The prairie experience of the crofter families selected under Lothian's scheme of emigration and settlement contributed materially to that change.

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In an ironically appropriate legal metaphor, a "cloud on the title" of the lands purchased by Charles Sexton at Saltcoats resulted in complicated litigation that was not cleared up until after World War One.^{3 4} Valuations of the properties were required and, in October 1910, a Homestead Inspector, accompanied by Charles Docherty and Archibald Ferguson, examined the quarter sections selected by the forty-nine families in the summer of 1889. The inspector noted that much of the land had returned to prairie and wrote

There is evidence of old buildings having been on this land as well as old breaking having been done some time ago.^{3 5}

The statement could stand as epitaph to both the settlers and the work of the Imperial Colonisation Board.

^{3 4}PAC, RG 15, vol. 604, file 212189(1-3). As a result of an agitation by the *Yorkton Enterprise* in 1911, the Department of the Interior attempted to enforce provisions of Section 44 of the Dominion Lands Act requiring *bona fide* settlers to be placed on lands held by colonization companies. The I.C.B. was accordingly sued in June 1911 though the suits were actually brought against the Board's U.S. successors.

^{3 5}*Ibid.*, file 212189(2). J. Gibson to Commissioner of Dominion Lands, 2 November 1910.

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APPENDIX I
MEETINGS OF THE IMPERIAL COLONISATION BOARD

APPENDIX I

Meetings of the Imperial Colonisation Board

Meetings were almost always held at Dover House, London with the Secretary for Scotland in the chair.

1. 7 February 1889
2. 15 March 1889
3. 7 May 1889
4. 2 July 1889
5. 25 February 1890
6. 9 June 1890
7. [?] September 1890
8. [?] November 1890
9. 7 February 1891
10. 4 December 1891
11. 18 February 1892
12. 10 August 1892
13. 16 May 1893
14. [?] July 1894
15. 20 March 1895
16. 15 July 1895
17. 29 November 1895
18. 17 May 1897
19. 16 June 1897
20. 12 November 1897
21. 4 November 1898
22. 24 April 1899
23. October 1900 [?]
24. July 1901 [?]
25. 5 May 1902
26. 16 February 1904
27. 25 May 1905
28. 17 July 1906

SOURCE: SRO AF 51 files.

APPENDIX II
IMPERIAL COLONISATION BOARD LANDS NEAR PELICAN LAKE

APPENDIX II

Imperial Colonisation Board Lands Near Pelican Lake

Admin No.	Name of Settler	Location (W1)	Disposition
The Killarney Colony			
1	William McLeod	NE 3.5.17	to settler 1904
34	Malcolm McIver	NE 33.4.17	to non-crofter 1904
2	Donald MacDonald	NE 9.5.17	to settler 1905
54	Samuel Graham	NW 5.5.17	to settler 1900
4	John Mackay	SE 35.4.17	to settler 1905
5	Norman Graham	NE 21.4.17	to non-crofter 1902
35	William McLeod	NW 17.5.17	to settler 1903
6	John Nicolson	SW 25.4.17	to settler 1905
36	John McLean	SE 25.4.17	to settler 1903
56	Murdo McLeod	NE 25.4.17	to settler 1900
7	John Campbell	SW 13.5.17	to settler 1905
37	Angus Graham	NW 31.4.16	to Saltcoats crofter 1905
8	John Mackenzie Jr.	SW 27.4.17	to settler 1905
38	Andrew Graham	NE 1.5.17	to settler 1893
9	John McLeod	SE 23.4.17	to "unassisted crofter" 1905
39	William McLeod	NW 23.4.17	to non-crofter 1900
40	John McLeod Jr.	SW 23.4.17	to non-crofter 1900
57	Lewis McLeod	SW 3.5.17	to "unassisted crofter" 1900
10	Kenneth Macauley	SE 33.4.17	to settler 1905
53	John Macauley	NW 33.4.17	to settler 1905
73	Neil Munro	NE 5.5.17	to settler 1903
11	Angus Macdonald	SW 9.5.17	to settler 1905
58	John McKenzie	SW 35.4.17	to settler 1903
13	Angus McLeod	NW 25.4.17	to other crofter 1905
41	Donald McLeod	NE 23.4.17	to creditor 1899
14	John Morrison	SE 9.5.17	to settler 1905
59	Murdo Morrison	SE 17.5.17	to widow 1908
15	John Graham	SW 31.4.16	to settler 1905
60	John Graham (cousin)	NE 17.5.17	to settler 1900
16	Allan Macleod	NW 9.5.17	to settler 1905
42	Murdo Stewart	SE 5.5.17	to settler 1905
17	John Mackenzie Sr.	SE 27.4.17	to settler 1905
43	Colin McKenzie	NE 27.4.17	to grandson 1900
61	Kenneth McLeod	SW 5.5.17	to other crofter 1903
18	William Macdonald	NE 31.4.16	to settler 1903
55	Alexander McDonald	SE 31.4.16	to other crofter 1903
44	Donald Murray	SW 17.5.17	to settler 1904

Admin No.	Name of Settler	Location (W1)	Disposition
19	Murdo Graham	NW 13.5.17	to settler 1903
21	Norman Mackenzie	SE 21.4.17	to widow 1908
45	William Mackenzie	NW 21.4.17	to settler 1905
62	James McIver	SW 21.4.17	to Saltcoats crofter 1903
63	Malcolm Mackenzie	NW 19.4.16	to CNWL Co. 1893

The Argyle Colony

22	John MacDonald Jr.	NW 21.5.16	to widow 1908
46	Norman McDonald	SW 21.5.16	to settler 1900
64	Duncan McDonald	NW 7.5.15	to settler 1903
23	John MacDonald Sr.	NE 17.5.16	to settler 1903
47	William MacDonald	SE 21.5.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
24	Angus McLeod	SE 21.6.16	to settler 1902
65	Alex Morrison	NW 27.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
25	Angus Morison	NW 15.6.16	abandoned; to ?
66	Archibald Morrison	NE 9.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
26	Donald Mackinnon	SW 21.6.16	to settler 1902
48	Kenneth Mackinnon	NW 33.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
67	Catherine McKinnon	NE 17.6.16	to settler 1903
27	Donald Stewart	NE 15.6.16	to son 1903
49	Kenneth Stewart	SW 13.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
68	William McLeod	SW 15.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
28	Ronald Mackay	NE 23.6.16	to non-crofter 1900
29	Dugald Mackenzie	NW 21.6.16	to settler 1902
69	Donald McKenzie	NE 21.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
70	John McKay	NE 19.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
71	Hugh Morrison	NW 19.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
30	Roderick MacKay	SE 23.6.16	to son 1905
72	John McKay	NE 13.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
31	Bannatyne MacKinnon	NW 23.6.16	to settler 1902
50	Kenneth McMillan	SW 23.6.16	to CNWL Co. 1893
32	Kenneth MacLeod	NW 13.6.16	to settler 1905
33	John Fraser	NE 7.5.15	to non-crofter 1904
51	Donald Fraser	SE 7.5.15	to CNWL Co. 1894

SOURCES: SRO AF 51 files; Reports of the Imperial Colonisation Board.

APPENDIX III
IMPERIAL COLONISATION BOARD LANDS NEAR SALTCOATS

APPENDIX III

Imperial Colonisation Board Lands Near Saltcoats

Admin No.	Name of Settler	Location (W2)	Disposition of Land
The Lothian Colony			
2	Kenneth MacIver	SE 10.25.1	to Sexton 1906
51	Murdo McIver	SW 10.25.1	to Sexton 1906
5	Malcolm Mackay	SW 10.25.2	to Sexton 1906
54	Donald McKay	SE 10.25.2	to Sexton 1906
95	Neil McKay	NE 14.25.2	to Sexton 1906
6	Donald Morrison	SW 27.25.2	to Sexton 1906
7	Norman Macauley	NE 3.25.1	to Sexton 1906
10	Donald MacDonald	Left before located.	
11	Charles Docherty	SW 16.25.1	to Sexton 1906
58	John Docherty	SE 16.25.1	to Sexton 1906
12	Alexander Macdonald	NW 9.25.1	to Sexton 1906
13	Malcolm McLeod	NW 34.24.2	to Sexton 1906
14	Donald Graham	NW 2.25.1	to Sexton 1906
15	Angus Smith	SE 4.25.2	to Sexton 1906
60	Roderick Smith	NE 4.25.2	to Sexton 1906
16	Alexander McLean	NE 32.24.2	to Sexton 1906
61	Alexander McLean	NW 32.24.2	to Sexton 1906
17	John McLean	SE 32.24.2	to Sexton 1906
62	Angus McLean	SW 32.24.2	to Sexton 1906
63	John McLeod	NW 28.24.2	to Sexton 1906
18	Duncan McLeod	SW 19.25.1	to Sexton 1906
64	Murdo McLeod	NE 18.25.1	to Sexton 1906
19	Donald McKay	NW 33.25.1	to Sexton 1906
65	Norman McKay	SE 24.25.2	to Sexton 1906
20	Allan Kenneth Murray	SW 34.25.2	to Sexton 1906
21	Finlay McLean	NW 32.25.1	to Sexton 1906
22	Alexander Mitchell	SW 1.25.1	to Sexton 1906
68	Neil McLeod	NE 1.25.1	to Sexton 1906
23	Donald McLeod	NW 19.25.1	to Sexton 1906
24	Malcolm McDonald	NW 17.25.1	to Sexton 1906
25	Donald MacDonald	SE 17.25.1	to Sexton 1906
71	Murdo MacDonald	SE 18.25.1	to Sexton 1906
26	Angus Mackay	NE 32.25.1	to Sexton 1906
27	Malcolm McLeod	NE 2.25.1	to Sexton 1906
28	Robert McKay	SE 2.25.1	to Sexton 1906
31	Donald Morrison	NW 27.25.2	to Sexton 1906
32	John Mackay	NE 2.25.2	to Sexton 1906
74	Malcolm McKay	SE 2.25.2	to Sexton 1906
35	Peter Morrison	NW 34.25.2	to Sexton 1906

Admin No.	Name of Settler	Location (W2)	Disposition of Land
36	Donald McDonald	SW 15.25.2	to Sexton 1906
77	Alexander McDonald	SE 15.25.2	to Sexton 1906
77b	John McDonald	NE 10.25.2	to Sexton 1906
96	Mary McDonald	NW 10.25.2	to Sexton 1906
37	Roderick Mackay	NE 9.25.2	to Sexton 1906
78	Angus Mackay	NW 14.25.2	to Sexton 1906
39	Ewan McKay	SW 14.25.2	to son 1905
40	Neil McSween	NW 15.25.2	to Sexton 1906
80	Torlach McSween	NW 22.25.2	to Sexton 1906
42	Alexander Young	NW 1.25.1	to Sexton 1906
82	Norman Morrison	SE 1.25.1	to Sexton 1906
43	Archibald Ferguson	SE 14.25.2	to settler 1908
47	John McIver	SE 13.25.2	to Sexton 1906
85	John McIver	NW 13.25.2	to Sexton 1906
88	Donald McIver	SW 13.25.2	to settler 1905
48	Kenneth McLeod	NW 36.24.1	to Sexton 1906
49	Donald MacLeod	SW 18.25.1	to Sexton 1906

The King Colony

1	John Macauley	NE 9.24.3	to non-crofter 1903
3	Donald Montgomery	NW 16.24.3	to non-crofter 1902
52	Duncan Martin	NE 16.24.3	to non-crofter 1902
4	Alexander MacDonald	SE 16.24.3	to non-crofter 1902
8	Norman McRae	SW 16.24.3	to non-crofter 1902
9	John Macauley Jr	NW 9.24.3	to non-crofter 1903
29	Alexander Murray	SE 4.24.3	to non-crofter 1903
30	Alexander Morrison	SE 17.24.3	to non-crofter 1902
33	John McKay Jr.	SE 21.24.3	to non-crofter 1903
75	Donald Murray	SW 22.24.3	to non-crofter 1903
34	John MacKay	SW 21.24.3	to non-crofter 1903
38	Murdo McSween	SE 20.24.3	to non-crofter 1902
41	Murdo McDonald	SW 9.24.3	to non-crofter 1903
44	Murdo McIver	NE 17.24.3	to non-crofter 1902
45	Neil MacIver	NW 20.24.3	to non-crofter 1902
46	John McDonald	SE 9.24.3	to non-crofter 1903

SOURCES: SRO AF 51 files; PAC RG 15, vol. 590, file 198738(1); PAC RG 15, vol. 603, file 21189(1-2); Saskatchewan Homestead Records.

APPENDIX IV

REPAYMENT OF ADVANCES BY PELICAN LAKE SETTLERS 1890 - 1906

APPENDIX IV

Repayment of Advances by Pelican Lake Settlers 1890 - 1906

Year	Area Under Wheat Cultivation (acres)	Production (bushels)	Price per Bushel	Repayment to I.C.B.	No. of I.C.B. Homesteads
1890	1346	20760	\$.60	not due	69
1891	2120	36974	\$.35	not due	69
1892	3089	31599	\$.45	nil	69
1893	2875	33607	\$.45	\$98.74	70
1894	1957	21797	\$.40	nil	55
1895	1924	49112	\$.40	nil	54
1896	2246	27845	\$.60	\$470.25	54
1897	1925	19878	\$.75	nil	54
1898	1893	25082	\$.60	\$328.23	54
1899	2100	35080	\$.58	\$2915.65	56
1900	2105	13916	\$.58	\$4738.74	45
1901	2071	46548	\$.55	\$881.98	43
1902	2120	53000	\$.55	\$5223.54	39
1903	1745	34900	\$.65	\$9361.88	28
1904	-----	-----	----	\$5756.87	23
1905	-----	-----	----	\$5230.90	23
1906	-----	-----	----	\$193.63	1

SOURCES: SRO AF 51 files; Reports of the Imperial Colonisation Board.