

CROFTER COLONISATION.

THIRD 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,

WITH

APPENDICES.

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

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# THIRD REPORT

OF THE

## COLONISATION BOARD.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

WE, the undersigned Commissioners, appointed under Your Majesty's Royal Sign Manual, for the purpose of carrying out a scheme of Colonisation in the Dominion of Canada, of Crofters and Cottars from the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and from the congested districts of Ireland, desire humbly to submit to Your Majesty the following Report:—

Reports have recently been received from the agent of the Board in Canada, relating to the settlements at Killarney, in Manitoba, and at Saltecoats, in the North-West Territories. The former was established in the summer of 1888, and the latter in the spring of 1889.

Statements are appended giving extracts from the reports of the agent (Appendix A), and summaries of the returns (Appendix B), showing the position of the various families at the end of October last, with particulars of the acreage under wheat, oats, and potatoes, in the years 1890 and 1891, the number of tons of hay cut in the latter year, the extent of the land prepared for crop in the coming season, the buildings erected, the live stock on the farms, and other interesting information.

### *Killarney Settlement.*

The following table relates to the Killarney settlement for 1891:—

	Acres.	Estimated Average Yield (Bushels).	Estimated Total Crop (Bushels).
Wheat - - - -	2,110	20	42,200
Oats - - - -	182	45	8,190
Potatoes - - -	11½	—	2,377

Most of the grain had not been threshed when the report of the agent was prepared, but the estimates are calculated at a lower rate than the actual yields were expected to return. Some of the grain already threshed yielded 28 bushels per acre for wheat, and 57 bushels per acre for oats, as compared with the estimates of 20 bushels and 45 bushels respectively. In a few cases the frost is reported to have done slight damage, but the above figures will not be materially affected thereby.

The value of the wheat for 1891 is estimated by the agent at over \$27,000 (5,550*l.*), of the oats at about \$1,700 (355*l.*), and of the potatoes at about \$356 (73*l.*). The average value of the crops for the year is, therefore, equal to nearly 200*l.* per family, irrespective of other sources of income.

The area prepared for cultivation in 1892 is 3,565½ acres, compared with 2,303½ in 1891, an increase of 1,262 acres, which is most gratifying. 896 tons of hay were obtained by the settlement, an increase of 378 tons over the previous year. It is satisfactory to observe that the younger members of the various families have amongst them no less than 1,374 acres of ploughed land ready for crop included in the total acreage of 3,565½ acres already alluded to.

As the settlement consists of 30 families, the average extent of land prepared for cultivation in 1892, including the heads of families, and the younger members thereof, is 119 acres per family, a result which could certainly never have been attained in the Hebrides.

In many other ways the settlement has considerably improved since our last report, and the holdings have consequently much increased in value. There are now 60 houses in the settlement (besides many additions to the buildings originally erected on the arrival of the crofters), of which 30 belong to the heads of families, and 30 to the younger members of the families who are now farming for themselves; and there has also been a substantial addition to the number of stables, granaries, and other buildings.

Reference must also be made to the considerable increase in the live stock in the possession of the various families, especially those under the headings in the statement of horses, oxen, and cows. The additional 38 oxen chiefly belong to the younger members of the families, and have been acquired out of their earnings. It will be noticed that the young stock has also shown a satisfactory increase, and now numbers 63 heifers, 53 steers, and 7 bulls.

In connexion with the very satisfactory condition of the Killarney settlement, it must not be forgotten that, for the first two years, its progress was comparatively slow, and that the crofters had to be assisted during the winter of 1888-89, and also with seed grain in the following spring.

It is perhaps a matter for regret that the settlers have acquired so much machinery on credit. They were warned against doing so, but the allurements of implement agents seem to have been difficult to withstand, and the scarcity of labour often makes it difficult to harvest the crops with rapidity, especially if reliance has to be placed on machinery not entirely under the control of the farmer.

The value of the land in the settlement, the buildings, stock, &c., is estimated at a low valuation, at about 16,000*l.*, against an indebtedness of about 5,000*l.*

#### *Salteoats Settlement.*

The following table refers to the Salteoats settlement for 1891 :—

	—	Aeres.	Estimated Average Yield (Bushels).	Estimated Total Crop (Bushels).
Wheat	- - -	271½	—	—
Oats	- - -	223½	—	—
Potatoes	- - -	19¼	—	3,592

The report so far as it concerns Salteoats is, as was to be expected, not quite so satisfactory as that relating to Killarney. There were 166½ acres more under wheat in 1891 than in 1890, 103 acres more of oats, and 3¼ acres more of potatoes. Manitoba and the North-West Territories, with a few exceptions, enjoyed a bountiful harvest last year, but unfortunately the Salteoats district was one of the exceptions, the entire crop of wheat being seriously damaged by frost in the last week in August. The crofters are, however, self-supporting, and have not required any assistance from the Board.

The oat crop in 1891, although slightly damaged by frost, is said to be a fair sample, and the root crops are stated to be good.

The acreage in cultivation is not so large as could be wished, and it will probably not increase with the rapidity shown at Killarney, until a good crop has been obtained. In 1889, owing to inexperience of the country and to the dry season, the crofters did not get much crop. In 1890 they had not so much ground under cultivation as could have been expected, but the crops were excellent in quantity and quality. The grain, however, was somewhat damaged at harvest time by heavy rains, and owing to its not having been properly stacked. This naturally caused some disappointment. The crofters, however, had enough grain to supply their wants during the winter, for seed grain in 1891, and to pay the store debts they had incurred.

The acreage prepared for 1892 is 692¼, an increase of 178 acres over the preceding year.

The younger members of the families have 90 acres ready for cultivation in 1892, which indicates that the settlement is following the same course of development as that at Killarney. Several of them have also erected houses for themselves; and, as at Killarney, the erection of additional buildings by the heads of the families, has added to the value of the holdings.

The hay crop was 711 tons, an increase of 143 tons compared with 1890.

It is satisfactory to notice that the live stock in the possession of the crofters has considerably increased in numbers. There has also been a desire on the part of the crofters to acquire additional cows, whenever they could arrange to do so, and it is gratifying to notice that they have purchased no fewer than 17 out of funds provided by themselves.

It will be observed that the young stock is as numerous at Saltecoats as at Killarney, although the settlement is a year younger.

The indebtedness of the crofters to implement makers is very small compared with that at Killarney.

The value of the land in the settlement (exclusive of the abandoned homesteads), the buildings, stock, &c., is already estimated at a low valuation, at about 1,500*l.* in excess of the money advanced.

Although the progress of the two settlements has not been equal, it must be remembered that Killarney occupies a very favourable position. There the new settlers are surrounded by experienced farmers, whose example has proved to be of great value, besides affording employment for the crofters in their spare time. The Saltecoats settlers have had few or none of these advantages. The condition of the settlement, however, is (upon the whole) satisfactory. It is sure to improve year by year, and if the coming season is favourable, it will have a stimulating effect, especially as the crofters are beginning to understand, better than they did, the soil and climate, and the best methods of farming.

The general remarks of the agent of the Board upon the settlement are interesting. He says in effect that although the crofters are disappointed with the results of the past year, they have learned to know and like the country, and are looking cheerfully forward to the coming season, and that they acknowledge they have never been so well off.

The land of the settlers who abandoned their holdings in 1889, is in the possession of the Board, and a portion of the stock and chattels have been granted to the younger members of the families as they entered for land. The houses, stock, and chattels not required will be sold, and the proceeds credited to the accounts of the crofters, the balances remaining a charge against the land.

The honorary sub-committee of the board in Winnipeg has been of much assistance to us, and we desire to place on record our appreciation of the valuable services it has rendered.

LOTHIAN.  
HORACE PLUNKETT.  
CHARLES TUPPER.  
JAMES KING.  
R. W. COCHRAN PATRICK.  
JOHN ROSS OF BLADENSBURG.  
JOHN MUIR.  
THOMAS SKINNER.

J. G. COLMER, Secretary.  
29th April 1892.

## APPENDIX A.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE AGENT OF THE BOARD.

#### KILLARNEY SETTLEMENT.

For 1890 I have shown the yield of grain. I regret I am unable to give the same information for 1891. The crops have not yet been threshed. I have shown machinery purchased by crofters, to give the Board an idea of the weighty obligations (\$8,779.56) incurred by them. I have taken every opportunity to point out to crofters how unnecessary it was to go so largely into machinery. I have tried to convince them that half the quantity would, if used in partnership, perform the work required. A number of them still contend that "each man wants his own" and "they were not hard to get." From my Saltcoats report the Board will notice that we have only one binder (\$225.00) in that Colony and it is nearly paid for. It will be my intention, should the Board send out any more crofters, to inform the different implement firms the conditions of the lien given by a crofter to the Board, so that they could instruct their sub-agents.

I have computed the yield of wheat and oats for 1891 at the low estimate of 20 bushels for the former and 45 for the latter. The grain already threshed by the Harris crofters yielded wheat 28, and oats 57 bushels per acre. As some of the Lewis crofters' crops are slightly damaged by frost I think it advisable to estimate the average well under what I feel sure the yield will be.

I do not consider it would be advisable for the heads of families to crop much more land than at present, except in a few instances. Pasturage is required for the stock, and if the settler encroaches upon what is necessary for that purpose, he will make a serious mistake. It is quite evident that it is not their present intention to go largely into stock. I have endeavoured to impress upon each crofter that he should keep as much stock as he can procure hay for, pointing out to them that in the event of a poor crop, the sale of a few head of stock would recompense them for any loss. They seem to think cattle are too much bother and that "wheat pays best."

The Lewis crofters' wheat crop (1,186 acres) is in most instances very fair grain. A few of them have suffered slightly from frost. Their crop estimated at 20 bushels to the acre means 23,720 bushels. The grain should sell at an average of 60 cents per bushel, amounting to \$14,232.00. The oat crop (441 acres) is only fair, estimated at 45 bushels would mean 6,345 bushels and if sold at 20 cents will realise \$1,269.00. Potato crop (7 acres) is a fair one, and amounted to 1,436 bushels. Last autumn it was difficult to find a market at 15 cents a bushel, if sold at that price will realise \$215.40.

The Harris crofters' wheat crop (921 acres) is very good. Gr. large and good colour. Estimated at 20 bushels to the acre, means 18,480 bushels. This grain before navigation closed could find a market at 80 cents, present price 70 cents per bushel, and if sold at 70 cents will realise \$12,936.00. The acreage of oats (41 acres) is very small. Grain very good. Estimated at 45 bushels to the acre means 1,845 bushels. The price realised last year for oats was only 25 cents a bushel, this may account for the small acreage of that grain under crop. If sold for that price this year will realise \$461.25. The potato crop is fair (44 acres) and amounted to 941 bushels. If sold at 15 cents will realise \$141.15.

The Board will see that the crofters had 2,110 acres of wheat in crop this year, against 1,319½ for 1890, an increase of 790½ acres; oats 182 acres against 64 acres, increase of 118 acres; potatoes 11½ acres against 10 acres, increase of 1½ acres. The number of acres under cultivation this year is 2,303½ against 1,423 acres for 1890, an increase of 880½ acres. Breaking for the same years 1,262 acres as against 859 acres, an increase of 403 acres. It is gratifying for me to be able to inform the Board that the Killarney and Glenboro's crofters will have under cultivation next year 3,555½ acres against 2,303½ acres last year, an increase of 1,252 acres, or an average of over 51 acres to each crofter. The number

of horses purchased by crofters for years 1890 and 1891 is for the former 1, and for the latter 28, an increase of 27. I have repeatedly pointed out to crofters it would be better for them to purchase another yoke of oxen instead of buying any expensive teams of horses, which meant raising oats for feed, shoeing, and many other incidental expenses at present unforeseen, the cost of a yoke of oxen being three-fourths less than a team of horses. Their argument is that the yokes supplied them in the first place are now useless; they have broken the required land, and a team of horses is now best, being faster, and can stand the work better than the yokes.

I believe that in the future the Board may confidently expect a greater return for the acreage under cultivation, as the crofters have not only learnt to farm and manage stock, but the land is in better condition.

#### SALTCOATS SETTLEMENT.

In my statement last year I estimated the probable yield of grain at much too high an average, it being rather over 15 bushels to the acre. The grain was damaged while being harvested by heavy rains. The loss would not have been so great had the crofters conformed to the usual method of stacking in this country. As it was, they placed their grain in too many stacks, and the rain penetrated. Notwithstanding all this, the crofters had sufficient yield to keep themselves and pay off store debts.

The Board will see I have not shown the yield of grain for the year 1891. I am unable to do so for the following two reasons. Firstly, no threshing is yet done, because the threshing machine hired for that purpose is destroyed by fire. Secondly, the wheat crop is badly frozen, and it is impossible to form any correct idea of the average.

The oat crop, although damaged by frost, is a fair sample, and will with few exceptions pay to thresh. The root crop is good.

I beg to call the Board's attention to the comparatively small amount of farm machinery purchased, \$900.77 against \$8,779.56 of the Killarney crofters.

The Board will see we had 271½ acres of wheat this year against 165½ last year, an increase of 106½ acres; oats, 223½ acres against 120½, an increase of 103½ acres; potatoes, 19½ against 15½, an increase of 3½ acres. The number of acres under cultivation, 514½ against 231½, an increase of 282½. Breaking, 178½ as against 182, a decrease of 3½ acres. The land ready for crop next year is 692½ acres against 514½, an increase of 178 acres. The increase of live stock is very good.

The small acreage ready for cultivation next year, 692 acres, can only be accounted for by the crofters refusing to break more land "until they get a crop"; they say they can earn more money working out, and that their families in their absence can look after stock, &c., they returning in time for harvest. It is regrettable we have no large farmers about here to set them an example, as is the case with the Killarney crofters.

The land is undeniably now in a much better condition for producing a wheat crop than formerly. I think the crofters may expect a crop of that grain next year, but that they will never reach the same ratio of yield as the Killarney crofters, it being generally understood that this part of the country is better adapted for stock raising than grain growing. Consequently the crofters here will go in more for stock than grain.

All the people are, of course, disappointed with the present year, but have learnt to know and like the country so well that they are already cheerfully looking forward to next season. Meantime, while they do not overlook the fact that although this year has not been so profitable as they expected, they acknowledge that they were never so well off. All are pleased with the education given their children, for which they do not have to pay in any way, and say that they were never so healthy as since they came to this country.











SALICONS CROFTERS.—continued.

Farm Number	Heads of Families.	Younger Members	Acres under Cultivation.										Total Acres under Cultivation, 1941.	Grand Total 1942	Live Stock on Farms.													Implement purchased from Machine Agents.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
			1906	1911	1916	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951			1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051	2056	2061	2066	2071	2076	2081	2086	2091	2096	2101	2106	2111	2116	2121	2126	2131	2136	2141	2146	2151	2156	2161	2166	2171	2176	2181	2186	2191	2196	2201	2206	2211	2216	2221	2226	2231	2236	2241	2246	2251	2256	2261	2266	2271	2276	2281	2286	2291	2296	2301	2306	2311	2316	2321	2326	2331	2336	2341	2346	2351	2356	2361	2366	2371	2376	2381	2386	2391	2396	2401	2406	2411	2416	2421	2426	2431	2436	2441	2446	2451	2456	2461	2466	2471	2476	2481	2486	2491	2496	2501	2506	2511	2516	2521	2526	2531	2536	2541	2546	2551	2556	2561	2566	2571	2576	2581	2586	2591	2596	2601	2606	2611	2616	2621	2626	2631	2636	2641	2646	2651	2656	2661	2666	2671	2676	2681	2686	2691	2696	2701	2706	2711	2716	2721	2726	2731	2736	2741	2746	2751	2756	2761	2766	2771	2776	2781	2786	2791	2796	2801	2806	2811	2816	2821	2826	2831	2836	2841	2846	2851	2856	2861	2866	2871	2876	2881	2886	2891	2896	2901	2906	2911	2916	2921	2926	2931	2936	2941	2946	2951	2956	2961	2966	2971	2976	2981	2986	2991	2996	3001	3006	3011	3016	3021	3026	3031	3036	3041	3046	3051	3056	3061	3066	3071	3076	3081	3086	3091	3096	3101	3106	3111	3116	3121	3126	3131	3136	3141	3146	3151	3156	3161	3166	3171	3176	3181	3186	3191	3196	3201	3206	3211	3216	3221	3226	3231	3236	3241	3246	3251	3256	3261	3266	3271	3276	3281	3286	3291	3296	3301	3306	3311	3316	3321	3326	3331	3336	3341	3346	3351	3356	3361	3366	3371	3376	3381	3386	3391	3396	3401	3406	3411	3416	3421	3426	3431	3436	3441	3446	3451	3456	3461	3466	3471	3476	3481	3486	3491	3496	3501	3506	3511	3516	3521	3526	3531	3536	3541	3546	3551	3556	3561	3566	3571	3576	3581	3586	3591	3596	3601	3606	3611	3616	3621	3626	3631	3636	3641	3646	3651	3656	3661	3666	3671	3676	3681	3686	3691	3696	3701	3706	3711	3716	3721	3726	3731	3736	3741	3746	3751	3756	3761	3766	3771	3776	3781	3786	3791	3796	3801	3806	3811	3816	3821	3826	3831	3836	3841	3846	3851	3856	3861	3866	3871	3876	3881	3886	3891	3896	3901	3906	3911	3916	3921	3926	3931	3936	3941	3946	3951	3956	3961	3966	3971	3976	3981	3986	3991	3996	4001	4006	4011	4016	4021	4026	4031	4036	4041	4046	4051	4056	4061	4066	4071	4076	4081	4086	4091	4096	4101	4106	4111	4116	4121	4126	4131	4136	4141	4146	4151	4156	4161	4166	4171	4176	4181	4186	4191	4196	4201	4206	4211	4216	4221	4226	4231	4236	4241	4246	4251	4256	4261	4266	4271	4276	4281	4286	4291	4296	4301	4306	4311	4316	4321	4326	4331	4336	4341	4346	4351	4356	4361	4366	4371	4376	4381	4386	4391	4396	4401	4406	4411	4416	4421	4426	4431	4436	4441	4446	4451	4456	4461	4466	4471	4476	4481	4486	4491	4496	4501	4506	4511	4516	4521	4526	4531	4536	4541	4546	4551	4556	4561	4566	4571	4576	4581	4586	4591	4596	4601	4606	4611	4616	4621	4626	4631	4636	4641	4646	4651	4656	4661	4666	4671	4676	4681	4686	4691	4696	4701	4706	4711	4716	4721	4726	4731	4736	4741	4746	4751	4756	4761	4766	4771	4776	4781	4786	4791	4796	4801	4806	4811	4816	4821	4826	4831	4836	4841	4846	4851	4856	4861	4866	4871	4876	4881	4886	4891	4896	4901	4906	4911	4916	4921	4926	4931	4936	4941	4946	4951	4956	4961	4966	4971	4976	4981	4986	4991	4996	5001	5006	5011	5016	5021	5026	5031	5036	5041	5046	5051	5056	5061	5066	5071	5076	5081	5086	5091	5096	5101	5106	5111	5116	5121	5126	5131	5136	5141	5146	5151	5156	5161	5166	5171	5176	5181	5186	5191	5196	5201	5206	5211	5216	5221	5226	5231	5236	5241	5246	5251	5256	5261	5266	5271	5276	5281	5286	5291	5296	5301	5306	5311	5316	5321	5326	5331	5336	5341	5346	5351	5356	5361	5366	5371	5376	5381	5386	5391	5396	5401	5406	5411	5416	5421	5426	5431	5436	5441	5446	5451	5456	5461	5466	5471	5476	5481	5486	5491	5496	5501	5506	5511	5516	5521	5526	5531	5536	5541	5546	5551	5556	5561	5566	5571	5576	5581	5586	5591	5596	5601	5606	5611	5616	5621	5626	5631	5636	5641	5646	5651	5656	5661	5666	5671	5676	5681	5686	5691	5696	5701	5706	5711	5716	5721	5726	5731	5736	5741	5746	5751	5756	5761	5766	5771	5776	5781	5786	5791	5796	5801	5806	5811	5816	5821	5826	5831	5836	5841	5846	5851	5856	5861	5866	5871	5876	5881	5886	5891	5896	5901	5906	5911	5916	5921	5926	5931	5936	5941	5946	5951	5956	5961	5966	5971	5976	5981	5986	5991	5996	6001	6006	6011	6016	6021	6026	6031	6036	6041	6046	6051	6056	6061	6066	6071	6076	6081	6086	6091	6096	6101	6106	6111	6116	6121	6126	6131	6136	6141	6146	6151	6156	6161	6166	6171	6176	6181	6186	6191	6196	6201	6206	6211	6216	6221	6226	6231	6236	6241	6246	6251	6256	6261	6266	6271	6276	6281	6286	6291	6296	6301	6306	6311	6316	6321	6326	6331	6336	6341	6346	6351	6356	6361	6366	6371	6376	6381	6386	6391	6396	6401	6406	6411	6416	6421	6426	6431	6436	6441	6446	6451	6456	6461	6466	6471	6476	6481	6486	6491	6496	6501	6506	6511	6516	6521	6526	6531	6536	6541	6546	6551	6556	6561	6566	6571	6576	6581	6586	6591	6596	6601	6606	6611	6616	6621	6626	6631	6636	6641	6646	6651	6656	6661	6666	6671	6676	6681	6686	6691	6696	6701	6706	6711	6716	6721	6726	6731	6736	6741	6746	6751	6756	6761	6766	6771	6776	6781	6786	6791	6796	6801	6806	6811	6816	6821	6826	6831	6836	6841	6846	6851	6856	6861	6866	6871	6876	6881	6886	6891	6896	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