

Llyodminster
Brittannia Colony
Battleford
NWT
Canada

July 22nd

Having heard so much of all the exaggerated reports in praise of and in condemnation of this new colony and everything connected with it I have decided to devote some of the few spare moments of my time to writing my actual personal experiences as one of the new colonist settlers hoping that a true unvarnished account of the state of affairs may perhaps, if made public, counteract a great deal of the unnecessary harm which such reports must reflect on the Colony.

To start from the commencement I left England April 8 by the Lake Simcoe as I was unable to settle up my affairs in time to join the Barr party on the Manitoba which afterwards proved more of an advantage than a disadvantage. As far as qualifications are concerned for my starting farming in Canada I may say I have farmed in the old country all my life the estate I rented in Devonshire having been farmed by my forefathers for over 200 years. I was paying rent at the rate of over 10 dollars per acre in addition to rates, tithes and taxes and wages. A crisis having come and failing to get my landlord to do anything either in reduction of rent or repairs of any kind to dwelling house or out buildings all of which were rapidly falling into ruins I determined to throw up the life of slavery for others and strike for independence in Canada for good or ill.

Having acquired from headquarters all necessary information respecting the free grant lands in N.W.T. I applied for a homestead for myself and another one for one of my men who had decided to throw in his lot with mine in spite of the disapproval of many and dismal prophecies of failure, I, with my wife and children aged 2 and 4 left the old country, not without many a heartache for all near and dear to us that we were leaving behind yet with a strong determination to face all difficulties and succeed in the end.

Our voyage from Liverpool to St. John's was a record one and we landed in St. John's April 13 having sailed from Liverpool April 8 and from this time onward our trial of endurance commenced. We were just hustled off the Lake Simcoe like so many cattle late in the day in terrible weather, snow and sleet: hungry and miserable, no proper meal having been provided on board since early in the day.

Owing to the Manitoba being still in dock we had to land a long distance away and managed to be in the very thick of the fire which is no ancient history but was alarming indeed to those who happened to be as near it as ourselves, next door in fact. Thank God I got my wife and children also baggage in safety. We then had to wait till past midnight to get our baggage from the Lake Simcoe, viz. From Wed. till Thursday midnight just huddled together in the train almost starved with cold and hunger.

Over the next portion of our journey I would like to draw a veil. It seems all the sleeping colonist cars had been requisitioned by the Manitoba Party, consequently the accommodation provided for us by the C.P.R. was of the most miserable description both as

regards comfort and cleanliness, such as no English Railway would tolerate for cattle. My wife, who is a shareholder in C.P.R. exclaimed, "It this the wonderful C.P.R. that we hear so much of with all its wonderful accommodation for comfortable traveling!" After enduring indesirable misery in the train from April 15 to April 22 we reached Saskatoon remaining there till April 29th.

Here was the huge Barr encampment, but of the arrangements there I know little or nothing as I made my own independent arrangements for my wife and children, but I much doubt if those in camp suffered much more than we did, for accommodation and food were alike miserable and even filthy. My first business at Saskatoon was to purchase wagon and a pair of horse and harness which cost me 508 dollars, a stiff outlay but a necessitous one, also camp stove, plough, harrows, and a good supply of nails and tools. I had to waste a week here "waiting for baggage" thanks to the total lack of organization on the part of C.P.R. causing us great unnecessary expense which we could ill afford.

However, we managed at last, having duly packed up our traps to set out April 29th en route for Battleford having duly provisioned ourselves for the journey, which was fortunate for there was nothing to be got on the road as represented or rather misrepresented, thus causing much misery and privation to many of the poorer class who had in great measure counted on availing themselves of this promised boon. My experience of horses and driving in the old country stood me in good stead and in spite of all difficulties inclement weather, rough country, we reached Battleford safe and sound without one mishap in 4 1/2 days which was considered very good as I had a heavy load.

We remained at Battleford from Sunday May 2nd till Tuesday, May 4th when we once more resumed our journey to the "Promise Land." This part of the journey was the most trying of all, the road terribly rough and the weather bitter. Had it not been for the government tents many must have died from cold and hunger. My wife and little girl now began to feel the effects of exposure to the bitter cold, and by the time we reached the Settlement both collapsed, thoroughly ill, in fact we were all worn out and weary with the long journey and want of rest.

My first enquiry was for a doctor who quickly came to our assistance and whose kindness and attention I cannot speak too highly of and little dreamt how frequently we were destined to call his professional experience to our aid within the next few weeks. With care my wife and little one soon recovered, when my man sickened with threatened pneumonia, and again Mr. Amos thanks to prompt attention saved him from serious illness. We remained in camp from May 10 to 15, prairie fires raging around us on all sides causing terrible damage and giving rise to serious anxiety at one time for the safety of the whole camp, necessitating summoning out all the men, horses and ploughs that happened to be available.

I lost no time in starting to view the homestead allotted to me by Mr. Barr in Township 50, Sec. 23.24 Range 1, but quickly decided it was no good for agricultural purposes, and after due application Mr. Barr escorted me himself the next day to Township 49, Sec. 36, Range 1, which land I was greatly pleased with and decided at once upon it for my location, and on May 15th, after many weeks of great anxiety, weary traveling and the facing of many and great difficulties we pitched our tents at last on our own domain with a blessed feeling of

thankfulness that journeying was over and the longed for goal reached at last.

I started the very next day to plough, and in less than a week had ploughed and tilled three acres of oats and the week after 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres barley and $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of potatoes. At the time of writing this, July 22nd, I have $\frac{1}{4}$ acre Swedes also mangos and vegetables of all kinds in my garden all of which are looking splendid considering late sowing in consequence of the severest and latest spring known in the colony for 20 years. I am much pleased with my land which is good soil mostly cleared for plough with sufficient wood and brush for useful purposes.

My wife and I view daily from our tent door the rapid completion of our bungalow which is to be our future home. This has been a heavy expenditure owing to the lack of lumber having to fetch all from Fort Pitt or Onion Lake 30 miles distant. The supply is totally inadequate to the demand, which seems the great drawback in respect to all supplies and a great hindrance to the settlers generally who have so much to do in the short time and this is a matter, which greatly need the attention of the authorities.

The stores are terribly deficient of all necessaries and unless arrangements are made to improve this department and greater facilities for obtaining tools, implements and general necessaries the colonists will be heavily and seriously handicapped and the success of the colony seriously affected. This is the cry of the majority of the colonists and the difficulties above mentioned are doing much to discourage those anxious and willing to work, to say nothing of those who belong to the noble army of grumblers and only too ready to look on the

black side of everything. The many who "turned back" and spread such alarming and distressing reports of the colony were mostly those who placed too much confidence and the rosy accounts of everything they read in print and relied too much on the promises made as to provisions and transport on their journey up to the settlement. That there was real ground for complaint in respect to the latter there is no doubt whatever.

On the other hand many never brought their common sense into use at all, else they would have realized that as pioneers in a few colony they must have the many serious difficulties and drawbacks to encounter and that all the courage and determination one is possessed of must needlessly be brought into play to surmount the inevitable drawbacks we are bound to face before we can hope to "stem the tide." I cannot speak too highly in praise of the valuable and kindly assistance of the Government Officials who have spared no trouble or pains to smooth away all difficulties as far as they were able. We cannot live without supplies, we cannot work without tools, neither one nor the other are forthcoming as they ought to be. When complaints are made we are told, "Oh, it will be all right when we get the railway through the colony". I quite believe it, but what are we going to do meanwhile for the workers on the Railway cannot get on with their work for the very same reasons, they cannot procure the necessary tools.

Delay everywhere. Real workers eager to get on with the success of the Colony at heart will, I am sure, join with men in a very earnest plea that those in authority who have the power to do so will come to our aid, remedy the above mentioned deficiencies and thus save much needless distress and anxiety to those who

have given up homes, country and friends in the old country to devote their future to the success of the New Colony.

Signed W.Rendell

Township 49, Section 36, Range 1

Lloydminster, Britannia, Sask., N.W.T.