



Barr colony settlers' destination

There was a "tide of immigration" from Lanark County to Manitoba.

Settlers passed through

by Harry Hinchley
for The Mercury

It was around 10 pm on an April night in 1903 that the first of four special CPR trains pulled through Renfrew with loads of passengers headed for the far-away west. These trains were carrying the settlers who were to form the Barr Colony,

about 150 miles west of Saskatoon where now stands the City of Lloydminster, in the oil fields of Alberta.

The settlers had been recruited around London, England, by Rev I M Barr, a clergyman of the Church of England who persuaded about 2,000 of the more adventurous to

join with him in establishing a colony in the North West Territories of Canada.

But before his dream could come true Barr was replaced as leader by another Anglican clergyman, Rev G E Lloyd after whom Lloydminster is named and who later was to become Bishop of Saskatchewan.

The settlers were mostly from the better classes, some single and others with wives and families. Some had means and a few were even wealthy. They had for the most part been brought up in cities and had little knowledge of what life might be like on a prairie farm.

One young bride called for

help when she could not get the fire to burn in the oven of her stove. Another complained bitterly about her old hen that kept walking away with her chickens running after her instead of standing still so that they could catch up to her and suck.

The settlers had to travel 130 miles beyond the railway to get to their new homes. Some did not make it but took jobs with Canadian farmers or found their way to the cities. but of those who stayed on and toughed it out many became some of Canada's finest people — adaptable, industrious and smart.

Lloydminster was built on the 110th Meridian which forms the boundary between Alberta and Saskatchewan. One of the principal streets is known as Meridien Road. The Post Office was in Saskatchewan but the railway station was in Alberta, as was the New Alberta Hotel shown in the photo.

At one time Saskatchewan had prohibition but Alberta did not go dry. Then the Alberta Hotel did a rushing business with the thirsty from over the meridian who would sometimes when they returned find the Saskatchewan police waiting.