

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Robert Lowe Sherbrooke**

**- poems -**

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## Song of the Squatter

The Commissioner bet me a pony—I won,  
So he cut off exactly two-thirds of my run;  
For he said I was making a fortune too fast,  
And profit gained slower the longer would last.

He remarked, as devouring my mutton he sat,  
That I suffered my sheep to grow sadly too fat;  
That they wasted waste land, did prerogative brown,  
And rebelliously nibbled the droits of the Crown;

That the creek that divided my station in two  
Showed that Nature designed that two fees should be due.  
Mr. Riddle assured me't was paid but for show,  
But he kept it and spent it, that 's all that I know.

The commissioner fined me because I forgot  
To return an old ewe that was ill of the rot,  
And a poor wry-necked lamb that we kept for a pet;  
And he said it was treason such things to forget.

The commissioner pounded my cattle because  
They had mumbled the scrub with their famishing jaws  
On the part of the run he had taken away,  
And he sold them by auction the costs to defray.

The border police they were out all the day  
To look for some thieves who had ransacked my dray;  
But the thieves they continued in quiet and peace,  
For they 'd robbed it themselves, had the border police!

When the white thieves had left me the black thieves appeared,  
My shepherds they waddied, my cattle they speared;  
But from fear of my license I said not a word,  
For I knew it was gone if the Government heard.

The commissioner's bosom with anger was filled  
Against me because my poor shepherd was killed;  
So he straight took away the last third of my run,  
And got it transferred to the name of his son.

The son had from Cambridge been lately expelled,  
And his license for preaching most justly withheld!  
But this is no cause, the commissioner says,  
Why he should not be fit for my license to graze.

The cattle, that had not been sold at the pound,  
He took with the run at five shillings all round,  
And the sheep the blacks left me at sixpence a head,—  
A very good price, the commissioner said.

The Governor told me I justly was served,  
That commissioners never from duty had swerved;

But that if I'd a fancy for any more land  
For one pound an acre he 'd plenty on hand.

I 'm not very proud! I can dig in a bog,  
Feed pigs, or for firewood can split up a log,  
Clean shoes, riddle cinders, or help to boil down—  
Anything that you please, but graze lands of the Crown!

Robert Lowe Sherbrooke