

from Judge Pringle. Reference has been made in previous reports to the security the deposit of originals or of copies would afford for the preservation of papers whose loss would be irreparable, and an instance may be cited to show that the risk of loss of most important documents is not an imaginary danger, and that it is not fire alone that is to be dreaded. During the summer, instructions were given to have copies made of the registers of the "Actes de Foy et Hommage" deposited at Québec. These registers contain the authentic evidence of the grants of seigniories and noble fiefs, from almost the earliest date of the French settlement, and although by great labour lists might be compiled from various publications,—from official returns to the Legislature, from the documents published by the Seigniorial Tenure Commission, &c., yet even the best that could be done in this way would be incomplete.

When the first-copies were received, I found that they began with the Registers of 1723. In answer to inquiries, I was informed that these were the earliest to be found, but aware that there had existed registers dating from about 1660 for the Royal Grants, besides the earlier grants to be found in the *Registres des Intendants*, I gave instructions to have a further search made, and after a lengthened correspondence, requested Mr. E. E. Taché, Deputy Minister of Crown Lands, to give Mr. Bédard, who had been employed in the work, full powers to search until the missing registers could be discovered. The search, I am happy to say, was successful for the grants from 1667 to 1674. The registers had, many years ago, been removed from the custody of the Department responsible for their safe keeping, and added to those relating to the Jesuits' Estates, where they were lost sight of. They were in the most dilapidated condition, covered with dust, mildewed, and so fragile that they could scarcely be handled without crumbling into dust. After consultation with Mr. Taché, with Mr. S. E. Dawson of Montreal, who happened to be in Québec, and with Mr. T. Lemieux, binder, means were taken to have them restored. Instructions have been given to continue the searches for the registers still wanting.

M. Lemieux has sent a report (of which I give a translation) of the state of the documents, the process of restoration and their present condition. As it may be useful to those possessed of old documents, in a decayed state, the report is published in full.

REPORT BY MR. LEMIEUX ON OLD REGISTERS.

DESCRIPTION.

The "Actes de Foy et Hommage" were placed in my hands in a state of the most complete decay. To understand properly the difficulties of restoring such documents, a detail of the condition of these 114 sheets, or rather rags, becomes necessary.

CONDITION.

The whole presented the appearance of papers which had moulded after remaining for some time in the water, gnawed, ragged, thick fragments blended and packed together, constituting a compact mass. A part of the sheets was so decomposed that