

46 THE IRON MINES OF THE ST. MAURICE TERRITORY.

of New France. It was necessary to find an equivalent for the advances made to the new settlement for its maintenance. It seemed also desirable to carry out, by proof, the views which he had enunciated before the French Government, regarding the wealth of the Colony. He was particularly anxious about iron mines, which, it appeared from the information he had received, were very abundant, and on his return trip to France he disembarked at Gaspé where he expected to find silver, but the information which he had received proved to be erroneous; he was more successful in the discovery of iron. In August, 1666, he sent *Sieur de la Tesserie* to Bay St. Paul, where he discovered an iron mine which appeared to be rich. In the journal of his trip he states that the earth was still broken and overturned by the earthquake of 1663. On *Mr. Talon's* return to France in 1668, he succeeded in obtaining the sanction of *Mr. Colbert* to new mining explorations, and *Sieur de la Potardière* was sent to Canada for that purpose. On his arrival at Quebec, he was shewn specimens from two iron mines; these had been brought from Champlain and Cap de la Madelaine by order of *Seigneur de Courcelles*: one sample was mixed with sand, the other was massive. *La Potardière* visited the mines near *Trois Rivières*, and on his return to Quebec reported that they offered nothing advantageous either as to quality or quantity."

From the date of *La Potardière's* unfavorable report of the iron mines near *Trois Rivières*, but little was attempted of a practical nature until the year 1737, when a company, duly organized by Imperial authority under the great seal of France, obtained a grant of forest land and water power on the site of the *St. Maurice Forges*, and commenced the rough manufacture of iron by the erection of a furnace, smelting house, and a few dwelling houses for the operatives. The workmen were drawn principally from the French soldiery in the garrison at the Fort of *Trois Rivières*, and were but poorly remunerated for their services. The operations of this company were confined to the furnishing of common rough-cast stoves and kettles to the inhabitants and garrison of the above named *Bourg*, and occasionally barter with the Indians for venison or furs. Some few years later *Cugnet and Cie*, the lessees, were compelled, from want of means, to return their charter to the "*Gouvernement de Trois Rivières*," and the establishment was taken possession of in the name of the King of France. An attempt was then made to carry on the works in the name and for account of the Imperial Government; this was done with some success, and we find among the manuscripts, which have been handed down to us, the following interesting