

EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF SURVEYS.

"The accompanying map, on a scale of twenty-five miles to the inch has been prepared to illustrate the season's surveys and as a reference, in connection with the descriptive extracts from surveyors reports appended hereto. The latter are not quite complete, as at the present time the returns of several of the surveys have not yet been received; as soon as they come in similar extracts from them will be made and submitted to supply the omissions in the present list.

"I would respectfully beg permission to make some suggestions relating to the future prosecution of the surveys, particularly those of the block outlines, and in connection with the following questions. The gentlemen in charge of these have, almost without exception, represented to me the difficulty of carrying out these surveys under contracts at previously stipulated prices per mile, and plead that the method of paying for the surveys most likely to be fair, alike to the Government and to the surveyor employed, is that of daily pay and allowances for actual disbursements.

"They reason as follows:—The contract system suited well the conditions of character of country and facilities for transport that existed at the outset of most of the block surveys, and in anticipation of which conditions the prices allowed were fixed; but the country to be surveyed proved not to be nearly as uniform in character as was expected. Much less of it than had been estimated was found to be open prairie. Obstacles to progress, in the shape of extensive marshes, thick woods, windfalls, &c., occurred, presenting varying degrees of difficulty and delay, to arrange prices corresponding to the different shades of which would be impracticable. Some surveyors who were fortunate enough to fall in good country realized fair remuneration from their contracts, but the majority would not, unless some consideration beyond the terms of their contract were allowed for special difficulties encountered. This might at first sight seem simple to remedy, by allowing higher rates per mile for lines run in certain kinds of country; but the difficulty of so doing justly by both parties to the contract, lay in the impossibility of estimating beforehand for an unknown tract of country to what extent obstacles to survey existed, and precisely what increase of cost they entailed. Only by fixing a rate per mile so high as to be more than work of average difficulty would be worth, could it be ensured to the surveyor that he would in all cases make his fair daily pay. An average price, though fair to the surveyors as a body, might prove exceedingly unjust to the individual. And the cases of the block and the subdivision surveyors were widely different. The former, besides being the pioneer of the latter, extend over distances in some cases reaching a hundred miles and more, with consequent vicissitudes in the survey of the line and transport of supplies that the varying character of the country traversed would produce. For example, one surveyor in the course of his season's work had to cut thirty miles of road through the woods to enable his carts to follow him with his supplies. Another, not very remote from him, worked all summer on open plain where his horses hardly ever required to deviate from the line he was running. Where, in the matter of transport, delay had cost the first surveyor weeks of his whole party's pay and food, they had not cost the second an hour. The contract price to each of these was not the same, but it was difficult, until the work was done and actual cost known, to assign a difference in price per mile run that would exactly meet the circumstances.

"Their case thus set forth by the block outline surveyors is fairly stated. I would add thereto, in favor of their being remunerated by daily pay and allowances, that under the contract system, adverse circumstances, such as bad weather, difficult country, &c., act as a pressure on the surveyor to slight his work in his endeavour to make up by hurrying through it, for time lost. It sometimes occurs at governing points, where, by the rules laid down to him, the surveyor should, before proceeding farther, check his positions by astronomical observation, that he is kept, with his whole party idle, waiting days for the requisite clear weather. He is here, by the dead loss of his disbursements for pay and expenses of a large and costly party, and of his own time, tempted to disregard