

looked upon their freight with feelings more akin to wonder than fear. Some of these devoted fathers were lost, some were massacred by the ignorant Red Skins, but some returned to the French trading posts on the St. Lawrence, and even to France, to tell a tale of trouble, disaster and misery, of which they had been the victims among the tribes which they had visited ; but at the same time, to inform French traders and miners that fortunes were at their disposal if they emigrated to the shores of the mighty St. Lawrence. For a series of years, owing to the tardy means of communication then at the disposal of the French Colonists, but little was really effected in the direction of progressive development. The difficulties which the pioneers of settlement had to encounter in treating with the Indian tribes proved to be almost an insurmountable obstacle in the opening up of the country. As an instance of these difficulties, it is recorded of the Indian tribes that a strange superstition prevails among their race that it is unlucky to impart the secret of the existence of a mine, and that speedy death will overtake the imprudent party who makes the disclosure. They have thus in many cases religiously withheld all information on the subject, although it is confidently surmised that even at the present day, the existence of many valuable mines is known to the Indians, but that they fear to divulge the secret. While the Iroquois attacked the posts established on the main St. Lawrence with unforgiving violence, all the means at the disposal of those who occupied them were urgently required to expel these attacks, and it is wonderful that under such discouraging circumstances, the representatives of France, even aided by the tenacity and perseverance of the Jesuit Fathers, contrived to preserve these central points as dependencies of the French Government. It will be easily surmised that the exploration of the interior of the country must have offered still greater difficulties. The first discovery of iron ore in La Nouvelle France may be clearly traced to the year 1667. Colbert, who was at that time Prime Minister under the French King, had strongly urged upon the Governors and Intendants who were sent out to govern La Nouvelle France, the advisability of seeking productive mines, the existence of which could be held out to the rising generation of France as an inducement to emigrate to the new colony. We read in "Charlevoix History of La Nouvelle France" the following details of a first attempt to carry out this policy :—

"In 1667 Mr. Talon, under the direction of Colbert, Minister of State, sought to discover some new means of increasing the prosperity