
REPORT.

CULLING AND MEASURING WOOD.

To the Honorable the House of Commons :

Your Committee appointed to enquire into the state of the Quebec Office for Culling and Measuring Wood, begs leave to submit the following Report :—

It was considered advisable by your Committee to obtain on the one hand, the statements and views of persons connected with the office, and on the other the experience of the dealers in timber.

With this object, Mr. Quinn, the Supervisor, and two of the cullers, selected as representatives of that class by such of them as could be consulted at the moment, as well as several lumber merchants, whose transactions with the office seemed to give them the best means of judging of its working, were summoned to give evidence before your Committee:

All the witnesses agreed, that among the cullers there is a class incapable of discharging efficiently the duties of their position, on account of infirmities, and from other natural causes, and a second class very properly distrusted for various other reasons, by traders in timber.

Your Committee is of opinion that the requirements of the trade would be consulted by freeing the staff of cullers from both of these classes, and by thus diminishing the number from seventy-six to about sixty.

At present, there are three branches of the Culling Department, the square timber, mast and spar branch, the deal branch, and the stave branch, with forty-six, twenty and ten cullers attached to them respectively.

The men employed in the deal and stave branches appear to be fully occupied in the measuring season, but it is quite evident that the work now performed by the forty-six in the square timber branch could be done by twenty.

From the evidence, it seems that the collective number of persons attached to the office, both inside and outside, might be much reduced, were the cullers competent to measure and cull wood of all kinds which now reach Quebec, to make out specifications, and to read, write, and perform arithmetical calculations.

The Supervisor thinks that, by insisting on such qualifications, the number of cullers might be brought down to forty, while keeping in view the fact that the work is not equally distributed over the culling season.

The amount paid into the revenue fund since 1857 by the office, exceeds the expenditure on account of it by \$20,000. This amount, by being invested with a per-centage of the future earnings of the cullers, might form a superannuation fund, should it be determined to immediately grant an annual allowance to the men who are now old and infirm, and to act in like manner to those who might become so from time to time.

It is believed by your Committee that, although great abuses have taken place under the rotation system, such evils will be removed when the negligent and incapable are off the list.

The advantages arising from the continuation of the rotation system, and the consequent knowledge by one party to a transaction in timber that the other party to it has had no power in selecting the person who determines the quantity supposed to be in his lot, will more than counterbalance the disadvantages.