

with the method of constructing roads, or with the carrying on of public works of any kind. Those who tendered lowest were frequently found to be of this last class, and the Department being as a rule unacquainted with the parties tendering, or their competency to do the work, were bound to accept the lowest tender, and were, in the majority of cases, saddled with an inexperienced and often incompetent contractor. The result was badly made roads and inefficient and unsatisfactory work generally. It was found impracticable to get compensation from bidders; and even if the attempt should be successful, it would not give the settlers what they wanted, viz., good and well-built roads. Again, it was impossible to give the exact location of a road at the time of letting the contract, as variations, in nearly every case, have to be made when men go upon the ground and begin actual work. Where this occurred, the contractor made it an excuse to claim damages on account of the change in what he alleged was to have been the original location of the road, in respect to which he had framed his tender. In fact, it became evident, after often-repeated trials, that for these and other reasons it was impossible to construct or repair Colonization roads under the contract system in an at all satisfactory manner; that money was annually lost in the attempt; and that the work done was not performed so well or so economically as would have been the case had it been under the supervision of competent overseers. After thoroughly testing the matter, the Government, although reluctant to abandon the contract system, came to the conclusion that the true policy in the construction and repair of Colonization roads was to place good overseers in charge, who were required to make proper returns and produce proper vouchers for all expenditure, and to keep complete and careful control over them by means of experienced inspectors, whose duty it was to report to the Department from time to time upon the progress and performance of the work.

SALE OF TIMBER LIMITS.

A very successful sale of timber limits in the Districts of Muskoka and Parry Sound, adjacent for the most part to the waters of French River and Lake Nipissing, was held by the Department on 6th December, 1881. It was found that in the interest of the public revenue, as well as of the settlers who had taken up lands in some unlicensed townships in the section named, it was necessary to deal with the pine within the territory before it became jeopardized by the clearing of the land and the fires raised in process thereof. In this way timber of the finest quality is often cut down and applied to uses for which inferior lumber would be suitable, the result being a depreciation of the value of the timber limits before they are brought into market, and a consequent loss to the revenue, without being of any advantage to the settler.