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3<sup>e</sup> Travaux Publics pour l'année finissant le  
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## REPORT OF Mr. J. A. CHICOINE

### ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRANCO-CANADIAN COMPANY IN METGERMETTE.

*To the Honorable P. GARNEAU, Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works.*

SIR,—I have the honor to submit the report of a visit which you instructed me to make, by your letter dated 20th november last, to the establishment of the Franco Canadian Company, in the township of Metgermette.

This company, of which M. Vannier is manager, has for one of its objects, the colonization of certain township in Beauce and in Dorchester, by french immigrants. It began its operations in November 1873, on the borders of lake Abenaki. It had to open up from the first a road through the forest, to the spot selected for the site of its first village, and it made use for such purpose, of an old sugar bush road, opening up also a new road over a mile in length. The first work which followed was the construction of a bridge on the Abenaki river; this bridge, about 60 feet long, is 16 feet wide in its narrowest parts, and rests on two abutments in cedar wood squared and dove-tailed in; the paving is made of squared spruce timber. Immediately below this bridge is a saw-mill, a building three stories high, 60 feet long and 40 wide, solidly constructed out of timbers a foot square. The furnishings are complete; two sets of gang saws, of 12 saws each, are put in motion by a large water wheel; the other saws, and the rest of the machinery, are worked by a turbine wheel, 65 horse power.

This mill is situated at the mouth of lake Abenaki, the waters of which supply the necessary power. At the discharge of the lake, a dam has been constructed, which raises the water four feet and has much increased, the water power; consequently turning the whole lake into an immense reservoir, from which the necessary water is taken as needed.

The discharge of the lake forms what is called the Abenaki river, which at the end of 12 miles, falls into the Famine river; this in its turn, falls into the Chaudière river; it is through these various streams that the company intends floating down its timber and lumber as far as Quebec, to be there shipped to France.

Besides the mill, the company has constructed various buildings, numbering 14 in all, some being used as shanties for the labourers, others as carpenters and black smith's shops, stores, &c. One of these constructions is used as a stable, containing 14 large stalls, to which a granary is attached. The largest of these buildings measure 32 feet by 30, and the smallest 16 by 20 feet. There are seven houses built. One, near an oven, is used as a bakery; the others are occupied by families. Two of these houses measure 16 feet by 20, and the others 20 feet by 24; five more houses are being built, besides an ice house 26 feet by 18.

Four french families, numbering 9 persons in all, are residing there as settlers since last spring. The number of persons employed actually by the company is 77, out of which 73 are canadians and strangers to the colony.





The forest trees in the township of Metgermette appeared to me very fine and of varied kinds. White spruce and birch prevail ; in certain spots there are beautiful cedar groves of excellent sound wood. Above the head of Abenagui lake there are a certain number of fine pines, ash and tamarack ; that part bordering on the United-States ; frontier contains beautiful maple sugaries, in which over 60 persons are employed every spring sugar making.

This spot has appeared to me quite suited to colonization. Besides the main Abenagui lake, there are three other lakes called : small Abenagui, St. John, and Little St. John. The two latter fall into the St. John's river, which here forms the boundary line. These sheets of water are bordered by heights of land well suited for agricultural purposes. These lands, which can be easily drained, cannot fail to offer great inducements to settlers. The main Abenagui lake, of a pleasant oval form, is 32 acres in length and 17 in width ; its average depth is 15 feet. It is on the left bank that the proposed village is marked ; it will be admirably situated.

Five streets come down to the lake ; the centre one, on which the church will be constructed, as well as the school, and work shops, will be 100 feet wide. Already, about 6 arpents in length have been opened up in this line, and of the above mentioned width. The other streets will be 60 feet wide. One of them, which borders on the lake, is already opened for a length of 18 acres. According to the plan proposed, a house is to be constructed at every acre, to which a garden of two superficial acres is to be attached.

100 acres of land have already been cleared around the mill and the other buildings ; out of this superficies, about 19 acres still want cleaning up, leaving 81 acres ready to sow down next spring ; besides which there are 56 acres *brushed off*. Moreover, the superficies of the land, cleared for the streets of the future village, forms about 11 acres.

Seven acres of land were sowed last spring, but too late, as a rule, to secure a paying crop. What was sown in good time gave good results. Out of these seven acres, two were sown with garden produce.

Around the building used as an office, the soil has been cleaned, pulverized and under-drained with stones, which has dried the spot, made it healthy, and will allow it to be sown quite early next spring. So far the company has worked under circumstances more or less disadvantageous, from want of proper communications. A distance of about 14 miles had to be crossed through the forest, by means of the small bush road which I have mentioned above, from the concession of St. Nicholas, to lake Abenagui. It was through this road that all the tools had to be carried up, as well as the provisions and the machinery for the mill, one of which, the turbine, weighed no less than 3600 lbs. These disadvantages will disappear now that the company is opening up a road from lake Abenagui to the Watford road ; this by-road is  $8\frac{3}{4}$  miles long. The trees have been pulled up a breadth of 22 feet, besides which an opening has been cut down ten feet on each side, giving to the road a width of 42 feet ; to complete it, a few stones and roots have still to be removed, and ditches to be made. The bridge which is to cross the Abenagui river, about the centre of this road, is already contracted for, and is to be constructed on the model of that built near the mill.

The distance from Quebec to Mr. Vannier's colony is 80 miles ; the road leading to it is every where fit for wheeled vehicles, with the exception only of the newly opened part above described, which requires levelling and draining.



The completion of the Levis and Kennebec Railway promises very soon to reduce considerably this distance, since it is to pass in the vicinity of the establishment. In a few days it will be opened as far as Ste. Marie, which will be of an immense advantage to the colony.

In concluding, I must say that, seeing what has been done, and the serious manner in which the enterprize is conducted, we may expect much from the future of this colony.

The whole respectfully submitted,

J. A. CHICOINE,

Colonization Agent.

St. Hyacinthe, 4 December 1874.

