

1686. as remote as many supposed, the Marquis de Dénouville proposed to the minister, by his letter of May 8, 1686, to erect a stone fort at Niagara capable of holding four or five hundred men. He represented to him that this post thus guarded would absolutely close the passage of the English to the lakes, and put us in a condition to prevent the Iroquois from bringing them their furs, more especially as by means of Fort Catarocouy, where barks could be kept sheltered from the winds all the winter, it would be easy to navigate Lake Ontario freely, we commanding both extremities; and these Indians, whose territory extends along this lake, would no longer have any outlet for hunting-parties except such as we chose to give them; that then, as there is almost no hunting in their territories, where there are scarcely any wild animals, and not a single beaver, they would be at our discretion in regard to trade. This would entail a loss of four hundred thousand francs a year to the English, by which we would profit.¹

Project of a
fort at
Niagara.

Moreover, he added, if we wished our allies to be able to aid us when we shall be at war with the Iroquois, it is of absolute necessity to have a post where they can assemble and take refuge in case of reverse or bad weather. In fine, it did not seem to him doubtful that such a fortress, within reach of the Iroquois, would keep them in fear and respect, arrest that great number of French deserters who generally went in that way to the English, and then served them as guides to reconnoitre the advanced posts of the colony. Moreover, we should perhaps succeed in time in gaining the Iroquois, by enabling them to see more clearly the difference between our habits and those of the settlers of New York.

After having thus shown the necessity for this work, the general, to meet the objection which might be made on the

¹ N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., pp. 286-8. Historical Sketches and Local Names For the name Niagara, see Marshall, of the Niagara Frontier, pp. 12-13.