

Yet this enterprise was not then carried out, and the reason adduced for deferring it, namely, that the season was too far advanced, was little more than a pretext, although not entirely without foundation. The real reason was that the whole profit was to go to the Company, and that d'Iberville was to share the glory with the Commandant of the king's ships. Accordingly that officer, on arriving at Quebec, did not conceal his feelings that such an expedition was not at all to his taste. Yet, as the king's orders were positive, Frontenac, to whom they were addressed, did not wish to take upon himself to change anything of his own authority.

The expedient that he adopted was to assemble those interested in the Northern Company, and all who possessed any knowledge of the navigation of the Bay. There Mr. du Tast set forth the reasons which seemed to him most suitable to convince them of the danger of exposing ships on that sea so late in the season. All were convinced, or saw that it would be useless to seem not to be, and de Frontenac and de Champigny deemed it expedient not to express their own opinions.¹

Moreover they had positive information that the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and all the lower river, were infested by English cruisers, who had already captured several merchantmen and fishing smacks, and it did not displease the Governor-General to find that du Tast preferred cruising in those parts to making war in Hudson's Bay; more especially as this second destination was given in that captain's instructions, in case the first was deemed absolutely impossible.²

Within a short time a rumor began to spread that the English were seriously thinking of taking their revenge for the affront they had received the year before off Quebec; it was even positively stated that Phibs had

1691.

Enterprise
against
Port Nelson
deferred—
Why?

Great pre-
parations
of the
enemy.

¹ Decision prise par MM. de Frontenac et Champigny, July 16, 1691. Canada Doc., II., vi., p. 59.

² Frontenac to the Minister, Oct. 20, 1691. N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., p. 505.