

1696. The minister adds that the King, after considering the report of de Frontenac and de Champigny on the unfavorable disposition of our allies and the difficulties of an excessive expense for communication with them on account of the war, had resolved, by the advice of the most experienced persons, to abandon Michillimackinac and the other advanced posts, except Fort de St. Louis in the Illinois, which the King wished maintained, on condition that the Sieurs de la Forêt and Tonti, to whom he reserved the concession, should not bring or cause to be brought any beaver into the colony.¹

I have been unable to ascertain on whose advice the King's council adopted this resolution. The excursions of the Canadians into new countries certainly ruined the commerce of New France, introduced fearful libertinage, rendered the nation contemptible among all the tribes on the continent, and raised an insurmountable obstacle to the progress of religion. Still the remedies which his Majesty sought to apply, were utterly impracticable in the actual position of the colony, since it is certain that the English would have seized the advanced posts as soon as we evacuated them, and we should thus at once have as enemies all the tribes gathered near the posts by our influence. Now if these tribes once joined the Iroquois and English, one single campaign would suffice to expel the French from New France.

Our allies
ill-disposed
towards us.

On the other hand, Frontenac was at last convinced of the indispensable necessity of making an effort to subdue the Iroquois. He had especially seen this in the disposition evinced by the Iroquois at the last audience he had given them; but what completely decided him to show himself in the cantons with all his forces, was the intelligence which came in from all quarters, of the bad impression produced everywhere by the inaction of the French, in spite of the hopes with which he had so long cajoled his allies, of a great expedition against the common foe.

¹ Louis XIV. to Frontenac and York Colonial Documents, ix., p. Champigny, May 26, 1696. New 637.