

1690. conviction that we were on the point of sinking utterly beneath the efforts of our enemies, as well as a secret joy to see themselves left by our weakness free to think of their own interest. To this must be added the unfavorable impression left on many minds after the treachery which the Rat, who was the projector, had laid to the charge of the Marquis de Dénouville.

The Ottawas even thought themselves authorized to reveal their design to no Frenchman, supposing that no one should take amiss their adopting measures to avoid being left exposed alone to the fury of the Iroquois, nor did they deliberate long on the conduct to be pursued by them in so delicate a conjuncture. They began by sending back to the Senecas all the prisoners taken from them, then fixed upon a place of meeting for the month of June ensuing. This was the negotiation which gave Mr. de Frontenac such great and well-founded anxiety, and of which Gagniegaton had made such a mystery to the Governor of Montreal.

Exertions
of Mr. de la
Durantaye
and the mis-
sionaries as
to this mat-
ter.

Fortunately, Mr. de la Durantaye and the missionaries, ever attentive to the slightest move of these Indians, were informed of the scheme, and the matter seemed sufficiently important for them to inform the Governor General of all that they had discovered. Yet this was not easy, as they were already well into the winter; but the Commandant was so fortunate as to find a man willing to undertake a journey of four hundred leagues, notwithstanding the rigor of the season and the difficulty of the roads. This was the Sieur Joliet, who arrived at Quebec toward the end of December, 1689.¹ He handed to the Count de Frontenac a letter from Father de Carheil, drawn up, doubtless, by that missionary in concert with Mr. de la Durantaye,

¹ De la Potherie, *Histoire de l'Amérique Sept.*, iii., p. 60. The Joliet here mentioned is Zachary, a younger brother of Louis, the discoverer of the Mississippi. Zachary, after studying

under the Jesuits, was apprenticed to a cooper, and then embarked in trade. Ferland, *Cours d'Histoire*, ii., p. 196. Relation, 1689-90. N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., p. 463.