

Wisconsin's first explorer, was sent to command at Chequamegon, assisted by Ensign Linctot, the authorities of the lower country having been informed that the Chippewa chief there was, with his fellow-chief at Keweenaw, going to war with the Foxes. St. Pierre was at Chequamegon for at least a year, and was succeeded by Linctot, who effected an important peace between the Chippewas and Sioux.<sup>1</sup>

Whether a garrisoned fort was maintained at Chequamegon Bay, from St. Pierre's time to the close of the French domination, it is impossible to say; but it seems probable, for the geographical position was one of great importance in the development of the fur trade, and the few records we have mention the fort as one of long standing.<sup>2</sup> In 1730 it is recorded that a nugget of copper was brought to the post by an Indian, and search was at once made for a mine; but October 18, 1731, the authorities of New France wrote to the home office in Paris that, owing to the superstitions of the Indians, which lead them to conceal mineral wealth from the whites, no copper mine had thus far been found in the neighborhood of Chequamegon Bay. The commandant of Chequamegon at this time was Sieur La Ronde Denis, known to history as La Ronde, — like most of his predecessors, a considerable trader in these far Western parts, and necessarily a man of enterprise and vigor. La Ronde was for many years the chief trader in the Lake Superior country, his son and partner being Denis de La Ronde. They built for their trade a bark of 40 tons, which was without doubt "the first vessel on the great lake, with sails larger than an Indian blanket."<sup>3</sup> On account of

<sup>1</sup> *Minn. Hist. Colls.*, v., pp. 423-425.

<sup>2</sup> It was during this period the only fur-trading station on the south shore of Lake Superior, and was admirably situated for protecting not only the west end of the lake, but the popular portage route between Lake Superior and the Mississippi River, — the Bois Brulé and the St. Croix Rivers.

<sup>3</sup> J. D. Butler's "Early Shipping on Lake Superior," in *Wis. Hist. Soc. Proc.*, 1894, p. 87. The rigging and material were taken in canoes from the lower country to Sault Ste. Marie, the vessel being built at Point