

PREFACE

The long period (1634-1763) of the French regime is the most romantic chapter in the history of Wisconsin. But its details have in large measure been inaccessible save to those historical specialists who had opportunity to work in the archives of both France and Canada. Unfortunately, the contemporary French documents heretofore published in our COLLECTIONS have been unsatisfactory in number and range. The student of that time, seeking thoroughly to know Wisconsin under the domination of France, has been compelled to supplement the COLLECTIONS with investigations elsewhere—chiefly in the old *Jesuit Relations*, Perrot's *Mémoire*, La Potherie's *Histoire*, Charlevoix's *Histoire*, Margry's *Découvertes*, the New York *Colonial Documents*, and the calendar entries in Brymner's *Canadian Archives*.

A variety of reasons have conspired to prevent a fuller presentation of material in our series—chief of these was the lack of funds for researches in the Paris archives, and for the transcription and translation of documents when found. The time has now arrived, however, when the Society finds itself enabled properly to publish the most important documents concerning this epoch in Wisconsin history. The recent edition of the *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* has made available, much of it for the first time, a considerable mass of material bearing upon the French regime in the Northwest; and important investigations have been conducted during recent years in behalf of this Society and of similar bodies, in the governmental archives of Paris. From this store of new material and that which has already appeared in the several publications above named, it has at last become possible to make a reasonably full presentation of the most important documents relating to the wide fur trade region of the upper Great Lakes, of which