

1689: ALGONKIN, HURON, AND IROQUOIS POLITICS.

[Letter of Étienne de Carheil, a Jesuit missionary, to Count Frontenac; written from Mackinac, probably in November, 1689.]

[Synopsis: Carheil¹ writes to the governor warning him of the dissatisfaction prevalent among the Ottawas, who are inclined to form an alliance with the Iroquois. Carheil vigorously denounces the inaction and timidity of recent French policy toward the Iroquois, and says that there is nothing left for the Algonkins save to secure peace as best they can, for the French no longer protect them. The Hurons at Mackinac are really taking the same course as the Ottawas, but are more politic and crafty in their methods. If these tribes are allowed to make peace for themselves, the Iroquois and the Dutch will monopolize the fur trade, to the exclusion of Canada. Carheil warns the governor that he cannot count upon the aid of the upper tribes, if he shall decide to make war upon the Iroquois. They have released the prisoners from that nation, and have forcibly indicated their contempt for the French alliance; their reasons for this are given at length. They reproach the French with weakness and cowardice, and taunt them with having accomplished so little in the Seneca campaigns. They regard the French alliance as also injurious to their trade, in which they get more advantage from the English. Carheil, after summarizing the case, adds: "From this it will be seen that our savages are much more enlightened than one thinks; and that it is difficult to conceal from their penetration anything in the course of affairs that may injure or serve their interests." He urges, accordingly, vigorous measures by the governor against either the Iroquois or their inciters, the Dutch.]—*Jes. Relations*, lxiv, pp. 11, 12, 23-39.

¹ Étienne de Carheil came to Canada in 1666, and two years later was assigned to the Iroquois mission, where he labored until 1683. In 1686 he was sent to the Huron-Ottawa mission at Michillimackinac, in which he continued until about 1704, by which time the Hurons had deserted that post for the new settlement at Detroit. Carheil then returned to Quebec, and spent the rest of his life in the French towns on the St. Lawrence. He died in 1726, at the age of ninety-three years.—Ed.