

great as to be burdensome; the [*qualitez*] will be done away with, and the sale of the pelts hoarded in France, in the store-houses of the Company, will be facilitated.

Messieurs de Callières and de Champigny have been persuaded of the necessity and usefulness of these establishments; but they have not thought best to promise them, lest they might contravene the prohibition of the congés. They see, however, that this disadvantageous state of affairs demands prompt relief, lest, if the Savages once make up their minds to resort to the English, we can not make them return to us. In that case, all the beaver-skins that are in France would become a dead loss for the Company of the Colony; for the English could, by trading in that way, send the pelts to Europe and supply them at much cheaper rates, since they would not have to pay the tax of one-fourth.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Throughout the history of New France, the fur trade was in the hands of monopolists, usually associations of merchants. For the privilege of engaging in the trade, the monopolist levied on every outsider a tax or duty, in the shape of part of his proceeds; in the earliest period of the trade, this duty was one-fifth (*Jes. Relations*, iii, pp. 199, 211). Edouard Richard, in his *Supplement to Canadian Archives, 1899* (p. 105), gives the following synopsis of a document dated April 18, 1703: "Decree of the council of State which establishes new duties in Canada, instead of the duty of one-quarter, in kind, on beaver. (This decree was passed at the request of Sr. de Lino, agent in France of the Company of the Colony. He alleged that the price of beaver had been reduced in order to increase the use of the fur, and to replace the use of hare fur by that of the beaver, in the manufacture of hats. That it had not been possible to reduce the price of beaver in America, as such a reduction would oblige the Indians to sell to the English. That the prices paid and the selling prices were such as to leave no profit. He considered, therefore, that the duty of one-fourth, in kind, equivalent to six sols a pound, should be abolished and replaced by a duty on drapers' goods, merceries, groceries, and millinery. Which was granted; and hence the present decree.)"—Ed.