

1703: INDIAN INTRIGUES; DETROIT SHOULD BE ABANDONED.

[Extract from letter of Governor de Vaudreuil to Count Pontchartrain; dated at Quebec, Nov. 14, 1703.]

The sickness which has ravaged this colony since last autumn, and some dregs of which still remain, having prevented the Upper Nations coming down to Montreal according to their custom, some twenty canoes of Outaouis, Hurons, and Miamis arrived on the 14<sup>th</sup> July. They came by Detroit and formed a junction on Lake Ontario. You will learn the sentiments of the one and the other, My Lord, from their Speeches.

It would appear from that of *Quarante sols*, the Huron Chief, that he is strongly attached to the French; nevertheless I am advised to the contrary, and even that he has been negotiating with the Miamis to get up a sort of trade between them and the English. As I am aware, My Lord, that among these Nations a design discovered is half broken up, I have been very glad to let them see by my answers, without however giving them too much pain, that I was not unacquainted with their proceedings. Could I, My Lord, express to you my opinion, without departing from my subject, I might with some show of reason assure you here that if the English ever establish a considerable trade with our allies, it will be owing to Detroit. I doubt not but M. de la Motte reports to you the occurrences at that post, but I strongly doubt, from what he writes me, that his views are as just as they seem to be; the general opinion of everybody being that that post is untenable and burthensome to the Colony; as you will be able to see by the unanimous declaration of the General Meeting which M. de Beauharnois and I<sup>1</sup> convoked at Quebec, a report whereof we transmit to you in the joint despatch. In regard to the number of Indians Sieur de la Motte expects to attract to Detroit, I do not think them so much inclined to repair thither as he calculates; which you likewise will be able to understand, My Lord, from the Speeches of the Outta-

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<sup>1</sup> Philippe de Rigault, marquis de Vaudreuil, was governor of New France from June, 1703, until his death, Oct. 10, 1725 (except from 1714 to 1716, during which time he was absent in France). François de Beauharnais (sometimes spelled Beauharnois) was intendant from September, 1702, to September, 1705.—Ed.