

1738: REPORT OF COPPER MINES

[Extract from a letter from Beauharnois to the French Minister, dated Oct. 5, 1738. Source, same as preceding document, but vol. 69, fol. 222.]

MONSEIGNEUR—

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The precautions I had taken to enable the two Miners to reach the Copper Mines have Been unavailing, owing to the Voyagers who conducted them having been obliged to put back through stress of Weather, And to the Season Being too far advanced, which compelled them to winter in Montreal. They proceeded Early last spring to Chagoïamigon And the Sieur de La Ronde Wrote me on the 28th of June and 22nd of July that, as he was returning from Navigating the Lake, he made an Attempt to approach the island that is said to Be of Copper but a Terrible Squall prevented him from reaching it. On his arrival at Sault Ste Marie (on the 24th of June) he learned that the Miners had passed 14 days previously under the guidance of the Sieur Guillory. He Hoped to meet him along the Lake shore. He wrote that this mishap had caused him chagrin, inasmuch as the Sieur Guillory did not know the Places as he did; that Nevertheless he Was assisted by a Savage who Undertook to take him to one of the Mines where the Sieur de la Ronde had Been. He adds in his Letter of the 28th of July that when the Miners returned to the Sault Ste Marie, he asked them what they thought of that mass of Copper (which is doubtless La Roche [the Rock] already mentioned).¹ They replied that it Was a Mass that had been carried by the ice to that spot on the shore. Thereupon when the Sieur de La Ronde told them he would show them similar masses more than fifty

¹ Since the earliest exploration of Lake Superior, the French had knowledge of a large mass of copper near the mouth of the Ontonagon River. It is described in the Jesuit *Relation* for 1666-67 (Thwaites's ed., 1, p. 267; liv, p. 161) and was popularly known as "La Roche." In 1843 this mass, weighing between 6,000 and 7,000 pounds, was transported to the Smithsonian Institution, where it was found to be 95 per cent pure copper.—Ed.