

more—we can furnish only commodities similar to those of Europe; we cannot give them for the same price although for the most part of inferior quality, and for such an immense country we have no outlet except by two rivers equally out of reach and of inconvenient and perilous navigation.

We must therefore confine ourselves to making the most of the chief advantage offered by the country, which consists in its exceeding fertility, and the facility of feeding a very great number of inhabitants with hardly any assistance from outside.

France obtains products of every kind from itself and from its Colonies. This one will produce nothing but men for a very long time, but, if we wish, it will in a short while produce so large a number of these that, far from fearing the English Colonies or the savage nations, It will be in a position to dictate to them; and it is proper to observe that those Colonies are so precious to England that if This one were once sufficiently powerful in men to endanger them, that fear alone would be enough to prevent the English from abusing their power on the sea as they so often do.

From this point of view which, although remote, should, it seems to me, occupy our attention, I see few settlements more urgent than that of the illinois country. It is a region easy to cultivate and to clear, and a country much coveted by our neighbors. A fairly large number of French families are already there,<sup>1</sup> and those that will go there in future and gradually are sure to be able to live on the labor of others while awaiting the fruits of their own.

But it is very difficult, not to say impossible, greatly to increase the illinois country by means of that of the Mississippi, which itself has few inhabitants and whither the beauty of the climate and the vicinity of the sea will be more likely to attract the people of the illinois region, than the latter will be to draw people from Louisiana.

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<sup>1</sup>In 1760 there were eighty houses at Kaskaskia, and fifty at Cahokia. See De Villiers du Terrage, *Les Derniers Années de la Louisiane française* (Paris, 1904), p. 54.—Ed.