

1748: TRADE AT THE WESTERN POSTS; LEASE SYSTEM

[Letter of Bigot to the French Minister, dated Oct. 22, 1748. Source, same as preceding document, but vol. 92, fol. 113.]

MONSEIGNEUR—

\* \* \* \* \*

I am convinced that peace will restore the leases of the posts to their original value.

Monsieur de la Galissoniere is, however, of opinion that licenses should be granted to all who apply for them in order to trade at the posts. He claims that if there be several traders at the same post, they will give their goods cheaper to the savages, but I do not believe it because they will agree together. Nevertheless he excepts from licenses the posts of Nepigon, Camalestigouia, michipicoton, temiscamingue, and la pointe de Chagouamigon.

It is not surprising the savages should have found that what they needed was sold them at excessive prices. The traders had to pay for what they bought in Montreal at least 150 per cent more than they paid in time of peace, and they sold in proportion. In spite of this they were partly ruined, because the savage did not pay. But, inasmuch as goods are coming down to the prices that prevailed before the war, they will in future be able to sell them 150 per cent cheaper, and the savages will notice this reduction.

If the commandants of the posts had no understanding with the farmer, they might see to it; but, although I have only been out here a short time, I know that so many abuses exist that it will be very difficult, however one may go about it, to put and keep in order this part of the service which is most essential.

I have the honor to be with profound respect, Monseigneur,  
Your very humble and very obedient servant,

BIGOT

QUEBEC, October 22, 1748.