

soil and the others the Traffic with the savages? Such neglect would inspire the French with disgust that might lead them to abandon their settlements and excite no less dangerous discontent amongst the savages who are accustomed to procure what they need in exchange for their heavy furs, and who, seeing themselves deprived of the Conveniences of life through the stoppage of Trade would undoubtedly have recourse to the English, who are ever ready to corrupt the nations that are faithful to us. Those savages will not fail in time of war to make it easy for them to seize our Settlements or in time of peace to establish some on the Ouabache or in any other place that may suit them. It is known beyond a doubt that they have often been solicited by the English who eagerly seize every Occasion that Can give them Influence amongst the nations of the upper country. Thus it would be flattering ourselves too much to Rely upon retaining the attachment and fidelity of Those nations to the prejudice of their private interests. But, it may perhaps be said, the Escorts required for the Safety of Communication between New Orleans and Illinois owing to the wars that disturb Louisiana, will Cease to be necessary when the troubles are Appeased. I think that, whatever appearance of tranquillity there may be, it will always be imprudent to travel with Assurance on a river of such great Extent, inhabited or frequented by so many savages of various nations the majority of whom never lose an opportunity of pillaging. The Voyageurs have only too frequently had this experience as regards the Cherakis and Ozages with whom, nevertheless, Louisiana has never been in open war.

The Knowledge I have of the country does not permit of my Agreeing that the two Companies in garrison at Illinois can be withdrawn without serious drawbacks. It is true that the inhabitants are sufficiently numerous to have nothing to fear from the savages when they are united. But there are amongst them many Coureurs des bois and Half-breeds, people who cannot be disciplined and whom the officer from Canada would assuredly be unable to keep within the bounds of duty with a detachment of ten or even of twenty men. The major in