

certain that nothing can oblige us to allow such trade on our own lands.

Thus, in all the alliances or kinds of treaty or words we have had with the remote savages, we have never expressly exacted that they should renounce going to trade with the English; we have merely exhorted them to do so; and we have never forcibly opposed ourselves to that trade.

The Ohio river and the rivers that flow into it belong, incontestably, to France. They were discovered by Monsieur de Lasalle; we have always had trading posts there since then; and our position is all the more unquestionable, that it is the most frequented way of communication between Canada and Louisiana. It is only a few years ago that the English ventured to trade there; and now they want to exclude us.

They have not, moreover, hitherto, pretended that those rivers belonged to them; their pretension is that the Iroquois are the masters thereof, and that, as they are the sovereigns of those savages, they can exercise their rights therein. But it is unquestionable that the Iroquois have no such rights and moreover that the alleged sovereignty of the English over them is a delusion. I shall have occasion to explain the reasons for this to you in another letter.

It is, nevertheless, of the highest importance that the progress of English pretensions and encroachments in that direction be checked. Should they be successful, they would cut our communications between the two colonies of Canada and Louisiana; and one can easily foresee the injurious effects of this on both, to say nothing of the advantages they would at once derive for their trade to the prejudice of ours.

The King proposes to complain to the English Court of all these innovations, and to ask it to give orders to have them stopped. But, however eager that Court may be to meet His Majesty's wishes for the maintenance of peace, such complaints cannot meet with success, at least very promptly; for, on the one hand, it is rather difficult to get conclusive proofs of the