

1752: EXPLOITING THE POSTS

[Letter from the French minister to Du Quesne, dated June 16, 1752. Source, same as preceding document, but folio 30.]

VERSAILLES, June 16, 1752.

MONSIEUR—Monsieur the Marquis de Lajonquiere sent me, with his letter of the 25th of October last, a statement of the receipts and expenditure he had made with the proceeds of the leases of the post and of the licenses he has issued for the upper country.

From the knowledge you have already obtained of the affairs of the government, you are aware that only a few years ago the majority of the posts were farmed out, and that it has been arranged that out of the proceeds of these leases, and of the licenses which the Governor and Lieutenant General grants for the trade in the upper country, he is to take the allowances of the officers employed at the posts, and distribute something to poor widows of officers and give other aid by way of alms or charity to the amount of ten thousand livres per annum; and Monsieur de Lajonquiere's statement of accounts relates to that arrangement.

When it was decided to establish this system two chief objects were in view: one, to take away from the officers employed at the posts all interest in the trade carried on there, and thereby prevent abuses that would continually give rise to complaints on the part of the traders and of the savages; the other was to add to the King's treasury for the payment of the expenses of the posts.

It seems that those two advantages should effectively result from the arrangement in question. In fact, as the officers commanding the posts are no longer interested in the trade, they ought to be more inclined to see that it is carried on properly and without abuse; and thus it should be more advantageous.

It has, however, been represented to me that the exclusive right conferred by the leases is subject to drawbacks all the