

from the fort of river au Boeuf and from Niagara. It lies almost at the entrance of a large bay, about a league and a half deep by half a league wide. It has a commandant who has a thousand francs gratification, and there is a garrison of fifty or sixty men.

This post as far as trade is concerned is like the two preceding ones; Its utility is as a necessary outpost, and the first from Niagara to La Belle River. The portage from this fort to that of the river au Boeuf is seven leagues. During the winters which are mild, rainy, and not liable to have snow, the transportation is almost impracticable; spring and autumn are much the same; summer is the only season on which one can count for sending provisions and other necessaries to La Belle River. I speak of wagon transportation; pack-horses go at all times. There are many savages in this vicinity, and their aid is almost always necessary from the haste with which we are forced to make the portage, in order to profit by the waters of the river au Boeuf; indeed, if the roads were repaired it would be easy to dispense with the savages.

But policy demands that they be employed, especially in time of war. When they are employed in portaging they hinder the tribes that might be badly intentioned from troubling our transportation, moreover that which they earn in this manner, and the presents that are made them, place them in condition to dress themselves and provide necessities; without this resource they would turn to the English who deal with them much better than we do, and it is essential that they should not perceive this difference.

It would be easy to attract about this fort the savages, in order to establish them there and form villages;²⁶ the land there is good, hunting and fishing are abundant.

²⁶ A considerable settlement both of French and Indians had sprung up about Fort Presqu'isle. One English captive reports about a hundred and fifty families at this place in the last years of the French regime. With the surrender of Niagara, however, these all retired by water to Detroit and the other settlements of the upper country.—ED.