

cludes by assuring me that, although he counts only on the forces which he has there, I may rest assured of his zeal, which, assuredly, will not allow him to neglect any effort which he believes suitable for the defense and honor of our arms, in order that the settlements under his command may be conserved.

The inclement season of the winter and the distance of five hundred leagues do not permit the prompt sending of any reinforcements to him for they would arrive late, as it is not possible to penetrate by water, for the river, from forty leagues below those settlements, is frozen from November until March. However, the great valor of the Lieutenant-Governor, seven hundred and eighty-six good militiamen, and the many Indians, who can be mustered in the eleven villages<sup>92</sup> under his command remove all fear from me. Meanwhile, for my part, I am doing my best to arouse the Indian tribes to resist or destroy the premeditated invasion of Langlade.

In my former letters I have shown how advisable it will be to form new settlements on the west bank of the Mississippi, with faithful men, well inclined toward our government, in order to oppose the continual projects of the Americans; and my idea is corroborated by the letter which I received from Captain Don Joseph Vidal, who is in Concordia, opposite Natchez,<sup>93</sup> at the same time as the above-mentioned letter. Its recital informs me of the insults to which the territory of His Majesty are daily exposed without this government being able to take any resolution to restrain them. Nor is it easy to think of it, for rules are lacking in immense wildernesses for such consummation. In these circumstances I would not be per-

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<sup>92</sup> These villages were Ste. Geneviève, New Bourbon, Cape Girardeau, New Madrid, Carondelet, St. Andrew, St. Ferdinand, St. Charles, Portage des Sioux, Maramek, and St. Louis. These represent the increase under Spanish rule from those mentioned *ante*, p. 290, note 13.—ED.

<sup>93</sup> Capt. José Vidal was commandant of Natchez, when that post was surrendered to the Americans (1798). Having removed across the Mississippi, he named the new post Concordia, in token of the amity prevailing between the two garrisons. The present town of Vidalia, in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, commemorates his name.—ED.