

1750: REGULATIONS FOR THE FUR-TRADE

[Letter of La Jonquière to the French minister, dated Sept. 29, 1750. Source, same as preceding document, but folio 282.]

QUEBEC, September 29, 1750.

MONSEIGNEUR—As the trade of the upper country requires the strictest attention on my part, I have earnestly endeavored to obtain all the necessary knowledge to enable me to strive effectively to make it flourish, by remedying the abuses that have so far crept into it.

In the first place, I issued an ordinance on the 29th of last May, to put an end to the infringements of the prohibitions inserted in the licenses, to prevent the farmers and voyageurs encroaching upon one another's rights, to stop the coureurs de bois, to forbid the trade carried on by certain voyageurs with the English, and finally to divert the savage nations from the said trade.

At the meeting I held with all the traders of Montreal, I gave them communication of the said ordinance although I had already caused it to be published and posted up, in order that they might know for themselves the line of conduct to be followed by them and by their employees.

The most wily men in the fur-trade did not allow a single article of the said ordinance to pass without raising objections tending solely to their own interest and directly opposed to the good policy I intend to establish. Consequently, I paid no heed to their representations.

I convinced them, however, that I was acting solely in view of the general good of the trade, and that the advantages connected therewith might be mutual. I entered with them fully into the matter as well as into details respecting the farming or the exploitation of all the posts. The more wealthy maintained stoutly that they should be farmed out (a proof of their cupidity); others thought that exploitation by licenses would place everybody in a position to trade and would greatly contribute to attract the nations to us; finally they were