

careful, at the same time, to make it appear, that the commissaries of France had nothing to oppose to this right, but pretences of early discovery and possession, which their own historians overturn. Or a temporary settlement, gained by an usurpation, which the law of nations will not justify, or a remote construction of treaties, inconsistent with both the letter, intention, and spirit of them. And therefore thought themselves warranted to conclude, with a renewal of that assertion they began with, that the right to the island of St. Lucia, is not in the crown of France, but in the crown of Great-Britain.

This point concerning St. Lucia, however, was never absolutely determined; for the French court would never admit the prior rights and justifiable claims of the British, because they were resolved at all events to seize those islands and hold them in possession, well knowing the great value of them.

And at this time a third dispute was arrived at such a height, and become so extremely critical, that the conferences about the neutral islands ceased, when the attention of both courts became entirely warped another way. This is the dispute concerning the lands on the Ohio. When the French began to see that their designs upon Nova Scotia would for the present be frustrated, they renewed without loss of time their old and extensive project of uniting Canada to Louisiana. To execute this project, they seized on the whole territory which lay between their two colonies, and began to erect forts to secure their illegal capture. These forts were so situated as to hem in all the British settlements by being on their backs, and thereby excluding them from all communication with the Indians: and here lay the foundation of that more latent aim, which was nothing less than hoping one day to extricate the British entirely from the whole continent of North America. Tho' this project had been near a century in agitation, yet it never alarmed the British till this period; when the French had drawn over to their interest the Iroquois, and advanced over the Apalachean mountains, and pretended a right to the western confines of Pennsylvania and Virginia.