

French-Canadian governor, Vaudreuil, in a letter to the minister in 1755, eulogizes him in extravagant terms for the completeness with which he had equipped his expeditions against the English and for the zeal and foresight which he had shown in anticipating every want. Indeed, he is declared to be quite indispensable in the colony under existing conditions. It was reserved for Montcalm, Lévis, Bougainville, Doreil and other French officers to point out what was the real meaning of Bigot's lavish expenditure.

At the same time, after looking into the details of the period, one has to admit that Bigot was really a man of exceptional ability, insight and largeness of view. As regards his corruption it was not unique, though it was conducted on the grand scale. As one of the memoirs of the period puts it:—"The intendants and governors go to the colonies with a view to enrich themselves, and at their embarking they leave their honour and probity in France, usually forgetting to be just and honest." Nor was that sort of thing confined to French colonies. Take the abundant evidence of the period as to the operations of the English officials in India, America and elsewhere, and we find, with a few notable exceptions, much the same story. Bigot, however, was, as has been said, no ordinary man. He was sure to excel in whatever he bent his mind upon, and in Canada he was undoubtedly much devoted to the amassing of a fortune out of the king's expenditure there.

The French government, on receiving Bigot's sympathetic but discouraging letter, seems to have determined to offset his increased demands by introducing a regular system of deferred payments. Instructions were sent to Canada that the bills to be drawn in 1753 were to be made payable in three terms, one third in 1754, one third in 1755, and the remaining third in 1756. A change was made the following year, and from 1754 until the loss of the colony, the proportions of the annual payments were one fourth the first year, one half the second year, and one fourth the third year.

In this arrangement no distinction was made between the card money and the treasury paper, hence the superior credit of the cards vanished, and a rapid decline in the whole paper money of the country followed, with a proportionate increase in prices, augmented, too, by special conditions of scarcity, etc.