

A. Alley

[Establishment of the Canada Company, 1627 & 1628.]

*Act for the establishment of the Company of the Hundred Associates for the trade of Canada, containing the articles granted to the said company by the Cardinal de Richelieu, the 27th april 1627.**

The king, being desirous now, as the late king Henry the Great, his father, heretofore was, of causing to be sought out and discovered in the lands, regions and countries of New France, called Canada, some fit and proper place for the establishment of a colony, for the purpose, with divine assistance, of introducing to the people who inhabit the same the knowledge of the Only God, cause them to be civilized and instructed in the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Religion and Faith; his Eminence the Cardinal of Richelieu, Grand Master, Chief and general Superintendant of the trade and manufactures of France, being obliged by the duties of his office to forward the pious intentions and designs of their Majesties, the kings above named, has deemed that the only means of introducing these people to the knowledge of the only God, is to people these regions with french born catholics, who will by their example dispose the people to embrace the christian religion and to lead a civilized life, and by establishing therein the royal authority, be the means of creating, in his said newly discovered regions, some trade which may become advantageous to His Majesty's subjects.

Nevertheless the persons to whom these objects have been entrusted have been so little zealous in their accomplishment, that, even now, but one settlement has been effected, in which forty or fifty french subjects are maintained, rather for the interest of traders, than for the benefit and furtherance of the king's service in the said country; and so little assistance have these settlements received up to the present moment, that various complaints have been made to the king in council, and the cultivation of the country has been so little advanced, that if the surplus of grain and other commodities, necessary for so small a number of individuals had not been brought annually, these people would have perished from hunger, inasmuch as they had not wherewith to subsist upon for a month after the period at which the vessel usually arrived every year.

Those also who have up to the present period obtained for themselves all the trade of the said country, have had so little desire or have had so little power of settling and cultivating it, that in the course of fifteen years, during which their privilege was to endure, it was not their intention to bring into the country more than eighteen men;—

* Mercure François, Vol. XIV, Part II, page 232,—and Memoirs on the possessions in America, Vol. III, page 345.