

siderable fortune, it was only granted to officers who were most in favour. If any of these had not a stock sufficient for the undertaking, he could easily prevail with some monied men to join with him. It was pretended that this system, far from being detrimental to the service, was a means of promoting it, as it obliged the military men to keep up more constant connections with the natives, to watch their motions, and to neglect nothing that could secure their friendship. It was not foreseen, or at least, pretended not to be so by any, that such an arrangement must necessarily prevail over every principle, except that of interest, and would be a source of perpetual oppression. This tyranny, which soon became universal, was severely felt at Frontenac, at Niagara, and at Toronto. The farmers of those three forts, making an ill use of their exclusive privilege, set so low a value upon the merchandize that was brought them, and rated their own so high, that by degrees the Indians, instead of stopping there, resorted in great numbers to Chouaguen, on the Lake Ontario, where the English traded with them, upon more advantageous terms. The French Court, alarmed at the account of these new connections, found means to weaken them, by taking the trade of these three posts into their own hands, and treating the Indians still better than they were treated by their rivals the English. In consequence of this step, the refuse of all those furs that were not saleable became the sole property of the king; and all the skins of those beasts that were killed in summer and autumn were readily given him. In a word, all the most ordinary furs, the thinnest, and most easily spoiled, were reserved for the king. All these damaged furs bought without examination, were carelessly deposited in warehouses, and eaten up by the moaths. At the proper season for sending them to Quebec, they were put into boats, and left to the discretion of soldiers, passengers, and watermen, who, having had no concern in those commodities, did not take the least care to keep them dry. When they came into the hands of the managers of the colony, they were sold for one half of the small value they had. Thus the returns were rather less than the sums advanced by the government in support of this losing trade.

But though this trade was of no consequence to the King, it is still a matter of doubt if it were advantageous to the Indians, though gold and silver were not the dangerous medium of their traffic. They received, indeed, in exchange for their furs, saws, knives, hatchets, kettles, fish-hooks, needles, thread, ordinary linen, coarse woollen stuffs; all which may be considered as the means or pledges of intercourse with them. But articles were likewise sold them that would have proved prejudicial to them even as a gift or a present; such as guns, powder, and shot, tobacco, and especially brandy. This liquor, the most fatal present the old world ever made to the new, was no sooner known to the savages, than they grew passionately fond of it. It was equally impossible for them to abstain from it, or to use it with moderation. It was soon observed that it disturbed their domestic peace, deprived them of their judgment, and made them furious; and that it occasioned husbands, wives, children, brothers and sisters, to abuse and quarrel with one another. In vain did some worthy Frenchmen expostulate with them, and endeavor to make them ashamed of their excesses. "It is you," answered they, "who have taught us to drink this liquor; and we now cannot do without it. If you refuse to give it us, we will apply to the English.