

that the French had come to visit them on the part of Onnontio, their governor, and to smoke the calumet on their mats; that the Sieur de la Salle was about to build a great wooden canoe above the Falls, in which to bring merchandise from Europe by a more convenient route than the rapids of the Saint Lawrence; that by this means the French would be able to undersell the English of Boston, and the Dutch of New York.*

This speech was accompanied with four hundred pounds weight of presents, consisting of hatchets, knives, coats, and a large necklace of blue and white shells. Portions of these were handed over at the end of each proposition. This mode of treating with the Indians by bribing their chiefs, has, unfortunately, continued to the present day.

Among other inducements, La Motte promised to furnish, for the convenience of their whole nation, a gunsmith and blacksmith, to reside at the mouth of the Niagara, for the purpose of mending their guns and hatchets. Several coats and pieces of fine cloth, iron, and European merchandise of great rarity among the Indians, and of the value of four hundred francs, were added, as weighty reasons, to influence them in favor of the French. "The best arguments in the world," says Hennepin, "are not listened to by the natives, unless accompanied with presents."†

On the next day, the Senecas answered the speech of La Motte, sentence by sentence, and responded by presents. As aids to the memory, they used small wooden sticks which the speaker took up, one by one, as he replied, *seratim*, to the several points in the speech of the day previous. Belts of wampum, made of small shells strung on fine sinews, were presented after each speech, followed by the exclamation "*Ni-a-qua*," signifying approval, from the whole assembly. This, however,

* Alluding to the plan of La Salle to send merchandise to the Niagara by the way of the Mississippi and the lakes.

† Hennepin, N. D., p. 85.