

REPORT OF MR. JOSEPH MARMETTE,

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SIR,—I have the honour to submit my report on the historical researches which, in pursuance of your instructions, I am continuing, in Paris, this year.

Having reached this city on the 31st July last, I at once resumed the work of analysing the documents relating to the history of Canada and Acadia, preserved in the Colonial Archives of the Département de la Marine. As in the past, my task is greatly facilitated by the extreme kindness manifested by M. Guët, Directeur des Archives Coloniales, who combines the erudition of a paleographer with the exquisite courtesy of an accomplished gentleman.

The further I go with the examination of the vast collection of MSS. relating to New France, preserved in the Archives of this Department, the more I am impressed with their richness and importance. Day by day I find fresh evidence to show that an incalculable amount of valuable matter relating to the internal history, trade, industry and material development of Canada, under French rule, has hitherto escaped the attention of our historians.

I would point out that among the abstracts from these documents, constituting the bulk of my report, the series comprised under the heading "Correspondance Générale," had been copied, in part, under the direction of M. Faribault, in 1833, but only as far as the end of volume 56. Now, inasmuch as that series alone comprises 124 volumes, it follows that the matter of 68 volumes and two *cartons* is as yet unknown in Canada. This is without taking into account some 400 volumes and cartons, which I shall have to examine when I have finished the "Correspondance Générale."

To give an idea of the novelty, interest and importance of the matters by which I have been struck, in that portion of the correspondence of the Governors and Intendants of New France, which I have perused during the past four months, I beg to offer in this preliminary report, a few quotations intermingled with such reflections as these interesting papers, as a whole, have suggested.

It was not until the beginning of the 18th century, after the firm administration of Frontenac had secured peace with the Iroquois, conquered at last, that the colony—up to that time all but restricted to the three small towns, Quebec, Montreal and Three Rivers, and paralyzed by the terror resulting from the unceasing incursions of the savage warriors of the Five Nations—began really to develop itself. Under a series of able Intendants, such as the elder and younger Raudots, Bégon, and above all, Hocquart, who succeeded each other from 1705 to 1748, Canada expanded day by day beneath the sun of civilization and progress.

On the banks of the St. Lawrence the primeval silence of the vast woods gives place to the sturdy strokes of the pioneer's axe. The forest is cut down, and cottages, villages, and parishes spring up. The howling wilderness of yesterday is covered with golden harvests of grain, and the hillsides are teeming with luxurious vegetation. With a steady increasing number of vessels arriving from Europe, navigation pushes its way onward and secures its empire over the mighty river. Science maps out an easier path across the mighty highway connecting France with her North American possessions. And then, in proportion as the colony derives its own subsistence from the soil, we find her sending to her mother land and foreign countries the wealth of her products. Her gigantic pines and oaks proudly bear the flag of France to the farthest points of the globe. Our resinous trees furnish tar, and rendered impermeable therewith the ships built in the infant city of Champlain, set sail for the old world, loaded down with the choice furs of our wild animals and fish oils from the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

And while the sonorous dome of the great pines resounds with the clang of the St. Maurice forges, beating out the first ore extracted from Canadian soil, the dying moans of the last of the savage tribes, struggling against French civilization, expire afar off on the plains of the Mississippi, that great artery which thereafter became