

The dealings with the Indians took the shape of direct barter and the product of that trade passed to the company in exchange for other goods for sustenance and barter. The need for a medium of exchange was, therefore, confined within pretty definite limits. To meet this need there was one article of universal acceptance which answered all the purposes of a medium of exchange, except for small currency, and that was the beaver skin. To a certain extent other furs shared this position, but none so adequately as the beaver, especially when the price at which it was receivable by the company was fixed.

The "Company of One Hundred Associates," though important as expressing in its organization and purpose the general French colonial policy for the next century, was destined to failure from the outset. Its first fleet of ships, coming with provisions, stores and settlers, was intercepted by the English under Kirke, and nineteen out of twenty vessels captured or destroyed. The following year Canada passed for a time into the hands of the English. The colony contained at the time only five families of settlers and about twenty acres of cleared land.

When Canada was restored to France in 1632, the company resumed its powers, but most of the original enthusiasm had evaporated in the meantime. Its privileges were transferred to a small association within the other, which, following the lines of its predecessors, took little interest in anything beyond the immediate profit from the trading monopoly.

Champlain, who still retained his interest in the colonization scheme, and who had gone out again as the first Governor of the country with 150 colonists, died in 1635, and no one seemed ready to take up his work. However, the Jesuits and other missionaries had now established themselves in the country, and were exciting a new interest in it through their famous letters or relations which were eagerly read throughout France.

In 1644 Montreal was established on a half religious, half military and wholly commercial basis, by a grant from the company to the Seminary of St. Sulpice.

In 1645 the company gave up its trading monopoly to the people of Canada, on condition of being relieved from the burden of maintaining the religious, civil and military establish-