

monopoly followed another in a rapid succession, without any advantage; they were pursued with greediness, without a plan, or any means to carry them into execution. All these different companies successively ruined themselves; and the state was no gainer by their loss. These numerous expeditions had cost France more men, more money, and more ships, than other states would have expended in the foundation of great empires. At last Samuel de Champlain went a considerable way up the river St. Lawrence; and in 1603, upon the borders of that river laid the foundation of Quebec, which became the origin, center, and capital, of New-France or Canada.

The unbounded track that opened itself to the view of this colony, discovered only dark, thick and deep forests, whose height alone was a proof of their antiquity. Numberless large rivers came down from a considerable distance to water these immense regions. The intervals between them were full of lakes. Four of these measured from two to five hundred leagues in circumference. These sort of inland seas communicated with each other; and their waters, after forming the great river St. Lawrence, considerably increased the bed of the ocean. Every thing in this rude part of the new world appeared grand and sublime. Nature here displayed such luxuriance and majesty as commanded veneration; and a thousand wild graces, far superior to the artificial beauties of our climates. Here the imagination of a painter or a poet would have been raised, animated, and filled with those ideas which leave a lasting impression on the mind. All these countries exhaled an air fit to prolong life. This temperature, which from the position of the climate must have been extremely pleasant, lost nothing of its wholesomeness by the severity of a long and intense winter. Those who impute this merely to the woods, springs, and mountains, with which this country abounds, have not taken every thing into consideration. Others add to these causes of the cold, the elevation of the land, a pure aerial atmosphere, seldom loaded with vapours, and the direction of the winds, which blew from north to south over seas always frozen.

In 1626, the French had only three wretched settlements, surrounded with pales. The largest of these contained about fifty inhabitants, including men, women and children. The climate had not proved destructive to the people sent there:

Though severe, it was wholesome, and the Europeans strengthened their constitutions without endangering their lives. The little progress they made was entirely owing to an exclusive company, whose chief designs were not so much intended to create a national power in Canada, as to enrich themselves by the fur trade. This evil might have been immediately removed, by abolishing this monopoly, and allowing a free trade; but it was not then time to adopt so simple a theory. The government, however, chose to employ a more numerous association, composed of men of greater property and credit.

They gave them the disposal of the settlements that were or should be formed in Canada, together with a power of fortifying and governing them as they thought proper, and of making war or peace, as should best promote their interest. The whole trade by sea and land was allowed them for a term of fifteen years, except the cod and whale fisheries, which were left open to all. The beaver and all the fur trade was granted to the company for ever.

To all these were added further encouragements. The king made the company a present of two large ships, consisting of seven hundred men: Twelve of the principal were raised to the rank of nobility. Gentlemen, and even the clergy, already too rich, were invited to share in this trade. The company were allowed the liberty of sending and exporting all kinds of commodities and merchandize, free of any duty whatsoever. A person who exercised any trade in the colony for the space of six years, was entitled to the freedom of the same trade in France. The last favour granted them, was the free entry of all goods manufactured in those distant regions. This singular privilege gave the workmen of New France an infinite advantage over those of the mother country, who were incumbered with a variety of duties, letters of master ship, charges for stamps, and all the impediments which ignorance and avarice had multiplied without end.

In return for so many marks of partiality, the company, which had a capital of a hundred thousand crowns, engaged to bring into the colony, in the year 1628, which was the first year they enjoyed their privilege, two or three hundred artificers of such trades as were fittest for their purpose: And sixteen thousand men before the year 1643. They were to provide them with sufficient lodging and board, to maintain them for three years, and afterwards to give them as much cleared land as

<sup>c</sup> Quebec, in the Indian Algonquin language, signifies a strait. *Ibid.* p. 92.