

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 had 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 a simple theory. The government, however, chose only 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 to them was the free entry of all goods manufactured in Canada. This single privilege gave the workmen of the colony an infinite advantage over those of the mother-country, who were encumbered with a variety of duties and 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, or thirteen thousand, one hundred and twenty five pounds sterling, 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 lodging and board, to maintain them for three years, and afterwards give them as much cleared land as would be necessary for their subsistence, with a sufficient quantity of grain to sow it the first year.

But a long period had elapsed before the new company was able to carry any of its purposes into effect. Nor did fortune second the endeavours of government in its favour; for the first ships which had been fitted out were taken by the English, who were lately at variance with France. At last, however, after the exercise of some activity on the part of government, which had been rendered necessary by the commercial jealousy and enmity of England, the company formed some permanent settlements in Canada; and the fur trade was first begun and regularly established at Tadousac, a port situated about seventy-five miles below 120
Quebec. About the year 1640, the town of Three Rivers became a second mart; but in process of time the fur trade centered in Montreal; to which place almost all the inhabitants of the continent carried their furs and exchanged them for European merchandize.

At this time the French in Canada began to indulge themselves more freely in a custom, which at first had been confined within narrow bounds