

La Vérendrye tells us that the Indians near the Missouri had large numbers of horses, mules and asses. This information is of great interest, since it shows us how far north the horse had reached at this date. The Spaniards had brought the first horses to this continent, and from their settlements in Mexico and California, from time to time, horses escaped, or were purchased or stolen by the Indians. They passed from tribe to tribe by capture or trade. The possession of these animals made an entire change in the life of the Indians, and gave the tribes who used them an enormous advantage in hunting, in travel and in warfare. The buffalo, on which they depended for their food, clothing and shelter, now could be surrounded, or ridden down by hunters on horseback. Formerly all journeys were made on foot; the dog was their only beast of burden, and these could carry only small loads. Now they could travel rapidly, and heavy loads could be transported easily by means of the travois. The Indians never developed the wheel.

Under the French régime in Canada money was counted in livres, sols and deniers. Until 1717, the livre, equivalent to the franc, was worth 15 sols in Canada and 20 sols in France, while the sol consisted of 12 deniers. Old French accounts often use the signs L, s and d, these, of course, refer to the livres, sols and deniers, and it is only a coincidence that they should be the same as those which indicate the English pounds, shillings and pence.

There was always a scarcity of coinage in New France. The Intendants, who had charge of the finances of the colony, in order to provide a medium of currency, issued card or paper money at various times until the conquest. The first issues were put into circulation in 1685 by the Intendant, Meulles, and since there was neither press nor paper mill in Canada he used playing cards, writing the denomination and his signature on their plain backs and stamping them with his seal. This was the first paper money issued in America. Card money was suppressed in 1717, but twelve years later the need for currency compelled the authorities to resume its use; henceforth it was made from