

The fourth and last *Arrêt* of which I have to speak in this connexion, bears date three years later, in 1679; and is only to be found on page 247 of the first volume of the *Edits et Ordonnances*. It recites that, at last, the return or land-voll, ordered in 1672 and 1675, had really been made, and that it showed the greater part of the granted lands to be still unimproved and "useless to its owners (*inutile aux propriétaires*);" and thereupon, it first ordered the execution of the *Arrêt* of 1675,—admitted, therefore, till that time to have remained unacted on,—and then enjoined a course quite other than the course indicated by that *Arrêt*,—that is to say, ordered that one fourth of all the lands granted before 1665, and not presently cleared and cultivated should be "taken from the proprietors and possessors thereof, (*retranché aux propriétaires et possesseurs d'icelles*)," and one twentieth part of whatever should be the uncleared remainder of each grant, yearly thereafter. There is not however, the least trace of this *Arrêt* any more than its predecessors, having ever been put in force. It was merely comminatory. Neither one half, nor one fourth, nor one twentieth of any Seigniorship was ever escheated. All was a dead letter—a threat never executed, perhaps never meant to be executed.

I pass to consider the grants made by the Company of the West Indies, or in the King's name, from the date of the dissolution of the Company of New France to the year 1712. These grants were very numerous—in all something less than two hundred and sixty, of which some eighty-three are not in Canada or for other reasons should be struck off. There remain a hundred and seventy-six; of which a hundred and sixty-four are printed in the Volumes before the House. Two of those not so printed, I have obtained elsewhere. In all, they exceed four sevenths of the grants now in force; and they cover more than four millions of the ten millions of arpents held *en fief* in Lower Canada.

A few of them, some six in number, were granted by the Company of the West Indies; all in the same terms. The grant of the Seigniorship of Rivière-du-Loup *en bas*, is one of these; and is to be found on page 39 of the First of the Volumes laid before Parliament. It grants, "on the south side of the great River St. Lawrence, one league above and one league below the *Rivière du Loup*, by one league and a half in depth, and the ownership (*propriété*) of the said *Rivière du Loup*, and of the mines and minerals, lakes and other rivers which may be found within the said concession, and also the islands and beaches in the said River St. Lawrence, opposite the said concession, with the right of hunting and fishing throughout the whole of the said concession; to have and to hold the same unto the said Sieur de la Chesnaye, his heirs and assigns for ever, in full "property and seigniorship, (*en toute propriété et seigneurie*)," subject only to the rendering of "foi et hommage, with payment of an *écu d'or* on every change of possessor, and on condition of clearance being begun, a survey made, and bounds (*bornes*) planted, within two years. The grants of Terrebonne and Petite Nation (neither of them printed in the Volumes laid before Parliament, but of which I have obtained copies) are in the same terms.

These grants by the Company were confirmed by the Royal Edict of 1674 (see page 20 of the Second Volume laid before Parliament) revoking the Company's Charter. "We declare valid, approve and confirm," says that Instrument (p. 23) "the grants of land accorded by the Directors, their agents or attorneys, and the sales (*ventes particulières*) which have been made of any habitations, stores, lands "and heritages, in the Countries by us conceded" heretofore to the Company. So that there was evidently no more idea then, of questioning the right of the Company to sell, than there was of questioning their right to dispose of land in any other way.

The remainder of the grants of this period were made in the King's name; first, a large number by Talon in 1672,—to Officers of the Carignan Regiment and others; then several, by the Comte de Frontenac, the Governor; then, some by Messrs. Frontenac and Duchesneau, under separate instruments executed by each; and afterwards, the remainder, under instruments jointly executed by the Governor and Intendant for the time being.

In the terms of these grants there is great variety. Some refer back to grants by the Company of New France, and augment them; the new grants being quite