

general policy of administrative centralization.¹ Furthermore, the so-called "Édit de Création des Intendants" (1635), published in Isambert's *Recueil Général des Anciennes Loix Françaises*,² seemed definitely to indicate the genesis of the office. Almost half a century ago, however, a careful investigator demonstrated beyond question that the edict of 1635 had been printed under a misleading title by the editor of the collection in which it was contained; that the intendency was in existence long before the time of Richelieu; and that its powers were so well developed by the first quarter of the seventeenth century that the cardinal-minister could have found but little to add to them.³ On the contrary, if the *Testament Politique* is to be regarded as Richelieu's legacy of political theory, he would seem, far from having created or developed the office, to have had in truth a very poor opinion of it and to have been actually in favor of curbing its jurisdiction.⁴

The provincial intendency was, therefore, no spontaneous and arbitrary creation, dating back, as some writers have supposed, only three decades before its transplantation to New France.⁵ It was a very old post, and in its origin a not very important one, the jurisdiction of which grew slowly but surely in a general atmosphere of centralization, its widening powers simply reflecting with fidelity the steadily increasing fusion of administrative functions under the direct control of the crown.⁶

The office of intendant first made its appearance in connection with the affairs of New France in the spring of 1663. The colony had just been taken away from the Company of One Hundred Associates; and the king, on the advice of Colbert, had decided to provide it with a new framework of government modelled in general upon that of a French province. To this end an elaborate edict constituting the new administration was issued in April, 1663.⁷ By it provision was made for the establishment in New France of a Sovereign Council (*conseil souverain*), to be composed in the first instance of seven members: a lieutenant-general and governor

¹ Cf. the *Mémoires* of Séguier and of Omer Talon, cited by Gabriel Hanotaux in his *Origines de l'Institution des Intendants des Provinces* (Paris, 1901), 152-153.

² Paris, 1822-1833, XVI. 442 et seqq.

³ Jules Caillet, *De l'Administration en France sous le Ministère du Cardinal de Richelieu* (Paris, 1857), 44 et seqq.

⁴ Richelieu, *Testament Politique* (Amsterdam, 1688), pt. 1., ch. iv., §§ iii, iv.

⁵ James Douglas, *Old France in the New World* (Cleveland, 1905), 507.

⁶ Allen Johnson, *The Intendant as a Political Agent under Louis XIV.* (Lowell, Mass., 1899), ch. 1.

⁷ "Édit de création du conseil supérieur de Québec", *Édits et Ordonnances*, I. 37-39.