The Jesuits at Onondaga, 1656-58.

by

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Abstract

The Jesuit settlement at Onondaga in 1656 has been little considered by historians of New France. This thesis is an attempt to look afresh at the mission and to set it against the background of the Jesuits' wide interests and far-ranging activities in New France before the imposition of royal government.

Such conclusions as have been drawn about the mission have been based largely on the Jesuits' own account of it, given in the Relations: this is the starting-point of the present enquiry, but objections to the simplistic picture that it offers are also raised. A survey of the economic position of New France in the 1650's follows (Chapter II), and Jesuit involvement in matters like the securing of a charter for the Communaute des Habitants inevitably comes to our notice in this context. Next the relations between Jesuits and Iroqois before 1656 are examined, and several important points emerge: contacts between the two groups before this date were as often based on commerce as on evangelism; the Jesuits acted in the early days of New France in the closes collaboration with the temporal authorities, so that the two are often indistinguishable in their aims and methods; and contacts were initiated more often by the French than by the Iroqois - which is interesting in view of the statement in the Relations that the Jesuits settled in Onondaga only after years of pleading by the Iroqois.

There is plentiful evidence of clerical involvement in the fur trade of New France, and this is summarised in Chapter IV. The fortunes of the party in Onondaga are viewed in relation to developments in the political life of the colony in the mid-1650's. It is noticeable that the Jesuit retreat took place just as their influence in ruling circles at Quebec was being severely challenged. Finally, the changed role of the Jesuits in New France after 1658 is considered, and the Onondaga mission placed in perspective at a high point -- perhaps the highest -- of Jesuit influence in New France in the seventeenth century.

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Dr. J. Kupp, my supervisor, introduced me to the study of New France. I am most grateful for his guidance, and for his patience and forbearance towards a distant and dilatory student. Dr. P.E. Roy and the other members of the committee to whom this thesis was submitted have also been very indulgent, and I acknowledge their assistance with gratitude. My husband has constantly encouraged me from closer at hand.

Unlike Francis Parkman, I readily admit that errors both of fact and of judgement may be contained in this slim sheaf of pages: they are all my own.

RUTH GOWERS

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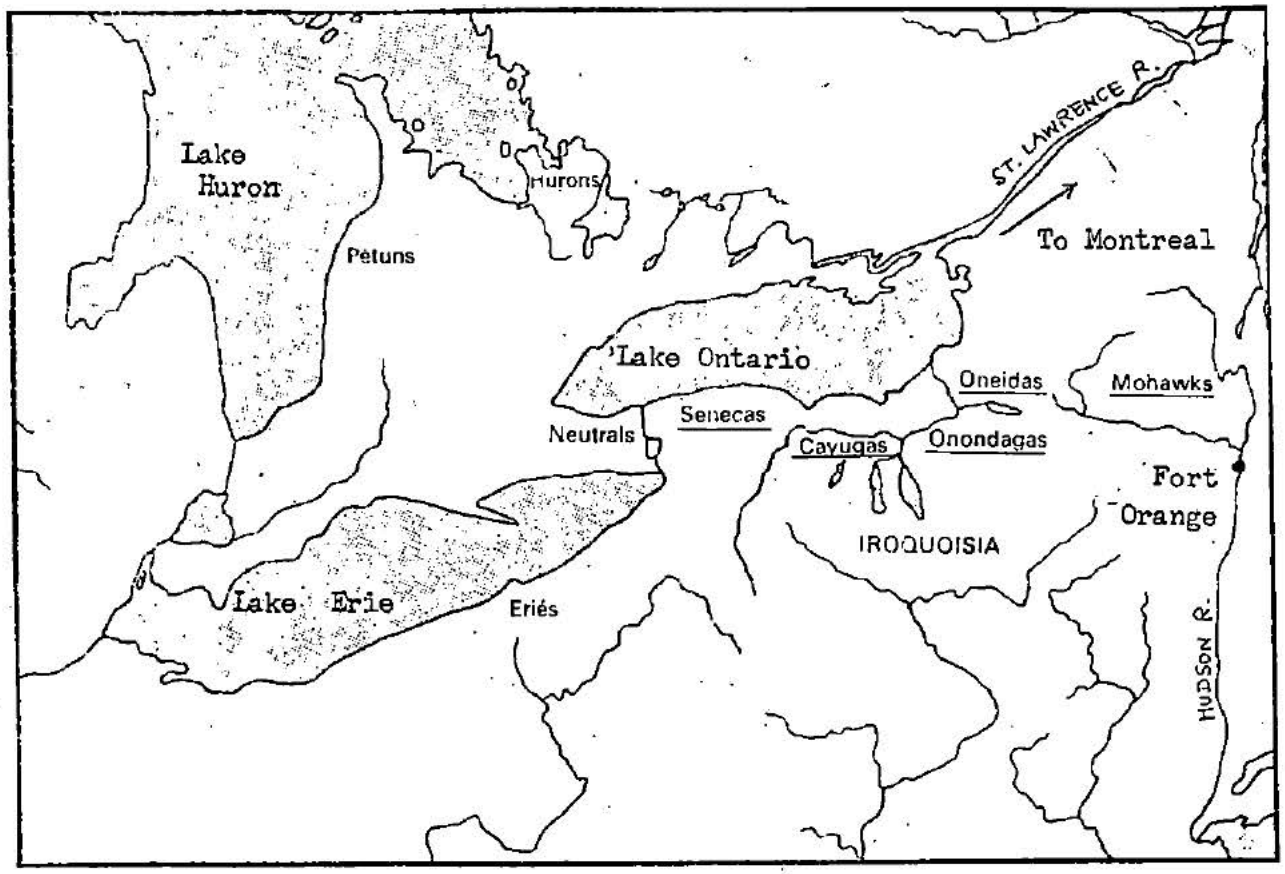
Distribution of the Iroqois tribes, showing access to French and Dutch trading points in the 1650's.



Based on M. Trudel's map showing distribution of the Huron-Iroqois group, in Introduction to New France (Toronto: 1968).

INTRODUCTION

During the early years of the seventeenth century, Europeans in New France and New Netherland were building up a trade in furs with the native tribes of North America. By the 1630's a fairly well-defined pattern of alliances had emerged; the French obtained their supplies of furs through the Huron Indians, the Dutch traded with the Iroqois*, and one consequence of the economic rivalry between the two groups of allies was the subjection of the French settlements to sporadic Iroqois attacks.

About 1638, the Dutch at Fort Orange began to supply their Indian allies with firearms and ammunition, and after 1640, the Iroqois attacks on the French and on the Hurons became more regular and more dangerous. In 1649, the villages of the Hurons were destroyed. Many of the inhabitants were slaughtered, but many more were scattered, later to be rounded up and absorbed into the population of the Iroqois towns. The Iroqois then concentrated their attention on the harassment of the French, and letters and journals of the 1650's recount numerous ambushes, torturings, kidnappings and murders of French settlers by Iroqois raiders. Some of the stoutest-hearted pioneers were ready to return to France, and yet in 1656, fifty Frenchmen and a number of Jesuit fathers established a camp deep in Onondaga country, built houses and a chapel and settled down to trade and teach the catechism.

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* 'The Iroqois' is the general name given to the loose confederation of five tribes living to the south and east of Lakes Erie and Ontario at this period; the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas are all referred to as 'Iroqois'. During the seventeenth century, spelling of this name varied -- 'Irocois', 'Iroquois', 'Iroqois' are all found in contemporary documents.

This expedition has received little attention from the historians of New France: Parkman and Salone each dispose of it in a single sentence, and it is not difficult to see why. The venture was short-lived -- the missionaries were back in Quebec by 1658. The march to Onondaga seems little more than a heroic gesture in an age of heroic gestures, hardly comparable with the carefully-cultivated and long-maintained missions among the Hurons. The object of this thesis is to examine the Onondaga mission in an attempt to demonstrate that it does in fact fit into a pattern, that there was a continuity and coherence in contacts between Jesuits and Iroqois in the period before the imposition in Canada of direct rule from France. The connecting thread between these contacts is Jesuit involvement in the temporal life of New France - for instance in the illegal fur trade.

Official records can provide little evidence about the illegal fur trade of New France, or about Jesuit involvement in such trade: in the first place, trade between New France and New Netherland was officially prohibited, and illegal transactions are unlikely to be officially documented; in the second, the constitution of the Jesuits' order forbade them to engage in any commercial activity. But constant prohibitions against unregulated trading and much circumstantial evidence made quite clear that illegal trade between French and Dutch settlers in North America flourished in the seventeenth century. Groulx estimated that in Talon's time, 1,200,000 livres' worth of beaver from Canadian sources was being sold each year on the markets of Fort Orange and Boston. When one considers the stringent controls that were almost continuously applied to the fur trade of New France, and the adventurous

and acquisitive character of many of those involved in the trade, it is hardly surprising that they should have sought — and found — more profitable markets than those officially open to them.

It is not surprising either to find indications that the Jesuits were involved in commercial activity in New France. They were involved in almost every aspect of the colony's existence, for besides carrying out their pastoral and missionary work they acted as educators and explorers, ambassadors and administrators. The Jesuit college of Quebec was the only institution of its kind in the colony. The names of Jesuits are associated with the exploration of Hudson Bay and the Mississippi, and Jesuit emissaries spoke to assemblies of Indian elders in the name of "Onontio and all the French". The Jesuit Superior had a seat on the Council of Quebec and a say in the financial affairs of the Community of Habitants. And besides their activities within the colony, the Jesuits also spread word of the achievements and aspirations of the colonists through the Relations, published annually in France from 1632 to 1673.* These remarkable documents, part newspaper, part charitable appeal, part evangelical propaganda sheet, provide one of our best sources of information on every aspect of life in New France.

The fur trade absorbed a large portion of the energies of the settlers in New France, and it provided the economic basis for the very survival of the colony. When the Jesuits were so deeply involved in all other aspects of the settlers' lives, it would be hard for

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* Communications from the missions were also published in France before and after these dates, but not regularly.

them to escape contact with this one. And for all their diversity of interest, they had always one fundamental objective: the conversion of the Indians. The accounts in the Relations and elsewhere of the terrible sufferings of the Fathers in the pursuit of this end leave no doubt of their sincerity. As long as the French colony on the Saint Lawrence survived, the opportunity to save the souls of the Indians remained, and the Jesuits acted where they could to ensure that their missions would survive. It has more than once been pointed out that in spite of the wide divergence between the exalted evangelical aims of the missionaries and those of the fur traders anxious simply for quick profits, the Indians were at the centre of both sets of interests.

The Indians with whom the Jesuits in New France were longest and most closely associated were the Hurons, the 'good Indians' of the popular historical imagination. The Iroquois live in contemporary accounts of life in New France and in the writings of historians of widely-differing outlook — both Parkman and Salone, who has been described as 'l'anti Parkman', for instance — as near-monsters of inhuman savagery. This is the image that stands in the way of any proper assessment of the mission of 1656. The Jesuits were not offering themselves for martyrdom when they settled among the Iroquois, but were pursuing a line of policy carefully formulated by the Quebec authorities. When they were appealing for funds from France it may have suited the missionaries to represent the Iroquois as blood-thirsty savages threatening the existence of the French colony, but in their day-to-day dealing with the Five

Nations, the French were quite prepared to treat them as equal partners in diplomacy.

The Jesuits' explanation of the origins of the settlement appears in a letter from Father Le Mercier to his Superior in Paris written in 1656: the Iroqois, he says, 'for over three years constantly sent presents and embassies to ingratiate themselves with us, and to solicit us to make peace', until the Jesuits could no longer refuse their entreaties that the 'black robes' should come to live among them and instruct them. There are factors in the general situation of New France at this time which point to additional motives. The French colonists had lost their middleman in the fur trade with the elimination of the Hurons in 1649, and the prosperity of the fur trade was vital for the well-being of the colony. Jean de Lauzon, the Governor who took office in 1651, was determined to increase the profits of the trade, if only to provide comfortable positions for his family and to line his pockets. He was also a close associate of the Jesuits. There is ample evidence that the Jesuits in New France had an interest in commercial matters — without the fur trade they would have had insufficient material resources to carry on their spiritual endeavours. A mission to the Iroqois would certainly provide valuable opportunities for evangelisation; that it could also bring trade to the French colony, and perhaps at the expense of the Iroqois' Dutch trading allies, cannot have escaped the missionaries' notice.

The following chapters seek to show that Le Mercier's account of the founding of the Onondaga mission may be true, but that it

gives only part of the truth. When an attempt is made to put together a more rounded version of the story, the Jesuits emerge not only as keepers of the consciences of New France, but also as diplomats, politicians and traders.

Chapter 1

The Onondaga mission according to the Relations

The Jesuits' mission among the Onondaga was established only after years of cautious negotiation by the French. An account of these diplomatic preparations will illustrate the nature of the relationship between French and Iroqois in the period before the imposition of royal government in New France.[1]

On 26 June 1653, sixty Onondaga Iroqois appeared at Montreal, "calling out that they were sent on behalf of their whole Nation to learn whether the hearts of the French would be inclined to peace".[2] The Jesuit Superior in Quebec, Father Le Mercier, reporting this and subsequent Iroqois peace overtures in the Relation for 1652-3, was surprised and perplexed by them. He was inclined to welcome the apparent Iroqois change of heart as an opportunity for spreading the Faith far more widely than had previously been possible in New France, yet memories of Iroqois treachery and deception made it difficult for him to trust the peace-seeking ambassadors. He remarked in a letter to his Father Provincial in France that "we hope against all hope".[3]

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1. The main source for this account is the Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents edited by R.G. Thwaites (73 vol., Cleveland: 1897-).

2. Relations XL, 89.

3. Ibid., 77. The letter prefaces the Relation of 1652-3.

Clearly his suspicion was shared by others outside his Order. The Governor of Montreal, "prudently distrusting" the Onondagas, told them that their previous treachery made him suspect their sincerity in proposing peace, and that if they really wished for an alliance they must go to Quebec to speak with Monsieur de Lauzon, "Governor of the whole country".[4]

The Onondagas did proceed to Quebec, where they exchanged presents with representatives of the French government and a peace treaty was agreed on. The Cayugas shortly afterwards also requested peace.[5] The Mohawks remained hostile, however, and continued their constant harassment of the French settlements. They were audacious raiders: in May they had surrounded a group of Frenchmen in a field near Three Rivers and killed two of them while Lauzon was paying an official visit to the town.[6] In August, they besieged Three Rivers with over five hundred warriors,[7] but the siege ended happily for the French. The besiegers sent a party with a white flag "to parley and to treat of peace".[8] The Relations offer more than one explanation for this turn of events. The military commander's

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4. Relations XL, 163-5.

5. Ibid., 91. As proof of their goodwill, they informed the French of the Mohawks' plan to besiege Three Rivers.

6. Ibid., 101. In the following two weeks the Mohawks made two further raids, killing and kidnapping both French and Hurons.

7. Ibid., 113.

8. Ibid., 169.

account of the engagement mentions that Huron allies of the French, anxious for news of friends and relatives captured by the Iroqois, began fraternising with the enemy, so that "in a short time there was nothing to be seen but conferences and interviews between Iroqois and Hurons".[9] This may have persuaded the Iroqois that their peace overtures would be accepted, and that they had more to gain from negotiations than from further fighting and possible loss of men. They were also informed in their parleys with the Hurons of the capture of some Iroqois at Montreal; they had French captives who could be exchanged for their warriors if conditions were peaceful. Le Mercier says in his summing-up that the Mohawks simply gave in because they met more resistance than they expected.[10] At any rate, the prospect of peace with the most implacable of their Iroqois enemies seemed to the French truly heaven-sent. Le Mercier optimistically headed the final chapter of his Relation "The door closed to the Gospel seems to be open wider than ever". He looked forward to the establishment of a Jesuit residence at a site offered by the Onondagas, "of their own accord", and asked for volunteers from France to assist with this great and holy undertaking.[11]

After the preliminary peace negotiations of 1653, Onondaga envoys returned to Quebec in February 1654, and further consultations were held which seemed to bring firm agreement near. "But", reported Le Mercier sadly, "a dark night followed upon a

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9. Relations XL, 113.

10. Ibid., 169.

11. Ibid., 219-21.

beautiful day"; the French were informed by the Hurons that the Iroquois were intriguing to break the Franco-Huron alliance.[12] Both Onondagas and Mohawks were trying to persuade the survivors of the destruction of Huronia to make their homes with them, and the Hurons begged the French for advice.[13] The steps that the French took to settle the difficulty, temporarily at least, show their customary caution in Indian diplomacy. They told the Iroquois that they would be glad to send "black robes" to live among them, but that the plan could not be carried out immediately; and they advised the Hurons to tell the Iroquois that "it would be best to communicate to the French their hitherto secret design, without letting it appear that there had been a desire to conceal anything from them". The Iroquois agreed.[14] The French thus gained time to discover how sincere the Iroquois' desire for peace really was, without either committing themselves to immediate action or giving the Iroquois cause for suspicion.

The following weeks were peaceful, but in April 1654, a French surgeon who was out hunting near Montreal was captured by a band of

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12. Relations XLI, 55.

13. Relations XLI, 59. Part of the Hurons' plea to "Onontio" for advice is recorded by Le Mercier in these words: "We have been dead for four years, ever since our country was laid waste ... We live only in thee, we see only through thy eyes, we breathe only in thy person; and our reasoning is without reason, except in so far as thou givest it to us"; clearly the Hurons were too demoralised by defeat and dependency to make any decision about the Iroquois proposals for themselves.

14. Ibid., 61.

Oneidas. The French were much alarmed. The inhabitants of Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec were all warned to prepare their defences.[15] A group of Onondagas who arrived in Montreal soon afterwards, however, expressed shock and surprise at news of the capture, and a "Captain" of the band offered himself as a hostage until the Frenchman was returned. His companions went off to secure the release of the prisoner, who was duly delivered, with twenty wampum collars and many apologies from Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas alike.[16] The fears of the French settlers appeared groundless, though contemporary accounts make clear their continuing mistrust of the proferred friendship of the Iroqois.[17] The escort of the released Frenchman repeated their nations' desire for peace, and their invitation to the "black robes" to settle among them.

In July 1654, a Jesuit did set out to the country of the Iroqois. Their demands were becoming more pressing, so Lauzon appointed a missionary experienced in dealing with the Indians to

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15. Ibid., 69. "There we were again exposed to the terrors of a fresh war, and expecting a hostile army".

16. Relations XLI, 71-3.

17. Many Iroqois of various nations appeared at Montreal and Three Rivers during the winter of 1653-4, bringing presents and assurances of goodwill. Two Frenchmen who volunteered to spend the winter with the Mohawks were returned safely in the spring of 1654, and their escort, the celebrated Flemish Bastard, brought with him letters "from the Captain of Fort Orange in New Holland and from some Dutch tradesmen, who all assured us that, now they really saw a disposition for Peace on the part of the savages allied to them" (Relations XLI, 85): these according to Le Mercier helped to dissipate French fears a little.

act as French ambassador -- Father Simon Le Moyne.[18] He left Quebec with a party of Onondagas and travelled with them through Iroqois villages, making speeches and presenting gifts in the name of Onontio, "great Captain" of the French.[19] Not even this gesture of goodwill was satisfactory to all the Iroqois; a party of Mohawks came to Quebec soon after Le Moyne's departure with the Onondagas, and their spokesman objected that, by going to Onondaga, the French were entering the cabin of the Five Nations "by the roof and through the chimney". Were they not afraid, the Mohawks demanded, to be blinded by the smoke, or to fall from the ceiling?[20] The rhetoric does not disguise the Mohawks' real anger and jealousy; and the speech illustrates the delicacy of the French position -- it seemed that any move they made was bound to provoke hostility in one direction or another. Lauzon told the Mohawks that "Ondessonk" would visit them too, if he could be overtaken on the road and instructions to this effect delivered.

He had too much of a start, however. The Mohawks as a result of this slight sent no official ambassadors to Le Moyne's parleys at Onondaga. "An Anniehronnon who by good luck happened to be

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18. Le Moyne had spent the years 1638-49 among the Hurons, and was an accomplished Indian linguist; see Leon Pouliot's article in Dictionary of Canadian Biography I (Toronto: 1966).

19. See Le Moyne's Journal of his travels in the Iroqois country, Relations XLI.

present" did join the consultations on at least one occasion,[21] but his nation was not included in the general professions of peace and goodwill which closed the meetings. Le Moyne was assured by the representatives of the remaining nations that "the Anniehronnons would doubtless follow the others; and that therefore I was to be of good cheer, since I bore with me the welfare of all the land".[22]

Le Moyne's summary of the decisions made in his conferences with the Iroqois certainly sounds cheerful. A site was decided upon for the new French settlement: it was agreed that the Iroqois should come to fetch the settlers in the canoes, leaving some little girls with the Ursulines; and Le Moyne himself was to winter with the Iroqois as a further indication of goodwill.[23]

Le Moyne returned to Montreal in September with news of these agreements, but the French authorities still moved cautiously. The following September, two Jesuit Fathers, Dablon and Chaumont, were sent to Onondaga, "as Ambassadors rather than as Preachers of the Gospel".[24] For a time the Onondagas seemed to be appeased by this arrangement, but on the last day of February 1656 the Fathers were told that unless a French settlement were established immediately, the peace would be broken. After some difficulty

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21. Ibid., 113.

22. Ibid., 101.

23. Relations XLI, 135.

24. Relations XLIII, 297. The remark is taken from the Relation of 1656-7, which was edited in Paris by Le Jeune.

in obtaining a guide (it was the beginning of the hunting season), Dablon returned to Quebec to deliver the ultimatum.[25] It was carefully considered by the Governor and the Jesuits, who were "extremely perplexed", and "aware that falsehood, deceit and treachery were almost as natural to these people as life itself".[26] They decided eventually that the presence of a party of French among the Iroquois might pacify the Indians sufficiently to save the rest of the settlers from their anger.[27] When Dablon rejoined Chaumonot at Onondaga in July, he was accompanied by Father Le Mercier, the Jesuit Superior at Quebec, and two other Jesuits, two lay brothers, and fifty "valiant Frenchmen".[28]

At last there was a French settlement in Iroquois country. From their base at Onondaga the Jesuits set out to preach to the other Iroquois nations, and they reported an enthusiastic welcome wherever they went. The Relation for 1656-7 noted that "there is not a single family in Onnontaghe which does not welcome us with joy, and is not pleased to hear us speak of our mysteries", and contained chapters on successes among the Senecas and Oneidas.[29] In a letter to the Jesuit Provincial in France written in June 1656, Le Mercier admitted that the Mohawks did not show the friendliness

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25. Relations XLII, 201-5.

26. Relations XLIII, 127.

27. Relations XLIII, 129-31.

28. Relations XLII, 217.

29. Relations XLIV, 43; chaps. 17, 18.

of the other Iroqois, but added that "we far prefer to have them alone for enemies than the four [other Iroqois] Nations together" -- and Le Mercier was enthusiastic about the progress of the missionaries among the other four.[30]

Less than two years after this optimistic report, on 23 April 1658, the following brief entry appeared in the Journal des Jesuites: "the mission of Onontagoe was broken up. All our fathers, brethren and Frenchmen who were there arrived at Quebec, about 5 o'clock in the evening".[31] Elsewhere in the Relations we find accounts of the Frenchmen's tense last days among the Iroqois. With their Indian hosts becoming increasingly hostile and likely to turn on them at any moment, the Jesuits and their companions managed to construct in secret two flat-bottomed boats and eight canoes to transport themselves to safety. On the suggestion of a young Frenchman, the Indians were invited to an "eat-all" feast prepared by the French, and were so stuffed with food that they fell into deep sleep. The French seized their opportunity, slipping their boats into the water - the winter ice was only just breaking up - and making their way with great difficulty to Montreal, where they arrived on April 3rd after two weeks' journey.[32]

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30. Ibid., 65.

31. Ibid., 95.

32. They left Onondaga on March 20th. See letters of Father Ragueneau, Relations XLIV, 153ff., 175-83; also ibid., 217, 221. The boy who thought of inviting the Indians to a feast may have been Radisson: see Grace Lee Nute, Caesars of the Wilderness (New York: 1943), 55.

Father Le Moyne made another journey to the country of the Onondagas in 1661, and the Relations spoke hopefully of "the renewed opening of those fine Iroquois missions".[33] Most references to the Iroquois in the Relations of the early 1660's, however, were concerned with the cruelty and barbarism of these old enemies of the French, and with the terror they were spreading among other Indian nations. In 1661, Le Jeune reported: "The panic is said to have spread even to the Sea-coast whither we were going, and whither these barbarians fully intend this year to extend their cruelty, in order to push their conquests as far toward the North as they have done, of late years, toward the South".[34] He concluded that the Mohawks were such a menace to the peace and well-being of New France that "their sacrifice at the hands of France, as being the sacrifice of irreconcilable enemies of the Faith and of the French, seems now to be the will of divine Justice".[35] In 1662, Jerome Lalement described the Iroquois as "the hardest and heaviest" cross of the many that the French settlers in America had to bear.[36] His conclusions were similar to Le Jeune's: "Only the strong arm, present and effective, can securely bind their hands", and he rejoiced at the news that help was to be

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33. Relations XLVII, 67: for Le Moyne's report of his mission, see ibid., 69-83.

34. Relations XLVI, 291.

35. Relations XLVII, 113.

36. Letter to Father Provincial of France, 18 September 1662; Relations XLVII, 217.

sent from France to put down the Mohawks.[37] The Iroqois once more appear as the perfidious barbarians whose acts of cruelty were so frequently described in the Relations of the 1640's and early 1650's.

Even while the French settlers were in Onondaga, the Relations often expressed fears for their safety and uneasiness about the real motives of the Iroqois in receiving the party -- and often reported incidents which make the uneasiness entirely understandable. In May 1656, for instance, a band of Mohawks concealed in the woods above Quebec attacked the rear of a convoy of Frenchmen and Indians on the way to Onondaga; the attackers explained that they had made a mistake, and then proceeded down the river to pillage French houses and take Huron prisoners.[38] Father Carreau received mortal wounds from Iroqois fire when he was caught with some Alquonquins in an ambush in August 1656. He was brought to Montreal by Iroqois who also carried "two wretched little presents", one to signify their regret at the accident, and the other to dry the tears and assuage the grief of the French.[39] In August 1657, another party on its way to Onondaga was disrupted and seven Indian allies of the French killed.[40] The Jesuits, ever hopeful that their teachings might truly find acceptance among the Iroqois,

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37. Relations XLVII, 217.

38. Relations XLVIII, 115-7.

39. Relations XLII, 237.

40. Relations XLIV, 73.

always reported successes eagerly and optimistically, but constant incidents like these made it difficult for them to have confidence in the Iroqois' show of goodwill. Some of their remarks sound distinctly contrived, as though they are aware that their readers would need a great deal of convincing that the old enemies of New France sincerely desired peace. When Le Mercier reported the peace overtures of 1653, he explained that though some may mistrust the Iroqois in view of their past record of treachery, there was an important distinction to be made between previous treaties and the present one: "I admit that we have had peace with them, but am uncertain whether they have ever had it with us; for, to tell the truth, it was we who induced them to make peace, urging them with presents and in long councils".[41] The report of the hearty welcome that the French received at Onondaga in 1656 ends on a cautious note: "If, after all that, they betray and massacre us, I will accuse them, not of dissimulation, but of frivolity and inconstancy, which in a short time can change the affection and confidence of those Barbarians into fear, hatred and treachery".[42] The fear of treachery was not absent even at the moment of greatest apparent friendship.

The French settlement at Onondaga lasted at its greatest numerical strength for only two years, and this is one reason for the scant attention that it tends to receive from historians

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41. Relations XL, 157.

42. Relations XLIII, 163.

of New France; in comparison with the Huron mission, it appears as a fleeting — and unsuccessful — experiment. There does not appear to be much to say about it, and what is said is usually taken from the Jesuits' account of the negotiations, establishment of the mission, and final retreat. The Relations offer two basic explanations of the Iroqois' desire for peace in 1653: one is divine providence, and the other the fact that the western Iroqois were involved in a war with the Eries and wanted to avoid fighting on two fronts. The simple story culled from the Relations is that the Iroqois wanted peace, for which the French were also eager, so until the Iroqois changed their minds a French mission was maintained among them.[43] The actions of the French

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43. Le Mercier's Relations of 1652-3 and 1653-4 contain numerous references to the divine intervention that secured peace for the French: e.g. Relations XL, 87, "God's hand was finally so heavy upon [the Iroqois] that they sued for peace"; see also ibid., 75, 85, 113, 163, and XLI, 81, 133, 135. For comments on the Iroqois' war with the Eries, see Relations XLI, 81, 217. Generations of historians relied principally on this source for accounts of the Onondaga mission. To mention a few, we might first take Faillon, whose narrative was taken mostly from the Relations, with details of the 'festin a tout manger' from Marie de l'Incarnation: see Histoire de la Colonie Francaise en Canada (Ville-Marie: 1856-66), II, 248-9, 372. Naturally enough, the same sources were used by Father Rochemonteix in Les Jesuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVIIIe Siecle (Paris: 1896), II, 141-55. Francis Parkman, in spite of his lack of sympathy with the Jesuits in religious matters, accepted unquestioningly in this case as in so many others their account of events: see The Old Regime in Canada (London: 1907) I, 54-95; Parkman concluded that "the mission of Onondaga was a miserable failure". George M. Wrong based his account of the mission on the same materials in The Rise and Fall of New France (Toronto: 1928) I, 318-32. Gustave Lanctot's references to the mission in A History of Canada (Cambridge: 1963) I, 214-16, 231, are also based on the Relations and Marie de l'Incarnation: the threat to the Iroqois from the Eries is stressed, and the eat-all feast described at some length.

in the matter were apparently determined by the wishes of the Iroqois.

This simple outline, however, leaves a number of points unexplained. Why, if the French were willing to be directed entirely by the wishes of their former enemies, was there so long a delay between the Iroqois request for peace and the establishment of a French settlement? At no time during their stay at Onondaga did Jesuits and other French settlers feel that they were entirely welcome and completely safe, so were they in any more danger in March of 1658 than they had been previously? The Relation of 1656-7, compiled in Paris by Le Jeune in December 1657, included a letter from a Jesuit in New France urging his French Superior not to withdraw the support of the Order from the Onondaga mission, in spite of the great expense involved, because of the many opportunities it offered for the saving of souls.[44] Three months later the mission was abandoned. What was it that decided the Jesuits that the time had come for escape? Part of the answer must be that the settlement customarily described as "the Onondaga mission" was built on more than the Jesuits' search for souls. The long and complex negotiations that preceded the expedition of 1656 involved not only the missionaries, but also the chief administrators of New France.

The question of the degree to which the Jesuits were engaged in temporal as well as spiritual business in New France is one on

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44. Relations XLIV, 79.

which agreement will probably never be reached; the records are not full enough to settle the debate, and circumstantial evidence can be variously interpreted. But it is quite clear from the Jesuits' own account of the events of 1654-7 that in the matter of negotiations with the Iroqois, the missionaries acted as agents of the Governor of New France. Several indications of this have already been mentioned: on his preliminary journey to the Onondagas in 1654, Le Moyne spoke to the assembled representatives of the Iroqois in the name of Onontio; Chaumonot and Dablon followed "as Ambassadors rather than as Preachers"; the ultimatum of February 1656 was discussed by the Governor and the Jesuits before a decision was reached.[45] The Jesuits' journal also mentions meetings between French officials and Iroqois "in our house", and clearly in the eyes of the Iroqois the Jesuits represented the Governor.[46] The French were quite aware that the lives of the settlers they sent to Onondaga were at risk — though the Relations assure us that there was no shortage of volunteers.[47] The Jesuits had already risked death among hostile tribes for the sake of the Faith, but in this case holders of temporal authority considered the risk worth taking too: there were material gains at stake as

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45. For references see above, pages 5, 7.

46. Relations XLII, 37, 45, 47 refer to meetings; Le Moyne on his journey of 1654 was addressed by the Iroqois spokesman as if he were in fact Onontio, and Ragueneau in 1657 was given presents at Onondaga which were intended for the Governor: Relations XLI, 115; XLIII, 61.

47. Relations XLI, 135.

well as spiritual ones. The risks were taken for reasons which become clear when one examines the general situation of New France at the beginning of the 1650's.

Chapter II

The Economic position of New France in the 1650's

During the 1640's, the attacks of the Iroqois on the French and on their Indian trading allies became increasingly fierce and frequent as the Iroqois sought new supplies of furs for their own European trading partners, the Dutch. The attacks on the Hurons culminated in 1648-9 with the destruction of their villages and the dispersal of the dispirited survivors. Five Jesuit missionaries were martyred during the protracted Iroqois offensive. New France had lost its longest-established trading ally, and the mission which the Jesuits regarded as offering their best hope of spreading the Faith in North America was destroyed.[1]

Although the long-term effects of the campaign were not what the Iroqois appear to have hoped for,[2] their success did leave the fortunes -- and the morale -- of New France at a low ebb at the beginning of the 1650's. The Relations and the correspondence of Marie de l'Incarnation are full of accounts of murder and kidnapping by bands

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1. The martyred Jesuits were Fathers Daniel, Brebeuf, Lalement, Garnier and Chabanel; see Relations XXXIV, and for summaries of the campaign George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroqois (Madison: 1940), 92-4, and Lanctot, A History of Canada I, 196-8.

2. See Elizabeth Tooker, "The Iroqois defeat of the Huron: a review of causes" in Pennsylvania Archaeologist XXXIII, 1963, 115-23: the Iroqois could obtain more furs either by conquering new hunting-grounds or by supplanting other nations as middlemen, so they probably hoped to replace the French Indians in the St. Lawrence trade.

of Iroqois who lurked in the woods around the French settlements. Describing one such incident to her son in 1650, Marie de l'Incarnation remarked how "ces courses ont jete l'epouvante chez tous les havitants".[3] In 1651, the Iroqois harrassment of Montreal was so severe that even the steadfast Maisonneuve began to doubt whether the settlement could survive.[4] In August 1652, nine Frenchmen were killed and another seven taken prisoner at Three Rivers in the fiercest skirmish to date with an Iroqois war party. A rash of desertions followed, from Quebec and Sillery as well as from Three Rivers itself, and Mother Marie wrote in 1653 that "the Iroqois have so ravaged these parts that we thought to return to France".[5] It was in this atmosphere of fear and uncertainty about the future of the colony that the Iroqois suddenly proposed peace; the offer must indeed have seemed heaven-sent.

Quite apart from the constant threat to the lives of settlers from Iroqois guerrillas, however, New France faced a danger of another sort in 1653; the danger that the colony would cease to be economically viable. The finances of New France had been precarious from the early days of settlement. In some years

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3. Letter of 17 March 1650, in Lettres de .. Marie de l'Incarnation, ed. Richaudeau, (Tournai: 1876) I, 417; this particular incident involved the murder of two servants, the pillaging of one house and the burning of another.

4. See Gustave Lanctot, Montreal under Maisonneuve (Toronto: 1969), 54.

5. Lanctot, History of Canada I, 207.

there were enormous profits to be made from the fur trade, and in others Indian wars, shipwreck, privateers or any of a number of other hazards could lead to bankruptcy. The Compagnie des Cent Associes had been planned by Richelieu as a large-scale organisation with sufficient capital to sustain it over unprofitable years, but it had never recovered from the series of misfortunes that befell it almost immediately after its foundation in 1627. The Company's monopoly of the St. Lawrence trade was leased to two subsidiary groups of share-holders during the 1630's, but they inherited the financial difficulties of their parent body.[6] In 1645 the Hundred Associates ceded their monopoly once more, this time to the Communaute des Habitants -- a society of inhabitants of the colony itself; for the first time the conduct of the fur trade was to be directed from within New France and not from Europe, and for the first time the profits of the trade would remain in the colony.[7]

The charter of the Communaute was secured in France by two Canadian settlers, Repentigny and Godefroy, who travelled to Paris in 1644 for discussions at Court. They represented a group of prominent land-holders in Canada who wanted an opportunity to profit from the colony's only source of wealth; and it is clear that from the earliest conception of their plan for a trading

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6. For a brief summary of the misfortunes of Company, see Trudel, Introduction to New France, (Toronto: 1968), 45-6.

7. Details of the organization of the Communaute are given in Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada (Toronto: 1956), 39, and T.J. Kupp, Fur Trade Relations, New Netherland - New France (Ph.D. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1968), 160-161.

company of habitants, this group worked closely with the Jesuits. They informed the Fathers of their project in 1643, and it was approved as being likely to keep profits in the colony, attract more settlers and provide additional funds for the maintenance of the missions.[8] When the spokesmen of the habitants arrived in France, they received the useful support of the Jesuit Charles Lalemant: he had spent some years in New France, but now devoted his energies to the promotion of the colony's interests in the mother country, and was well-known both among the remainder of the Hundred Associates and at court. When the charter of the Communaute des Habitants was granted, an entry in the journal of the Jesuits in Quebec commented that the success of Repentigny and Godefroy was due to "the Queen and our stimulus".[9] And the regulations of the new company gave responsibility for dividing the profits of the trade to a committee that included the Jesuit Superior in Quebec.

At first, it seemed that the Habitants would profit handsomely from the new trading arrangements. 30,000 pounds of furs were obtained from the Hurons in 1645,[10] and the following year the total was 32,000 pounds. In those years, however, the Mohawks

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8. Kupp, op.cit., 159.

9. Relations XXVII, 85 -- Lalemant's entry for 29 October 1645. The other figures in this account are also taken from the Relations, and are cited in Lanctot, History of Canada I, 188ff.

were at peace with the French and their allies, having exchanged prisoners and come to terms in September 1645; by 1647, war had broken out again and no Huron canoes came downstream to barter with the French. Hostilities had been re-opened when some Hurons had been attacked by Oneidas near Montreal: here is an example of the way in which factors entirely outside the control of the traders could influence trade. In 1648 the Hurons again brought their furs to trade with the French, who obtained 250,000 livres' worth, but the events of the previous year had emphasised the uncertainty of the market, and stimulated efforts to put it on a firmer basis. The Council of Quebec, the administrative body set up by order of the King in 1647 "to establish good order in and to police Canada",[11] passed stern orders to prevent smuggling for private profit. They also gave permission for properly-licensed Frenchmen to travel to remote areas to barter with the Indians on their own ground, instead of waiting for them to risk the dangers entailed in bringing their furs to the French settlements. There was no shortage of volunteers for such missions: in 1648, twenty-six Frenchmen returned with the Huron traders to their territory, and a month later brought back 5,000 pounds of beaver.[12]

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11. For the disagreements and negotiations which led to the establishment of this body, see Lanctot, History of Canada I, 189.

12. Lanctot, op.cit., 194: Emile Salone, La Colonisation de la Nouvelle France (Paris: 1906), 128.

Sixty Frenchmen were sent to escort the Huron trading-fleet from their own country to the French market-places in 1649, and 200,000 livres' worth of furs were secured. But the last great onslaught of the Iroqois was awaiting the Hurons, and the villages from which the French had escorted them were soon to be destroyed.

The Relations of 1650 and 1651 do not contain trading figures: their main subject-matter is the constant attacks of the Iroqois. Recording the events of the spring of 1650, the Jesuit author exclaims that his pen "shrinks from the repeated portrayal of such scenes of cruelty",[13] and we read in the record of 1651 that Montreal would be an "earthly paradise ... were it not for the terror of the Iroqois, who make their appearance there almost continually and render the place nearly uninhabitable".[14] In the prevailing atmosphere of panic and general disorganization it is not surprising that definite trade figures are not recorded -- perhaps they were not even compiled -- but passing references make quite clear that trading activity did continue. In June 1650, a note was made in the Journal des Jesuites of the departure from Montreal of Martin Gravel's and Monsieur Godefroy's barks, "both to make fortunes in the way of navigation and Trade".[15]

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13. Relations XXXV, 189. For examples of the sort of incident to which he refers, see the Journal des Jesuites for 1650 (XXXV, 41-3, 59) and 1651 (XXXVI, 125, 133, 149).

14. Relations XXXVI, 165.

15. Relations XXXV, 49. This entry was made by Lalemant, who, unlike Ragueneau, usually noted in the Journal only matters of ecclesiastical interest.

And in November 1651, three Frenchmen were drowned "who by night had gone to trade in Beaver skins on the isle of Orleans".[16]

It is remarkable that even in this period of marked stress and tension, between the accounts of Iroqois outrages and instances of divine intervention, the missionaries were noting matters of commercial interest. We read in the Relation of 1650-51, for instance, that the Residence of Montreal is to be regarded as a temporary shelter for friendly Indians rather than a permanent dwelling:

> It is a very advantageous place for all the upper Nations who wish to trade with us, for, as they find there what they seek, they are not obliged to come further down and to expose themselves to new dangers from the Iroqois, who are more to be dreaded below than above Montreal.[17]

This might as easily have been written by a fur-trader as by a Jesuit. When Druillettes wrote to Governor Winthrop at Boston in 1651, suggesting joint action against the Iroqois, he offered "the most ample commercial advantages": again we see a Jesuit acting as spokesman for the traders and administrators of New France, in the front line, as it were, of resistance to the Iroqois threat.[18]

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16. Relations XXXVI, 147 — Ragueneau, Journal 1651.

17. Relations XXXVI, 201.

18. Ibid., 75. Druillettes subsequently visited New England to conduct negotiations in person, and reported on "The Disposition of the Magistrates of the Commonwealth in regard to aid against the Iroqois": ibid., 83.

It has been argued that by the end of the 1640's, the importance to the French of the Hurons as middlemen in the fur trade was waning.[19] Certainly it should not be assumed that the dramatic destruction of the Huron villages entialed the dramatic destruction of all French trading contact with the Indians, but the trading activities that the Jesuits chronicled in the early 1650's were on a small scale; the grand convoys of 1648-9 were replaced by individual barks and canoes.[20] In order for the commercial viability of New France to be maintained, commercial activity had to be stimulated, but any Frenchman who ventured outside his settlement was likely to be pounced upon by prowling Iroqois. In 1651, the Company of Habitants was 80,000 livres in debt, and the Council of Quebec in desperation levied a tax of one half on all beaver skins brought to the Community's warehouses.[21] These financial difficulties threatened the whole future of the colony, and no-one was in a position to see this more clearly than the administrator of the Community's finances, the Jesuit Superior Jerome Lalement.[22] The Relation of 1652 outlines the

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19. See Kupp, Fur Trade Relations, 181.

20. Parkman did make this assumption: Jesuits in North America (London: 1899) 550-2. See also Lanctot, History of Canada I, 195; the prosperity of New France "entirely depended" on the Hurons' provision of furs.

21. See Lanctot, op.cit., 212.

22. The Council of Quebec passed an order dated 29 October 1650 which forbade "taking any measure of importance in the pursuit of affairs or raising loans except on the advice, by the orders and under the direction of the Reverend Father Hierosme Lallement". See Lanctot, op.cit., 201.

desperate situation:

> For a year, the warehouse of Montreal has not bought a single Beaver-skin from the savages. At Three Rivers, the little revenue that has accrued has been used to fortify the place, the enemy being expected there. In Quebec warehouse there is nothing but poverty; and so everyone has cause to be dissatisfied, there being no means to supply payment to those to whom it is due, or even to defray a part of the most necessary expenses of the country.[23]

Efforts were made to increase the flow of furs by amending the regulations of the Community. In order to encourage personal initiative the habitants were given permission in 1653 to retain three quarters of the beaver taken to the warehouse, instead of the one half previously decreed. The district of Tadoussac was set aside to meet the general charges. In 1656, the habitants were given permission to trade for one year at Tadoussac,[24] but even this liberality did not increase the Company's profits: an ordinance of the following year restoring the Council's control complained that "the inhabitants are well instructed in all the means of profiting from the trade ... They no longer trade at the public warehouse and some individuals have drawn all the profits to themselves".[25]

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23. Relations XL, 211.

24. Innis, Fur Trade, 40.

25. Arrest du Conseil d'Etat portant Reglement sur le commerce et traitte, 7 March 1657, cited Innis, op.cit., 40. The individuals concerned were Lauzon and his nominees: see Chapter IV.

But by the time this measure came into force, other more desperate efforts to secure economic viability were also being made -- in the form of settlement among the Iroqois. For, although the peace overtures of the Iroqois were so cautiously received, the precarious economic position of the French colony made this proffered friendship enormously important -- far more important to the French than it was to the Iroqois themselves. It offered a means of financial salvation, if only the opportunity could be successfully exploited. In fact, the Onondaga settlement of 1656-8 turned out to be another of the fleeting contacts that characterised the relations between Jesuits and Iroqois during the period of Jesuit pre-eminence in New France; but the pattern of these contacts, as we shall see, is not without significance.

Chapter III

Jesuit-Iroquois relations before 1656

The relations between the Jesuits and the Huron Indians in New France have been extensively examined by historians, for obvious reasons: Jesuit contact with the Hurons was better-established and longer sustained than with any other tribal group, and more fully documented. The Hurons were picked out by the Jesuits in the early 1630's as likely targets for conversion and "Francisation". They were a sedentary people, numerous and concentrated in a small area.[1] It would be relatively easy to establish missionaries in their villages once their initial wariness had been overcome,[2] and through their elaborate network of trading connections they might eventually spread the word among more distant tribes. From the first mission of Fathers Brebeuf, Daniel and Davost in 1634, to the destruction and dispersal of the Hurons by the Iroquois, every development and incident in the relationship between Jesuit and Huron was meticulously documented, in the Relations

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1. Two documents on this subject — the selection of the Hurons — are included in S.R. Mealing's brief selection from the Relations (Toronto: 1969): a letter from Paul le Jeune to his Father Provincial in Paris, dated 1634, and part of le Jeune's Relation for 1634, "On the means of converting the Savages". See Mealing, 22-31.

2. They were at first very wary: see Lanctot, History of Canada I, 164; Innis, Fur Trade, 29; Hunt, Wars of the Iroquois, 55. It is perhaps worth noting the commercial element of this wariness. The projected mission centres were on the "fur route" from the interior to Quebec and Fort Orange: see Kupp, Fur Trade Relations, 98.

sent back to France for general publication, or in the secret Journal des Jesuites, or both. A whole narrative is plainly set forth, and it provides a microcosm of Jesuit-Indian relationships involving both evangelical and commercial factors.[3]

Jesuit relations with the Iroquois, on the other hand, though equally meticulously documented, provide no continuous narrative. The Iroquois usually appear in the pages of the Relations as raiders, swooping swiftly on the French settlements and disappearing, or as envoys, seeking peace settlements which are rapidly broken.[4] The contacts are usually fleeting, which tends to give the impression that the Iroquois were nothing more than peripheral figures, however damaging their incursions. They have been ascribed only a negative importance, as when Parkman wrote that they "ruined the trade that was the lifeblood of New France; they stopped the current of her arteries, and made all her early years a misery and a terror".[5] But the French did sometimes acknowledge that the Iroquois might have an important positive role in the development of New France, and they did attempt on occasions to foster a

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3. Brebeuf's "Breve Relation" 1653, gives a summary of the whole Huron venture: Relations XXXIX, 47ff.

4. The index to Thwaites' edition of the Relations list over 150 instances of Iroquois hostility towards French settlements or individuals. There are nearly 30 references to alliances and peace negotiations.

5. Jesuits in North America, 552. Parkman considered that Liberty owed a debt to the Iroquois for thus stifling the forces of Absolutism, Feudalism and repression in the New World.

friendship with the apparently incurably unfriendly Five Nations. The Jesuits played a central part in these attempts.

The first contacts between the French and the Iroquois in North America did not augur well for their future relationship: in order to secure the friendship of those Indians on whom he depended for their knowledge of the country and for trade, Champlain fought with them against the Iroquois in 1609, and again in 1610 and 1614.[6] The Iroquois claimed the first of their French victims in 1622, when they attacked the Recollet convent of Notre Dame des Anges.[7] At this stage, however, their raids and ambushes were sporadic, and seem to have been undertaken without the determination and careful preparation of later campaigns. In 1624, they were even prepared to make a peace treaty with the French and with the Hurons and other "French Indians", and to trade furs with them -- a development which tends to discredit the theory that Champlain's early skirmishes earned the French the undying enmity of the Iroquois.[8] Relations were peaceful at the time when the Jesuits became established in New France in the mid-1620's.[9]

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6. For a summary of the circumstances surrounding these clashes, see Lanctot, op.cit., 106-11.

7. Ibid., 118.

8. Ibid., 119; Hunt, op.cit., 27.

9. Fathers Lalement, Babeuf and Masse and Brothers Charton and Buret arrived in Quebec in June 1625, and in March 1626 they were granted a seigniory bordering the Beauport river; Lanctot, op.cit., 120-1. Earlier Jesuit activity in Acadia (see Relations I-III) had been short-lived; it was with the landing of 1625 that the foundations of Jesuit ascendancy in New France were laid.

It was a bitter blow to the French colony when in 1627, hostilities broke out between the Five Nations and the "French Indians": the French became embroiled when a French envoy was murdered.[10] The Jesuits suffered as everyone did from the resulting shortage of supplies, and Lalement had to send home workmen who could not be fed. And in the spring of 1628, instead of relief vessels from France, there were English ships blocking the river at Tadoussac. But with the restoration of the colony to France by the treaty of Saint Germain en Laye, a new phase of Jesuit activity in New France began. The close relationship between the Society of Jesus and Jean de Lauzon, Intendant of the Company of 100 Associates, became apparent: Lauzon's influence ensured that the Capuchins and Recollets were excluded from the colony.[11] Thanks to what Lalement referred to as Lauzon's "skilful conduct of the affair", the Jesuits remained the only religious body in New France.[12]

The commercial life of the French colony was quickly resumed on the departure of the English — 80,000 crowns' worth of furs

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10. Lanctot, op.cit., 121-2.

11. For the dubious negotiations which resulted in the exclusion of the other orders, see Lanctot, op.cit., 148-9. The emphasis of Rochemonteix' account is, not unexpectedly, rather different, but it does seem likely that the Jesuit monopoly was secured only by some disingenuity on the part of Lauzon: Rochemonteix, Les Jesuites de la Nouvelle France I, 182. See also M. Eastman, Church and State in Early Canada (Edinburgh: 1915), 15.

12. Letter of Lalement, cited Rochemonteix, op.cit., I, 195.

was obtained in barter with the Hurons during the summer of 1633.[13] But the attacks of the Iroqois were also resumed. Two Frenchmen were killed in an ambush in June 1633, and the colonists suffered more scattered raids. Champlain appealed twice to Richlieu for reinforcements: with just 120 men, he asserted "dans un an on se rendra maistre absolu de tous ces peuples en y apportant l'ordre requis, et celle sugmentera le culte de la religion et un trafiq incroyable...".[14] Trade and evangelisation are linked, as always. The Jesuit missionaries also followed the traders when in 1634, a trading-post and fort were established at Three Rivers. This is the place which, as Salone emphasises, remained "le grand rendez-vous des traiteurs et des sauvages, le grand marche du castor", for all the first half of the 17th century. The Jesuits were the first seigneurs at Three Rivers.[15]

It was not only at Three Rivers that the French were attempting in 1634 to drum up trade. A party of Dutchmen who set out in December that year from FortOrange on a journey to Mohawk and Oneida country reported many traces of French traders. They were told that six Frenchmen had been in one of the Oneida villages in "the month of August of this year", and had given the Indians "good gifts"; the Dutchmen saw for themselves "very good axes",

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13. Relations 1633, cited Lanctot, op.cit., I, 153.

14. Letter of Champlain to Richelieu 15 August 1635, in Collection de Manuscrits ...

15. Salone, Colonisation de la Nouvelle France, 62.

French shirts, coats and razors. The Onondaga promised that if the Dutch party were to return in the summer, they would be shown "where the Frenchmen came trading with their shallops".[16] The Dutch were indignant at this invasion of their trading territory; the Iroquois merely complained that the Dutch were scoundrels because, unlike the French, they brought no presents. The identity of these Frenchmen is not known, but their presence in Iroquois country at this juncture is not surprising: in 1633, the Mohawk were trying to make a commercial treaty with the French Indians, and the French no doubt planned to take any commercial advantage they could from this circumstance. There is also evidence that Le Jeune made plans to send some Jesuit fathers to the Iroquois. Again we see the missionaries' projects closely linked with those of the traders.[17]

While these commercial ventures were being planned, the Company of 100 Associates was facing great financial hardship. It received no compensation for its losses to the English, and it had to pay a large indemnity to de Caen after the suppression of his short-lived monopoly.[18] The vitality of the colony depended on the vitality of the fur trade, and the Jesuits cannot have been

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16. The report of one of the participants in this "Journey to Mohawk and Oneida Country, 1634-5" appears in Jameson's Narratives of New Netherland, (New York: 1959), 139-55.

17. Hunt, Wars of the Iroquois, 35; Kupp, Fur Trade Relations, 112.

18. For a summary of the Company's difficulties, see Trudel, Introduction to New France, 45-6; Lanctot, op.cit., I, 160.

unaware of the potential importance of Three Rivers to the trade when they took their leading part in the founding of the post. Coincidentally enough, the Relation of 1636 contains a long repudiation by Le Jeune of accusations against the Jesuits of fur trading. He explains that beaver skins are the currency of New France. Day-labourers would rather be paid "in this money than in any other". The "Gentlemen of the Company" do not object to the use of skins as currency, "provided that, in the end, [the skins] came back to their storehouse, and do not cross the sea except in their ships". By paying for goods with skins the habitant saves "the 25% that the market price gives [the goods] over that in France for the risk they run upon the sea". Le Jeune points out that if the missionaries were really involved in trade and the Gentlemen knew nothing of it, "they would not be very vigilant in their affairs and in the principal part of their business".[19] He apologises, after eight pages of reflections like this, for "dwelling so long on what did not merit an answer".[20]

The 1656 Relation was not concerned entirely with the fur trade, however. It has also been described as "a true emigrant's

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19. In 1643, the Company of Habitants did in fact issue a statement to certify that the Jesuits took no part in the fur trade; it was appended to the Relation of that year (XXV, 77-9). As Parkman pointed out, however, the statement merely proves that "the Jesuits were neither partners or rivals of the Company's monopoly": Jesuits in North America, 466.

20. Relations IX, 171-83.

handbook", for Le Jeune set out in it all the advantages -- and disadvantages -- for which the settler should be prepared. It was clear to the Jesuits that emigration from France must be encouraged if the colony were to remain viable, and the Relations, which were read with such interest in the mother country, were a useful vehicle for colonising propaganda.[21] For all the Jesuits' efforts, however, the French population on the St. Lawrence remained pitifully small: in 1642 there were still only about 300 habitants spread between Beaupre, Beauport, Three Rivers and Quebec.[22]

By the early 1640's, besides the colonial propaganda, a new theme appears in the Relations -- the question of what is to be done about the Iroqois. The Jesuit view is that they must be either brought into alliance with the French, or exterminated.[23] It is true that after the English occupation, the treaty of 1624 was disregarded. The treaty was broken off in 1627. In 1634 two Frenchmen were killed at Three Rivers, and in 1637 the same vulnerable settlement was surrounded

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21. See Relations IX, 185-91, "Some Advice to those who Desire to Cross Over into New France". The influence of the Relations was considerable in pious and wealthy circles in France: an anonymous reader provided the funds for the building of the Notre Dame des Anges seminary in 1635, and another financed the establishment of the mission at Three Rivers: Lanctot, op.cit., 163-4; for the influence of the Relations on the Duchesse d'Aguillion and Mme. de la Peltrie, ibid., 165; Maisonneuve and La Dauversiere too may well have been influenced by the Relations: Dollier de Casson, History of Montreal (Toronto: 1928; R. Flenley, ed.), 63, 71.

22. Lanctot, op.cit., 172.

23. Relations XXI, 271: letter of Charles Lalemant to the Assistant de France in Rome, 28 February 1642; see also Vimont's Relation of 1643.

by a large party of Iroqois warriors,[24] but the raids and ambushes were as yet infrequent compared with the onslaught the colonists were to suffer in the early 1650's. Still, the attacks were being intensified, and a new note of fierce anti-Iroqois feeling is evident in the Relations.

In The Wars of the Iroqois, Hunt points out that during the 1650's, the Iroqois were far more often attacked by the Hurons than the reverse — an observation which is a useful counter-balance to Parkman's portrayal of the Iroqois as an "insensate savage".[25] In the course of the 1640's, however, the Iroqois did move onto the offensive; the raids of 1642 have been described as "the true beginning of the long and desolating wars of the Iroqois". This was the year when Father Jogues was captured as he accompanied a fleet of Huron canoes returning from a trading expedition to Quebec.[26] During 1642 and 1643, the missionaries posted in remote Indian villages received no supplies from Quebec, so thoroughly were lines of communication disrupted by Iroqois raids. In 1644,

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24. Lanctot, op.cit., 17.

25. "The Iroqois seemed to fear the savage allies of New France even when at home": Wars of the Iroqois, 72-3; see also Jameson, Narratives of New Netherland, 150, for the Oneidas' fear of the French savages; Parkman, however, categorically states that the Hurons at this period "lived in constant fear of the Iroqois": Jesuits in North America, 149; for one of his characterisations of the Iroqois, their insatiable rage for conquest and homicidal frenzy, ibid., 540.

26. Jameson, Narratives of New Netherland, gives a detailed list of the documentation of Jogues' captivity, and includes Jogues' account of "Novum Belgium": 240-1, 257-8.

Father Bressani was taken prisoner at Three Rivers by a war party of forty Iroqois; like Jogues, he suffered terrible hardships in captivity before being ransomed by the Dutch.[27]

The Jesuits were suffering, like all the French in Canada, from an increase in Iroqois hostility which can be explained only in terms of developments outside the narrow boundaries of New France. By about 1640, the beaver population of the Iroqois hunting-grounds in present-day New York State was seriously depleted by years of indiscriminate hunting. The Iroqois needed beaver to carry on the trade with the Dutch which had by now become essential to them, so they had to look about for alternative means of obtaining skins. The new role that they decided to assume was that of middlemen in the north-west trade.[28] To this end, they made several efforts to negotiate peace with the French; it was when their overtures were rebuffed that they began the offensive that was to culminate in the events of 1649. And their attacks were the more deadly because from about 1639, the Iroqois were obtaining firearms from Dutch

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27. Vimont gives an account of Bressani's captivity in the Relation of 1643-4 (Relations XXVI, 33-5, 39-51); Bressani's own description of his experiences appears in two letters written on 15 July and 31 August 1644; see Relations XXXIX, 63-77, 77-83.

28. Hunt, op.cit., 74; Goldstein, French-Iroqois Diplomatic and Military Relations, (The Hague - Paris: 1969) 46-7; Tooker, "The Iroqois Defeat of the Huron", Pensylvania Archaeologist XXXIII, 116-7, discusses Trelease's theory that the Iroqois planned to "oust Indians who lived in areas where furs could be obtained by hunting, and to hunt these territories themselves", but prefers Hunt's view that the wars were due to the Iroqois' desire to become middlemen. See Allen W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York in the seventeenth century, (Ithaca, N.Y. 1960).

traders in New Netherland.[29]

In 1641, a large band of Iroqois came to Three Rivers to return French captives and to conduct peace negotiations.[30] Montmagny -- and Father Ragueneau, who was also present -- did not give them a sympathetic hearing. They proposed that Iroqois and French should become one people, but no mention was made of the Indian allies of the French. The Iroqois' aim, clearly, was to immobilise French resistance while they disposed of the Hurons and Algonkins. Monmagny refused to make a treaty which did not include the French Indians. Iroqois attacks were resumed almost at once.

It was during the darkest days of the Iroqois offensive that the Jesuits and leading laymen of the colony brought to fruition their plans for the formation of the Communaute des Habitants.[31] In the following years, good supplies of furs were transported to the French settlements under the protection of soldiers — two small groups of reinforcements had arrived in 1642 and 1644.[32] The

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29. In spite of the reputation of the Dutch in New France, where they were much blamed for supplying the Iroqois with weapons, the trade in fire-arms was in fact illegal: see Van Rensselaer-Bowier Manuscripts (van Laer, Albany: 1908), ed.), 426, 565, for ordinances of 1639, 1641 prohibiting the sale of firearms to Indians; for the effect of the trade, see Narratives of New Netherland, 274, "Journal of New Netherland" 1647: with guns, the Mohawks are successful against their Canadian enemies where before "they derived little advantage".

30. Hunt, op.cit., 74-5; Lanctot, History of Canada, I, 171; Goldstein, op.cit., 66.

31. See above, 17-18.

32. Relations XXIII, 289; Dollier de Casson, op.cit., 167; op.cit., 123.

men who escorted the Huron canoes down-river in 1645 had wintered in the Jesuits' mission-houses, at the Jesuits' expense.[33]

There was at this time a respite for the French settlers and their allies. An exchange of prisoners arranged by Montmagny in 1645 led, after long and complex negotiations, to a peace between the Mohawks and the French and French Indians. To Marie de l'Incarnation, the peace seemed like a miracle from heaven;[34] to later generations able to follow an account of the negotiations in the Journal des Jesuits it appears rather more worldly, the product of human duplicity rather than heavenly inspiration. The Jesuit fathers Vimont and Le Jeune were closely associated with Montmagny at every stage of the discussions, and without the knowledge of their Superior, Lalement, they secretly agreed with the Iroquois to abandon their Algonkin allies.[35] For all the dubious dealings that produced it, however, the peace did remain in force through the following year, and the Hurons brought large cargoes of furs down the St. Lawrence - so large, in fact, that some furs had to remain unsold for lack of trade goods.[36]

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33. Journal des Jesuites, XXIII, 289; Dollier de Casson, op.cit., 167; Hunt, op.cit., 76.

34. For a full account of the negotiations, see Hunt, op.cit., 77-81. When Lalement finally did learn the truth, he entered the story in Latin in the Journal des Jesuites with the remark that "what was surprising therein was that our Fathers sent us no word of all that": Relations XXVII, 147-55.

36. Relations XXVIII, 141, 231.

The close involvement of the Jesuits in diplomatic activity continued. We read in the Relations of 1645-6 that, "Monsieur our Governor having resolved to send two Frenchmen to the country of the Annierronnon", Father Jogues readily agreed to go. He had a double purpose. He hoped to convert some of those Iroqois who had treated him kindly during his captivity in 1642, and indeed the Relation refers to his journey as the start of the "Mission of the Martyrs"; but he also had a political mission. He was to persuade the Mohawks, the only Iroqois signatories of the peace, to prevent the upper Iroqois from passing through Mohawk territory, to trade with the Dutch or fight with the French. In the first Iroqois village he reached, Jogues is pictured for us as he "sets forth the word of Onontio and of all the French...".[37] He was received with great courtesy and display of affection, and was assured that his message would be given serious consideration. After reporting to Quebec the outcome of these discussions, Jogues set off again to the country of the Iroqois late in September. Less than a month afterwards, he was dead at the hand of a Mohawk assassin of the Bear clan, and Iroqois attacks on the French and their Indian allies were renewed with vigour.[38]

The usual explanation of the Iroqois hostility met by Jogues on his return journey, the one which has entered into the folklore

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37. Relations XXIX, 49-53; Lanctot, op.cit., 81-3.

38. For an account of Jogues' life, and bibliography, see D.C.B., 387-9.

of New France, is that they suspected a black box which he left with them on his summer expedition of being the source of a number of ills that befell them soon after his departure — sickness, drought, famine. The French heard of Jogues' death a year after it occurred, from the Dutch: the news was contained in a letter from Kieft, Governor of New Netherland, to Montmagny, which put forward the theory about the black box. The story has been accepted and perpetuated by generations of historians,[39] but Hunt rejects it firmly. There is evidence that the murder of Jogues was not generally popular among the Iroquois, as would surely have been the case had the Jesuit been regarded as a bringer of plague and suffering. When he arrived in Mohawk territory, Jogues found that a war party was already on its way to Fort Richelieu, and that envoys had been sent to raise warriors among other tribes. It seems likely that the wrath of the Iroquois had been roused not by the black box, but by the rich fur convoy of the Hurons. By the terms of the treaty of 1645, the Hurons and Algonkins were to trade with the Iroquois as well as with the French, and the Iroquois were anxiously awaiting replenishment of their supplies of skins for trading with the Dutch. The following year they saw the Hurons bring down the St. Lawrence so many furs that the French were not even able to purchase them all, but the Iroquois had no part in the exchange. If furs could not

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39. Relations XXXI, 117-9, XXXII, 25; see Rochemonteix, op.cit., II, 54-7, Parkman, Jesuits in N. America, 400, Lanctot, op.cit., 189 for retellings of the story of the black box.

be obtained through trade with the Hurons, the Hurons would have to be supplanted.[40]

The period from Jogues' death to the dispersal of the Hurons was one of intense diplomatic activity among the Iroqois tribes and their neighbours. This activity is chronicled by Vimont, Ragueneau, Lalement and the other compilers of the Relations, but the French were not themselves directly involved: the parleys they describe took place between Huron and Onondaga, Susquehanna and Onondaga.[41] The Hurons were attempting to split the Iroqois confederation, while the Mohawks, in particular, felt increasingly isolated and driven to fight for their commercial life.[42] Ironically enough in view of the impending disaster, the Jesuits at this period were well content with the progress of the Huron mission and confident of continuing success, and their attentions were concentrated on Huronia. The Hurons were unable to bring their furs downstream in 1647 because the Iroqois were blockading the river, but this does not seem to have disturbed them greatly — they had acquired plentiful supplies of trade goods in the previous year — and in 1648 trading was again very active at

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40. See Hunt, op.cit., 82-6.

41. See Hunt, op.cit., 82-6. Trigger, "The French Presence in Huronia", C.H.R. XLIX, 136-7, argues that from 1645 onwards an anti-French party was growing among the Hurons which aimed to break the French alliance and establish trade links with the Iroqois: he sees the Huron-Onondaga parleys as part of the effort at rapprochement.

42. Hunt, op.cit., 88, 91.

Montreal and Tadoussac.[43] In March 1649, Father Ragueneau wrote from Huronia to Caraffa, General of the Society of Jesus, that the outlook for the church there was better than ever before. Between July 1648 and March 1649, 2700 Indians were converted, and in 1647 and 1648 over 3000 visited the mission centre at Sainte Marie. The priests had supplies for three years.[44] What need had the Jesuits, in these circumstances, of contact with the Iroquois?

After the dispersal of the Hurons, if matters had developed according to Iroquois expectation, there might have been much negotiation between French and Iroquois on commercial questions; the Jesuits would no doubt have played a leading role in any such parleys. But the Iroquois in fact found themselves no nearer than in 1646 to becoming middle-men in the French trade. The early 1650's was the time when the Relations were filled with horrified accounts of Iroquois hostilities, and when Druillettes went on his mission to enlist help in New England against the Iroquois.[45] Ragueneau reported in the Relation of 1651-2 rumours that the Iroquois were massing for a tremendous attack to destroy the French the following winter.[46] While there was no question of any productive contact, material or evangelical, with the Iroquois, the Jesuits were quite prepared to fill the Relations with

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43. Hunt, 87, 91; Lanctot, Hist. of Canada I, 169; Trigger, "The Jesuits and the Fur Trade", Ethnohistory XXII, 46.

44. Relations XXXIII, 253-5.

45. See above, 20, 21.

46. Relations XXXVIII, 61.

propaganda against them and to lend their skills to the diplomatic offensive. But we have also seen how positively the Fathers reacted when any opportunity was offered for the French to gain commercial advantage from contact with the Iroqois: in 1634, in 1645, again in the 1650's they were quick to associate their missionary efforts with French commercial undertakings, and the lines between the two spheres of endeavour are often blurred. In the period before the establishment of the Onondaga mission, dealings between Jesuit and Iroqois were consistently based on commercial as well as religious considerations, and in 1656 there again seemed commercial advantage to be gained for the struggling French colony from trade with the Iroqois. The Onondaga "adventure" can be seen as part of a regular pattern rather than as a fleeting and unique enterprise.

Chapter IV

Jesuit trading activity in New France: Political developments, 1655-7.

> Whatever activities the Jesuits may have performed on behalf of the government or fur trade of New France was action taken because it made the Jesuits' work in Huronia possible and did not conflict with their principles.[1]

This historian's verdict on the commercial activity of the Jesuits in one area of New France is in essence the view of those Jesuits themselves. They accepted the necessity of becoming "all things to all men, in order to gain all to Jesus Christ",[2] and, as Le Jeune explained in his Relation of 1636, this sometimes involved the Fathers in transactions which to the outsider might appear unfitting.[3] When Rochemonteix roundly declares that the Jesuits were not involved in trade, he is making a claim for them that they did not make for themselves.[4]

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1. Bruce G. Trigger, "The Jesuits and the Fur Trade", Ethnohistory XII (1965), 51.

2. Relations XXIX, 49.

3. See above, p. 29.

4. Les Jesuites et la Nouvelle France II, 176, 177. Recent researches by Dr. J. Kupp in the Public Archives of Canada have revealed many notarial and admiralty documents of La Rochelle and Guienne which indicate that the Jesuit Superior Jerome Lalemant signed loans and contracts of the Company of Habitants dealing with very risky financial enterprises: Dutch Documents relating to the Early Fur Trade and Cod Fisheries of North America, Vols.XV-XVII (Public Archives of Canada).

Whatever one's views on the morality of the matter, it is clear that the Jesuits did have commercial connections in Canada from their earliest landings there; what is interesting is their own changing attitude in the reporting of commercial activity. In the Relation of 1616, Biard gives details of the "Contract d'Association des Jesuites au Trafique du Canada", entered into before a notary of Dieppe in January 1611, by which the Jesuits, Madame de Guercheville, the sieur Robin and others were to share the expenses and the profits of a Canadian mission.[5] In "An Account of the Canadian Mission" written by Father Jouvency in 1710, the same events are recalled: Madame de Guercheville's generous assistance in founding the mission is acknowledged, but no mention is made of the Jesuits' part in the transaction.[6] In the years between the writing of these two reports, the Jesuits were forced by hostile opinion to become much more discreet in discussing their commercial interests. From the beginning, the Contract d'Association roused suspicion of their motives, as Biard himself was aware. The Fathers were accused in 1629 of coming to Canada "to convert beavers rather than savages";[7] Le Jeune's protestation of 1636 was prompted by circulating rumours of Jesuit fur-trading, and the Company's declaration of 1643 was secured in an attempt to quell the still-persistent stories.[8] Talon reported in 1667 that the Jesuit Fathers in New France were employed mainly in distant missions,

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5. Relations III, 233.

6. Relations I, 209.

7. See 'The Catholic Clergy and the Fur Trade', Cornelius C. Jaenen, in C.H.A. Historical Papers, 1970, 65.

8. Above, p. 29.

> ouvrage digne de leur zele et de leur piete s'il est exempt du meslange de l'interest dont on les dit susceptibles, par la traitte des pelleteries qu'on assure qu'ils font aux Outaouaks, et au Cap de la Magdelaine; ce que je ne scay pas de science certaine.[9]

Frontenac was less guarded: he considered most of the missions "de pures moqueries" and asserted that the Society of Jesus was interested only in the conversion of beavers.[10]

In the face of this persistent 'misunderstanding' of their motives, it is not surprising that the Fathers relegated reports of trade matters from the Relations themselves to the secret Journal des Jesuites, but now that the secrets are revealed, we can quite easily document their commercial activities. Mention has already been made of the Journal entry on the occasion of the grant of a charter to the Communaute des Habitants.[11] The entry for 15 November 1645 records the Fathers' concern at the rumour that trade with the Indians was to be prohibited at Quebec as it already had been at Three Rivers. Father Vimont sought the guidance of

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9. "Memoire sur l'etat present du Canada", L.H.S.Q. Historical Documents (Quebec, 1840), 3.

10. Frontenac to Colbert, 2 November 1672, cited Jaenen, op.cit., 73. As this article makes clear, the Jesuits were by no means the only clerics in New France with commercial interests; Professor Jaenen deals also with the trade activities of the Recollets, Sulpitians and the women's orders. See the Journal des Jesuites itself, June 1647; "the room of ... the Ursulines' priest is inspected, and more than 260 pounds weight of Beaver skins are taken from him, after he had boasted that he had some, and that he would give them to the warehouse only for a good sum ..."

11. See above, p. 18.

"M. des Chastelets, general Manager", on the question, and the diarist was able to report a favourable outcome: "the conclusion was that ... this matter would proceed for us as usual, but that we should carry it on quietly".[12] We read also of discussions of the beaver trade at Sillery,[13] and learn that when Fremin was sent to the Cap de la Madeleine mission in 1665 he was relieved of all responsibility for the fur trade in order to devote himself to evangelisation among the Montagnais and Algonkins.[14] Commercial activity among the Jesuits of New France must be accepted as a fact of the colony's life.

The trade which has so far been considered, though arguably contrary to the constitution of the Society of Jesus, took place within the legal limitations imposed by the government of New France. Though the regulations were varied from time to time, it was quite legal, as Le Jeune was at pains to explain, for peltries to be used as currency within the colony. And the usual legal means of obtaining skins from the Indians was through barter at such centres as Sillery and Three Rivers and Cap de la Madeleine.[15] The next question to be considered is whether the Jesuits also took part in the trading that went on outside the law -- whether they chose to interpret in the interests of their order the temporal as well as the ecclesiastical laws by which they were theoretically bound.

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12. Relations XXVII, 99.

13. Relations XXX, 187, 19 July 1647.

14. Journal des Jesuites 17 August 1665, cited Jaenen, op.cit., 72.

15. Jean Hamelin, Economie et Societe en Nouvelle-France (Quebec: 1960), 48-51, gives a summary of the varying regulations governing the fur trade between 1627 and 1760.

There is no doubt that the inhabitants of New France engaged in illegal trade on a very large scale. The fact that successive governors had to issue numerous reiterations of prohibitions against smuggling indicates how wide-spread the practice was, and how little notice was taken of the prohibitions. Three ordinances of Montmagny between August 1646 and June 1647, for example, each "reitere les ordres deja donnes" in matters of trade.[16] Lauzon's ordinances of 1652-4 also include a high proportion of trading regulations: one dated 28 April 1654 is aimed at preventing "le divertissement des castors et autres pelleteries".[27] The 'diverted' furs found their way into the hands of Dutch traders of New Netherland, for reasons which are easily discernible. Dutch trade goods were superior in quality to those of the French, and prices at Fort Orange were always lower than in Quebec -- the difference varied, but in 1653 one ell of Flemish linen cost two livres in New Amsterdam and twenty-eight livres in Quebec; in 1662 a hogshead of French wine cost about 400 livres in New France and about 140 livres in New Netherland. French records of 1665 mention a price difference of 100%, and this was even after the interruption of supplies to New Netherland brought

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16. P.G. Roy, Ordonnances, Commissions etc. ... des Gouverneurs et Intendants de la Nouvelle France (Beauceville : 1924) I, 7-9, ordinances dated 12 August 1646, 21 September 1646, 25 June 1647.

17. Lauzon's ordinances appear in Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Quebec pour 1924-5, 377-90.

about by the English conquest.[18] When the same amount of beaver would procure twice as much merchandise outside the regular channels as within them, it is hardly surprising that the habitants of New France felt it worth their while to overlook the regulations, which bound them to turn over their skins to the Company warehouse, and to accept a fixed price for them.

The Dutch authorities were as much opposed as those of Quebec to the activities of the 'free traders', and sought to control the flow of profits from their settlements into official channels. An ordinance of 1642 issued in Rensselaerswyck proclaimed that private traders not only "wronged the honourable patroon in his jurisdiction", but also impoverished the inhabitants.[19] Pieter Stuyvesant, Governor of New Netherland from 1647 till 1664, was repeatedly informed when the Directors of the West India Company were replying to his letters that what interested them most was "your deliberation to prevent the smuggling in the fur trade";[20] but in 1660, he still had to report that "on a third, if not a half" of the beavers exported by way of New England, no duty had been paid.[21] Neither was it only the Dutch

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18. Kupp, op.cit., 234.

19. Van Rensselaer-Bowier Manuscripts, 626-7, ordinance of 10 October 1642 "prohibiting freemen and private traders from coming ... within the limits of the colony".

20. Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany: 1856-87 - hereinafter referred to as N.Y.C.D.). XIV, 400, Directors to Stuyvesant, 22 December 1657; for other remarks by the Directors on the same matter, 373 (19 December 1656), 398 (15 September 1657), 452 (22 December 1659).

and French authorities in North America who had constant struggles with flaunters of commercial regulations. In the records of Massachusetts and Connecticut, for example, one finds repeated prohibitions against illegal trade.[22] In every colony the legislators faced the same difficulty: as long as there were profits to be made through the exercise of personal initiative, there were everywhere colonists prepared to face the possibility of prosecution. And the Dutch were perhaps the most single-minded traders of all.

The French holders of fur-trading monopolies from the French crown had many obligations regarding the transport of settlers to the St. Lawrence, the supporting of priests and the encouragement of evangelisation.[23] The Dutch holders of the New Netherland Company monopoly granted in 1614, on the other hand, undertook in return for their privileges only to map the New Netherland coastline.[24] They were not much concerned with the conversion of the Indians.[25] In

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22. Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay ... (N.B. Shurtleff ed., Boston, 1853-4) I, 196; III, 208, 297, 348. The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut (J. Hammond Trumbull ed., Hartford, 1850), I, 113, 145, 163, 197.

23. See "Acte pour l'etablissement de la Compagnie des 100 Associes ...", 1627, in C. Nish, The French Regime (Canadian Historical Documents Series, Scarborough, Ont., 1965), 18-19.

24. Kupp, op.cit., 35.

25. See C.R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire (London, 1965), 150-51; Dutch Calvinist ministers in New Netherland were more concerned with the presence of Protestant dissenters than with the "admittedly thankless task" of conversion; the Directors were not even much concerned with the dissenters, as long as they caused no annoyance to their neighbours — Stuyvesant was instructed not to be too strict with them, as he might discourage immigration. The contrast with the religious orthodoxy of the French authorities could hardly be more marked!

the 1640's there were in Rensselaerswyck "as many traders as persons",[26] and the patroon of the settlement was certainly an example to the colonists. Kiliaen van Rensselaer's long Memorial of 1633 to the Assembly of Nineteen of the West India Company dwelt on the possibility of diverting the trade of the "French Indians" from the River of Canada to New Netherland, and in 1641 the same matter was still exercising him:

> I have not given up the hope, if the Lord will grant me a few years more, of diverting to the colony a large part of the furs of the savages who now trade with the French in Canada, and nothing grieves me more than that we now dispute with one another about formalities and do not even touch what is to yield profits.[27]

And van Rensselaer was not the first Dutch trader to realise that rich possibilities might lie in the diversion of the French trade. In 1626, Isaac de Rasieres reported to the Directors of the West India Company his plans for persuading the Minquaes (Mohawks) to "come to an agreement with the French Indians" which would enable the Dutch allies to trade for skins in the north. De Rasieres provides a glimpse of the commercial anarchy prevailing in the North American colonies at this period:

> ... the French cannot procure [wampum] unless they come to barter for it with our natives in

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26. Narratives of New Netherland, 274. The remark occurs in the "Journal of New Netherland, 1647", probably taken from a copy-book of Willem Kieft, Governor of New Netherland 1638-47.

27. Van Rensselaer-Bowier Manuscripts, 553, van Rensselaer to Toussaint Muyssart, 6 June 1641. The Memorial of 1633, 244-6. For further illustration of van Rensselaer's commercial philosophy, see also 411, 483.

> the north, just as the Brownists of Plymouth come near our places to get wampum in exchange. I beg to submit to your Honors whether, if we could overtake French or English sloops here, it would not be well by some means or other to take the trade away from them, either by force or by spoiling their trade by outbidding them ...[28]

With commercial competitors like de Rasieres, the French could hardly afford simply to wait at Three Rivers or Quebec till the Indians should choose to bring down their furs, and the Jesuits, well-informed and practical men, must have realised it. Their compatriots in North America certainly did. In 1615, Champlain was already aware that "the real, eventual enemy was the Dutchman in Fort Nassau and New Amsterdam",[29] and in the 1660's Talon was still pointing out the same danger.[30]

It can never be proved conclusively that the Jesuits, faced with the necessity of providing material support for their spiritual undertakings, accepted as the French, Dutch and English traders around them did that they must take their profits where they could, regardless of the regulations. If they bartered with the Dutch or their allies at Onondaga, obtaining trade goods for beaver skins, they were disregarding both the constitution of their order, which forbade them to engage in trade, and the legislation of New France, which allowed beaver skins to leave the colony only by way of designated warehouses.

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28. Van Rappard Papers (San Marino: 1924), 215, 224.

29. M. Bishop, Champlain: the Life of Fortitude (Toronto, 1963), 200.

30. "Memoire sur l'etat present du Canada", 2. For other examples of French wariness in the face of aggressive Dutch trading, see Kupp, op.cit., Chap. 1. passim.

But let us consider the general pattern of economic circumstances in New France and New Netherland. The French colonists had access, through their Indian allies, to large supplies of furs, but the trade goods they needed for barter were expensive to obtain from France. The allies of the Dutch and English settlers had largely exhausted their hunting-grounds of furs by 1640.[31] The Dutch in particular, with their strong currency and good supplies of cheap, well-made trade goods from Europe, had the kettles and knives and cloth the Indians wanted. The fur trade in North America was regulated not by the ordinances of the trading companies, but by the business instincts of the traders and their search for profits.[32] What would be more sensible than the exchange of French furs for Dutch trade goods? The Dutch were eager to fulfil the demand for peltries from Holland, the French made more profit on their furs if they exchanged them for cheap Dutch goods rather than expensive French ones. In 1653, the Directors of the Dutch West India Company in Holland were suggesting the establishment of a Company trading post 50 or 60 miles north of Fort Orange, to divert the northern trade from the French, so that at the time when the Onondaga mission was being planned, the Dutch were still preoccupied with the possibility of tapping French-controlled sources of furs.[33]

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31. The falling-off of trade at Fort Orange from about 1640 made legally-obtained beaver skins very expensive there, and price ceilings had to be fixed in 1642: see Trelease, Indian Affairs ..., 118.

32. See T.J. Kupp, review article, C.H.R. vol. 51 (1970), 476-8: the economic problems of the West India Company were approached not through planning but in the light of short-term considerations.

33. N.Y.C.D. XIV, 171, 208; Trelease, op.cit., 123. Trelease also mentions that in 1655, Father Le Moyne was well-received on a visit to Fort Orange.

When they heard of the Jesuits' presence in Iroquois country in 1656, the Directors reacted cautiously. The report of the settlement was "not agreeable news to us ...", they wrote, "for it can only be to the disadvantage of our Province and the inhabitants". They asked Stuyvesant to investigate the matter, but they did not consider any immediate action necessary: "We have not as yet deemed it advisable to come to a final resolution ... as being premature and the matter perhaps of small consequence only".[34] The tone of the letter is very different from one of the previous year in which directions were given for a rapid expedition against the Swedes. On that occasion, "no delay or sluggishness" was to be tolerated, and a ship was sent from Amsterdam with 200 men and thirty-six pieces of artillery.[35] Though the French presence was on nothing like the scale of the Swedes', the Directors could have acted equally firmly against them had they considered it necessary. In fact, in spite of some uneasiness, they do not seem to have regarded the French settlement as a potentially serious gap in their economic defences, and their views were in any case not necessarily identical with those of the inhabitants of their colony. The Relations of 1656-7 include an account of the journey to Onondaga taken from the journal of one of the Fathers of the mission party, and his remarks reinforce the impression that the French presence was a source of even less alarm to the New Netherland settlers than it was to the Directors in Amsterdam. The Father mentions rumours that the Dutch wished to

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34. N.Y.C.D. XIV, 374, letter of Directors to Stuyvesant, 19 December 1656.

35. N.Y.C.D. XIV, Directors to Stuyvesant, 26 April 1655.

provide "horses and other commodities" for the French settlers, "as they are glad that we will dwell in these countries".[36]

A letter of 1656 written from New Netherland by Jeremias van Rensselaer reports "a good year for traders as this spring there has been a good trade" -- so many beavers were being sent to the Netherlands, in fact, that he was afraid they would sell cheaply.[37] In the following winter his correspondents in "the fatherland" confirmed his fears. Two letters of December 1657 mention the poor market, "as more beavers arrive than can be sold in Muscovy", and another of January 1658 expresses the wish that "there was some demand ... Peltry is low".[38] Half a year later, Jeremias was reporting the opposite difficulty: "beavers are scarce", "there are no beavers among the people".[39] These dramatic changes of fortune were characteristic of the fur trade, which could so easily be influenced, as we have seen, by factors quite outside the control of the traders. But, even though the "good trade" of spring 1656 is too early -- and too large[40] -- to be attributed directly to the presence of the Jesuits in Iroquois country, it is tempting to connect the steady fur supply of 1657 and the dearth of skins in 1658 with the fortunes of

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36. Relations XLIII, 185.

37. Correspondence of Jeremias van Rensselaer, ed. A.J.F. van Laer (Albany, 1932), 29, letter to Nicolaas Bevelot, October? 1656.

38. Letters of 17 December 1657 from Guilliaem Homma, 22 December 1657 from Anna van Rensselaer, 5 January 1658 from Richard van Rensselaer, ibid., 73, 77, 84.

39. Ibid., 104 (to Anna van Rensselaer, 11 July 1658), 107 (to Richard van Rensselaer, 28 August 1658).

40. Jeremias van Rensselaer mentions a total of 36,000 skins: ibid., 29.

the French in Onondaga.

During the Jesuits' sojourn among the Iroquois, significant developments took place in the political life of New France: the composition of the Council of Quebec was altered, and Lauzon resigned his office before the end of his term as governor and returned to France. The two developments are not unconnected, and each was the outcome of complaints made in Paris against abuses of power in New France. Lauzon, intent on appropriating what profit he could from the fur trade, had appointed his own nominees to the Council of Quebec, and was managing the affairs of the Communauté des Habitants without any regard to the wishes of the habitants themselves -- this was the report carried to the Company of One Hundred Associates in Paris by the Quebec syndic Denis. The Company in turn appealed to the King's council, and a royal decree of March 1656 considerably increased the degree of supervision to which the operations of the Council were subject.[41] The same decree relieved the Jesuits of the obligation to serve on the Council of Quebec. With his stoutest allies removed from the Council and his profiteering opportunities seriously curtailed, Lauzon clearly felt that it was time for his departure. As the historian of the Seigneury of Lauzon blandly puts it, 'dans l'été de 1656, il demit volontairement de sa charge et retourna en France'.[42]

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41. At this point the Council made a number of hasty gestures aimed at permitting the habitants to trade more freely, including opening the Tadoussac trade for a year: see above, p. 22.

42. J. Edmond Roy, Histoire de la Seigneurie de Lauzon (Levis: 1897), I, 123; in this as in other dubious episodes of the retreating governor's career, the book is a masterpiece of apology. No mention is made of the fact that Lauzon left with most of the beavers brought down-river by the Ottowas in 1656, and with 3,000 livres that he demanded as travelling expenses, though his passage probably cost him nothing: see Lanctot, Hist. of Canada, I, 220.

The last-mentioned provision of the decree of 1656 was the result of a request from the Jesuits themselves. The leaders of the Order in Paris were concerned at the enthusiasm of Father Ragueneau for political activity. They felt that his over-zealous participation in the direction of affairs in New France led to such unpopularity for their order, such currency for the ever-prevalent feeling that the Society of Jesus was more interested in temporal than in spiritual matters, that it was expedient for the Fathers to withdraw from public political life.[43] In the following year, after Ailleboust and Maisonneuve had further represented to the authorities in Paris the difficulties that the colony was facing, the Council was radically reorganised.[44] In the reconstituted body no place was allocated to the Jesuits, in accordance with their wishes. They realised that their connection with the Council "really diminished their influence while seeming to increase it".[45]

The period of the Onondaga mission was thus a period of considerable political activity in New France. It is most unfortunate that the Journal des Jesuites covering these events is missing, as is the

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43. Poncet, de Quen, Vimont and le Mercier were so much troubled by Ragueneau's involvement in political matters and by its effect on other members of the Order that they all at various times wrote to the General of the Society of Jesus about it. In 1656 de Quen was directed to "eloigner le Pere Ragueneau de Quebec": see Rochemonteix II, 183-5.

44. For details of the reorganisation, see Gustave Lanctot, "The Elective Council of Quebec of 1657" in C.H.R. XV (1934), 123-32.

45. M. Eastman, Church and State in Early Canada (Edinburgh, 1915), 44. Rochemonteix expresses very similar sentiments: op.cit., II, 182.

Relation of 1655.[46] On the departure of the Jesuits' friend and ally Lauzon, Father Vimont wrote to the General of the Society of Jesus that there was rejoicing among French and Indians alike,[47] but no mention is made of the feelings of the Jesuits themselves on the matter. Their position in the direction of the colony's affairs was bound to be altered by the departure of the governor with whom they had worked so closely and for so long. It was through Lauzon that the Jesuits' spiritual monopoly was first secured;[48] it was through the intervention of the Jesuit Charles Lalemant that Lauzon agreed to cede to the Society of Notre Dame the island on which Montreal was founded.[49] If their collaboration had had no other consequences than these, the association between Lauzon and the Jesuits would still have made its mark on the history and development of New France.

Lauzon's objectives of filling his pockets and securing the fortunes of his sons demanded the same kind of policies as the Jesuits' wish

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46. The Relation was lost when the messenger carrying it from the ship at La Rochelle to Paris was attacked and his papers scattered: see Rels. XLI, 14. The missing portion of the Journal des Jesuites, from February 1654 to October 1656, was written, it seems, with unjesuitical lack of precision, on paper of a different size from the usual folio sheets; it has long since been lost. De Quen explained the lapse most painstakingly when he resumed the folio sheets: Rels.XLII, 249; see also editor's note in Preface, ibid., 14.

47. Letter of 28 August 1656, cited Rochemonteix, op.cit., II, 232.

48. See above, p. 27.

49. The cession was made in August 1640, for the enormous sum of 150,000 livres, according to Parkman; see Dollier de Casson, op.cit., 67; Salone, op.cit., 74; Lanctot, Hist. of Canada, I, 176.

to extend the dominion of France and the Church without undue expense to either. The mission to the Iroqois was an undertaking in which both Lauzon and the Jesuits considered the risks to be worth taking in the expectation of profits, spiritual and material; it marks a climax in the influence of their partnership over the affairs of the whole colony, and in the influence of the Jesuits over Lauzon. In the planning of the Onondaga venture, Lauzon "allowed the Jesuits to shape his policy, shoulder the responsibility and face the peril".[50] He was also prepared to make what seemed to some observers unwarranted compromises to ensure the success of the expedition. No reprisals were made against Mohawk raiders while the peace treaty was allegedly in force. When in May 1656, for instance, 300 Iroqois attacked the habitants of Quebec to go to the aid of the Hurons for fear of endangering the peace.[51] Lauzon was replaced after his precipitate departure by administrators whose outlook and priorities were quite different. The Jesuits, who had for years been as one with the temporal authorities of New France, were soon in conflict with them.

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50. Eastman, op.cit., 20.

51. See above, p. 10; Lanctot, op.cit., I, 215.

CHAPTER V

Jesuits and Iroqois after 1658. The Onondaga mission in perspective.

On his return to France, Lauzon left his son unwillingly in his place. By the summer of 1657 the younger Lauzon, tired of waiting for the arrival of the new governor from France, handed over his office to a former governor, Ailleboust. It was with this transfer of authority that the Jesuits' position in the direction of New France policy towards the Iroqois began seriously to be challenged.

Part of De Quen's entry in the Journal des Jesuites for October 20th 1657 reads as follows:

> Monsieur d'alliboust, governor, complains of me for the little confidence which I have in him, saying that I do not Impart to him the matters which concern the mission of onontage; and first, that I did not convey to him the 2 presents which Father Ragueneau had sent to me from the onontage. These presents were addressed to Onontio ... Father druillettes conveyed on my behalf the 2 Collars to Monsieur d'alleboust, 2 days after.[1]

The following day Ailleboust held an assembly of the habitants, to which the Jesuits were not invited, where "it was Resolved", by common consent of all present, that the French should take measures to defend themselves against the raids of the Iroqois: "no one should be allowed to commit a Theft or robbery or any other act of hostility, under pretext of peace".[2] Ailleboust was emphasising that, whatever the

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1. Relations XLIII, 61.

2. Ibid., loc.cit De Quen's report is hearsay, because in reporting a further public meeting on November 4th he notes "none of our fathers was called, any more than to the other assemblies": Relations XLIII, 71.

Jesuits' special position with regard to the mission during Lauzon's governorship, they could no longer "considerer le gouverneur comme une quantite negligeable".[3] He was also making quite clear that Lauzon's policy of ignoring breaches of the treaty in the interest of maintaining an illusory peace was to be abandoned. An altogether more energetic policy was to be pursued, and it was to be directed not by the clergy but by the temporal authorities. Its object was not the gaining of profits or even the saving of souls, but the protection of the lives and property of the French settlers and their allies. Within days, Iroqois raiders had been arrested at Montreal and Three Rivers. Of these, five Mohawks were sent to Quebec. Aillebousт sent two of them to report back to their tribe on the new state of affairs, keeping the others as hostages.[4]

It was five months after the habitants' resolution to defend themselves against Iroqois incursions that the missionaries at Onondaga made their escape. Was the growing hostility of their hosts entirely the result of the new attitude of the French settlers? It seems unlikely. The Missionaries were informed that an offensive against the French was being planned throughout 1657.[5] The usefulness to the Iroqois of the French alliance had diminished. The tribal wars in which they had been embroiled at the time when they first asked for French settlers had been satisfactorily concluded;[6] they had succeeded in

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3. Salone, op.cit., 105.

4. See Lanctot, op.cit., I, 229. The new stern measures against the raiders were faithfully reported in the Relations, XLIV, 193-7.

5. See Lanctot, loc.cit.

6. See above, p.12. For a colourful account of the campaign against the Eries, see Parkman, Jesuits in North America, 542-5.

carrying off many Hurons from under the noses of the French during the peace, thanks to Lauzon's policy of appeasement, but under the new energetic regime at Quebec the treaty would afford them no further immunity. At a meeting between French and Iroqois called by Ailleboust in February 1658, an Iroqois spokesman announced "The Iroqois and the Dutch are united by a chain of iron, and their friendship cannot be broken":[7] the Dutch were good allies who provided guns and brandy as well as kettles and knives and cloth. With friends like them, there seemed little need for a connection with the French. The French themselves might have gained much more from it, had it really provided all that it seemed to offer — a means of contact with the Dutch and their trade goods, the promise of many souls to be saved, the possibility of freedom from Iroqois raiders. But in the early months of 1658, the French at Onondaga were faced both with growing hostility from the Iroqois, and with what amounted to a withdrawal of protection from the French authorities. Father le Moyne reported in March that the French party "do not well know whether we are at peace or at war" after a massacre of Huron Christians by Onondagas, "and that before the faces of their brethren, the French, who perhaps expected to fare no better themselves".[8] In their uncertainty, retreat was the most prudent course. They found in Quebec on their return a political climate quite different from the one they had left.

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7. Relations XLIV, 207.

8. Relations XLIV, 217. The letter was in fact written five days after the escape of the French party, but le Moyne knew nothing of this because he was on a visit to New Holland; the reason for the visit is not specified.

The reproaches of Ailleboust must have been a rude shock for Father De Quen after the cordial relations his order had previously enjoyed with the governor. However, Ailleboust was in office only temporarily. The Jesuits perhaps looked forward to another reversal of attitude when the new governor arrived; if so, they were disappointed. Argenson landed in Quebec in July 1658, and on the following day led an attack on an Iroquois raiding party.[9] By this time there was no French settlement in Onondaga whose safety had to be bought with appeasement, of course, but Argenson's first acts as governor indicated that he intended to follow in Ailleboust's determined footsteps. He also expected the Jesuits to confine their activities strictly to ecclesiastical matters: he had been warned before his departure from France against the tendency of the Order to assume authority in the temporal as well as the spiritual sphere.[10] The Jesuits had become accustomed under Lauzon to being consulted on matters of policy and to being kept informed of proceedings in administrative circles, and when Argenson kept them less in his confidence they were very resentful. De Quen wrote to the General of the Society of Jesus that the new governor believed he could do without the Jesuits' counsel, that he was surrounding himself with presumptuous youth and taking their advice. The Jesuits even felt that Argenson was "making war" on the missionaries, and feared that he might take steps to reorganise the religious administration of

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9. Relations XLIV, 227.

10. The warning came from the King's councillor Lamoignon: Lanctot, op.cit., 238.

the colony, removing all authority from their order.[11] Fortunately for Argenson's reputation, the Jesuits' opinion of him is not the only one recorded. Marie de l'Incarnation, even though she also represents the religious interest in the colony, admired the energy and straightforwardness with which Argenson set about tackling the ills of the settlers, and her view seems closer to being generally held than that of the Jesuit fathers.[12]

The fact is that on their return from Onondaga, the missionaries were faced not just with a change of personnel in the administration of New France, but with a whole change of emphasis in the running of the colony. During the period so far considered, more or less from the beginnings of organised settlement on the St. Lawrence to the end of the 1650's, it has been possible to regard Jesuits and French authorities as one. The Onondaga mission itself is an illustration of co-operation between church and state to pursue material and spiritual ends simultaneously. By the end of the 1650's, new interests were gaining influence in the colony. What has often been called the "heroic" period of New France was drawing to a close — Rochemonteix actually pinpoints the end of the Onondaga mission as the end of this age:

> Avec elle s'achevait l'enfance de la colonie francaise, et cette premiere epoque, epoque heroique, de l'evangelisation des peuplades indiennes dans l'Amerique septentrionale.

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11. De Quen's letter, dated 6 September 1658, is cited in Rochemonteix, op.cit., II, 234. Rochemonteix' opinion of Argenson echoes that of the 17th-c. Jesuits.

12. Richaudeau, Lettres de la reverende Mere Marie ..., II, 169; Eastman, op.cit., 43.

From henceforth, "tout va se modifier, se transformer".[13]

Whether or not one accepts this precise dating, it is certainly true that the character of the colony was changing. The creation of a bishopric removed from New France the status of a mission, and the character of the first bishop ensured that the voice of the church in Quebec issued from his mouth and not from the mouths of the Jesuits.[14] The fur trade was growing increasingly complex. The search for furs further and further afield produced new specialists in what had been an important sphere of Jesuit influence: the coureurs des bois also learnt Indian languages and adapted to their customs in their search for furs as the Fathers had in their search for souls.[15] The interest of Colbert in New France and the imposition in the early 1660's of direct royal government strengthened the influence of the civil power in what had been essentially a theocratic community. The Onondaga mission was the last to be planned and carried out under the auspices of the Society of Jesus in Quebec.

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13. Rochemonteix, op.cit., II, 155.

14. The creation of the bishopric was surrounded with a great deal of clerical controversy both in France and in Rome, and even after the arrival of the bishop the ecclesiastical situation in New France remained very confused for some time: for a summary of the confusion, see Lanctot, op.cit., I, 226-7. The bishop, Laval, was consecrated in France in December 1658, arrived in Quebec in June 1659, and remained in office until 1684.

15. See S.D. Clark, The Social Development of Canada (Toronto: 1942), 44. Clark considers that between 1660 and 1700 the fur trade was exercising its greatest socially disorganising influence in New France.

The 'new men' of the civil authorities did not overlook the value of the Jesuits' previous contacts with the Iroqois, and made use of Jesuit expertise when the occasion demanded. Argenson, from whom the Jesuits probably expected little recognition, called on their Superior when in 1661, Iroqois appeared in Quebec to return prisoners and to ask for a missionary to accompany them back to their villages. Father le Moyne went with them, on his fifth journey into Iroqois country.[16] His reports from his travels show undiminished interest in every aspect of New France's existence: one reason he gives for the wish for peace among the Five Nations is that for the Senecas, trade with the French would be much less fraught with danger than their present trade with the Dutch, which is carried on "with great inconvenience and by long and perilous routes."[17] The interest of the Jesuits was no longer a factor in the framing of policy -- in fact officials sent to Canada from France in the later 17th century were warned as a matter of course against pretensions of the Order to temporal authority -- but Argenson's successors, too, welcomed the missionaries' assistance when they wanted to foster good relations with the Iroqois. Tracy sent six evangelists-cum-ambassadors to their country when his show of military strength persuaded the tribes to sue for peace in 1666.[18] Frontenac's mistrust of the missionaries was deep enough for him to request Colbert in 1674

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16. This embassy arrived after a period of particularly fierce harassment, and was greeted with relief but with incredulity: Journal des Jesuites, 29 June 1661, Relations XLVI, 181; also 225, 237.

17. Relations XLVI, 111.

18. Eastman, op.cit., 91-3.

for funds to pay independent interpreters, "in order not to pass through the hands of the Jesuit fathers when we have to treat with the savages".[19] His whole relationship with the Jesuits has been described as one of "frustrated hostility",[20] but he never quarrelled openly with them, and they provided him with much valuable intelligence from their missions among the Five Nations.[21]

The presence of the Jesuits in Iroquois country was long a source of uneasiness to the Iroquois' trading partners. The English had replaced the Dutch of New Netherland, and governor Lovelace was anxious at the appearance of Tracy's envoys. The English intendant at Manhattan was alarmed at reports that Frontenac was planning to meet Iroquois leaders at Cataraqui in 1673, and invited Bruyas, a Jesuit missionary and adviser to Frontenac in negotiations with the Iroquois, to a meeting at Fort Orange to discuss the situation. Bruyas reassured the Englishman in a letter: it was purely the beauty of the spot that had decided the French choice of meeting-place, "rather than the design of turning aside the Iroquois from trading at Orange".[22] Even when they were

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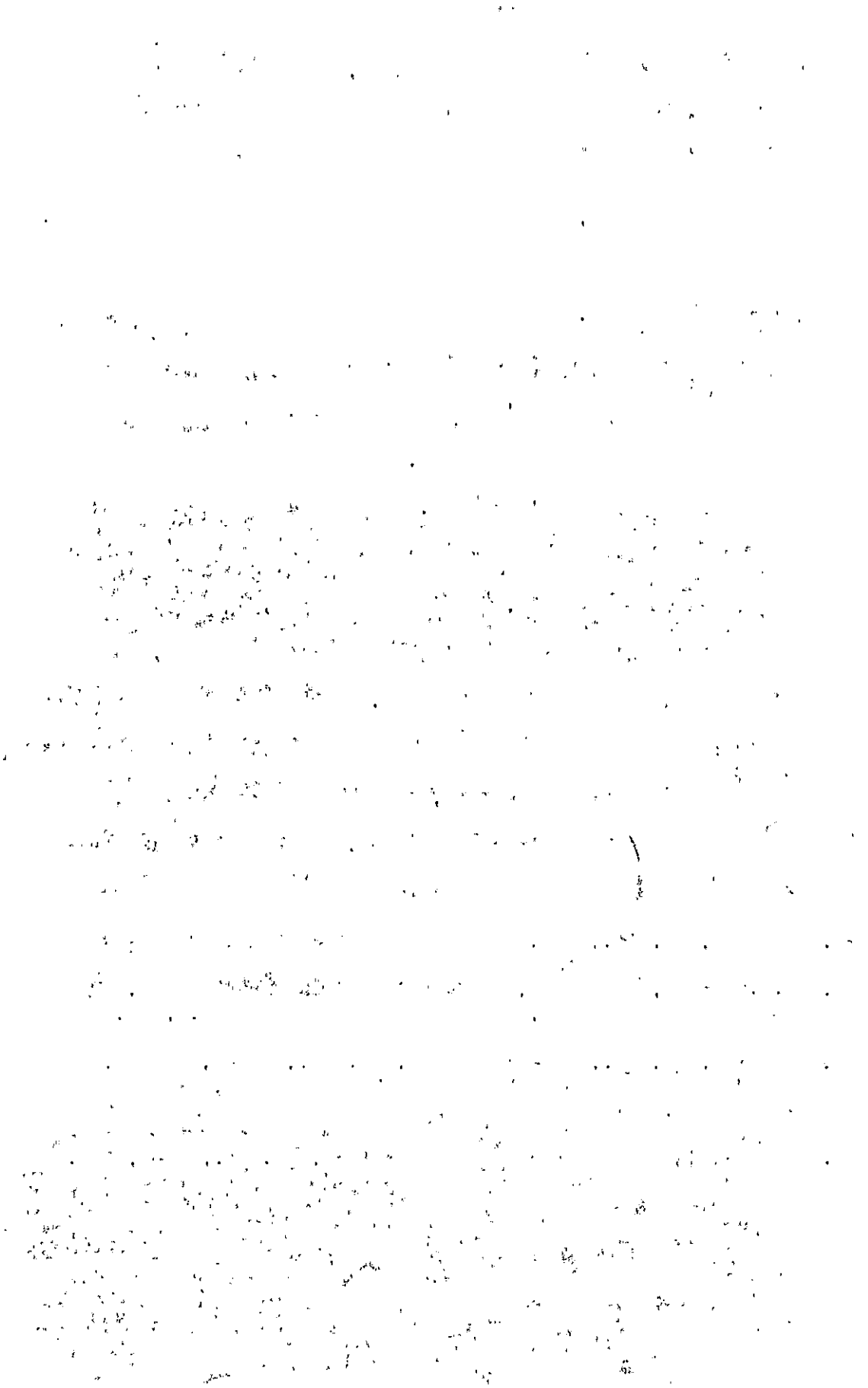
19. Eastman, op.cit., 144.

20. W.J. Eccles, Frontenac, the Courtier Governor (Toronto, McLelland and Stewart, 1965 - Carleton Library ed.), 65.

21. Eastman, op.cit., 143-6; Eccles, op.cit., 117-8, 329-30, mentions the services of two particular Fathers, Lamberville and Bruyas.

22. Both incidents are recounted by Eastman, op.cit., 91-3, 145.



no longer dictating the policies of the French in North America, the Jesuits were putting their diplomatic skill and experience among the Indians at the service of French interests.

Towards the end of his volume on the Jesuits in North America in the seventeenth century, Francis Parkman comments that it was fortunate for the European colonists that "the wisdom of the Iroquois was but the wisdom of savages":

> their sagacity is past denying, - it showed itself in many ways; but it was not equal to a comprehension of their own situation and that of their race ... their organization and their intelligence were merely the instruments of a blind frenzy, which impelled them to destroy those whom they might have made their allies in a common cause. [23]

This picture of the Iroquois, and the idea that they were a constant major threat to the existence of the French colony on the St. Lawrence, have been perpetuated in the historiography of New France. One reason for this is that Parkman's stereotypes have been remarkably widely-accepted and long-lived because his History for so long monopolised the field.[24] His sources on the Iroquois were mainly ecclesiastical. It suited the purposes of the Jesuits to stress

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23. Jesuits in North America, 538.

24. E.G. Bourne remarked in 1901 that Parkman's thoroughness in research gave his narrative "in some measure the character of sources" (Essays in Historical Criticism, reprinted 1967, Freeport); Thomas B. Costain's Preface to The White and the Gold: the French Regime in Canada (Toronto: 1954) acknowledges "two great sources -- the Jesuit Relations and Francis Parkman's splendid volumes". Parkman appears in more than one recent text-book of source studies for 17th-century Canada, alongside Champlain, Dollier de Casson and Marie de l'Incarnation: see C.F. Goulson, 17th Century Canada: Source Studies (Toronto: 1970), 192-3; Reid, McNaught and Crowe, A Source-book of Canadian History (Toronto: 1967), 18, 26, 37.

the Iroqois threat in their appeals, through the Relations, for support from France, and it suited Parkman's dramatic style to stress the hardships of the beleaguered colonists, isolated in their wilderness settlements and surrounded by hostile hordes.[25] From an unlikely historiographical combination of seventeenth-century Jesuit propaganda and nineteenth-century Boston Brahmin prejudice there thus emerges a well-rounded and coherent picture of senseless Iroqois savagery threatening a precarious colonial existence. Emile Salone, who has been described by Fregault as "l'anti Parkman",[26] nevertheless shares the same imagery when he describes New France between 1642 and 1663 "sous la menace perpetuelle de la hache iroqoise" or "pantelante sous la hache iroqoise".[27] Whatever the outlook of the historian, the image of the Iroqois seems constant.

On the ground, as it were, in their everyday dealings with the Five Nations, the Jesuits' attitude was much more flexible and less pessimistic than in the Relations. They recognised that the real threat posed by the Iroqois was more subtle than the threat of physical extermination. The two communities, European and Iroqois, each depended

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25. See Hunt's bibliographical essay at the conclusion of Wars of the Iroqois, 187. In spite of his anti-French, anti-Catholic prejudices, it suited Parkman's dramatic descriptive style to accept the Jesuits' portrayal of the Iroqois threat.

26. In Fregault's 'Presentation' of the 1970 re-edition of La Colonisation de la Nouvelle France (Trois Rivieres: 1970), vii.

27. Ibid., 110, 139. Similar expressions abound in the historigraphy of New France; for just one example, see Zoltvany, Government of New France ..., 2.

to some extent, in certain matters, on the other. What the Five Nations wanted was European wealth, in the form of manufactured goods; what the Jesuits wanted of the Five Nations was as much their economic co-operation as their souls. The Onondaga mission fits much better into a pattern of political manoeuvre than into one of evangelical fervour. The Jesuit fathers often prayed for martyrdom: they did not stay to find it in Onondaga -- their mission was a political and commercial one and when it became expedient for them to withdraw, they took their opportunity.

We have seen how the mission at Onondaga was established not in an access of zeal to save souls, but after long and cautious negotiations, in close collaboration with the temporal authorities of New France. The political and commercial possibilities of the settlement have been outlined, and the political developments in Quebec which accompanied the Jesuits' withdrawal from the mission and which, it seems, may have had some influence in bringing about that withdrawal. The whole story is one of political manoeuvre and diplomatic negotiation. Rather than treating the Iroqois as bloody and unpredictable savages and recoiling from them in horror, the Jesuits seem to have been quite prepared to take them on as commercial and political partners. Coming to terms with the inescapable fact of the Iroqois presence, the Jesuits sought to make the most profitable arrangements they could with them, for the benefit of the French colony in Canada and for their own order; eventually circumstances made their approach to 'the Iroqois problem' unacceptable to the authorities, but at the time of the Onondaga mission, it was the Jesuits' policy that held sway. Attempts to make use of the

Iroqois connection were made by the Jesuits before 1656, as we have seen. After 1658 too, contacts were maintained and made use of where possible in the furtherance of French interests. The Onondaga mission was not a spontaneous heroic gesture, an adventure embarked upon in a burst of evangelical fervour. It shows us the Society of Jesus at the peak of its influence in New France, using its great accumulation of experience in politics, in commerce and in Indian diplomacy to carry out a carefully-considered policy.

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