The Administration of François Bigot
as Intendant of New France
IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY FATHER

GEORGE PONTIOUS

THE LATE, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF

THE PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN.
When casting around, a number of years ago for a research topic, my teacher and friend, Doctor Hilda Neatby, of the University of Saskatchewan, suggested to me the study of New France. While researching her book on the administration of justice under the Quebec Act she regretted the shortage of good secondary sources and her impression of an almost complete lack of interest in English Canada in pre-conquest history was cemented by her experience on the Massey Commission. So this thesis was undertaken with the hope of learning more about the institutions and opinions which moulded early Canada and in the process to interpret the experience of one of our founding peoples to the other. Particularly in the light of the Bégon correspondence and the relief into which it is thrown by Gradis' letters it is believed that progress has been made on this front. Fortunately, since the early 1960's the tempo of ancien régime scholarship has begun to increase under the leadership of a number of historians, by no means the least of whom is W.J.Eccles, Professor of History at the University of Toronto. By 1973 he had become the acknowledged master of the field and so it was to him that Dr Neatby directed me for further guidance. Not only was he kind enough, at that time to suggest a number of areas which in his opinion required attention, but he has continued to be generous in advice and support ever since.

It would be most ungenerous of me not to mention Professor Richard Cobb, Mr David Fieldhouse and Mr John Prest, all of whom taught me in undergraduate years and who encouraged me to stay on at Oxford to do my D-Phil. Nor would it be right to ignore Sir Edgar Williams, the
Warden of Rhodes House, who not only arranged a third year of Rhodes money for me to begin research but who has continued faithfully to act as a wise and sympathetic adviser. But great though is my debt to these people, it is small when compared to the loyal labours and cheerful encouragement of my supervisor, Doctor A. Freddie Madden. Not only was he instrumental in persuading the Brit Fund to finance my second year of research but I am quite certain that without his unflagging interest this work would never have come to fruition.

Like other historians, I hardly knew where to begin to express my gratitude to the various institutions which have helped me.

No doubt the list must be headed by my College, Balliol, which has not only provided me with a home and stimulating friends but has also been generous with financial assistance.

The staff of Rhodes House Library has been untiring in its efforts on my behalf and the same must be said of the Canadian Public Archives, the Archives Nationales, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bibliothèque de l'Armenien and all the other libraries I frequented. Mrs Helen Avisseau, Secou-directrice of the Archives de la Gironde, and Elle Citeau of Charente-Maritime require special recognition. On the three occasions on which I visited Bordeaux Miss Avisseau cast aside her own work to labour at my side on the inventories. Her energy and knowledge saved me many frustrating hours and the same is true of Elle Citeau. Without their interest many of the details of Sigot's family simply would not have come to light.

This brings us to the Grotte family papers. The kindness with which M. Henri Grotte showered me, not only in granting me access to his family records but in providing me a private office in his complex on the Rue de Rivoli was simply prodigious. Not only was I honoured
by his trust, since it was understood from the beginning that no
incriminating materials would be suppressed and that the evidence
would have to be allowed to speak for itself, but his very real
enthusiasm for the project was a great stimulus. These kindnesses,
however, are as nothing before the richness of the materials. There
are literally hundreds of private letters written to the administrators
of Canada, the chief of whom, François Bigot, was an old family friend.
In their illumination, for the first time the rulers of New France
have emerged from their official straight-jacket and can be viewed as
human beings with domestic backgrounds and family interests. Not only
does this modify significantly our reading of the testimony given in
the officier du Canada, but Gradis' extensive contact with different levels
of the French administrative corps has provided the materials to draw
a more vivid picture of Marine administration in general.

What Canadian scholar is not indebted to the Canadian people for
their financial assistance through the Canada Council? No less am I
for the last two years of research.

The debt to my parents for their unassuming generosity and especially
to my mother whose interest has never flagged, even in the aftermath of
my father's death, is immense.

I thank professors John Foster, Pierre Boule, Dale Miquelon and
Dale Standen for their stimulating suggestions. Of course, for that
which has been made of the material, I remain entirely responsible.

Hugh A. Fontenot

Oxford, England
30 June 1978.
Traditionally, François Bigot has been considered an interesting subject for historical investigation not only because he was important, having presided over Canada's civil administration at the time of the Conquest, and was attainted in a large criminal proceeding at the Châtelet in Paris; but owing to the voluminous testimony accumulated by the court, there is more evidence at the historian's disposal than for his predecessors. There is, however, every reason to doubt the court's objectivity. Although the court believed Bigot was only too typical of colonial administrators, historians have tended to exaggerate the intendant's crimes and to represent him as some strange atypical monster who single-handedly corrupted the administrative corps of the colony. Not only is this interpretation unsatisfactory since it begs the question of how it was possible for this 'monster' to perpetrate his crimes unmolested for over two decades, but by turning him into something unusual, vitiated the value of the materials as evidence for a more generalized picture of colonial administration. The questions which arise, therefore, relate not only to the intendant as an individual but to the administrative corps of the Marine as a whole, and they are related. Who was Bigot? Where did he acquire his attitudes to work and responsibility? How did he view his own activities? What did his friends and family think of him?

Questions about his early career would have been much easier to answer had any good secondary works on the Marine existed. Fortunately, access to the Gradis Papers has made it possible not only to reconstruct a cogent picture of 18th century administrative practice but has also imparted much about his family and trade interests. This thesis attempts to illuminate pre-Conquest Canada by tackling her administrators as persons rather than official functionaries, with the result that Bigot's actions are made intelligible in the context of his times.
ABSTRACT II

After years of neglect study of the administrative history of the ancien régime is in full renaissance. The speculations of Parkman, Wrong and Shortt have, in the light of developments in economics, sociology and psychology become obsolete. Historians have recognized that it is no longer satisfactory to make sweeping generalizations about the nature of institutions and the attitude toward them of the people who were shaped under their sway. What is required is more of the facts! It has been asserted that the Canadians harboured a servile attitude toward authority. What did they themselves have to say about it? It is rebutted, on an equally theoretical plane, that although the Canadians resented their institutions, they could always escape into the forests to freedom. If this was the case why could they always be relied upon to fight valiantly against great odds in the defence of those same institutions? What indeed is the relationship between a people and their institutions? Obviously these are the sort of questions that have no simple answer but this thesis attempts at least to grope toward a better understanding of the Canadian condition in Chapter V.

Though in certain respects the most ambitious chapter, Chapter V is nevertheless a luxury. Historians are often tempted to pronounce the last word before the detail is known. In the case of ancien régime studies there is still much work to be done. Since institutions are never faceless but are moulded by the individuals who hold office, just as those individuals were shaped by the structures through which they rose; any attempt to gain a better appreciation of the institutions of a society must not neglect the individuals who ran them. In
the case of François Bigot, the last intendant of New France this is no hard duty but rather a positive pleasure. By concentrating on his life and attitudes this thesis aspires to make a small contribution to the detailed knowledge of the field.

Though one of the most colourful and controversial figures of Canadian history, François Bigot is probably one of the least well understood. This is due both to the large amount of information previously available to historians about his criminal activities and the relative dearth about those of his predecessors. Even were the testimony gathered at the trial a completely reliable source of information, the accumulated evidence against the intendant raises more questions than it answers: the most pressing of these being his long period of tenure. How was it possible for such a villain to retain office in the North American colonies for over twenty years? The usual explanation and the one the court wished to be believed is that Bigot was not only an evil but also an exceptionally wily individual who managed systematically to intimidate his subordinates and deceive his superiors. The court, however, was not consistent in its interpretation because at the same time it was condemning Bigot as a wicked individual it maintained that he was only too typical of colonial administrators. But the court ought not to have it both ways. Either Bigot was an exceptional individual who owing to his own perversion corrupted the previously honest administrative corps of the colony, or he was typical of his breed, having acquired his attitudes from those general in the service. In order to come to a measured conclusion on this subject it has been necessary to delve deeply into Bigot's family life and training.

It has not been an easy task since the materials have been thin
and much has had to be inferred from legal instruments; hardly the
most chatty sources of information. Indeed, were it not for the
Gradis correspondence the task would have been impossible. For the
first time the Gradis family has opened its archive to a student of
Canadian history with the result that a generation of Canadian
administrators can be seen as three-dimensional human beings rather
than as the shadowy figures they appear to be in the official
correspondence. Gradis knew the Bigots well in particular, but he
corresponded also with the contrôleur of Canada, Ébrigard, the garde-
magasin, Estèbe, the capitaine-aide-major, Pean, his beautiful wife,
Angélique, and with a host of lesser personages. He was also in frequent
contact with the chief administrators at Versailles; the minister, his
first commis and a number of the special assistants in the minister's
office. This too was fortuitous since it rapidly became apparent that
no secondary work existed that explained conditions in the eighteenth
century administrative corps of the French Marine. Nowhere was there
a study of the personnel of the corps, their social background and criteria
for entrance. Nor was there any study of their training or for that
matter even of the functions of an administrator once he was trained.
References to the French ports were vague at best. Therefore it was
apparent that effort would have to be devoted to the elucidation of
administrative practice in the French ports and Versailles.

When it came to ordering the material the most logical point of
departure emerged as a brief sketch of the origins of the Marine, and
a discussion of the central administration as it is related to the affaire
du Canada in the person of Arnaud de la Porte, the first commis at
Versailles. One of the pivotal issues in assessing the responsibility
of the colonial administrators is the degree to which they were independent of Versailles. To the extent that they were free to govern their own actions and understood what was unacceptable administrative practice they must be held accountable. Since Versailles had a most imperfect control over even the ports in France, the argument runs, the independence of the colonial administrator, due to distance was almost complete. On that score it cannot be inferred that Bigot's alleged crimes were made possible only with the complicity of the first commis at Versailles; the court was not derelict in failing to bring de la Porte to justice. On the other hand, the argument of distance having been accepted as a satisfactory exculpation for de la Porte then due consideration must be given to Bigot's claim that he had no effective control over alleged malversations in the forts in the pays-d'en-haut. Consequently, aside from a general recapitulation of conditions as reported in that part of the colony, attention has been focused primarily upon those charges related to parts of the service from which Bigot could not conceivably escape responsibility, although in his testimony he attempted to do even that. The discussion of those charges, however, was based upon Gradis' letters exchanged with Bigot and is relegated to Chapter VI.

Chapter I, having discussed the relationships between Gradis, the minister, de la Porte and their subordinates with the intention of discovering just where the effective power of the ministry lay, proceeded to examine, in some detail, the relationship between Versailles and the French ports and concluded with a discussion of Gradis' frustrations in dealing with his own local potentate, the intendant of Bordeaux. The latter discussion not only served as the means to familiarize the reader with Gradis' high minded attitude toward the service of the Crown but
emphasised the independence of the regional intendant.

The general conditions of Marine administration having been adumbrated, the time was practically ripe to draw the discussion back to François Bigot himself, to find out from whence he had sprung; but not before something had been said about the social milieu of the Marine in general. The lack of any serious study on this subject made the task more difficult. Drawing upon the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, the Begon correspondence, the Rochemore testimony and a couple of secondary works, it was possible to put together a few introductory remarks on the subject. Although far from definitive they are offered in the hope that they are at least a beginning on an important subject which deserves more attention. Owing to the information of the Gradis papers the second part of the chapter was more successful. Not only was it possible to give the vital details of the Bigot family but it even became possible to speculate upon relationships between the members. Particularly interesting was the dominant role François' mother seems to have played in keeping the family together and directing their energies. It is apparent that François, far from being a self-made man, ruthlessly determined to improve his individual fortunes, was a beloved member of an ambitious family which had been painstakingly raising its social position over a period of generations. Far from being the 'petit compagnon' so sarcastically denounced by his judges, the conclusion to be drawn from Chapter II is that barring the loss of Canada he would have been accepted into Court society upon his retirement with scarcely any difficulty.

In 1723 Bigot left his home to enter the service at Rochefort. Aside from a few entries in his Etat de service and a couple of super-
ficial references in his brief to the court, the years 1723-1739 were ignored. Surely they were seminal but where was information to be found? The logical source was the Rochefort correspondence between intendant and minister. Fairly complete records survive and although there are few direct references to Bigot, as was to be expected, a careful reading of the documents has nevertheless permitted a fairly comprehensive reconstruction of the administrative departments of the port, their functions and problems. Since the central figure of the investigation is Bigot, after all, what better system of exposition could have been adopted than to follow him through his postings, learning about the port, perhaps in an order not so far removed from his own experience.

Administrative structures described, Rochefort was not yet disposed of. The question remained; did Bigot learn corrupt practices at the port before he left for Canada? As in the previous chapter there was little direct evidence on Bigot but a plethora of ministerial complaints about fraud were recorded. Combining the official correspondence with an anonymous pamphlet about conditions at sea and information from the Gradis papers, it was possible to trace shady practices from Versailles down to the lowest petty officer. Not that they were conducted without any restraint. There appeared to be certain conventions which governed the conditions and amount of graft which was acceptable, indeterminate though they may have been. If anything the amount tolerated may have been related to the station attained in the administrative hierarchy. In the colonies, at any rate, access to extra-curricular income was closely related to the power wielded by an official and sometimes this came down to the overt question of how many votes he could command on the Superior Council.
Chapter V explores further the institutional structures of colonial government, pursuing the question of the power exercised by the colonial chiefs and attacking the issue of independence from Versailles from the colonial point of view. No great claims for originality can be made, since most of the material used was quarried from secondary sources. Nevertheless it was required to link the discussion of fraud in the French ports to fraud in the colonies and in this context advances the hypothesis that effective discipline was ruled out essentially owing to the impossibility of finding adequate replacements for corrupt personnel. In particular it was stimulating to come to grips with the ancient controversy over the nature of Canadian institutions and if the arguments presented are not definitive it is hoped, at least, that they advance the discussion by another step.

Chapter VI treats the affaire du Canada itself reviewing some of the evidence and facing directly the question of the extent to which Bigot can be said to have deviated from the norm. Its thesis is fundamentally that only insofar as Bigot exceeded the conventional limits to casual fraud ought he to have been held criminally responsible by the court. Unsatisfactory though the information might be, some further evidence has been accumulated to show that Bigot might well have made a substantial portion of his fortune legitimately, but this is really of secondary concern.

What the discussion of the last chapter assumes is that the phenomenon of institutionalized fraud has been proved. Although certain advanced jurisprudential circles of the early eighteenth century may have disapproved, no effective steps to eliminate it appear to have been taken until France was engulfed by the disastrous Seven Years War. No doubt to it can be attributed much responsibility for military
defeat and yet it is for another study to determine whether British colonial administration was much more honest. Government service was, after all, the high road to social advancement and riches. Service in the colonies was, for the aspiring, one possible route to success. The pursuit of power was a game played in deadly earnest by determined competitors, who were ruthless in their tactics. If the stakes were high then so too were the dangers and only a few players won. Bigot was exceptional primarily in the drama of his trial and life banishment, but because he was typical, he is none-theless worthy of attention. Indeed, it is his very representativeness which justifies a thesis devoted to the study of his life since it throws into such vivid relief the assumptions and conventions of his time.
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ABBREVIATIONS

AC - Archives des Colonies
AM - Archives de la Marine (France).
    IE denotes the Rochefort series.
AN - Archives Nationales (of France).
BN - The French National Library.
CNL - Canadian National Library.
CPA - Canadian Public Archives.
IE - The Rochefort series of marine documents.
F.B.A.F. - François Bigot, Administrateur Français, Guy Frégault.
MG - indicates a series of the Canadian Public Archives
INTRODUCTION

'MONOPOLIES, ABUS, VEXATIONS et FRAVARICATIONS'\(^1\)

The title phrase is the blanket charge levelled against fifty-six former administrators of New France on the 12 December, 1761, at the Châtelet in Paris. It marked the culmination of more than a year of inquiry into the origins of the fortunes which the officials had brought back with them to France and was the beginning of a show trial which was to last for nearly two years. It resulted in thousands of pages of conflicting testimony about monopolies and fraudulent practices which were alleged to have grown up primarily under the protection of the last intendant, François Bigot. The degree to which Bigot's actions were typical of administrators in the French Marine and Colonies during the first half of the eighteenth century is the major point of this inquiry.

Until recently historians of New France have for the most part restricted their attention exclusively to the colony itself, contenting themselves with a few dismissive remarks about its place in the metropolitan structure. Now, as the strictly Canadian sources have been more thoroughly culled and the historical events chronicled, attention has been turning to the imperial relationship in an effort to explain the complex and often elusive influences exerted by France and more broadly by Europe on the colony. Guy Frégault in *La Guerre de la Conquête*,\(^2\) and G.F.G. Stanley in his *New France: The Last Phase 1744-1760*,\(^3\) were both at pains to describe the impact of European strategic considerations upon the North American theatre of

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2. (Montreal, 1955).
3. (Toronto, 1968).
the Seven Years War. Other recent work has explored the economic ties between the two countries: Dale Miquelon having examined the accounts of Robert Dugard, Navy and Lefebvre, and John Bosher having produced a number of monographs on the trans-Atlantic merchant community. Yet despite a growing awareness of the implications of colonial status, very little has been said about the administrators of the colony as Europeans, with European backgrounds, assumptions and ambitions. Still less is known of the administrative services as an extension of the French department of Marine.

Granted, W.J. Eccles observed that Frontenac accepted the Canadian gubernatorial post because he saw it as a means to mend his European fortunes, and Fréguault maintained that Bigot viewed the colony from the same point of view; but having made these observations, the background and early training of the officials was neglected. Both were mature men when they were dispatched to the colonies, Bigot was nearing forty; so, it is unlikely that they acquired new habits and values at that stage of their lives. Clearly, it is of interest to know more about the formative years of their lives, and fortunately, in Bigot's case, the correspondence he exchanged with David Abraham and Moïse Gradis, members of an influential mercantile family of his native city, Bordeaux, has thrown much light upon his family and business associations. Chapter II, in particular, discusses his family while chapters IV and VI deal with his business concerns.

If little has been said about the training of colonial administrators, it is no doubt owing at least in part to a dearth of literature on the administrative corps of the French Marine. Nothing

5. 'French Protestant Families in Canadian Trade 1740-1760'; 'A Québec Merchant's Trading Circles in France and Canada'; 'Le ravitaillement de Québec en 1756', Histoire Sociale, Ottawa.
of any stature has been published since Albert Duchêne's, La Politique Coloniale de la France; le Ministère des Colonies depuis Richelieu, appeared in 1928. While containing some useful information about the central offices in Versailles, Ministers and their assistants, it passed over the ports in silence and said little more about the administrative divisions within the department. Consequently, as a source of information about Bigot's training at Rochefort it is of little use. Resort therefore had to be made to the Rochefort official correspondence. Fortunately Gradis maintained close relations not only with the authorities of Bordeaux but also of Rochefort and Versailles, with the result that a comparison of the two series has provided a vivid picture of the structure of the provincial service, its work and assumptions. These are set out in chapters I, III, and IV.

The literature on the French colonial empire as a whole, too, is scant. Were it not for Pierre H. Boulle's masterly French Colonies and the Reform of their Administration there would be an almost total void. Excellent though it is, his scope required that eighteenth century efforts to control corruption be treated as a secondary theme. But in Bigot's case it is the charges of massive corruption laid against him in the affaire du Canada which are of primary interest. Apart from the fascination of scandal, they are important because the court alleged that Bigot's corruption was the fundamental cause of the loss of Canada. They are even more interesting in so far as the court believed Bigot's manoeuvres were only too typical of colonial administration in general and, if correct, the trial literature provides a rich source for the reconstruction of administrative

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8. (Paris).
practice. Unfortunately, the conditions under which the trial was prosecuted at the close of a disastrous war which had literally bankrupted the Royal Treasury, render suspect the motives of the Court and the objectivity of the verdicts. In particular, the court's determination to convict the accused at all costs and to hold individuals rather than institutions responsible for colonial corruption, understandably encouraged them to deny all charges where documentary evidence did not exist. Thus as historical sources, the briefs are unreliable. Fortunately, the Gradis correspondence provides an excellent 'control' on this testimony and is invoked for this purpose particularly in chapter III.

A new study on Bigot would have been justified even had the Gradis papers not been made available. Comprehensive as was Frégault's bibliography, the student is forced to conclude that he neither read all the evidence as carefully as he ought to have done, nor did he approach the question with a sufficiently open mind to produce an objective and judicious summary. He showed himself willing, although never missing an opportunity to denigrate the veracity of Bigot's testimony, to believe any slanders against any administrator even when they came from a source he regarded as so unreliable as Bigot; as when, for example, he built a case against the officers charged with the recovery of goods from the convicted Canadians, starting from the allegation in Bigot's appeal of 1773:

Personne n'ignore le désordre qui a paru dans les comptes du sequestre, et la dissipation des fonds que le jugement du Canada devoit faire rentrer au Roy.10

Although in his inventory Frégault listed AN, V7 364, one of the four cartons containing the documents relative to the recovery, it

would be kinder to assume that he never saw it rather than to believe he made the superficial use of it that his work suggests.

Based upon a report of 1764, reproduced in the Canadian official correspondence, he leapt to the conclusion that large sums had been pilfered from the sequester. He glossed the report as saying that:

En 1764, le roi ne retira que 618,963 livres sur les biens du condamné, et le trésorier des colonies, préposé au sequestre, calculait qu'il ne restait que 225,000 livres environ à recouvrer. 11

But Bigot was reputed to be worth at least 1½ million livres. What had become of the rest? Watched as he was, Fregault argued, Bigot could not have hidden them. So, he concluded:

L'administration du Canada avait montré des signes évidents de corruption; celle de la métropole ne valait pas mieux. 12

Had Fregault bothered to read even a few of the documents of the listed V7 364 he would have discovered just how baseless was this slander. Piece 115, page 15, dated the 7 March, 1772, the report of the Contriaires General reported that 1,518,254 livres 2 sols 8 deniers had been recovered from Bigot's goods.

Fregault, still on the same tack, calumniated the Minister, Choiseul himself. Upon a misreading of a series of letters reproduced in the Report of the Canadian Public Archives of 1904 he alleged that Choiseul, rather than delivering Bigot's silver plate to the mint, divided it among his friends. 13 Had he not been so determined to make criminals out of everyone who passed under his pen, the letters in the R.C.P.A. alone would have convinced him that the plate was duly paid for. On the 30 January, 1764 Choiseul instructed the contrôleur général:

12. Ibid., p. 381.
13. Ibid., p. 382.
Writing to the Maréchal de Richelieu on the 12 February, 1764 Choiseul informed him:

je vous observerai seulement qu'il y aura quelques-unes de ces pièces dont le prix sera plus fort que celui de la vaisselle ordinaire et M. de Fontanieu vous en sera parti.

And again on the 27 February, 1764 Choiseul instructed M. de Fontanieu:

de faire remettre à M. le Maréchal les pièces qui sont portées sur cet ordre et dont le payement sera fait suivant le prix dont nous sommes convenus dans notre dernier travail.

Should any doubt remain as to whether the plate was paid for, it is dispelled by pieces 3, 105, 106, 106 bis, 107 of V7 364 which are accounts of payments on the silver; and by piece 158 of V7 362 which shows a final total of 58,796 livres 10 sols 1 dernier for the silver on the 22 May, 1764, a sum higher even than the value estimated for the silver in the original itemized inventory of the goods at Vaugien, Bigot's chateau south of Versailles. Dated 31 January, 1764 it was estimated at 51,466 livres 16 sols 9 derniers.

Although Frégnault admitted the political nature of the trial and that Bigot was made a 'bouch à enjoliver' by the embarrassed government; his personal indignation at the frauds and passionate identification with the sufferings of the colonists, abandoned to their fate by the metropolitan power, combined to make him the prisoner of his rather
inconsistent assumptions. Either Bigot was victimized or justly punished; so he ought not, at one moment, to be portrayed as the 'petit compagnon' no more than a small cog in a large machine, and the next an arch fiend who single-handedly corrupted the administrative corps of the whole colony.

It may be that Frégault’s problems stemmed from the transitional period in which he wrote the book. Although one of the rising generation of Québécois historians trained in the techniques of systematic historiography, apparently he could not resist the attractions of the romantic narrative. It is not without much justification that Jean Blain, in his review of Frégault’s work observed:

Frégault comme Groulx a le culte du héros; mais contrairement à Groulx, il a en outre l’obsession de l’anti-héros dont on peut retrouver maints exemples dans ses œuvres.16

The great interest of the present work is to present Bigot in a more sympathetic light, taking into account not only the slanders of his enemies but also the opinions of his friends. In the process the trial literature has been re-examined in the context of the official correspondence of Canada, Isle Royale, (now Cape Breton, Nova Scotia), and Rochefort and the Gradis letters. Yet, it is not so much Bigot’s guilt or innocence which is at stake but rather the degree to which Bigot can be taken as representative of French colonial officials. The ultimate goal, therefore, of this work is to present through Bigot’s experience a more accurate picture of French colonial and naval administration in the mid-eighteenth century.

CHAPTER I

HEAD OFFICE

The major substantiated charge against Bigot in the affaire du Canada was that while intendant of Canada he carried on a business with Abraham Gradiis, a wealthy Bordeaux shipper, and Bernard, the contrôleur of Canada, which sold large quantities of goods to the royal Stores at Quebec. The court maintained that the goods were sold at prices well above the market rate and it was implied that this combine would not have been permitted were it not for the protection of one of the first commis at Versailles, Arnaud de La Porte. Prior to the opening of the Gradiis correspondence, it was impossible to say anything conclusive about the relationship between Bigot, de La Porte and Gradiis and the profits which accrued. Now that the letters are available, these questions can be re-opened profitably. In order to determine whether de La Porte was capable of protecting the combine it will be necessary to examine his influence in Versailles. Fortunately, the Gradiis letters afford not only an insight into the minister's office but also yield much that is new on the relationship between Versailles and the ports. So besides illuminating the Bigot affair directly, they contribute to a better understanding of the general administration of the Marine.

Although generally regarded, and rightly so, as the man most responsible for colonial administration, the degree of control which the minister of the Marine exercised over the colonial empire even in 1760, was far from complete. Not only were the colonies distant and communication slow, but his authority was shared with other ministers. The minister of War continued to hold responsibility for
anyTrouss de la Tour stationed in the colonies. The colonial
administration managed customs, some colonial revenues and interfered in
patronage. He was also an influential member of the Council of
Commerce which deliberated on commercial policy and oversaw the
Compagnie des Indes which not only carried on an important part of
the trade with North America and the Caribbean, but managed the
factories in Africa, India, Arabia, Burma, and China. The far-flung
scope of the company's responsibilities has lead Pierre Boulle to
argue that the Marine, 'was in fact restricted in its colonial
activities to the French possessions in America and in its naval
activities to the Atlantic Ocean.' Even those colonies were liable
to be visited by royal intendants as agents of the Conseil d'Etat.
So, Mr. Fieldhouse analysed the situation accurately when he argued
that:

The colonial empire suffered from too much inter-
ference with insufficient concentration of
responsibility. 2

The origin of the Marine has been traced to the nomination of
Clausse de Marchaumont as secretary of state to the Marine in 1647.
The Marine was at that time administered by the Admiral of France,
Henri de Montmorency. After the death of the admiral, Cardinal
Richelieu, under the title of grand master, chief and superintendent
of navigation and commerce, was responsible for the Marine and Colonies.
He was aided by two chief administrators, one for the Ponant, the
other for the Levant. 3 When Richelieu died, the charge of admiral of
France was re-established in favour of the Duke of Beaufort. It was,

1. Boulle, op.cit., p. 29.
3. The Levant referred to France's Mediterranean ports; the Ponant
to the Atlantic and Channel ones.
however, Lyonne, the secretary of state for Foreign Affairs, who signed and gave the orders. Since his responsibility for Foreign Affairs prevented him from taking full cognizance of the Marine, he had to rely heavily upon his commis (administrators).

In 1669, Colbert persuaded Louis XIV to create a separate department of state for the Marine of which he was given the supervision. Henceforth, there would be an admiral of France, but he would have limited powers and no control over the ministry. Since Colbert continued to act as controlleur-général the old competition between the Contrôle and the Marine for authority over the colonies was temporarily ended, but since Seignelay, Colbert's son and successor at the Marine, did not retain the Contrôle at Colbert's death, the former divisions were re-instated. 4

As demands increased upon the bureaucracy, so also did its size. At first Colbert had employed only three commis. By his death in 1683, having assumed the direction of Commerce, Consulate and Colonies, in addition to the Marine, he had acquired another six. Under Seignelay, two commis, Valocières and Tour-Boistroux were pre-eminent. This pattern was at first carried over into the ministry of Pontchartrain. By 1715, there were four first commis and five in 1729, under whom there were nine second commis in charge of details. In 1740, there were eight first commis in charge of eight boards employing sixty-five second and third commis and secretaries. The boards were: Mondes, Charges, Comptes, Police des Ports, Commerce et Consulats, Officiers d'Embâche et de Plume, Ministère des Cartes et Plans. 6

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4. For fuller treatment see below p. 109.
5. (sic) H. La Roque de Roquebrune, 'La direction de la Nouvelle France,' Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique Française. (Mars 1933) p.475.
7. Created on the 19 November, 1720, "pour la conservation des cartes, plans, journaux, mémoires ..." and to be administered by an "officier de vaisseau" Lacour Cayet, p. 52.
Until 1710, those colonial affairs for which the Marine had been responsible were handled in the bureaux of the Levant and the Pontar, together with other naval concerns. In that year, the Bureau des Colonies was created as a new sub-department of the Marine with its own premier commis. In 1750, this department was given a further degree of autonomy when colonial finances were separated from those of the navy, although the Commissaire continued to administer them.

A great deal of effort has gone into determining the degree of influence which the premier commis of the Bureau des Colonies exercised. This point is of particular relevance to our study of Bigot since it has been maintained that it was possible for him to elaborate his corrupt practices in Canada only on the strength of the first commis, de La Porte's, protection. Since even the Gracias correspondence yields no conclusive proof, the issue here is to determine just what the extent of the first commis' power was, to see whether he was capable of protecting Bigot for a decade. Then we will examine, as far as the Gracias correspondence permits, the relations between Gracias, Bigot's chief collaborator, and the administrators at Versailles.

Apparently, owing to a misreading of Duchêne, Roquebrune, forgetting that the premier commis was only one among eight at the Marine, incorrectly compared his post with that of a modern deputy minister and argued that the long term of office enjoyed by several of them ensured them a 'veritable dictatorship' over the administration

of the colonies.⁹ According to Duchêne, with the exception of Le
Normant, appointed in 1758, specifically to oversee all the business
of the Marine and to countersign with the new Minister, Passirc, all
orders and dispatches of the Marine, no one premier commis prior to
1760, had ever been invested with any more "guère sortir de prévÎnance
efficacité."¹⁰ Although arguing that Borremas, Pellerin, de La Porte,
and Rodier had all assumed a special place in the minister's councils,
sometimes even sitting in the Conseil de la Marine, Duchêne did not
make any attempt to describe their relationship with the other first
commis nor to specify whether these others continued to enjoy direct
access to the minister. Nor was the place of privilege reserved for
the administrator of the Colonies exclusively, since of the four
mentioned, only de La Porte held that position. Clearly, if it was
the ascendant first commis to whom Roquebrune was attributing
despotic powers, then in all but de La Porte's case, the first commis
of the Colonies was but a cipher. If, on the other hand, it was the
first commis of Colonies who was supposed to have this power, that
would not only overlook the large degree of interdependence between
bureaux,¹¹ and even ministries, but begs the question of the
ascendant commis' power.

9. Roquebrune, Ibid., p. 475. Fontanieu was first commis of the
Bureau des Colonies from 1710, staying on in 1715, in spite
of the re-organization of the Marine by the regent. Forcade
held the post from 1725 to 1738, surrendering it to Arnaud
de La Porte, who in turn was not retired until 1758.
11. Op.cit., p. 36. He argued that despite the creation of the
Bureau des Colonies in 1710, many affairs concerning colonies
continued to be transacted by other offices of the Marine:
"Mais les défenses des colonies devaient rester fines à celles
de la marine: beaucoup de questions ayant trait à l'armement
des navires dans les ports, à la défense de nos établissements,
au personnel administratif ou militaire à utiliser continuaient
t être traitées dans divers services."
Bouille also sidestepped the issue where he generalized that the extent of the premier conseil's role in policy making depended on his ability and character and also on the ability and character of the minister under whom he served. Apparently, he was referring to the first conseils of the Bureau des Colonies when he argued that this conseil knew the precedents, was acquainted with many influential colonials, and processed all of the correspondence passing through the office. Perhaps, in de La Porte's case, being both premier conseil of Colonies and ascendant conseil, it is conceivable, as Duchêne argued, that he held, 'entre les mains, tous les fils de la politique coloniale de la France ...' but, whether this put him in a position to 'control' the information reaching the minister is another question.

While not wishing to quarrel with Roquebrune's observation that the premiers conseils devoted more of their time to 'le détail' than could the minister, and the 'le détail est bien souvent l'essentiel', his claim is not proved that letters sent to the governors and intendants, 'ne passaient jamais sous les yeux du ministre.' It must be pointed out that if a letter bears the words, 'M. de La Porte', scribbled in the margin, this does not necessarily mean that the minister did not see it. Furthermore, considering the responsibilities attributed to de La Porte it is impossible to believe that one man could possibly have found time to advise the minister on general policy, carry on the normal workload of a regular first conseil, and at the same time devote energy to obstructing, rather than facilitating the normal flow of information.

Since Filion's work on Maurepas did not appear until 1972, Bouillé can not be condemned for exaggerating the degree to which this minister depended upon his subordinates. It is surprising, however, that he did not take a stronger line against Fréchault's hypothesis about de La Porte since he wrote that Bouillé, 'preferred to attend to all business himself,' with the result that the premier commis' role, 'became purely that of a bureaucrat keeping his office in good order.' Since Bouillé recalled Bigot in 1754, to answer questions about his administration, clearly, de La Porte ultimately failed to protect him. The likelihood that de La Porte was an important factor in Bigot's re-appointment as intendant of Canada has been convincingly dismissed of by Bouillé, and it is probably

15. Maurice Filion, La Pensée et l’Action Coloniale de Maurepas vis-à-vis du Canada. Editions leac, Ottawa, 1972. Filion argues that Maurepas not only made the important policy decisions, but even supervised a lot of the official correspondence himself.

16. Bouillé, op.cit., p. 33. Bouillé, apparently, had not made up his mind on the subject. On p. 33, fn. 16, Fréchault as if convinced by his argument: 'At least one premier commis, Arnaud de La Porte, used his office to protect his friends and their activities from the minister's scrutiny. He was dismissed in 1758 for his dishonesty.' On p. 69, fn. 61, however, this certainty had become only a possibility since Bouillé observed, 'That Arnaud de La Porte kept compromising documents out of the Minister's hands is possible ...' and went on to argue that in any case, the minister had sufficient information to have Bigot dismissed. By p. 115, however, de La Porte is referred to once again as Bigot's ally and the censor of the minister's mail.

17. Bouillé, ibid., pp. 86-89. Bouillé argued that the strategic situation alone and the appointment of a new governor-general, Vaudreuil, made Bigot's return indispensable. His contention that the minister probably did not know that Bigot was stealing is less convincing since in the very next phrase he noted that Fréchault's very first letters to Bigot after his return to Canada show 'evident distrust'. More likely, is that the minister was only too sure of Bigot's dishonesty, in which he differed but little from many other colonial administrators, but was only unaware of its extent.
safe to dismiss as mere gossip Kontcalm's belief that it was de La Porte who prevented disciplinary action being taken against Bigot.\textsuperscript{18}

What then was the role that de La Porte played at Versailles? The Gradis correspondence provides some clues.

Abraham Gradis developed increasingly close connections with the administrators at Versailles during the 1750's. As Canada's official supplier, he travelled to Versailles at least once a year and during the peak shipping period from January through June, often dispatched five letters or more to the court a week. He knew the officials personally and understood their conventions. This knowledge and the tact with which he approached Versailles made the difference between receiving payment or bankruptcy. Consequently, his correspondence provides a valuable insight into the administrative practice of the Marine.

As might have been assumed, his correspondence with the minister is of a purely formal nature. In it he discussed the quantities of goods to be shipped to North America, the prices at which they could be purchased, the amount of time required to process, pack and ship them, to whom they were to be directed in the colony and how he was to be reimbursed. During the shipping season, the minister was given a weekly progress report on operations and explanations for any delays. Gradis never doubted but that his letters went directly to the minister, nor that ultimately the minister made the final allocation of contracts.

Throughout the 1750's he maintained a detailed correspondence with both the minister and de La Porte, frequently repeating the same information in letters to each of them. After a particularly busy spell, on the 2 April, 1757, Gradis apologized to de La Porte for

\textsuperscript{18} H.R. Casgrain, ed., \textit{Journal de Montréal}. 1756-1760. (Montreal, 1889-95) p. 489; cited by Frécault, \textit{RE}, i. 293.
Having failed to keep him posted on the progress of his shipping, he excused himself saying he expected de la Porte would have seen the letters he had written to the minister. An even more striking example of the clear distinction in Gradis' mind between the minister and de la Porte is afforded by his letter of the 20 September, 1755, in which Gradis apologized to de la Porte:

Quoiqu'e nous soyons bien convaincus, Monsieur, qu'il n'a point deperdu de votre protection auprès du Ministre que nous n'avons été remboursé de nos avances pour les fournitures de Québec et de Louisbourg; nous avons cru qu'il ne serait point hors de propos que nous en signalions nous même au Ministre pour solliciter a notre remboursement ...

This is not to say that Gradis did not recognize the influence which de la Porte exercised. On the 1 May, 1757, just after Vachault as minister, Gradis wrote to de la Porte to thank him for the 'lettre obligante que vous avez eu la bonté de nous procurer du Ministre' and he observed in another letter to M. Vernet de la Rivière, an accountant in the office at Versailles,

Je sais parfaitement bien que je suis redevable à M. de la Porte de la confiance que le Ministre me témoigne.

Although he did not believe that de la Porte made the minister's decisions for him, obviously the minister consulted with de la Porte, so it was a good idea to lobby both of them concurrently. In fact, it was useful to cultivate other clerks in the office since de la Porte in his turn was influenced by the advice of his subordinates.

On the 25 November, 1755 negotiating the contract for 1756 Gradis wrote to de la Porte offering his services and suggesting that he might recommend them to the minister. He pointed out that the

19. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, iii. 94.
20. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 86.
21. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, iii. 36.
22. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, iii. 37.
outbreak of war had greatly increased the risks that had to be run and he wondered whether or La Porte might not be able to think of some way to decrease them. Writing the same day to La Riviere, Gradis told him that:

Il serait très aventieux que ces fournitures furent enregistrées et dispersées dans différents vaisseaux du navire qu'on ne peut éviter de faire passer à Québec.23

The minister's letter of the 13 January, 1756 rejected the suggestion, but the example is none the less illustrative of the relations among the administrative officers and the manner in which Gradis attempted to exploit them.

Although Gradis was on sufficiently good terms with de La Porte to remark to Bréard, the former contrôleur of Quebec:

Nous nous flattons sur la protection de M. le P(orte) et qu'il nous rendra tous les services qui dépendront de lui dans cette occasion.24

he could not rely upon the first commodore's automatic support for all propositions he might put forward. He even found it expedient, in at least one case, while enlisting Bigot's persuasive influence to make it appear that he ignored the intendant's initiative. Previously in the same letter he had observed:

Nous n'avons pas juge convenable sur ce que vous nous faites l'honneur de nous marquer que l'army de Quebec devait vous fournir une lettre de recommandation en notre faveur pour M. de la P(orte) pour l'engager à nous procurer des assurances et qu'il devait nous écrire au sujet et d'agir de notre côté auprès de lui. Nous avons pensé qu'il convenait d'attendre d'avoir reçu les lettres que vous nous annonces plutôt que de rien demander et faire connaître que nous ignorons totalement les bontes de l'army.

The letter was addressed to Rochefort where Bréard was expected to arrive from Canada shortly. He was travelling on Gradis' ship,

23. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 154a.
25. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, 7 November 1755, i. 133a.
the Hennefée.

Perhaps due to the late arrival in France of the Hennefée on the 14 December, Gradis decided to approach de La Porte before Bigot's letter arrived. He was still eager for help from the Canadians and rebuked Bréard on the 20 December for having failed to give him any advice on how to approach the minister. He was unhappy not to have received Bigot's letter but thanked Bréard for having written to de La Porte on his behalf:

Vous me marquez Mr avoir écrit à Mr de La Porte sur nos fournitures du Canada de 1766 afin qu'il trouve quelque expedient pour leur envoyer à leur destination avec moins de risques. 26

So it would appear that de La Porte could not have been criminally associated with Bigot and Gradis. Had he been, Gradis would not have had to worry about his support, nor would Gradis have had to pretend that his relations with Bigot were less intimate than they were. Obviously, Gradis believed that an opinion from Bigot, provided de La Porte believed it to be independent, would influence the first gradis' decision to advocate the renewal of the Gradis contract. It seems unlikely that Gradis would have ignored a special understanding between the two administrators.

While interested in his own financial security, Gradis took his responsibilities to the service seriously. Although nervous of the risks involved in wartime shipping, it did not occur to him to abandon the colony. In the same letter of the 20 December, he observed:

Je n'ay cru dans les circonstances des choses et je ne m'étais pas même possible dans l'état de la Colonie de me dispenser d'accomplir le mémoire.

It was for this reason and in order to attempt to lift the heavy war risks from his shoulders 'sans laisser la colonie menquer de tout ce

26. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 177.
doubt he a necessity, that he decided to travel to Versailles to consult with de la Porte in person. Believing in the justice of his request he was convinced that the minister would agree to guarantee his risks or order that the goods be carried on royal ships. Hence, Gradis' brother-in-law observed in a letter to Brizard on the 29 December:

"Il n'est question aujourd'hui que de savoir comment le Ministre et M. de la Porte l'entendront afin de pouvoir prendre un parti fixe. Au surplus je sais convenu d'avance que M. de la Porte fera tout ce qu'il demandera de lui pour procurer le Parti le plus favorable et le plus avantageux qu'il lui sera possible." 27

De La Porte's subordinates, besides having a general field to oversee, were also employed at sundry tasks as the need arose. La Riviere, for example, sometimes acted as a secretary for de la Porte. On the 22 February, 1757, Gradis wrote thanking him:

"De vous etre aussi bien acquitte de la Commission que vous a donne M. de la Porte de nous escrire pour nous ordonner que l'intention du Ministre etoit que l'on ne nous arracher dans l'exécution de l'opération dont j'ay été charge..." 28

Gradis found it useful to maintain close relations with La Riviere, not only as another channel to La Porte and the minister, but also because La Riviere himself was in a position to expedite Gradis' business. A letter of the 18 July, 1755, of Gradis to La Riviere, shows that the clerk was doing the paper work for the provisions sent on the King's account to Canada and Ile Royale that year:

"Vous nous faites l'amitié, Monsieur, de nous informer comme on vous a remis nos factures des envoies des lard et farines pour que nous examinions a en faire l'examen et la vérification des calculs pour établir un prix des uns et des autres, dans lequel entrera le prix d'achat des barils, et leurs autres frais a quoi vous avez la bonne de travailler pour que je puisse donner les ordres a M. de Rostan qu'il en passe le traitte tant pour les achats que pour les frets..." 29

27. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 188a.
28. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, jii. 17.
29. " " " " i. 38a.
La Rivière was also called upon in 1755 to settle Gradis' account for the freight of provisions sent to Biriot and Duchene in 1753 and 1754. He seems to have exercised a measure of independence in devising a means of settling the account after the decisions in principle had been taken by the minister since Gradis noted that La Rivière had been in direct contact with the 'premier conseil du bureau de l'examen des comptes de la Marine des colonies de Paris,' in order to discuss how payment could be arranged. The situation was exceptional and La Rivière had had to be brought in because Rostaing, the commissaireordonnateur of Bordeaux had refused to 'passer de traitte' on the grounds that Gradis had no sworn statements from an 'arrêleur' to prove that the goods had indeed been shipped. Nor did he have any instructions from the minister. Consequently, it had been decided that the most suitable means of effecting payment would be 'à titre de gratification'. It was the gratification upon which La Rivière was at work during July 1755.

That it was indispensable for official agents to maintain close relations with the individuals administering the Marine is shown by the correspondence of the later 1750's. Even with his excellent connections, Gradis was tottering on the brink of bankruptcy owing to non-payment by the Crown of outstanding accounts. As early as the 18 July, 1755, Gradis was sufficiently hard pressed to write to La Rivière that he was prepared to give up his commission if only he could receive his principal.

30. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 38a.
31. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, to Bigot, 8 July 1755, i. 66a.
Despite appeals to the minister on the 5 August and the 20 September, to de La Porte on the 29 August, and the 20 September, by the 28 October, 1755, Gradis still had received no payment and was moved to appeal to La Riviere yet again. This time La Riviere was able to get things moving. On the 4 November, Gradis wrote:

"Sur ce que vous avez fait l'honneur de nous marquer que M. de la Porte se ressouvenoit de nous et qu'il se proposoit de nous faire toucher des fonds; cela nous a empêché de vous écrire pour le supplier de le faire plutôt qu'il le sera possible."

Although La Riviere managed to persuade de La Porte to employ Gradis upon the estimates for November and December, the account still was not fully paid in February 1756, as Gradis explained to La Riviere on the 7 February, his bankers were making difficulties over payment of the provisions of 1756 when 1755 had not yet been funded. De La Porte was particularly annoyed when the bankers, Chabert and Banquet, wrote to him threatening to 'laisser protester des lettres de change.' It appears that it was only owing to the continuing efforts of La Riviere that the account was finally paid. Gradis was still complaining to him on the 2 April that the account was outstanding and it was only in early May that La Riviere was able to tell Gradis that the last certificates were to be signed.

As the years went by Gradis was forced to make increasingly long visits to the Court in order to regulate his accounts and payment became ever less prompt. In 1756, having already spent the first fortnight of the year at Versailles, Gradis left for the capital on

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32. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 38a.
33. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 126a.
34. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 219.
35. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 221.
36. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 280.
June first and did not get back to Bordeaux until the 27th August.
Most of the time he had spent waiting in the minister's anti-chamber
and even so was still awaiting confirmation of his employment upon
the royal accounts in September.\textsuperscript{37}

Although the sheer lack of funds was the greatest impediment
to prompt payment, a problem which became acute at the end of the
decade, administrative inefficiency was at least a contributing
cause. It is amazing not only that Gradis would have had to spend
weeks at Versailles in order to get his business transacted, but
that the accounting should have been done at Versailles at all, and
by no less a personage than La Riviere. Since, in general, the post
authorities were in charge of the munificim's accounts at
Rochefort,\textsuperscript{38} Versailles only auditing them and authorizing payment,
it may well be that this arrangement was precipitated by Rostan's
refusal to have anything to do with the Gradis account.\textsuperscript{39} If this
is the case it shows to what extent the service was vulnerable to
the whims of its servants. In any event, there is no doubt that it
added to the heavy workload already on La Riviere's shoulders. As
Gradis remarked to La Riviere on the 18 September, 1756:

\textit{Vous ne pouvez pas manquer d'occupation. Les
états auxquels vous travaillez sont pénibles
mais personne mieux que vous n'est en situation
d'en venir à bout.}\textsuperscript{40}

During his sojourn at Versailles, Gradis worked out with La
Riviere a system that would save him time:

\textit{Je me souleray (wrote Gradis) à l'avenir pour
envoyer mes factures sur le srmoir que vous devez
faire parvenir de cette manière. Je vous enverrai
un travail pénible et incommodant en faisant l'appre-
ciation de ce que chaque article reviendra avec les
fruits de voiture, commission d'achat sur les lieux
et jusqu'à bord du navire de la manière que nous
connais connu.}\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 144.
\textsuperscript{38} See below, pp. 102, 104, 105, 108, 121-127.
\textsuperscript{39} See below, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{C.C.C.E.}, i. 144.
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}
Once again the difficulties experienced by Gradis in the recovery of his funds and his dependence upon Le Riviere's good will was highlighted:

> Si je me trouvois dans un autre position, j'attendray volontiers, mais vous jugez bien que dans les circonstances presentes, j'ay le soin de mes fonds pour faire face a mes affaires et au besoin a ce que je travaille. J'aspere et je compte sur lez bontez de M. de La Porte qu'il ne m'oublira pas et que vous ayes soin de luy en refaichir la memoire dans l'occasion.  

Besides keeping de La Porte informed of general progress Gradis often wrote directly to him either to solicit preliminary approval for novel arrangements or when requiring extraordinary administrative action to procure funds. On the 15 April, 1755 Gradis informed Bigot that he had, that same day, written to de la Porte requesting that he order Rostan to sign the forms required by Gradis for the reimbursement of the freight of provisions shipped to Bigot, Duqueine and Vaudreuil. Rostan was refusing on the grounds that the letter of administrative procedure had not been followed at the time of dispatch. As in the case of the contract for 1756, Gradis duplicated his letter to de La Porte with another one, phrased in more direct language to La Riviere in which he complained that '(Rostan) est formaliste et il se pique d'exactitude jusqu'a l'exces.' Neither La Riviere nor de La Porte could take the necessary administrative action on their own. On the 8 July, 1755, writing to Bigot, Gradis said:

> J'y ou l'honneur d'informer M. de La Porte de toutes ces difficultes qui nous paraissent bien deplaisant et l'avoient prie d'avoir la bonté d'engager Le Ministre a lui donner des nouveaux ordres pour cela.  

In another case, Gradis wrote to de La Porte on the 25 November, 1756, explaining that the Marquis de Vaudreuil had sent them an order.

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42. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 144, and see above pp. 20, 21.  
43. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amerique, i. 39a.  
44. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, 21 May 1755, 2.10a.  
45. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amerique, i. 10a.
upon the treasurer of the Marine for 1,500 livres. It was the sum which had been awarded him as a gratification and was intended to pay Gradis for the provisions he had supplied to Vaudreuil. This manner of proceeding, Gradis admitted, 'Presente au premier aspect une forme qui paraît irrégulière,' so he was writing to de La Porte for direction on how to procure payment. At first he received no satisfaction from de La Porte and wrote on several occasions to La Rivièr about it, asking him to intervene with de La Porte. The administration's first response was, typically, more red tape. On the 4 January, 1757, Gradis wrote to La Rivièr complaining that neither de La Porte, nor Magnonville, the 'garde du Trésor Royal' had given him satisfaction. Therefore, he would have to send to Vaudreuil,

'Les quatre quartiers de parchemin que vous nous adressez pour qu'il les signe et nous les renvoie par quatre différentes vaisseaux ...

Gradis' persistence was finally rewarded. Having corresponded yet again with de La Porte, he was on the 2 April, 1757 able to thank de La Porte for having arranged for the acceptance of Vaudreuil's certificate.

A measure of de La Porte's effective authority is that his approval was sufficient security for Gradis to begin sub-contracting. While Gradis was in Paris his brother-in-law relayed the information to Écoud on the 10 January, 1756, that:

(N' Gradis) avoir eu l'honneur de voir M' de La Porte qui lui a donné rendez-vous pour se présenter demain d'après jour au Ministre. En attendant il lui a dit qu'il pouvait donner ses ordres dans les divers endroits de faire rendre les marchandises le plus promptement qu'il se pouvait.

46. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 286.
47. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 431.
48. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, iii. 94.
49. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 1976.
De La Porte’s authorization was nevertheless only provisional. On the 8 April, 1755, Gradis had written to the minister asking him to whom in Canada and Isle Royale he should address the invoices for a supplementary shipment of flour and lard. Under the pressing circumstances an informal directive from de la Porte had been sufficient authority on which to begin the operation. On the 20 April, 1755, Gradis wrote to Bigot:

Par une lettre que nous vous venons de recevoir par ordre de votre ami et du notre, M° de La Porte, datée de Versailles le 14 du mois; il nous donne ordre de vous informer que nous vous adresserons la moitié de la partie des marchandises qu'on nous a demandé et dont nous avons eu l'honneur de vous donner avis lorsque vous étiez à la Rochelle.

Gradis was not, however, satisfied with authorization only from de la Porte. He repeated in several letters to the minister that,

'suivant les ordres que M° de La Porte nous a fait porter de Votre Grandeur, nous avons envoyés ces connaissance à M° Bigot. It was only upon receipt of explicit instructions from the minister that he relaxed.

Nous sommes, Messrs, extrêmement flattés de la satisfaction que Votre Grandeur a bien voulu nous témoigner par la lettre dont elle nous a honoré le 9 de ce mois. Nous continuerons done toutes nos expéditions comme pour votre compte, et nous devons des connaissances que nous envonons à M° Bigot et Prevost.

That Gradis had good grounds for uneasiness until the minister had himself approved contracts becomes all the more evident when it is realized that even ministerial approval was no iron-clad guarantee that the terms of a contract would be honoured. During his visit to Versailles, in the summer of 1756, Gradis had negotiated with de La

50. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Ministre, p. 21.
51. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 37.
52. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Ministre, 29 April, p. 22.
P cite the contract for 1757. On the 4 September, 1756, he informed Bréard that the minister, himself, had given his approbation:

Consequently, Gradis’ surprise and dismay could not have been greater than when at the beginning of October he was informed that Versailles had decided to re-open the contract. In a letter to La Riviere of the 5 October, 1756, he exultated:

Unfortunately, the Gradis papers give no indication whether it was de la Porte or the minister who was responsible for this abrupt reversal.

This was one case where good relations with the administrative assistants was of crucial importance. The 4 January, 1757, found Gradis asking La Riviere for a copy of the contracts he had signed the previous summer in order to put together a protest against the arbitrary reduction made on his freight payments and commission. As to whether he succeeded in improving the conditions, the Gradis papers are also silent. Nevertheless while he was at Versailles during the early summer of 1757, Gradis came to an agreement with the Administration. It must have been satisfactory since Gradis,

54. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 119.
55. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 170.
56. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 431.
despite his earlier threats, agreed to undertake the shipments for the following year.

So, while de la Porte managed le détail of the Marine and made many on-the-spot decisions, these decisions were only provisional, requiring ultimately the minister's approbation. He exercised enormous influence over the minister, but was himself subject to the influence of his subordinates. Certainly, in the management of the Gradiot contracts, de la Porte can not be said to have disposed of a 'veritable dictature'. Nor would his influence over the regional administrators appear to merit this description.

Since there is no set of private papers to testify to the exact relationship of de la Porte with the regional administrators, it can not be investigated with equal precision. de la Porte's power could not, however, have been any greater than Versailles'. So, one means of determining the upper limit would be to see to what extent Versailles controlled the activity of the ports. This inquiry will provide a good 'control' for the discussion of the colonies since the influence exercised by Versailles over colonial administration could not have been any more effective than that held over the much nearer ports of France.

Ever since Colbert's time, Versailles had tried to know all and direct all, but the theory was far from the practice. The sheer slowness of communication, letters taking up to five days even to travel from Rochefort to Versailles, for example, made it indispensable that local administrators should make many decisions, even if only on a provisional basis. Supplies had to be ordered, ships overhauled, and for all these, a plethora of contracts to be

57. See below. Chapter I, pp. 42, 43.
58. Gradiot Correspondence, Copybook Americaine, to Elgot, 24 July, 1757. i. 213a.
negotiated and overseen. Obviously, the needs of each port could only be assessed on the spot by an intendant who was well versed in the details. How easy it would have been if each intendency had been an island unto itself and each intendant could safely have been invested with sufficient authority to make all decisions.

The intendencies were not islands but rather intermediate links in the chain between Versailles, the high seas and the Farthest colony. Naval supplies could be channeled through Le Havre or Nantes just as readily as through Rochefort and Bordeaux. The choice of entrepot was not just a matter of administrative convenience. There were real variations in the price of shipping and the availability of supplies depending upon the fortunes of local shippers and the state of the harvests. The local intendant was in no position to make comparative judgements on the practicability of his port or another, nor could he know what the colonies needed. Ultimately, Versailles had to be the final arbiter.

Unfortunately, there was no clear demarcation of responsibility. Although no intendant could have questioned Versailles' final authority to decide what contracts were to be issued at the port, Versailles' competence to judge the honesty of the prices negotiated by the intendant or the quality of the goods supplied was limited. In most instances Versailles was bound to rely upon the reports of the port staff itself. Should a dispute arise between the intendant and the supplier, Versailles was called upon to arbitrate, but at what odds? The danger lay between treating a merchant unjustly, or failing to support one's local representative. Versailles and the regional administrators were, even at the best of times, oppressed by a mountain of correspondence since Versailles wished to be regularly informed of even the least significant administrative details.
If a local supplier like Gradis fell out with his intendant, a
deluge of recriminatory correspondence was added to the already
unmanageable pile. Under these circumstances, it was easy for
Versailles to lose correspondence and was sometimes caught by its
intendants issuing conflicting directives. It is not surprising
that the intendants sometimes took advantage of the confusion at
Versailles to impose their own solutions. In the face of a
determined intendant the minister, short of taking the drastic step
of removing him was reduced, either to approbation of actions taken,
or an inept and wrenching of hands.

Lemoine probably overstated the case when he observed that:

Rochefort fut, pendant presque toute cette période
(the eighteenth century) le grand et exclusif entrepôt,
le point de départ et l'aboutissement de toutes les
communications avec la France; 59

but, it is true that Rochefort was a very important naval base during
this period and of particular interest because it was there that
François Bigot was trained and worked until 1739.

The intendant of Rochefort was not only responsible for
administering the port, but after 1715 he was also invested with the
functions of a territorial intendant becoming responsible for the
development of the town of Rochefort. Of the intendant's functions,
Lemoine wrote:

C'est à lui que s'adressaient les ordres de la Cour;
il en était l'executeur responsable en même temps que
le dispensateur des grâces. Toute la hiérarchie des
fonctionnaires aboutissait à lui, et, si même les
officiers de marine étaient nominellement sous les
ordres du Commandant en chef, dans le port, en raison
de leur fonction, un grand nombre d'entre eux se
trouvaient subordonnés à l'Intendant. 60

If by this Lemoine meant only that the intendant was the effective

59. Dick Lemoine, Repertoire Historique des Archives de l'Armed,
issu de l'intérim de Rochefort (Paris, 1925) p. 6.
60. Lemoine, ibid., p. v.
The implication appears to be, however, that he also enjoyed a large
measure of social prestige. In the eyes of a Canadian observer in
1750, this was not the case and even the office of commandant was
dishonoured.

Social prestige aside, just as the colonial intendants were held
ultimately responsible by the minister for the civil administration
of their colonies, so also was the intendant of Rochefort for the
running of his port. After one particularly rancorous dispute between
Rochefort and Versailles, the minister uttered the last word saying:

It was not, however, very fair of the minister to attack the intendant
in such unmeasured terms, since he had conducted himself throughout
in a way he thought to be in the best interests of the service.

In 1738, the intendant, having warned the minister that the
Jason probably would not hold all the supplies destined for Isle
Royale, was nevertheless blazoned when this turned out to be the case,
although it had been the minister who took the final decision to use
the ship. In a letter of the 24 February, 1738, that the minister

61. Correspondence of Rocq. Épagn, RAQ, 1935; Épagn & de Villebois,
23 May 1750, p. 94.
62. AG, B, 69, (Autres Lieux) 19 May, 1739.
wrote to Beaucharnois, he observed:

"J'ay, Monsieur, reçu votre lettre du 15 de ce mois. Je vous ay marqué que je destinai le Profond pour l'Isle Royale sur ce que vous m'aviez observé que le Jason ne pourrait peut être contenir tous les effets a y transporter. C'est ce que je vous prie de vérifier plus particulièrement parce que mon intention serait de le destiner pour cette colonie par préférence au Profond ..." 63

In the meantime, the hurried intendant had discovered that despite his apprehensions about the capacity of the Jason, it would be impossible in any case to substitute the Profond.

"J'appren par une lettre que je reçois de St Dominique que le Profond commandé par M. de Beals ne pourra être de retour en ce port qu'à la fin de mai et comme je n'ay plus que le Jason, je vous propose pour l'Isle Royale je prends le parti M^, de faire continuer son voyage avec vivacité." 64

He went on to say that the only hope of loading all of the provisions ordered for Isle Royale would be to reduce the crew from 200 to 150 and to take off 8 to 10 cannon as had been done when M. de Coulomb was captain. When by return of post on the 3 March, 65 the minister approved this proposition, he had not reckoned on the determined opposition of the captain to the reduction of crew. On the 9 April, without consulting Beaucharnois, the minister reversed himself:

"M. de Chauvagnerac m'a représenté qu'en fixant son équipage a 160 hommes, ce serait l'exposer à se trouver hors d'état de faire faire des manœuvres nécessaires en cas d'accident ... je trouverai bon que l'équipage de ce vaisseau soit porté jusqu'à 200 hommes au lieu de 160, comme vous l'aviez proposé et que je l'avoir approuvé d'autant mieux qu'il est à croire que cela n'espechera pas que tous les effets a avoyer a l'Isle Royale ne puissent y être embarqués." 66

As a consequence, it is hardly surprising that on the 24 May, 67 Beaucharnois had to inform the minister that the last 90 tons of freight

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63. A.M., Rochefort, 1E, 128, (minister to the intendant), p. 57.
64. A.M., Rochefort, 367, (the intendant to the minister).
20 February, 1738, p.44.
65. A.M., 1E 128, p.69.
67. A.M., 1E 367, p.139.
could not be fitted onto the Jazon. Considering the explicit fashion
with which Beauchanois had advised the minister of this likelihood,
it was most unjust of the minister to reply on the 2 June:

J'avais lieu de croire que M. de Chavignon em-

bercerait sur le Jazon tous les effets destinés

pour l'île Royale: (if anyone had given him that

impression it must have been the captain himself)

Et je n'avais été peu surpris d'apprendre par votre
dernière lettre qu'il en laisse pour près de 90

ton(s)$. Dès que vous avez été informé des envoy.
qu'il y avait à faire en cette colonie et de leur en-

combrer, vous auriez dû faire constater ce qui

pourrait être embarqué sur ce vaisseau, faire dans l'

État ou sont les chaux, il ne reste que d'autre party

à prendre que d'envoyer par un vaisseau marchand ce que

le Jazon ne peut point emporter ... 68

The following year, when the intendant was convinced that the

Jazon would be adequate, he turned a deaf ear to the minister's

repeated instructions that the Profond ought to be sent to Isle

Royale instead. Obviously he was gambling that Versailles would

not take a sustained interest in the affair and went so far even as
to pretend that he was following the minister's own orders. This

time, however, the minister's staff found the back copies of the

relevant correspondence and the intendant was subjected to one blast

after another for flagrant disobedience of specific directives. In

the final event the Jazon proved adequate to the task.

On the 26 February, 173969 Beauchanois, in a letter to the

minister acknowledged that he had received orders to send the Profond
to Isle Royale. He reminded the minister, however, that only the week

before he had informed him that the Jazon, although not in a fit state
to make any of the dangerous approaches to the Caribbean ports could

quite safely make a last voyage to Isle Royale. He based his observ-

ations upon the recommendations of "Messieurs les officiers du Port;"

68. A.M., 18, 128, p.281.
Despite the minister's previous order to ready the **Profound** for the voyage to Isle Royale, on the 12 March, Bauharnois repeated to the minister that he was urging the replacement of the **Profound** by the **Jaxon**. Consequently he was putting off the overhaul of both ships until he received new orders from Versailles.

The minister responded with a rocket on the 20 March:

Il re convient point de changer la destination qui a été donnée au Profond pour la campagne de l'Isle Royale, si on lui substituait le Jaxon, on n'aurait dans l'inconvenient de l'année dernière que ce vaisseau ne put pas porter tout ce qu'il y avait à envoyer dans cette colonie. Il est vrai que l'envoi requis, comme vous le proposez, son équipage, il y resterait plus de place; mais outre qu'il y a le grand habillement à envoyer cette année-cy, il y aura encore quelques faux samiers. Ainsi, vous faire préparer le Profond pour cette campagne; et je vous expliquerai immédiatement les intentions du Roy en rapport au Jaxon.

On the 2 April, the minister was informed that the intendant had complied with his orders; however, on the 7 April, an accident to a private ship, the **Perle**, gave Bauharnois the excuse he wanted to follow his own wishes. In this letter he told the minister that he and Rochalar, having conferred together, had decided to destine the **Profound** to Louisiana in place of the **Perle**, there being no suitable merchant ships to hand. They had already begun to trans-ship goods from the **Perle** to the **Profound**.

The minister was very annoyed by this decision. On the 13 April, writing to Bauharnois, he insisted that the only possible excuse for the increased expenditure it would entail would be that freighting a private merchantman might so retard the operation as to jeopardize the prompt arrival of the goods in Louisiana. Consequently, the wrath

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70. A.M., 1F, 368, p. 78.
72. A.M., 1F, 368, p. 96.
73. A.M., 1F, 368, p. 104.
74. A.C., B. 69, (no pagination).
of the minister knew no bounds when Beaulnois, having rejected the
proposition of a private merchant recommended to him by the minister,
he persisted in his plans for the Profond:

Je reçois, M., la vôtre lettre du 23 du mois d'août
au sujet de la destination de la flûte du Roy Le Profond.
Après vous avoir expliqué si précisément les intentions
de S.M. pour l'envoyé des effets de la Louisiane, par mes
lettres du 14 et 17 et répétée par celle du 13, je n'ai
pas été peu surpris de voir que vous avez fait du S.
S. Theodore de LaCroix pour cet Envoy sans avoir
seulement rendu compte de sa proposition ni des raisons
que vous croyiez avoir pour la rejeter. Vous auriez dû
faire attention d'un coût qu'en acceptant celle-ci
lorsqu'elle vous a été faite, vous pouviez mettre ce
navire en état de partir avant que le Profond puisse être
vaisseau, et d'un autre coût qu'en prenant la flûte du Roy
vous allier exposer S.M. dans des circonstances d'autant plus
considérables, que le Japon qui par cet arrangement
Seroit destiné pour l'Isle Royale n'ayant pas pu
contenir l'année d'ici tous les effets qui furent envoyés
dans cette colonie, pourroit encore moins suffire pour
les envoyer a f'air et cette année oy lesquels sont bien
plus forts. Je ne Sais point quel parti vous auries pris
Sur ces lettres des 21 et 24 et si en exécution des
ordres tant de fois réitérés Sur cet article vous ne vous
Seriez pas déterminé au chargement du n(avi)re m(a(n)ch)é,
qui encore une fois aurait pu être prêt avant que le
Profond puisse être vaisseau. Mais si a la réception de cette
lettre oy vous aviez pas changé de sentiment depuis la
vôtre du 23 du mois d'août et que les choses soient au
meme état qu'elles estoient alors, il ne Sera plus lieu de
penser a ce 23e, et il faudra bien S'y suivre cette
destination du Profond; et dans cette Proposition
j'adresse a M. de Rochalar les instructions pr(ou)r le
S. de Grandchamp, qui doit estre en etat de profiter du
p(re)mi er vent favorable a mettre a la voile. Le Roy
Sera tres mécontent que l'on Soit obligé d'en venir là.

Nor was Rochalar exempt from criticism. On the 1 May he too was
reprimanded for an apparent inability to read.

J'ay receu les lettres que vous n'ayez pris la
peine de m'écrire les 23 et 25 du mois d'août.
Vous vous êtes trompé si vous aviez cru que la
proposition d'aborder le Profond pour la Louisiane
avait été approuvée. Vous aviez dû voir par ma réponse
a votre lettre du 11 du mois d'août qui contenait cette
proposition que l'intention du Roy estoit de n'avoir recours
cet amendement que dans le cas ou l'on ne trouverait
pas de Flavire n'ayant la Rochelle ou a Capet pour le

75. A.C., B., 69, 1 May, 1739.
Substituer à la Ferle; Si par ma dépêche du 14 je vous ay expliqué bien précisément que je donnois ordre à M. de Beauharnois de prendre le Savire de M. Theodore de La croix, je n'ay renouvelé cet ordre par d' autres Lettres du 21 et du 26: Et j'espère encore qu' il Se Sera mis en devoir de S'y conformer.76

It was, however, too late to change the destination of the

Profond but Versailles continued to fulminate. On the 4 May, the

minister expostulated to Beauharnois:

Ce n'est pas Sans peine que j'ay vu que malgré tous ce que je vous ay écrit vous avés persisté dans la resolution de s'partir le Profond pour la Louisiane; Et ce qui me Surprend le plus est que vous me souvienirs que c'est en execution de mes ordres du 13 du mois dernio... Le Roy qui ne peut estre que tres content de cette operation faite contre Ses ordres les plus formels.77

On the 19 May, the minister asserted that the use of the Profond might increase the shipping cost to the crown by 40,000 écus and that on no possible account could Beauharnois shuffle off the blame onto Rochelier.78

The minister also asserted that the use of the merchant's ship would have saved up to two months.

Turning his attention on the 11 June79 to the Jazen and the ship-

ments for Isle Royale, the minister urged the intendant to make a

very careful estimate of the excess cargo which the Jazen would not likely be able to hold in order that alternate transport might be booked early at a possible saving.

On the 8 July80 the new intendant, Deslandes was able to inform the minister that all the roads destined for Isle Royale had been put aboard the Jazen.81 Apparently, the lack of excess cargo was due

76. A.C., B., 69.
77. A.C., B., 69.
78. See above, p. 29, fnnt. 60.
80. A.C., B., 69.
81. It ought not to be inferred that Beauharnois was dismissed due to the foregoing. He bad for some time been requesting his replacement. Although his imminent retirement may have made him feel slightly less inhibited than usual he, nevertheless, would have bad his pension to consider.
primarily to a decision to obtain Isle Royale's supply of flour in Canada that year.

To recapitulate, in 1738 the minister had recommended the Jazon over the intendant's advice. When it had proved inadequate the intendant was blamed. In 1739, the minister had insisted that the Jazon would be inadequate, the intendant had followed his own views, was severely reprimanded for so doing and was proved by the event to have been right. Whether Versailles was well founded in its contention that Beaubarnois' actions had cost the crown up to 40 thousand écus, is impossible to confirm. What is clear is that Versailles was helpless in the face of a determined and experienced intendant; even when that intendant was at such a short remove as Rochefort.

If intendants often adopted a cavalier attitude to orders from Versailles, this may have been due to their sometimes conflicting or palpably impossible nature. On the 3 March, 1738 returning an approved contract to Beaubarnois, the minister reprimanded him for the arbitrary deletion of certain articles.

Je ne vous dissimulerai pourtant pas que j'ay esté surrie de voir que vous avés retiré de l'État que je vous avois envoyé des effets a adjoier a ces mêmes negocians 8 articles que vous avés compris dans l'Adjudication faite aux Marchands de Rochefort; Et il est en effet assez extraordinaire que vous ayez fait ce chargement, sans m'en rendre compte, j'avois eu pas raisons pour arranger les choses sur le pied que je vous les avoir presrites, et principalement par rapport aux cloots, sur le fournitur desquels je sais qu'il y a de l'abus a Rochefort. Je vous prie d'avoir attention a ce que pareille chose n'arrive plus.82

On the 8 March Beaubarnois defended himself on this article by pointing out to the minister that only six months prior, Versailles had authorized a three year contract with a merchant of Saint Jean.

82. A.M., IE., 128, p. 69.
d'Angely:

Les 8 articles que j'ay laissé retirchés de la soumission de ces negocians consistent en 5 articles de clowns et 3 articles en vin Rouge et blanc, et vinaigre, je n'ay fait ce retirchérent que sur ce que vous avez passé arrêté le marché que j'ai au mois d'octobre dernier avec un negociant de s'Jean d'Angely pour la fourniture des mendes clouteries pendant trois années tant pour le service courant au port que pour les Envoy qui s'en font dans les colonies. Je joins ici l'état de comparaison des prix du marché avec ceux portés par la soumission de ces negocians, cet Etat Mar vous fera commencer le bénéfice considérable que le Roy fait sur cette fourniture... 83

The wine was not included because the price had not been stipulated and the merchant's agent had refused point blank to take responsibility for him.

The only further objection which the minister had to make on the 17 March was that:

vous auriez deû m'en rendre compte en m'envoyant les adjudications que vous avés fautes pour ces fournitures. 84

Although the intendant might well have been justified in the contentious stand he took on the examples given above, administrators appear, on the whole, to have been more interested in their own prerogative than was good for the service. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than the frustrations Gradis was forced to endure at the hands of commissaire-ordonnateur Rostan. The fortress of the regional administrator was the letter of the law, as Gradis had discovered when trying to negotiate with Rostan for the settlement of DuChesne and Bigot's freight charges. 85 Forced by Rostan to waste the Court's time on that issue, Gradis expressed to Bigot on the 15 April, 1755 his fear that Rostan would raise difficulties over the

84. A.M., IE, 128, p. 115.
85. See above, p. 23.
86. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Americque, i. 35a.
reimbursement of their outlays on that year's special shipment of flour and lard. Subsequently, this suspicion hardened to a conviction since on the 8 July he told Bigot:

Nous avons pris la liberté d'en prévenir le Ministre pour qu'il en boute de lui donner des nouveaux ordres pour qu'il en sorte en double notre traite.

What caused Gradis his concern was that the contract of that year was being executed in a rather pecu liar fashion. Although Gradis was charged with the purchase and shipping of 6,000 quintals of flour and 2,000 of lard for the King's account, the minister informed them:

Il est question d'y travailler comme si c'était pour votre compte.

Why such cloak-and-dagger methods were adopted is not made clear but obviously Gradis felt bound to follow religiously the minister's instruction since all of the invoices sent to Bigot in Canada and Prevost at Isle Royale were made out as if they were Gradis' private shipments. Even though Rostan received explicit instructions from the minister:

Quoique vous doive se faire sans qu'il paroisse que c'est pour le compte du Roy, j'en préviens M Rostan, et je lui donne mes ordres tant pour qu'il mette en règle les dépenses de la fourniture des denrées et de leur fret, que pour faciliter l'expédition des ravires sur lesquels vous les ferez charger.

he was never reconciled to this irregularity. When in January 1756, it was decided to revert to having statements made out in the name of the King, Rostan seized upon the change as a vindication for his opposition to the other method. On the 27 January, Gradis recounted

87. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 68.
88. Gradis Correspondence. Bordeaux Microfilms, chemise 55, 31 March, 1755.
89. Gradis Correspondence, Bordeaux Microfilms, chemise 55, 31 March, 1755.
to La Riviere:

J'ay remis vendredi l'apres midi a M. de Rostant le paquet a son adresse. En le lisant lorsqu'il a ete a l'article du connoisement qui doit se faire au nom du Roy, c'est alors qu'il a dit, 'Enfin, on voit l'erreur dans laquelle ils ont ete l'annee d'o de les faire mettre votre nom ...

Rostan must have resented the close relationship Gradis had with the Court. No doubt he viewed it as a challenge to his own authority. When Gradis informed him that his wishes were not to be followed for the declaration of cargoes, since Versailles agreed with Gradis' arguments, Rostan flew into a rage and declared that in that case he would have nothing what-so-ever to do with the shipment. Gradis quoted Rostan in his letter of the 27 January, to La Riviere as saying:

'Il faudra donc que lorsque vos navires partiront que vous me presente une facture en regle de ce que vous y aurez embarque et que les cap'taine(s) viennent chez moy pour la signer pour que je les envoie a M. Bigot et au Ministre.' Je luy ay represente que comme le chargement de ses navires consistoit en un grand nombre d'articles et que celles retarderoit les expeditions; que les ordres verbales qu'on m'avoyt donne a Versailles estoit de faire les connoisements comme les font les negocians et expliquer tant de balles de telles marchandises. Il m'a repoyd que si c'etoit ainsi qu'il ne s'en miroit point.

This appears to have been Rostan's last word on the subject since he was not again mentioned in this context although the correspondence with Versailles concerning the shipment lasted well into 1757.

It did not mean, however, that Gradis no longer needed Rostan's co-operation. The commissaire-ordonnateur subsequently set himself to make life as difficult as he could for him. It is a measure of the stiff-necked arrogance of these administrators that Rostan would so harden himself against Gradis. Gradis, of all men, was well equipped to smooth ruffled feathers. His letters to Canada, Paris and

90. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 207a.
91. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 207a.
the other ports are models of persuasive charm. There is no reason to believe he would willingly treat any differently a man with whom he had to work more closely than anyone.

The realm in which Rostan embarrassed Gradis most severely was the procuration of crews. Technically, this was a private concern of the shipper and his captains. In practice, there was little difficulty in finding adequate crew among the sailors exempted from national service, but by 1756 war conditions prevailed. As Grad's explained to La Riviere on the 1 February, 1757, all the sailors wanted to serve on the corvaires, since in the event of a prize they got a share. Consequently, it was virtually impossible to get sailors, despite handsome salaries for the voyage to Canada. Under these circumstances Gradis believed that he ought to be given crews from the reserved class since his shipments were for the Crown.

In the first of many complaints to de La Porte, Gradis described on the 27 January, 1756, the indifference that Rostan showed to his representations:

Je ne puis même vous dissimuler que j'ai grand peur de ne procurer pour former les équipages de ses deux navires et je dois vous rendre compte de la conversation que j'ai eu à cet égard avec M. de Rostan que jeus l'honneur de voir immédiatement après son arrivée en lui remettant la lettre du Ministre. Je lui communique la crainte que j'avais de ne pouvoir compléter de bons équipages s'il ne m'accorderait pour cela son concours au besoin. Il me dit que c'était son affaire d'en chercher dans la classe libre puis s'il arrivait que je l'honneur de lui représenter qu'a sa faute d'en trouver dans cette classe les expéditions eussent souffrir quelque retardement. 'Pouvez-vous espérer que vous me permettriez d'en prendre ou que vous auries la bonté de m'en procurer des classes destinées au service s'il le faisoit.' 'Non,' me répondit-il, 'il me faudrait

92. Gradis Correspondence, Country Great, ii. 522.
93. For the system of naval reservation and allocation of crews see below, pp. 114-118.
pour cela des ordres expens que le ministre ne se donne point par sa lettre. J'ay eu beau lui observer que c'étoit ses intentions et combien il importait au bien du service et de la colonie que ses fournitures partissent promptement pour éviter les mauvais ren-contre. Il m'a pareu décidé a ne point se départir de sa sisteme sans de noueaux ordres...

Rostan was sustained in his position, in so for as Versailles did not order sailors from the national list be given to Gradis. He was, nevertheless, instructed to give Gradis priority over any other private merchant for sailors from the exempt list. Rostan told Gradis he would comply to the directive but seem to have made no real effort to implement it. Indeed, in one of his replies to the importunate Gradis, he betrayed sentiments verging on contempt for his superiors. On the 15 February, 1756, Gradis wrote to La Riviere:

J'ay été voir mercredy matin, M. de Rostan. Il finisait de lire ses lettres et il se dit, 'voues pouvez ecrire a M. de la Forte et luy marrer qu'il est inutile qu'il se donne la peine de faire signer de lettres par Le ministre pour vous fournir des pete lots. J'ay donné des ordres dans mon bureau, qu'on ne donna des permis que pour vos navires."

In 1757, the situation was even worse. On the 11 January, appealing to La Riviere, Gradis observed that he had been to see Rostan to ask for help in obtaining sailors. Rostan had replied that he had no orders from the minister on the subject. Gradis was surprised since he had appealed to the minister on the 11 December, 1756. Even had he received such orders, Rostan said, it would have been impossible for him to help Gradis since he had no sailors available. But observed Gradis, 'les navires qui s'expedient pour nos colonies et pour la course en trouvent.'

In spite of a letter of the minister to Gradis of the 7 January

94. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 206.
95. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 225.
96. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 453.
97. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 335.
98. Correspondence Gradis, Copybook Europe, ii. 453.
in which Gradis was assured that orders had been issued to Rostan;  
d'en faciliter l'expedition autant qu'il sera possible';99 on the  
25 January Gradis was again complaining to La Riviere that he could  
get no crews at any price and that Rostan was still pretending he  
had received no orders on the subject.100 The 26 February found  
Gradis distraught without crews and Rostan still denying he had any  
sailors at his disposal; whereas, Gradis noted:  
'Tout dit qu'il accord a d'autres les memes choses  
qu'il nous refuse.'101  
By the 10 March, he was sufficiently convinced of Rostan's bad faith  
to confide in Bigot that his whole purpose in holding back crew was  
to show just who wielded the real power.102  
Gradis also had cause that year 'to complain of a shortage of  
carpenters owing to Rostan's non-co-operation,103 and furthermore  
about Rostan's unwillingness to provide an escort for five 'pousses'  
to Rochefort. Without the escort they would have run away.104  
It is little wonder that the end of the shipping season found  
Gradis threatening Versailles that he would not undertake another  
contract unless he was guaranteed better co-operation from the service.  
He informed La Riviere:  

Je ne me refuseray jamais a me rendre utile autant  
que cela devendre de moy pour le bien du service. Je  
sacrifieray mon bien, mon repos et ma tranquillite  
mais tous autant que je servay subordonne au caprice  
d'un homme je n'en feray rien. Si absolument le  
Ministre l'ordonne, J'auray l'honneur de lui repré-  
sentar que tous autant que je n'auray pas un ordre  
exprès pour qu'on me passe les équipages que je  
présenteray qu'ils soient de classe de service ou non;105  
it n'est pas possible que je puisse remplir ces vues.  

99. Correspondence Gradis, Copybook Ministre, p. 29a.  
100. Correspondence Gradis, Copybook Europe, ii. 501.  
101. Correspondence Gradis, Copybook Europe, iii. 26.  
102. Correspondence Gradis, Copybook Amerique, i. 162.  
103. Correspondence Gradis, Copybook Europe, 5 February, ii. 535.  
104. Correspondence Gradis, Copybook Europe, 10 May, iii. 197.  
105. Correspondence Gradis, Copybook Europe, 2 April, iii. 96.
The final proof of Rostan's power was afforded in 1758. In a year when Gracis was wandering,

"...consent on pourra faire pour compléter les équipages qui sont nécessaires pour ces armées, ..."
because,

"La Course nous a enlevé la plus grande partie de nos matelots qui sont dans les prisons d'Angleterre, ..."
he had no difficulty with crews. Rostan was well disposed:

"M de Rostan nous a fourni de le meilleur grâce nos équipages dont nous avons eu besoin pour toutes non expéditions. S'il en eut fait de même l'année d'ici, le malheur que nous avons de nos navires ne serait certain pas arrivés."

So much for the absolute authority of Louis XV, his ministers and their councils. So much for the 'véritable dictature' of the first émigré who was helpless before the 'course d'un bateau' even such a short distance from Versailles as Bordeaux. If even Rostan could not be controlled, how much more difficult it was to keep abreast of events in the far distant colonies. In the colonies, each local administrator issued his own decrees which were enforced immediately and perhaps repudiated months later by Versailles. In the case of lesser administrative decisions, the colonial authorities, even more than Rostan, were practically absolute.

Although he accepted gifts from Épée, de La Porte probably knew little more about his activities than the minister and was glad not to be bothered. After all, colonies had but one purpose which was the creation of wealth for the mother country. If corruption ran unchecked in the colonies, it was too much trouble to do anything

106. Correspondence Gracis, Copybook Amérique, 24 February 1758, i.234a.
107. Correspondence Gracis, Copybook Amérique, 24 February 1758, i.237a.
108. See below, pl.61.
about it. De La Porte and the minister had enough to do just to
cope with daily administration. Dr. Boulle has argued that
ministerial circles had begun to turn their attention toward the
reform of the colonial system before 1756, but the evidence he
presented tends to confirm rather than weaken the impression that
only the unqualified disaster of the Seven Years War sufficed to
rouse the central administration to a serious attempt at reform.

110. Boulle, op.cit., pp. iii, iv. This is not to dismiss his
excellent discussion of the changing attitude toward
mercantilism and the first tentative efforts which were
made prior to the Seven Years War to liberalize the trade
laws and attack at its roots one of the primary causes
of colonial weakness. See for example his thesis, p. 77.
CHAPTER II

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Having examined the 'head office' in its relations with its subordinates in the provinces, we turn now to a discussion of the administrators themselves, their careers and families. Since the colonial service was deeply intertwined in the general French administration, we will not be surprised to learn that colonial administrators did not view a career in the colonies as an end in itself. Bigot, for example, spent the first sixteen years of his working life at Rochefort in other departments of the Marine, and regarded his postings to Isle Royale and Canada only as the necessary preludes to an appointment to an intendance in France. Preference in the Marine was awarded primarily on a patronage basis, being only secondarily concerned with questions of integrity and efficiency. Bigot's actions in Canada can not be fully appreciated unless set in the social context of the Marine. Therefore, some of the dynastic considerations and lobbying tactics current in Bigot's period will be examined before moving on to discourse on his own family and friends.

Regarding the recruitment policies of the Marine, Neuville stated that in 1702 commissions in the administrative corps were made verbal. This was considered an improvement over the insecurity of tenure which had prevailed previously. It was hoped security would encourage administrators to:

s'en rendre plus capables; et, par le désir naturel de faire passer leurs offices à leurs enfants et héritiers, ils puissent instruire ceux qu'ils destineront pour les remplir après eux.¹

¹ Neuville, M.D., Archives NATIONALEs DE LA FRANCE; ETAT SOMMAIRE DES ARCHIVES DE LA MARINE, 1898, PARIS, p. 582.
Apparently, the venal experiment did not produce an adequate supply of devoted civil servants because it was ended abruptly in April 1716. From 1685, efforts had been made to develop a system for the training of administrators. A dispatch of that year announced that candidates would be chosen:

parmi les jeunes gens qui se recommandoient par leur noblesse ou par les services de leur famille, et qui avaient un âge convenable pour commencer à servir dans un port. 2

and Maurepas made an absolute fetish of recruiting young aristocrats for the administrative corps since he was convinced that they were not only likely to be more honest than commoners but would also be more likely to intimidate corrupt naval captains. On the 7 March 1735 he informed Rocamboles, the intendent of Rochefort:

Je suis bien aisé d'admettre dans ces emplois des gens de quelque distinction pour leur donner plus de relief et ce sont ces sortes de sujets que vous devez placer par préférence sur les vaisseaux, les officiers ont plus de considération pour eux et ils sont moins susceptible de prégation dans leurs fonctions. 3

In 1716, the new training rank of 'petit commissaire' was created for specially favoured candidates, apparently to short-circuit the usual pattern of crieve, scrivain-ordinaire, scrivain-général, commissaire. In 1756, for example, at the age of eighteen and after only a few months work in his father's office, Arnaud de La Porte, fils, was made a petit commissaire de la Marine.

Although, it was possible to enter and rise to high rank in the Marine without the advantage of birth, 4 despite a shortage of talent, such was the exception rather than the rule. To be sure,

4. Joseph Pellerin, eventually a first coréal began life in 1683 as the son of one of the King's trumpeters, and Arnaud de La Porte was himself the son of a coast guard at Bayonne.
one needed a rudimentary education to qualify for a training post in the service, but the key to any appointment was a good recommendation. Friends were useful, and friends could be bought, as a rather disillusioned Canadian who had spent seven months in Paris explained. Landriève told Mme. Bégon that in Paris:

"qu'il a fallu se mettre en beau habit, afin d'être regardé et qu'il n'y a que ceux qui paraissent avoir de l'argent qui sont bien reçus." 5

The reason for this was that one had to look worthwhile.

... il voudroit être écrivain principal. Il a de l'argent et st'il en veut donner il réussira; c'est par là que tout s'arrange en ce monde, à ce qu'il m'a dit. 6

Nothing, however, was more useful in the game than good family connection.

Not only was Jean-Baptiste Colbert succeeded in the ministry by his son, but he managed to do well by his in-laws. Zoltvary observed that the marriage of Marie Charron, whose mother was a Bégon, to Colbert, on the 14 December, 1648, transformed the Bégons into maritime and colonial administrators. 7 Colbert assisted his cousin by marriage, Michel Bégon de la Picardière to obtain, first the intercancy of Saint-Domingue, then that of the galleys at Marseilles, and finally the key post of Rochefort. At the same time Bégon was intendant of Saint-Domingue, his brother-in-law, Jacques de Neulles, was intendant of New France.

Of his three sons, two; Michel and Claude-Michel, pursued successful careers in the marine. The former, who began work as an écrivain-principal at Toulon, furthered his career through a

6. Ibid., 10 December 1750, p. 140.
7. This and the following is taken primarily from the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. III, 1741 to 1770, Toronto, 1974.
marriage into the powerful Beauharnois family, themselves closely related to the Phélypeaux dynasty which provided three ministers of the Marine, in an unbroken tenure from 1690 to 1748. Michel Pégon rose quickly, serving as intendant of New France, intendant of Le Havre, intendant of the admiralty of Normandy and finally ending up as intendant of naval forces. His son, yet another Michel, rose to be intendant of Dunkerque.

Michel's sister married the Peer-Admiral, Roland Barrin de La Calissonnière, whose son, Roland-Michel, served as interim governor of New France from 1747 to 1749, before taking over the dépôt des Cartes et Plans at Versailles, where he became a personal adviser to Rouillé. Not only did he serve as a commissioner on the North American Boundaries Commission, but also generated the successful occupation of Minorca in 1756.

Claude Michel, even though he angered the family by marrying the daughter of the marechal de logis at Montreal, Marie-Elisabeth Robert de La Morandière, rose eventually to occupy the not inconsiderable gubernatorial post of Trois Rivières. His daughter, Marie-Cathrine Elisabeth, married Honoré Michel de Villebois de La Rouvillière, whose father was a commissaire at Bordeaux in the 1730's and whose uncle, we have already encountered in the person of Henri de Bostan, commissaire-ordonnateur at Bordeaux.

Michel's career is a good example of how not to succeed in the Marine. Although industrious and talented and certainly not without influence at Court, Michel committed an unfortunate tactical error in permitting himself to be drawn into bitter conflict while he was commissaire-ordonnateur in Louisiana with the governor, Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil. Perhaps the quarrel was rooted in the antipathy which had existed between Vaudreuil's father and Michel's father-in-law's brother, who had been governor and intendant of
Canada at the same time; but, as Lemieux has shown, there was no need for an old family feud as a pretext for antipathy between the holders of those offices. 8

When such a quarrel rendered officials irreconcilable the rights or wrongs of their position seem to have borne little weight when set against the influence of family and friends. When Michel's worldly-wise mother-in-law learned of the quarrel, she was beside herself with concern. She reminded him pointedly:

qu'on ne t'a mis où tu es que pour arranger tes affaires et point pour y être le réformateur du gouverneur. 9

Michel apparently underestimated the value of Vaudreuil's friendship with de La Porte since in a letter of the 23 March, 1751, Mme. Bégon observed:

tu as beau dire qu'il n'a que M. de La Porte. Il a, et tu dois t'en apercevoir si tu veux ouvrir les yeux tout ce qu'il y à a espérer de crédit. 10

This was not the first time that Mme. Bégon had referred to de La Porte's influence. In a letter of the 8 December, 1750, she had noted that Lenoir had seen de La Porte when he was at Versailles. She surmised that 'de La Porte lui a promis sa protection, car il en paraît fort content.' 11 Judging from his other comments, this probably meant that the first commis had been bribed. 12

If Michel was determined to pursue his quarrel with the governor, Mme. Bégon urged that he should at least employ tactics


9. Bégon Correspondence, 22 February 1751, Ibid., p. 150.
10. Ibid., p. 166.
11. Ibid., p. 139. Last there be misunderstanding the discussion of chapter one did not argue that de La Porte's influence was unsubstantial, but only that it was not unlimited.
12. See above, p. 47.
which would put arguments in the mouth of his friends rather than his enemies.

In fact, his violent language, contrary to all policy, not only alienated his friends but alienated his enemies. Although, as Mme. Bégon argued, La Galissonnière had no particular need of de La Porte, he had apparently given up on Michel since in his fevered imaginings, Michel had come to believe that La Galissonnière, for personal interests, had ranged himself on that side.  

It was probably well for him that he died in 1752. As one historian has observed: he, 'lacked the qualities needed to survive in a government system that turned on patronage, not efficiency.' 

Far from receiving a promotion, he would have been fortunate to avoid the fate of a successor, Vincent-Gaspard-Pierre de Rochemore, who despite the strenuous efforts of his family, was recalled in 1761 to answer charges of a criminal nature preferred against him by the governor. It is not proposed to enter into the sordid details of that affair, but in order to understand the associated use of family influence and allegations of misuse of power in high places, it will be necessary to sketch the primary outlines.

The third son of Henri de Rochemore, Seigneur de La Deveze, lieutenant des vaisseaux du roi; Vincent-Gaspard-Pierre was born in

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14. Ibid.
1713. In an interesting parallel to François Bigot's family, the
Mémoire concernant Le Pau 3e de Rochambeau noted that:

"M. de Maurepas proposa de placer le jeune sire de
Rochambeau dans le corps de la marine, il eut la
bonté d'ajouter, qu'il lui fallait des Sujets de
cette trempe pour remplir les Intendances." 16

Furthermore, Maurepas, who thought it necessary to bring military
and civil officials into a narrow unity, held the idea that when
positions were solicited for members of the same family, the older
should be appointed as an administrator, and the other to a military
rank. 17 It must, therefore, have been Rochambeau's younger brother
who rose to be chef d'état-major, 18 just as Bigot's younger brother
became a capitaine des vaisseaux. 19

Upon Maurepas' recommendation in 1731, Rochambeau was appointed to
the post of écrivain at Toulon and by 1738, had become an écrivain-
principal. After a varied experience at Rochefort and at sea, he
had by 1751, been appointed commissaire-ordonnateur and in 1757,
though soliciting the post of ordonnateur at Marseilles, received,
doubtless to his dismay, that of commissaire-ordonnateur at Louisiana.

The reports on his abilities, though not ecstatic, attributed
to him the qualities of probity, intelligence, and common sense. On
the negative side, he was said to have lacked drive and was, perhaps

16. Mémoire concernant Le Pau 3e de Rochambeau, Commissaire-Général
de la Marine, Ordonnateur à la Louisiane; AN, col. M 1024, III
La Louisiane.
17. Villiers du Terrage, Baron Nolh, Les dernières armées de La
Louisiane française, Paris, 1905, pp. 126-128; cited by Lemieux,
op.cit. pp. 59, 64. As his letter of 7 March 1750 to Beauchanois
shows, he particularly wanted to encourage members of the old
aristocracy to enter the administrative posts to be placed on the
ships on the grounds that the Naval 'officiers ont plus de
consideration pour eux et ils sont moins susceptible de
prevarication dans leurs fonctions.' AN, H, 122, p. 145. His
general recruitment policy is thus shown as tending toward
greater social exclusivity.
18. Mémoire de Rochambeau, p. 5.
19. See below, p. 72.
not very efficient; hardly the portrait of a man likely to paralyze
the administration of a colony through a lust for power and violent
partisan passions. Yet, these were precisely the allegations laid
against him by Governor Kerlerec. The authorities quoted by Lemieux
and Boulle, however, seem to agree that Rochemore was almost wholly
to blame for the divisions which resulted. Such a one-sided view
can only be explained by blind faith in what Kerlerec had to say in
the official correspondence and ignorance of the briefs in defense
of Rochemore; Rocheblave, officier des troupes détachées de la
Marine à la Louisiane; and Philippe de Marigny de Mandeville,
lieutenant des troupes. They were unanimous in alleging a series
of tyrannical abuses against the governor and even went so far as
to accuse him of clandestine relationships with the English for
the purpose of private trade which seriously jeopardized the security
of the colony, the governor's special province of responsibility.

For the ends of the present discussion, however, by far the most
damaging allegation against the governor was that he intercepted
all incoming correspondence at Belize where only those letters
which it pleased him to release were distributed. In a letter of the
26 April, 1761, Rochemore complained to the minister:

Depuis pres de trois ans que je suis arrive dans
cette colonie, les circonstances sont telles que je
n'ai reçu aucune lettre ni de mes parents ni de mes
amis, nonobstant toutes celles que je leur ai addresses.
La plupart des negociants et des particuliers etablis
ici, se trouvent dans le meme cas ...

20. Besides Villiers; Emile Lauvriere, Histoire de la Louisiane
française, 1672-1932, Paris, 1940; Georges Oudard, Vieille
Amérique; la Louisiane au temps des Francais, Paris, 1932;
Nancy Elvis Surry, The Commerce of Louisiana During the
22. Mémoire de Rochemore, p. 78.
Kerlerrec, by this means, not only deprived Rochemore of knowledge of his efforts to oust the ordonnateur, but was also able to learn by what arguments Rochemore's relatives were attempting to defend him.

The mémoire argued that Kerlerrec's bad faith had been manifest from the moment Rochemore had stepped ashore. In office since 1752, he had become accustomed to his command, which since March 1757, had virtually become dictatorship owing to the death of the ordonnateur, Guillaume de Sèchechau D'Auberville, and his replacement by Kerlerrec's puppet, Jean-Baptiste-Claude Fabre-Descloseaux, as acting ordonnateur. Within a month of Rochemore's arrival, on the 5 October, 1758, Kerlerrec had written a most violent denunciation of him to the minister because, according to the mémoire, Rochemore had refused to lend himself to the governor's nefarious activities. In January 1759, the governor dispatched Descloseaux and Titon, his secretary, to Paris where they lied brazenly to the minister with the result that Descloseaux was given letters of ordonnateur. Although Boulle has produced weighty objections to the argument that Berryer's hand was stayed by family intervention on Rochemore's behalf, the mémoire was categorical in its statement that the Countess of Berulle convinced him he ought not to act, at least until he had given Rochemore the opportunity to defend himself.23 Indeed, that the minister could even think

23. Mémoire, pp. 30, 31; Boulle, op. cit. p. 147. Boulle argued that not only was Berryer a man who repeatedly refused to grant all but the most insignificant favors to such people as the Prince of Condé, the Princesses of Conty and Carignan, and even to his own sister, but that, 'a letter to a brother of Rochemore (Gaston?) in November 1759 does not reveal any weakening of the Minister's determination to be rid of the unreliable official as soon as he can.' Furthermore, Boulle continued, 'the only concession he made on this occasion to the Commissaire Ordonnateur's family was to have him merely recalled instead of revoking him, a fate which Berryer intimated the Louisiana official would have richly deserved.' Apparently, there is no marginal note on a letter of recall dated 27 August, 1759, which led Boulle to believe that it must have been sent.
of recalling Rochefoucauld within a year of his appointment, solely upon the testimony of the governor and his associates, raises very serious questions about Berryer's own judgement. If Rochefoucauld bungled the colonial currency, he was not the first ordonnateur to have been deputed by that intractable problem. As to the issue of the confiscated interloper, even if Rochefoucauld's allegations against Kerlerec were unfounded, Rochefoucauld had at least the appearance of legality on his side.

One explanation of Berryer's haste is that he was influenced in his decision by de La Roque, then second commis in the Bureau des colonies. The mémoire alleged that Titon had cultivated de La Roque's favour and that it was de La Roque who in November 1759, recommended the replacement of Rochefoucauld by Descluzeaux. Lending credence to the conspiracy theory is the evidence of the missing communiqués. Although Rochefoucauld's dispatches of 1759, had been delivered by Bellot, Rochefoucauld's Secretary to the Consul de France at Cadiz; with the exception of a letter to the Countess of Berulle, all trace of them seemed to have been lost during the critical months of 1759, when Berryer was meditating Rochefoucauld's recall. Only after sustained pressure had been applied over a period of months, the mémoire maintained, were the letters 'discovered' behind an armchair in the minister's office.

In the meantime, Kerlerec had been pressing his case against the ordonnateur. A few months after dispatching Titon and Descluzeaux, de la Perrière and des Salles were sent to the Court on a similar mission and a series of letters were written to the commanding

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25. Mémoire, op. cit., p. 82.
officer of the colonial troops in Europe, Count Halvyl, libelling a number of colonial officers who had taken Rochemore's part against the governor. A ruthless tactician, Kerlerec, having finally secured Rochemore's definitive recall in 1762, insured that his version of the latest events would reach the Court before Rochemore by chartering a Spanish ship at royal expense. It sailed from Louisiana a full month before the coloniales's departure but was captured; by what means is not specified, but Mme. de Rochemore obtained the originals of the letters which she reproduced in the mémoire. One of the 25 June, 1762, proved that for three years Titon had been resident in France, apparently lobbying ceaselessly on Kerlerec's behalf, since the letter referred to:

tous les mouvements que vous vous estes donnés pour exposer sous les yeux du Ministre et pour faire valoir la bonté de ma cause. 27

Rochemore died in Paris on the 31 March 1765, before he was able to clear his name but the mémoire noted that d'Abbadie, Rochemore's replacement in Louisiana, in a letter of the 29 June, 1764, to Mme. de Rochemore, thoroughly corroborated Rochemore's position and assured her that, 'Le Ministre en est informé.' 28 On the 9 June, Mme. de Rochemore was informed that M. Dupont, lieutenant-particulier du châtelet had been named to investigate the Louisiana Affair.

As if, however, the whole bizarre story was not sufficiently complicated, Mme. de Rochemore wound up her mémoire with the accusation that Accron, the first commis of the Bureau des Colonies was a party to the conspiracy against her husband's memory. She argued that although d'Abbadie's letter of the 29 June, 1764, had stated that he had already informed the minister and Accron of Kerlerec's

26. Ibid., p. 88.
27. Ibid., p. 104.
28. Ibid., p. 128.
wrong doing, and was sending additional details to the minister in
the same bag as carried her letter; when Accron retired in the spring
of 1765, he declared that nothing had yet been received from d'Abbadie
and speculated that his widow might be bringing the account. Mme. de
Rochemore alleged that the real reason for the long delay in getting
the hearing underway after Kerlerec arrived in January 1764, was that
Accron had suppressed the evidence in circumstances similar to the
loss of the letters of 1759 behind a chair. 29

If this last detail could be substantiated it might be necessary
to modify the conclusions upon La Forte's ability to protect Bigot.
What is clear from the above examples is that the Marine was fraught
with frequent contests for power, fought out on family lines and waged
with the weapons of bribery and intimidation. Of course, the efficiency
of the service was seriously impaired by these conditions, but this
was of little consequence to the families who monopolized the posts
of the Marine and seemed to regard the government service as
instituted primarily for their private benefit.

One might easily proliferate examples of the dynasties who
fattened off these spoils. Mentioning only those who figure in the
Gradis correspondence; the Phélypeaux secured employment for their
cousins, the Beauharnois, who during the eighteenth century produced
an intendant of New France who subsequently became intendant of
Rochefort; a governor-general of New France, and a Governor of the
Îles du Vent. Another Marine family, the Vaudreuil produced two
governors-general of New France, a governor-general of Saint Domingue,
a commander of Rochefort, two vice admirals and a governor of Trois
Rivières. Arnaud de La Forte clinched his own career by marrying
the first comtesse, Joseph Pellerin's daughter, which put him in the

29. Ibid., pp. 136-140.
position to help his brother to the intendancy of Saint-Domingue. The brother of the comte de Bonnefons of Canada, Jacques-Michel Bréard, was trésorier des Colons at Rochefort. Guillaume Estabe was assisted by his son in the Royal Stores at Quebec, and the Martel brothers monopolized the posts of commissaire and sergent-march in at Montreal during the 1750's.

Thus the Marine of the eighteenth century resembled nothing so much as a private club whose criteria for membership were birth or friends and preferably both. Not that it differed from other governmental services. Posher described identical conditions in the contre-général, and Roquebrune mentioned inter-relationships between the Marine and families dominating other departments. The law courts of the time operated under a similarly exclusive system. Even a Canadian student of mathematics, de Lotbinière, according to Mme. Bégon, would have to exploit his family connections to find a job in France. Fortunately for him, she observed:

Il est de famille assez heureuse pour ne devoir dé espérer de rien.

Thus François Bigot was born into a world in which family counted for almost everything. Although individual ambition was no doubt the motive force behind family fortunes, no one person could hope to push his own status much farther than a step above his father's and in so doing had of necessity to drag the rest of his family along with him. Therefore, it was important that the family stick together and all work toward the improvement of their collective position.

Social status depended upon titles, landed wealth, and occupation. If one possessed none of these a good way to begin would be to become a successful merchant. A son might then afford to enter the legal profession and in turn might obtain employment for his sons in the administration of the state. When the family had obtained sufficient money, they might think of investing in land and by that route eventually succeed to titles and aristocratic consideration. Provided one exercised the discretion not to push too hard or to appear to have acquired too much money too quickly, few questions were likely to be asked about the source of the income. The colonial service presented all sorts of opportunities for the acquisition of wealth. As Mme. Bégon quoted Landriève:

"Personne ne se fait de mystère de faire des concierges ouverts de toute espèce; et on regarde au bureau bien fous ceux qui font autrement et qui font manger leurs biens." 34

There was, however, as Duchêne observed:

"Quelque décence, quelque prudence, à n'éblouir personne, d'un trop vif éclat; on ne faisait rendre gorge aux traitants, comme on disait, que lors qu'ils allaient un luxe par trop insolent." 35

To see whether the court was justified in maintaining that François Bigot offended against the received conventions it will be necessary to examine at what point on the social scale François Bigot's family had arrived when Bigot was appointed to the colonies.

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In his mémoire justificatif presented to the commission at the Châtelet in 1763, it is written that:

34. Bégon Correspondence, 10 December, 1750, Ibid., p. 140.
Des son plus jeune âge, le père du sieur Bigot l'avait décidé pour la marine,

which was hardly surprising, the mémoire went on to say, since:

le Port de Bordeaux y attire presque tous les habitants de cette grande ville.\textsuperscript{36}

He was born at 2:00 AM on the 30 January, 1703 in the parish of Saint Ponsant in Bordeaux and baptised the next day in the church of Saint André. Although not appearing in his baptismal certificate, the baptismal note of François de Barre, his nephew, gives his godfather's name as François d'Assise de Bigot.\textsuperscript{37} The intendant's father, Louis Amable de Bigot was at the time of his birth conseiller du roi in the Parlement of Bordeaux.\textsuperscript{38} Himself, the son of Louis Bigot, a greffier en chef of the same law court, and Jean Basse,\textsuperscript{39} he ended his career as the Parlement's sous-secrétaire.\textsuperscript{40}

Louis Amable married within the Hôtel de Marguerite Lombard, in the parish of Saint Éulalie on the 29 April, 1698. She was the daughter of Marguerite La fitte and Joseph Lombard, secrétaire du roi in the Parlement de Bordeaux.\textsuperscript{41} One of her brothers, François, also a conseiller du roi in the Bordeaux Parlement, was Bigot's godfather and his godmother was an aunt, Geneviève Bigot, wife of M. de Richon, secrétaire.\textsuperscript{42} Marguerite Lombard and Louis-Amable lived in a home on the then fashionable Rue de Lom in the centre of old Bordeaux, close to the cathedral and only a five minute walk from the Parlement, where

\textsuperscript{36} Mémoire pour l'Esquive François Bigot... Accusé... BN 4° -EM-2988-2990.

\textsuperscript{37} Archives départementales de la Gironde, registres paroissiaux d'Arveyres, E suppl. 4382-CC 16, acte de baptême, 24 July, 1747; cited by Pierre Moller, Armorial du Bordelais, Bordeaux, 1906.

\textsuperscript{38} Archives-Gironde, registres paroissiaux de Saint André de Bordeaux, acte de baptême, François Bigot, 31 January, 1703.


\textsuperscript{40} Mémoire pour François Bigot, 1, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{41} Testament de Marguerite Lombard de Bigot, 5 August, 1765, Archives départementales de la Gironde, 3B 13157, notaire Rouan.

\textsuperscript{42} AC Cah. 93, p. 275. Bigot to the ministre, 1 October, 1769.
they raised their five children; three sons and two daughters.

Jae. Bigot's will, made in 1765, stated that although she had a

number of children she was survived only by:

Joseph de Bigot, mon fils ainé, marié avec dom(ois)-
elle Françoise Barret; François de Bigot, av devant
commissionnaire de la marine; Louis Joseph de Bigot,
actuellement lieutenant des vaisseaux du Roy; Marie
Anne de Bigot, épouse de Monsieur de Perre, et Marie
Louise de Bigot, morte au monde, par son entrem en
religion dans le couvent des religieuses Ursulines.43

This represented no change from her husband's will made on the 31
August, 1737.44

Although not closely related to any of the old aristocratic
Bigot families, François, in his mémoire of 1763 was able to claim
that he was a 'parent assez proche de M. le comte de Morville',45
who was in 1723, Secrétaire d'etat de la marine. He was also
distantly connected with Louis-Philippe Brulart de Sillery,
marquis de Puysegur, minister of Affaires Étrangères from 1748
to 1756, whose mother was one Marie-Louise Bigot, daughter of
Antoine Bigot, auditeur des comptes de Paris.46 The relationship,
though close enough for François to presume upon, was nevertheless
still sufficiently distant for Puysegur to write him polite replies
while abstaining from making any great efforts to promote his career.47

Prégault speculated that the Puysegur had probably married into the Bigot
family for money. If this was the case, it must be assumed that the

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43. As cited.
45. Mémoire, François Bigot, 1, p. 4.
46. De la Chenaie-Desbois and Bodier, Dictionnaire de la noblesse;
cited by Prégault, Ibid., 1, p. 54.
47. See Prégault, Ibid., 1, p. 57.
Bigots had not sufficient money to make the match worthwhile for at least three generations, for as Frégault pointed out, Louis-Philippe's mother was not François' aunt. It would appear likely that François and the marquis were second cousins.

Although not of the old landed gentry, the Bigots' social position hardly warranted the anonymous sneers found on the margins of one of Bigot's printed mémoires of 1763. Not only had they succeeded, a couple of generations before François was born, in marrying a daughter into one of the more influential families of the kingdom, but for the same length of time they had been conseillers ducally in his majesty's Parliament at Bordeaux. Although the authorities differ, even the most rigorous admits that when two generations had held that post for twenty years each, or had died in office, noble status which in the case of the first was for life only, had become hereditary.

Wicked from Versailles, perhaps, as provincial obscurity, Paul Butel argued that the Noblesse de Robb was most highly esteemed in Bordeaux and even though purchased at increasingly extravagant rates

48. Mémoire, François Bigot, BN., 4° En 2289. 'tous annoncè qu'il était véritablement coupable d'une esccce de conjuration contre les finances de l'État, qu'il voulait envahir pour devenir d'un petit compagnon qu'il étoit (car qu'est ce que le petit fils d'un proclier d'un Parlement de Province, cont le pare n'oseraient peut etre être cité par l'arrière petit fils) un riche important et distingué, comme tant d'autres misérables de nos jours qui brillent et offusquent nos grans par les richesses, les dignités, les terres, les alliances acquises par la ruine du peuple et des finances de l'État ...' The writer went on to expose his prejudices by implying that somehow the old landed wealth had been acquired by more legitimate practices. p. 208.

49. See Frégault, ÉE/4, p. 49.
in the eighteenth century, the purchaser was not always recognized socially by the established members of the Rohe. Thus marriage into the old families of the Rohe was eagerly sought after by the wealthy merchants. The Bigots, having served their apprenticeship, were firmly ensconced in that society. Mrs. Bigot was not, therefore, affecting a status to which the family was not entitled when she inserted the particle in her children's names, although François did not as a rule, use it.

Apparently, the Bigots were not satisfied even by the high social status that the Rohe conferred but were determined to buy their way into the landed gentry. In addition to a small farm close to Bordeaux, in 1766 not worth more than 50,000 livres, Louis-Adable acquired on the 8 March 1712, from Mgr. François de Nezam, bishop of Bayeux, in lieu of interest on the mortgage, 'la terre et Seigneurie de Beaujon.' It is situated about half-way between Bordeaux and Saintes in the parish of Saint-Dizant du Gue, just a few miles inland from the Gironde estuary. This explains how it was that Louis-Adable came to be described in his will of 1737, as, 'Seigneur de Beaujon.' As if further proof of identity were needed, the description given of the Bigot arms in the Études Historiques ..., 'd'azur au chevron d'or, trois étoiles en chef, grenade d'or en pointe', corresponds exactly with the description of François Bigot's arms given in E-Z Massicot and R. Roy, Armorial du Canada français.

François' older brother, Joseph, born in 1699, conformed to

52. Études Historiques, Littéraires et Scientifiques sur l'Arrondissement de Jonzac (Charente-Inférieure), Jonzac, 1884, p. 91.
53. Montreal, 1915, p. 68.
54. Archives Départementales de la Charente Maritime, Registre paroissial de Saint Dizant de Conac, burial note, 22 June, 1788.
family tradition, becoming a Conseiller du Parlement de Bordeaux.

Prior to the birth of his first child, Marie Anne Françoise Louis, baptised on the 6 December, 1752 in the church of Saint André de Bordeaux,55 he was married within the Rabe to Françoise Barret, born in 1719,56 the daughter of François Barret. In 1778, her brother was identified as the greffier au chef du Parlement. Although Joseph worked at his profession for twelve years,57 presumably until his father's death, it appears that his social pretensions would not permit him further to soil his hands with legal briefs after he had come into his patrimony. Regarding his inheritance, his father's will, unfortunately, only states that the marriage contract between Joseph and Françoise set out that which was due to them and this contract has not been found. It can be said with confidence, however, that a large part of the family fortune, including Beaulon, went to them because the eldest brother was referred to as the seigneur de Beaulon in 1755,58 and his mother's will named him, 'notre heritier general et universel'.59

That François leased his brother as much as 23,390 livres over the years is entirely probable;60 but that the motive was represented

55. Arch. Dept. Girondie, baptismal note, 1732. It is assumed that Marie-Anne must have been his first child since his wife, in 1732, was no more than fifteen years old.
57. Prégault, i.65.
58. Arch. Charente-Maritime; legal action undertaken by Bigot against one Capdorean to require fulfillment of contract, B, 609, 40. 27 May, 1755, p. 23.
59. Louis-Anable, although allocating his property among his heirs, reserved the enjoyment of all his property to his wife during her lifetime. Mme. Bigot had, in 1766, as well as her own property, the household effects and silverware to distribute.
60. AG, B 121; Paquin to Morville, 24 April 1768, p. 236. Joseph had been condemned by the court to pay this sum to the sequestror and Morville was soliciting a complete reimbursement for his relative.
as the alleviation of chill penury, is derisory. It may well have been that Joseph in the 1760's was hard pressed by his creditors, but rather than poverty, this was the result of his over-ambitious acquisition of property. Not content with two houses on the Rue du Loup, and his manor house at Beaujon, Joseph was determined to acquire in 1755, a town house in Pons. This he arranged with a loan from François. Originally reckoned at 12,000 livres, it had reached the sum of 17,000 livres by the time the transaction had been completed. The loan was not a gift. Not only was it to be repaid, but it was to be paid back with interest. Gradis arranged security for François in the form of certificates on the rent of the small house adjoining the large one on the Rue du Loup.

After François had sent into exile in Switzerland, Joseph appropriated for himself the farm which François is said to have inherited from his father, on condition, 'd'un laisser la jouissance a sa mere et de payer une pension viagere a sa sœur religieuse,'

61. AC, B 32, Bigot Poudrier, Persiculx to the minister of Marine, 15 June, 1766, p.10.
62. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, Gradis to François Bigot, 12 June, 1755, i. 57. The smaller house adjoining the larger was rented out.
63. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, Gradis to François Bigot, 28 April, 1755, i. 47.
64. Ibid., Gradis to François Bigot, 21 February, 1756, i. 112a.
65. Ibid., Gradis to François Bigot, 15 May, 1755, i. 51a.
66. Ibid., Gradis to François Bigot, 12 June, 1755, i. 57.
Writing to Choiseul in 1764, and to Fontenelle on the 15 June, 1766, Physieux claimed the land for François' younger brother, Louis-Joseph, called La Couture, a naval captain of a 'mursite personnel generallement reconnu', who was, 'encore jeune et en etat de rendre des services au Roy et a sa patrie.' Physieux objected to the older brother's acquisition of the land not only because he had ceased to work for a living, but because, 's'il lui restoit, seroit plus pour ses ascendants que pour lui.' M. Martin, a minister and secretary of state, on the other hand, was lobbying on behalf of the older brother, arguing that he had a large family and that it would have been his by normal succession. It is not known who, in the end, got it. Since his burial note qualified

67. The land in question is almost certainly that of Cairée, spelled alternatively Cayrée, or Cayerès, near Bordeaux, where Mme. Bigot often spent a part of the summer. (Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 1755-1758, 24 February, 1756, to François, i. 112a.) In 1755, because Mme. Bigot had not gone to supervise the grape harvest, the wine was ruined through inattention. It was so bad that Gradis advised François, 'Nous n'avons pas même osé les mettre en baril pour la demande qui nous avait été fait pour chez vous, jugez leur qualité.' Physieux described it as consisting of, 'quelques arros de vignes et de terre, que min en vente n'en cédervent pas la valeur de 25 à 30,000 livres.' (AC, F 32, piece 10.) What is surprising about this correspondence is that Louis-Armand's will had nothing to say on the subject; but there can be little question of its validity since besides Physieux' reference, an office memorandum of the 11 September, 1766, repeated the same information, differing only in so far as it implied that the farm was held at that time, not by Joseph de Bigot but by the crown, since it was, 'sans le cas d'être vendu au profit du Roy.' (Bigot Dossier, piece 9.) No doubt, the pension accounts for some of the money Gradis gave to Mme. Bigot on her son's account, 600 livres prior to 24 February, 1756 (Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 111a) 1,100 livres prior to the 24 February, 1758 (Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 233a) and 1,082 livres 5 sols prior to the 6 July, 1758. (Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 278a).

68. AC, F 32, Bigot Dossier, piece 11, July 1766.
Joseph as, 'Seigneur de Beaulon et d'autres lieux', it may be that it remained in his hands.

Both Joseph and his wife were buried at Beaulon. He was interred on the 22 June, 1780 and his wife followed him six years later, on the 4 November, 1786.69

Although Bertin asserted that Joseph had a large family, the only baptismal records located are those of two daughters. His second daughter, Marie, was baptised in the same church as her older sister, on the 15 January, 1734.70 That the older daughter lived to maturity is confirmed by Marguerite Lombard de Bigot's will, since she left to her a pension of 450 livres. Since it seems unlikely she would favour one grand-daughter and not the other, the second girl may have died in infancy. If this is indeed the case, then it would be to Marie Anne that Gradis referred on the 24 February, 1758, when he informed François, following his instructions, that 800 livres had been given to Hélène Bigot, 'votre nièce'.71 Probably François also gave 2,000 livres to this niece in 1759, since it seems unlikely that he would have given such a large sum to so young a girl as his sister's daughter, Elizabeth, who at that time was only fourteen.72

Although no birth certificate has been found, Joseph had a son, Pierre de Bigot de Beaulon, born probably a year after Marie since in the spring of 1755 he went to Rodez to be initiated into the profession of his father.73 On the 15 April, 1755, Gradis informed

70. Arch. Boréale, Registre, Saint André.
71. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 233a. Since his younger brother was not married, there can be no doubt about the identity of the father.
72. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 5 March, 1760, ii. 34a.
73. It is not likely that Pierre preceded Marie Anne since at her birth in 1733, Mme. Bigot was no more than fifteen years old.
François said:

Nous avons conté à M. votre neveu, mille livres en conformité des intentions de madame votre mère.

Probably his first time away from home, Pierre must have enjoyed his uncle's generosity since Gradis went on to observe, 'Il fete la belle.' Regarding his career, Gradis explained:

Il doit se faire recevoir avocat dans le roi prochain. Souvint il suivra le barreau ... Après que M. votre neveu aura suivi le barreau quelques temps, sans pourra, s'y vous le juger a propos de lui acheter une charge de conseiller au parlement ou peut-être même d'avoir celle d'avocat général ...

By the end of the month Pierre had settled into his studies with 'Monsieur Teres, avocat en notre Parlement', and had made a good impression on Gradis:

Ce garçon nous paroit très range à présent et nous sommes persuadé qu'il se rendra digne de mériter les honneurs que vous avez pour lui ... Il a beaucoup d'esprit et on doit s'attendre de lui qu'il en profitera pour mériter ces honneurs.

In addition to the 1,000 livres Gradis had previously supplied which had been used for the purchase of 'un habit noir et du linge qu'il a été obligé de se faire', Gradis had also given him 600 livres from François' purse, the initiation fee for an avocat, 500 livres for half a year's board and lodging, and 500 livres spending money, intended to last for the same duration. Since this was no small expenditure, Gradis assured François:

S'il ne se comporte pas comme il convient nous prendrons la liberté de lui faire nos représentations et convenons l'honneur de vous rendre compte de sa conduite. Nous ne laissons pas lorsque nous le voyons de lui activer sous les yeux toutes les obligations qu'il vous a et combien il doit travailler à en mériter la contribution qu'il ne peut la faire qu'en travaillant et vivant comme un honnête homme doit faire ...

On the 2 June Pierre wrote a note to François, presumably in thank his uncle for his generosity. 77

74. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 25.
75. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 46.
76. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 46.
77. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 46.
February of 1756 found Gradis informing François that he had received Pierre's pension of 600 livres and paid 1,000 livres for that year's board and lodging. On the boy's progress he observed:

"Il nous paraît qu'il se range tous les jours de plus en plus et qu'il accepte beaucoup d'apprendre."

He recommended the purchase of the office of conseiller au Parlement that year. Replying in June, François indicated his approval in principle of the purchase but as happened frequently, he stipulated that the Bigot should make the final decision.

Mme. Bigot appears to have been a woman of common sense.

Gradis informed François on the 10 March, 1757, that she had decided the acquisition of the office was as yet premature. In her opinion it was better for Pierre, "qu'il suive le barre et qu'il plaide quelque temps."

Perhaps the old woman suspected that her son had other ambitions for her grandson than that he should spend much time in the law courts. At any rate, by the 24 February, 1758, Joseph had recalled Pierre to his side at Fons with the consequence that for the first time in four generations the heir to the Bigot titles was never able to call himself conseiller au Parlement.

The upshot was that Mme. Bigot and François' younger brother, Louis-Joseph, decided that Pierre required only 800 livres of the 1,200 livres François had intended for him. The other 400 livres they directed toward François' nephew and godson, François de Reynock de Barre, to pay his tuition fees at a school in Bordeaux.

In the following year, Pierre was still with his father at Fons and he was paid his maintenance as usual.

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76. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 111a.
79. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 140.
80. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 161.
81. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 233a.
82. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 9 February, 1759, ii. 13.
What Pierre did during the next eighteen years is unknown. On the 31 October, 1778, however, when he must have been well advanced into his fifties, he contracted to marry Marie-Jeanne de Blois.

She was the daughter of the, 'très haut et très puissant Seigneur, Messire Charles de Blois', who was 'seigneur de Rousillion, Massac et autres lieux, capitaine au régiment de Mailly-infanterie, chevalier de St Louis'; and of Anne Marie Pardin de Beaucerg. 83

Her residence was the 'Chateau de Rousillion, paroisse de Saint Germain de Seuldr' at Pons. Pierre was to receive 20,000 livres immediately as an advance on his future wife's dowry which when paid in full was to amount to 80,145 livres 10 sols. 84

The marriage took place in 1782, 85 and from it issued three children: Marie Magdelaine Joseph, baptised on the 2 May, 1783; Françoise-Charu-Adeide, on the 16 December, 1784; and Joseph, on the 27 December, 1786. It may be that Pierre's advantageous marriage raised his status, since in the baptismal notice for his second daughter he is referred to for the first time as the 'haut et puissant Messire', whereas, his son's notice names him as the 'très haut Seigneur'. 86 After having taken part in the provincial assembly of February 1789, he died and was buried on the 22 August of that year at Beaulon.

It was hoped by a genealogical search to find a living descendant in the male line who might possibly have preserved in his archives letters of François or his immediate family and perhaps even some portraits. Unfortunately, Serrinie recounted

83. L. de la Verinerie, Le Noblesse de Saintonge et d'Anjou, conv毅e pour les Etats-Généraux, de 1789, p. 23.
85. Etudes Historiques de Jonzac, p. 91.
86. Arch. Charente-Maritime; Registre, Saint Dizant de Conac.
that Pierre's only male heir, Joseph, an officer in the 21st regiment, 'de chasseurs à cheval', was killed in Spain during the Napoleonic wars. His first daughter appears to have died without issue while still young since she was mentioned by neither the Jonzac local history nor by Morierie. The local history gives the name of the second daughter as Françoise-Charlotte-Adélaïde, whereas Morierie inverts the order of the first two names. They agree that she married M. Josias de Remond d'Arc, on the 2 May, 1807. Remond sold Barion to M. Ransès in 1833 and Françoise died on the 13 August, 1858, 'la dernière de son nom.'

Of François' younger brother, Louis-Joseph, called 'La Couture', the two vital dates of his life are unknown. It is known, however, that in 1737 his father assigned to him a pension of 600 livres from which he was to give 72 livres a year to his sister the nun, 67 and that his final settlement amounted to 10,000 livres. 68

Laccour-Gayet recorded Louis-Joseph as first entering the service of the Indies as a guard on the 5 July, 1725. He also noted that he was the 'petit-fils de M. Lambert, inspecteur général de la marine a Bordeaux'. Since he went on to say he was, 'frère de Bigot de la Motte, intendant du Canada', it is obvious that full confidence cannot be reposed in his work. Bigot de la Motte, who at that time was intendant of Brest, never became intendant of Canada and was not, as far as can be told, related to the Bordeaux Bigots in any way. Since Laccour-Gayet indicated that his report was based on Colonies I, 169; it must have some basis in truth, so it is to be

67. Testament of Louis Amable de Bigot, made the 31 August, 1737. opened the 15 October, 1745: Arch. dept. de la Gironde, 38 15344, notaire Dubus.
68. Testament of Françoise Lembard de Bigot, as cited.
supposed that the 'de la Motte' was his own invention. What then of
M. Lambert? Certainly Louis-Joseph was not descended from any
Lamberts but the similarity between 'Lambert' and 'Lombard' is too
striking not to infer that this was an error of transliteration. It is by no means beyond the realm of possibility that Marguerite
Lambard's grandson or some other close relation was an officer of the Marine and this
would explain how it was that two of her three sons should have
chosen to enter the service themselves. 89

The first definite reference in the official correspondence
to Louis-Joseph, is a letter from the minister of the 21 April, 1744,
informing him that he had been assigned to the Caribou, a ship to
be launched at Isle Royale. He was to be carried across the Atlantic
on La Finonde. 90 On the 23 May, 1754 he was made a naval Lieutenant, 91
and during the summer of 1755 he sailed in Mackenzie's fleet which
captured the English ship carrying Hamilton, the governor of Carolina.
In a letter to his of the 13 September, Gracis expressed his relief
that it had been decided to return the ship although he did not believe,
'que cela ensoche les Anglais a nous declarer la guerre mais cela
les mette dans leur bord vis à vis tous les princes de l'Europe.' 92
Later that year, Gracis offered to solicit a naval command for him
while he was in Paris, 93 but his efforts were to no avail. On the

89. G. Lacour-Cayet, Ibid., p. 523.
90. AC, B. 79. It is possible that Beaumanois' letter to
Mourville of the 16 January, 1723 referred to Louis-Joseph
and a brother of Louis-Amable: 'M. Bigot, (a ship captain)
m'a dit qu'il représente soit au Conseil que la place de
Pilotin qu'il demande est pour son neveu.'
AN, AE, 352. It is not, however, a strong probability because
the captain was based in Port Louis. He was granted his
request provided he maintained the boy at his own expense.
AN, AE, 65, pp. 40 and 123.
91. Lacour-Cayet, Ibid., p. 523.
92. Gracis Correspondence, Europe, i. 78.
93. Gracis Correspondence, Europe, ii. 180.
24 February, 1756 he was still referring to La Couture as, 'Lieutenant de Vaisseau'.

On the 6 November, 1756 Gradis congratulated La Couture upon hearing he had been decorated with the 'croix de Saint Louis'.

Gradis must have been mistaken when he informed François on the 6 February, 1759, that La Couture had been to Paris that year to collect a naval command,56 since in a letter to Fontanier of 21 December, 1754, Vaisseau referred to him as a 'Lieutenant de Vaisseau'.57 Recours-Court confirms that he received his promotion on the 27 November, 1755,58 and retired from the service with that rank in 1776.59

That the brothers were on good terms is apparent from the letter of the 24 February, 1755 that Gradis wrote of La Couture:

Il ignore pour ou il sera destiné mais je pense que cela pourrait bien être pour chez vous, il le souhaiterait infiniment pour avoir la satisfaction de vous voir.100

That La Couture's affection might partially be owing to his brother's generosity is possible since on the 1 January, 1757, Gradis forwarded to him a present of 100 livres,101 but this is the only gift to La Couture mentioned in the correspondence.

Curiously enough, nine years earlier François had made a statement which made him sound like a veritable scrooge. On the 14 April, 1748, he wrote to Gradis:

je ne dois plus rien dans le monde entier. je vous prie de ne pas donner un sol à ceux qui pourraient vous en demander sur mon compte, n'y parents, n'y autres.

94. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 111a.
95. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, ii. 222.
96. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, ii. 15.
97. A.C., B 118, p. 449.
98. A.C., B 120, p. 449.
99. Ibid., p. 523.
100. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 111a.
101. Gradis Correspondence, Europe,
The impression which this creates is, however, immediately softened since he added:

\[ \text{si on l'entre, je vous ferai plaisir de lui fournir.} \]

Although La Couture did a small trade with Canada, it does not appear that François intervened in any way to ameliorate the conditions. Writing to Claverie, the merchant with whom François is alleged to have been in combination for the supplying of the Royal Stores at Quebec, on the 10 April, 1755, Gradis announced that he had embarked four tons and one barrel of red wine for the joint account of Eggot La Couture and his nephew's brother-in-law, M. de Malronne. It is highly unlikely that Gradis would have made completely fraudulent operations in Canada, of which he was supposed to have been a major benefactor; but, if he were indeed the recipient of special favours, then how could he possibly believe that François' own brothers were not similarly favoured? Yet, from what he wrote to La Couture on the 28 June, 1755, it is indisputable that he believed La Couture's M. de Malronne would have to compete like other goods, on the open market.

It is difficult to see what would prompt Gradis to make such an observation if he knew it to be spurious. Consequently, serious doubt is cast upon the testimony at the trial regarding the Claverie enterprise.

102. C.P.A., FG 18, G 8(1).
103. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 330.
104. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, i. 26a.
The business of 1755 could not, however, have been an unmitigated disaster because 1756 found Gradis once again preparing a shipment on the associates' behalf. This time Bigot's nephew, Malronne's brother-in-law, de Reynack was to be included and the total value was 6,600 livres. If anything, though, business conditions were even worse than in 1755 due to the high cost of freight and insurance. So on the 7 March, 1756, Gradis wrote to Malronne to say he would not embark the wine, spirits, and other merchandise intended for Canada without renewed authority from them. Although the associates decided to go ahead despite the risks, Malronne's death on the 2 May once again disrupted their plans. Gradis suggested that La Couture and de Reynack pick up the slack, fifty percent each, but apparently it was too late to re-adjust the relationship and the goods were not sent.

Instead, when Gradis heard that La Couture was destined for the Caribbean, he wrote, urging that he embark the provisions intended for Canada to exchange in the Antilles for indigo, coffee and cotton. Moreover, Gradis was so enthusiastic about the prospects that he urged La Couture to accept a loan of 30,000 livres for the purchase of more fabrics. He was to draw the capital on Gradis' bankers and the profits were to be divided equally between them. Gradis was to risk his capital and La Couture was to provide the service, including the freightage in the holds of his majesty's ships; a most valuable contribution, especially in war time:

105. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, i. 250.
106. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, i. 244.
107. Gradis Correspondence, America, i. 189a.
108. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 3 May 1756, i. 291a.
of course this practice was of doubtful legality but La Couture seemed to have anticipated no difficulty. He not only accepted the terms but brought a friend, M. de Verville, into the partnership. Besides approving their decision to order 6,000 livres worth of cloth and 500 livres of silver thread, in addition to the commodities they already had on hand, Gradis, as a parting comment, on the 22 January, 1757, enjoined them to be sure to draw even up to 40,000 livres worth of exchange in the Antilles if incising prices were favourable. Whether the adventure was as profitable as Gradis had hoped is not known, since the sequel to the copybook for 1757 has been lost.

Few better illustrations could be found of the eighteenth century toleration of prohibited practices than the surreptitious loading of goods by officers on the royal ships. In his instructions of the 22 April, 1742 to the Sr. de Chateaubui, who was to command the Rubia on her voyage to Canada, the minister left no doubt about his views on trafficking officers. The captain was instructed:

Elle (Sa Majesté) lui defend aussi de ne rien charger a fret pour luy ni de souffrir que les officiers ou autres qui seront sous ses ordres chargent rien. Elle lui defend pareillement de faire ni de souffrir qu'il soit fait per les(ites) officiers ou autres aucun commerce directement ni judicieux en.t.

Nor was this ruling by any means a recent innovation. Writing to Beauharnois a decade earlier, by coincidence using the same officer, the minister observed that Crown goods frequently could not be loaded because clandestine packages were occupying their space.

109. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 15 September 1756, ii. 133.
110. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 6 October 1756, ii. 171.
111. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, ii. 491.
112. AC, B 75.
He wanted the practice to cease.

J'ai vu avec peine qu'il est arrivé plusieurs fois dans les possessions pour les colonies qu'on a été obligé de laisser à terre des Effets du Roy. Et l'Interpretation la plus favorable que je puisse donner a cet avis, c'est de l'Imputer à la négligence des officiers. Les preuves qu'a donné le 2e de Conteneuil de son désintérêt, et de son Exactitude, me sont presque que je l'accuse encore reproche a lui faire sur cet article, non plus que sur son séjour dans les Indes, persuadé qu'il n'aurait qu'une que la quantité de marchandises permises pour son compte. 113

Although at first glance this instruction appears to be blatantly self-contradictory, it becomes less absurd when it is explained that captains and other officials sometimes received permission to embark specified quantities of goods on royal ships in place of ballast.

No doubt de Conteneuil had received such a permission in 1732, just as he was given permission in 1742 to load a hundred weight and a half of salt for his own account. 114 So ministerial policy toward trafficking officers was in fact ambivalent. Although they were not supposed to embark goods on royal ships without permission, there was no objection in principle to naval officers carrying on private trade. Otherwise, what did the minister think de Conteneuil was going to do with all his salt?

Further proof of the minister's willingness to tolerate trafficking subordinates is supplied by the case of François Bigot's sugar. On the 22 November, 1744, when he was commissaire-ordonnateur of Isle Royale, Bigot wrote to the minister informing him that he had embarked 300 quintals of sugar in place of ballast on the Gironde earlier that month. He hoped the minister would exempt him from freight charges, not only because the Crown would have expected no

113. AN, 2E, 117, 3 November, 1732, p. 339.
114. G, 3 75, 28 March.
return on bullock, but also because he had acquired the sugar from privateering which had not gone well. Two ships in which he was the primary investor had been taken and this was the only commodity he had obtained from his activities. He excused his participation in this enterprise on the grounds that if he were unwilling to set the example by risking his own money, no one else would outfit corsairs. The minister granted his request.

Other officials were also permitted to embark private goods on royal ships, provided they paid the going freight rate, and obviously intendants were permitted to grant permissions for shipments originating in the colonies as the case of the capitaine-lieutenant Du Vivier's fish oil illustrates. In 1736, Du Vivier complained to the minister that of seventy-three barrels of fish oil which he had freighted on the naval ship, the Rubis, eight had been broken owing to bad packing. Far from trying to hide the fact that he had obtained the oil, obviously through commerce, and that it was transported on a royal ship, the captain did not scruple to request that he be exempted from paying freight on the eight broken barrels. His request was granted.

In fact, the minister had little choice but to tolerate moonlighting because both administrative and naval officials were seriously underpaid. A theme which recurs again and again in the trial literature, it was understood that officials would supplement their incomes through a modest volume of trade. It must have been to this that Desbarolles was referring when he complained on the 22 June, 1732, to the minister that he could no longer find any armuriers willing to undertake the king's service because they:

117. AC, B 16, 17 April 1736, p. 295.
118. AC, B 16, 15 May 1736, p. 363.
The contradictions of this policy appear not only to have sapped the will of port officials to prevent officers from taking their own goods aboard ship with them, but also to have compromised the captains whose job it was, in conjunction with the prudentier, to account for all goods loaded on board their ships. If a captain was given permission to embark a specified quantity of goods on his own account, what a temptation it would have been to load more than he was permitted and to falsify the records. Nor did the captains even need that excuse since they were responsible for providing the provisions for their own table. Naturally, it was expected that they would profit from this, but who was to check to see that the captain had not loaded a few bales of merchandise along with his foodstuffs?

Under conditions where everyone was convinced that official pay was inadequate, a captain was unlikely to take a hard line against the officers with whom he had to share the same table for many weeks while at sea. If they were themselves compromised, their will to antagonize fellow officers would be commensurately weakened and opportunities for graft were a legion. In the case of the Profond, for example, although there is no direct evidence implicating the captain, it is difficult to believe he could have been ignorant of a falsification of the accounts amounting to about half the value of freight of a private shipment of goods. In a letter of the 14 June, 1733, the minister informed Beauharnois that a comparison of his figures with those sent from the colony from which the voyage

had originated, indicated that twice as much sugar and indigo as was declared had been shipped. It was to see to it that the rest of the freight due was collected. 120

The inadequacy of official salaries admitted of a multitude of sins for in the easy atmosphere of the service, colonial administrators chronically overran their prescribed quota for personal freight, apparently with the connivance of port officials and naval officers. To cite only one of a number of letters on the subject, the minister informed Beaumarais on the 22 April, 1740, that:

It was not until Berryer raised the salaries of the West Indian administrators in 1759 that the first systematic efforts were made to attack the root of the problem. 122

When Marie-Anne de Bigot, the elder of François’ sisters married Pierre de Reignier, écuyer, Seigneur de Barre et de Barret, chevalier de l'ordre militaire et royal de notre dame de Mont Carmel, ancien capitaine du régiment de Pornandie, on the 19 March, 1724,123 she was bequeathed 5,000 livres from her mother’s private fortune and

110. AM, H, 122, p. 421.
121. AC, B 71.
122. AM, AD VII 6, no. 170, Ordinance of 23 July, 1759; cited by Beulé, op. cit., p. 155.
123. Arch. Principales de Bordeaux, registre, Saint-Projet, mariage entry, 66 626/84.
promised 10,000 livres from the Bigot estate. For husband, the son of Jean-Joseph Reynier, 'avocat, seigneur de Bonnet, Lartigue et Parre', and Jeanne de Cares, was born on the 1 December, 1689.

The Reyniers were an old family, originally from Lorraine, who had established themselves in Bordeaux during the reign of Louis XII. There is a degree of confusion in the spelling of the family name because they were seigneurs of both Reynier and de Reynier. They were also seigneurs of Parre, Bonnet, another Bonnet at Brantome, and Malvirade at Bordeaux; as well as being barons of La Grenade, Capbreton, and Lalouque. It was not a bad alliance for the Bigots to have made.

Marie Anne's first child, a son, was christened, Pierre-Arable on the 1 March, 1725. Shortly thereafter, he was followed by a brother, Louis-Arable, on the 3 April, 1726. Although it may be owing to gaps in the records, the next birth did not appear until the 27 November, 1745 when Elizabeth was baptised. Elizabeth was followed by one little brother, Francois, whose uncle, the intendant, was also his godfather.

The first reference to the Berres in Bigot's correspondence was a letter of the 16 May, 1752 addressed to David Grédis. Pierre de Barre must have been asking François for money because he observed:

Je vien de lire, monsieur, une lettre de M. de Parre qui se dépeint son désastre. Je souhaiterais être en état de leurs procurer quelque secours mais chacun a besoin du sien.

The impression of rank selfishness is somewhat mitigated by the following sentence:

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124. Testament of Louis-Arable de Bigot, as cited.
125. Arch. Gironde; Registres de Grézillac, Canton de Branne, série E, suppl. 4736, no. 3: cited by Pierre Léller, op.cit., p. 15.
126. Arch. Gironde; Registres de d'Arveyres, Canton de Libourne, série E, suppl. 4301, cc. 5: cited by ibid., p. 227.
Vous aures la bonté, je vous prie de faire compter
à M. de Barre, ma Soeur, trois cent livres dont je
vous tiendrais compte.

She was to count it as her new year's gift. 127

Considering the subsequent acts of generosity to his sister and
her children, it is difficult to account for the niggardliness of
this reply. Is it possible that he disapproved of his sister's
husband and that this overrode, in this instance, his strong family
loyalty? By 1757, at any rate, François appears to have forgotten
his reasons for refusing de Bérenger money, since on the 24 February,
1758, Gradis informed him that in conformity to his orders he had
given:

1,300 livres à Mme de Barre, votre beaurefère pour
l'acquittement d'un billet de parcelle sans que
M. de Nical, conseiller ayeit fait à son ours
pour lui faire plaisir. 128

To his sister and her children, François was consistently
generous. The 1752 gift of 300 livres seems to have been part of
a pattern, since on the 24 February, 1756, Gradis noted that he had
given her 600 livres on François' behalf. 129 In 1757 she received
another 600 livres. 130 In 1758, 1,200 livres, 131 and in 1760, part
of 7,800 livres which was distributed among François' brother,
(which one is not specified), his nephew, (probably de Bérenger),
Mme. de Barre and Marie-Louis, the nun. 132 It was at this time also
that he made 2,000 livres available for his niece, 133 should she
require it. There is nothing to indicate that
that these were any but free gifts. Certainly,

127. C.P.A., PG 18, G 8(1).
128. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 234a.
129. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 111a.
130. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 16 March, i. 163.
131. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 24 February, i. 233a.
132. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 5 March, i. 34a.
133. See above, p. 66.
Louis-Amable de Bigot's will did not require François to pension his married sister. Such an arrangement would have been highly unorthodox and unnecessary considering Marie Anne's large marriage settlement. On the other hand, like his younger brother, François was bound to provide from his paternal pension of 200 livres a year, 75 livres to Marie-Louise. He was in fact many times more generous, having given her 120 livres prior to February 1756, 150 livres prior to the 30 March, 1757, 200 livres prior to the 24 February, 1758, and whatever was her share of the previously mentioned 7,900 livres.

Of the first two de Parre boys, both appear to have begun their professional lives in the army. It was probably for Pierre Amable that Bigot in 1745 solicited the post of adjutant de la Marine. Although the boy had already endured a couple of campaigns, which would have made him eighteen when he enlisted, Bigot observed that 'il n'etait pas assez riche pour soutenir la dépense qu'il faisait.' According to Bigot he spent the following four years in service. When soliciting his advancement in 1749, Bigot appears to have anticipated his birthday by declaring him to have been twenty-five.

Pierre Amable must have been a charming man indeed, since both Bigot and Gradis appear to have been able to deny him nothing. Having been bailed out of the army, Pierre continued to experience money problems.

Writing to Le Couture on the 20 December, 1755, Gradis forwarded 1,000 livres that François had authorized by a letter of the 10 November.

134. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 3. 111a.
135. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 3. 103.
136. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 3. 255a.
137. LE OLLA, 93, Bigot to the ministre, 1 October 1749, p. 274.
1754, to pay off the debts Reynack had contracted in Rochefort and
Brest.138 Apparently, even that was insufficient to meet the young
man's obligations, since in May 1756, he had written to his uncle
requesting even more. In the letter Gradis wrote on the 19 May
approving this course of action, the intendant appears in anything
but scrooge-like profile:

"Vous avez très bien fait d'écrire à M. votre oncle pour vous
solicited de vous mettre en état de les acquitter. Il est bien. Il vous aime et je compte qu'il m'en
donne-les ordres.

He concluded with an exhortation to Reynack to 'vivre ensuite avec
économie.'139

Besides advising Reynack to ask François for help, he also
extended his own succor in the form of trade credits. In a letter
to Reynack of the 30 November, 1755, Gradis approved his plan to
purchase 700-800 livres worth of l'eau-de-riue to be sold at half
interest with the brother-in-law, Halinne, in Canada and authorized
him to draw the entire sum on his bankers.140 By March 1756, La
Couture had become associated with the adventure of which the
subsequent details have been related.141

After a summer of boring reconnaissance duty and conveying
merchant ships to a distance of thirty miles from the coast,142
de Reynack had the misfortune in September to fall dangerously ill.
The suspected cause was metallic poisoning (ver de riue) from a
chicken he had eaten. Four months later he was still suffering from
attacks of fever three to four days in the week. In a letter to
Bigot, Gradis observed that it had been fortunate for Reynack that

138. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, i. 150.
139. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, i. 10.
140. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, i. 165a.
141. See above, pp. 73-75.
142. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, ii. 48 and 67.
he had been disembarked immediately at Royan and given attentive nursing care, because even in March his prospects for a full recovery were not good. Gradis was very upset by this turn of events since he observed, "C'est un gars qui de mérite, rempli de sentiment à présent fort rangé." Even in his extremity, Reynack was determined that he would continue to serve in the Marine and Gradis offered to lobby Des Gouttes and La Touche to take him onto their ships. He also was informed that Basterot had offered to speak on his behalf to Gabriont Touche. Gradis also wrote to La Rivière on the 10 February, 1757, in the hope that he would procure a promotion for the young man:

Vos n'ignorez pas combien je suis attaché à M. Bigot Int. du Canada. Il y a Mr. Reynack, mon neveu, Ens. de V Lion de département de Rochefort. Voulez-vous luy rendre service et me dire si vous pensez pouvoir lui servir de quelque utile ? Je pourrai peut-être dépendre de vous pour quelque chose pour cet ami.

Not only did La Rivière take up Reynack's case:

On me mande de Versailles, l'amis que j'avais chargé de solliciter notre affaire qu'il irait ce même jour dans le Bureau des officiers et que je pouvais compter qu'il ne m'ignorera rien pour vous le faire obtenir quant il en sera temps.

but the results were almost immediate, since on the 30 April, 1757, Gradis was able to congratulate Reynack upon his promotion to Lieutenant. Obviously, it was an advantage to have influential friends.

143. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 10 March, 1757, i. 163.
144. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 27 November, 1756, ii. 292.
145. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 1757, iii. 2.
146. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 1757, 1 March, iii. 52.
147. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 1757, ivi. 174.
Perhaps in anticipation of this promotion, or maybe just because his old one had worn out, Gradis on the 8 January, 1757, agreed with Reynack that he could not avoid the purchase of a new uniform. Once again it was uncle François who was to pay the bill.

Pour vivre on en met à votre oncle. Il fera surtourt réclamer chose pour vous. Il a le cœur bon et il aime ses parents. 148.

No wonder Reynack would have found it difficult to meet the expenditure out of his own purse; it came to 400 livres. 149

By July, Reynack was once again in good health and employed on the batteries at Rochefort. 150 During the winter Gradis forwarded to him 1,200 livres from his uncle. 151 On the 19 September, 1758, he was still employed on the batteries at Rochefort. 152

Although apparently the most favoured of the de Serre children, of Pierre's younger brother Louis Arable practically nothing is known except that he was attending the École-Militaire in 1757 to which address Gradis forwarded a present from the boy's father of 700 livres. Pierre Arable in Rochefort received 600 livres at the same time. 153

Pierre Arable was not the only de Serre to receive financial help from his uncle. As already noted, 154 his cousin, François de Reynack, described by Gradis on the 24 February, 1758, as, 'un jeune homme d'une fort jolie figure, rempli d'esprit, qui n'ait aucune aye', received 400 livres for his tuition in a Bordelais school. It was his intention to enrol him in the Marine. Gradis

148. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, ii. 444.
149. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 25 May, iiii. 217.
150. Gradis Correspondence, Europe, 23 July, iii. 500.
151. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, 24 February 1758, i. 233a.
152. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 363.
153. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook, Europe, Gradis to Reynack, 22 January 1757, i. 451.
154. See above, p. 68.
François was ready to employ his influence on their behalf is witnessed by a letter he wrote to the minister from Canada on the

155. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 233a.
156. Gradis Correspondence, Amérique, i. 111a.
1 October, 1749. Having identified a cousin as the son of his
mother's brother, a conseiller du roi in the Parlement de Bordeaux,
he observed that:

Le comte de Marrepus m'accorde pour lui, il y a
trois ans ou environ, un travail d'écriture: je
lécrivai ce parti a une lettre de garde de la Marine
comptant sur les honneurs de ce ministre et qu'il lui
ferait faire vite son chemin dans ce corps.129

Observe that he was 'un jeune homme qui a de l'esprit,' Bigot
solicited for him the rank of écrivain principal.129

This then was the Bigot family, and it is clear that François
was faithful to his father's dying wish, who in his will wrote:

je les exhorte, (his children) aussi d'entretien,
entre eux une union et une amitié qui répondent à
l'éducation et aux exemples que je, chère femme et
roy avons taché de leur donner.

Not only did he provide the funds for these nephews' education,
but he was liberal with his sisters and prepared to aid his older
brother in the enlargement of the family estates. Furthermore,
Crédits' letters to members of the Bigot family are studded with
references to letters he is forwarding for them to François and
vice versa. Therefore, one must assume that he was indeed over-
whelmed with work in May 1750 when in response to de Barbe's appeal
for financial assistance, François sent his sister 300 livres and
observed, 'Je n'ai pas le temps de lui en écrire. Ce sert ses
eternités.'160

What was his relationship with his father? The comment in his
Journal of 1763, if not purely rhetorical, might indicate that
Louis-Amable was not only sober, honest and well-read but also rather
distant, after the fashion of diligent jurisprudens:

129. AN, C11A, 93, pt. 275, 276.
160. C.P.M. MM 18 C 2(1), to Crédits, 6 May.
That Louis-Arable acquired devotion out of family loyalty seems curiously, to be confirmed by his wish that he be buried with his mother and father in the family sepulcher in Bordeaux. His loyalties lay with the nest; to his sons the future of landed dignity.

Certainly, he was pious. His will left 100 livres to the Cabot fathers, another 100 livres to the Recollets, so that two hundred requiem masses might be said for his soul, and 100 livres for remembrance to the church of Saint Disant. Nor was he unsympathetic of the poor and sick, leaving 150 livres for the poor of the parish, 30 livres for the mendicants at his funeral, 100 livres for the general hospital, and 4,700 livres to a group who intended to build a house for the poor and chronically ill. Indeed, it would be surprising if the Bigot family had not been imbued with Jansenist ethics, at that time so prevalent in legal and commercial circles.

Mrs. Bigot appears to have shared her husband's strength of character, since his will clearly showed he expected her to continue as the cohesive force in the family after his death.

As already noted, he credited her with the good sense to make a wise distribution of the family goods and so did not take it upon himself to allocate everything.

In fact the Cabot's correspondence shows that Mrs. Bigot not only

161. Cabot, Francois Bigot, i. 3.
162. See above, p. 63, note 59.
kept the respect of her children, but that she was consulted and made final decisions on the distribution of lands and the development of careers. Although in 1740, François articulated a rather niggardly attitude toward the rest of the family, to his mother he would refuse nothing. At a time when Gradis was urging the acquisition of the charge of conseiller au Parlement for her grandson, François directed that he should be ruled by his mother's opinion and she vetoed the idea, at least for the time being. Furthermore, in 1759, in conjunction with her youngest son, she had no compunction in depriving Pierre de Bigot of a third of his pension in favour of another grandson, François de Forre. She was a good businesswoman and usually oversaw the running of the family farm. When sickness prevented her from directing the harvest, the wine was ruined. Consequently, it is not surprising that François would entrust her with power to act as an attorney for him in the acquisition of land:

"Par votre lettre du 22 octobre vous nous marquez avoir envoyé votre procuration à M. votre beau-père pour vous faire l'achat de la terre d'origine..."

Although it had been decided not to make that purchase, Gradis assured Bigot he would advance any amount of money required upon his mother's order should another property be chosen.

She was indeed a force to be reckoned with and despite frequent illnesses in the last decade of her life, recovered to "se porte aussi bien qu'une femme de son âge, peut être." She was, after all, an unconscious time-living since she must have been well over eighty years of age at her death in 1766. Her practical nature bore her up.

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163. See above, p. 73.
164. See above, p. 66.
165. See above, p. 68.
166. See above, p. 65. Tit. 67.
167. Gradis Correspondance, Amériques, 10 March, 1757, i. 163.
168. Gradis Correspondance, Amériques, 13 May, 1756, i. 195a.
to the end. Although the matriarch in life, her will carried no final expectations to her children. She contented herself by asking pardon for her sins, begged for mercy and recommended her soul to God.

To recapitulate; the Marine like the other governmental services of the eighteenth century was manned by dynasties who regarded it not only as a secure source of employment for younger sons, but as a battleground where social prestige and even wealth were to be won. The ruthless use of influence was a sine qua non for promotion and even employment in the lower grades was dispensed as a favour. Thus strong family loyalty was indispensable to advancement.

François Pigot came from a typical Marine background. Although the younger son of a lawyer, he appears to have had relatives on both sides employed in the Marine. Certainly, he deferred to his mother's ambitions for her family, not only lobbying the minister for them but providing substantial sums for their outfitting and education. If he was personally ambitious, he was no less ambitious for his family as a whole. Indeed, family ambition must be seen as the source of his own, since for at least three generations the family engaged in a struggle for wealth and greater social prestige. Moreover, by François's generation they had succeeded not only in confirming their position as Nobles de Rois, but had made the most honourable of alliances and had gone a long way to establishing their title to respect as landed gentry. Given this background one suspects, had Canada not fallen and had Pigot's friends in France been more discreet in the use of his funds, that he would have had little difficulty in setting himself up at the Court. He had after all a most distinguished record, and had been promised the intendency of Rochefort. Perhaps, like his nephew, Pierre, he would have contracted a marriage and produced children, even though in his sixties. There can be no doubt
but that the loss of Canada was not only a national embarrassment, and calamity for the Canadians, but also a personal disaster for her last incumbent. Before investigating the extent to which Bigot contributed to the colony's loss and his own, however, more must be said about the conditions of French colonial administration both in Europe and in the colonies.
CHAPTER III

WORK EXPERIENCE

One of the most serious deficiencies of the existing literature on the marine and colonies is the lack of a reliable description of the institutional structure of the French ports. Consequently, it has been difficult to reconstruct the early work experience of a colonial administrator such as François Bigot. No doubt this was attributed to the diffuse and circumstantial nature of the evidence. Nevertheless, it is important that some attempt be made to come to grips with the subject. Bearing in mind, therefore, that the views presented in this chapter are but tentative, the reader is invited to explore the port of Rochefort as it would have appeared to Bigot in the 1720's and 1730's.

The important departments at Rochefort after the quarter of the Intendant were: the Controller at Hyde, Constructions at Redoute, Armaments, Clasner, Colonies,Soldats, and the Bureau. As described in the first chapter, over all these the Intendant held a general supervisory authority. It was to the Intendant that the premiers commis at Versailles wrote under the minister's signature when they required information or wished to address orders to their sub-department at the port. Obviously, the Intendant could not attend to all things himself so except where a satisfactory response was not forthcoming from a subordinate, his office was primarily the post office where mail was sorted and the ministerial instructions sent off to the relevant dock. The Intendant's chief duty was to review the official correspondence in order to intervene where necessary to implement the

1. See above, pp.27-30.
minister's wishes and to report back to Versailles any problems requiring action beyond his personal capacity. This system is particularly well illustrated by a letter to the minister of the 29 January, 1729 in which it was stated that letters to the intendant were stamped according to the experiment to which they pertained:

 Vous m'avez honoré de me remuer par une lettre l'heure de colonies que le proces verbal que je vous av adressé sur la qualité du vin de Trois-Îles envoyé a Québec et qui en a été reporté sur la du entre fait en présence des Conseils du ministre de son directeur, le Consul aux caves et son Conseiller y est coit ressenti mais je pres la liberté de vous représenter que tous les procès verbaux se sont sacrés quant des officiers proposés pour donner de la bonne ou mauvaise qualité des vivres et enlement des Conseils du ministre.

In this case the intendant had been asked to deal with a fairly routine sort of directive concerning the provisioning of the colonies. In all probability he forwarded the letter with a brief covering note requesting an explanation to the relevant clerk who would have drafted a short report. The report was quite likely received by one of the secretaries at the intendance who would have composed the formal reply for the intendant's signature.

One field in which the intendant was called upon frequently to exercise his personal judgement was the training and promotion of administrative personnel. Rochefort, series E fairly bristles with discussions between the minister and the intendant of the merits of various officers and of who should work where; so, it is not surprising that contemporaries accused Laurence of being preoccupied with staffing.
to the exclusion of most other concerns. Not that this preoccupation was displaced on the minister’s part. As has been observed already, the marine was afflicted by a chronic shortage of efficient officers. Caused by inadequate pay and restrictive living practices, the shortage was a serious impediment to the eradication of corruption and the general improvement of administrative efficiency.

Various hiring practices to improve the quality and quantity of administrators having been tried, it was decided it would be expedient, before placing new recruits into the apprenticeship ranks to give them a period of formal instruction; so classes were set up at Rochefort. Thus it was that de Bourvillé wrote to Roubaudroi on the 19 June, 1723 instructing him to reserve, 'une place d’Élève' for, 'Vélot, fils d’un Conseiller au Parlement de Bordeaux.'

Rochefort are the prerequisites for a place d’élève, specifically stated, nevertheless, it is to be assumed that successful applicants had to be literate and moderate. François de Bourvillé was sent to school in Bordeaux, perhaps the same one that his uncle attended, in preparation for a career in the marine. Applicants were supposed to have attained a certain age, perhaps their twentieth year, for that was François

3. In his Mémoires sur la marine de France, written in 1725 for Court Beaulieu, the Intendant of France, Valincour, his secrétaire des commandements, wrote of Bourvillé that he was, 'un jeune homme de vingt-quatre ans, de bon esprit qui a de très bonnes intentions, mais qui ne sais pas de quelle couleur est la mer ni comment est fait un vaisseau; qui, depuis qu'il est en place, n'a fait autre chose que d'examiner si d'un écrivain on peut faire un commissaire, ou si d'un capitaine on peut faire un enseigne, et si on enverra celui-ci à Toulon et celui-là à Rochefort.' Cited by G. Lacour-Gayet, op.cit., p. 86.
4. See above, p. 46.
Bigot's age when he entered the Marine in 1723. Nevertheless, it was commonly understood that this stipulation could be waived if the right influence was brought to bear. In the 1750's according to Gradis, boys were commonly received at twelve and thirteen years of age. It was even possible to send boys to Rochefort in anticipation of a place d'élève since in a letter to the minister of the 17 October, 1732, Beauchenoir solicited places d'élèves for two boys who had already been working in the administrative offices of the port for three months. He argued:

ou'ils travaillaient dans les différents bureaux du port et il a bien servi pendant la majorité de quelques mois des Étudiants. Ils ont tous deux plus que l'âge compétent pour être Élèves.

Although it could appear that a senior officer was generally responsible for the instruction of these élèves, it was not impossible for other officers to combine instruction with other administrative duties. In the same letter Beauchenoir also observed:

J'ay proposé a M. L'Affilard a qui vous ayez donné le bureau des Arrêts de ne charger ainsi l'absence de M. Feston de l'instruction des Élèves ce qu'il a accepté, M. maîtres ait répondu que les détails du contrôle et des colonies ne lui permettaient pas de prendre ce soin.

The period of Bigot's formal training does not appear to have lasted much more than one year since his 'etat des services' stated that he was made an écrivain ordinaire in 1734. Whether this was the normal training period is uncertain since it is possible that he was rushed through this stage. Owing to the acute shortage of clerks, the interdant was eager to thrust responsibility onto young shoulders as quickly as possible and he had even employed unenlisted persons to perform duties regularly entrusted to full écrivains.

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7. See above, p. 85.
8. AM, IR, 553, p. 168.
Regarding the shortage of clerks at Rochefort, the intendant elaborated to the minister in a letter of the 12 October, 1724:

"Jours après 6 à 7 mois d'absence et du S. Michel de Casternau qui n'a pas encore servi et qui maintenant sont tous deux nécessaires. Vous savez aussi que le S. Des Godinieres et les autres ecritains destitués à la visite des lois au port d'Andernos et à la haute mer, camp de S. Berne et Écritain du contrôle et le S. Meunier au bureau des soldats.

For was this a problem which eased with the passing of years."

Writing to the intendant on the 21 May, 1743 the minister informed him that the S. Foucault was to be trained in Rochefort for the Canadian service and explained:

"Vous savez que le Petit nombre de sujets qu'il y a dans les ports en Etat de Suivre le detail des décharges ne m'a pas toujours permis d'y prendre ceux qui ont été demandés pour les colonies."

Another reason for suspecting that officers spent only a short time in the status of écrivain is that their training was not considered to be at an end when they were made écrivain. In his letter of the 12 October, 1724 the intendant recommended two men for promotion to écrivain and added that the Sr Poitiers would look after their further instruction. Indeed, as is the way with bureaucracy, each rank was subordinated to the supervision of a superior and écrivains were moved from one job to another in order to prepare them for greater responsibility. On the 5 November, 1733 for example, the minister informed

10. AM, IE, 353, p. 182.
11. AM, IE, 353, p. 177.
12. AM, IE, 353, p. 182.
In other cases responsibilities were changed in an effort to improve bureaucratic efficiency. One such occurred in 1725 when a group of clerks was moved from under the Sire de la Boittière to Laaffiart at the Control:

J'approve fort le parti que vous prenez de détacher du bureau du Sire de la Boittière les Engravés qui doivent partager le travail dont il detoit encore, pour luy offrir l'occasion de vouloir s'en occuper. Selon la mette dans la nécessité de ne songer qu'aux parties au travail qui luy sont destinées, et vous avez fort bien imaginé de placer ces Engravés au contrôle sous les yeux du Sire Laaffiart qui veillera à leur conduite. Et pourm les aider dans ces commencements, ne doutez pas qu'avec ces précautions vous ne vous apercuviez bientost du fruit de ce nouvel établissement ...

No doubt Birot also was moved from one department to another in his early years of service. Unfortunately nothing specific remains to show what his particular assignments might have been. On the 15 November, 1723, upon a request from his father to the minister, he was granted leave for two months, so presumably his first Christmas after entering the service was spent at home. He also received another leave of three months' duration before the end of 1726. In the Ardouin inventory there is a tantalizing entry which was not located in Rochefort. It reads quite simply:

Biriot, condamné à 1100 de restitution envers le Roi dans l'affaire du déficit des bois de construction.

13. AS, B2, 118, p. 3.
15. Inventaire Ardouin.
If this is a reference to François, it might mean he was employed in the Department of Constructions et Bâtiments with responsibility for the timber.

Constructions et Bâtiments was, of course, the department concerned with the building and overhaul of the royal ships and the construction of port facilities. It appears to have been presided over jointly by a master carpenter, in charge of the work, and a chief clerk, responsible for the inventory of building materials.

A letter of the 6 June, 1737 indicates that the master carpenter, the intendant, and the governor conferred together upon the building program in a, 'conseil de construction', whose recommendations were subsequently forwarded to the minister. 17 This conseil also met to decide upon the fate of vessels beyond repair and it appears the minister's approval was a mere technicality. 18 Provided the minister was convinced by the arguments of the conseil, a royal certificate ordering construction or demolition was forthcoming.

De la Croix' letter of the 6 June, 1737 contains a good example of the sort of advice which was forwarded from these conseils de construction. The conseil, having debated the relative merits of various types of design had decided to recommend that:

si vous voulez absolument vous ressaisir à la construction d'un seul de ces deux navires, il me paraît être que le XVIème merite la preference; leurs Kebantions en bois et en fer et leur main d'œuvre différent de tres peu; et ce que le XVIème coûterait plus que la flûte n'est pas suivant moy comparable à l'avantage d'avoir un navire à deux usages qui soit en même temps propre à transporter dans les Colonies les Effets qui leur sont destinés et à servir en guerre en cas de Rupture avec quelque Puissance maritime au lieu qu'une îlette ne peut jamais servir que de bâtiment de transport et à besoin d'Escorte.

17. AM, 18, 366, De la Croix to the minister, p.152.
18. AM, 18, 179, minister to Brederoensis, 15 February, 1739, p.91.
Thus considerations of cost and efficiency were very much to the
fore in the minds of the port officials. That this corresponded
to the minister's frame of mind is confirmed by the letter of the
15 February, 1739 regarding the prospective demolition of the


To compte qu'en y faisant travailler vous avez
attention a en faire retirer les fers qui en
proviennent et les bois qui peuvent etre de
coule usage pour les differentes services du

Naturally any economy drive required a strict accounting of
building materials and a letter of the 6 June, 1737 shows that at
that time de Ruiz was responsible for this operation. 19 So la Croix
was able to report that:

De Recenssent de tous les Bois de cet arsenal
que vous m'avez ordonné est fait pièce par pièce, il
ne sait plus que d'en dresser l'Etat qui sera fini
a terms pour que nous puissions savoir sur nos Bouches
avec connaissance de Cause, lorsque vos ordres sur les
Constructions que nous aurons à faire, nous parviendrons.

De Ruiz was also responsible for the supply of timber for
construction. As well as accounting for quantity and inspecting it
for quality at its receipt into the port's warehouses, he was
required to make tours of inspection of the royal forests. He was,
for example, absent from the port for a certain period of 1736 while
inspecting the forest of Anjou, 20 and it was about these absences
that Beauchanois protested to the minister in 1739 because they
aggravated shortages of manpower in the administrative offices of the
port. 21

The delegation of signing authority does not, however, appear to

19. He had been in charge of the departement since November 1732
when he replaced Berry who had been moved to Arrancats.
38, 20, 117, p. 443.
20. AM, 12, 568, intendant to the minister, 35 January, 1739. p.15.
21. See above, pp. 95, 96.
have been restricted to the administrative corps since 1726 the

contrat de service was not only sent out to inspect the

President Bourbon's forest but even went so far as to sign a contract

which, although contrary to the wishes of the intendant and minister,

was considered to be binding. The minister explained to Beauharnois

on the 6 May:

As to the nature of the forfeiture required of Rigot, it is
tempting to read into it the first conviction of a criminal career

but before leaping to hasty conclusions the prevailing custom which

put the responsibility for making up accounting errors and other

such oversights upon the shoulders of the officer concerned, must be

considered. In the private sector, for example, Rigot complained to

Tonnis that two barrels of wine had not reached him. Gracie replied

on the 30 August, 1755 that:

Les deux barriques de vin dont une marque 'G' et
l'autre 'J' ont été embarquées dans la Renommée et ni
vous ne les avez pas reçues c'est la faute de moindre
(chief capitaine). Le party que vous m'avez à promettre a
l'embarqué pour ne rendre un peu plus attentif c'est de
lui faire payer ce qui pour vous manquer de même
que ce qu'il vous l'assurera qui ne sera pas bien

22. AN, 1E, 124, p. 335.
Likewise, in the collection and spending of royal revenues, because the accountants and treasurers operated almost as private businesses, the only means of bringing them to account was to try them for fraud. 24 LaCellein Nicolas Baéard, the trésorier des Colonies at Rochefort, was twice subjected to such proceedings. In 1763 he was a victim of the witch-hunt against the Canadian administrators, his brother being the contrôleur of New France, and the question of his integrity was again opened in 1783 after his death. Proceedings against him were dropped in 1763 after it was discovered that he was in advance to the Crown by 120,000 livres. In reply to the second charge that he was indebted to the King for 657,149 livres 10 sols, his son argued that this was not due to deliberate fraud but rather to poor accounting practices. In any case, it was argued that 1,614,872 livres 2 sous 5 deniers was still owed to his father on other balances. 25

The nature of Était's misdemeanour is difficult to assess. Since the handling of money was reserved to a special corps of semi-private intendants, there can be no question of theft of specie. Perhaps a deficit in the funds could have occurred from mishandling of the timber itself; some might have deteriorated through negligence, hastened because the wood originally accepted was of poor quality. Some might even have been stolen or merely misappropriated, either case requiring extra expenditures. Indeed, with a little imagination, one could multiply the possibilities; but whatever the cause, it was,

27. Croisis Correspondence, Canbyck Americque, i. 64a.
24. See Boncher, François Finances, pp. 11, 12.
25. AN, V 7, 47.
no doubt, the Contôle which brought the case to light.

Next to the intendant's office the Contôle, headed by a contrôleur was the most powerful of the departments at the port. Charged with the general auditing of the accounts, the Contôle inquired into the activities of the other departments in order to prepare the annual budget and maintain the general records. Versailles required regular financial reports of the intendant which were addressed to the ministre de la Marine who shared them with the contrôleur général des Finances. To draw a modern analogy, the Contrôle Général is best viewed as a composite ministry of Finance, Revenue, and Auditor General in one. Its structure was accordingly complex. For the purposes of this study, the most important subsection was that which worked within the Marine as the auditing branch. It was only indirectly responsible to the contrôleur général through the ministre de la Marine, who sat with the contrôleur général on the Conseils de la Marine and Commerce, justifying his requests for funds through a general accounting of Marine expenditures.

Speaking generally of the Contrôle, Bosher argued that its first and basic task was, 'to verify (contrôler) and register all the acts bearing upon the finances of the King.' It had to see to it that payments and collections authorized by royal order were duly made and to match the proper receipts with the original orders, this in a set of registers kept for the purpose. The Contrôle neither collected nor spent any money, except for its own working expenses. Money transactions were handled by the trésoriers de la Marine, who in

26. For the composition of these councils and a general discussion of their activities, see Boulle, op.cit., pp. 38, 39, and Duchene, op.cit., pp. 74-77. Although the minister of the marine and the contrôleur général were jointly responsible for raising revenues; as Boulle observed, p. 116, in 1758 Moras, 'was left to devise increasingly desperate stratagems,' it was possible for him to abdicate this responsibility entirely to the contrôleur général, as Berryer abdicated colonial revenues in 1759. Ibid. p.160.

Rochefort worked through the port's Bureau des Voiris. The contrôleur's job was to prepare the crown's business for the trésorier, keeping the ledgers of funds to be collected and spent. They were supposed to record whether payments were made in cash or in notes in anticipation of revenue, and to verify the title or authority of each claim on the Treasury.

A typical financial transaction was discussed in a letter of the 11 June, 1735, where the ministre de la Marine informed the contrôleur général that in conformity to his wishes he had instructed the trésorier général de la Marine to receive the 156,415 livres 16 sols 11 deniers, which the contrôleur had instructed the comptes-rendus général to pay to the Royal Treasury. This shows that whereas the contrôleur général had general authority over the spending departments, in other words, he could order the comptes-rendus to make certain payments and request the minister of the Marine to facilitate these transactions; he could not write directly to the trésorier de la Marine, who was subordinated not to him, but rather to the minister of the Marine. This is proof of the observation made earlier about the divisions in the Contrôle.

The theoretical divisions between contrôleurs and trésoriers were not, however, as rigorously observed in the ports as at Versailles. Writing to Beaubrunois on the 11 June, 1735, the minister observed that his suspicions of fraud in the declarations of goods carried on the royal ships from the Caribbean to Béthune had been come out by the investigations the intendant had conducted. The declared quantities fell short of the real amounts by almost half and the minister ordered the intendant to instruct Bellamy, the comptes-rendus.

28. AC, B 60.
29. See above, p. 78, 79. ment. 120.
of the Marine at La Rochelle to recover the outstanding freight charges. 30

Had Bellamy been the only agent of the Marine at La Rochelle, it might have been consistent that he was charged both with the
Controle's functions of investigating obligations and the Treasury's functions of collecting the revenues. What is peculiar is that there was an agent of the Inspection at La Rochelle by the name of the St' Povvallet. In fact, a memo to the minister of June 1736 shows that he had indeed been collecting these funds since 1726 but without remuneration. His work, he maintained, was known to the Intendants, contrôleurs, and inspecteurs of the Marine at Rochefort. 31

Furthermore, he maintained that his predecessor had received 500 livres for every freight he recovered for the Crown. It is to have been expected that the minister would be startled by the size of the payment accorded to Povvallet's predecessor. What is particularly strange is that the minister was convinced that Bellamy had not only been discharging this function, but also that he had received an annual gratification for this work. Unfortunately, the sources do not retain any report of the findings of the investigation.

A good example of the minister's instructions to the intendant of Rochefort regarding the Controle is to be seen in the minister's letter to De la Croix of the 9 October, 1730. The latter, substituting for Beschermein required more detailed guidance on the port's accounting than was usual. The minister introduced his subject observing:

Je sens à bien aise, Monsieur, de regler avant
la fin de cette année les projets des dépenses à faire
à Rochefort pendant 1731.

30. AA, 1E, 122, p. 421.
31. AA, 1B, 124, p. 419.
In order to facilitate this forecast the minister said he expected shipping to be at about the previous year's level. He went on to discuss the repair of ships, the contracts for supplies of both iron parts and wood, sails and all the other materials required in shipbuilding. Besides a general accounting of expenditures on various supplies, the minister wanted a breakdown of what payments were to be made to whom; this being possible at that time of year because most of the contracts had already been let. De la Croix was to estimate the amount and cost of the commissions which the post would consume; rust, hemp, pitch, tar and lead, remembering that this expenditure had to be limited to 75,000 livres. Rochefort was to receive up to 5,000 livres' worth of small arms, and a special allowance to be granted for payment of the small arms received by the colonies which could be, 'dépensé et payé par excédent.' The minister approved in principle the construction of additional storage space at Rochefort and recommended that the intendant have a cost study of the project produced in order that the minister might:

destiner tous les ears une somme à cet usage, de l'on composer par l'échant et le transport des matières qui conviendraient, afin de finir par la rendre cet usage qui ne paraît être important.

Apparently, the Contrôle had not always been overly conscientious in the forecasting of expenditures. After discussing a couple more items of capital outlay, the minister concluded his letter with the admonition:

Vous vous tires travailler à tous ces Etats avec un soin particulier, et vous observerez que l'on ne les remplise point des sommes excessives que les années précédentes parque les dépenses doivent augmenter ou diminuer suivant les conjonctures.32

That Canada was not the only section of the Marine to get well behind in its accounting is evident from an exasperated letter which

32. AM, 1M, 119, p. (15).
the minister sent to Bassembœuf on the 27 April, 1755. Not only
was the minister annoyed by the bizarre fashion in which the
intendant had handled the munitionnaire's accounts of 1750, but he
pointed out that despite repeated requests the accounts for food-
stuff delivered to the port in 1726, 1728, and 1729 still had not
been forwarded to Versailles.33

The intendant was reprimanded on the 18 April, 1755 for having
failed to impose a uniform system of recording expenses upon the
officials he sent out to make regional reports. This, the minister
was convinced was the primary cause in the delay in making up the
general accounts. He explained:

Je reçois les Estats des Dépenses Extraordaires de Brest beaucoup plus grande, et plus nombreux que
ceux de Rochefort immédiatement après la remontée,
and added,

ces Estats sont si simples et si faciles à faire, que
les moins habiles les peuvent dresser aisément si l'on
veut les assujettir à une pratique uniforme.34

Incorrect calculations of the cost of contracts did not make
the Contrôle's task any easier. On the 23 April, 1754 Bassembœuf
had to confess to the minister:

Je Joins joy le marche que j'ay fait avec le
Correspondant en ce port du S. le Magre de Bocen pour
la fourniture de 450 couvertures de laine destinées
pour Quebec. Elles se trouvent un peu plus chères
que je n'avois, & qu'on n'avoit pas compris dans l'estimation des
frains de voyage ceux de la Rochelle, les droits
de controle et de quittance ...35

Fortunately, errors made by the Contrôle in Rochefort were sometimes
redeemed at Versailles. On the 4 July, 1735, for example, the minister
wrote to Bassembœuf informing him that the invoices for payment to

33. AE, 13, 118, p. 289.
34. AE, 13, 122, p. 275.
Ct. Lccr^ for wheat were incorrect. Oats had been over-charged, since only 1,423 quintals were sent there, rather than 3,408. The rest, 1,985 quintals had been shipped to Isle Royale. In the same letter, he explained that an over-payment of 1,719 livres 11 sols 9 deniers had been made to M. Barner for the swine regiment. The minister expected Beauchenais to see to it that this sum was returned to the treasurer of the Marine. The treasurer-general was, however, quite capable himself, of making mistakes. On the 17 June, 1754, in response to an inquiry, from the minister, Beauchenais informed him that M. de la Tuillerie had ordered his clerk at Rochefort to deduct 4,091 livres 17 sols 3 deniers from the Canadian account for 1754. This, according to Beauchenais was unwarranted and no a special credit was to be made to the Canadian account for 1754.

Sometimes, the Contrôle was unjustly accused of excessive predictions. In a letter of the 29 September, 1755 Beauchenais was very annoyed at having been reprimanded for having over-spent the estimates for ship repairs. He referred the minister to the report he had prepared with M. Laflèche, the chief of the Contrôle, and observed:

"Vous savez, Mgr., qu'il n'est pas possible de prévoir à la fin d'une année toutes les dépenses qui se trouvent nécessaires dans le cours de l'année suivante a) de faire par des projets une estimation juste de ce qu'il en peut coûter pour le budget des v° qui sont à la mer. Ils en reviennent quelquefois en si mauvais état que la dépense en journée est aussi considérable que celle d'une construction et c'est de qui occasionne des excédens qu'on ne peut éviter."

In another case, the intendant had to explain delays in payments of which the munitionnaire was complaining to the minister. On the 29 October, 1757 the minister observed that the munitionnaire

36. AM, 1E, 123, p. 9.
37. AM, 1E, 252, p. 101.
38. AM, 1E, 364, p. 299.
had not been paid for uniforms be supplied for the Compagnie de la Baie de James until after they had been ordered for the colonies, which was unnecessary. In the future, he was to be paid as soon as the goods had been delivered to the stores of the port. In his reply to the minister of the 7 November, 1736 Beaubearson argued that it had always been the custom not to make payment for goods until they were actually loaded onto ships and proof of their embarkation given by certificate of the mercantile and captain. This was necessary because the destination of goods was often unclear between their receipt at the stores and their embarkation. Custom was that their destination would be indicated on their invoice to avoid confusion in the Contrôle when it was necessary to debit the colonial accounts.

On the 14 November, the minister reversed himself, agreeing that this procedure ought to be continued.

A major function of the Contrôle was the registration of all contracts passed by the Intendant. This made it the central records office of the port, and ensured that it could monitor all planned expeditions. In the letter of the 8 October, 1730, for example, the minister, referring to a contract for sails instructed the Intendant:

... vous en trouverez le marché cy joint et le faire enregistrer au Contrôle.

On another occasion, the 32 July, 1725, Beaubearson informed the minister:

J'ai rendu au Contrôle l'expédition du marché des 2 et 3 Barthaut et Carpe pour la fourniture des Effets de laine, Toille, palons et boutons pour l'habillement des Compagnies en garnison à St. Domingue...

The Contrôle also received ships' journals. Beaubearson wrote to the minister on the 14 February, 1726 saying:

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39. AM, 13, 197, p. 315.
40. AM, 12, 356, p. 802.
41. AM, 18, 197, p. 353.
42. AM, 12, 354, p. 274.
J'ay remis en execution de vos ordres au Contrôleur de la part les Jacobins de navigation de l'Esp de Colbert, de Joyer, de Sauvage et de Conteverne. M. Bremaert (l'Intendant of Canada) doit les joindre a ceux que je lui ai precedentemment remis.43

These thus, were the major functions of the contrôleurs entirely subject to the minister of the Marine. There were, however, another group in a more ambiguous situation; the collectors of duties and the officials delegated to enforce the navigation acts. Their position was ambiguous because, although clearly involved in maritime regulation and hence the natural delegates of the Marine, they were also fiscal agents and consequently dependent upon the Contrôle Général. Furthermore, as the eighteenth century advanced, the navigational acts were increasingly viewed as a hindrance rather than a support for the development of colonial empire, and so the minister of the Marine, in his capacity as general supervisor of the settlement empire became more and more the advocate of merchants and colonists to the contrôleur général against the over-zealous Fermains Généraux.

During the time of Colbert there had been no problem co-ordinating fiscal and colonial policy because Colbert himself was both minister of the Marine and contrôleur général. At his death, however, his son did not inherit the double mantle and the resulting division of responsibility was subsequently, on the 13 September, 1699 enthroned in a royal edict stating that:

Les affaires commerciales des colonies, la défense de leur territoire, les instructions générales à donner aux commerçants, les détails d'administration intérieure, dépendaient du ministre de la marine. Le contrôleur général conservait le droit de se prononcer sur le tarif des taxes applicables aux marchandises à l'entrée et à la sortie de ses possessions, ainsi que sur les conditions dans lesquelles les compagnies de commerce coloniale exerçaient de leurs privilèges.44

44. Cited by Duchêne, op. cit., p. 32.
In an attempt to forestall problems, Soignolay, in 1685 created the Bureau du Commerce to liaise with the Contrôléd and it was to this body that questions of principle regarding customs and trade laws were referred.\(^45\)

Writing to M. Fagot, presumably an employee of the Contrôle, on the 30 September, 1740 Bernex forwarded a memorandum from Robert Bujard and Company of Rouen which argued that due to the exemption from duty accorded them, all their fish and oil originating from the Isle Royale fisheries ought to enjoy this privilege. Although agreeing that their position appeared to be well founded, the minister was worried that:

> leur demeure, si elle est accordée pourrait occasionner beaucoup d'abus,

and he invited Fagot, provided he believed it expedient:

> de faire examiner ce mémoire du Comité.\(^46\)

Although not binding upon the Conseil de Commerce,\(^47\) the recommendations of the bureau were not to be taken lightly. Bernex concluded his letter to Fagot urging him, 'de ne faire part de ce qu'il en pensera.'

That referral to the bureau was not considered necessary in a case where a single exception to the trade laws was requested is evidenced by the exception accorded to Bujard for his fish in 1739. Writing to the contrôleur on the 28 November, 1739 the minister argued that the Rouen merchant had, for a long time, carried on a large trade to Canada.

\(^{45}\) The preparation of instructions for colonial governors and interdits was also delegated to the members of this body, the directors of commerce. For a more detailed treatment of the Bureau du Commerce which ought not to be confused with the Conseils of Commerce of the regional centres: see Fouille, op.cit., especially pp. 53-55, 115-120.

\(^{46}\) A8, B 71.

\(^{47}\) The executive committee composed of the minister of the Marine, the post-flour général and some of the intendants of Commerce; see Fouille, op.cit., p. 39, and Buché, op.cit., pp. 74-79.
In 1738 the poor harvest in that colony had seriously reduced Bagard's sources of return cargo. Consequently, he had in 1739 resorted to a triangular trade with the Caribbean in an effort to repatriate his juniors. Due to the high price of sugar and tobacco at Martinique, this venture had failed. So, it was on these grounds that Bagard had been granted his dismission. 40

The French and the Customs Contrôle on the other hand, were by no means always at cross purposes. In the discharge of its regulatory responsibilities, the Customs were at the same time able to act as a second check upon the quality of goods sent to the colonies on the King's account. On the 7 May, 1740 the minister thanked M. Pagon for having ordered the release of thirty-seven bundles of cloth at Rochefort, ordered from the Mariette brothers of Monhamer for the Royal Stores at Quebec. Apparently, the seizure had been occasioned initially by the failure of Mariette's representative to obtain the proper clearance from the customs officials, "la décharge." 42 In the investigation which followed, it was discovered that a number of items were of inferior quality. Ricouart, Beaufortois' successor, was instructed to:

"Fassie réfuter ces pièces pour les remplacer par des états qui seront prises à la fole encheère des fournisseurs..." 50

Pagon was praised for his department's vigilance:

"indépendant de la nécessité qu'il y a pour le con... en son de procéder de pareil abus, les mesures... qui peuvent prendre pour cela ne peuvent... contribuer à assurer la bonne qualité des fournitures qui Seront faites pour les Magasins du Roy dans les Colonies." 51

Such was the Contrôle that discovered the, "déficit des bois de

42. AC, B 71. Minister to Pagon, 13 May 1740.
50. AV, B 71. Minister to Ricouart, 7 May 1740.
51. AV, B 71. Minister to Pagon, 7 May 1740.
construction'. Bigot's infraction could not, however, have been considered very grave since he was permitted to continue in his functions when the Court did not hesitate to prosecute officials for serious offences. For example, on the 23 February, 1733 the minister wrote to Beaumarais to instruct him:

Je vous adresse, Monsieur, l'ordre pour Casser le S. Marçon, Ecrivain après lui en avoir déclaré le content, vous le ferez conduire sous bonne et seure garde au château de sevres où je restera jusqu'au nouvel ordre.52

Not only did Bigot keep his job, but on the 24 May, 1728 the minister was considering him for promotion. Addressing Beaumarais he wrote:

Je vous prie, Monsieur, de m'informer exactement et sans compromis de la conduite et des talents du S. Ecrivain. Je serai bien nne de connaître à quoi il est propre ... Dites vous la plaine ce promettant ce sujet tous les éclaircissements dont vous aures besoin pour m'en rendre un compte fidèle.53

Apparently Beaumarais' testimony was favourable since... On the 12 June, 1728 the minister informed him:

J'ay procédé au S' Ecrivain, le brevet de certes ordinaires des classes sur le troisième avantages que vous m'avez rendu de sa conduite et de son application. Je vous adresse l'ordre pour le faire servir à Rochefort en attendant son brevet suivant la charte d'ancel vous le ferez employer dans l'Etat du port à un appointement ordinaire.54

What Bigot's salary had been during these years is not explicit. In a letter of the 22 March, 1722, however, the minister ordered Beaumarais to employ the S. Marçon as an écrivain at the port on a salary of 30 livres; so, presumably Bigot had received no more than this while he was occupying that status.55 It is more difficult to generalise about the pay of an écrivain since it would appear to have

52. AV, 12, 112, p. 123.
53. AV, 12, 111, p. 467.
54. AV, 12, 111, p. 561.
55. AV, 12, 129, p. 179.
been determined on the basis of three variables: experience, responsibilities, and the whim of the minister. On the 10 September, 1736, the minister quoted the annual pay of an écrivain ordinaire at 480 livres and of an écrivain principal at 900 livres. On the 12 October, 1724, however, when Beaumarquis recommended the promotion of de Moreau and Du Bresset to the status of écrivain he suggested that the latter ought to be paid at 600 livres a year, almost certainly as an écrivain ordinaire. On the 21 May, 1725 notwithstanding, Varin was sent to Canada to be contrôleur there, with the rank of écrivain principal and at the rate of 600 livres a year. A possible explanation for these variations is afforded by the case of the 3e Grenet who was sent by Beaumarquis to work in the Haras of Rochefort on the 25 September, 1736 with the status of écrivain ordinaire. It may be that he was given the higher pay of 600 livres a year because as the minister observed:

C'est un jeune homme qui a été éduqué chez ses oncles a l'âge qui sont marchands, et par là il connaît les différents sortes de marchandises, et est dans l'habitude de faire ce qu'il faut pour leur conservation.

But it is difficult to take refuge in the idea that pay varied solely on the basis of experience, for surely the minister would not have sent a man out to Canada to act as contrôleur whose work experience was of no more value than a green boy just entering the stores. This inconsistency recognized, pay does seem to have been related generally to experience and responsibility since in 1732 the two écrivains principaux in charge of Armées and Constructions et Bâtiments, de Perny and Roven, were being remunerated at 1,800 livres a year.

56. AM, IE, 125, p. 179.
57. AM, IE, 353, p. 162.
58. AM, IE, 358, p. 199.
59. AM, IE, 125, p. 241.
It would appear reasonable to believe that Égout was in receipt of this latter salary from 1734 when he took charge of Arcencs from de Perny. 59b

Égout's report dated 10th June, 1728 was forwarded to the intendant on the 12 July, 1728,60 and is reproduced in the post's archive under the date, 20 July.61 It stated that:

Le Roy ..., veulent commettre des personnes capables et fidèles pour faire les fonctions de commis ordinaire des Classes des Métélots tant dans les ports et Arcencs de Bénezé que dans les différents quartiers ou ils seront destines et jusques que le S.Yran, Écrivain ordinaire de la Marine, a les qualités nécessaires pour bien acquiter, de Majesté le Rédien et ordonne que les dites classes soient en de la qualité tenir les registres et les lettres des officiers, Parlement, metsots et autres gens de mer du quartier où il sera destiné ...

Although giving Égout extra responsibility, this does not seem to have been a full promotion since the minister instructed Beullarrous on the 6 October, 1728:

Su Majesté souhaitte que, il se soit rien changé rar rapport aux Commissions ordinaires qui se trouvent dans la même case, et il sera expédié des projets de Commissions principaux aux S.Yrs de Perny, Pogot, et Égout quand ils auront marité cet avancement.62

His service in the Bureau des Classes must have proved satisfactory since he was made an écrivain principal in 1729.63

On the system of the naval lists, there is a small corpus of literature in existence of which the most useful summary is Hercue Parrichet, published under the title, 'L'Administration des classes de la marine et ses archives dans les ports bretons, in the hevea.

59b. See below, p.121.
60. AM, 12, 116, p. 43.
61. AM, 12, 116, p. 67v.
62. AM, 12, 116, p. 240.
63. AM, 12, 116, p. 22.
Jarrichet maintained that the beginnings of this system were originally traced under Richelieu and Mazarin in an effort to obtain some idea of the numbers of seamen potentially at the disposal of the navy but that at that time:

Les arrêtés pour la mobilisation des quen sous

Under Colbert, however, the great expansion of the navy required a more systematic instrument than the incidental roaster gang to men b's project's ships; so, a series of innovations beginning in 1661 and culminating in the edicts of 1681 and 1682, established a regular census of seamen, officers, and even all artisans such as carpenters, joiners, rope and sail makers who worked in the service of the marine. By the 1720's, however, abuses in recruitment had become so great concern that royal commissaries were sent out between 1724 and 1727 to the sixty-four census districts to conduct a general review of sailors, to divide them into four groups and to re-establish the classe de service. In order to secure a closer watch on the local administrators, a central bureau of statistics was created to which the clerks were to make monthly returns listing movements of sailors in their district. Although Jarrichet maintained that this brought about a greater equality in the conscription of sailors for naval service, he pointed out that it by no means put an end to all abuses of the system. Such a system he maintained:

64. For more detailed treatment of the subject he referred the reader to, among others, J. de Criencry, Mémories sur l'inscription maritime, 1670; Jacques Cartier, Histoire de l'expédition de l'île Royale en 1608, Paris, 1956; and M. de la Perrière, La France de guerre au XVIIe siècle. natalots de

These abuses continued right through the Seven Years War. The difficulties Grodis experienced in the procurement of his crews due to the discrimination of emigré and adventurer Rostan, have already been discussed at some length. It was only through the inscription of one of Rostan's cabins of the Classes, Grodis informed La Rivière on the 2 April, 1757 that he succeeded to obtain crew for his ship the

President Le Berton:

De mes six navires, je n'en ai que deux qui soient assez bien armés; c'est le President le Berton, par la raison qui tous des Lieutenants est frere d'un domestique Vincent qui travaille au Bureau. . . .

The Court d'Estaing identified the problem in a memorandum written after the war:

Il est inconcevable que l'on se soit flatté que des gens à qui l'on donne trop peu pour vivre puissent s'abstenir de s'assurer une existence honnête et savent, en général, assez vertueux pour empêcher les autres de voler et pour ne pas le faire eux-mêmes.

So it appears that Pigot occupied a post of not inconsiderable influence early in his career which was generally understood to be insufficiently remunerated and where very real opportunities for graft existed. Is it possible that he did not emulate his peers and supplement his income in order to, 's'assurer une existence honnête'? To summarise Perrichet, Lebet's specific duties as a commissaire

67. See above, pp. 40-42.
68. Grodis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, iii. 96.
den Classes were to maintain a register of the movements of all marine personnel in his district in different registers for each rank and occupation. He was to deliver an identity document to all of them indicating their rank, to be carried by each at all times. It had to be produced, for example, by sailors when enlisting on merchant ships and steppers were required to submit accurate crew lists to the commissaire. The record of these lists was not, however, sufficient for the maintenance of the roles; so in addition, the commissaire had to make periodic tours of his area. There was also a constant volume of correspondence which had to be maintained with the Contrôle Général des Classes, not only for the remission of the monthly reports but also to ask for ministerial approval for any individuals wishing to leave the enumerated occupations. Perrichet noted that much of this correspondence has been preserved in B 2 and B 3 in the archives of the Marine, so it is possible that even more of Bigot's correspondence from these years might be extant.70

One such fragment dating from 1734 concerns André Fourreaux, a resident of Sablès d'Olonne, who as part of a punishment for insubordination at sea, had been incorporated into the bombardiers regiment at Rochefort. His father had appealed this decision to the minister on the grounds that the boy was his sole support and the minister requested information from the intendant of Rochefort on the 6 July, 1734 in the following terms:

Vous ayez appréciable de faire vérifier si c'est aux Sablès d'Olonne a fournir des batalets pour ce service, parce que si ce n'est pas le tour de ce quartier il ne conviendrait pas d'en engager ce batalet. Vous me ferrez cet, ce qui est, et vous engagez en même temps un État de ce qu'arrive quartier a fourni pour la Compagnie des bombardiers depuis la dernière ordonnance.71

70. Perrichet, ibid., pp. 102-107.
71. AN, 18, 121, ff. 9, 10.
In his reply of the 18 July, Beauvoiris forwarded to the
minister Rigot's report which stated:

"Il a été vérifié suivant la demande qu'en fait M. le Comte de Bouvois a M. l'intendant que
ce sont le tour de quartier des Sables d'Olonne a
fournir des matelots pour la compagnie des mouchardiers
n'en ayant pas encore formé depuis l'endosser rendu
a ce sujet. Le comte André Bourneuf pour lequel Jean
Bouvois, son petit, a demandé au ministre l'exception
d'autoriser dans cette compagnie est le premier matelot
des sables qui y ait été destine par M. de beauvoiris.
Il en doit encore fournir un au 3e bataillon."

Another surviving letter highlights the role which Rigot played
as commissaire des classes in the issuing of official career doc-
ments. By a letter of May 1746 to Beauvoiris, the minister declared
that he had waived certain service requirements for one Jean Bouvois
in order that he might sooner receive his credentials as a
matelot maritifery. Before he was to be transferred from the
service status to his new one, he was to be sent:

"un congé en son nom, ce qu'il aura représenté
da M. Rigot la lettre de réception sur laquelle
ce commissaire pour marquer la f(acte)ur du
Registre où il sera porté."

A letter of the 11 June, 1757 reveals Rigot giving informa-
to the procureur du roi des Annates of La Rochelle and Marennes
regarding infringements by captains of the regulations regarding
the reporting of crews, and he was still keeping the roles in
July 1756 since it was on information supplied by him that one
Pierre Filloux was fined 60 livres for a similar infringement.

Although in general a hard working and esteemed administrator,
Rigot ran afoul of the military regulations in 1723. On the 18
April, 1730, the minister ordered Rigot's transfer from Rochefort

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74. M., 16, 126, p. 326.
75. M., 16, 126, p. 367.
to Toulon:

Vous trouverez ci-joint deux ordres pour faire

Poster à Toulon les 5e de Bissy et Bigot. Ces ordres

ordinaires des classes. S'il ne revient de bons

rapports de leur conduite et de leur capacité lorsqu' ils y auront servi quelques mois, vous pouvez les

assurer que je vous enverrai au lieu leur avancement.76

It was a matter of policy to move administrators from one port
to another, as the minister observed when he issued a similar order

for the 5e Béarn de la Feuille, on the 2 February, 1733:

il est bon pour son instruction qu'il connaisse

le service des différents ports.77

While in Toulon, Bigot seems to have made a most favourable

impression. Not only was he made a commission ordonnateur in 1732,78

but the intendant, Villeblanche, was badly disappointed when he

received the minister's order of the 26 January, 1733 for Bigot's

immediate return to Rochefort. On the 5 February, the intendant

replied:

Je suis très touché, Mgr. des reproches que vous

me faites de ne vous avoir pas informé que Mgr. Bigot

de Bissy avaient joués à des Jeux de Hazard puis-
qu'ils sont défendus par l'ordonnance de S.M. du 3

Janvier 1691. Comme ces Mgr. n'ont joués qu'au Gouverne-

ment je ne voyais pas devoir regarder ce lieu la comme

susceptible d'être point à sa connaissance qu'ils ayant

jamais fréquentés les Tripots et ils assurent qu'ils

n'ont joué au Gouvernement que pour assurer les Dames

qu'ils y avaient engagés.

He noted that the order which had been received the previous day had

been communicated to Bigot immediately and that he was preparing to

leave within the twenty-four hour deadline. The intendant continued:

Je prends la liberté de vous représenter, Mgr., qu'ils

sont tous les deux très bons sujets. Ils ont bien promis

qu'ils ne joueront de leur vive à ces sortes de Jeux. Ils

s'entendent la continuation de vos bontés n'ayant absolument

rien autre chose qu'on puisse leur reprocher et a quoi

ils ne se seront pas exposés s'ils y avaient eu le moindre

77. M., 17, 116, p. 41.
78. L., 6 ?., p. 2.
That Villeblanche had a very high opinion of the officers in question, was re-entitled by his letter of the 7 February:

J’ay l’honour de vous informer que M. Bigot commissaire de la marine a tiré la perche qu’il n’avait donnée de sortir de cette ville avant les 24 heures; M. de Béry est parti en même temps que lui tous les deux sorties comme s’ils avaient été commandés à quelque suplice. Ils ont senti vivement le cas ou ils n’auraient de vous avoir déjoué et j’ose vous assurer, Mgr, que c’est une leçon pour eux qui ne s’efforceraient de leur vie et un exemple pour tous les autres qui ne s’exposeraient aux jeux de hasard dont il n’est plus question. Ces deux officiers ignoraient l’ordre du 27 February et qu’ils ont vu la peine que vous leur avez imposée, il est de votre avoine Mgr de leur faire grace pour repérer leur honneur qu’ils croyent perdu. J’ose vous assurer que s’ils veulent a nouvel le premier à vous en rendre compte. Si j’avais, Mgr, quelque grace essentielle à vous dédier, ce serait celle de vouloir bien pour les renvoyer dans cette ville où ils sont fort regretés par leurs bonnes qualités. Il y a dans ces deux officiers de quoy faire d’Excellents sujets. 60

So February of 1733 found Bigot once again in Rochefort; the port, according to his memorandus of 1765 there.

‘Il étoit aussi, considéré, où d’ailleurs il vivit avec la plus grande aisance.’ 61

His imminent arrival was announced to Brechervois by a letter of the

2 February, 1733:

Le S⁴ Bigot, nouveau Commandant du département de Toulon vous présentera, Monsieur, un ordre du Roy pour servir à Rochefort en vertu duquel vous l’employerez dans l’Estat du port aux appoints ordinaires ... Le sujet de son changement a Esté pour Roy faire sentir le tort qu’il avoit Eût de s’acquäirer a une Banque de Phason. Le S⁴ de Béry, Brigadier des Gardes marines qui estoit tombé dans le meme cas a eût avec un ordre pour puiser de Toulon à Brest. Le Roy ne vut point que les Officiers s’adonnent a ces sortes de faits nuisibles ... 62

79. Lt, B 5, 358, pp. 276, 277.
80. Lt, B 5, 358, pp. 279, 280.
81. Locüt, 4, 5.
82. Lt, B 18, 118, pp. 81, 82.
Exactly what his new functions were is obscured by an inconclusive letter which the minister wrote to Pocahontas, on the 2 August, 1724.

The text is:

"... chaque attentant les instructions dont le Sr. Bigot est chargé aux magazins général et aux armées, vous prescrive de ce remplacement et charger le Sr. Bigot du magasin des armements et des armées a la place de Sr. de Berny." 63

What is odd about this is that Bigot as commandant des Clauses had written a report on André Fouron only in the previous month, of which a signed copy is retained by the archives. 64 (--) It appears that Bigot must have exercised a dual responsibility over the Magazins and Clauses since February, sharing the authority for Clauses with de Berny. So it is clear that commissions were given dual charges, and were sometimes asked to substitute for another official should he be ill or away on business.

The Magazins were in certain respects, at the core of the port's activities, for it was there that all goods required for the service of the port and colonies were received and checked for quality. The functioning of the Stores is most highly relevant to the present study since one of the most important questions debated in the affaire de Garde was the responsibility for the pricing and quality of goods purchased in Quebec. So, it is appropriate to seize this opportunity to define just where these duties lay.

The chief receiving agent was the procureur magazin who enumerated all articles delivered to the Stores and issued his receipt against their reception. As the contrôleur of Quebec, Frédic, argued; it

63. AC, 1F, 121, pp. 136, 137. There must have been two de Bernys at Laclercort prior to 1729 since this one had been moved from Constructions to Armes in 1732. See above, p. 99, fnat. 19.
64. See above, pp. 117, 118.
was the garde magasin's job to keep an inventory of goods in storage
so as at any time, to be in a position to produce:

un relevé des articles qui étaient dans le magasin
du foî, et un autre de ce qui y restait restait: 65

Although trésor maintained that the garde magasin also assisted in
the pricing of goods, this was vigorously denied by Estèbe, the
garde at Quebec, who insisted that:

Il ne s'agissait de ne part que d'avoir attention que
les marchandises fussent rentrer, et que l'on en fixât
dans le magasin, la quantité.

Quoting from the "ordonnance des ports et arsenaux du marine", of
the 15 April, 1689; book XII, section 5, article 4, Estèbe noted
that the responsibilities of the garde magasin were specified:

Il sera toujours présent à la réception et délivrance des marchandises, et quantités; donnera son avis
sur la qualité de tout ce qui entrera dans les magasins,
et prendra garde que les poids, jauges, et aumages
soient justes ...

Article 5 stated:

après cet examine, il sera l'enregistrement de sa
reception, dans un journal, spécifiera la qualité, quantité,
poids et mesures des marchandises et quantités, le
Nom de celui qui les aura fournis, et les ordres en
verra desquels il les aura reçus.

and finally, article 29:

defend au garde magasin de recevoir aucunes marchandises,
ni munitions sans un ordre par écrit de l'intendant
ou du commissaire préposé au magasin. 66

This then must have been the job which Bigot discharged during some
months of 1734.

Just what the duties of such a garde magasin would have been,
Estèbe did not report, since there was no such officer employed at

65. Notice pour le Sieur Boisard ... contre M. le procureur
       général, Paris 1763, p. 115: Bn, 4° En 34331(4).
66. Notice pour Guillaume Estèbe ... ci-devant, garde des
       magasins du Roy ... accusé, Paris 1763, p. 328: Bn,
       4° En 34331(9).
Quebec. He could, however, act in place of the intendant in the reception of goods and so apparently, accepted the intendant responsibility for supervising the grande magasin. Furthermore, it appears that at Rochefort the commissaire of the magasin accepted responsibility for only those goods intended for use by the port or the navy and that the commissaire des colonies officiated at the receipt of commodities destined for the colonies. On the 24 November, 1732 de la Duré informed the minister:

C'est moy, sgr, qui suis preposé à la recepe des farines comme commissaire des colonies lorsque M. de Bernusco est ici. J'y suis assisté par le contrôleur, par les officiers de port et par ceux de vaisseaux qui sont nesés par le Comisnaire ...

That his responsibilities extended as far as the pricing of commodities is most doubtful. Maitbe maintained that this was clearly the duty of the contrôleur and intendant. Quoting from the ordonnance of 1691, Maitbe observed that book II, section 1, article 2 stated that the intendant:

pourvoira à la fourniture des marchandises, et munitions nécessaire dans les magasins;

and article 19 stated that:

1° l'intendant signera les Marches de tous les achats et fournitures de marchandises auxquels il appellerà le contrôleur.

Of the duties of the contrôleur, book XII, section 4, article 1, stated:

Le contrôleur aura inspection sur les achats, et emploi des marchandises et il assistera à tous les contrats et comptes qui seront fait par l'intendant

and article 7 rendered it even tighter:

il assistera à tous les contrats et Marches qui seront fait par l'intendant et les signera avec

67. All, 12, 362, p. 92, and see below, pp. 158-162 for a fuller treatment of flour provisioning.
So the gouverneur and intendant not only had exclusive contractual power but they were also charged with the supervision of the garde magasin and conservatoire to ensure that they were discharging their functions.

The intendant of Rochefort not only devoted much of his time to contracting for supplies but even accepted temporary responsibility, for the or at least one occasion when some arrived too late one day to be received into the magasin. On the 9 August, 1726 Beauchampes informed Marceau:

Deux mouillers d'orliers chargés des Etats pour l'habillage des Troupes de S. Moragne arrivaient avant hier au soir. Comme les magasins étaient fermés l'ordonnay que les deux charrettes entrassent dans le cour jures de lendemain que ces livres ont été portées au magasin général au lieu à être reçues aussitôt qu'elles auront été visitées. J'en ferai exéder le certificat du garde magasin et son ordonnance de payer. Je procéderas aussi à l'adjudication de la façon de cet habillement. 99

At his trial Breard argued that he held no real responsibility for contracting, pricing or payment. He maintained that Bigot:

autorisait le Garde Magasin acheter les Articles portés sur ce dernier relevé a lui et s'en approvisionnait ou il jugerait a propos. (Bigot) dressait les états de fourrisses qu'il m'en prêterait pour y establir les prix. Lorsque c'etait le Sieur Estève je portais les prix d'apres l'apprisition qu'il m'en ressaitait. Lorsque c'etait le Sieur Claverie, je le requoy suivant le prix des lectures ou notes joignes aux états, que je lui faisait affirmer verbalement. 100

If Breard's testimony is true in these points, then it is clear that several abuses of usage had been permitted at Quebec. First, as Estève had established, the garde magasin had no responsibility for contracting and so if Bigot had authorized him to undertake there

90. No. 13, p. 267.
functions, such authorization could have had no weight in law and
B sigmoid would have remained entirely responsible for any abuses of
confidence which resulted. As Estèbe had also established, the
controller and intendant were jointly responsible for pricing; so,
if Estèbe unconditionally accepted the quotations proffered by
Estèbe and Cleverin, the supplier, this rendered him no less
responsible. Nor could B sigmoid claim immunity. Though he might have
forwarded to Estèbe the invoices to have them priced, he was just
as much responsible to see to it that the prices entered corresponded
to those in the contracts he had signed. If he had signed no
contracts in advance and Estèbe had performed that duty, then B sigmoid
neglected one of his chief responsibilities as intendant and was no
less responsible for ted contracts.

As to the process of payment for small deliveries, the paro
regimen issued his receipt to the supplier who took it to the
treasurer who upon receipt of the intendant's ordonnance de payement,
paid over the sum required. In Rochefort, owing to the role of the
munitionsmaire and in Canada also, following the advent of a
munitionsmaire in 1756, the processes of contracting and payment were
a little more involved.91

Up to 1743 New France had been supplied largely through Rochefort
and La Rochelle. The minister retained for himself final authority
to approve contracts, but it was, as Estèbe pointed out, largely upon
the shoulders of the intendant that the responsibility for finding
contractors devolved. Although contracts sometimes were awarded
through competitive bidding, (judicature) on the whole the minister
preferred to entrust the business of the state to a few big suppliers.

91. For a discussion of some aspects of Canadian accounting under
the munitionsmaire; see below, pp. 210-212.
At a time when transport was slow and finances precarious, the advantage of doing business with a large concern was the guarantee of a relatively sure delivery of acceptable goods. As Buchènè observed: "sous maîtres philanthropes et garantis fournisseurs.

Aside from the building supplies for the fleet: wood, rope, canvas, pitch, and special metal parts, goods peculiar to the navy, unavailable from the private sector, and consequently produced directly under the supervision of the Marine; most commodities were obtained under contract with private business. By far the largest item on this list was foodstuffs for the fleet and colonies.

It was the practice to negotiate a general contract with a "administrateur général resident at the port, the directeur des vivres. He had the authority to conclude contracts binding on his superior and so it was only under exceptional circumstances that the intendant insisted upon negotiating directly with the philanthropes contractant himself. Such a case did, however, occur in 1728 following a particularly unsatisfactory report of the condition in which flour

93. See AB, Series France, 1339, pp. 35-59. 'Traité des Vivres pour les Vaisseaux, Calènes et autres Batiments de Sa Majesté sous le nom de Claude Port,' 24 February, 1750. Port contracted to provide foodstuffs to the naval crews not only at sea but also, "dans les Ports et Bases, ainsi qu'aux chirolières et dans les Hôpitaux de la Marine, pendant six années, a commencer en premier Janvier 1751."
had reached la Martinique earlier in the year. The minister had been so angered that he had threatened to withdraw the Crown's business from the monitionnaire, Bonneau. In order to emphasize the determination of the administration to avoid similar deficiencies in the future, the intendant summoned the monitionnaire to confer with him personally, and it was only after three days of continuous discussion during which the intendant had repeatedly threatened to throw open the contract to public bidding, that a mutually satisfactory arrangement was concluded.

Although in principle contracts which the directeur des vivres signed for the monitionnaire were regarded as binding, the intendant's signature was only provisional upon the minister's approval. Following another unsatisfactory shipment of flour to St. Domingue in 1733, and in consideration of the price demanded by the monitionnaire of 12 livres 10 sols a quintal, the minister decided not to ratify the contract that the intendant had passed with him and he informed Beaumanoir that he had made other arrangements to procure the supply.

But the government did not by any means adopt a strict policy toward its suppliers. In the case of large and unforeseen fluctuations in commodity prices they were not held to their original bid, at least in a case where they could have had no good reason to anticipate a steep rise in price. Such, according to the intendant, were the circumstances surrounding Le Duc's butter contract of 1734. On the 22 June, 1734 the intendant informed the minister that he had not held the supplier to his contract:

94. AN, IE, 112, minister to Beaumanoir, 26 October 1726, p. 283.
95. AN, IE, 357, Beaumanoir to the minister, 4 December 1728, p. 285.
96. AN, 12, 957, Beaumanoir to the minister, 14 December 1728, p. 289.
97. AN, 12, 119. 22 December 1733, p. 475.
vou erred par ces Etats, mais que de 799 à
leure d'Irlande, je n'avais en avoir que 679 à 775
gu tant compté 575 le 9 au lieu de 593 comme
avait été ajusté au C le Duc, marchand de cette
ville auquel si ne pas est possible à cause des bruits
de guerre de tirer des beurre d'Irlande ce qui a
entend de les faire adopter à la Rechelle pour ne
pas retarder le départ de l'armée qui a reçu au
versoir avoir quitte. Il avait besoin pour sa campagne,
dans c'est un fait du prince il ne pas eu à devoir
obliger ce marchand en payant de la folle beurre
de ce beurre et je suis persuadé que vous trouverez
plus juste que sagesse passer avec ce marchand
particulier de cette fourniture.98

I write the fact that the minister ignored the minister's
representations as based on nothing but the most flimsy of grounds,
he nevertheless, passed the revised contract; a case of particular
relevance to the Canadian study since it is a clear precedent for
the upward re-evaluation of the terms of the Cadet contract. On the
6 July, 1734 the minister replied:

Je vous regrade aprè le marché que vous aviez
fait avec le C le Duc pour la fourniture de 799 à 775
de beurre d'Irlande pour l'isle royalle a 775 l'armée
celui la adjudication en ont été fait a 823 que a le
Duc qui naturellement aurait dû être obligé en paye-
ment de la folle beurre. Je ne comprend pas que vous
ayez dû recevoir que les bruits de guerre qui a cače
vous marchand n'ont point permis a est adjucataire de
faire venir cette partie de beurre directement d'Irlande,
hissant un fait du prince j'ai bien voulu cependant
avoir egard aux representations que vous avez fait
en su faveur.99

Moreover, the Le Duc re-evaluation was by no means an isolated
case. Not only were marchands compensated for unexpected price
rises but they were often subsidized for the loss and deterioration
of commodities in transit. For example, on the 6 December, 1736 the
minister wrote to the treasurer:

Le C. Paubert n'a fait des representations sur le
rebut de 67 pièces provenant des 103 qui avaient été
marquées à la côte de Calais et il se plaint du
retard de quatre mois qu'il a apporté à la recette de

98. AM, 12, 365, p. 107.
99. AM, 12, 121, p. 15.
Such subsidies appear to have taken most of the risk out of government contracting, making the business an assured road to high profits. Such security, from the modern point of view, seems to have robbed the suppliers of all justification for large profits but clearly this was not the prevailing attitude of the eighteenth century. This then, is yet another ground for questioning the equity of the court’s judgment on the Bigot affair since one of the most serious charges of the prosecution was that Cadet had been compensated for losses by procedures not authorized in his contract.

Besides the contracting for foodstuffs, the Rochefort correspondence items with information upon the arrangements for procuring munitions, uniforms, guns, camping equipment for troops in the colonies and even trade goods. These items were procured from St. Jean d’Angle, Fontenay, Rouen, St. Stienne, and even as far away as Lyons, through different munitions. They followed the general pattern of the contracts for flour. 161

Bigot was indeed charged with the Prenn des Armements in 1734 and in 1738 he covered de Ruin in Constructions et Redoubts while the latter was on a tour of inspection of the forests, since on the

100. AM, IE, 125, p. 489.
101. See below, pp. 156-162.
15 January, 1739 the intendant informed the minister:

102. AM, 12, 366, p. 15.
103. See above, pp. 30-36.
104. AM, 12, 123, p. 271.
private, the officers of the port were required to inspect it to
guarantee that it was in a fit state to receive the goods. Once
they had given their approval, a private merchant could no longer
be held responsible for damage caused to the goods due to faults
of the ship, as the minister explained to Beaumanoir on the 19
May, 1739 in reference to the goods damaged in an accident incurred
by Betteau’s Fragile. 105 These reports would almost certainly have
been handed into arguments.

The bureau supervised the loading of the royal ships, quite
probably hiring the labourers and in the case of private shippers,
supplying the arrière who observed the loading and testified that
such and such a quantity of goods had indeed been loaded for the
Crown. A similar process was observed at the unloading of ships.

It had been Bellamy’s failure to forward these arguments to
Rochefort which caused the minister to observe to Beaumanoir:

Je suis très surpris que M. Bellamy ne vous ait
vu surtout l’état du fret des marchandises venues
de St. Domingue par la flotte lefortifiée pour le compte
des particuliers, et plus encore qu’il ait ainsi négligé
de vous remettre celui du fret de la Gironde arrivé
depuis le mois d’Août dernier de Caracas et de la Martinique.
J’en fais à ce Commissaire; mais je vous observez
en même temps que ce négligence auroit dû vous amener
té lui demander ces États; et je vous prie de prendre
à l’avenir des mesures pour qu’il n’y ait point de
pouvoir retarder dans ces sortes de rémunérations. 106

In the handling of shipments for the colonies arguments must have
worked closely with the Bureau des Colonies which forwarded the
invoices of loading to the colonial administrators.

Mistakes in these invoices invariably caused confusion and
recriminations. On the 24 March, 1739 the minister roundly scolded

105. AG, B 63.
106. NW, 1E, 124, p. 219.
Beauharnois for the 'lais d'attention d'or a donné à Rochefort,' to the shipments of 1737 for Louisiana, which Selvon, the Gouverneur, had reported were riddled with substandard goods and even completely deficient in certain articles.  

Although clearing the port officials of fraud, Beauharnois really admitted serious lack of attention by his staff since the minister observed:

Il est à croire, comme vous le dites cull doit y avoir eu quelques Erreurs de constance dans le double envoû à M. Selvon de la facture des Effets embarqués sur le navire le bateau par les magasins de la Louisiane.

Errors had also been detected in the reports of the "Consulats" which, the minister bluntly informed Beauharnois, seriously impeded work at Versailles.

Il n'est trouvé, Monseur, quelques Erreurs dans l'Extrait du dénombrement du bateau suivant le relevé de joud ou leserez report au Bureau des Consuls en recommandant une parfaite attention, sur ces sortes de décomptes, parce que l'on n'a pas toujours joy le temps de les vérifier en détail si ces Erreurs n'estoient pas corrigées dans les tables en force, elles seraient certaines la destruction du Compte.  

In the course of this work, it must be observed, Pigot would not only have become familiar with Atlantic shipping and shipping costs, but must also have learned much about the nature of colonial supplies and the quality and value of these goods.

In a letter of the 6 April, 1739 the intendant was informed that Pigot, having served in the European service for almost sixteen years, had been given his first colonial post:

Le baron agen, Maréchal, destiné M. Pigot pour la place de Commissaire Ordinaire à l'île Royale, je lui écris de prendre ses arrangements pour y passer par la flûte de Provence.

108. A2, 18, 128, 23 April, 1738, p. 183.
Apparentiy, this promotion was based largely upon the intendant's recommendations:

In the time that remained to him in Rochefort, Pigot was to be given every opportunity to improve his knowledge of the administration of the colonies. Consequently, he must have spent much of the next few months in the *Huit des Colonies*.

Colonies serves, in the port, to have operated almost as a subsection of the Contrôle since its main duties appear to have been to account for the same spent in the port on colonial shipments, to inspect their quality and to look over the stock of the Bureau des Armements to insure that they were effectively dispatched. When Pigot first arrived in Rochefort his immediate predecessor as intendant of Canada had just been put in charge of the department.

On the 12 January, 1723 Beauharnois informed Tourville that the:

F. Hoquart, Comm. de la Marine chargé du détail des colonies arrivé ici hier au soir ... je donneray (à lui) communication de toutes les affaires qui regardent les Colonies.'

Perhaps during 1724 and 1725 Colonies had in fact been annexed to the Contrôle since on the 11 September, 1725 the intendant addressed the minister:

J'ai eu l'honneur de vous remarquer au mois de juin dernier que je vous proposerçois un arrangement au sujet du détail des Colonies que M. Hoquart ne peut plus suivre par les occupations que lui donne le Contrôle.

And he suggested that it be moved to the intendance:

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110. *Ac*, 18, 189, p. 221.
111. *Ac*, 18, 362; Gilles Hoquart was named commissaire ordonnateur in 1729 and received the title intendant in 1731.
Ainsy qu'il y est dit lorsque M. Felicrin est venu en ce port et d'en changer le 3e Bulletin, Comme principal capable de suivre ce détail, Comme il le fit pour ses yeux Je vous en rendrai un bon compte.\textsuperscript{112}

That colonial finances were completely separated from regular naval accounts in 1750 has been noted,\textsuperscript{113} but it had already been the practice for many years to keep separate accounts for goods sent to the colonies.\textsuperscript{114} On the 8 June, 1737 De La Croix, substituting for himself, believed that the accounting ought to be made even more thorough. He doubt his regular position as chief of the Service des Colonies gave him the necessary insight into the accounts to observe that the port was being incorrectly debited for materials destined for the colonies:

Le surplus de l'Etat consiste en armes, munitions, outils, ustensiles, marchandises et autres effets tirés des magasins de cet arsenal portant à la somme de 56,760 livres et 7 sols. Ces sortes de conservations qui se font pour toutes les colonies augmentent considérablement celles du port qui parraissent beaucoup plus fortes qu'elles ne sont réellement et il serait à souhaiter que qu'il y eut des fonds particuliers dédiés de ceux du port et destinés pour subvenir à toutes les dépenses des colonies.\textsuperscript{115}

Perhaps De La Croix' observation made an impression upon the minister. On the 28 June, 1739 the intendant was informed that the budget for Isle Royale for the year was 162,370 livres 17 sols 3 deniers and another of the 14 July informed him:

A l'Égard des intérêts à faire sur les fonds de l'Isle Royale, je vous ay marqué par la dépêche du 25 au mois d'écrit qu'il fallait précomptez sur ces fonds les prix des Munitions, Vivres et marchandises destinées pour cette Colonie, le montant des lettres de change qui ont été tirées sur l'Éxercice Curémet et les parties qui se trouveront avoir été payées en France. C'est Vous n'avez qu'voir le montant des envois, celui des lettres de change équittés, les parties dont les payeurs ont été ordonnés par les

\textsuperscript{112} A., 15, 353, p. 322.
\textsuperscript{113} See above, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{114} See above, pp. 107-108.
\textsuperscript{115} A., 15, 366, p. 156.
No longer were the colonies to be subsidized by the Rochefort accounts. No doubt, it was the port's Bureau des Colonies which would have supplied the intendant with the required statistics.

So it is obvious that there was plenty of material in the port's archive from which Biot could familiarize himself with the details of Isle royale's administration. Indeed, his career up to 1759 had taken him successively from one department to another in such a way as to ensure he had a good grounding in all aspects of Marine administration. In this respect, he was admirably suited to take on the administrative direction of Louisbourg. No doubt, he also had learned where the system could be exploited for personal profit. Since a discussion of institutionalized fraud has already been anticipated in a number of places, now that the institutions and social conventions of the Marine have been described it is time to move on with the greater confidence to a detailed discussion of speculation in France, on the high seas and in the colonies.
CHAPTER IV

INSTITUTIONS

Under the heading 'business', a whole spectrum of commercial and administrative practices ranging on the one hand from the

present subservience given to prominent Versailles personalities, through the disappearance of goods in the ports and colonies, to the most serious abuses of authority causing the distance of innocent officers and the starvation of ordinary seamen, will be examined.

Such a wide scope of inquiry is requisite since these phenomena were all symptoms of the same attitude toward corruption which not only made possible the Bigot frauds but even justified them in the minds of the accused. "As Bigot's contemporary, de Lormis observed, the service was 'un choix, un abîme de faux principes d'administration'," and Komar, writing to Bigot on the 19 April, 1758 admitted that:

La corruption et l'incompétence régnent non seulement dans une colonie comme le Canada, mais aussi dans les ports de France. 2

Much of what there is to report is little more than hearsay and unsubstantiated allegation. While insufficient to 'convict' the individuals against whom the accusations were made, the accumulation of evidence will illustrate the general assumptions upon which naval and colonial officials acted. Although no means ensuring Bigot of his serious crimes against the state, this inquiry will at least render them intelligible in the context of contemporary conventions.

Several allusions have already been made to the questionable practices of officials at Versailles, but as yet few details have been produced. 3 These practices divide roughly into two categories;

1. Cited by Prévost, FAP, i, 252.
2. AC, B, 267, p. 304.
the direct participation in trade ventures involving a potential or
real conflict of interest and the acceptance of gifts from other
administrators and businessmen. Regarding trade interests,
Duchêne observed that:

Il était donc quis convenir à la fois concilier ses fonctions et ses intérêts personnels, stagner au besoin des uns pour développer les autres; ce n'était pas un système, mais on ne tenait pas. L'exemple venait de tout ... Colbert, de son côté, tout en se montrant si raresquement accorder des décrets de
l'État, laissait en lui un très grand pouvoir; dans le XVIIe siècle, le service du roi régnait,
obliguait presque, que l'on fût honneur à sa propre
saison.

De Verçade, the premier commis des colonies, for example, owned a
plantation at Cayenne in partnership with the intendant, Mestel and
the governor, d'Ouvrilliers; a company which monopolized all the
executive power in the colony, while in France De Verçade was well
placed to receive favors from the merchants of La Rochelle where he
sold his commodities.5

Duchêne also reported that Arnaud de La Porte obtained for
himself,

un privilège pour un bateau de passe qui coût
pretend qu'il affirme 200,000 livres par an

and in 1746 he also obtained a concession at Saint Domingue. To what
degree he was compromised by these interests Duchêne made no attempt
to assess but a parallel exists in the trade his brother, La Porte La
Lance, the intendant of St. Domingue carried on with the assistance
of Gradis.

That the first prime knew of and conditioned his brother's commercial
interests is proved by the advice that he frequently gave Gradis on

4. A. Duchêne, La Politique Coloniale de La France, p. 56.
the business. In a letter of the 7 February, 1756 for example, Gradis reminded de La Porte of a conversation they had had at Versailles in the previous month regarding La Lance's letters of exchange. Gradis reported that in conformity to the first copies' wishes he had given orders that the letters would not be protested if they were refused by Vernet and Company of Versailles and Laker of Nantes. Why de La Porte would be reluctant to authorize this common legal procedure is difficult to understand unless it is wished to keep the publicity of his brother's affairs to a minimum. This theory appears to receive some support from Gradis' letter to La Lance of 14 October, 1755 in which he was supported that La Lance might be able to reappropriate some of his funds through provisioning Perrier's fleet, then watering at St. Domingue. Should he not wish to be indignant. Gradis wrote, he ought to, 'dire pareil cueilquant de confiance', who would lend La Lance his signature. A striking parallel to his relations with Bigot is found in Gradis' promise to La Lance on the 15 February, 1756 that he would provide any sums required by Arnaud de La Porte for the purpose of repaying land. No doubt the de La Porte recognized that discretion was requisite in such transactions.

Besides discussing the disposition of La Lance's letters of exchange with de La Porte, Gradis was also in the habit of consulting him prior to taking commercial decisions such as the insurance of cargoes of sugar. In a letter of the 16 March, 1756 he was at great pains to apologize for having failed to consult de La Porte prior to

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7. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Americas, ii. 236a, 235.
8. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Americas, i. 93.
9. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Americas, i. 104.
Having 120 barrels of raw sugar which La Lanne had embarked on a
couple of ships the previous December. Gradis argued that the first
letters on the subject had been lost and they had only, just been
informed of the shipments themselves. Since so much time had elapsed
there was every reason to believe that the ships had been lost and
so there had not been a moment to lose before insuring the cargo.
So concluded:

Nous pour assez confirmer suivant la liberté
que nous en a donné votre frère à ce que nous
saurions faire nous même, les circonstances ne
nous ont permis de vous conseiller sans exposer la
votre frère au hasard de la mer et c'est ce que nous
avons cherché à éviter en envoyant notre parti sans
votre frère. Nous souhaitons que vous l'appréciez. 10

Arrica de La Porte was also consulted on the incident for
reassuring La Lanne's funds through his provisioning of the fleet.
He approved the suggestion that La Lanne might embark indigo on
royal vessels as an alternative. Writing to La Lanne on the 17
March, 1736 Gradis observed:

Nous croyons que pour éviter les risques d'autre
prix vous n'avez que de vous faire un prétexte qu'il
serait de prendre des lettres de change sur les
transmissions Genevoises à 20% de votre perte pour les
demandes des V de la Roy qui sont chez vous ou
d'embarquer des indigo dans les vaisseaux du Roy
locaux ils reviendront en France. Il n'y a que ces
deux seules moyens qui puissent vous convaincre. J'ay
mène ou l'honneur d'au conférer à d'lieu avec en
votre frere a ton voyage de Versailles. 11

Gradis was particularly enthusiastic about this proposition since
he was to have a half interest. Naturally, La Lanne was to insure
this spice through the influence of his position:

Nous croyons que lorsque vous proposerez au Com-
mandant de l'embarque qui doit entre chez vous de rece-
voir dans son vaisseau et dans les autres quelques
étaielles d'indigo qu'il ne vous refusera pas de claissir.

10. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 24a.
11. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook America, i. 115a.
That to the use of such influence there was attached no stigma from Gradis' point of view is obvious since he went on to observe:

Si vous souhaittes M° vous vous faires signer par l'ecrivain ou commissaire de l'escadre un recue ou connoisement pourque ses indigos nous soyent remises à Brest ou dans les autre port ou ces vaisseaux faîsent leur desarmement, ou a nos ordres. Vous pourre meme, si vous le juges a propos expliquer qu'ils sont pour notre compte ou le votre et le notre.¹²

Gradis benefited in other ways through his association with the de La Portes. On the 17 March, 1756 he informed La Lanne that his ships which had been sent to Canada had been given orders to return by Saint Domingue. He hoped that La Lanne would accord to them his usual bounties.¹³ As with Bigot these favours consisted primarily in the instruction of Gradis' captains, and the assembling of return shipments. On the 2 August, 1755 regarding the captain of Gradis' ship the David, Gradis wrote:

Vous aves la bonte mon re de nous faire part de l'idée que vous avés, que soudain qu'il sera chez vous, pour engager ce cap' a nous renvoyer ce navire à fret sous le Commandement de son segond cap' et que le S La coudray reste chez vous pour y faire la vente et le recouvrement de notre cargaison. Nous ne pouvons qu'aprouver M° cette resolution et nous vous en faisons tous nos remerciemens quoique si nous eussions le malheur d'avoir la guerre et que nous regardons comme très prochaine, le fret de 18 à 20 E(cues) nous deviendroit bien honnereux.¹⁴

Finally, in return for the favours Gradis did him in France, La Lanne used his influence in St. Domingue to see to it that debts outstanding to Gradis were paid to his correspondent, Benech Le Pinay.¹⁵

Certainly, it was entirely within the province of the intendant to supervise the payment of debts by colonials to their metropolitan creditors, so La Lanne was not making an irregular use of his power

¹². Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amerique, to La Lanne, 24 February, 1757, i. 159; for a fuller treatment of the Gradis-La Lanne partnership, see below, pp.260-262.
¹³. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amerique, i. 115a.
¹⁴. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amerique, i. 78.
¹⁵. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amerique. Gradis to La Lanne, 16 February, 1755, i. 12a.
in this case. As the minister explained to the intendant of La Havre,
Berschény on the 7 March, 1741:

Le M. Vallée Catinier de la Cadiolle de havre a dit représenté l'as pour pouvoir a se faire payer dans somme de 1,500 livres qui est dû par le S. Benoist laissant de la Chaussee, il avait adressé une procuration en blanc a M. Bigot, ordonnateur à l'âtre d'Angleterre, lequel l'avait pas jugé a propos d'exécuter cette commission sans au dire, et vous prix de lui faire savoir que si M. Bigot n'a pas voulu se charger de la procuration, c'est qu'il se laisserait pas le faire, et qu'il faut qu'il plaisance à quelqu'un d'autre, mais que j'écris a cet effet la lettre que vous trouverez ci-jointe pour lui recommander d'accorder a celui qui en sera chargé la protection nécessaire pour obliger le S. Benoist a payer ce qu'il lui doit. Ṣ

Nevertheless, the personal interest which La Lanne had in Gradis' credits could not have contributed to an impartial judgment.

As to the acceptance of gifts, Landrieu's observation has been already noted that the way to get ahead in the service was to exercise of influence. Ṣ It may be that this is what Bigot had had in mind when he authorized Gradis to make gifts of wine to the chief clerks of the havre. On the 24 February, 1756 Gradis informed him that:

Nous faisons tirer cette dernière des 3 lievrées de vin blanc en bouteille que nous adressons à M. Chardin, maître tailleur à Paris (Bigot tailleur) que nous luy a faites souvenir par les bavilliers puisqu'elle fasse tenir que a 10' de la ferme, une a 17' valoir et l'autre a 19' de GRAÇON. Ce dernier n'est que vous l'aves proven de cet envoyé par les lettres que vous luy avez écrit. Ṣ

And Bigot trusted this scrupposed in 1757 as on the 10th March

Gradis informed him:

Nous avons embarqué pour plus grande sûreté, dans un navire Hollandeis qui devait aller à Rouen, les vins blancs en bouteilles que vous avez avec chargé de faire passer à Versailles à M. de La Porte, Tellerin et Gracson, Ṣ

16. AC, 3 73.
17. See above, p. 47.
18. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amsterdam, 1. 119.
19. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amsterdam, 1. 160.
There are no other references, however, in the Chadis correspondence to gifts given by Rigot to the Versailles administrators. The fact that these two were mentioned so openly makes it doubtful that between 1755 and 1760 Rigot employed Chadis to forward any other presents to the Court. Nor are there any such references in the letters preserved in the Canadian Public Archives written to Chadis between 1746 and 1759. The only other gifts mentioned were those addressed by Rigot to his cousin Physiculx in 1749. On the 30 August, Physiculx wrote to him saying:

Je vous suis tres sensiblement oblige, des presents que vous m'avez fait. Je vous pri cest ne plus arrever de fourrures presente quoy quelles soient belles, elle me me sent d'amusce usage et que je suis persuad d'ailleurs quil les voyez content cher.

Apparently Rigot sent him a second touch before he had received this letter, since on the 24 December of the same year Physiculx addressed him even more pointedly on the subject:

Vous vourez recevoir de Savor et moy de vos fourrures lais sa vous dormons instement de se vous en plus envoyer, vous la conseil que je vous assure que vous l'avès fort embarazzé.

There can be little doubt but that through the giving of these presents Rigot had hoped to ingratiate himself with Versailles but there appears to be little ground upon which to argue that he had embarked upon the full scale corruption of his superiors, as the innuendo of Montcalm and other anonymous commentators implied.

Although Physiculx had been embarrassed by Rigot's gifts, de la Porte, Dullerin and Crozant accepted the wine without complaint as they also accepted the occasional gift from Chadis. The total value of these

20. Mihires Frangères, Mécéines et Recrants; American, 9, p. 76.
21. ibid., 9, p. 146v.
gifts was small but when given by a man of such rank and discernment as Grudis they no doubt produced the maximum of good will.

Besides the wine he had given on Pipo's behalf, Grudis observed on the 24 February, 1756:

I remarqued justly on the honour of the court (M. de Crassot) and on hearing the sound of Versailles, seeing that he had not been given wine, and that he had sent rather than demanded, I gave him a barrel of cellery that I had reserved for your purpose. I heard that he had found it to your taste, and I beg you to convey my respects.23

De La Porte, Fillair and Crassot were not the only officials who received gifts from Grudis. On the 20 April, 1756 Grudis informed La Rivière:

I have just received from your Excellency twelve bottles of which you have been so kind as to give me the first. I have ordered them to be sent to the Baron de La Roque, and I pray you will do me the favour of enclosing the respective labels.24

Only a week later he forwarded another charming gift to La Roque:

I have just received a message from M. de La Roque, which I had not been possible to attend, that I wish you to forward to me in the hope that you will accept my respects...25

On the whole Versailles administrators appear not to have considered themselves compromised when accepting small gifts from 'friends' such as Grudis or even when engaged upon trade ventures with them. In 1752, 1754, and 1755 Grudis assembled and shipped to Canada small quantities of wine, spirits and merchandise for the joint account of La Rivière, La Roque and De Villeneuve, all three

23. Grudis Correspondence, Congrèse Ancien, i. 112.
24. Grudis Correspondence, Congrèse Ancien, i. 260.
25. Grudis Correspondence, Congrèse Ancien, 27 April 1756, i. 283.
officials in the bureau des Colonies at Versailles. Of the 1755 shipment, Gravas was informed:

"Les marchands ont avoué à Versailles (...) qu'ils ont promis de leur en procurer la vente la plus avantageuse qu’il lui soit possible."

No doubt, this arrangement had been in force for the previous shipments. Although Bigot’s favour in the sale of the goods would have been valuable, it is clear that Gravas gave no more than his time and expertise. Not only did the administrators pay the full purchase price of the goods but they were even billed for freight charges. On the 20 January, 1756 Gravas wrote to La Rivière:

"Voici enfin le compte du premier de fret des marchandises que nous avons cherché pour votre compte dans les différents navires pour Québec qui se monte à 5,950 livres 6 sous. Vous aurez pour exemple de nous créditer de ses detours."27

This was, nevertheless, a valuable favour to the administrators and it would not have been surprising had Gravas expected something more in return than the mere expedition of his accounts. At least Gravas would not be expected to feel constrained to protest to La Rivière his zeal for the good of the service. Yet, he never missed an opportunity to do just that. On the 18 July, 1755, for example, after having described his desperate financial situation,28 he continued:

"On nous allouera cependant ce qu’en jugera à préses et nous assurera toujours âme satisfait, heureux, si nous avons pas remplir les intensions de Meneau... Le Gare des Sceaux et c’ill a eu lieu d’être satisfait de votre activité et à l’économie que nous avons porté au menagement des intérêts du Rey. Il m’y a que seule qui puisse nous flatter le plus et nous dédommager de nos pannes et sommes car pour de profiter nous aien exigir point."29

26. Gravas Correspondance, Cayman America, 20 April 1755, i. 57a.
27. Gravas Correspondance, Cayman Europe, i. 211a.
28. See above, no. 20-21.
29. Gravas Correspondance, Cayman Europe, i. 58a.
What would be the point of such an elaborate plea if Gradis knew that the man to whom it was addressed was a corrupt official, corrupted even at his own hands?

Despite the relative innocence of these peculations when the minister heard about them he demanded that they cease immediately.

On the 24 February, 1756 Gradis informed First:

"Par une lettre qui nous avons reçu de M. de la Porte, il y a 8 jours, il nous auroit qu'il eût été présenté un monstre au Ministre que ses corrompus faisaient passer par sa voix des peculiers qui se vendoit ensuite pour les magasins du Roy. Il a existé de son parlement de ne plus se mêler de ses créations directement ou indirectement. Je la lui ay donné en saissant réponse. Il se marqoit qu'il vous écrroit pour vous demander la rose chère. Ainsy il, nous ne fairessons rien apporter d'hour en avant pour le compte de ses successeurs."

Therefore de la Porte was not so compromised by the gifts he had received and his brother's trade interests as to impair his effectiveness in the discipline of his subordinates. In reply to his letter on the peculiers Gradis wrote:

"Je crois devoir tenter reduire au vray tant que qui a resse par ses chefs et dont j'ay en connaissance des peculiers dont il s'est. En 1753 pour 2,180 livres, en 1754 pour 7,689 livres, en 1755 pour 12,742 livres; le tout en capital, frais et assurances au depart de France." 

He even believed himself constrained to dissemble an ignorance of how they were disposed in Canada:

"Quant a l'employé qui a été fait en Canada des marchandises de ses peculiers, je l'ignore."

At first Gradis believed himself bound not to inform La Rivière of the reasons for his sudden refusal to ship the peculier:

"Vous aures est aussi, douce surprise de ce que je vous ay marque l'ordre dernier au sujet des peculiers mais je suis persuadé que vous ne manquez point a remplir le cours d'une chargement de cette essence. Ce n'est des instances en plutôt des ordres qui l'ont ainsi exige du mony ..."

50. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amerique, i. 119v.
51. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europa, 10 February 1756, i. 721.
Recently this reluctance to discuss the affair was owing to instructions from de la Ferte since Gradis went on to apologize:

"C'est une attention que laisse à l'évit de ne luy qui m'a dit de rester ici."

Whatever the reason for this reserve they must have disappeared or been overpowered by La Rivière's importunities because Gradis wrote him all the details on the 2 March, 1756:

"Je ne puis me charger, mon tres cher cousin de faire passer vos recettes pour le present, celle ayant ete recommandée par H de la Ferte. Je luy en ay donné en particulier d'honneur en réponse a l'honneur qu'il m'en a donné. Je ne saur luy avoir présenté un nombr de mission qui luy apport qu'il faisait divers recettes pour le compte de M. le Comte de Buran de la Marine et qui se plaisent dans les eprêts que luy a lacher. J'ay cru qu'il convenait de luy donner une connaissance sincere des envoys qu'il avoit fait jusqu'à présent sans luy parler de leur profit afin qu'il peut entre déterminer de l'impression que celu avoit eu faire sur ceux autrement on doit avoir presque les objets. Je ne puis concevoir qu'il avoit eu la soin de l'avoir présent un pareil service. Tous de découvert s'il avoit possible mais que je ne voit pas surtout ceux concerné."

In order to assuage La Rivière's disappointment Gradis had held out hope of alternate enterprises:

"j'espère trouver des affaires particulières dans lesquelles quelques intérêts pour nous encourager du profit exigé sur les recettes."

It is clear from a series of letters with which La Rivière delayed Gradis later in the year that the officials were at least as eager to do business with Gradis as he was to speculate with them.

On the 7 December, 1756, Gradis hastened to assure him:

"Soyez assuré M.T.C.M. (mon très cher cousin) sur la pressence que j'ay en l'honneur de vous faire. Je vous en informeray en tiers et lieu. Ainsi soyons tranquilles et continuons toujours sur le même et parfait attachement avec lequel je suis ..."

52. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, 13 February 1756, i. 225a.
53. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 240.
53a. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, 13 February 1756, i. 275a.
The letter went on to discuss the possibility of provisioning St. Malo, an enterprise which La Rivièvre was urging upon him:

Nous convenons cependant que l'introduction libre des vivres à St. Malo ne recevrait encore un bénéfice capable de faire saisir des efforts. Découvrez de donc en un peu plus clairement ce dont il s'agit. Vous commencerez une direction et mon attachement et je vous paye par de mes réflexions.

Whatever La Rivièvre had to propose, Gradius implied that it would have to be good if it were to interest him since:

Vous savez fort bien que personne ne sait les déboires dans lesquels les fournitures considérables de France ne s'engagent et nous ne vous disons pas tous les déboires dans les entreprises particulières. 34

With this encouragement La Rivièvre disclosed to Gradius his project. On the 25 November, 1756 Gradius replied:

Je crois que par le secours que vous nous fètes qu'il serait d'introduire à St. Malo des vivres par les navires neutres qui ne serait muni de passeport y seront reçus.

If this was all he had to propose then Gradius was not interested:

Chaque coup d'œil favorable que présente au premier aspect cette entreprise, nous n'en avons pas une opinion égale de nous y engager sans réflexion. La navigation des neutres est extrêmement coûteuse soit à cause des droits qu'il faudrait payer sur les marchandises à la sortie des ports de France soit à cause des frais du transport chez l'Etranger ces droits annuels, elles y seront sujets, soit enfin à cause de bien d'autres inconvénients inévitables dans telles opérations. Nous savons bien que vous observerez qu'il est une espèce de harcèlement la plus nécessaire sans doute aux habitants, c'est la facilité qu'en conçut obtenir la permission de charger pour l'Étranger.

Les loueurs d'ailleurs qu'exige la prévision d'une belle entreprise qui ne serait pas au surplus à l'ordre d'être trouble par les esprits de l'État par l'interposition des neutres nous disaient encore de ce projet. Nous vous avons avec franchise en sorte que s'il se serait en effet que de ce que nous nous livrions entièrement, nous vous prions de trouver bien que nous n'ayons pas l'engagement de quelque conséquence. 35

34. Gradius Correspondence, Copybook Europe, 11. 320.
35. Gradius Correspondence, Copybook Europe, 1. 392.
Although it might be possible to surmise that Gradis can only get off in Rivière with these arguments in deference to the promise he had given de la Porte, parallel developments show that neither he nor the Versailles officials had taken the minister’s objections seriously. In his letter to de la Rivière of the 18 July, 1752 Gradis had expressed his pleasure at the information that de Villiers, one of the partners in the prospecting was to be sent to Canada to replace Édard:

Votre bien-fait l’honneur de nous confier qu’on se propose d’envoyer M. de Villiers en Amérique pour relever M. Édard de ce qui nous fait tout le plaisir; imaginant retourner le plus souvent que nous avons de le faire sauter une parte par M. de Villiers. Nous nous flattons qu’il vosra bien nous faire la grace de nous secourir la continuation de son hôtel et qu’il ne trouvera pas mauvais que nous prenions la liberté de vous adresser à lui dans les occasions lorsque sa demission ...

In a letter of the 23 March, 1756, only six weeks after de la Porte’s rebuke it was made clear that de Villiers usefulness in Quebec would be as an agent for the Gradis-Édard-Rivière trade interests:

Je vous ay bien pay à avoir recommandé à notre ami M. de Villiers de nommer ses deux vertues de commender lors il sera à Quebec et de vous en mander son sentiment pour nous regler et les faire suivre un autre année de la meilleure façon par M. Manchot.

A letter to de la Rivière of the 4 January, 1757 shows that something was already afoot:

J’ai reçu depuis 8 jours une lettre de M. de Villiers datée de 10 g. Il se sert de luy dire l’heure, ce que je ne pourrai pas. Aussi en veut se renouer sur ses soins et qu’il ne soit plus question, de n’ayant pas besoin de l’argent que vous me proposiez par la lettre. Je me rouvrevis en temps et lieu par le retour.

Gradis’ reply to de Villiers’ letter of 10 November, 1756 reveals

36. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 39.
37. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 256.
38. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 433.
that Blanq had encouraged him to order a postponement from Gradis:

"Pour ne plus vous faire un voyage en France... Vous savez bien ces choses qu'il vous a conseillé de vous écrire pour vous faire un effort. Cela vous a été conseillé avec nos amis dessus à mon dernier voyage. Abstenez-vous et envoyez-moi un échantillon de ce que vous nous en avez chargé à l. En toute, nous avons pour vous mille livres, dont trois nous vons en envoi et les six autres nous amis..."

The exact value amounted to 9,666 livres.

Besides the postponement and small gifts from which La Rivièrè profited, his friendship with Gradis permitted him to procure handsome sub-contracts for his brother-in-law, the Sr Blanchet, who manufactured commodities (apparently confectionery accessories). As the accountant at Versailles, this placed him in a far more serious conflict of interest than the postponements, since he became responsible for the accounts of the sub-contractor as well as for the general one. Had he wished to conspire with Gradis and Blanchet to raise the costs of the sub-contract and garner a "kick-back," there would appear to have been no obstacles in the way, but the evidence indicates that not only were the associates remiss in their accounting but Gradis frequently exhorted them to look to the quality of items supplied. In a sense it is an even greater tribute to their integrity that under such tempting circumstances they professed to want no more than a fair commission; and from their point of view it was only right that if a friend could do the work just as efficiently and inexpensively as a stranger, the friend should get the contract.

Gradis' letter of the 20 March, 1756 shows that Blanchet forwarded his accounts through La Rivièrè to Gradis who upon verification of quantities returned them to La Rivièrè in order that he might add in both Gradis' and Blanchet's commissions. This done, he

39. Gradis Correspondence. Copybook Amérique, 10 March 1757, i. 171b.
40. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, to La Rivièrè, 29 March 1757, ii. 568.
returned the documents to Gradis who in turn amended them to the
general account before sending it to the minister. Eventually
they would all land on La Rivière's desk for a third time:

Je vous envoie l toute les pièces que vous m'avez
reçue pour la fourniture de 150 cannes que M. votre
Maître m'a fait faire avec la facture sur laquelle
l'ont aussi ajouté d'y joindre 2p signés sous forme
convenu et j'y aura aussi envoyé vous l'et j'y ferai
espoir pour ses peines et services. lorsque j'aurai
cevte facture en main et telle que je dois les porter
sur la facture générale que je dois former pour la
rencontre au Ministre. *

As if to emphasize his own circumstances (and at risk of repetition
it is legitimate to ask what would be the point of much pleading to a
fellow larronist), Gradis reminded La Rivière three days later that
the 2% commission he was asking for himself was modest:

vous pourriez les journées d'ouvriers, raines et peines
sur le prix de 10, puis en outre adjouter la commission
qui est 2 p% qui est une chose d'usage et dont je ne
serais pas tenu et autor paye meme quelquefois jusqu'
6 et 4 p%, c'est suivant les cas. *

Gradis' concern for cost and efficiency is illustrated by his letter
to La Rivière of the 4 September, 1756 in which he spoke of Blanchot's
renewed contract for 1757:

Je compleque l' H. Blanchot se sera mis à rédiger
de commencer les ajuste de trille et contile qui luy
auront été nécessaire pour les cines de saison et les
60 tentes que je lui ai désiré de nous faire qu'il
aura obtenu ces trilles et contiles au meilleur marché
qui lui aura été possible. Il conviendra qu'il fasse
travailler à ces canoës et tentes en toute diligence
pour que je puisse les savoir icy si la chose est
possible à la fin de X 1756 puisque je vous ferai encore
de faire ces conditions en Janvier ou Février prochain
et éviter par ce moyen les risques de ces ours et de
celles du nord. *

La Rivière's sister-in-law had also obtained a sub-contract for 1757
because Gradis went on to observe:

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41. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, i. 255.
42. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, 24 March 1756, i. 256.
43. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 114.
Il figure que vous après la complaisance d’ordonner à mon de votre belle sœur, l’achat des chevaux dont j’apprécie pour le Canada; deux douzaines de chevaux deny ces quinze francs, une douzaine idem à cet et 9 douzaines à huit soixante livres en argent et moitié en or pour leur large et leur étant destiné pour les savages. Il faudra faire mettre tout ces chevaux dans une caisse bien emballer leur envoi à moi, et nous l’envoyer par acquit à caution au nom de Y. 44

On the 18 September, 1756 Gradis was even more explicit in explaining to La Rivière that he expected Blanchet's goods to be of first rate quality:

Faites moi le plaisir de prier M. votre Secrétaire de travailler à l’usur et à l’entrée et de ne rien négliger pour que le tout soit fait au mieux et que je reçoive les recouvrements dans le temps que je le voudrai. 45

That there was need to keep secret these arrangements was made explicit in Gradis' letter to La Rivière of the 21 September, 1756. After having prepared to send La Rivière his procuration en binaire, (essentially power of attorney), in order that La Rivière might receive payments made out to Gradis from the Immis des colonies and forward the same directly to his brother-in-law Gradis explained:

L’objet qui nous amène à cela n’est uniquement que pour une personne n’ayant aucune connaissance de ces affaires d’autant que je sais qu’on aime beaucoup à parler à Paris. 46

It appears that at this time Gradis had hired to thrust the bulk of his financial administration upon La Rivière’s shoulders, since on the 26 October, 1756 he wrote:

J’aurais l’honneur bien cher M. de vous remettre par un de ces jours de cette lettre trois lettres de change à votre ordre pour M. de Boullogne à 15 jours de poste, conformément de ce qui vous meuf l’année passé (the sum was 200,000 livres)...j’irai faire un petit tour en ville pour vous faire faire la procuration en blanc que je crois que vous enverrez afin que

44. Ibid.
45. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Parroc, II. 144.
46. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Parroc, II. 149.
Apart from the confounding nature of such a commission it would have placed another heavy burden upon the shoulders of an already overworked official, so it is not surprising that La Rivière refused to be a party to the scheme. At least this is the impression created by the letter of the 15 November, 1756 in which it was observed that, rather than keeping Cradis' letters of exchange, La Rivière had had them forwarded to Bordeaux where Cradis himself would have had to cash them and forward payments to his sub-contractors.45 Therefore, although the Versailles administrators engaged in a wide range of dubious activities which the minister attempted to stop, on the whole they appear to have observed that 'bécure' and 'apparence' to which Duclère referred.46 Their relationships with Cradis do not appear to have impaired either his or their own concern for the efficient administration of the king's affairs and if they had their friends profited, was not that considered their due? As has been observed, Cradis deserved little more of this than that they recommend his services to the minister and expedite his payments. This seemed entirely correct to him since he always attempted to give first rate service. If he advanced money to officials like La Rivière on letters of exchange,47 the favours he requested in return such as a list of naval officers and ships, though useful, were in themselves innocent.48

47. Cradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 205.
48. Cradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 243.
49. See above, p. 58.
50. On the 27 November 1756 he ordered his Paris bankers, Chobert and Ramonet to give La Roque 2,400 livres for a letter of exchange. Cradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, ii. 222.
51. Cradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe. 5 February 1757, ii. 341.
Hardly the same thing can be said of some of Grady's competitors.

During the 1730's and 1740's there were repeated complaints in the ports and colonies about the quality of goods supplied by the surveyors to the Marine in France. On the 19 August, 1732 the minister informed Bouchardois at Rochefort that M. Solon, the commissary-general of Louisiana was not satisfied with them sent out to clothe the troops:

M. Solon me écrit a l'occasion de l'habillement envoyé par le souverain que les saliètes des soldats n'ont point de fond, et qu'ils aient de la peine à s'en servir à moins qu'en les écorçant.

Furthermore, the minister continued, some hats had been packed in barrels containing the areas of wine and consequently were raised.

although the minister did not endorse the theory that they had been re-packed at Rochefort and restricted himself to asking for a report and recommending greater vigilance to the interdit. 52

Later in the same year the minister raised with Bouchardois the issue of defective cloth sent to Canada for the Indian trade.

Bouchardois, the intendant of New France maintained that it was of such poor quality that it was driving the Indians into the arms of the English. Apparently this long standing Canadian complaint was owing to fraud in the manufacture and levity of the inspection at Rochefort.

M. Bouchardois m'eçrit que les Gare Magaçins des postes des forts de Frontenac et de Piegrow sont tres concerets de la qualité des Moltons, Bourgeon, couvertures de 2, 3, et 4 points qui sont fournis depuis quelques années, et qu'elles ne peuvent briller aux sauvages qu'avec bien de la peine et au décharge de leur valeur, car la qualité des fournitures sont n'etre pas bien contrôles à Rochefort. Il me souvient qu'il vous a paré de faire l'adjudication pour ces fournitures soient faites conformément à ces échantillons, d'il en est tout autrement, il conviendrait bien pour mieux de rien point envoyer, les marchandises de

52. CC, IV, 117, p. 482.
qualité inférieure relaient les services et les
pertes d'un préfet de conseiller avec les Anglais de
qui il a bien signalé serait préjudiciable à la Colonie
et au Commerce.\footnote{53}

Despite this explanation, Boscourt was no more pleased with the
merchandise of 1733 than he had been with that of 1732 and he
suggested that if the authorities at Rochefort lacked the time to
price goods properly, then they should be reprimanded when they were
delayed in Canada. In a letter of the 24 November, 1733 to the
minister, de la Croix, who was substituting at Rochefort for Bea-
uchanois, rejected the idea, saying:

Il n'y a point d'adjudicate qui se soumettent
à cette condition.

He suggested that rather than obtaining them from the adjudicateur,
indeed it would be better to purchase them directly from the:

Sr. Marit, negociant de Londres dont M. Boscourt
tercier connoissait la probité.\footnote{54}

That the adjudicateur really had a great advantage over the
administration is clear from an exchange between Beauchanois and the
minister in April 1733. On the 7 April Beauchanois informed the
minister:

J'ay l'honneur de vous adresser
le procès verbal de la visite qui a esté faite de
partie des Etoffes de la fourniture du adjudicateur
destinées pour l'habillement des troupes des colonies.
ces Etoffes Mgr. se sont pas de bonne qualité, s'ay
qui vous le verrez sur le procès verbal. Le reste
de ces Etoffes esté arrivées pendant les garées j'ay
ordonné qu' en fit dans la visite et que le choixit ce quil y aura de meilleur pour commencer le petit
habillement pour Québec. Il y a Mgr un défaut d'attention
dans la fourniture des chevaux qui n'est pas excusable.
On les a mis l'un dans l'autre trois à trois comme pour
marquer les trois villes, mais le 5é chevaux est si
petit de forme quil ny a aucun soldat qui puisse son

\footnote{53. MM. 19. 117. 16 December 1732. p. 525.}
\footnote{54. MM. 19. 560. p. 95.}
The minister who was,

"très mal satisfait du ren d'attention qu'il
(he previously) a donné à la fabrication
de ces chapeaux, et au choix qu'il a fait des

crateaux"

was nevertheless, forced to agree with

le parti que vous (the intendant) avez pris
d'ordonner le choix de ca qu'il y aura de
meilleur pour compose le petit habillement
des Troux de Canada,

the reason being, 'qu'il ne put souffrir aucun retardement.'

The intendant was so sure that that which was absolutely useless
was to be replaced, but owing to the pressing need, many substandard
goods had to be accepted.

Similar examples are easily multiplied. The barrels used for

shipping commodities such as flour, spirits and lead were often
inadequate and broke in transit. The blankets intended for sale to

the Louisiana Indians in 1732 were too small to be of any use to anyone.

Although it might have been due to incorrect descriptions sent from

Rochefort, Rocquaqueduct complained in 1734 that the blankets sent to

Canada were not of the proportions specified in the invoices, and

later in the same year it was reported that the quality of cloth

produced at Marseilles was of such a consistently poor standard that

it had been found necessary to send an official to supervise its

production:

Aussà le present les Draps de la Manufacture de
Marseilles n'ont été faucés dans la perfection,
le conditionnaire y a envoyé un homme intelligent qui

55. AV. 15, 362, p. 95.
57. AV. 15, 394, 27 March 1725, p. 122; AV. 16, 165, 9 September
1730, p. 161.
58. AV. 16, 119, 1 September 1733, p. 139; AV. 15, 116, 16 August
1730, n. 71; AV. 15, 394, 27 August 1735, p. 227.
luy a été donné par M. le Prince, et qui tient la main sur la façon des draps, et particulièrement pour leur aspect, on s'espère qu'ils seront à l'avenir de meilleur qualité.

Some improvement has seen, however, in the quality of goods sent to the colonies, since the minister concluded his letter saying:

Au surplus on a été fort content aux colonies de l'habillement de l'année dernière. 66

Considerations of cost, quality and security of supply had constantly to be weighed and balanced against each other. Merchants appear to have pursued government contracts ruthlessly and to have showed but scant concern for the truthfulness of their declarations as an exchange between the minister and Beaucharnois of early 1739 shows. On the 9 January Beaucharnois reported that:

Le Commissionnaire des 5e, le Roy et Battereauc ayant communiqué aux négociants de cette ville l'état et la rubrication déditte 5e Battereauc et le Roy pour la fourniture des munitions et marchandises destinées pour faire aux prix portés par cet état ces marchandises que lavois fait assembler pour procéder à l'adjudication de ces munitions et marchandises se représentant qu'ils estoient inferieurs des offres qui vous avoient été faites, et sur lesquelles ils disaient être pour cent, Crase vous m'appuyez par arrêté de donner la préférence aux dits 5e le Roy, et Battereauc pour ces fournitures, et que leur Commissionaire ne déclare n'être pas autorisé d'accepter encore diminution d'loy l'honneur de vous adresser la commission des négociants de cette ville afin que vous aysses agressée de la faire Communiquer aux 5e le Roy et Battereauc pour qu'ils acceptent cette diminution.

In his reply of the 10 February the minister informed the interdict that the contractors had assured him that quality items could not be supplied at a lower price. When the la Rochelle merchants had held the contract there had been endless complaints about quality so he preferred to pay a little more and ensure that the goods supplied were serviceable:

56. AN, 13, 123, 22 November 1735, p. 319.
It appears, however, that Patteredeau and Le Mayne abused the minister's confidence in 1730 when they insisted that no reduction was possible on the price of blankets, since on the 19 January, 1730, the minister ordered that their contract ought to be renewed since they had agreed to a substantial reduction in their prices. Even this reduction was inadequate according to the interdict of Canada, who although he had no criticism of their quality to make, believed that their price could be reduced still more. The minister ordered that they were to have their contract renewed provided they made further price concessions. It may be that the minister had pushed too hard this time because the blankets they supplied in 1741 were of inferior quality. On the 27 December, 1741 he offered to renew their contract despite the fact that:

61. AS, 12, 128, p. 31.
62. AS, B 69.
63. AS, B 71, minister to Patteredeau and Le Mayne, 2 January 1740.
Since complaints about the quality of foodstuffs received in the colonies were common, no treatment of fraudulent practices would be complete without an examination of the provisioning services. Complaints about flour, for example, were frequent but difficult to prove. Since it was a perishable good, a rancid shipment could always be attributed to over-heating during the voyage to a colony, and if barrels were not full it might be explained as due to settlement in handling. As Bouherence arrived on the 13 November, 1728 in defence of both the provisionnaires and the quality control of the port:

"comme leurs correspondants sont tenus de la curiosité avec laquelle on accorde l'aj a la réception de leurs farines ils peuvent bien soutenir que si elles ne trouvent pas mauvaise odeur lorsqu'elles arrivent dans les colonies que cela vient d'or de côte, je ne saurai vous prouver mieux l'univocité avec laquelle on a visité ses maisons farines qu'en a été fait, à l'égard du pain. Joy eu s'honneur de vous surper plusieurs fois qu'il n'est pas permis de le trouver juste par le mouvement que l'on donne aux quarts lors de l'embarquement et du débarquement et par la chaleur du fond de caisse."

Considering the elaborate arrangement for controlling the quality of flour at Rochefort, it is surprising that shipments of flour were so often reported to be substandard in the colonies. Responding to such a complaint on the 24 November, 1733 de La Croix explained the system. The duties of his committee, the membership of which is set out on page 123 above, were:

64. 60, B 73.
65. N. 13, 357, p. 234.
The minister was generally satisfied by this explanation but knowing well his superordinates' instructions to the intendant:

"il faut que les sacs rebutés soient sur le charpente des magasins; car que s'ils y resteraient, ils seraient un obstacle au profit d'un certain nombre a ce sujet de la part du fournisseur qui pourrait se servir pour cela du ministère des journaux..."66

The records show that the officials had no hesitation in rejecting inferior flour when better could be had. On the 8 February, 1732 Beaucharrois informed the minister:

"les... hommés ont commencé de faire... 450 sacs de farines pour France et la continence. Il y en a en 35 sacs de rebutés..."67

In some years, however, when the French wheat crop was generally poor it was impossible to insist upon receiving only high quality grain and de la Croix put at least part of the blame for the unacceptable deliveries on 1732 upon this factor. He also explained the steps he had taken to ensure that only the higher quality grain of the new crop year should be received in 1733:

66. AN, 1E, 362. p. 92.
67. AN, 1E, 119, 8 December 1732. p. 213.
68. AN, 1E, 356. p. 34.
Toutes ces différentes précautions s'observent réellemen-
t à toutes les fournitures et est en un heureux
succès lorsque les grains dont les farines proviennent
ont été de bonne qualité. C'est de l'Amende qui étaient
très souhait et ont attiré toutes les plaintes que
veux avoir en. Pour les éviter je viens d'aller voir
S. M. pour en être adjudicataire, que si dans
un de leurs envois il se trouvait un seul sac dont
la farine proviend de vieux grain ou fut malrangé,
je confirmerais tout cet événement et je le ferons porter
sur le chapeau leurs frais au petit hôpital, pour les
graves arrêtes ou y sont pourris de leur temps ou par elle se trouvent en fente. 69

Another cause of the deterioration of flour stocks was poor
handling at the port. Although de la Croix defended the port's
procedures, saying that:

Les sacs reçus sont vidés sur le plancher sans autre
secours que les mains qui se sont formées
au bord de l'intérieur des sacs lorsqu'ils ont été
menagés par la pluie ou s'en détectent et n'occasion-
ment la corruption des farines; Lorsqu'elles ont été
15 jours sur le Plancher on les mit dans des quarts
dans chacun desquels elles sont touchées et nourries
par le père d'un homme qui est dressé dans le quart
et auquel on donne ces sacs de toile uniquement réservés
à cet usage... 70

The minister replied that that was all very well:

Mais toutes les précautions dont vous se servies
et celle que je viens de vous prescrire ne regardons
que la visée des farines lors de leur reçu. Leur
conservation dans les Magasins du Port ne demande pas
moins d'attention; c'est pourquoi je vous observe que s'il
m'et revoir que les Magasins dans lesquels elles sont
prises sont lisses, et qu'il surviendrait aucun de
les mettre dans les Magasins des vivres c'est ce que
je vous prie de l'examiner avec soin. Mais quelques partie
que l'on prend à cet endroit, il sera toujours nécessaire
de faire renou les farines dans les 8 ou 10 jours
jusqu'à ce qu'elles soient entièrement sèches, après
quoi on peut y mettre alors sous le faïre,
a moins autre ne croit qu'elles ne s'échauffent.
Il faudra encore avoir une grande attention par rapport
aux vivres qui doivent pareillement être bien secs.

69. AN, 1E. 362, p. 99.
70. AN, 1E. 362, p. 99.
71. AN, 1E, 119, p. 373.
But despite all this special pleading de la Croix was not so
ingenious as to suggest that the mariners were incapable of
attempting to defend the Crown. In the case of the substitution
of maize for wheat flour he recognized that their only sure defence
was the argument that it was against their own proper interest and
that if such frauds had been perpetrated then they must have
occurred in the colonies:

À l'égard de ce qu'on vous a ajouté dans les plaintes
qui vous ont été adressées, on ne voulait trouver des quartes
remplies de farines de Pays de quoi vous amuser, i.e.,
qu'il n'en est pas parti un seul de cette espace dans
tous les envoyés qui ont été faits par les vaisseaux
de Roy. Je vous veux les fournir 75 n'ayant pas assez
de probité pour s'en abstenir ils en sont accouchés
par leurs propres intérêts parce que le Roy dans
cette province et dans le royaume plus cher que le
farine mais, ôôô, ces plaintes se sont souvenu
la vérité de ce qui m'a été rapporté par plusieurs
parlemens, que dans toutes les Colonies il y a des
guerres qui sont dans l'usage de faire porter lors de
l'arrivée des vaisseaux du Roy, ces quartes remplies de mauvi-
se farines qui leur appartiennent et de les échanger
avec ceux qui sont parmi les vaisseaux, et je crois qu'il
en est de même pour ceux qui sont pillés de ceux parmi les
vaisseaux, et je ne crois qu'il suffirait pour pré-
venir cet inconvénient de faire envoyer les bateaux
de ces farines apportées au Roy d'une autre façon.

Did the minister's response indicate a real incredulity or was it
couched in the language of shock in order to indicate his outrage
at such infidelity? In either case the remedy he suggested would
have been useless in the face of really determined speculators and
shows his reluctance to take any but the most superficially cosmetic
steps to put an end to the endemic fraud:

J'ai de la peine à croire qu'il y ait des officiers
capables de changer lors de l'arrivée des vaisseaux
de Roy dans les Colonies des bateaux remplis de mau-
vise farines qui leur appartiennent avec ceux parmi les vaisseaux,
et je crois qu'il suffirait pour pré-
venir cet inconvénient de faire envoyer les bateaux
de ces farines apportées au Roy d'une autre façon.

72. W., 13, 323, p. 92.
The limitations of space prevent a fuller treatment of the flour contracting but even the few examples reproduced permit a generalization that although judgments on the value of any given shipment were highly subjective, despite an elaborate system of inspection and control, frauds were nevertheless perpetuated. Furthermore, where flour had been accepted and shipped from the port, it was in the interest of the intendant to side with the supplier in any dispute over the quality of flour shipped to the colonies since to do otherwise would have been to impair the competence and integrity of the port officials and hence of his own personal efficiency.

Consequently his remarks on the subject must be judged accordingly.

In cases where goods such as wine had been received but as yet not shipped the intendant was not exposed to similar considerations. In fact, in a letter of the 10 February, 1725 the intendant bluntly informed the minister that he ought not to put any credence in the protestations of the suppliers:

Pendant que l'on vous observe que ce n'est pas sur les Etats que le bateau... vous resaut vos vues, que nous avons été informé qu'au juste des vives qu'ils dans ses magasins, c'est par les lettres qui d'ay l'honneur de vous écrire toutes les semaines pour vous tenir compte de ceux qui ont été reçus et de leur bonne ou mauvaise qualité. Les derniers vins venus de Bordeaux sont si soûts, si peu convets et si non soumis que sur les plaintes qui m'en ont été portées on n'y a fait rien. La visite assuy bien que des vins beaux, et d'ay l'honneur de vous en envoyer le procès verbal, afin que vous connaissiez la manière dont le bateau ou ses gens font le service en ce port.74

That this was not an isolated case but typical of the wine supplied is confirmed by a couple of letters written by the intendant.

73. CN, 18, 372, p. 375.
74. AK, 13, 554, c. 74.
during 1757. On the 16 March, the minister was informed:

A l'Ecart du vin comme il est a croire une cylindre que celui qui serait adjoint en exigera un prix accru aux posterieur de la qualité donc on le verra si il en s'y conforme pas dans l'aident qu'il en ferait decider a M. de Rosten pour egayer les prix des vins des meilleurs crus, je sert si ce que le directiveur ne demandera pour en fournir de ces sommes etc. sera fait d'acquis des Prix que M. de Rosten m'en reprend et joueur l'honneur de retirer vos courtes sur le morbe que j'aurais a passer avec lay.75

As it turned out, the Croix's suspicions were well founded; the directiveur was asking more than the point note, and this was this very particular precaution of quality. Case 23 shows the inquiry continued:

M. Rosten, écrit de Bordeaux que les vins de Courriers et Montferrand qui sont coûts pour estre
par leurs qualités les plus provers se bien conserver
y valent 300 livres au Courrier au lieu que le Correspondant au Directiveur les fit de 310 livres a 315 livres. Ils
constaient de plus 8 livres a 9 par Tonneau en Barbaco en
vironment en lies de Bordeaux Ioy. En circonstances
fortes de l'achat des 150 barris ordinaires pour la Louisiane et de la vente des vins de Bordeaux et de leurs Barriques dans ce Port on serait assuré de leurs qualités et de les avoir a meilleur marché
que d'un adjointaire, D'ailleurs cet adjointaire pourrait en exigé le même prix qu'il les tiraient des meilleurs Crus et arréterait en Fournir de ceux d'une qualité inférieure qui lui assurer unfortunate en gain consi-
derniable. J'aurais à M. Rosten que j'attire sur cela vos ordres pour les lay envoyer.76

Furthermore, confirmation of the poor quality of wine supplied was
provided by complaints from Louisiana. On the 24 March, 1757 the
minister noted that the wine shipped to that colony was said to be
as bad as 'tous ceux qui ont esté precedentement envoyés dans cette
colonié',77 and on the 13 May following he urged the intendent to be
vigilant against similar frauds:

Puisque vous avez jugé a propos de laisser au directiveur les 25 fruits et une bouteille qui restent de ces vins, a condition qu'il remplacera le vin quantité, il faudra veiller a ce que lorsque ce remplacez se fera, ce soit en vins de bonne qualité.78

75. Al. 1E, 366, p. 70.
76. Al. 1E, 366, p. 79.
77. Al. 12, 125, p. 126.
78. Al. 1E, 128, p. 231.
It is clear therefore that the suppliers of the Marine rarely missed an opportunity to defraud the service either by overcharging or by the supplying of inferior items. In such an adversary situation, it was vital that the officials be uncompromised in order to guard against these frauds. On the whole, the correspondence appears to demonstrate the zeal of Perdheneir and de la Croix. Yet, the Gracias correspondence shows the intimate relationship which he maintained with the Versailles administrators, and Gracias always prided himself on the integrity of his business. What would the private correspondence of the Rochefort purveyors with the Court and coast officials show had it survived? In at least one case, the inspection control at Rochefort broke down completely.

On the 29 January, 1740 Ricourt was admonished to tighten up the inspection of goods sent to the colonies since a most blatant fraud had been discovered in the butter shipments of the previous year:

"A la suite où j'ai été rendu des Envoys de vivres faits l'année dernière à l'Ile Royale, j'ai vu que dans les bœufs que contenoient les bouses remises dans cette colonie, il s'est trouvé des Piquets de sel de poids de 15 livres et 20."

With these sorts of demolitions slipping through the control in France, it is not to be wondered at that abuses were also common on the high seas.

Regarding conditions in His most Christian Majesty’s ships, the authorities agree that the common reason suffered terribly during active service. Although not to be accepted unreservedly due to its polemical nature, an unpublished polemic written under the pen name, "Phenolpus," contains a series of denouncing allegations concerning the conduct of officers. The official records are too full of concern for the welfare of seamen and their reluctance to serve in the very
to doubt of the essential truth of a pamphlet written in 1756 by an educated man who in some capacity had, ‘fait deux campagnes au Service’. It began by inventing France’s naval weaknesses and the dearth of trained seamen. The poor rate of pay they were given was one cause of the shortage but this, the author maintained was as nothing compared to the loss of good men at sea. Chronic fraud on the provisions he attributed to the port administrators:

malgré les ordonnances du Roi qui prescrivent de nombreux quér les Fours, lieux, bois, pêcheries, etc., et bien de ce point l’absence des Vierges qui ont de la faveur des Capitaines, créent les écluses lesplus fréquents, ainsi que des autres auxiliaires, viennent de Brest, etc., Père de tout ce que nous remarquons qu’un dary, encore avec peine, est sûr et suivi, que les siens les officiers de plaisance font leur grand tour de bataille, ou pour faire vite tous de Fafon, enserrent pendant des services Vierges, qu’ils doivent ran eux et d’alérer bientôt la Sérénité des Équipes, et produire des maladies Épidémiques, ce qui est fait que nous perdons beaucoup de monde au Service... 

But the wastage of men through disease had also to be ascribed to the filth of their living conditions. As the report observed:

La propriété dans un Vaisseau est le moitié de la Sérénité des Équipes.

and even an eighteenth century commentator knew when 400 or 450 men were crowded together below decks in the heat of a tropical voyage sleeping amid the decomposing excrement of the livestock embarked for the officers’ mess that their health was likely to be impaired. Red and hard tack and salt rock, the sailors were limited to only one drink of water with their meals:

pendant que le moindre officier et même garde marine

Empêchent pour jour, soit pour le lever les mains, la bouche, le visage, et pour boire; autant deux mots d’ordre... 

Even the animals were said to have received fresh water in preference to the men.

60. Le intrigué Breton ou le marin civil, pp. 9.
61. Ibid., p. 11.
Further abuses were reported from the sick bay. The second
surgeon who had the care of the sick sailors and who was responsible
for the distribution of fresh meat, bread, wine, rice and peas was
often guilty of withholding these commodities from the men who had no
idea that the first surgeon had ordered for them. Of their tactics,
Tropique commented:

The profits from this activity were not during a voyage since the
surgeons were even bold enough to sell wine to the crew and after
the boat had docked at which time they sold the rest of their stocks.

In the colonies fraud was institutionalized. Long before Rigot
arrived in New France the minister had been receiving complaints
about trading governors, trafficking individuals and rapacious
subordinates. The majority of many of these reports, however, makes
it difficult to judge of their objectivity. Sure, at least, were
produced by would-be profiteers whose purpose was not to clear up
the colonial administration but rather to put themselves in the way
of the rents. Independent evidence is practically non-existent.

Before considering some of the allegations against Rigot's pre-
decessors, a brief discussion of colonial structure is necessary in
order to explain the mechanisms through which colonial exploitation
operated. In the colonial power was divided between a governor who
was the nominal head, responsible for all military operations, and
an intendant, who from 1675 chaired the Sovereign Council and supervised

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82. Ibid., p. 12.
83. For a more exhaustive treatment, see chapter V.
all matters related to finance, trade, provisioning, police and justice. Since, in a frontier society the bulk of government activity was military, or quasi-military as in the regulation of the fur trade; most of the intendant's attention was riveted upon the supply of the troops and the preservation of defense materials. So the governor and intendant's authority overlapped in the important field of administrative activity. Nor had it been Versailles' intention that they should be independent one of the other. Their roles had been co-ordinated deliberately in order that they might keep a watch on each other, with the result that colonial administrations were frequently rent by the most vituperative quarrelling. As Denieux observed:

While all the orders and instructions emanating from Versailles situated harmony and union between the governor and intendant as essential to the progress and tranquility of the colony, complete harmony was neither expected nor looked upon as desirable. 84

Obviously, the central government believed a degree of tension would check arbitrary actions and hinder calculation.

The Sovereign or Superior Council, whose task it was to register ordinances and hear judicial appeals, was intended to aid the two chief officials in the discharge of their regulatory and judicial functions. Its membership was appointed technically by the Crown but in effect by the governor and intendant. Since its power over the liberty and property of the colonists was extensive, it could be a valuable tool in the hands of its chairman were he involved in a conflict with the governor. Consequently quarrelling governors and intendants competed for control of the council. In such a situation a colonist, if out of favour with one official often sought the

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84. Denieux, op.cit., p. 75: and for a more extended discussion, see the same, pp. 63, and 126-127.
protection of the other. Were the governors and intendents to conspire together against the liberties of the country, as the Canadian
1239434296 observed in 1712 the Sovereign Council was easily
robbed of any judicial independence:

M. de la Condamine observed ni droit civil ni
equitable et encore moins les ordonnances pour la
régularité des procédures, qu'il admettait
qu'il était la seule des lois, des règlements et
des ordonnances, qu'il avait envoyé pour les caser
et pour en faire d'autres à son gré...
Cette autorité absolue et arbitraire n'a pas
été acquise sans contradiction; le premier moyen dont
ce droit survit c'est de tout hânceler et de tout
apprécier sans hésiter par leur autorité parti-
culière et d'exercer à l'instar tous ceux qui écrivent
la tâche de résiduer n'ayant pas force de
se soutenir; il a fallu en usage augmenter le Conseil
de six de vingt conseillers autant n'osant sans
dévoués à ceux de qui ils tenaient leurs places, et
pour l'huissier lecture des lois ou des coutumes; il a
fallu en vue gouverner et éclairer ceux dont la forme
et l'intégrité devaient importantes. 85

Membership of the Council not only bestowed prestige but also gave
the councillor the opportunity to serve his own interests through
service to his patron. Evidence of political manoeuvring and
corruption in high places antedates even the establishment of Crown
Colony government in New France. 85a

In his Canada under Louis XIV, W.J. Beverley noted that almost
all the members of the first Sovereign Council of New France which
followed the imposition of Crown Colony government in 1663, were

85. Mémoire de l'état présent du Canada, [A.A.P.Q., 1922-1923],
p. 38-49.
85a. Although essential for a full perspective on the Regime regime,
The author can not himself search for the accuracy of all the
evidence here presented. Beverley's reputation for thorough
research and carefully weighed opinions inspires confidence
in his criteria. As for the section following, it is not
intended that all of the allegations alluded to be weighed
as proved. They are reproduced here in order to show that
such allegations were a commonplace in the colonies.
Pursued, under the previous administration, to have served their own interests before those of the company and the colony. In Eacute;cles' opinion, there is insufficient evidence to make any authoritative statement on the subject. A major cause for complaint had been the distribution of trade favours by the governor, Duport to his friends; a practice also alleged against Bigot. Duport secured a monopoly on the purchase of beaver pelts, the fur trade of Taboucans and the right to sell liquor to the Indians to seventeen associates, of whom the chief three sat on the Sovereign Council. So sooner, however, had his replacement, the Chevalier de Macute;zy, arrived then this group was deprived of their monopoly and the colony's pelts put up to public auction. It was the typical sort of revolution incumbent upon the replacement of an administrator. The new official wanting his own men around him, created an automatic opposition out of the former favourites by depriving them of their monopolies. On the 13 February and the 17 September, 1664 de Macute;zy took the necessary steps to consolidate his control over the administration by dismissing those members of the Sovereign Council who had gone over into opposition against him. Typically, the death of de Macute;zy and the arrival of his replacement, Courcelles and the intendant, Talon in 1666 resulted in the reconstitution of the Sovereign Council, this time with some of the original members who had been dismissed by de Macute;zy.

Jean Talon, the first Canadian administrator to be given the title, intendant, set another precedent by becoming deeply involved in trade on his own account. According to Eacute;cles, the intendant at that time was privileged to import free of freight on the royal

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67. Ibid., pp. 45, 56.
ships virtually unlimited quantities of goods, 'for his own use.'

Having sold some of the provisions he had brought with him to Canada at a sizable profit, he turned his attention to procuring additional shipments. Colbert admonished him to remember that the intendant's task was to administer the colony and not to use his position for private gain, but undeterred, Talon continued to import goods for resale in the colony, even building a warehouse in lower Town at Quebec and employing several men to manage his business. In 1669 he ordered from La Rochelle among other things: 154 barrels of Savoieux wine, 96 barrels of Charleto wine, and 220 barrels of brandy. It was not long before the private merchants of the colony began to complain that the intendant was siphoning all the colony's trade into his own hands since they could not possibly compete on equal terms, having to pay heavy freight charges and a ten percent cut, on wines and spirits. Talon was also active in the fur trade, from which Boiles believed he profited substantially. No other construction can be put upon Talon's repeated efforts to return to Canada following his recall in 1672. Not only did he lobby for the post of governor in 1661 but by 1662 he had so lowered his standards as to beg to be permitted to return to Canada merely tofound an ainshe house. The immediate reason for his recall had been a struggle for power with the governor, Connelics and his successor, Frontenac.

Frontenac had been posted to the colony as lieutenant-governor, but he wasted no time before setting about the repair of his fortunes. With Talon out of the way in 1672 he had a free hand to play the fur trade and was without scruple in the expenditure of public funds in order to facilitate his private gain. As Boiles pointed out, the

88. ibid., pp. 73, 74.
location is chose for Fort Frontenac rendered it strategically useless, but well placed to sweep off the Iroquois from the Ottawa river to Montreal. It travelled there on an annual basis accompanied by a dozen or more canoes of trade goods in spite of ministerial disapproval. Furthermore, it was alleged that Frontenac and the Montreal merchants maintained illicit trade relations with Iroquois where they received three times the value in cash that they could have received from the Iroquois.

Frontenac was prepared to break no opposition to his private interest. Whereas his associate, La Galie was given generous public assistance when the governor of Montreal, Perrot, who had himself been abusing his powers came out in opposition to the governor-general, Frontenac had him thrown into prison and sent back to France. Upon Perrot's return to New France, having been reinstated by the Court, Frontenac entered into an alliance with him to further their mutual interest in the fur trade. Consequently, when Perrot ordered the arbitrary arrest of a Montreal magistrate in 1676 Frontenac supported his action, precipitating angry protests from the Sovereign Council and censure by Versailles. Due to his interest in the brandy trade, Frontenac manipulated the representation in the Brandeys parliament in order to secure a majority for toleration.

It was not long after his arrival in 1675 that the new intendant, Jacques Duchesneau, recognized the clergy and out-of-favour merchants as a good power base from which to attack the governor. By 1680 the complaints of the Sovereign Council beaked by Duchesneau against the exile of three members to their residences by Frontenac resulted in his replacement by the intendant as chairman of the Council; an

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28. Ibid., pp. 92, 162, 164.
29. Ibid., p. 110.
arrangement which was institutionalized. It may be that the intendant had been genuinely dismayed by the governor's arbitrary practices but there is no doubt that he used his newly acquired influence to content with the governor his old monopoly of the fur trade. By 1661 the intendant's associates, the Sieurs de la Cresnaye, le Bar and Charles le Moyne were in sharp competition with La Salle, leading Frontenac to restrain to the minister of the intendant's interest in the trade. [91] Determined to implement the statute governing the fur trade and break Frontenac's power, on 15 October, 1700 the Sovereign Council launched an investigation of Perrot; who, now converted by Frontenac, was reported to be distracting anyone who interfered with or criticized his illegal fur-trade operations. The town fiend had been arbitrarily imprisoned, some of his goods seized and soldiers quartered in his house because he had dared to arrest certain compañeros de indio who happened to be in Perrot's employ. [92]

Martinière, a member of the Sovereign Council and an associate of the de la Cresnaye, le Bar, le Moyne group was sent to investigate and charges were laid against Perrot and the Sieur Boisseau. The latter, an agent of the Company of the Fur which held the monopoly on the purchase of beaver pelts and seals hides was one of Frontenac's associates. Although Frontenac did everything he could to impede the proceedings, the Sovereign Council sent the evidence to France and in the following year Boisseau was recalled and exiled.

Another point at issue was Frontenac's unlawful practice of requiring Canadians to obtain passports for their shipping. Then Bourassa had the temerity to protest he was arbitrarily imprisoned. The minister's solution, typically, was to recall both the governor and the intendant in 1702, apparently in the belief that a change in

91. Ibid., pp. 21, 112.
92. Ibid., p. 93.
personnel was all that was required to reform abuses as clearly rooted
in the institutions as in the individuals who were shaped by them and
in their turn perpetuated.

Although Eccles believed in the innocence of Frontenac's
successor, La Barre was nevertheless the victim of calumnies originat-
ing in the colony. Having instituted a system of trade licences
known as 

some in the colony were quick to inform the Minister
that La Barre was not only issuing genuine licences
but had a financial interest in this trade.93

Naturally, La Barre denied this but De Pelletier, the Intendant, adding
his voice to the other detractors accused him:

of attempting to usurp his authority in the Sovereign
Council, of interfering in matters of justice, and
of various malpractices in the fur trade.94

Corruption was by no means restricted to the French officials in
the seventeenth century. Since there had been no properly constituted
governor of Acadia, Frontenac appointed a cure, Valièvre, who no
sooner had arrived on the spot but he began to extort fees from the
English fishermen for his own pocket and carried on an illegal trade
in furs with the English. In his defence it must be said that he was
given no official salary. In 1684 he was replaced on the order of the
Court by Perrot, who, having made himself extremely unpopular in
Montreal was moved. He promptly imitated Valièvre's practices.95

Nor was Villebon, appointed to replace Perrot in 1681, any more
corrupt since the Acadians were soon complaining that he was not
only determined to monopolize the fur trade but he was also retaining
for himself use part of the presents and supplies sent out for the
Indians, settlers, and troops.96

93. Ibid., p. 124.
94. Ibid., n. 120.
95. Ibid., pp. 128, 129.
96. Ibid., p. 124.
Although La Barre may have been implicated in incorrect practices, he was recalled extensively for military failures. He was an indecisive governor but the colony's weakness was at least in part owing to corruption and inefficiency in France. Of the 1,000 muskets supplied in 1665 only 260 were serviceable, while 520 of the 1,000 swords were useless. The 200 troops which arrived in the autumn of 1664 were without proper arms, supplies, or funds for their pay. If, under these circumstances the intendant was forced to issue small money, the fault cannot be all to the Colonial Administration alone; but La Barre at his recall in 1785 joined the long list of victims to the Court's refusal to accept responsibility for the difficulties of her subordinates.97

Even if La Barre was not himself compromised, he was prepared to ignore irregularities perpetrated by the intendant. No sooner had his successor as governor, Bonnaville, arrived than it was reported that the Stores were in a shocking state of confusion. Bonnaville alleged that De Neulle had been trafficking in public goods for his private profit; nor had he shown any inclination to resist when reprimanded. In 1685 De Neulle was summarily dismissed by the minister.98

To Bonnaville, Eccles gave a clean billing of honesty. Not only did the governor take steps to reduce public drunkenness and to put the defenses of the colony in good order but while refraining from entering into business on his own behalf, reformed the distribution of pensions. Eccles wrote:

Much stricter regulations governing pensions for the western fur trade were introduced. Whereas Frontenac and La Barre had granted these permits in large numbers to their friends and associates, Bonnaville limited the number to twenty-five and granted them all to poorer

97. Ibid., pp. 138, 135.
98. Ibid., p. 110.
families who had been excluded from such favours in
the past. In thereby made enemies of some of the more
influential families in the colony.99

Jean Robert de Champigny, De Mauleon's successor, however, did
not fare so well at the historian's hands:

Several years after Champigny's return to France
it was reported on good authority that, with the con-
ivance of a Quebec merchant, he had made 25,000 livres
a year, twice his annual salary, by supplying the troops
with articles of clothing on a repayment basis.100

And this was during a century where the total annual expenditure for
New France never rose above 500,000 livres.

With Frontenac re-appointed as governor-general in 1691 the fur
trade was rife, once again his private monopoly. Not only did he
proceed with the reconstruction of Port Frontenac in 1695 against the
most explicit instructions of the minister, but he seriously weakened
the war effort by sending trade parties of over one hundred men into
the upper country. This had the added inconvenience of alienating
the Ottawa tribe by displacing them as middle men. By 1696 it had
become apparent to the minister, Pontchartrain, that the western
posts had been established, 'to satisfy the greed of some of the
officers, rather than for the preservation of the colony; a statement
of sufficient strength from which to infer that he had been convinced
of the allegations that Frontenac was smuggling men out on the
pretext of military missions, who subsequently traded their munitions
on their own account for fur. Undeterred, Frontenac continued to
converse with the officers in this illicit trade.101

In fairness to the governor and intendant the drain on the
colony's funds during this period due to fraudulent practices can not
be attributed solely to them. They frequently had cause to complain

99. Ibid., p. 152.
101. Ibid., pp. 199, 200, 202, 204.
of bad supplies and short weight coming to them from Rochefort where the intendant balanced his books at the expense of the colony.

Furthermore, the Rochelais merchants who had been given a monopoly on the Canadian trade in exchange for the transport of military supplies had doubled the price at which goods were sold in Canada, raised the freight rates from 50 livres to 120 livres a ton and the insurance rate to 20%. Although Coigny disputed the facts with him, Frontenac also allowed that the skyrocketing cost of beef in the colony was attributable to speculation by two members of the Sovereign Council, d'Antin and Villerey, whom he maintained had bought all the cattle in the vicinity of Quebec. He finally persuaded the intendant to impose price controls in 1695.102

In the 1690s the governor and intendant were themselves encouraged by the minister to engage in the fishing industry. In 1692 Coigny was complaining that he had lost 4,000 livres, the implication being that he had a right to recuperate this loss in some other fashion. Perhaps the governor was employing a similar line of thought when in 1697 he claimed one-third of the 60,000 livres realized by the Sieur Juberat on the prize ship he had brought to Quebec. The minister did not share Frontenac's view, however, and his action was overruled.

Unfortunately, for the period following 1701 there is no work similar in scope and authority to Beale's Canada under Louis XIV. but when Dale Miqualen's sequel is published it will almost certainly describe a continuation of the same sort of malversations. Even with a limited knowledge of the period it is possible to point to glaring examples of the kind. Miss Ivan, for example, in her doctoral thesis, Economic Development in New France, 1710-1760, submitted to McGill

102. Ibid., pp. 209, 211.
In 1777 summarized D'Antenille's evidence written:

In the early years of the century before 1717, the Intendants Beauchêne and Bigot were said to have monopolized the local trade in foodstuffs, buying up flour and salt at prices which they had the power to fix and then selling the provisions at real advanced prices both to the public and to the King's stores.

Had her term of reference been broader she might well have gone on to observe that D'Antenille accused all three Intendants: Charron, Beauchêne and Bigot, as well as the governor, Vaudreuil, of frequent and unmerited intervention against the natural course of justice on behalf of their favourites. He asserted that Vaudreuil, Beauchêne, and Bigot conspired to silence the directors of the Company of the Farm in order to protect their friends and relatives from charges of embezzlement in the forts, and in order to continue to export furs despite a prohibition ordered from France. Beauchêne is alleged to have received pittance of goods into the store at greatly inflated prices on his brother's account, and to have conspired with Vaudreuil in frauds perpetrated against funds for the fortifications and for the troops. Vaudreuil is said to have carried on an illicit trade in spirits to the Indians and sent various of all, to have become too deeply compromised by trade with the English as to have jeopardized the security of the colony during war by permitting English ships to sail right up to Quebec. In short there is no accusation missing from those directed against Bigot but Bigot was never accused of compromising so flagrantly the security of the country.

Although will in the extreme, there may be a grain of truth in D'Antenille's allegation that Vaudreuil and Beauchêne were permitted to continue on their course only due to the protection of the minister.

himself. If the minister had not, in fact, placed his relatives in
the top Canadian posts with the express intention of improving their
finances at the expense of the Crown; it cannot be said that he made
any sustained efforts to inquire into the abuses alleged by Chauvill.
Once again, administrative indifference to regulation is manifest.
It appears to have been viewed as the inevitable perquisite of office
and of small concern as long as it did not pose an immediate threat
to the solvency of the Crown. 104

Michel Édouard de la Picardière, the Intendant of New France
from 1710 to 1726 was ensnared by the Council of the Marine in 1715
for his trade interests. The allegations against him read like a
list of his predecessors' sins. As Lunn summarized, he was

accused of using the authority which his position gave him to buy cheap and to sell dear. Not only did he
manipulate prices but he was said to have paid only in
cash money at that time much stressed in value, while
he would accept remittance only in fine or in bills of
exchange in France... He forced the export of flour in
1714 but he himself shipped it to the West Indies in
that year. In Karénien, member of the Superior
Council, complained that the Intendant neglected his
duties...and...that...he had infected everyone with the
spirit of usury, so that the only men of good will left
were the clergy.

To the investigatory council:

Monseigneur admitted that he engaged rather extensively
in trade and that he was interested in two ships with
Jean Forget, Le Rochelle merchant. Moreover he had
exported flour in 1714 over his own prohibitions and
on at least one occasion he kept some of the best made
flour for his own trade. He denied, however, that his
commerce was anything but beneficial and asserted that
if his business had been bigger it would have done the
colony still more good. Besides, he said, he had to
do something to make up for the indebtedness of his salary. 105

104. B.P.R.O., 1722-1723, d'Antoigny to Fort Chambly, 14 November
1704; 'Mémoire' to the minister, 17 October 1705; 'Mémoire
de l'état present du Canada', 1712; 'Mémoire' to the minister,
1715, pp. 11-58.

105. C.P.A., Coll. B. 37(3), Ministre a Monseigneur, Marly, July 13, 1715,
p. 772-5., Coll. B. 511, Minute Conseil de Marine, March 1714,
p. 37-95., Coll. B. 20(2), Conseil à Monseigneur, Paris, 16 June 1716,
p. 327-99, ARC, Mgr., Lettres, Amerique, 7(4). In Venturière
au Ministre, (pa. 28 October, 1715, pp. 69-108, cited by Lunn,
op. 375, 376.
Although the Council gave the intendant a sharp reprimand forbidding him to engage in trade both because it interfered with the performance of his official duties and because it was bound to prejudice the corruptness of the merchants owing to the special opportunities which his position gave him, it took no steps to remove him from office. Indeed, it seems unlikely that his activities would have attracted even this degree of official attention had not the Regency precipitated an energetic, though brief effort at reform. Holtzmann contended that the major effect of the reprimand was to cause Péron to sink into almost total lethargy. Although the absence of comment would appear to indicate that he reduced his trade activities, he also permitted the accounts of the Royal Stores at Montreal, Trois Rivieres, and Louisbourg to deteriorate into "total disorder" and appears to have connived with the colonial treasurer in the embezzlement of royal funds. In 1720, for example, the fund for the redemption of the cord money was found to be inexplicably overdrawn by 157,251 livres and in the following year Vaudreuil was moved to complain to the Council of the登入 of the suspiciously swift depletion of the fund of specie sent to the colony. Although protested to the interdiction of Le Favre in 1727, Bégon was admonished to bring all the records required to give a full explanation of his stewardship. 106

Bocquet. Bigot's immediate predecessor, is generally believed to have been a relatively honest and frugal administrator. This, however, makes Bocquet rather than Bigot, the exception, and even Bocquet 'the prod', had difficulty in containing the acquisitive instincts of his subordinates; as but a small sampling of the official correspondence shows. A "cessation de la" of the 13 May, 1740 noted

that Nicoquart had done well to recall the S Governor, Pierre
La Force, fromParagraph 187, and a letter of the 16 April 1741 to
Nicoquart revealed that between 1729 and 1739 La Force had oversold
19,642 livres on a volume of 372,762 livres of goods sent to the
fort. 108 The minister was convinced that these sorts of malversations
were general and Nicoquart was admonished to keep a close
watch on the other gardes magazins, but the futility of such
measures was illustrated when on the 20 April, 1742 the incredulous
minister was forced to concede that if La Force just did not have
the money to make full restitution then there was no point in
initiating further proceedings against him. 109

On the 27 February, 1742 the minister revealed the decree to
which corruption had become institutionalized in the production of
bread in the Royal Stoves by deciding to throw the industry back
into the private sector. Even allowing for private sector profit
and an increase in salary to the gardes magazins, 'pour (10s)
dédommager...un profit qu'ils trouveraient dans la fabrication du
pain', he believed this would result in a substantial saving to the
Crown:

\[
\text{en diminuant le travail des les magazins, doit aussi}
\text{mettre à portée de veiller avec plus de soin a la}
\text{conservation des effets et a esprêcher qu'il n'en soit}
\text{fait de fausses consomm} \] 110
\]

Although the minister was convinced that sloppy accounting in
Quebec made possible a wide range of malversations, he left no doubt
but that it was in the wilderness that most of the government's funds
were disappearing. On the 12 April, 1742 the minister complained to

107. AC, B 70.
108. AC, B 72.
109. AC, B 74.
110. AC, B 74.
Boucharnoir about the continuing disappearance of men are accused not only the petty officers of inclination but even accused Boucharnoir himself of insufficiency. It was atheme revealed on the 15 April, 1743 which resulted in a new ordinance on the 4th of the same year. In another letter of the 13 April, 1742 the minister complained to Boucharnoir and Hocquart that careless accounting was resulting in double payments to the troops in the wilderness and likewise on the 17 of the month he observed that negligence was resulting in the deterioration of military hardware and fraud in the construction and repair of the forts. On the 20 April, the minister observed that laxity in the distribution of presents to the Indians had been a contributing factor to runaway expenditures in the colony, and on the 20 he communicated his intention to impose a complete prohibition of any trade on the part of the fort commanders. He also insisted on the 12 April, that the sergeant's monopoly, or the sale of wine and spirits to their men was to be terminated, leading as it did to the break-down of all discipline. In the evening of the 50 Boucharnoir and Hocquart were accused of insufficient attention to the prevention of frauds in the custers and in the foodstuffs supplied by the habitants. In short, the administration was riddled with corruption and even a reputedly faithful interent appears to have been helpless in the face of the most explicit corruption from Versailles.

For was corruption as an institutionalized phenomenon restricted to Canada. Messina-Giraud and Berteaux detail similar practices in Louisiana, beginning with the frauds of d'Hererville.

111. AC, B 74, 76.
112. AC, B 74, p. 323.
113. AC, B 74, p. 392.
which implicated, "le personnel de tout grade," the legalized
retortions of Crozet, and the mutual accusations of governor,
le Motte and Onondiagon, agents of illicit trade. Officiating in
the Royal Store, valorization of public funds and the miscarriage
of justice. Although these allegations have to be partially
discounted due to the structural unity between the offices, no
sooner had le Motte and Beauvoir been replaced by L'piney and Robert
in 1746 than Robert was raising doubts about the governor's
nonintervention. Before relations were further strained, however, L'piney
was recalled due to the acquisition of Louisiana by the Compagnie
de l'Occident. This delayed by a couple of years a flood of
reprimandatory correspondence since Hubert's ally against L'piney,
Biarville, was named commandant général. By 1780, however, the
officials of the colony were again accusing each other of dishonesty
and incompetence, charges which were confirmed by the company's
agent, Boisbriant. In particular he accused Hubert of an unscrupulous
management of the company's stores, with the result that Hubert
resigned his duties and asked to be recalled. For were the junior
officials any more efficient or trustworthy, since after an analysis,
individual by individual, Giraud concluded that in the early 1720's:

la confusion était si grande dans la colonie, les plus
critiques qu'il n'eût pas été possible, sans avec
un personnel qualifié, d'y mettre fin rapidement.110

Despite repeated attempts to eradicate abuses such as the
monopolies of the post commanders who forced the locals to purchase

115. Marcel Giraud, Histoire de La Louisiane Francaise, i. 304 and
following.
116. Ibid., i. 272, 273, 275, 276.
117. Ibid., i. 285.
118. Ibid., ii. 91.
119. Ibid., iii. 289, 291.
120. Ibid., iii. 330.
goods at inflated prices; they continued to finagle, if only because there was a certain legitimacy in the colonists' desire to supplement their lower salaries.\textsuperscript{121} Nor were the troops amenable to any but the most violent of measures, composed as they were of 'thieves, robbers and vicious characters'.\textsuperscript{122} But if discipline was at all possible it had in part to be attributed to lack of supplies, food, regular pay, and the need to kill the troops among the citizenry. Nor were abuses in the payment of the troops easily eradicated.\textsuperscript{123}

Although Le Normant, sent out in 1744 to clear up the mess left after the thirteen years of Governor-adjutant Salmon's administration, reported that under the circumstances no-one could have done better,\textsuperscript{124} Versailles received renewed in its conviction that he had said, 'save us confusion and one negligence among example.'\textsuperscript{125} From at least December 1739 the minister had been complaining to Salmon about overexpending and serious irregularity in the colonial accounts which could be attributed in part to large reversions in the forts but, he observed pointedly, the accounts of the Stores in the centre of the colony were also in abysmal confusion.\textsuperscript{126} By 1740 the minister had sufficiently solid information to allege enormous 'fractions, corruptions' against the colonial administration, fraud in the construction of the New Orleans barracks and irremediable expenditures which were completely unaccounted for.\textsuperscript{127} In spite of renewed instructions from the minister ordering retrenchment and improved accounting, year by year the situation seemed only to

\textsuperscript{121} Lamieut, op.cit., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., pp. 99, 91.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 92.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 97.
\textsuperscript{125} AC, B 78, Minutes to Le Normant, 20 April 1744.
\textsuperscript{126} AC, B 68, 24 December 1739; ibid. p. 417.
\textsuperscript{127} AC, B 70, 28 October.
deteriorated until the minister began to wonder whether Salmen was not himself seriously concerned.128 That a number of subordinates were thoroughly corrupt, there was no doubt.

Naturally, the deeply rooted abuses were not terminated by a change in the top administrative personnel. Even if axiomatic Michel's charges in the early 1730's that Governor Vaudreuil was profiteering on the posts were groundless, the likelihood is that Cambronne, major of New Orleans, and Figeac, commander of the Illinois colony of 1748 took advantage of the Governor's good will.129 Referring to, 'the doubtful honesty of the post commanders, the lack of discipline of the troops, and the favoritism toward the Canadians in Louisiana,' L BIOSO corrected that if Vaudreuil:

\[\text{did not succeed in eliminating this problem any more than his predecessors had, it was an inherent part of the administrative structure of French Louisiana, a sparsely populated colony in which the military element represented an excessive force.}\]

And what was said of the military can be broadened to refer to the whole range of institutionalized fraud with equal validity.

It is not surprising that the Seven Years War by increasing stress and disrupting communication with France, plunged Louisiana into one of her worst crises. The issues in the quarrel between Governor Kerlerec and Protestant Rochambeau have already been adumbrated,131 but now that their historical context has been described, it is appropriate that they should be referred to again. Briefly, the complaints against Rochambeau are not only that he haggled the colonial currency, but that he engaged in 'private business ventures, disadvantageous to the colony and to the Crown'.

128 A 18, B 78, to Le Normant, 30 April 1744.
130. 1844, p. 175.
131. See above, pp. 50-56.
No Governor alleged that he confiscated a British interloper in order to sell it to his associates with the consequence that the only source of supplies for the colony was closed. 132

No doubt the allegations regarding the mismanagement of the currency were well founded. About the interloper, however, Kerlerec's mémoire had a very different story to tell. It maintained that there was no need for foreign supplies, since at the time there was still several months supply of foodstuffs, the harvest promised to be good and there was at least a two years supply of merchandise in the colony. 133 The real reason, it said, for Kerlerec's favour of the interloper trade was that he, himself, and his associates were deeply interested. This was unfitting not only because it broke the trade laws, but worse, compromised the security of the colony by permitting the English to inform themselves on the state of the colony's defenses in time of war. 134

When an assembly of concerned citizens yet to protest the threat to the colony's security, Kerlerec responded by imprisoning three of the colony's most eminent and respected officers, and launched a vendetta against them resulting in their 'arrestion' and removal to France to face legal actions. 135 Furthermore, the mémoire went on to allege that Kerlerec had encouraged the fur trade at the expense of the Crown, had excluded the inhabitants from participation in favour of the companies and had granted them their trade privileges in exchange for a percentage of their sales. 136 Kerlerec was accused of extortion, of conspiring to raise prices in the

133. Mémoire, op.cit., p. 16.
134. ibid., in. 24-27.
135. ibid., pp. 44-49.
136. ibid., pp. 22, 23.
Illinois where he had private trade interests through refusing to
permit the dispatch of a convoy during the winter months, and then
raising profits of 400-500% on goods he sold to the Crown in the
Illinois. This, it was maintained, was the reason for the
expenditure of $4,000,000 living in the Illinois during a four
year period.127 Under his brother-in-law's protection, de Rigot,
Commander of the Illinois is alleged to have requisitioned flour
from the inhabitants when he later sold, together with other
provisions from the Royal Stores, to the English for his own profit.128
Kerlerec is also alleged to have forced Rochambeau to purchase goods
from his favorites at exorbitant prices as well as having ordered
the construction of unauthorized fortifications which were contracted
to his friends and paid for at double the rates that construction
under Vaudreuil had received.129 Like Rigot he had lavish new
quarters constructed for his own use.130 Furthermore, he is alleged
to have forced Rochambeau to purchase from his personal stock large
quantities of superfluous supplies at inflated prices.131

In short, there seems to have been hardly an abuse which the
governor had not perpetrated with abandon. Although the memoirs
gave different catalogue Kerlerec's sins at considerably greater length,
the point is made. If Rochambeau was corrupt, the governor too
appears to have been seriously compromised and in fact, there seems
in a century of American administration to have been scarcely an
official who did not engage in some form of illicit practice. Fraud,
therefore, was so endemic as to be safely labelled institutionalized,

127. ibid., pp. 52-60.
128. ibid., pp. 60, 61.
129. ibid., pp. 61, 64, 65.
130. ibid., p. 64.
131. ibid., p. 65.
without fear of misrepresentation. Consequently, it is in this context that Bigot's reverberations must be judged. The stage has now been reached where it is possible to see Bigot as an authentic product of his times.
CHAPTER V

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

Since the administrative structures of the French colonies have been described frequently it would be otiose to repeat what has already been well said. On the other hand, it is impossible to discuss the affairs in Canada without having said something about the institutional structures in which Bigot had to function. Consequently, this chapter will set forth only briefly the historical development of the office of intendant and the ascension of its powers. It will move on rapidly over the relations between the governor, intendant and minister in order to settle into an examination of the particular difficulties which Bigot experienced in the discharge of his functions. This will prepare the ground for a careful reconsideration, in the following chapter, of his relationship with Gracie and the charges which were brought against him in 1761.

Saluting Bigot as _patro-chércheur de Dieu_, on the 1 May, 1759, his most Christian majesty, Louis XV, King of France, commissioned the St. François Bigot, subdelegate of the intendant of New France, commissary-ordonnateur of Isle Royale and the isles adjacent to act in the full capacity of the intendant in his absence. Since the intendant very rarely visited that rocky outpost of his domain, perched as it was almost the entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence,

1. See, for example, Guy Frépoul, _Histoire de l'administration française_, op. cit.; Marcel Claveau, op. cit.; Gustave Lacomot, _L'administration de la Nouvelle-France_, Librarie Ancienne Honoré Champion, Paris 1929; and J.-B. Torses, op. cit.

2. _AC, B 68_, p.338.
the key to communication with Canada but a thousand miles east of Quebec city; the commandant-adjuntoir of Isle Royale was virtually autonomous. Like the commandant-adjuntoir of Louisiana, although nominally subject to the intendant of New France, he took his instructions primarily from Versailles. J. S. Keenan noted that:

the Governor and intendant of Canada were advised about the affairs of Isle Royale only in so far as the business of the two colonies was concerned. 3

There were exceptions: Bigot, himself, as intendant of New France spent two months during the summer of 1749 at Louisbourg re-establishing the administrative structures of the colony. More typical, however, was his intervention from Quebec by a letter of the 14 August, 1752 by which he ordered the commandant-adjuntoir to prepare the amount of ordnance and powder for Isle Verte in the following year since it was twice as expensive to ship it from Quebec. 4 Such interventions were quite rare. So, despite the detailed and scholarly distinctions drawn by Lenieux, it is still true to say that Bigot as commandant-adjuntoir exercised much the same power at Isle Royale, though over a much smaller colony, as he was to enjoy

3. *Legislative, from its Foundation to its Fall*, London, 1928
   p. 44.
4. C.P.A., KG 18, 08(1)
subsequently as intendant in Canada. Since the two offices were so
very nearly the same the description of the intendency which follows
can be taken to subsume that of commissaire-ordonnateur.

Although intendants and commissaire-ordonnateurs maintained a
regular correspondence with the minister concerning all aspects of
their administration, they were much too far removed from Versailles
to act as mere cyphers. The round trip taking anywhere from three
to six months, depending on the time of year, American colonial
administrators, even more than the intendants of France, though in
theory completely subordinated to Versailles, exercised a large
measure of discretionary authority. In his mémoire Nigot's view of
the situation was described:

S'il desire être éclairé sur quelque point qui
l'embarrasse, à peine trouve-t-il quelqu'un avec
qui il puisse s'en expliquer. S'il lui est neces-
saire de consulter le Ministre, il faut un entier
pour qu'il puisse recevoir sa réponse. En attendant,

5. Lemieux, intent upon correcting the impression that the office
of commissaire-ordonnateur was identical to that of intendant
but in a less significant colony, quoted Dart, arguing that the
two offices were historically quite different, the former
originating as a subordinate administrative post within the
Marine, the latter as a royal delegate, 'charged with supervision
over local government, and to inquire into, correct and reform
abuses therein.' (Henry Planché Dart, 'The legal Institutions
of Louisiana', The Louisiana Historical Quarterly II (January, 1919),
pp. 78-79.) Lemieux went on to point out that whereas an intendant
was by virtue of his commission invested with full authority over
finance, justice and police: 'the position or title of "commissaire"
of marine and "commissaire ordonnateur" did not automatically
include judicial duties, membership in the Superior Council, or
the position of first councillor in the Council. It was upon the
receipt of the commission of first councillor that they were
assigned judicial duties.' Lemieux was also at pains to show that
the office of commissaire-ordonnateur was neither as powerful nor
as prestigious as the intendant, but that that distinction amounted
to was essentially that whereas the letters patent permitted a
prie-dieu in the sanctuary to the intendant this was denied to the
ordonnateur. (Lemieux, op.cit., pp. 50-52.)
souvent il est nécessaire d’agir. Il faut donc qu’il prenne la décision sur lui. Si, dans sa marche, il rencontre une difficulté que lui fasse le Gouverneur, il faut qu’il s‘arrête; et, quelque sage, quelque ministre que puisse être le parti qu’il se propose, il faut qu’il l‘abandonne. S‘il n‘était qu’à quelques journées de la Cour, il écrirait, il prendrait des ordres. Ces ordres seraient la Loi du Gouverneur contre la sienne, et il serait sûr de n‘être pas désapprouvé. Mais les termes qui le séparent du Ministre, le forcent d‘éloigner de son chef, mille choses sur lesquelles il ne peut que suivre les mouvements de sa conscience, et ses propres voeux.

Broad though the discretionary power of the office was, definite limits were imposed by the commission and instructions. Intendants had to work within colonial institutions which had been shaped by the ordinances of their predecessors and edicts from Versailles. Nor was their power unchecked within the colony itself. As Bigot mentioned, there was always a governor jealous of his prerogatives, as well as ambitious colonials with whom he had to contend. In the case of the latter, an Intendant’s position, Bigot maintained, was particularly delicate:

D‘un autre côté, qu‘arrive-t-il de cette situation, qui, tenant les Chefs de la Colonie cloîtrés ou Ministre les force de prendre sur eux une multitude de décisions? Il arrive que, dans l‘intérieur de la Colonie, on leur impute tout le désagrément des ordres qui déplaisent, non-seulement de ceux qu‘ils écrivent eux-mêmes, mais encore de ceux qu‘ils ne font que notifier, et qui leur sont envoyés directement de la Cour. Souvent ils n‘y ont pas eu la moindre part; quelquefois même ils en ont suspendu l‘exécution par leurs représentations. On ignore ces détails dans les Colonies; mais on sait que l‘ordre est venu, et il prêve. C‘en est assez pour qu‘on accuse les Chefs ou de l‘avoir sollicité, ou de ne l‘avoir pas enlevé. De là les bains secrets, plus dangereux mille fois que les intrigues déclarées, les éclats souvenus; les rumeurs enverdies, et tout ce qu‘approprient les Gens en place, sur-tout quand, étant éclatées, ils sont hors d‘état de mettre le Ministre à portée de s‘informer par lui-même de la colonie des insuffisances.

6. Mémoire, François Bigot, i. 277-278.
7. Mémoire, François Bigot, i. 278.
For the first hundred odd years of its legal existence, Canada, the oldest French colony, was without an intendant or even a fore-runner of his breed. As Lanctot observed, the letters patent accorded to François de la Roque, Seigneur de Roberval, on the 15 January, 1540, gave him virtually absolute power over the colony:

Le roi lui accorde le droit de faire la paix ou la guerre, d'établir des 'capitaines justiciers' et tous autres officiers, de faire des lois et ordonnances 'politiques et autres' de punir les coupables français ou indigènes de châtiments exemplaires et même de la mort corporelle, de concéder des terres en fiefs relevant du roi, et finalement d'ordonner de toutes choses, 'comme nous-mêmes le ferions et faire le pourrions si en notre personne y estimons.\(^8\)

Apart from minor vicissitudes in the ownership of the colony and the interposition of trade companies between the patron and the governor of the colony, the governor's powers remained generally intact until 1663. In that year Louis XIV repossessed the colony, issued an edict creating the Sovereign Council and nominated a commissioner to supervise civil government.\(^9\) In 1665 the commissioner, Gaudais-Dupont was replaced by Jean Talon whose commission named him:

intendant de justice, police et finances en nos pays de Canada, Acadie, et Isle de Terreneuve et autre pays de la France Septentrionale.

Lanctot summarized the powers assigned to him as:

assister aux conseils de guerre en Canada, ouïr les plaintes des citoyens et des soldats en toutes matières et leur rendre justice, informer de toutes entreprises contre le service et procéder contre les coupables de tous crimes jusqu'à exécution du jugement, appeler le nombre de juges et de gradés requis par la loi et connaître de tous crimes et délits, abus et malversations, présider au conseil souverains en l'absence du gouverneur, juger souverainement seul en matières civiles et ordonner de tout ainsi qu'il paraîtra juste et à propos.\(^10\)

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To these powers was added in 1670 the right to make, "des règlements de police tant pour le général du dit par que pour les habitations particulières", which were to be effective immediately although provisional on Royal assent. The interdant received further accretions of power in 1675 when Duchesneau was ordered to:

tenir la main à ce que les juges inférieurs et les officiers de justice ne soient pas troublés dans leurs fonctions, et que le conseil souverain juge conformément aux lois et à la coutume de Paris; faire avec le conseil souverain, les règlements de police générale et voir à leur exécution par les juges subalternes, ou le faire seul, soit le droit nécessaire au service. En plus, la constitution lui accordait la connaissance souveraine et exclusive de tout ce qui concernait la levée et la percepción des droits, tant en matière civile que criminelle, en présent, au cas de prince afflicte, le nombre voulus de gradués, ses jugements étant exécutoires comme des arrêts de cours souveraines. Enfin, elle lui confèrait la distribution des deniers provenant de la levée des droits.

Not surprisingly, this innovation in colonial government was difficult to consolidate. Not only was it hard to find suitable candidates: Colbert on the 15 November, 1664 told de Tracy:

I despair of being able to find an interdant who has the proper qualities for this post, those who would acquit themselves worthily lack the settle to risk the long voyage, and those who would undertake it lack the intelligence, integrity and ability needed to be of some use there.

but no sooner had the interdant arrived in the colony but he was locked into quarrels with the governor over jurisdiction and honours. In the late 1660's the Governor, Courcelles, was discontented because he believed he was insufficiently consulted in the administration of justice, and Frontenac all but brought the wheels of government to a standstill.

11. Ibid., I, 4 juin 1672, p. 72; cited by Lenciot, ibid., p. 53.
a full stop in 1678-79 in his determination to be styled 'chief and
president' of the Sovereign Council in all of its records and public
notices despite the king's express déclaration to the contrary of
1675. The correspondence of 1669 roundly condemned Frontenac for
his intemperance and repeated that he had no claim to act as the
presiding officer at the Council. In order that there might be
no such mistake in the future, de Meulles' commission of the 17 May,
1692 specifically assigned to him the right to:

profiter au Conseil Souverain, donner les avis,
recueillir les voix et prononcer les urdes. 16

It was almost inevitable, however, that the chief officers would
continue to quarrel since their still overlapping jurisdictions
provided ample grounds for debate, 17 and they were even separated by
class and education. As Frégaunt pointed out:

(The governor) est un gentilhomme de bonne naissan-
sance, il consé les plus grands honneurs mais
détient des pouvoirs plutôt restreints; le second
est un fonctionnaire de carrière, généralement
jeune, un technicien; toujours relégué au second
au troisième plan par le protocole mais ses
fonctions complexes et étendues sont de lui l'honneur
le plus précieux du pays. 18

17. Professor S. Role StJean in a paper presented to the 1975
Conference of the Canadian Historical association entitled
'Politics, Patronage and the Imperial Interest: Charles de
Beaubear's' Robert with Giles Boquet' has argued convinc-
ingly that tension between governor and intendant was
institutional in character not due to overlapping jurisdiction
but because their responsibilities were only too effectively
divided; the governor's exclusive concern for defense being in
direct competition with the intendant's responsibility for
retranchement of expenses. This fundamental divergence sus-
pected upon the background of separate backgrounds and career
circumstances provided a natural focus for the opposing camps of
vested interests to batten upon and made conflict almost
inevitable.
18. Guy Frégaunt, La Civilisation de la Nouvelle France, Montréal,
1944, p. 145.
For were such problems absent from relations between the
commandant and conseiller-ordonnateur of Isle Royale. As McLennan
observed:

There was natural antagonism between the two... and constant friction resulted, although the home administration did all that it could to minimize its causes. Their seats in church, the order in which the sacrament should be administered, their places in processions were regulated. While the easy-going Costebelle had no trouble with Soulares, St. Ovide constantly quarrelled with the three
Conseiller-Ordonnateurs who served him. They quarrelled about precedence, about the realities of business, about its formalities, the conditions at Louisbourg, however, were so bad that, as an instance, the Council writes, that the Governor and the Conseiller-Ordonnateur seem to agree only in one thing, that being to harass the engineer in the work of building the fortifications. Their disagreements reached in the same year, such a point that St. Ovide, the Governor and de Bay, who had replaced Soulares, were informed that if they could not agree remedies would be proposed to the Regent which would be disagreeable to them both. Even so sharp a threat as this did not make things go smoothly for long.19

The politics of colonial administration were fought out not only in the colonies but also in the dispatches to Versailles.

As McLennan noted:

The ordinary course of business was that the
Conseiller-Ordonnateur and the Governor wrote joint
letters to the Board, and that each addressed it separately on subjects exclusively in his control; and that in reply the Board, and afterwards the Minister wrote in the same way. Sometimes it happened that the Conseiller-Ordonnateur in another letter, withdrew statements which he had signed in the joint letter in the interests of harmony.20

It is of particular credit to Bigot that his correspondence is almost completely devoid of such vituperative duplicity, although he was forced to repeat that it was the governor and not himself who was

19. AC, B 42, 9 July; 23 September 1720, pp. 480, 490.
20. Cœurs, AC, C118, 3, p. 166; cited by McLennan, ibid., p. 46. Also, see above, pp. 50-56.
responsible for ordering ever increasing expenditures. Even at Isle Brebeuf he had begun to evoke this theme, putting the blame for rapidly rising expenditures on du Gouin. 21 Similarly in Canada, on the 2 November, 1752 Bigot apologized to the minister for his inability to restrain the rising cully, saying:

Il me sera cependant impossible, monseigneur, nonobstant toutes mes réflexions de faire diminuer ces dépenses lors qu'il se présentera réellement des caisses d'en sorte de nouvelles; elles portent toujours du génie qui les juge nécessaire, tant pour l'honneur et le salut de la Colone, la conservation de nos frontières que pour le gouvernement des sujets et je ne peux qu'esper d'oeconomie dans leur distribution et c'est ce qui m'occupe uniquement. 22

For could be control effectively expenses in the forts. Not only were they too far removed from the seat of government but they did not properly fall under his purview. He replied to the minister on the 3 November, 1757:

Vous aviez seule satisfait de la comparée de l'hiver dernier...mais non des dépenses qui se font en Canada...

Les lettres de change tirées en 1757 contiennent à 12, 337, 444 livres, 5 sols, 4 deniers sans que je puisse savoir s'ils sont employés avec équité; ils le sont par les ordres des commandants auxquels il faut s'en rapporter. 23

Bigot's contention that these expenditures were not his responsibility would appear to be confirmed by Lanctot:

Quant aux fournitures contrôlées par l'intendant avant leur envoi dans les posts, comme elles étaient naturellement délivrées par les commandants, elles étaient sous la direction du gouverneur. Afin d'être acceptées au rendu suivant, il fallait que les états portassent son visa. 24

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23. AC, CLI, 127, p. 765.
As in military affairs where the governor disposed of "une juridiction exclusive et souveraine" so also in Indian relations:

toutes dépenses de vivres et de munitions, soit pour la guerre, soit pour les délégations chez les sauvages, étaient ordonnées par le gouverneur.25

It was not quite as straightforward, however, as Bigot could have had the minister believe. Although it was the governor's responsibility to order all Indian expenditures, Lanctot continued,

examinées et enquêtes par l'intendant, qui visait également les comptes des personnes qu'on envoyait sans les tribus pour les faire venir en toute.26

Furthermore, the historian noted:

le gouverneur ordonnait de toutes les dépenses militaires, sauf toujours avec la participation de l'intendant. Il décidait des parts de guerre, mais c'était l'intendant qui en dirigeait la fourniture. Lors à l'occasion de la distribution des présents aux sauvages, il ne pouvait donner un ordre à ce sujet aux garde magasins. L'ordre devait d'abord passer à l'intendant qui ne l'accorderait qu'au jugement de sa prudence.27

Thus, although Bigot could not be held responsible for ordering expensive operations, it was his job to see to it that the operations were conducted with a minimum of expense and irregularity. He was, in theory at least, as responsible for the forts as for the operations in Quebec city. Whether this was a just expectation is open to question.

Indeed, there is some doubt as to how safe it is to generalize

about the influence wielded by the governor and intendant. If anything was strictly the governor's concern it was military operations. Yet Bigot, his protestations notwithstanding,
appears to have exercised a not inconsiderable influence over his associates. Certainly, when he was in disagreement with Longueil, he had no hesitation in stating his views either to the governor or to the minister. Writing about the unsettled situation in the Ohio on the 26 October, 1732, Bigot complained of the Canadians' lack of initiative:

'It may be that Bigot's record is so free of bickering, primarily because the governors fell in with his ideas even when he was advising them on their own responsibilities. In the case of Du Guasne at any rate, agreement on this essential issue accurately foreshadowed harmonious relations between them.'

The letter continued:

'Vous avez heureusement envoyé un général, car si le Gouvernement est en rest encore un en entre les mains de ces Monseigneurs, la mission Canadienne serait bien préceli et personne ne se serait écriblé...'

'L'honorable le Marquis Duquesne est de ce sentiment et il m'a paru à son arrivée bien d'accorder à tous d'après ce qui regarde la Colonie je lui avo donné de mon cété toutes les consommences que j'en avo, et il est trés mal pour le service et les intérêts du Roy, moyennant quoi il fero de bonne heure. 28

28. VAL, NA, III, 98, p. 177-179.
Apart from the observation that the Canadians obviously had a much better grasp of the strategic realities than the French administrators, it is clear from the above letter that Bigot was not justified in taking refuge behind the claim that defence spending was the governor's province, and so he ought not to be held accountable for it. Bigot, here, is revealed as just as ardent a sub-imperialist as were the governors. Even if he was not the architect of the expansionist policy of the early fifties, he had obviously become one of la Galissomière's most ardent disciples and like Frontenac in the 1680's may well have had private motives to advocate expansion. Indeed, so convinced of the wisdom of that course had he become by the 3 November, 1757 that he did not scruple to tell the minister in terms which anticipated Adam Smith by some twenty years that economy was of little concern when weighted against the colony's security:

>J'espère néanmoins que les dépenses ne seront pas à l'heure prochaine ne pré
evrent pas de si grandes souvenances; si les cir-
cunstances nous y engageant, j'ai l'honneur de vous assurer que je ne regarderois pas ce qu'il en contiendit, mais seulement l'honneur des armes du Roy, et je contribueroi tout jours autant qu'il le sera possible, tant par mes avis que par l'ex-
cution de ce dont je serai chargé à les rendre 
glorieuses dans cette Colonie.

Cela m'oppose encore plus que l'économie, quoique ce dernier objet m'intéresse beaucoup... 29

So, whatever the motives behind Bigot's actions, it emerges that he intended intervened frequently in military decisions and was himself an ardent advocate of a forward policy.

Bigot's success in securing the confidence of successive governors testifies to the man's powers of persuasion and elevated the Sovereign Council as a mechanism of balance. What little power

29. RG1, AC, COLL, 102, pp. 307-326.
the King had left the Council on the 20 May, 1724 by ordering that it should:

> se réunir en nulle façon ni directement ni indirectement de ce qui regarde le gouvernement.20

The power was seized by Bigot's clique since as d'Astoul pointed out, without a divided leadership, there was no focus around which opposition could concentrate.1 Bigot's independence was further increased by the episodic and incomplete control that Versailles exercised over colonial affairs. Ever in issues of the most crucial importance such as military campaigns and large capital works, the minister usually had to submit to the opinions of his son on the spot. Not only would frequent deliberations of local decisions have paralysed colonial administrations but in the interval order of events, the minister was bound to see things through the eyes of his officials since they provided him with the talk of the information upon which his decisions were based. For very colonial officials reluctant to plead urgent necessity to justify making expensive and irreversible decisions without consulting the minister. To take but one example, on the 11 April, 1749 the minister explained to de la Jonquière and Bigot:

> C'est sans avoir daigné les ordres du Roy que M. de la Galissonière et Rocquart ont pris le parti d'abandonner le fort de Naples et d'en fonder un autre au Hicpe Saint-Jean. certes jugé sans doute que les circonstances de ce qu'erreur éritable au changement, et ne permettaient pas de le différer.21

The letter went on to complain bitterly of the abuses tolerated in the construction and the exorbitant cost incurred. Naturally matters of less significance were almost entirely beyond the minister's competence,
but that did not prevent him from exerting a more effective supervision. Although on the 11 April, 1749 in another letter the minister admitted that only Bigot was really in a position to discover administrative malfeasance and to do anything about it:

Il est rîé de sentir combien l'administration des finances et celle des magistrats en Canada exigent de soins pour les restituer en pais convivables; et vous devez d'autant plus vous y appliquer que tous les objets qui vous sont confiés dans la Colonie, il n'en est point de plus intéressans: le Roy attend de votre sœle qu'a recouvrant aux effets qui s'y vont glisser, vous y établir la règle convenable à l'avenir...c'est à vous de pouvoir aux premiers qu'il peut y avoir a prendre

Nevertheless, year after year he descended from Bigot increasingly more detailed accounting for the annual expenditures. On the 14 June, 1750 he instructed him:

Je vous recommande encore sur toute chose de se référer chaque année des Recensements bien détaillés de toutes les dépenses de l'Exercice précédent, distinguées nature par nature, et d'exécuter à ces dépenses toutes les charges dont ils pourraient être susceptibles.

In the following year on the 6 June the minister felt himself constrained to require even the detail of the quantities and prices of goods purchased for the colonial stores in order that:

je crois en estat de connaître les dépenses de Canad e, l'employ des fonds qui y sont consacrés.

Despite the minister's satisfaction in 1752 with the way in which Bigot submitted his accounts:

Et au moyen de la balance qu'ils contiennent de chaque article de recettes et dépenses relativement à l'ordre observé dans les États du Roy, se trouve en estat de connaître sur quelles parties

33. MEI, 46, p. 69, p. 67.
34. MEI, 46, p. 91, p. 190.
35. MEI, 46, 293, pp. 68, 71.
he was forced to admit finally that only Bicot was in a position to
know the real economies could be made. It was the same story
again in 1757. The vague nature of his explanations to growing
slowness that what little use he made detailed accounts were to him
in understanding the

By 1754, although admitting to Bicot:

C'est à vous de préciser les mesures que les cir
costances peuvent permettre pour remplir cet

the minister was still unprepared to give up all hope of securing

sufficent information to control the Canadian expenditures from

Versailles:

Au surplus les bord(croup)es que vous m'avez
reçus, tels que je vous les avais demandés, ne
font bien entendre sur quelle partie tombent
les économies de dépenses mais j'ai besoin de
plus amples éclaircissements pour pouvoir faire
des véritables économies de ces dépenses. Je crains
qu'ils ne vous aient pas encore remis en état de
satisfaire à ce que je vous ai signalé ; et je ne pro-
pose d'entrer avec vous dans les plus purs dé-
tails sur cette matière.

As Bicot's letter of the 5 November 1757 showed, the minister was

far from successful in his quest for ministerial control.

Even upon his arrival at Isle Royal, Bicot must have had a

fairly clear idea of the independence his new post gave him, since

one of his first acts was to inform the minister by a letter of the

36. COI, A.C., B 95, pp. 88-89.
37. COI, A.C., B 97, minister to Bicot, 8 June, p. 149.
38. COI, A.C., B 99, to Bicot, 1 June, pp. 114-115.
39. See above, p. 149.
14 September, 1739 that he had made improvements in his own and the commander's dwelling and had charged the expenses to the funds allocated for fortifications. Although the minister authorized the project, he was obviously rather disinclined by these pre-seventeenth-century tactics and lectured the administrators:

...Mais...co遍及 comme logements doivent être a présent en bon état (et M[ajolet]e) comme que vous n'y mettez plus partie de dépenses et cela semblait que si par la suite, il n'avait quelque chose à faire, vous prendiez sur ordres avant de rien entreprendre, a moins que par quelque accident jamais il ne fait (question) si quelque arrangement qui ne soit pas nécessaire de retardement...41

He relented was sufficiently strong to elicit an apology from Sigot on the 20 October, 1740. He admitted that his predecessor had lived perfectly comfortably in the house for many years but he protested that:

il n'avait pas le maître de domestiques que j'ai et je ne savais où les placer.42

Undaunted, however, by the minister's disapproval, Sigot in 1741 again authorized extensive alterations to the governor's quarters.

A measure of the minister's impotence is that despite his wrath at this disobedience, he had no alternative but to pass the expenditure.

His idea of discipline was blunter:

(Se Majesté) a bien voulu assez accorder les 2,25 livres devant des ouvrages suite aux logements du pavillon des Oeuvres occupé par M[ajolet]. Elle envoie qu'un moyen de ces augmentations et de celles qui ont été faites pavillon en dans la saison qui sort de logement à M[ajolet], je ne ferai plus (question) que d'en faire de nouvelles, ni dans l'un ni dans l'autre. En tout cas, il vous est redd a tous deux d'y faire (clair) le (air), sans une permission expresse de sa part, que les dépenses supplémentaires d'entretien, les bâtiments ont jusqu'à présent consenti tant de fonte, qu'elle ne veut pas qu'on y en emplie d'avantage sans son ordre...43

41. Ac, 20, 25 May, 1740.
42. Ac, 2115, 25, p. 199. Cited by P[Cepheus], P.E.A.P., 1. 75.
43. Ac, 3, 74-3, 6 June, 1742.
In other words, the minister's only truly effective disciplinary instrument was the power to recall a contentious official. With efficient administrators in short supply and the few that there were, reluctant to go to and stay in the colonies, it was not a reserve that could be readily invoked. In fact, having all but behaviour which crossed the clock in a colonial administration, provided an administrator observed the colonies in his correspondence, he was virtually free to govern a colony as he saw fit.

No wonder, therefore, that colonial administrators were accorded a respect which all but eclipsed that given to their European counterparts. Though Francis Parkinson greatly distorted the case when he described the Canadians as:

An ignorant population...trained to subjection and dependence through centuries of feudal and monarchial despotism...(plagued by) perpetual interference of government-regulations, restrictions, encouragements sometimes more mischievous than restrictions (and) a constant uncertainty as to authority could do next.44

Lever appears, in his eagerness to fit the early Canadian experience into Turner's frontier thesis, to have erred in the opposite extreme arguing:

that French life and society in America departed considerably from authoritarianism and in spirit approached English life and society in America. Where conditions were so uniform as in the settlers' attack on the forest, and where it was the north of a man, as an axe-wielding, forest-clearing, crop-seeding, cattle that counted the ease qualities came to the fore, the same scale of values tended to prevail.

...North American democracy was forest-born. It counted with it a stubborn attachment to the rights and privileges that come from an independent life and a disinclination to coercion that was a strong defense against arbitrary authority.45

In his essay, 'Sur la Nature de l'Emigration', Fréququot argues that important as were geographic and economic influences in shaping a people, the continuing impact of political ideas and organization imported from the mother country ought not to be underestimated. Canadians were often described by their governors as difficult to manage. Dugot informed the minister on the 21 September, 1743 that:

Les Canadiens ont plus besoin d'être frappés que d'autres peuples, bien qu'ils aient l'indépendance.

Locques referred to them as 'naturally indecent' and in Wescoull's opinion they were assisted by an 'esprit de ratatine et de cupidité'.

They, nevertheless, identified with and even glorified in their institutions.

That is not to say that they were bound to oppressive and legislative forms of government which were incongruent in the new 'free' world. Although the same could be said for New France as has been said for Western Canada, that, 'A great heritage has been brought in and transplanted with singularly little loss,' just as in the case of Western Canada, the very strength and popularity of these institutions in the new setting must be attributed to the autocratic process by which the settlers re-actualised these institutions to serve their own purposes. Despite the lack of representative organs, according to Fréququot, the Canadians were capable of blocking or evading the most onerous ordinances of the colonial authorities.

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46. O.H. 17, s. 114, p. 672.
47. Détail de toute la colonie (1746), Collection de mémoires et de relations sur l'histoire ancienne du Canada, 2: Cited by Fréququot, La Civilisation de la Nouvelle France, p. 165.
50. Fréququot, La Civilisation de la Nouvelle France, pp. 163-166.
while at the same time pursuing government contracts and honours.

As W.B. Lante pointed out in a discussion of the impact of De

Negre's creations on the Canadians:

The grant of these honours seems to have made
such an impression in the colony that for some
traders, colonists, and others were seized with a
new desire to obtain distinctions in the hope that
social elevation might follow. Colliers, merchants,
artisan, and habitants sought patents of noblesse
with almost equal vigor; the whole colony became
infected with aristocratic ideas, and men the
lurid in rerum reversione made a mistake
of having received it. Habitants who had by years
of hard labor amassed sufficient to purchase half-
developed distinctions strived along with the size
of born aristocrats, while their wives, in the words
of Governor Renonville, 'desired to play the first
head'. The intendent, Kecless, was disgusted with
the spirit: 'Everyone in the colony', he wrote,
beginning by calling himself an émigré, and ends by
thinking himself a gentleman'.

That is significant of the above is not that the Canadians were

spring European customs but that no one in the colony was disqualified

from playing the game. De Kecless' objection, obviously, was not

the result, rather than tending toward due subordination and order,

but a ludicrously democratic air about it. In their nostalgia for

what they believed to be the custom of the old country, the Canadians

with their new world wealth, clustered around the little court at

Quebec and invested their officers with a degree of ceremonial

respect they would never have enjoyed in France. This was the scene

by which the Canadians asserted their own dignity and in so doing

unwittingly created social conditions quite different from those

they believed themselves to be emulating. No one, for example, was

more surprised than he. Again, the in correspondence with her son-

in-law had gone into many details of the great feasts and entertainments

51. AC, ULIA, 8, Drummond to the Minister, 10 November 1666,
p. 329; AC, ULIA, 6, Reves to Minister, 4 November 1665,
p. 365; cited by W.B. Lante, The Colonial System in Canada,
given in Quebec and Montreal by the brilliant intendant, François Bigot, to discover in both fact that affairs were not arranged on the same footing. Thus, it appears that Canadian society was at the same time more democratic and more ceremonial than provincial society in France. In a way, just as the great gulf between the "rural king" and the nobility tended to diminish distinctions and the real power of the aristocracy in France, so too, the great gulf between the imperial administrators and the Canadiens emphasized their mutual equality. Conditions in Canada did not, however, combine to make effective the potential monopoly of power which such an attitude would seem to have licensed. Perhaps the ceremonial respect given to the chief officials served to compensate them for the frustration of being held responsible by Versailles for a trust they lacked the effective power to supervise.

Just as distance from Versailles tended to liberate the colonial officials from close supervision, so too, distance in the colony operated to put large areas of it beyond the effective reach of the intendant. Nor was distance itself the sole problem but wilderness and the savage inhabitants of the country greatly complicated an intendant's problem. As Bigot's brief asserted, administering Canada was something quite different from administering a French province:

* Nos Intendants de Provinces n'ont qu'un Pays assez broad à gouverner; et, dans ce Pays, ils ont toutes sortes d'Officiers à leurs ordres par lesquels ils peuvent surveiller à tout ce qui s'y passe, même leur manœuvre. Quand leur Province ne fait point de leurs besoins, ils les trouvent dans le Provinces voisine...* 

Just as above, p. 30.
Even with unlimited resources and the unequivocal co-operation of the governor, it would have been difficult for the intendant to control effectively the administration of the forts if for no other reason than that he was inadequately assisted. The intendant, he argued:

"n'a d'ailleurs qu'un très petit nombre d'employés, insuffisant pour veiller sous lui à toutes les parties d'une administration qui s'étend presque à toutes les distances imaginables, jusqu'à 800 lieues, à 1,000 lieues de sa résidence. S'il désirait s'expliquer sur quelque point qui l'embarrasse, à peine trouverait-il quelqu'un avec qui il puisse s'en expliquer..." 93

Moreover, he maintained that this part of the administration suffered as much as any other from the division of responsibility between governor and intendant since:

"l'intendant peut très bien entrer n'importe où; mais qu'il n'a aucun moyen efficace pour les empêcher, dès qu'elles sont administrées par des gens qui ne sont pas de son choix et qui veulent tromper."

But, he went on to say, even the governor would have found difficulty in controlling the forts since:

"D'un autre côté, le Gouverneur lui-même est bien éloigné de son choix car même il n'a pas sous la main une multitude de sujets, comme en les trouve en France. Il faut qu'il n'en tienne à ceux qu'il a; et l'on ne peut pas se dissimuler que dans le petit nombre courant dans le grand, ce n'est pas la pluralité qui réunit toutes les qualités qu'on pourroit désirer. D'ailleurs, le Gouverneur est obligé de préférer, pour les posts, ceux des officiers qui aiment le plus ce crédit par l'esprit des environs qu'il failloit contenter, et ils pouvaient être par toujours ceux qui réunissaient le plus de délicatesse..." 94

93. Œuvre de François Bigot, i, 275-276.
94. Œuvre de François Bigot, i, 377.
95. Ibid., i, 15-16.
Resolution in the forts acquired a particular significance because it was on the forts and military measures that Bigot allocated the greater part of the skyrocketing colonial expenditures. Beginning even with their construction, the wastage of funds was enormous. On the 3 November, 1738, for example, Bigot observed:

Je ne peux avoir l'honneur de vous rendre compte des dépenses que l'on a fait au fort S. Jean n'en ayant reçu aucun. On dit seulement dans le public qu'il coûterait plus de 40 ou 50 mille livres. C'est bien de l'argent pour un fort de piquet.

He went on to observe that according to the reports it was so poorly constructed that already the chimneys were falling down and consequently the fort was unfit for habitation. The shocking cost was attributable at least in part to systematic fraud on the removal of earth:

elles se payent par voyage de petite demi-terres aux ateliers d'un cheval en il n'y a qu'une piquée de terre. On donc par voyage un mario qui veut deux sols ou plusieurs suivant l'éloignement et l'appréciation de l'ingénieur. S'il est payé par gens fides il n'y aurait que dix sols, mais ils en donent quatre pour un, on les gâte pour eux et ils les distribuent dans le public, et cela fait une augmentation de dépense considérable.

This was encouraged by the officers and engineers because they had a share in the ill-gotten gains and so, urging them to greater vigilance was no solution. Bigot believed he had conclusive proof of fraudulent activity in such cases as the:

extrait des payements des ébats de terre (phrases) ...

...que ceux du mois de juin aux ets des terroeurs de la compagne s'ont été consommés et servoient avec ceux de la ville montrent à 25,106 liv. 3 sols. ces premiers sont venus le 1er juillet ce qui devait faire une diminution de 16 de ce mois sur cette dépense, cependant elle a été plus forte dans ce mois puisqu'elle montre à 29,924 liv. cela vient de quoi qu'il n'y est passé plus de troupes.55

55. 1907, AC, C114, 54, pp. 82-85.
Bigot's proposed remedy was to, 'payer les terres a la fois'.

On the 11 April, 1749 the minister thanked Bigot for this detailed account and added that it is by no means the first indication he had received that the construction of the forts was thoroughly corrupt. He gave the intendant full authority to investigate and rectify the abuses, but was not very explicit about how that might be done, other than the typical 'cavailles' reflex which was to annul the prosecution of the guilty in this case the de larges.57

The elder, de L... in his response, shifted the blame for the peculation onto the troops when he maintained had counterfeited the vouchers in question, and substantiated his claim by noting that some had been imprisoned for their crimes. He also went on to point out how completely inadequate was his salary. Despite his thirty years as directeur des fortifications, he was paid only 2,000 livres, whereas M. Herrier at Louisbourg received 6,000. Furthermore, his son received only 200 livres while:

le moindre ingénieur en France a 600 livres.58

The implication, obviously, was that their small incomes justified their peculation; a point to which all Canadian administrators recurred inevitably to return.

The briefs of the accused bristle with references to transactions in the forts but are remarkably opaque due to the underlying assumption that the reader is familiar with the accounting procedures. Fortunately, the related notes from an early interview between Langlois, clerk to the Canadian audit de chevalier, and the prosecutor of the trial, have survived in the records of the arsenal. In summary, Langlois

57. AGI, AC, B 89, pp. 34-43.
58. AGI, AC, C 114, 54, (pp. 7-8); and see below pp. 216-217.
maintained that each fort was supposed to have been equipped with a commander, a garde-magasin, and a clerk of the munitions. The garde-magasin disbursed goods from his stores of merchandise and munitions upon the written order of the commander. If, it was a question of actions, then the garde-magasin turned to the clerk of the munitions and gave him an order for the required amount as stipulated by the commander. In the absence of the garde-magasin, the process could be short-circuited but the clerk had to procure the issue of the garde-magasin upon his return. The garde-magasin was required to keep a careful record of all these issues and it was upon these records certified by both garde-magasin and commander that payments to the munitions were authorized by ordonnances drawn on the intendant généraux de la Marine. It was Peninsau's job to go from fort to fort auditing the accounts of the clerks for comparison with those of the garde-magasin. At this point he entered into a discussion of the means by which frauds were perpetrated:

J'avais fait des répercussions il engageait ce garde-magasin de lui expédier un état de ses expéditions pour lui avoir au moins de 150 livres qui avait été réellement les mèmes et il expédiait ainsi dans l'état de vivres portés. Le 6 Peninsau décrochait l'argent de vin ou de l'eau de vie, etc., et ce garde-magasin pour l'engager à faire cette manœuvre.

Enfin, il était ; par le garde magasin le dit Peninsau les prêchait et les portait au Commandant pour qu'il les vendait et il croyait faire souvent que Peninsau luy faisait prélever de vin, et vin de vie ou argent, et cela pour que ce commandant ne regardant de trop peu les États qu'il luy avait rapportés à viser.

Peninsau urged that the initiative, as often as not came from the commanders and garde-magasins themselves.

Another means of fiddling the accounts was found in the purchases of foodstuffs, tobacco, and spirits which the clerks purchased,
supposedly from the commanders in the forts. Feniouneau maintained that such purchases were frequently purely fictitious and yet the commanders were reimbursed for their claims by the quittanceintérim's clerk at Montréal. The quittanceintérim subsequently submitted the accounts to de Villiers, the intendant de l'Arsenal, who checked the arithmetic and ordered the drawing up of an invoice for payment. In order to be negotiable this had to receive the intendant's signature and finally was paid by the intendant de l'Arsenal, Inst.79

Although this description is of the system that was inaugurated in 1756, the former system was even easier to defraud since similar arrangements would only have had to account for two people, the commander and vendeur personnel. That the minister was well aware of the difficulty of controlling these accounts is clear from a letter to D'clet of the 11 April, 1749:

Il y a donc longtemps que je suis informé du due de sincérité de la plus part de ces dépenses. Je suis rassuré que l'attention que M. Le Royer a voulu porter à ce réside a donné lieu à d'autres jalousies, les vendeurs étant dans la crainte de supporter des reductions sur les prix ayant pris le pari d'augmenter les quantités à sa détriment ou d'autre les abus qui jusqu'ici sont subsistés.

And he went on to acknowledge that the money really lay not with the Intendant, but the with the governor in the appointment of honest commanders:

Il est question de recevoir officieusement celles-ci, si cela est possible; mais comme les ressources a prendre sur celles dépendent plus de M. de la Jonquière que de vous, je lui ai expliqué les intentions du Roy à cet égard. Il doit en conséquence me confier les commandements des forts qu'il des officiers sur lesquels on peut compter.60

But, the minister seems to have overlooked one of the greatest

60. HII, 40, F 69, sp.76-77.
problems of colonial supply which was the large quantities of goods which simply disappeared in transit. Such losses were easily explained as spoilage or shipping accidents and in operations over such a vast territory, who was to question the authenticity of such claims? Only to cast an eye over the Contrecœur correspondence, for example, is to see accounts of the sinking of boats such as the July, on the 26 April, 1755, before being red on human nations for lack of hay and the supposed corrupt plans complaining about wine being stolen from the convoy on the 11 July, 1754. On the 27 August, 1755 Varin described to Contrecœur the great difficulty he was having in preserving perishable due to the extreme heat and the problem in transporting goods before they rotted were at least in part attributable to the shortages of manpower which were complained of constantly. Similarly, the Collection des papiers du Maréchal de Levis, like all other contemporary sources, is full of references to rotting goods, smuggling bateau-men, and thieving clerks. In a letter to Levis of the 20 July, 1756 Bigot deplored the slow progress made in the construction of a warehouse at Carillon with the result that,

les vivres restent à l'Injure du pays et qu'il s'en trouve beaucoup défaits. 62

On the 2 August, 1756 Levis wrote to Vaudreuil complaining about the 'frigories qui se font jaloûsement' in the provisioning of the forts by the bateau-men, 63 and during March 1758 he noted in his Journal that Contrecœur had informed Vaudreuil he was sending,

61 Bernard Grenier, ed., Papier Contrecœur et autres documents concernant le conflît Anglo-Français sur d'Orléans en 1745-1749, Quebec, 1952, pp. 49, 184, 210, and 221.
63 Ibid., ii, 37.
In short, the opportunities to defraud the Crown were virtually a
debacle and accounting for legitimate losses to receive a task as
to be practically impossible.

It was a situation of which Bigot was aware from the beginning
of his Canadian career. As early as the 7 September, 1740 he had
informed the minister of the hopeless confusion in the colonial
accounts and the hazards which sheltered under it. But he was
determined to defeat his predecessor:

set interdict avant tout d'oeuvre pendant
le guerre et il s'y adroit si levent qu'il
ne joyoit pas possible d'expliciter en aucun
de faire les archives. 66

As to the forts, he did not suppress the knowledge that they were a
risk of corruption but on the 14 October, 1746 shared his doubts
with the minister that they could be reformed, 'de quelque facon
qu'on eût pu y penser'. 66

He did, however, take serious efforts to limit speculation where
possible. During 1736 supplies had been disappearing from the field
hospitals at an alarming rate. Writing to Lewis on the 29 July the
intendant observed that despite the large amounts of medical supplies,
unseals and bedding sent to Fort St. Frédéric, he was still receiving
complaints about shortages. Bigot took that opportunity to send no is
the list of goods sent in the hope,

'qu'on aura plus soin du rest de la quanton envoi
que vous en avez connaissance',

and apoloized for having taken this step, explaining:

64. Ibid., i. 170.
65. MAI, 46, 1217, 91, p. 16.
J'ai besoin de prendre toutes mesures de précautions pour maintenir l'ordre dans les con-
fusions, parce que le pays ne peut pas de-
faire certain arrangements qui considèrent.67

Yet a measure of Bigot's real helplessness before the massive weight of his responsibilities is that in spite of an increasing conviction that systematic fraud was taking place in the hospital at Fort 58.

Hédière, the best he could do was to show his annoyance with Lewis.

after all, if in a drunken stupor the doctors lost his use of instruments, what else was to be done except to send a replacement?69

Great though was his determination to limit peculation, Bigot did not feel able to make use of the black accounting processes to record those whom he believed to be deserving. On the 9 October, 1758

Varin informed Contrareux:

J'ay parlé a M. l'Intendant pour Vous obtained
une gentification. Il m'a dit qu'il ne pouvait vous
la procurer en argent les dépenses considérables
qui se sont faites et qui se font pour la Belle
Motrice comme de la Maîtrise horaire au Ministère,
il m'a soutenu pareil de faire délivrer d'octo-
bre a la personne que Vous la jugerez a propos,
six bouteilles de Vin et deux quarts d'eau de vie
qui y auroit Vendiles & votre profit.69

From this it is to be observed that Bigot can hardly be said to have
got a good example to his subordinates. Taking his cue they even
wrote so far as to argue that they were fairly recording themselves in
proportion to their services. At any rate, according to Denissonneau,
in March 1758 been justified the inflation of the programmatic's
accounts on the grounds that:

Le M. Bigot etoit instruit de ces arrangements
et qu'il n'envisait d'autre object que celui
d'augmenter la Société des parties qu'elle avoir
fait.70

67. Memoires de Lewis, ix. 9.
68. Ibid., Bigot de Lewis, August 10 and 14; ix. 11 and following.
69. Premiers Contrareux, p. 72.
70. Mémoirs pour la France Tonnerre. . .Contre l'Intendant le Procureur
du Roi, p. 236; CPA., 1758-59(1): s. 4°, p. 321(15), n.p.,
in original.
Yet the minister can hardly be except from blame. The conscientious service Contrecœur gave is testified by his correspondence. Clearly he was deserving of reward and the uncompassionate attitude of the minister forced Birot to devise means only to see that justice was done.

Furthermore, the sources are unanimous in maintaining that officers were grossly underpaid, as Birot's secretary pointed out:

La vérité est que (et le signe Birot lo vait) que ces employés continuent si dévouément, qu'ils veulent voir se soutenir avec le produit légitime de leurs places. Il faut donc qu'ils passent un autre état; et celui qui est le plus à leur portée est d'abuser de la place qui devrait les faire vivre.71

Indeed, this claim was evoked time and again in the trial literature as the justification for officials who engaged in trade with private individuals and even with the Crown. It also might go a long way to explaining the chronic shortage of administrative personnel, since a service which could not afford to pay its officials commensurate to their experience and responsibilities was obviously in no better position to train enough men to perform all of the regulatory tasks that so clearly required to be undertaken. Hence, it seems rather odd that that great army of the speculators, Gay Frégnault, should have made a positive virtue out of this shortage. Having observed that New France was understaffed with underpaid administrators, he insisted that this was, for the Canadiens, a guarantee of liberty:

Il en résulte que le peuple ne subit pas les ennuis qu'opposent nécessairement les exigences multiples des parasites de l'État, lesquelles forment une classe noyautre, puissante et bien organisée.72

And what greater liberty is there than the freedom to accumulate

71. Mémoire, François Birot, i. 16.
72. Frégnault, E.P.A.H., i. 157-158.
riches at the expense of the state?

Shortages of skilled manpower not only impeded efficient administration in the posts but also plagued the central offices of the colony. Although a problem common to all developing societies, conditions did not seem to improve markedly in Canada during the century of Royal Government. On the 7 November 1735 Hocquart and even complained of insufficient staff and Hocquart restated the same problem on the 16 October, 1730.73

Apparently, the minister had hoped that the shortage could be cured good in Canada, itself and pretended to believe that salaries were sufficiently high to attract young Canadians into the service since on the 1 May, 1739 he informed Hocquart:

Il est facheux qu'il se trouve si peu de sujets dans la Colonie capables de remplir les emplois qui y manquent; mais il y a lieu d'espérer que les appointements de ces emplois assurent à ceux qui en sont pourvus d'engageant à l'avoir des jeunes Canadiens à s'en rendre Capables; Et vous devez les y exciter autant que vous le pourrez.74

In the following year, on the 2 May, the minister revealed his real prejudices saying that, 'Les dépenses des Emplois ne sont déjà que très considérables', and that Hocquart would have to present a more convincing case to justify an additional administrator.75 That Hocquart's representations were convincing is evidenced by the minister's letter of the 20 April, 1742 since he observed:

Pour l'écran que j'ai fait de la lettre que vous m'avez adressée des Norvaviens et autres Emplois pour le service dans la Colonie il paraît qu'il n'y a que des sujets bien médiocres, et il est facheux que vous n'en trouviez pas de meilleurs.76

73. AC, Ch1A, 35, pp. 36-27; AC, Ch1A, 53, pp. 48-49; cited by Dugueul, ibid., p. 156.
74. AC, B, 68.
75. AC, B, 70.
76. AC, B, 72.
He went on to promise the intendant an écrivain for the colony's
Séjour des Expéditions et des Fonds. Having managed to put the
intendant off by one argument or another for at least four years,
on the 12 April, 1742 the minister was left with no further
expedient but to admit to the harsh reality:

Il ne m'a pas été possible de faire passer
cette amère en Canada l'écrivain que vous aviez
certifié pour servir au bureau des échanges. Les
Sujets propres à ce travail sont rarement dans les
ports.\[77\]

All that was left to him was the rather pathetic note that the
intendant could somehow improve efficiency through a reallocation
of the work force.

No wonder Hoquart was forced to hire private merchants such as
Estèbe, who were by virtue of their experience the only men qualified
by private life to take on administrative posts. Their very
experience, however, put them entirely beyond the mediocres official
complaints offered for their services and so the intendant was forced
to tolerate their continued interest in trade and even to wink at
transactions involving them in flagrant conflict of interest. Since
the minister insisted upon holding them official salaries while at
the same time upgrading the qualifications of the officials, there
was no alternative. In Estèbe argued in his pleading to the court:

Tout le monde peut donc faire le commerce
dans les colonies. Tout le Monse m'y fait faire,
On n'y connaît aucune exception a cet égard. Le
militaire comme employé le fait. Leur appointe-
ments sont trop médiocres; ils ne m'y soulignent
Point pas sans en secrours... J'ai accepté l'emploi
de force jusqu'à la France en l'année de
1740 (sur ce principe). Les placesussent été
trop rémunérées pour moi, s'il eut fallu conter
le Commissaire qui seul m'avait déterminé a m'aligner
dans cette, a renouer avec ma famille, à vivre
sous un ciel étranger qui ne m' convenait pas.
Je ne me souviens point expliqué pour être garde-magasin de France avec 1500 livres d'avancement...

J'ai cherché d'après cet usage, et conformément à ces lois des colonies, sous le Sieur Rocquart, et ce nom seul demeure toujours en justification, que le Sieur Rocquart, étant déjà Garde-Magasin, jamais acheté, pendant plusieurs années, la totalité ou une partie de polonaises du ROI; tantôt par adjudication, tantôt suivant l'estimation, selon que l’argent selon les circonstances jugait à propos de faire dans ou l'autre forme de vendre utile dans les colonies. Sous les yeux de cet Estima ant irréprochable, avec son avel, et toujours Garde-Magasin, je n’étais intéressé dans une maison de commerce, qu’avait formé le Sieur Ferriareau, comme lui-même dans les possessions du ROI, et qu’il avait établie près de ces magasins. Le Sieur Rocquart le savoit. Il ne trouvait pas cet intérêt incompatible avec sa qualité de Garde-Magasin, où la finance de commerce défendu a un emploi dans ces magasins. Il laissait, au contraire, aider pour les besoins du service de préférence, chez le Sieur Ferriareau.76

Now had Versallianc: attitude changed when Bigot was appointed

Minister. The minister was still requiring ever increasing amounts of administrative work to be done without corresponding increases of personnel. Bigot had hardly set foot in the colony before he believed himself constrained to inform the minister:

Je ne suis déjà aperçu, Seigneur que les bonnes pages n’existent dans nos bureaux. Il n’y a que de très moins corruptions et ce ne peut être autrement le Roy ne leurs donnant pas de quoi vivre de sorte que d’abord qu’ils savent un peu travailler ils se plaisent chez ces marchands.

We proposed to remedy the situation by procuring for the capable ones, 'de quoi vivre'.79 So serious was the situation that Bigot returned to the subject in a letter of the 28 October, 1748 in which he repeated the impossibility of retaining any staff at current levels of remuneration and added that official work was seriously retarded:

76. Lettre pour Gallois-estève... et devenu garde des Magasins du Roy, pp. 223-229; 68, 49 in 5431(9).
79. 181, 20, 318, 92, pp. 21-22.
Considering the situation as it existed, it is not surprising that Bigot found the colonial accounts in utter confusion. When he arrived the books still had not been closed on 1753. Although with the invaluable assistance of the comptroller, Brand, 31 and through great exertions of his own, he had managed by 1755 to bring the accounts up to 1752, he simply did not have means at his disposal to guarantee the regularity of the accounting which formed the basis of the annual report. On the 2 February, 1755 Brand, the colonial treasurer described the impossible situation in which he found himself to be. Although personally responsible for the payment of the troops

les souvenons intérieurs de la Coliation lui ont occasionné un travail trop forcé pour le faire avec régularité.

Soldiers who were stationed in the Pays d'en Haut sometimes, for as long as three and four years, had the privilege of nominating delegates to collect their salary for them. Since money could be paid at either Montreal or Quebec, a popular racket among the troops was the dispatch of a delegate to Quebec, who collected the payment while the soldier applied in person at Montreal; the shortage of accountants made it impossible to discover this double payment for many months, often too late to recover the overpayment. In cases where soldiers were paid in merchandise in the forts the accounting was even more

31. On the 3 November 1755 Bigot told the Minister: "je n'aurais pu débrumiller seul l'état des finances de la Colomie dans aussi peu de temps, et M' accordé ne s'y fut employé et n'y eut remé des minis." NCI, AC, CIL, 52, p. 96.
difficult. The best remedy Imbert could suggest was to put the accounting of Montreal and Quebec on an independent footing and to increase the number of accountants. Such an increase in staff might also put the Contrôle in the position to audit the accounts for payments it received from the Treasury, thus eliminating the many clerical errors which slipped through owing to staff shortages. Finally, the pressure of the sudden conversion of circulating notes into letters of exchange was so disproportionate to the clerical resources that many mistakes were inevitably made for which the treasurer was held personally responsible. 82

There can be no question of the utter confusion in which Bigot discovered all aspects of Canadian administration. Furthermore, it would appear that this was attributable not only to the difficult nature of the country but to an acute shortage of qualified administrators. Although Bigot performed miracles in bringing up the accounts to date and in greatly augmenting the detail in his letters to the minister; faced with chronic staff shortages as he was and with an ever rising volume of business owing to the increasing tempo of military operations, it is hardly surprising that he was not capable of supervising personally every aspect of colonial administration. In fact, his précis of 1773 is at its most convincing when arguing this point:

La forme établie en Canada pour le service entraînait des abus nécessaires qu'il aurait toujours été impossible d'éviter, mais qu'on n'avait pas pris un autre plan d'administration. On voulait que l'intendant s'occupât de tous les États de fournitures et toutes les dépenses qui se délivraient, en conséquence, au détriment des fournisseurs qui faisaient quelquefois jusqu'à 50 % et 1,500 lires de Québec dans les pièces où les commandants étaient seuls à prendre les commandes, et qui d'ailleurs n'étaient inspectés

82. PCY, AC, C114, 99, pp. 188-199.
The same was true, he maintained, for the accounts of the Dogme and the Lettre, 35

Of course Bigot's testimony can not be accepted without question. In no bureaucracy has it ever been possible for the chief officer to investigate the rectitude of all the actions of his subordinates. A control is obtained through explicit standards and occasional spot checks to assert the principle that everyone is liable to investigation at any time. Perhaps, if Bigot had not been compromised himself by his commercial enterprises he may have been a more effective police agent but it should be clear by now that he did not regard himself as being particularly compromised in his activities. Furthermore, fraud was endemic to such a degree and competent administrators in such short supply that were he to have taken punitive measures against the guilty he may well have found the prisons incapable of holding the accused and the colony completely demoralized of its administrative corps. Consequently, the intendant appears to have been a prisoner of the system rather the seizer and should not have been so vindictively condemned by the Châtelet in 1783. Before drawing any more definite a conclusion however, it will be necessary to examine more closely the evidence of the trial and Gradis correspondence.

Since Frégnault wrote two volumes based primarily upon the voluminous evidence presented to the court in the Châtelet, it is a hazardous enterprise to undertake to improve upon such substantial efforts in a single chapter. Nevertheless, new insights into the trial literature and official correspondence make it impossible to pass over the subject in silence. Even were the Gradis papers still ignored, the circumstances in which the trial was conducted and the violent language of the prosecutor and judges are sufficient to cast doubt upon the objectivity of the court. Therefore, after having described the motives which precipitated the trial, the argument will move on to a discussion of the charges laid against Bigot and his defence. Because the Gradis papers provide, for the first time, an authoritative comparison to the trial literature, the investigation will concentrate especially upon those charges related to the Bigot-Gradis correspondence. If, by no means affording a comprehensive reinterpretion of the court's findings, this will, nevertheless, give some opportunity to determine the degree of objectivity with which the court approached its task and indicate what weight can be accorded safely to its judgement.

In a paper presented to the 1978 Convention of the Canadian Historical Association, John Poshor connected the Affaire du Canada to the Gigues case and argued that the accused, whether innocent or guilty, they were almost certain to be convicted in a trial of this type if the Crown so desired.² Pointing to the battery of

1. F.B.A.F., ibid.
reports, judgments, facts, and other such material printed during
the trial, he maintained that they are the records of an:

authoritarian government unassailed by an inde-
pendent judiciary or a jury, unchallenged by any
organized legal defense, by inquisitum or by
any other rights of the accused—had virtually
none—able to interrogate the prisoners in private
as often as necessary, accustomed to receiving
the testimony of secret or even anonymous 'witnesses',
more moderate and sensible perhaps than many other
authoritarian regimes but nevertheless free to
build up and publish an unchallenged official
version of the crimes in question, without fear
of questioning by an elected legislature. 5

So, if the Crown had any reason to wish to influence the verdict,
it had at its disposal the means to assure the desired end.

It is not necessary to look very far to find such a motive.
Coming as it did on the heels of a series of spectacular military
defeats in the Seven Years War, not the least of which was the
loss of Canada itself, it is obvious that the Court was looking for
a scapegoat and that the Canadian administrators were the most
convenient victims. The prosecutor of course was at no pains to
hide his prejudices. Besides accusing the administrators of,
'monopolies, abuse, vexations, et prévarications', 4 he went directly
to the point, demanding rhetorically:

Pouvoir imputer à d'autres causes les malheurs
de la France dans ces contrées et les avantages
que les ennemis y ont réservés? 5

But, Resher, the historians of French Government Finances 1701-1799, 6
in his latest article has produced a more sophisticated view of the
Crown's economic motives than just a desire to recover the 11,550,000

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3. Ibid., p. 2.
5. Principaux Rapports du Procureur Général en la Commission
établie dans l'Affaire du Canada, Antoine Boudet, Paris, 1763,
p. 6.
The prosecution of the officials, he maintained, was a means of justifying the repudiation of the bulk of its Canadian debt to private individuals:

The government, by prosecuting its officials for fraud, was able to create an impression that they were responsible for the immense cost of the war and administration in Canada. The entire Canadian debt was made to seem tainted by the military defeat and the corruption that was alleged to have caused both the debt and the defeat. The Canadian bills were thus discredited in general, those held by the guilty officials were confiscated and thus sixty millions in government debt were ultimately repudiated. What was left of the short-term debt incurred in the maritime and colonial wars was deferred and ultimately converted into long-term or funded debt.

Posher pursued this through the final ten pages of his paper noting the vast sums of money owed by the Crown to holders of the Canadian notes, a total reckoned in 1766 at about 83 million livres, which owing to the discredit brought upon these debts by the trial, ultimately, was reduced to only 37,607,000 livres. Thus, the Crown had a most immediate interest in finding verdicts of guilty against the Canadian administrators and so, the convictions brought against Bigot and his associates are equivocal.

That the court assumed the accused were guilty until proved innocent and that it had no compunction in leading the witnesses is alleged by Bigot's partie in the discussion of the charges relating to Bigot's share in the trade of the posts of La Hève and La Hér de l'Est. Although, according to Bigot, the Governor, de la Jonquière, took the initiative in securing the trade interest for himself, Bigot,
and Béard, 10 and Béard managed all of the related business; the
prosecutor was convinced that Bigot was chiefly responsible for the
deeds which had allegedly taken place. He was supposed to have
authorized the dispatch of Crown goods as 'Indian presents' for
the regular trade of the posts. New causes were said to have been
issued for transport and worn-out substitutes to have been accepted
in return. Bigot was also believed to have ordered the justification
of the accounts in the forts for the associates' profit. Despite an
absolute lack of material evidence and only hearsay upon which to
base the charges, the prosecutor returned to the subject again and
again in his cross-examinations of Béard:

On peut d'abord moins s'en dispenser, qu'on
ne peut pas se défendre d'une réflexion qui vaît
à la vue de toutes ces questions qu'on a faites
ici au sieur Béard: C'est qu'elles sont toutes
tournées contre le sieur Bigot. On sait que
c'est le Général qui a accordé ces marchandises;
mais on veut savoir si ce n'est pas à l'institu-
gation du sieur Bigot; si ce n'est pas le sieur
Bigot qui en a fait passer une quantité si immense,
qu'elle n'appartient le Commandant lui-même; si ce
n'est pas le sieur Bigot qui a fait délivrer
des Canots neufs, et qui en a reçu de vieux; si ce
n'est pas 'sur les ordres du sieur Bigot' qu'ont
été payées les dépenses supposées, qui ont été
portées dans des états fabriqués à l'intérieur. Et
dans la vérité, tout parait avoir marché sur ce
plan dans la Procesure, tout parait y avoir été
dirigé, si ce n'est uniquement, de moins princi-
pallement, contre le sieur Bigot. Il n'est pas un
seul Accusé, un seul Témoin, qui n'ait été presc
et déclarer tout ce qu'il savoit, à la charge
de ce premier Accusé. 11

No doubt the matter was well worthy of investigation but an impartial

10. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 130-131. Béard's mémoire,
while not showing this was less explicit, saying only
that, 'In 1751, it was arrêté entre M. de la Jonquière
alors gouverneur général du Canada; M. Bigot, intendant,
M. Martin et de M. Pierre, capitaines, un plan de
Société...'; CPA, 3618 88(5), p. 52; and original MS,
4° En 44331(4).
Justice would have tried to persuade Sérard to recall all he could about the circumstances and most certainly have refrained from encouraging him to beg the question by heaping all of the blame upon the incident. Not surprisingly, in his response to Bigot’s knowing, rather than going into greater detail, Sérard affirmed only that the frauds under discussion were committed in Montréal at Bigot’s order and that he did not know any more about them. So neither the court nor the historian nor any of his victims but the prosecutor and Bigot’s testimony, that Bigot was guilty.¹²

Though Bigot appears to have been deeply compromised by many of the conspiracies unearthed by the trial, the dubiosity nature of the original testimony against him lends credence to Bigot’s claim that he was himself the victim of a miscarriage of justice. In 1757 Jean-Victor Varin, intendant du Canada à Montréal, solicited his return to France on the pretext of ill health. No sooner had he set foot in the metropolis than he went to Versailles to make his ‘confessions’ to the minister. The victim of systematic terror, he maintained, frustrated by Bigot’s stubborn determination to block his promotion:

Toujours des abus qu’il voya commettre sans pouvoir les réprimer; inquiet sur les opérations de commerce dans lesquelles il s’était trouvé engagé, pour ainsi dire, malgré lui, il se détermina à fuir les occasions qui lui tendaient les pièges mènaçant de la fortune.¹³

Thus he presented his motives to the court.

Whether Varin was truly convinced that Bigot had deliberately blocked his promotion, or whether he merely found it a convenient

¹³. BNF, 4° H. 34351(3). Requête du Jean-Victor Varin à Sartines, p. 5.
argument, he maintained that Bigot held him a grudge owing to his recommendation of,

des operations qu'il convenoit de faire pour l'économie de l'approvisionnement des bagages. 14

That this was not the case Bigot went out of his way to demonstrate
in his mémoire by referring to letters he wrote to the minister
soliciting favours for the commissaire-ordonnateur.15 Having failed
to receive a promotion, as Varin's story went, even though he had
sent his wife to Versailles in 1751 to present his case to the
minister, he was convinced that only Bigot's recommendation would
procure him promotion. Thus, in spite of himself, when seen as
Bigot's agent, met him at Montreal in 1752 to urge him to join a
combine designed to defraud the Crown and argued that:

il ferait plaisir à M. Bigot; que ce serait une occasion de se lier avec lui, de s'en faire un
ami, de le déterminer en sa faveur au Ministre;
qu'il obtiendrait par ce moyen la place de Commissaire Général qu'il sollicitait depuis si long-
temps.16

all of his good resolutions were for naught and he succumbed.

But the very ruthlessness of this self-seeking throws into doubt
the explanation of his motives for confession in 1757. It is unlikely
that a man who was prepared to compromise himself so deeply in the
hope of promotion would develop a conscience subsequently. In fact,
that his motives for 'confession' were the same as those for 'commission'
was implicit in his own words. As Bigot's mémoire pointed out, his
whole will was bent upon replacing Bigot with himself as intendant.

Il avertissait le Ministre, que la Colonie allait périr, si on la laissait plus long-temps entre ses
 mains; qu'il était d'une nécessité indispensable de le rappeler, si on voulait le sauver; et il
s'engageait redoutant comme étant dans la géné-
reuse disposition de repousser le mer, et de faire

14. Ibid., p. 3.
le sacrifice de sa tranquillité et de son repos,
pour aller y rétablir le bon ordre et la règle,
si le Roi jugeait que son zèle pût y être de quelque utilité.17

Moreover, that Varin was vain and interested at least as much
in display as in the effecting of economies for the Crown was
testified to by Sec. Bigan on the 15 November, 1748:

N. de Varin est arrivé de Québec avec son grand cortège, car il maît que tout se fasse avec dignité. Il avait deux canots magnifiquement armés, et, à sa suite, la cour, qui est descendue avec lui et qu'il a gardé là-haut avec lui sans s'embarrasser s'il était nécessaire ici. Il fait le personnage d'un act.18

A measure of the court's complacency about the colonies or
perhaps its resignation to the systematic frauds which took place
there is that, rather than recalling Bigot immediately and launching
a full-scale investigation of Varin's charges, the minister contented
himself with writing the same sort of letters to the governor and
intendant urging economies as had been written in previous years.

If Bigot's mémoire is to be believed, the minister even wrote to him
in mid 1758 assuring him of the 'disposition favorable où je suis de faire valoir vos services auprès du Roi', but since the reference
immediately preceding this was deliberately distorted, no unsubstantiated statement the mémoire makes can be received without question.

Arguing that Varin's renoncement had made no impression upon the minister's
esteeem for Bigot, it was asserted that de Karas wrote to the intendant
on the 14 February, 1758:

Les témoignages qui m'ont été rendus de votre probité et ce que j'en ai vu par moi-même,
m'engagent, etc.19

Whereas, in fact, the minister was referring to the Gradier at that

17. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 149.
18. RAC., 1933, p. 6.
19. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 156.
point and the original wording was:

Les témoignages qui m'ont été rendus de leur probité...

This discovery is disconcerting. When such readily verifiable material is so brazenly distorted, what is there to be said for the reliability of the rest of the testimony? Were it only Bigot's brief that is subject to such selections, then perhaps the difficulty would be manageable but each of the accused appears to have had not the slightest compunction in similarly manipulating the evidence. So obviously, conclusions can be drawn safely only with the greatest of care.

Varin's brief, for example, is palpably absurd where it asserted:

Jusqu'à l'époque de l'année 1752 qui est le vingtième des services du Sieur Varin, il ne lui est rien reproché dans sa conduite. Le moment d'erreur, commis en 1752 que le S. Pean vint à Montréal.

Although Louis Magon regretted that her son-in-law, Varin's predecessor as commissaire-ordonnateur at Montreal, had been so scrupulous:

Avons donc que tu n'as été, cher fils, qu'une grosse dupie de n'avoir pas mieux su t'arranger; au moins qu'affrais-tu en quelque chose en sortant de Canada.

Donald Horton observed:

Between them, Michel and the Roostarts conducted most of the crown's business at Montreal and the evidence indicates that they did so with a sharp eye to their own interests as well as to those of their relatives and intimates. This self-interest was undoubtedly why the latter years of Michel's administration were scarred by controversy. During the early 1740's, for example,

20. CPA., 161, AC, B, 107, p. 132.
several complaints about his patronage practices, especially his methods of purchasing goods locally for the king's service, reached beyond Hochart, his patron, to the French court.\textsuperscript{23}

So speculation in the Royal Stores was already an established tradition at Montreal when Varin arrived on the scene. Indeed, Esthe observed:

Je savais qu'à Montréal, le sieur Robert, garde magasin pendant 50 années, avait toujours fait le commerce et qu'il faisait aussi fournir de préférence par son associé tout ce qui était nécessaire dans les magasins du Roi.\textsuperscript{24}

Given this background, it is impossible to believe that a self-confessed peculator could have established a trade society in 1746 with a local Montreal merchant, Lemoyne-Despins, and the gardemagasin at Montreal, Martel, which he even admitted supplied goods to the Stores and have resisted the temptation to garner a handsome profit.\textsuperscript{25} This conclusion is particularly irresistible in the light of l'Algon's observations about the construction of Varin's lodgings:

Je ne sais, cher fils, si je t'ai rendu que M. Varin avait loué la maison de l'Algon pour sept ans et qu'il lui donne deux cents livres par année et qu'il y doit faire toutes les réparations nécessaires à ses dépens. Il y a bien été un an qu'il l'a et il n'y a que depuis un mois ayant fait refaire cette maison au haut en bas, les plafonds, cheminées, planches, couverture tout à neuf, des cheminées de plâtre partout. C'est une maison magnifique aujourd'hui. Il y fait faire une galerie avec un fer à cheval à mettre une table de 20 couverts. Et tout cela se paye, à ce qu'on est les curriers, avec des certificats sur les réparations des maisons du Roi et sur celles des fortifications.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23} DGB., p. 445; for the relationships, see above, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{24} CPA., NQ19, 08(5); from En., 40-54 34531(9). Mémoire, Entebbe, p. 324. Martel also affirmed this: En., 49-50 34533(1). Observations sur les Profits Présentus indiquent faits par la Société Lemoyne-Despins, Martel, et Varin, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{25} Hochart, Varin, pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{26} MNB., 1748, 20 November 1748, p. 9.
What faith can be put in Varin’s allegations against Bigot, Pén and Bréard in the issue of the sociét des vivres de Montréal is uncertain. Essentially, Varin’s brief alleged that Pén proposed to him in 1752 an association for the supply of the varin at Montreal, whose profit to be obtained through a mark-up of twenty-five percent on the goods was to be distributed in shares of one-quarter to Bigot, one-quarter to Pén, one-fifth to Bréard, and three-tenths to Varin. Bigot attached this testimony not only on the grounds that Pén denied it point blank and that Varin’s oral testimony had varied significantly; at different times he had said that Pén’s proposition came in 1753, or even 1754, that he had proposed a mark-up of ten to twelve percent on the goods and that the distribution of profit was on the basis of one-quarter to Varin, one-eighth to Bréard, and one-eighth to Martel, but where he really bore into the brief was in the absolute lack of written evidence produced.

Varin had journeyed to France specifically with the intent of denouncing the speculators and yet he took not a shred to substantiate his allegations. Yet, as Bigot observed:

On a dû passer un Act de Société; et chacun des associés doit avoir son dû, signé de tous. Le Sieur Varin doit avoir le sien. Que ne représente-t-il? Direz-vous qu’ils ne fassent point de Traité public pour prévariquer? On ne stipule pas sans écoute la prévarication; voire, sans parler de la prévarication on fait un Traité de Société sur le fond de l’affaire dans laquelle elle doit être commise; et c’est ce Traité qu’il tendroit rapporter...

En effet, une Société, chose verbale, sur-tout quand elle roule sur des objets importants, produit nécessairement une multitude d’Actes, ou d’autres monuments qui le constatent; et dans ce cas particulier, tous ces Actes, tous ces monumens, doivent être entre les mains du sieur Varin...Mais puisque tous ces Actes n’ont existé, que ne les produit-il?

28. États de François Bigot, ii. 180. The testimony in question was given to the rapporteur on the 14 April 1762. CPA., 1818 GA(5), 71, Bureau’s trial records, p. 42.
Perhaps Bigot was justified in asking rhetorically how it was possible to sustain any charges on such flimsy grounds.29

A measure of just how complex and difficult of judgement is the evidence presented to the third estate is that the testimony on this point given by Bréard and Péan in their factum serves only to obscure rather than clarify. Bréard denied positively having had any share in the society described by Varin except for the year 1756.30 When cross-examined by the rapporteur on the 21 May, 1762, however, he admitted to having received money in 1754 from Péan. Although it may be that this came from shared interest in coasting boats, the rapporteur noted:

(11) se défend mal de la société pour laquelle les vivres ont été augmentée du bénéfice de 12 pour cent et dont Varin a fait sa déclaration.31

Of this transaction Péan's mémoire observed that it had been described to Bréard as a gift:

A l’égard du sieur Bréard il a déclaré dans ses réponses qu’il n’avait touché que dans une seule amende des sommes provenant des affaires que le sieur Varin faisait à Montréal, et que c’étoit ce Commissaire qui lui avait un matin apporté l’argent en lui disant que ‘c’étoit un présent qu’il lui faisoit.’

Pressing home the advantage he argued that if he had only remitted money to Bréard on one occasion, and if it was a gift, then he can not be said to have carried back profits on any regular basis, as Varin alleged.32 So, is it to be assured on the basis of one 'gift' that Varin's testimony is true and that Péan did coerce Varin into this trade combine? Why then, although varin, referring to himself, stated that,

il descendait tous les ans à Québec pour vendre

30. Mémoire, Bréard, p. 150.
31. CPA, M118 63, 71, p. 39.
32. D17, 4° 172 2526, Mémoire pour Michel-Jean-Hugues Péan...contre R. Le Frémoy, 1749, p. 264.
If he was accounting to Bigot for the combine, why did he in all of his testimony pretend that all of the negotiations were carried out with Péan? Why in his brief did he write that he knew of Bigot's involvement only by way of Péan; for what else could he have meant when he wrote that the 'enterprise was undertaken, 'à la sollicitation du Sieur Péan et du consentement de M. l'Intendant'?

Furthermore, Péan effectively questioned whether it was likely that a seasoned official like Varin would have accepted lessons in graft from an officer so junior to himself:

C'est cependant ce même homme qui après avoir vieilli dans des emplois distingués où sa conduite avait été exempte de soupçons, ne rougit pas de s'accuser lui-même des plus honteuses manoeuvres, et qui impute au sieur Péan de les lui avoir consignées. Lui à qui persuaderait-on que c'est un jeune officier que le sieur Varin avait vu dans la plus haute enfance, et dans un corps où ce Commissaire était déjà Contrôleur de la Marine, que c'est, dit-on, ce jeune officier qui a appris à un homme aussi expérimenté l'art dangereux de corriger ces prevarications? Quelle imputation ridicule et absurde? Un homme de cet âge qui dit avoir pris avec tant de complaisance des leçons en matière de fraudes ne croîtrait-il pas de passer lui-même pour avoir été fort capable d'en donner?

Péan admitted that he did have trade interests in common with Varin but argued that it was Varin who had invited him to take a share and that:

Lorsque le sieur Varin proposa au sieur Péan de s'associer avec lui, il ne fut point question d'entreprises où le Roi dit intéressé.

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33. CPA, P18, 68, 71, p. 42.
34. Requête, Varin, p. 9.
He argued that he was away in the Presidien Direct for most of 1753-54 and so, even if it was possible to believe that this experienced businessman would have permitted a green officer to take charge of his affairs, Péan was in no position to have done so. But it was not the accrité described by Varin in which Péan had a share but rather in the transport of foodstuffs in association with Varin and Filet. He poured scorn on the idea that Varin would have sought his advice on the percentage return permitted on transactions for the Royal Stores and concluded by observing:

Il faut l'avouer; le jugement le plus favorable qu'on puisse porter de semblables imputations, c'est qu'elles partent d'une tête abîmée par une longue captivité.\(^6\)

What is to be made of such a welter of conflicting and incomplete testimonies? Bigot categorically denied any knowledge of the scheme. Péan denied a direct personal participation although he admitted having had some shared interests with Varin and hinted that he later learned that the contrarière-ordonnateur had been involved in some dubious business. Éraud received a single 'gift' but had no knowledge of its source. It was common knowledge in the colony that not only Varin but also his predecessors had profited illicitly in the provisioning of the Marine. Varin was at pains to throw all of the responsibility onto Bigot's shoulders, but was incapable of producing any evidence whatsoever to substantiate his case. Is it possible that the connection with Bigot, Péan and Éraud was only a figment of Varin's imagination? Bigot's mémoire alleged that he had an obvious motive and that he might even have been encouraged by the prosecutor to trump up the story:

Le sieur Varin n'a pas plus ignoré que les autres Accusés après les différentes interrelations qu'on leur a faites, sur le compte du

\(^{36}\) Ibid., pp. 268, 271.
Sieur Bigot, qu'il était le grand objet du Procès; celui qu'on soupçonnait le plus, et qu'on drait plus spécialement d'essayer à conviction. Tous, ou presque tous, sont partis de ce point de vue, pour lui faire partager les faits qu'on leur impute A chacun en particulier, comptant, sans doute, mériter par-là ou laver ou mésaventure; qui soient mises, s'il n'en est pas qui se soient faites d'obtenir des lettres de grâce, et qui aient d'avoir rendu d'autant plus d'issue, que leurs déclarations, contre le Sieur Bigot, seraient plus chargées? S'il en est quelques-unes dans ce cas, le Sieur Varin a plus de titres qu'un autre pour se croire du nombre des heureux; et quand ils n'auraient voulu que s'excuser, en rejettant leurs fautes sur leur supérieur, c'est une considération bien suffisante pour les déterminer à employer cette ressource. 37

At best the evidence against Bigot is inconclusive. In so small and gosho a society as Quebec in 1758, where Varin's frauds were the substance of general consent it is inconceivable that Bigot ignored what was taking place in Montreal, just as his predecessor, Rocqueart, was informed of the activities of Varin's predecessor.

There would, however, appear to be little better grounds for convicting Bigot of having participated than to infer that Rocqueart, merely because he protected Michel, must therefore have profited too. No doubt both Bigot and Rocqueart were derelict in their duty, having failed to put a stop to the corruption in Montreal but even the court recognized that there was insufficient evidence to convict Bigot on this charge.

Even though Bigot was not found guilty of collaborating on the Montreal supplies it will be useful to examine Varin's case even more closely because he employed many of the arguments used by Bigot relative to the Gradis undertaking. Having testified to the existence of the Montreal society, Varin was determined to prove that there

37. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 158-159.
was nothing illicit in its operation. Like so many of the accused, he began his defence by citing the royal edicts of August 1669 and December 1701, which he argued not only licensed colonial officials to engage in trade but even encouraged them to do so, since maritime commerce:

était une source féconde qui port l’abondance dans les états, qu’il est la voie le plus innocente et la plus légère de gagner du bien.

Although he admitted that a literal reading of those documents would have shown that they applied only to military officers and nobles, he argued that such a strict interpretation would be to:

ignorer le système politique du gouvernement à l’Égard des Colonies. L’ur véritable et seule utilité, c’est l’agrandissement et l’activité qu’elles procurent au commerce. Plus il y a de mains qui manœuvrent, plus grande est l’abondance et de là est venue la liberté du Commerce dans les Colonies; de là l’usage qu’o de tout l’univers, que ceux qui se déterminent à aller habiter ces contrées, Militaires, officiers de justice, de finance et autres, se le font que dans l’Espérance de s’enrichir par la voie du Commerce.\(^\text{28}\)

Apart from the fact that the real price for which the administrators appear to have been accused by the Canadian public and the court was not so much having engaged in trade but rather having acquired a monopoly over it to the exclusion of all non-associated merchants from participation in public contracts; the court while cross-examining Bréard observed that the merchants had been desperate enough to dispatch a representative to plead their case to the minister;\(^\text{39}\) Varin’s argument is false because the context of the edicts cited makes it clear that their intent was solely to legalize

\(^{38}\) Regeste, Varin, p. 6.
\(^{39}\) Mémoire, Bréard, pp. 84-85.
Participation in wholesale trade to the French nobility, and not to sanction operations in the colonies involving the servants of the Crown in conflicts of interest. Certain as this might be, however, the universal resort to this argument by the Canadian officials must indicate that they believed themselves to be justified by it. At the very least, it indicates that a novel business, the prosecution of colonial officials for fraud was, since they would hardly have wasted so much ink had they been convinced by precedent that their argument would be dismissed by the court. This is but one indication that the trial was an effort to impose new standards of conduct upon colonial officials by convicting a group of them for their past actions and as such smacks of retro-active justice.

Besides a theoretical right to engage in commerce, Varin argued that circumstances made it absolutely unavoidable that colonial officials should so do:

Lais il y a quelque chose de plus fort; c'est que l'on peut dire que le droit que le suppléant a eu de faire est une convention. Les cinq premières années qu'il a habité le Canada en qualité d'écrivain principal et de Contrôleur, il n'a eu que 1500 (livres) d'appointement par an; les neufs années suivantes qu'il a été commissaire et contrôleur à Québec il n'a eu que 1800 (livres); enfin les neuf dernières années, qu'il a été commissaire tant à Québec qu'à Montréal, il n'a eu que 2400 (livres). Cependant en cette dernière qualité, il était obligé par décente, et pour faire honneur à sa place, d'avoir une table ouverte pour tous les officiers qui descendaient des pays d'en haut, soit pour aller à Québec, soit pour se rendre à une autre destination. Ceux qui connaissent le Canada, et combien il y fait cher vivre, surtout en temps de guerre sont en état d'attester que ces dindions appointements suffisait à peine pour vêtir et nourrir un domestique. S'ils n'ont pas été plus forts, c'est que la permission de faire le commerce et le gain qui en résultait était regardé par le gouvernement comme un supplément qui, en remplissant ses vœux du côté du commerce le dédommageait de la dépense que sa place rendait nécessaire. 40
The inadequacy of official salaries is undeniable. Whether
this sanctioned officials to indulge in trade with the Crown, thus
involving themselves in conflict of interest, or whether it
permitted only a modest volume of private trade, Varin declined to
discuss. Bigot's memoir, however, met the question directly and
went on to detail its almost universal practice:

Les Colonies ne s'administrent point comme nos
Provinces...
Le Commerce que tout le monde fait dans la Colonie,
tout le monde le fait avec le Roi...les chefs com-
merce ont cette liberté...
Il est bien nécessaire en effet de leur permettre
de vendre au Roi et d'acheter de lui; car c'est le
roi qui fait les plus grandes consommations dans
les Colonies; et par conséquent, c'est vis-à-vis
de lui principalement qu'on veut faire un commerce
d'une certaine importance...

Au surplus, cet usage des Employés au service
et des Chefs de faire le Commerce avec le Roi est
aussi ancien que les Colonies, et il a été de tout
temps à la connaissance des ministres. Quand le
Sieur Bigot passa à Louisbourg en 1739, en qualité
de Commissaire-ordonnateur, il trouva que le Con-
troleur de la Marine, le Garde-Magasin et tous les
autres officiers avaient des Patrons en mer, tout
couvertes sous leurs noms, et qu'ils avaient la
préférence de vendre leurs marchandises au Roi.

En 1748, il trouva en Canada, que le Garde-
Magasin des Pays-Divises était chargé de la
fourniture des Vivres pour le service, et cet
Etablissement subistait de père en fils dans sa
famille, depuis 40 ans.

Le Garde-Magasin de Montréal avait la même
fourniture dans le Gouvernement auquel il était
attaché et il l'a conservé pendant un grand nombre
d'années.

Celui de Québec faisait aussi le Commerce,
et il recevait nombre de livraisons en commissariat.
Le Roi se fournissait dans ces livraisons, et même
dans le Magasin de ce particulier.

L'Écrivain principal qui y faisait les fun-
tions de Contrôleur de la Marine, fournissait les
Vivres pour le service depuis plusieurs années.
Il les avait fournies pendant bien longtemps au-
paravent et alors il était Garde-Magasin de Québec.

Tous les officiers de Marine, sans exception,
faisaient le Commerce, tant de l'intérieur que de
l'extérieur de la Colonie.

Le Ministre en était informé, et il ne pouvait
ne pas l'ignorer. Non-seulement la notoriété le lui
apparaissait; mais il avait envoyé en 1740, un commis-
saire de prendre la connaissance la plus exacte de
tout ce Commerce et il ne l'a pas désapprouvé, puisqu'il ne l'a pas empêché.41

Whether the minister can be said to have approved of the commercial manoeuvres in the colonies because he did not put a stop to them is doubtful. It is more likely that Fraud was so widespread that he felt himself impotent to take effective measures against it. Furthermore, he could not end it without raising official salaries but he could not raise official salaries as long as the French Crown was plagued with financial difficulties, and one of the primary reasons for the Crown's difficulties was the shocking degree of population in all branches of administration. Even Bigot, however, did not go so far as to claim that there had ever been official permission to officers to traffic in the Stores. Although trusted to suit the needs of his immediate argument, he came close to evoking the fundamental axioms upon which ancient ruling administrative law hung when he wrote:

"Ce n'est pas que l'on prétende que les Ministres aient jamais déclaré ouvertement que le roi trouvait bon que les personnes attachées à son service fissent le Commerce avec lui...La crainte qu'on n'obtiendrait d'une permission authentique les a toujours empêché de la donner. Mais d'un autre côté, ils n'en ont jamais prononcé la défense, par une Loi publique; parce qu'ils ont toujours voulu qu'on put prononcer la défense, en même temps qu'ils toléraient l'opération, réservant à appliquer sa défense précised aux cas où ils rencontrerent des abus à reformer.42"

John Bocher put the argument more scientifically when he argued that:

"To say that eighteenth-century ethics for officials were different or less strict than our own is not to say that there were no standards of conduct...even men were indicted for their activities..."

41. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 4, 9-12.
42. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 16-17.
and others were not. There is no simple explanation for this. Patronage and family connections weighed heavily in the decision of a man’s fate; so did success and failure in the post or colony where he worked; but the decision was ultimately made in the subtle processes of the paternal monarchy. Not bound by the rule of law, not hampered by parliamentary scrutiny, not responsible to any power outside itself except God, but inclined to satisfy public opinion and powerful factions, to some extent in the interests of good government and political safety.43

As he stated elsewhere:

any student of the eighteenth century who has studied administrative institutions enough (realizes) that officials in that age were nearly all corrupt.44

Corruption was ascribed and measures usually taken against it only when motivated by other considerations.

It appears that the Crown had failed to legislate effectively against corruption because it saw no alternative to the entrenched system and even enjoyed a certain advantage in being able to prosecute any of its officials at any time. Bothar argued that the appointment of a Chambre de Justice, particularly after a war:

- to review the profits and business lives of all those who had grown rich in government finances and supply,

was a time-honoured practice. It:

- served the political purposes of satisfying public hatred of such profiteers or of getting rid of an un Wanted but well-established higher official and his supporters.

Since, 'the times were ripe for another after the Seven Years War', but because, 'by then the royal financiers were too strong and the Crown too weak', the Canadian officials were tried instead. 'This practice', Bothar added:

44. Ibid., p. 6.
Was probably universal in early modern Europe, one of the informed institutions of absolute monarchy, perhaps of all authoritarian regimes in all times.45

Abandon took the argument one step farther. He maintained that a confusion of private and public interest was not merely incidental to monarchical government but axiomatic given the identification of individual office holders with their office, most obvious in the Crown itself.46 In a system where office was property there could be no thought of bureaucratic discipline, the only prosecutable crime being a breach of trust large enough almost to be labelled treason. So, the affaire du Canada lies in line with a long tradition of arbitrary court proceedings and although the condemned officials might complain that they were punished for actions that were commonly committed, it can not be maintained in this sense that the proceedings launched against them were unprecedented.

Varin's defence was not, however, exhausted by the argument that colonial officials were permitted to engage in trade with the Crown. Since, at the very least, colonial usage seemed to sanction this activity, it was as Bigot's defence pointed out, only the nature of this privilege which could be deemed to be criminal. Only if the associates had used their position to inflate artificially the price of goods sold to the Crown could they be legitimately convicted of malversation. But, argued Varin, nothing could be less well founded than the application of French commercial values to Canadian commerce:

Quand à la servir des fournitures il n'est pas aisé de porter un jugement certain sur cet objet. Le commerce du Canada a des principes et des usages totalement différents et opposés au Commerce national.
La circonstance, le danger que l'on craint,

46. Politics, Patronage and the Imperial Interest, p. 30.
la rareté ou l'abondance augmente ou diminue le bénéfice de ce premier commerce. Le second au contraire, a un tarif de convention qui varie rarement, parce que les denrées et marchandises arrivent sans risque dans le magasin du débiteur.

Given these considerations, he argued that there was nothing out of line about a mark-up of twenty-five percent and so he was not guilty of any fraud:

or il est certain et l'on peut en fait qu'il n'y a ni particuliers, ni négociants à Montréal, qui eussent fourni ces vivres à un bénéfice de vingt cinq pour cent.

but, as the court learned, there were more ways of obtaining an illegitimate profit than by assigning an exorbitant mark-up to goods.

In testimony given to the parlement on the 14 April, 1762 Varin declared that total profits on the marchandises des vivres du Montréal for the period 1755-1758 amounted to 762,000 livres of which his share was 210,000 livres. He also declared having obtained 18,000 livres from a fictional receipt of flour and lard allegedly authorized by Pian and co indirectly by Bigot and charged to the account of the magasin of Montreal. Bigot, Pian and Mortal were each said to have received a like sum. Goods purchased in partnership with Pian and Bigot from Estèbe and la Maletic in 1756 were said to have netted a profit of 900,000 livres for the associates.

Varin stated that the mark-up given to Estèbe and la Maletic was ninety-five percent and that these goods were placed in the Montreal magasin at 15%. The 95% mark have been charged on top of the 700,000 livres paid to the Quebec merchants or else the profits could never have approached 900,000 livres. He also confessed to having profited in partnership with Mortal on the supply of porcelain for Indian presents in the sum of 30,000 or 40,000 livres. He admitted

47. Requête, Varin, p. 7.
having had a share in the goods supplied by Graciis to Jean in 1757 and also to have facilitated the introduction of goods into the Kasauni which were carried by the ship the Saint Victor but in neither his testimony nor his brief did he specify the profit he received from the Graciis shipment and he persisted that he had no share in the Saint Victor. Bréard, however, maintained that Varin had a one-third share in the boat in conjunction with himself and Estèbe. Finally, he admitted having received 9,000 livres for his part in the Claverie enterprise. The proportion supposed that Bigot had cheated him. Other subjects of malfeasance included a combine consisting of Bartel, d'Anteire, Bigot, Bréard, and Ren which Varin maintained had profited on the transport of goods into the Bacc d'en Haut. Bartel's brief stated that from the operation, which took place between 1755 and 1757, the associates netted 450,000 livres. Besides his interest in the Saint Victor, Varin also invested, in company with Bréard and Estèbe, in a ship called the Saint Joseph which was dispatched to France in October 1754 and brought back to Bove Verte a shipment of lard. He declared that he was given 25,000 livres for his share. Bréard, however, maintained that Varin had a three-fifth interest in the voyage, having taken over Bigot's two-fifth and Ren's one-fifth share in the ship. According to Varin's brief, however, Bréard insisted (it must have been in unreferred cross-examination) that he gave Varin nothing for the lard and paid him only 2,700 livres which was his share in the body of the boat. Estèbe, it was said, denied receiving anything at all on the enterprise. The remaining sections of the brief dealt

49. Désoire, Bréard, p. 95.
50. CPA., 1836, 88, LX, 41, p. 42.
51. EN, 4, En 5531(10), Désoire pour le Sieur Bartel...ci-devant Garde-languein du Pois a Valet-Neel, pp. 35-36.
52. Désoire, Bréard, p. 95.
with marginal charges concerning tobacco, flour, and canoes as well as a reference to the division of the surplus on the accounts of the Montreal ______ of 1756 which Hartel denied sharing with Varin.53

Naturally, all of the charges were explained away in one fashion or another or else blamed on someone else. Indeed, it was extremely difficult for the court, sitting in another country sometimes a decade or more after the fact, having lost access to most of the relevant documents owing to the conquest, to establish unequivocally any of the charges. In most cases all it had to go upon was the quixotic testimony of the accused themselves, who were so knowledgeable in the subject matter as the court was ignorant. They had every reason, it would appear, not to tell the truth or at any rate the full truth, and in questions where they contradicted one another it was usually only a case of one man's word against another. Indeed, in most instances, as Varin argued regarding the ______ de virres, about the only conclusion the court was justified in reaching was that had the accused wished to defraud the Crown, they were in the position to have so done:

S'il n'avoit pas été intéressé dans cette entreprise l'on ne pourroit certainement lui rien dire de les avoir fait payer le prix qu'elle l'ont été parce que non certir ne s'avoit a faire acheter aux prix de 1. valeur commune.54

But even though the court lacked solid evidence, all the testimony and the general habits of colonial administrators appears to show that Varin and the other officials in Canada needed no tuition in the arts of fraud. If Bigot shared their views quite happily, it is hardly tenable to maintain as Varin implied that Bigot single-handedly

54. Ibid., p. 8.
corrupted the whole administrative corps of the colony. What then was Bigot's role? Certainly one thing he had in common with Varin is that he took a lot of money back with him to France.

Despite Varin's desire to atone for his wrong-doing, atonement did not, apparently, extend so far as to give up the profits from his Canadian career since the profligate placement of money and his inept demand for a government pension scandalized the Court circles. On the 6 August, 1758 Gradis informed Bigot:

On a crié et l'on crie fortement contre M. Varin de ce qu'il a reçu une charge de Secrétaire du Ray du grand Collège, ensuite une terre à 10 ou 12 lieues de Paris qui est afférente de 20 à 22 mille livres pour 550 mille livres et plus encore de ce qu'il demandait se retirer avec une pension. 55

Earlier in the same year Bigot's agents had been in the market for an estate for him also. On the 24 February, 1759 Gradis wrote to him:

M. la Salle nous avertit MM. qu'il aubait en vaste de vous faire l'achat d'une terre du prix d'environ 200 mille livres que nous devions lui fournir suivant que vous nous l'avez ordonné, mais du depuis MM. de Berry nous a marqué avoir convenu avec M. de Seque pour la terre du Berry pour 550 mille livres, sans compter la dépense des meubles, du contrat, du décret et autres frais qui pourront se monter aux environs de 50,000 livres, qu'il aura besoin que nous lui comptions ce mois de May cent mille écus qu'il veut placer sur les états de France...Nous luy avons marqué qu'il peut compter sur cette somme. 56

The fuss that Varin's acquisition precipitated caused the Gradis to advice de Berry not to make any purchases for Bigot, but de Berry had ignored that advice with the result that by the 6 February, 1759 Paris was basking with vicious innuendo against Bigot:

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55. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 273a.
56. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 233a.
Le troisième bruit qu'a fait à la cour et dans Paris l'acquisition de la terre que Mr. de Berry a fait pour vous; ce qui a fait tenir bien de propos décevants au sujet de la haute fortune que vous avez faite dans le Canada. 

Sr. de Berry eût voulu suivre les cris et représentations que Notre Sr. Gracis luy avait faits de placer vos fonds bien solièdemment jusqu'à ce que vous luy fûriez de retour en France ce qui aurait bien mieux convenu à vos intérêts et vous luy étoit à même à votre retour de faire pour vous même ce que vous aurés jurez à propos de faire. En outre cela aurait évité les discours des personnes qui se plaisissent à trouver occasion de critiquer souvent sur les personnes qui doivent être respectées par eux. Enfin nous n'avons pas manqué de remarquer et d'instruire pendant tous le séjour que notre Sr. Gracis a fait à Paris, Mr. de Berry de tout ce qu'y servoit au sujet d'une terre que Mr. Verin avoit choisi et tout ce qu'on disoit partout et qu'ainay la prudence exigéoit de se tenir uniquement à placer comme il l'avoit vos fames jusques au mois des nouveaux ordres de vous part et que vous fussiez instruit de ce que y servoit en France.

Previously in the same letter Gracis detailed the other gossip current about Bigot:

L'attache(ment) respectueux et la reconnaisance que nous vous devons Sr. et qui ne finira qu'avec nous; les bontés et la confiance dont vous nous honorez ne nous permettent pas de vous laisser ignorer tous les mauvaises propos que nombre de personnes se censent de se rendre soit à la cour comme dans les provinces: Le premier, que toutes les fournitures que le Sieur Cadet, missionnaire au Canada a entrepris vous regardez en perte et qu'en consequence il y a une monopole que ce missionnaire fai à la faveur de son traité, soit dans les divers postes dont il est chargé d'envoyer et de faire passer les vivres se qui est honteisé par vous. La seconde; Le dépanse extra-ordinaire que vous ne causez de faire dans votre saison, et la perte de deux cent quelques mille livres que vous avez perdus au jeu l'hiver dernier avec les officiers chez vous ce qu'y a été marcé au ministre a ce que nous avons appris.

Yet, despite all this gossip, the Gracis, who knew Bigot intimately remained convinced of his integrity. The letter went on to read:

57. Gracis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, Nois Gracis to Bigot, 6 February 1759, ii. 14-Mn.
Nous savons Mr. mieux que personne comment vous
vous êtes toujours sacrifié au bien de l'État
et de la patrie et que vous n'avez rien à vous
reprocher de pas une part directement et indirec-
tement malgré tout cela, trouvez bon
Mr. que nous prenions la liberté de vous représenter de faire mettre
toute les affaires de la Colonie dans toutes les
règles possibles et de ne manquer pas des
formalités nécessaires à cela afin d'éviter que
pas un de vos ennemis ne puisse avoir une
prise pour vous faire de la peine.

At first glance it is not entirely clear how this letter ought
to be interpreted. It shows that Gradis had not only heard the
rumours circulated about Bigot's fortune but was accustomed to
handling large sums of money for him. Apparently, if his expressions
were genuine, he had no grounds upon which to suspect that the
allegations were founded. So, Bigot's fortune did not constitute
in his view prima facie evidence of wrong doing. Furthermore, he
was convinced that enemies were eager to make use of any equivocal
evidence that might be found against Bigot. Of course, even in the
face of the tone of the letter and indeed the tenor of all Gradis'
correspondence with Bigot, it might be suggested that Gradis'
courteous phrases were no more than form and that this was a scarcely
veiled alarm, the writer hoping that Bigot would dispose of tell-tale
evidence, as much for the writer's protection as for his own. Yet,
the genuine surprise manifested in a letter of the 12 March, 1759 at
the false report that Bréard had been called to Versailles to give
account of himself is evidence that the latter interpretation is
doubtful:

nos lettres de Paris de ce [année]re ordinaire
nous enjoignent que l'on veuille d'avoir que l'on
veuille d'apprendre que Mr. [Alexandrea, commis]aire
à London avait reçu ordre du ministre de ce
rendre à la Cour p(o)ry rendre compte de la
conduite qu'il a tenue en Canada pendant le
temps qu'il y a été. Cette nouvelle nous a surpris beaucoup et nous ne savons n'y ne pouvons
comprendre tout ce que cela pût estre, puisque nous sommes bien persuades que cet any est en estat de rendre bon compte de sa conduite et qu'il n'a rien a craindre de pas une façon des calomnies que ses ennemys peuvent luy avoir susités. Toute ces affaires devant estre en regle mais tout cela est fort facheux et fort desagreable (ou) un honnête homme... Tout cequi s'y passe nous paroit Mr. cy surprenant que nous ne saurions jamais prendre assies de liberté veu tout l'attachem(en)t et la reconnoissance que nous vous devons de vous reprenter de faire mettre toute vos affaires de la Colonie dans toute les regles imaginables (ou) evert que pas un de vos ennemys ne puisse dans pas un temp vous inquiter de pas une part.58

But if any doubt about Gradis' own relationship to Bigot remains, it must be dispelled by the letter Abraham wrote to Bigot on the 5 March, 1759 from Paris:

Vous aurez été bien instruit depuis bien du temps de l'idée où on étois icy que les affaires dont j'étois chargé pour la fourniture des magasins du Roy étoient pour votre compte, celuy de divers amis et le mien. M. le Normand en étois aussi bien persuadé et je ne sais pourquoi puisqu'il en a vu le Centraire par lui même, mais ensuite il s'est figuré que l'entreprise faite par le Munitionnaire de Canada, le Sr. Cadet n'étoit que le prête nom à cette pretendite Société. Tous le monde le croit même aujourd'hui et ses efforts pour les en dissuader en leur représentant que si vous et moy y eussions été, que personne n'aurait été chargé de faire cette,expedition que moy même puisque je n'auroit pas voulu me priver de cette commission pour la donner à des personnes qui n'étoient nullement propres à exécuter tous ces envoys et que même, j'auroit épargné considéramment dans tous les achates qui ont été faits chez nous, soit des Vaisseau aux que des farines, lards et autres articles car de vous à moy, Mr., les personnes qui ont été chargées de cette commission n'ont pas travaillé avec l'economie qu'ils auroient pu le faire. Sans doute que l'any qui a vu cela par lui meme (Pean) et qui est a Bordeaux vous en rendra un fidel compte en vous instruisant de bien des particularités. Toute la hate et l'animosite de Mr. le Normand contre moy n'a été que cela car je ne le connoscoit pas ni n'avoit eu aucune sort d'affaire avec lui. Voilà la raison pour laquelle, Mr., j'ay été aussi mal traîté par lui et qu'il a cru me sortifier en me privant de la commission de la fourniture présente pour la donner au Sieur Le Moyne et en faire couler au Roy au dela de 450.

58. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, Moisse to Bigot, ii. 20a.
à 500 mille livres de plus qu'elle n'euroit revenu si j'en eusse été chargé.59

Further testimony to Gradis' personal integrity is given by his comments on the Le Moyne contract:

'Juger K. de tous mes embarras, plus encore de mon mal au coeur de voir que K. Le Moyne, Neg(otian)t à Robert qui a été chargé de la four­nitrire cette année qu'on vous fait passer par la Voye de Brest et de Rochefort et qui a pris dans tous les Magasins soit de Rouen, Lentaulen et autres endroits les rebutte de tout ce qu'il y avait pour les avoir à meilleur marché et à long credit;60 touche depuis le 1er de janvier 150 et 160 mille livres par mois en espéces que d'ailleurs on luy paye exactement tous les mois et à compter d'une somme d'environ 600 q(uel)que mille livres qu'il avoit ci devant fourni au port de Rochefort par des traitez où il avoit payé 40 et 50 p. 61

Le dit le Moyne a passé un traitez avec M. de Lassalac pour la fourniture présente et à un prix de plus de 20 p. au dessus des fouritures que j'ay toujours fait par ecoonome malgré qu'il touche ces sommes d'avance et que mes payements n'ont commencé à se faire qu'un an après mes de­bours à 150 mille livres par mois. En outre depuis la prise de l'isle Royale les marchandises ayant diminué dans les manufactures de 10, 12 et 15 p. même, il y en a qui l'ont fait bien d'avant­age puisque nos fabriquants n'ont présentement aucun débouché de leurs marchandises par la ces­sation general du commerce de France. Il n'est pas douteux, Mr., que vous ne vous appercessez à la reception de cette fourniture de la diffeerenté de toutes ses marchandises et que vous serez la bonte d'en rendre un fidel compte au Ministre et...

59. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, ii. 23-23a.

60. In the letter of the 6 February 1759 Moise had informed Bigot that Le Moyne had even had the cheek, after having grabbed the contract, to suggest Gradis sub-contract half of it from him, which Gradis declined, replying: 'que nous luy souhaitons une bonne reussite dans son traitez qui estoit tres avantageux p(ou)r luy que quant a nous la benefice nous avoient toujours moins affecté que le desir que nous avons toujours eu de nous rendre utile à l'etat et à la patrie. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, ii. 15a.

61. Which was particularly galling to Gradis because he had at this time such large sums of money owed to him by the Crown that he was balanced on the edge of bankruptcy. On the 19 September 1758 the total debt stood at some 2,300,000 livres. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, to Bigot, i. 282.
que vous luy feres connoître de la façon dont j'ay servy le Roy dans tous les envoyes que j'ay fait pour vos Magazines. Si je ne suis pas assez heureux de cela et qu'on n'ait pas besoin de mes services pour l'avenir je cours risque que n'ayant plus besoin de moy que mes payements soient retardés, que même je ne seray jamais paye ou que je seray obligé de prendre en payement des effets ou je seray force pour faire de l'argent de perdre le 1/4 ou le 1/2 de ce qui me sera dû. Vous n'aves kr. accordé par le passé l'honneur de vos bonnes et de votre protection. Voicy une occasion où j'en ai plus besoin que jamais. J'ose me flatter que vous voudrez bien me les continuer et je vous la demande avec la plus vive instance afin de me tirer des embarras où je crains de me trouver et ou je seray indubitamment si vous n'aves cette bonté.

The correspondence speaks for itself. These were not the confidences of conspirators long practiced in the arts of deceit and extortion. Rather it is the righteous indignation of an honest man who had long served the Crown faithfully and who, fearing bankruptcy might be his reward, appealed to a man whose reputation was under sustained attack to testify to the quality of his goods. Obviously he was so convinced of Bigot's integrity that he could not believe he was discredited with the minister, even though the minister's chief assistant, Le Normand entertained a poor opinion of the accused. That he had good cause to respect Bigot's integrity is clear from the occasional reprimand Bigot had given him early in their commercial association for having sent sub-standard goods.

Although an old friend of Bigot, their relations had always been correct and there is not a single hint in the entire correspondence to indicate that Gradis might have been uneasy about the ethics of the relationship. Is it possible that a man who insisted so strongly upon his personal integrity, even in letters to an alleged conspirator, could have been corrupt? Is it possible even that he would have entered into so close an association with a man whom he knew to be

62. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, ii. 22-22c.
corrupt? It would be most unlikely. Yet, few of his contemporaries were more astute than Abraham Gradis in commercial matters. How is it that he handled such large sums of money for Bigot and yet was so surprised by the allegations against him? The most likely answer would appear to be that he believed Bigot had acquired his fortune legitimately.

Although impossible to state with any precision, the sources yield a few clues which might explain why it was possible for Gradis to believe that Bigot acquired his wealth honestly. In his mémoire Bigot maintained that the base of his fortune was laid when, at the time of his appointment to Isle Royale in 1739, the Bordelais merchants pressed funds upon him and he also received from his father, "une somme considerable sur sa legitime." Just how much that might have been can only be conjectured, but it would have been in addition to the pension of 900 livres a year his father's will allocated him. Unfortunately, the property settlement appears to have been made in François' older brother's marriage contract which has not been found; so, whether François received any real estate in addition to the family farm at Caire, valued at 30,000 livres in 1766, is not known. His advance might well have been equivalent to the value of the farm in 1739, since the Bigots, being a substantial robe family, would have had no trouble raising the capital on the security of their real and professional incomes. In addition to this, he would have had whatever he might have saved from his professional salary, and presumably the Bordelais merchants would at least have matched his

63. Mémoire, François Bigot, i. 6.
64. Archives Départementales de la Gironde, 32 15344, Testament de Louis Amable de Bigot: notaire Dubos. For a previous reference, see above, p. 62.
65. See above, pp. 62 and 65 ftnt. 67.
66. See above, pp. 59 - 62.
67. See above, chapter III.
private capital, for Gradis in 1748 did not require any capital of him at all in the société du Canada. So, he may well have had anything from fifty to one hundred thousand livres to invest in 1739.

According to the mémoire, no sooner had Bigot arrived in the colony than, 'il se livra à toutes les branches du Commerce, et il fut heureux', but exactly of what this commerce consisted, the mémoire remained silent. Frégault believed he had discovered evidence that Bigot had designs upon the Royal Stores in a reversal that he made on a proposition to set up a supply depot at the port. He argued that Bigot had opposed the proposal originally because he feared it would fall under Canadian control whereas, by 1742 Bigot was sufficiently confident of his own influence to advance the proposal himself. The best that can be said about this theory is that it is pure conjecture and even if it were accepted it is of little practical import since the depot was not established and Bigot did not derive any windfall profits from its supply.

There would appear to be surer grounds for suspecting that Bigot profited from the foreign trade. Although the island was ideally situated to exchange French West Indian products against Anglo-American imports, the minister was flatly opposed to such traffic in all but the most extreme case of need. Yet, despite his exhortation to de Forant and Bigot, on the 7 May, 1740, that they put a stop to the

68. The contract is reproduced in J. de Muparsant, Un Grand Armeur du Bordeaux, Abraham Gradias (1692-1769), Fordeaux, 1917, pp. 173-175; supposedly from an original in the Gradis Archives but which appears to have been lost subsequently. A copy exists in the BNF., Mus. Fr. n.e. 22255, pp. 165-166.
69. Mémoire, François Bigot, i. 6.
70. F.B.A.P., i. 138-142.
71. AC, B 70.
violations permitted by their predecessors, no effort appears to have been made to implement his instructions. In fact, their sympathy for the trade even went so far as to prompt de Lorant's successor, du Quennel and Bigot in 1742 to advocate the accumulation of Anglo-American agricultural products on the island in case of yet another Canadian failure. 72

That colonial administrators were generally interested in the foreign trade was alleged in the anonymous, 'Lettre d'un habitant de Louisbourg':

Les Généraux dans toutes nos colonies...enrichissent pour la plupart dans le commerce étranger, qui est si nuisible à celui des Sujets du Roi. 19

Specific allegations were made against governor Kerlerec of Louisiana in 1765, 74 against Frontenac, the governor-general of New France in the 1670's, 75 against governor-general Vaudreuil in the 1700's, 76 and examples could be multiplied easily.

Whether such trade was contrary to French interests, however, was subject to debate. The French merchants complained that they could not compete with New Englanders on an equal basis but Bigot replied that this was ridiculous since their profits were often close to one hundred per cent. 77 Although a surprisingly large figure, the evidence would appear to confirm that at certain times at least, merchants engaged in the colonial trade made profits of that magnitude. Not only were the merchants unscrupulous in their dealings with the Crown, 78

72. AC, B, 74; 21 July 1742, Émarges aux du Quennel and Bigot.
74. Démére pour Le Feu Sieur de Rochonore, op.cit.
75. See above, p. 170-71.
76. See above, p. 177.
77. AC, B, 76; 27 November, 13 February 1743, pp. 166-167, 475.
78. See above, Chapter IV.
but any representations they made on the subject of profits would have to be weighed in view of their obvious self-interest. Although war pushed freight costs up to ruinous heights, the cost of a ton of cargo to Canada rising even to 1,000 livres in 1759, the cost at which goods traded in the colonies rose commensurately; so that, for example, on the 7 November, 1748 Bigot informed the minister that goods were again trading at margins of one hundred per cent.79 In peace time, Miquelon calculated that Robert Dugard made profits of thirty per cent on his trade to Canada.80 The merchant community did not appear to suffer unduly from Anglo-American competition.

That Bigot had West Indian trade interests is not only likely considering his Bordelais connections, but is given added probability by the shipment of 500 quintals of sugar which he petitioned the minister to grant free freight to France. On the 29 November, 1744 he justified this request on the grounds that:

J'ai été prit l'etrain dans la Course que j'ai fait faire, ayant perdu deux corseires dont une grande partie m'appartenait.81

Although he could have obtained the sugar through his privateering activities, the length of time it took him in the early fifties to liquidate his investments to provide cash for a planned purchase of land in the Bordeaux region implies that they were of a far-flung nature. On the 14 August, 1752 he informed Abraham Grados that he would shortly receive:

Les fonds que j'aurai pu recevoir ayant disayus plusieurs sociétés que j'avais à Louisbourg et ailleurs.

and again on the 4 November:

79. AC, C11a, 92, p. 98.
81. AC, C11B, 26, pp.132-133.
Je vous envoie monsieur, cent dix-huit mille livres seize sols en lettres de change faisant une partie de toutes les sociétés que j'ai eu dans les colonies et j'espère qu'en 1754 j'en verrai totalement la rentée. J'ai renoncé depuis deux ans à toutes ces sociétés. J'ai bien de la peine à en ramasser les marceaux.82

As to his privateering adventures, although like other colonial officials Bigot pleaded poverty frequently to the minister in the hope of receiving further concessions, his plaint of 1744 can hardly be taken seriously.83 A report to the minister of the 12 October, 1744 indicated that twenty-eight English ships had been captured that year.84 If Bigot's claim of the 29 November was true:

si je n'y prenais pas un intérêt considérable, il n'en sortirait pas un (corsaire).

then his mémoire of 1763 would appear to be justified in stating that:

La guerre suivit en 1744: il alla plusieurs Corsaires, les uns tout seul, les autres en participation. Ces Vaisseaux firent des prises... elles furent envoyées en France où elles arrivèrent à bon port; et elles furent vendues avec le plus grand avantage.85

So starting with a modest capital of his own, with influential mercantile contacts, and with wide opportunities to trade in both French and foreign markets, it is hardly necessary to postulate massive corruption in order to explain the accumulation in Bigot's hands of a substantial amount of money before he was appointed to Canada. Certainly, it was his cousin, Puysieulx's belief that, 'Il estoit riche de son chef lorsqu'il a passé (au Canada)', and therefore, he reasoned, 'il n'est pas étonnant qu'ayant fait valoir ce qu'il avait qu'il n'aye pas saigné.'86

82. CPA., KG18, G8(1).
83. Lemieux observed that, 'most ordonnateurs politely complained of their salary.', op.cit. p. 74.
85. Mémoire, François Bigot, i. 6-7.
No sooner had Bigot been nominated intendant of New France, according to his mémoire, than he decided to pick up his old trade interests. Not that he had solicited the post for that reason, or even been pleased when he was appointed. On the contrary, he begged the minister not to send him there and pleaded with his cousin, Puyfsieulx, to intervene. So, the mémoire argued, it could hardly be maintained that it was, "des idées de fortune, qui l'ont porté dans la Colonie."68

That Bigot was reluctant to take up the Canadian position would appear to be confirmed by his repeated applications once in Canada to be posted back to France. On the 29 July, 1749 in a letter written from Louisbourg to Puyfsieulx he deplored the removal of Maretpeus from the Marine, for:

J'avais l'honneur d'être conn de luy. Il avoit eu des preuves de mon attachement pour le Service, et il auroit bien pu me recompenser par une intendance de la Marine en France au lieu de celle que j'ai

and he begged Puyfsieulx when next he saw Reuillé:

de vouloir bien luy demander la premier intendance de la marine vacante en France.69

A civil service memorandum of the 17 February, 1755 entitled 'CANADA' noted that Bigot had for the past two years been applying for a transfer to France on the excuse of his health. Making not a mention of the questions the minister had wanted to put to the intendant, it portrayed Bigot as a most trusted administrator whose services, though worthy of Rochefort, were required too urgently in Canada to be dispensed with there:

87. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 29.
88. Ibid., i. 12.
89. Affaires Étrangères, Amérique, Mémoires et Documents, 9, p. 76.
That Bigot consented to return to Canada is evidence of his unfeigned devotion to the service. It was not necessary for Présault to read the Gradis archives to learn that, to Gradis at least, Bigot consistently portrayed himself as the guardian of the Crown's interests. Symptomatic of Présault's determination not even to consider whether Bigot might have been innocent was his selectivity in the use of the letters in the Canadian Public Archives.

By the 4 May, 1752 Bigot was heartily disgusted with the petty complaints and back-biting quality of Canadian society. In a letter of that date he complained to Gradis:

La jalousie est poussée ici jusqu'au dernier période. Tous les negotians se mangent l'amé, les uns et les autres et si un est un peu favorisé tous les autres luy tombent sur le corps.

Nor was he insensitive to the vitriolic attacks made against his own reputation, which he maintained were baseless:

Au surplus je vous prie de ne point dire a personne que je suis dans le dessein d'acheter quoique ce soit. Je passerois bientot pour un Crasus dans l'esprit du public si on y voyoit quelque apparence au lieu que tous ce qu'on dit est fonde sur rien.

Although it might not be expected that a guilty Bigot would take his

90. AC, B 32, p. 4.
91. CPA., MG16, C5(1).
trade partner into his confidence, it seems hardly likely he would adopt such self-righteous language where there was no obvious gain to be made. After all, Gradis was a trade partner who if anything was indebted to Bigot; not the minister in whose power it lay to grant the much coveted transfer to a European intendency.

In fact, by the end of 1752 Bigot was so disillusioned with his job in Canada as to be seriously considering retiring from the service altogether. On the 4 November, 1752 he wrote:

Mon dessein est de passer en France en 1754 ou je ferai le parti que je prendrai. Si j’adopte celui de prendre maison a Paris comme je le crois vous y trouverez toujours bon visage d’hote et une chambre.

Que tout ce ci soit, je vous prie secret entre vous et moi. Cela est de consequence pour mes intêrets. Je ne veux pas qu’on puisse s’imaginer que je pense a me retirer du service. Je suis si degoute de celuy des colonies par les crieries continuelles pour chose auxquelles je n’ai jamais pense que je ne crois pas pouvoir me resoudre a y retourner.92

Obviously, only the most seductive blandishments could have induced Bigot to return to a country where he was the victim of so much abuse. Besides promising to relieve him in one, two or three years, as the memorandums of 1752 planned,93 the minister:

le flatta de le rappeler bientôt et de lui donner l’Intendance de Rochefort qui estoit vacante, et a laquelle il eût attention de ne point nommer tant qu’il fut Ministre.94

No doubt he was disconcerted indeed to be informed by Gradis in 1757 that Puysieux saw very little prospect for his early return to France:

votre présence (étant) trop nécessaire en Canada pour que vous pussies espérer être relevé encore.95

92. CPA., ibid.
93. LV, B 32, p. 4.
94. Mémoire, François Bigot, 1773, p. 61a.
95. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, 10 March 1757, i. 160a.
Consequently, his indignation at such very different treatment than he had been led to expect when finally the conquest released him from what Gradis was already calling in 1757, 'le tea in fini qu'il y a que vous êtes dans les Colonies,' was in this respect justified.

It seems scarcely possible that an unscrupulous man who had landed a position which he was turning into a veritable goldmine would have been as reluctant as Bigot, to take up the post and subsequently have seized every opportunity to petition for his recall. On the other hand, if one had to resign oneself to exile in the colonies, then the boredom of the banishment might be partially relieved by an interest in the colonial trade. In his Mémoire of 1763 Bigot observed that when he:

\begin{quote}
et été nommé à l'Intendance de la Nouvelle-France, il pensa à reprendre des intérêts dans le Commerce... Il convint avec les sieurs Gradis de Bordeaux, de faire à moi fe le Commerce du Canada et des Isles.\textsuperscript{97}\end{quote}

He might even have wronged himself in the impression this gave that he had taken the initiative in making a proposition to the Gradis. In 1739 he had observed:

\begin{quote}
Aussi-tôt que les Négociants de Bordeaux s'apprêter qu'il étoit nommé pour Louisbourg, ils s'empresserent de lui offrir des fonds.\textsuperscript{98}\end{quote}

Furthermore, it was Gradis who made the first approach both to La Porte La Lanne, the intendant of Sainte Prunay, and Kerleuc, commander of Louisiana. Although in the case of La Lanne, he and Gradis had already been trading services for a number of years, it was not until the 16 September, 1756 that there was a proposal that they should enter into a joint trade venture and the initiative came from Gradis. Writing on that date he suggested that they traffic in indigo. Gradis offered

\begin{quote}
96. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, ibid.
97. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 28-29.
98. Ibid., i. 6.
99. See above, pp. 137-141.
to supply the capital and stipulated that profits would be divided equally between them:

Il nous semblerait Mr. qu'il y aurait une affaire à faire toutes les années autant que la guerre dureroit qu'il seroit de vous le juger apropo's de faire acheter soit chez vous, St. Martinique ou au Cap une partie d'environ 400 q( uentsau) x de beaux indigos s'il ne valoit pas que de 4 et 4-10 s(ols) la livre et faire tirer la valeur sur nous à 4 ou 6 mois de vue avec la différence de l'arg(en)t de l'Amérique à celluy de France qui comme vous le savez 33% ou 150 mille (livres) de votre monny donner 100 mille (livres) en France. Embarquer ces indigos dans les Vaisseau)x du Roy qu'y reviendroient en France, rapporter ces indigos en portions agiles dans chacun desdits Vaisseau)x et fregattes. Si vous jugez a propos, cette affaire se feront de contre a dery entre vous Mr. et vous et suposé que vous n'y voulois pas entrer pour la note nous vous prions Mr. de vouloir bien le faire pour notre compte pour 200 q( uentsau)x d'indigos pouvant les faire embarquer dans les differentes Vaisseau)x ou fregattes du Roy... On peut faire cette affaire en ne faisant point assurer et elle donnera un profit très considerable quoique oy voulies faire ce chargement plus fort vous en estes le maître auquel cas nous vous prions de vouloir nous en prevenir.100

Besides shedding a parallel light on the Société du Canada in so far as Gradis was the initial proposer, this letter gives good cause to believe that Gradis had no intention of making a permanent gift of half the initial capital to his associates. In his discussion of the Canadian contract Fréquent made great play of his claim that Gradis was advancing all of the required capital:

Dans son Mémoire de 1763, 2: 30-31, Bigot résume ce contrat, tout en omettant de préciser que cette pièce portait que les Gradis s'engageaient à,

fournir pour Mrs. Bigot et Préard le fonds nécessaire pour le Susdit schaft du navire et Garnaison.101

The obvious implication was that one does not give away money for nothing and if Gradis was prepared to give away half of the capital

100. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 146.
101. F.B.A.F., i. 316.
then he must have expected favours which were hardly legitimate.

But all Gradis promised La Lanne was that he would raise the initial capital. Why else would he think that La Lanne might not be prepared to accept the offer? Only should La Lanne himself be exposed to risk would there be a question about his wanting to undertake the enterprise. Clearly, Gradis did not believe he would hesitate on other grounds since he was confident that La Lanne would perform the same services for a shipment on his sole account. For that matter, it is not even clear that the interest charges on the money would not be deducted from the gross product before profit was calculated. The substance of the partnership, therefore, was that Gradis offered to dispose of the cargo when it reached France, whereas La Lanne was to use his influence in having the indigo placed on naval ships. 102

Presumably it was intended that full freight should be paid to the Crown. So, La Lanne was expected to exercise his influence in no more criminal an undertaking than to put their goods onto the royal ships. Nothing, Gradis admonished, could have been more dangerous than to attempt to send the indigo by merchant ship. It was likely the ship would be taken and in any case insurance would cost between 55 and 60% presuming someone could be found to insure it. 103 So, the enterprise would be profitable only if transport was provided by Crown vessels. No doubtignet was able to avail himself of similar privileges to make profits of an equal magnitude.

In the case of Kerleroc de Kerwasigan, J. de Maupassant quoted from a letter of the 13 September, 1752 which seems subsequently to have been misplaced, written by Gradis to Kerleroc at the time of

102. See above, p.139.
103. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, 13 June 1757, i. 211.
Maupassant also observed that Gradis proposed to supply Kerlerec with his personal needs but since he was unable to find any correspondence he presumed that the initiative was without response.

In fact, letters written by Gradis to Kerlerec of the 12 September, 1755, the 21 December, 1762 and the 8 January, 1763 survive in the copybooks. Although from their context it is clear that the Gradis did not supply the Louisiana magasin, probably because Kerlerec had other sources of supply, 105 Gradis had been commissioned to provide for some of Kerlerec's personal needs. On the 12 September, 1755 Gradis wrote:

Si nous eussions été informé plutot de ces expéditions nous aurions profité de cette occasion pour vous faire passer quelques uns de vos provisions en vin, farine et eau-de-vie; ce que nous faisons si a l'avenir nous apprenons qu'il y en aye quelques uns car pour icy nous ne voyons pas qu'aucun armateur veuille armer pour chez vous.106

The war appears to have put an absolute stop to Gradis' commerce with Louisiana. It was not until the 31 December, 1762 that he again addressed a letter to Kerlerec. He prefaced his remarks saying:

Le longtemps que la guerre a duré nous a été une privation bien sensible de ne pouvoir entre­tenir avec vous une correspondance que vos bonne nous faisons toujours autant désirer qu'elle nous est agréable.

104. Maupassant, op. cit. p. 42.
105. See the Louisiana trial literature, ibid.
106. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 89a.
The intention was to inform him that they had embarked, 'plusieurs thonneaux de Marchandises pour notre compte', on l'Aisible Creole which they hoped he would 'favoriser dans la vente'.\(^{107}\) Apparently by the end of 1762 the seas had re-opened because Gradis was constrained to write again on the 3 January, 1763 to say that since closing the last letter he had received a letter from Kerlerec ordering provisions for the following year. This Gradis promised to busy himself about and so the Kerlerec-Gradis trade was recommenced.\(^{108}\)

Considering his proposals to La Lanne and Kerlerec it is probable that Gradis approached Bigot initially. Indeed, this seems to be confirmed by Bigot's letter to David Gradis of the 29 May, 1746 which opened saying:

> Vous aures de mes nouvelles, monseigneur, a mon arrivée a quebec et je vous remercie des ofres que vous me faien par la lettre que vous m'avés fait l'honneur de m'écrire et auxquels je suis tres sensible.\(^{109}\)

All in all, Bigot was not nearly so aggressive an entrepreneur as he has been made out to be.

The immediate foundations of the sociéti du Canada were laid in May 1748. Repeating, probably, the substance of Gradis' letter of the 18 May, Bigot on the 21 May wrote:

> Vous pouvez compter dès a présent sur l'envoy d'un navire de 300 t(onneaux) a quebec pour l'année prochaine qui sera de moitié entre nous deux. Vous le chargeras de vin, eau de vie et marchandises propres pour le pays ainsi que je vous le marquerai.

The possibility of building ships in Canada with the intention of employing them in the West Indian trade, was discussed. Bigot

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107. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, ii. pp. 79a, 80.
108. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, ii. Ibid.
109. CPA., MG18 G8(1).
vetoed the idea of developing a fishing fleet on the grounds that return on the investment was likely to be rather slow. The motive behind the suggestion being to obtain a saleable cargo for the West Indies, he advised that it would be better to purchase cod at Louisbourg.

As to the financing of the project, Gradis was to provide the initial capital. The bias of Frégault’s approach is again revealed in so far as Bigot explicitly not only bound himself to pay back the full amount of his share of the capital but even to pay interest on the outstanding sum until it was paid in full:

Vous aures des ter mes pour le payement des marchandises seiches que vous enverrez a quebec et j'espere que les lettres de change que je vous renverai arriverons a temps pour les acquitter a quelques mois pres dont nous paierons l'interet mais quant au prix de la moitie du navire je vous en paierai l'interet jusqu'a parfait payement. 110

Gradis was to compose the terms of the contract on this basis and Bigot was to see whether a third party might be associated. The intendant wondered whether the Chevalier de Caylus might be a suitable candidate.

It was not de Caylus but rather Jacques-Michel Bréard, contrôleur de la Marine at Quebec to whom Bigot granted a two-tenths interest in the société during the early part of October 1748. According to his pétition, Breard was a man, ‘que le sieur Bigot avoit tiré de Rochefort, par la permission du Ministre.’ It may be that he chose Breard because he was a man,

'qui joignoit a la plus austère probité, une intelligence peu commune, et qui étoit capable de soutenir un tres-grand travail',

but it is impossible to believe that having resided in so small a town

110. CFA., MGO G0(1).
as Rochefort and having worked in the same offices for two years, Bigot, 'ne le connaissait point auparavant.'

The intendant's motive for associating Bréard in the enterprise is particularly crucial because it appeared only too convenient that the chief administrative officer of the colony and his immediate subordinate, who between them handled all of the accounting for colonial supplies should have collaborated in an undertaking which did a substantial business with the Crown. Bigot's explanation was that when he discovered the duties of his office would not afford him the leisure to attend to the details of business he was forced to seek assistance and Bréard, by coincidence, was the most able man to hand. Although difficult to reconcile with his experience at Louisbourg, Bigot's consistent defence was essentially that:

Le Sieur Bigot qui n'entend rien au Commerce, et qui dans les parties mêmes où il a été intéressé, n'a jamais eu connaissance des détails, n'est point en état de s'expliquer sur tout ce qui peut les concerner.

Though it does not dispel the suspicion roused by Bigot's choice of Bréard, his explanation to Gradis on the 10 October, 1748 is consistent at least with the latter claim:

J'ay fait part à M. Bréard de notre projet ne m'étant pas possible de vacquer au detail du Commerce du pain qu'il faut essément savoir et il m'a déterminé à le cosigner.

Subsequent practice seems also to have borne this out since writing to Gradis on the 14 October, 1752 Bigot instructed:

Ayes agréable aussi de marquer a M. Bréard ce que je devrai de frit à la Renommée pour 1752 au dela des 12 tonneaux qui me sont accordés afin que je les puisse payer comme j'ai fait pour 1751.

111. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 29-30.
112. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 419.
113. BN. Mss. Fr., n.a., 22253, P. 155.
114. CPA., MG19 68(1).
It is also to be observed that throughout the correspondence of 1755, although Gradis kept Bigot generally informed about the freight of the Renommée, it was with Bréard that he entered into commercial detail.

Yet, Bigot took anything but a passive interest in the affairs of the company. Even in the letter of the 10 October, 1748 he advised Gradis:

> Je vous demande par ce mémoire la fourniture de notre papier. J'en préviendrai le ministre et supose par quelque avantage que vous ne fussies pas d'avoir de faire cette société il faudroit toujours faire l'envoi de ces fournitures dont le Roy paiera le fret, et le même profit qu'il donnait au fournisseur croyant, si cela manquoit je serois tres embarrasse.

After having discussed the state of the ship building industry in Quebec he went on to outline his intentions for the return journey of their ship:

> Si le navire que vous destinez pour notre société arrivoit à la fin de mai, il faut pour cela qu'il parte à la fin d'avril. Je pourrais le fretter pour l'île Royale et il emporterait avec lui son chargement pour St. Domingue. Mr. Bréard va se précautionner des bois à porter aux îles et nous aurons de la farine quicioque la sortie n'en sera pas permis suivant les apparences. C'est ce qui rendra le retour des navires qui viendront ici fort mauvais. Elles vaut 16 (livres) le quintal. ce sera à vous à me mander s'il en sera sorti quantité de Bordeaux pour St. Domingue car il ne faudroit pas forcer sur cette marchandise s'il y en avoir été beaucoup attendu que celle de Canada ne ai veut qu'à son défaut.115

Fragault made great play of Bigot's promise that the société would have flour for the Indies even though its export might be banned. This was purported to show that Bigot had no compunction in breaking even his own regulations and foreshadowed even more serious crimes against the welfare of the colony in the early fifties when

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115. ibid.
grain shortages were severe. Quoting Courville's mémoire, Fréguaut alleged that Péan owned large granaries full of cereals destined for the Indies. 117 His claim, however, that Bigot permitted his friends to export grain in spite of the prohibition which was not, in fact, proclaimed until the 19 March, 1751, 118 is inadequately substantiated. Apart from La Jonquiere's complaint to Rouillé on the 5 May, 1751 that he had had to intervene to prevent too large a shipment of flour to Isle Royale, 119 in fulfilment on an official commitment, Fréguaut produced no evidence to confirm his view. Furthermore, if it was only a question of the odd boatload of flour, such a small volume of exports would have made little difference to the general level of supplies in Canada and can be seen as one of the perquisites of office. Nor was Bigot utterly ruthless in his attitude toward the commodity because he did write that, 'il ne faudroit pas forcer sur cette marchandise.' What appears to be conclusive evidence against the claim that Bigot broke his own regulations is his letter of the 4 May, 1752 to Gradis. Referring to the Renommée he wrote:

S'il venoit je trouverois le moyen de luy faire faire un voyage par un extraordinaire qui est survenu. Car pour l'envoyer aux isles il n'y a ici n'y more n'y farine a y porter la recoite manquant, tous manque. 120

Fréguaut also made great capital out of Bigot's letter of the 22 October, 1748, 121 for it informed Gradis that due to a fall in

117. Mémoires sur le Canada depuis 1749 jusqu'à 1760; En trois parties; avec cartes et plans lithographiés, Quebec 1873, p. 1, 185; cited by Fréguaut, ibid., p. 387.
119. AG, C11A, 97, p. 27.
120. CPA., MG18 G6(1).
121. Fréguaut, F.R.N.A.F., i. 325.
the price of *eau de vie* to only five or six *livres* at which it looked as if he would have been exposed to a heavy loss. Consequently, Bigot:

"fait prendre trois pieces pour le Roy que Mr. estebe m'a dit vous restes en pure perte à 10 (livres) la ve(stre). Il vous en envera sans doute le compte." 122

Bigot also did the same favour for the Sieur Cambery, a friend of his, whom he had provided with a letter of introduction to the Gradis and whom the Gradis had supplied with the six *pièces* in question. Cambery, by the way, reappeared in the correspondence of 1755. In a letter of the 5 May, 1755 Bigot was told that he had freighted a ship with wine and spirits on his own account, for which the Gradis had lent him the money and their signature. Its goal was Louisbourg but should the market be depressed there he intended to sail on to Quebec. 123 Writing to Prévost, the *commandeur-ordonnateur* at Isle Royale on the 25 May, 1755, Gradis told him that Le Cambery was recommended to him by Bigot and urged the *ordonnateur*:

> de luy rendre tous les services qui dependront de vous et de luy procurer la defaite la plus avantageux de la pacotille qu'il a porté dans le bateau dans lequel il passo. 124

The total investment was 10,781 *livres*, 17 *sols* which was insured at 449 *livres* upon which Gradis was charging 4% interest. 125

From this evidence it is established that Bigot was prepared to grant favours at the expense of the Crown to his friends and that he had no hesitation in recommending them to his colleagues, proposing that they give them the same treatment. So, Bigot lied to the court when he asserted that he had never ordered or even insinuated that

122. CPA., MG18 06(1).
123. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 48a.
124. ibid., i. 53.
125. ibid., Gradis to Bigot, 2 June 1755, i. 53a.
the Gradis merchandise receive preferential treatment. His appeal of 1773 maintained that the biased nature of the proceedings had left him with no alternative:

Si le S. Bigot a nié au procès les différentes sociétés jusqu'à ce qu'on lui en ait rapporté les preuves, c'est par un autre principe. Il avait tout à redouter de la Commission qu'on avait formée pour le Juger. Il ne doutait pas qu'on ne lui fit un crime des choses les plus innocentes. Il craignait avec raison que son intérêt dans le commerce du Canada ne lui fut reproché par des juges prévenus et ne donnant lieu à des recherches iniques qui en prolongeaient l'instruction déniséroient sa captivité. L'événement n'a que trop justifié ses craintes. Lorsque le commerce du Sr. Bigot a été connu et avéré au procès, on en a fait un corps de délit grave, indépendamment de la servante qui seule pouvait être criminelle.

It is by no means sure that Bigot can be condemned for having favoured certain individuals over others. At least as far as Cambery was concerned his recommendation was similar to those of the private merchants who were constantly recommending one another to their friends in other ports. As he argued in the case of Claverie, the mere granting of protection is no proof of self interest:

126. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 43.
127. Mémoire, François Bigot, 1773, pp. 79a-80.
Of course, if colonial administrators were to be trusted with such powers then it was essential that their integrity should be established. Yet, it was precisely that Bigot had consistently shown a greater concern for his own and his friends' interests than for those of the Crown that was the chief allegation against him. His attitude, however, toward the quality of merchandise he was prepared to receive into the stores would appear to vindicate him in this regard. On the 22 October, 1748, having informed Gradis of the concession on the spirits, Bigot went on to complain that the cloth Gradis had sent on the David:

ne valent rien et personne n'en veut. Cela merite attention.

Apart from the observation that this shows clearly that at least a portion of the Gradis shipments were sold to private individuals, it is to be emphasised that in this case, Bigot did not offer to go to Gradis' aid and purchase it for the stores. On the contrary, Gradis was admonished:

Ayes attention je vous prie que tous ces papiers (for the office), soient du meilleur et que vos etoffes ainsi que tout ce qui est compris dans la memoire soit du bon sans quoi tout resterois a pure perte.'129

This was by no means an isolated case. In 1752 to take another example, Bigot was furious with Gradis for having dispatched some of the goods in a flute, a design not at all well adapted to the navigation of the Saint Lawrence. When the boat finally arrived he discovered that 150 quarts of flour were damaged by water and the wheat had

128. Mémoire, François Bigot, 1763, ii. 89.
129. CPA., MG18 G6(1).
developed an odour. He was also displeased with the wine Gradis had shipped that season. The quality of previous shipments had been 'le meilleur' but this one:

ne vaut rien et c'est le moins bon de tout celuy qui est entre dans la colonie. Il ne faut que cela arrive davantage.130

Another rebuke was administered on the 14 October, 1752:

Je vous envoyer le memoire de mes provisions. Ayes assemble de les faire compter avec du bon car vos comis qui ont ce detail n'ont pas eu toujours de meme.131

It was alleged at the trial that Gradis' shipments were purchased at prices higher than those current in the colony, that dates of receipt were falsified in order to conceal the malversations and that Bigot insured that Gradis paid no customs duties on the goods entering Quebec. On the question of false dating of cargo reception, if it was perpetrated in the early years of the decade, it would appear to have been extinguished by 1759. In a letter of the 3 February, 1759 to Descheneaux, Gradis' agent in Quebec, who was also Bigot's secretary Gradis gave the impression that he could not always depend upon the ready sale of his goods in Quebec. In this case he was discussing a shipment of wine he had had dispatched from Cadix. After having observed that the captain was instructed to apply to Descheneaux:

pourque vous luy procuries des moyens de faire une bonne vente,

he added:

soit que dans le cas contraire, le Capitaine Tricot ne peut luy mère vendre sa cargaison et qu'il fut de nos intérêts qu'il la laisssat pour s'en revenir en France; dans ce cas nous sommes bien assurés de votre attention et de vos soins pour saisir le temps le plus favorable a nous en tirer le party le plus avantageux.132

130. Ibid., 14 August, 1 November 1752.
131. Ibid.
132. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, ii. 11.
No more was Bréard able to count upon an assured disposal of his merchandise even in 1754, let alone benefit from falsified invoices. On the 17 March, 1755 Gradis told him he was sorry to learn that owing to the late arrival of the Entreprennant at Quebec at the end of June 1754, Bréard had been unable to sell most of the cargo of salt pork and that this had occasioned him a serious loss. Although in the same letter to Bréard, Gradis expressed his pleasure that returns on the Renommée's cargo of 1754, 'ont passé nos esperances', and went on to thank him:

d'avoir fait recevoir dans les magasins du Roy toutes les marchandises et boissons dont etoit composée la cargaison de la Renommée.\[134\] such privileged treatment could not be taken for granted. Indeed, he was under the impression that the efforts of his captain, Rozier, could make a difference to the success of the enterprise, since on the 20 April, 1755 he hoped that Rozier would have:

\[\text{tiré un bon party de tout ce que vous avies et que la crainte de la guerre que nous prevoyons bien fondée, fait valoir la marchandise un grand prix rapporté en le produit en lettres de change et faites en sorte de les obtenir au plus court terme qu'il vous sera possible. Nous contons que vous avez faitte tous vos efforts pour tacher d'obtenir quelques frets.}\[135\]

Furthermore, in a letter of the 8 July, 1755 to Bréard, Gradis gave the impression that he believed that the quality of goods embarked upon the Renommée bore some relation to the price that would be accorded:

\[\text{Nous esperons...que tout ce qui composit son chargement se sera trouvé d'une belle et bonne qualité ce qui en aura occasionné une defait prompte et avantageuse.}\[136\]

Not only Gradis but also Bigot believed that it was the generally

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133. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 16a.
134. It was a privilege which was repeated in 1755: Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, Gradis to Bréard, 30 August 1755, i. 86a.
135. ibid., i. 39.
136. ibid., i. 70a.
high quality of the Gradis' goods which permitted the intendant to continue to favour them. On the 14 August, 1752 he wrote:

L'escieurrsa les marchands ont été bien étonnés de voir retourner cette année la Renommée. Si vous n'aviez pas fait d'aussi bonne fourniture que celles que vous avez fait je suis persuadé qu'on aurait eu égard aux plaintes continuelles du même. 137

And Bigot's claim that quality had always been the associates' first concern is borne out by the correspondence. Gradis wrote no more then the truth on the 10 March, 1757 when he protested to Bigot:

Nous n'avons épargné ni peines ni soins et reïns encore l'argent pourtant que le tons fait de la plus parfaite qualité. 138

And this was no simple feat. As he went on to observe:

Jamais la marchandise n'a été aussi rare qu'elle l'a été cette année. Si nous ne nous eussions pas prévenu de l'avance d'une partie de ces fournitures il nous aurait été de toute impossibilité de pouvoir.

Typical of the standards he required from his sub-contractors, Gradis in a letter to the Rouen merchant Le Revins, on the 11 October, 1757 wrote:

sur les assurances reîterées que vous nous avez donné que nous aurions lieu d'être satisfait soit pour la belle et bonne qualité de la marchandise comme pour le semblant dans le prix de chaque article nous avons l'honneur de vous remettre les mémoires ci jointe que nous vous prions d'exécuter le plus promptement qu'il vous sera possible. 139

That Gradis had to wage a constant battle to maintain his high standards of quality is evident from the letter of the 24 February, 1758 written to de Vienne, the garde mausrein at Quebec:

Nous sommes aussi surpris qu'étonnés des relevés des factures de nos envoyés par les navires le Jason, le David, le Président le Berton et du Robuste des faux chargements et de la Supercherie

137. CPA., MGS 69(1).
138. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amériques, i. 162.
139. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, iii. 438.
de nos fournisseurs auxquelles en particulier nous avons fait passer ces erreurs qui nous assurent que leurs balles et caisses doivent se trouver conformes aux factures. Nous avons eu l'honneur de vous marquer l'année dernière que ces balles, caisses et Boucades ne sont pas ouvertes lorsque nous parviendrons pour pouvoir en faire la vérification. Elles nous arrivent dans le moment qu'il faut les embarquer et vous devrez juger s'il nous serait possible dans ce temps précieux où nous devons faire partir nos navires de pouvoir examiner et vérifier la qualité et la quantité de chaque article et voir si la chose est conforme aux factures que même quelques-unes ne nous parviennent qu'après le chargement des marchandises et l'expédition de nos navires. 140

As if sharp business practices were not enough for Gradis to have to contend with, theft on the docks appears to have been a serious problem as well. 141 In fact, the entire correspondence testifies to a uniformly dedicated attention to detail by the Gradis and a determination to supply only the best quality produce. Bigot would appear to have hit upon the essential when on the 14 October, 1752 he promised Gradis that:

Si vous continuez à bien servir je suis persuadé que le Ministre vous conservera cette fourniture étant de l'intérêt du Roy qu'elle soit faite par un seul et non à l'adjudication. 142

As to the charge that Bigot and his friends monopolized all the government contracting, the prosecutor not only underestimated the pressure exerted upon Bigot by the Canadian merchant community 143 but also manipulated the evidence in such a way as to hold Bigot responsible on the one hand for having monopolized the supplies and on the other for having ordered less than a full year's supply from Gradis in order to create shortages and by that means push up the prices. The mémoire was quite right to observe that playing by the court's sense of justice, Bigot's:

140. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 230a, 231.
142. CFA., EG18 G9(1).
143. See above, p. 250; ‘In olanda...’.
situation était donc bien critique? Il ne pouvait ni multiplier les envois de Gradis, sans être accusé de monopole, ni les diminuer, sans passer pour vouloir établir la cherté.144

The court also spent a lot of time discussing allegedly fraudulent payments Bigot authorized for freights between Quebec and Isle Royale both for the Gradis' boat, La Renommée and for a number of smaller boats supposedly owned by a consortium including, in various combinations: Bigot, Breard, Matèle, Péan, and Varin.

The case for the prosecution was glossed by Bigot's mémoire as being:

que le sieur Bigot a fait payer au Roi un fret trop considerable pour le Vaisseau la Renommée, par lequel il envoyoit des approvisionnements à l'Isle Royale. Il a fait payer ce fret 15,000 livres par voyage ou 50 livres par tonneau. Ces deux frets étoient semblables pour le prender Navire la Renommée; il étoit du port de 300 tonneaux...

Mais on a prétendu que le Bâtiment n'avoit pas toujours eu sa charge complete; et pour le prouver on a rapporté deux extraits des registres de Recettes, tenus au Magasin général de Louisbourg pour l'année 1750; desquels il résulte qu'en deux voyages le Navire la Renommée n'avoit disposé à Louisbourg qu'une charge de 438 tonneaux, au lieu de 600 qu'il aurroit du porter.

Bigot defended himself on the grounds that the registers of Louisbourg provided no real proof of the charge, that even if they did it was not his responsibility but rather that of the officers of the port of Quebec, and finally, that even they would have had difficulty policing the shipments due to the endemic frauds in the maritime traffic. In the light of pages 75 and 76 above, Bigot's speculation would appear to be well founded that:

Peut être aussi le Capitaine de l'Équipage et d'autres personnes, y auront chargé des effets qu'ils vouloient faire transporter à l'Isle Royale.

144. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 62, 63.
This may have sounded rather unconvincing to the court and yet the evidence of the Gradis correspondence contradicts the theory that Bigot was indifferent to the Crown's interest in such shipping contracts. On the 14 August, 1752, for example, although he informed Gradis that he had procured a couple of cargoes for Gradis' boat, the Donne Avanture, he warned him that he would not repeat the favour again. Instead, he had ordered the ordonnateur of Louisbourg to send guildeau and melasse to Baye Verte from Isle Royale since it cost half as much as at Quebec. He admitted that this would harm his own interests but insisted:

je suis oblige de faire pour les interets du Roy tout comme pour les miens. 146

Another indication that Bigot was not prepared to grant all of his friends' importunities arose in the correspondence of 1757. Returning from England in 1756, the Renommée had run aground resulting in damages for which Gradis had requested reimbursement from the Crown on the pretext that these damages were incurred during a return voyage after having disembarked English prisoners in exchange for French. Although there are many examples of the minister according damages to shippers under similar circumstances; for instance, the damages so insistently solicited by Basteau for the Perle in 1739 147 or by Gradis, himself, for the Robuste in 1757, Bigot decided that the claim for the Renommée was not worthy of consideration. In a letter of the 19 November, Gradis, having thanked the Intendant for procuring them 13,273 livres for 'le Retardement à Plymouth de notre Navire

145. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 72-74.
146. CFA., MG18 G8(1).
147. See AM., LE, vols 69, + 368.
la Renommée', went on to observe with regret:

Puisque vous n'aves pas juge que les avaries faîtes à ce Navire à l'occasion de ces divers écoulements ne doivent pas nous être payées par le Roy il faut s'y conformer. 148

Nor, it would appear, was Bigot such an easy mark as the prosecution maintained in the distribution of letters of exchange.

The charge against him was that in 1753 he had arranged for the Gradis to be given:

des lettres de change au premier terme, pour une portion plus considerable que le tiers de ce qui leur était dû; et qu'en 1755, il les a fait payer en entier, en lettres de change au premier terme. 149

Although there is no doubt but that he favoured Gradis in the drawing of the exchange, this favouritism knew definitely imposed limits.

On the 17 March, 1755, Gradis complained about, 'les échanges (qui) n'eussent pas été si longues'. 150 Writing to Descheneux on the 1 February, 1759 Gradis was unhappy once again:

Nous aurions cru que les réises que vous nous aves faîtes auraient été à des termes plus moderés, mais puisque vous ne nous aves pas excepté de la loy comune, il faut bien croire qu'il n'y a de favor pour personne et que chacun doit la subir. 151

As to the two years in which the Gradis were favoured, Bigot's defence was that the intendant not only had the right to exercise his own judgement in the distribution of letters of exchange but was even justified in giving the Gradis the advantage because:

Des personnes qui faisoient les principales fournitures de la Colonie, méritoient, sans doute, quelque consideration. Il y avoit d'ailleurs des habitans qui rapportoient de si petites sommes en Billets de Caisse, pour être converties en Lettres de Change, qu'il n'eîtoit pas possible de leur en

148. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 222a.
149. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 74.
150. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, Gradis to Brizard, i. 17.
151. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, ii. 10.
ielivrer en trois termes: en les leur expédiait payables au second; elles laissaient un vide dans celles du premier terme.152

Considering the sustained efforts of the Gradis to secure high quality goods and to dispatch them so that they reached the Colony as early as possible; taking into account the great frustrations they experienced in procuring crews and obtaining payment even of the letters of exchange which they held, Bigot was justified in saying that they deserved special consideration. If Bigot himself profited, was not that the prerogative of a colonial intendant?

But if the sociéte du Canada153 was not a legitimate enterprise there remains the question of the rather dubious tactics used by Bigot to insinuate the Gradis into the position of official supplier of Canada. To begin with, it must be observed that Bigot did not procure for them their first contract to supply Canada because at the end of December 1744 Gradis dispatched the Port-Louis to Quebec on the king's account.154 Again, in 1746 the Port-Louis was dispatched to Canada, this time as a part of Anville's fleet. The contract stated that the 250 tons of goods were to be remitted to Nicoquart, the intendant.155 Both sailings were from Rochefort. In the latter case Gradis spent three months in Rochefort preparing the cargo and so it was at that time that he laid the basis of the sociéte du Canada with Bigot.156 In this respect the sociéte du Canada appears as only an intensification of a trade interest which had already received ministerial blessing; especially since the minister had for

152. Mémoire, François Bigot, ii. 76-77.
153. See above, p. 264.
155. Ibid., p. 32.
156. Ibid., p. 37.
long been most unsatisfied with the services of the La Rochelle merchants and had been eager to find alternate sources of supply. If the association was legitimate then why was Bigot so evasive in his initial correspondence with the minister regarding the Gradis connection? On the 22 October, 1748 he told Gradis:

\[
j'ai écrit au ministre que je vous avois chargé de ces fournitures parceque vous aviez un navire qui venait ici en droiture en prime... Je mende au ministre que je vous paierez ici le prix du papier et ustenciles de bureaux, et qu'en outre vous aures votre com(mission). Ainsi convenes de la chose sur ce pie la.\]

It might be argued that Bigot was under no obligation to inform the minister that he was associated with the Gradis and that the only part of the shipment which concerned Versailles was the paper but the picture is even more clouded by the role the Pascaud's played in Canadian provisioning.

The prosecution believed that Bigot displaced them by devious means in order to put himself and his colleagues in the position to profit illicitly through the supply of the Royal stores. The Dernier Jugement, quoted the minister's letter of the 11 April, 1749 which approved Bigot's decision:

\[
de continuer de charger le sieur Pascaud, associant à La Rochelle, des fournitures à faire dans les magasins du Roi,\]

and which also noted the minister's approval of Bigot's decision to charge the Gradis, 'des fournitures des ustenciles de Bureau.' On the 8 October, however, Bigot informed the minister:

\[
qu'il ne profitera pas cette année (1749) de la permission que M. de Maurepas lui avoit donné de s'adresser au Sieur Pascaud pour les fournitures du magasin et qu'il a été obligé d'en acheter dans la Colonie pour fournir Montréal et les autres.\]

157. See above, Chapter IV, and especially p. 156.
158. CPA., KG 18 GS(1).
The letter was quoted as going on to say:

qu'il y avoit de l'avantage pour le Roi d'acheter à Quebec les marchandises pour son service, que la colonie en étoit pourvue pour trois ans, et qu'elles ne revendraient peut-être pas si chères qu'à les prendre en France, en payant la commission et le fret,

and he concluded:

Je charge encore le sieur Gradis (qui a armé à Bordeaux le printers dernier) des mêmes fournitures de Bureau, s'en étant bien acquitté cette année.

It is difficult to see exactly what the court made of these proceedings. If the purpose was merely to dispose of Pascaud as the official supplier in order to make all purchases locally, in other words, covertly from Gradis; then why did Bigot bother to arrange an official contract for Gradis to supply office materials? Perhaps Bigot wished to accustom the minister to purchasing from Gradis in order to ease him into the post of official purveyor, but having worked at Rochefort Bigot must have known that the minister was eager to replace the La Rochelle merchants with a more honest source of supply; so, why should he adopt such tortuous means? The minister did not make any difficulty about charging Gradis with the office supplies, so why should he object to giving him the contract in entirety? Is it possible that Bigot had honestly come to believe that supplies could be obtained more economically in Quebec than from La Rochelle?

As if the question was not sufficiently complicated, John Bosher has pointed out that Goguet was for long Pascaud's agent at Quebec. If, however, Bigot eased Pascaud out of his lucrative supply trade, then why was Goguet so friendly with Bigot and the Gradis? Where did Goguet and Pascaud fit into the affaire? 160 Not only, as

Boucher maintained, did Gouget hold large sums of money for Bigot, Bréard and Cadet, but he also disposed of the furs Bigot, Bréard and Estèbe sent him and acted as Gradis' agent in La Rochelle.

It was Gouget, for example who disposed of the Entrepreneant, a ship belonging to Bréard, and who in 1757 re-equipped the Robuste which had limped into La Rochelle after an encounter with the enemy.

Despite Bigot's insistence that Gradis' goods should be only of top quality and his reluctance to meet all of Gradis' demands for favours, it is not certain to what extent the associates believed themselves to be compromised by the relationship. One of the most embarrassing questions which the court put to Bréard was whether it was not true that in 1749 he had written to Gradis rebuking him for having put the invoices for the Renommée under his name:

\[\text{vu que cela etoit contraire a mon etat de Contrôleur, que si cela parvenoit au Ministre, j'en auroit du désagrément.}\]

He had to admit to this but parried feebly saying that in 1749 he did not know the extent to which his activities were justified by law and custom. So, he thought he had to go about his business being careful to observe, 'les docences', since he thought the permission to trade was only tacit.

Even Gradis appeared to be reluctant to discuss too openly with Bréard their mutual business. On the 25 February, 1755 he wrote:

\[\text{Nous ne vous entretiendrons point de nos affaires}\]

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162. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, to Bréard, 17 March 1755, i. 16.
163. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, Gradis to Gouget, 11 June, 2 July, 1757, iii. 243, 272.
164. Mémoire, Bréard, p. 81.
nous reservons de le faire Par l'amy (Bigot) N'en parlé pas je vous prie.165

Besides yielding a few more examples of this sort of exhortation, the correspondence is peppered with references to l'amy as above; which referred variously to Bigot, Bréard, Péan, de Villiers and even to La Rivière. This, to the jaundiced eye might smack of deliberate attempts to conceal the identity of these individuals should the letters fall into the wrong hands. And finally a letter of the 15 July, 1755, addressed to Bigot has had all but the last phrase of a paragraph utterly effaced with the same ink which wrote it. So, it must have been done relatively shortly after it was copied into the book; perhaps during the trial.166 Obviously the paragraph dealt with some commercial undertaking that Gradis preferred history and perhaps the prosecutor to ignore.

Whether a single effaced paragraph in a correspondence of several thousand pages is sufficient evidence upon which to convict Gradis of bad faith is doubtful. What is beyond doubt is his enormous energy deployed for over a decade in the service of the Crown, his determination to supply nothing but the highest quality

165. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 13.
166. I am most particularly grateful to M. Henri Gradis for the confidence he reposed in me, having permitted me to remove the volume to the Centre de recherches sur la conservation des documents graphiques in an attempt to read the paragraph with the aid of ultra-violet and infra-red light. Since it was effaced with the same ink which wrote the original, neither technique yielded positive results; nor did the technician hold out any hope that it might be read with X-Ray because it was so heavily effaced that the ink had in some places burned right through the paper. As M. Henri commented, 'Les Gradis sont tréens, ils l'ont fait exprès pour tâquiner les historiens canadiens!' The last words read, 'et qu'il en a passé le Contract.' Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Amérique, i. 73.
goods on time and at fair prices, and the great difficulties he
experienced in staving off bankruptcy as his reward for such
dedicated service.

As to the profits of the societé du Canada which was wound up
on the 16 February, 1756, Gradis' letter to Bigot of the 24 February,
1758 specified the same figure for the net profit, 902,305 livres,
as had been reported to the Châtelet.167 Whether this was justified
was debated at great length. Both Bréard and Estèbe produced
lengthy testimonials on the subject, but the best that can be said
is that their arguments were inconclusive and the court preferred
not to attempt to refute their claims. If this silence can be
interpreted as tacit admission that the sum named was not prima
facie evidence of extortion, then the Gradis must be cleared of any
lingering suspicion that they might have participated in any
illicit profits.

Unfortunately, it can not be said that the correspondence
clears Bigot in quite such a categorical way. Intimate though they
were, Bigot did not confide all of his concerns to Gradis, nor did
he necessarily explain even those decisions which immediately affected
him. For example, the first hint that Gradis received that different
arrangements were being made in Quebec to provision the Royal Stores
was in the autumn of 1755 when Bigot informed him only that he was
retrenching the flour, wine, and spirits from the order for the
following spring:

par la dernier mémoire de M. Bigot il a été supprimé
le vin, eau de vie, farine. Ce dernier article
était de 3 mille barriols dont le ministre nous
a dit qu'il disposerait et qu'il nous donnerons
en son temps ses ordres. Les entrepreneurs qui
doivent fournir les vivres pourroit bien être
la dupe de l'entreprise qu'ils ont fait à Québec

167. ibid., p. 235a.
car le vin, eau de vie et autres choses nécessaires seront bien chères en Canada. 168

Obviously, Bréard was not forthcoming about the arrangements for January discovered Gradis pumping La Rivière for details. On the 11 January, 1757 he observed:

On charge des farines, lard, eau de vie pour une Compagnie qui a fait une traite pour fournir les troupes en Canada, ce que Mr. Bigot a passé suivant les ordres du Ministre. Vous devez en avoir eu connaissance. 169

Also, Gradis returned to Bréard with a more direct question. Having noted that Desclaux, Jaures, and others were hiring ships rather recklessly for the enterprise, he asked:

Vous auriez-on remarqué les conditions de ce traite? Au surplus l’ami de Quebec nous a mandé que ce traite était avantageux au Roy. 170

So, it is entirely possible that Bigot could have been involved in serious criminal activity without Gradis having knowledge of it. It is possible even that Bigot and Bréard made large illicit profits on the Gradis supplies through the interposition of the Claverie enterprise. Estèbe testified that:

Les fournitures de la Maison de Claverie, modiques en elles mêmes se trouvent enflées sur les registres des Magasins du Roi par des fournitures particulières des Marchandises envoyées au Sieur Bigot et au Sieur Bréard par le Sieur Gradis, négociant de Bordeaux, et que cette intendant et ce Controleur faiosent declarer et écrire en recette sous le nom de Claverie de Quebec. 171

But like the Varin testimony, Estèbe’s story was challenged at almost every point by Bréard and Bigot so as to make the truth very difficult to ascertain. What is unequivocal is that Bigot regularly insisted upon high quality goods, prompt delivery and believed in rewarding

168. Gradis Correspondence, Copybook Europe, Gradis to Bréard, 15 December 1756, ii. 353.
169. ibid., p. 453.
170. ibid., p. 457.
loyal service generously but only within reason. If he engaged in trade, he did so discreetly and in his correspondence with Gradis, at any rate, he insisted that he had to consider the interests of the Crown before those of his own. This is not the portrait of a ruthless opportunist prepared to sacrifice all other interests in the pursuit of his own ends. It would take another hundred thousand words to do justice to the testimony from the trial. Let the examination of Varin's claims suffice to show that the briefs can only be used with the greatest circumspection. If the evidence can not be judged to vindicate Bigot, no more can it be said to convict him convincingly. A more objective court would have dismissed the case for lack of conclusive evidence.
CONCLUSION

If the evidence presented to the trial can not be said to have proved convincingly the individual charges laid against the Canadian administrators, it is not on the other hand tenable to argue that the mass of allegations against officialdom were groundless. Nor can it be said that the minister ignored the fraudulent practice prevalent at all levels in the Marine. Should any doubt remain on that score it must be dispelled by a memorandum found in the Haurepas papers. Dated 1743 and entitled, Mémoire sur les abus dans la Marine et sur les moyens d'y remédier; it was summarized by Fillion in discussing:

le peu de capacite des intendants de la Marine,
les malversations des intendants dans les colonies,
le defaut de connaissance des commissaires generaux,
l'ignorance, presque generale des officiers, le
peu de discipline dans ce corps d'officiers et dans les troupes de la Marine...

Nor was it unique. Another memorandum of the 2 December, 1750 observed:

l'état ne peut plus payer ces dettes, les équipages ne sont plus soldes. Le Roi est vole, la destination de ses fonds n'est jamais employee utillement. Ce qu'un particulier ferait avec 60,000 livres il faut ajouter un zero quant il s'agit de Sa Majeste. Mais le mal devient plus terrible quand au lieu de bon pain et aussi des autres provisions que le Roi paye cher, le matelot et le soldat ne trouvent sous le dent qu'un os de terre, de sable et de farine.

So the minister, during the 1740's and 50's was at least aware of the generalized larceny in the ranks even if he was not sure exactly how to cope with it. As chapte 1, III, IV and V showed his nominal

power was attenuated rapidly by distance from Versailles and his authority was shared with hosts of regional administrators each with their own web of patronage and local interests to defend. Even at Versailles the minister was not sovereign, sharing authority with other ministers and of necessity delegating most work to his subordinates. All were imbued with the ethos of the personal monarchy, tending to regard their offices as their property and like so many grands seigneurs distributing contracts and promotions to their protégés. It is not necessary to imagine any illicit tie between Bigot and de La Porte to explain Versailles reluctance to take action against him, for Bigot acted in Canada upon the same principles practiced at Versailles, principles he had imbibed through the territorially minded Robe circles in which his family moved and sixteen years of apprenticeship in the domestic offices of the Marine. Unless Versailles was prepared to admit that the basis of its own organization required fundamental change in the direction of disciplined bureaucracy, how could it consistently challenge its own methods applied by its own delegate in Canada? Considering the inertia of administration it is not surprising that only a calamity of the magnitude of the French losses during the Seven Years War galvanized the government into effective reforms. Whether it was justified in holding Bigot and his associates personally responsible for actions that were only too common is another question.

For corruption is a problem which has plagued every society at least since the venality of the Spartan Ephors, and continues to be a major pre-occupation of today's legislators. Political philosophers from Aristotle to Machiavelli and Rousseau frequently emphasized that

laws and institutions shape the citizen and set the bounds within which he can act. Therefore, the phenomenon of corruption in the French colonial system cannot be satisfactorily explained by ascribing it solely to the greed of perverted individuals. No doubt, besides the law of 1760 which explicitly prohibited colonial officials from engaging in trade and the accompanying wage rises, some sort of judicial action against the Canadian officials was warranted if only to prove that the government meant business. Having established, however, that Bigot began life with a small, though not insignificant, venture capital, that he risked it in Atlantic commerce repeatedly and earned a substantial portion of his fortune legitimately; the court's sentence depriving him of all his property was emphatically a miscarriage of justice. Nor was banishment for life an appropriate reward for a man who not only had spent forty years in the service but had been deemed worthy of the Rochefort intendance and had been sent back to Canada only because he was indispensable.

From Bigot's great reluctance to return to Canada it is clear that service in the colonies was to the European, a sort of banishment itself. Therefore, it is not surprising that colonial officials believed they were entitled to profit on trade with the Crown as a form of hardship pay. Life in Quebec or Montreal in the 1750's, while materially secure, was hardly exciting and it is arguable that the royal officials had a duty to provide entertainment while maintaining the dignity of the Crown. This role Bigot filled superbly, although he may have cost the Crown more than his predecessors. Madame Rigon recounted the impact he made upon the people of Quebec. On the 12 November, 1748 a couple of her friends had returned to Montreal:
très enthouiasmées des plaisirs de Québec où M. l'intendant fait danser à toute main. 4

And on the 15 November she added:

Nos messieurs de Québec ne sont pas plus pressés que tu les a vu, cher fils, de sortir de la capitale. Rien ne les émeut et ne contenterait d'être en extase des beaux meubles de M. l'intendant et de sa belle argenterie. Il veut tout mettre sur le bon pied et ne veut plus que l'on parle de retrancher sur les mémoires. Il veut bâtir des casernes à Montréal, des magasins et une belle maison pour l'intendant. 5

At a time when the menus plaisirs du Roi were costing the French government 2,700,000 livres, half a million more than the total expenditure on Canada, 6 what was wrong with the Canadians enjoying a small share of the reflected glory? Indeed, with Versailles turning all European heads, how could it be expected that colonists would not aspire to a dignity modelled on that of their metropolis? Bigot was an authentic product of the system. He aspired to high office and honour, he worked hard to acquire these, he gave the Canadians what they wanted and for this he was deprived of all of his goods and banished to Switzerland. The hypocrisy of the court's judgement is manifest.

That is not to argue that Bigot was a fair-haired boy, incapable of wrong-doing and martyred without a shred of justification. He was a shrewd businessman who observed to Ordis on one occasion that:

"Ce sont les bons comptes qui font les bons amis." 7

He was ruthlessly acquisitive and no doubt rather a dandy. Certainly he did not have much of a social conscience; one of his first acts at Isle Royale having been the acquisition of 'un questionnaire',

4. RAPO., 1935, p. 5.
5. Ibid., p. 7.
(a torturer); but did he differ in this much from the norm? After all, Voltaire had yet to publish his polemic against the judicial murder of Jean Calas and the half-mad Busiens was still to be tortured to death publicly in 1757. More important, as an administrator Bigot was, in at least one historian's view:

second only to Talon, the first of the intendants, in point of ability.

Even Montréal, whom Frégault showed had everything to gain by exaggerating Bigot's faults was forced to admit that, 'vis à vis l'intendant', he was an 'homme d'esprit et intelligent,' and furthermore, that he had, 'des qualités d'administrateur.'

Thus, he was as typical of his class and nation in ambition as he was extraordinary in ability. Though Frégault did not always produce balanced judgements he was right in introducing him as an Administrateur Français. And it appears that Bigot played by the rules. If he had a business relationship with Cradie, so also did other colonial administrators; if he was ambitious for wealth and higher social status, he wanted no more than what his society valued most highly; if his actions were sometimes high handed, it was no less than his office required; if, due to the fall of Canada the court decided to change the rules, it was his personal tragedy to have been intendant at that time. So Bigot is correctly held up as being representative of his times and his history evokes much that was essential of French colonial administration and society.

8. AC., C11B, 22: 219; cited by Frégault, PRAF., i. 118.
12. to Brosses, 20 July 1750: Ibid.
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Beauceville, 1919.
Manuscript Sources

In undertaking this work it was intended, as much as was possible, to avoid duplicating the work of previous researchers. It proved to be impossible, however, to avoid re-reading the copies held in the Canadian Public Archives of the official correspondence between Versailles, Rochefort, and the North American Colonies. Where possible the original pagination was cited but in some cases only the Canadian enumeration was available, in which case the reference in the text has been prefaced by M. The following inventory is restricted only to those sources which were of immediate use in the preparation of this thesis.

Archives des Colonies which are held in the Archives Nationales, in Paris. Series B contains the letters, orders and notes sent by the minister of Marine to the colonial administrators.

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Series C11A - letters from the colonial administrators to the minister of the Marine.

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vol. 10 - a memorandum on the high cost of living in Quebec (1759) pp. 229-230 which is duplicated in A.L. Inornique 11 memorandum on Canadian Administration 231-233, memorandum against Rigot Cadet, 19 October 1761, 234-237V and a memorandum to M. de Beuvet (1766) 241-249V.
Series E 32 - the Bigot Dossier (consulted in Paris). This contains a number of letters and memoranda concerning Bigot, his 'Etat des Services' and a copy of the Cadet Contract.

Series F 3 Collection bureau de St. Étienne (consulted in Paris). This supplies some of the gaps in C11A, vols. 14, 15, 16 of vol. 16 pp. 171-205, 207-208, 213, 215-216 and 223 concern the judgment rendu au Châtelet de Paris; Procès F. Bigot.

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Series C 7 - Carton 216 - though the Montcalm Dossier, this does not contain the pieces relative to Bigot inventoried by Fregault.

Series IE (consulted in Ottawa and Rochefort). This is the rich series which provides the information for the reconstruction of Marine administration at the time Bigot worked at Rochefort. Although much that is relevant to Canada has been copied for the C.P.A. and is held at Ottawa in RG 6 IE Rochefort there are nevertheless a number of references to Bigot in the Ardouin inventory of the series which are
only available at Rochefort. The relevant volumes in Ottawa are:

minister to the intendant: 112-129 (1728-1739)
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Louisiana III — documents relative to the Kerlerec-Rochemore inquiry.

Series V. This is the Series which contains documents relative to royal finances. 47 — contains the information on the prosecution of Marcell in Nicolas Bréard, ancien Trésorier des Colonies of Rochefort. 363-366 — contains the very valuable Contes rendus par M.M. de Vaudreir et de St. James which are a voluminous and exact record of all the transactions relative to the confiscation and sale of the goods seized from the Canadian administrators condemned by the Châtelet in 1763.

Archives Regionales de la Charente-Maritime. For genealogical information of the Bigot family:

Series B 712 p. 44 marriage of Pierre de Bigot

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Genealogical information of Bigot family.
3E 13157 notaire Rouan
3E 15028 " Baron
3E 15344 " Dubos

Registres paroissiaux de St. André de Bordeaux
":"": " Saint Projet
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Gradis Family Archives - 242 Rue de Rivoli, Paris, 1er
consist of several score volumes of documents, letters and account books, the records of a family business spanning the last three hundred years. Of immediate relevance were - a number of account books 1748-1760. Letters written to America:

vol. i - January 1755 - December 1758
vol. ii - January 1759 - January 1763

Letters written to Europe:
vol. i - June 1755 - May 1756
vol. ii - May 1756 - February 1757
vol. iii - February 1757 - November 1757

Letters exchanged with the minister of the Marine.

1 volume - June 1748 - January 1760

Canadian Public Archives

KG 18 A - Troplong "Le Patriotte Francais" (1756)

KG 18 G 2 (2) - Vaudreuil Papers - contains a few letters to the minister not reproduced in CIA which throw light on the events of 1759-60.

KG 18 68 - Archives du Seminar de Quebec. This is a collection of letters and documents relative to the affaire du Canada.
75. - the Journal kept by Moreau of the proceedings at the trial being most important, containing as it does glosses of the day to day testimony of the witnesses and accused.

MG 18 GS (2). The Bigot Dossier. This is the only collection extent of letters written by Bigot to Gradis. There are also a few addressed to Rouillé and Machault. They date from 1746 - 1756.

The Bourlamaque Collection
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Ordonnances des Intendants
30 vols. 1705 - 1760. Vols. 19-20 contain Bigot's Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (Archives of the Bastille)
Vols. 11828, 12111, 12114, 12133, 12142, 12143, 12144, 12145, 12147, 12148, 12151, 12154, 12156, 12162, 12163, 12166, 12501, 12502, 12503, 12504, 12506, 12507, 12519, 12582, all contain varying amounts of information not only of the captivity of the accused in the Bastille but also original notes from their pre-trial interrogations. Most are very thin. 12111 for example, contains only one short note signed by Choiseul summarizing Bigot's sentence. Others such as 12148 are more useful containing as it does a good number of documents relating to the Bigot-Gradis commerce. 12142 is found in notes of the first interrogations and provides first-hand insight into the difficulties faced by the prosecution in trying to forge a coherent case out of the highly contradictory statements of the accused.

For comparison to the affaire du Canada documents from the trials of other colonial administrators are important. Vol. 12168 contains documents relative to Lally Tollendal, held in the Bastille from November 1762-May 1766, condemned to death for "faute trahison de concussion et regardé comme la cause unique de..."
This library is the principal repository for the printed sources on the affaire du Canada. Almost all have been copied by hand for the Canadian Public Archives. Since most of the copies have been consulted and compared to the originals, and the copies are for the most part, faithful reproductions, for the ease of researchers on both sides of the Atlantic it is proposed here to give the BN reference followed by that for the CPA.

1. BN 4° FM 2986-2990; 4° FM 34329-34331 (1). Two copies of the Mémoire pour Messire François Bigot... Accusé... 2 vols: Together these volumes run to more than a thousand pages of historical narrative and closely argued rebuttal to the charges laid against the intendant. They are one of the principal sources for the Bigot administration but as Frégault observed, they must be used with utmost caution since Bigot and his lawyer had no inhibitions about resorting to sophisms and even outright lies. The first reference is to the copy which contains the marginal comments of one of Bigot's judges. [C.N.L. R-F-50639, B5L2 VI/]

2. CPA MG 18 68 (5) pp. 24-84, this manuscript entitled the Case of François Bigot is a gloss of his Mémoire and contains nothing new.

3. BN 4° FM 2990 (2); 4° FM 5134. Two copies of the 'Jugement rendu souverainément et en dernier ressort dans l'Affaire du Canada ...' 10 December 1763, Paris. This document which is appended to the Bigot Mémoire in the Canadian National Library (C.N.L.) and another copy of which can also be found in the AN in V7 364 contains the names and sentences of the accused, their judges and the principal pieces of evidence.
4. 4° FM 2990 (3); 4° FM 2991, 4° FM 5133. Three copies of the Principal reports of the Procureur general of the Commission; other copies can be found in the AN V7 364 and appended to the Bigot Mémoire in the C.N.L.

5. 4° FM 34379 - 4° FM 3326; two copies of the Mémoire for the 5° de Boishebert. The librarians at the BN have found no trace of the report for Boishebert inventoried by Fréguault as EN 4° FM 1556. The Précis for Boishebert can be found in C.P.A. MG 18 G8 (4) pp. 141-157.

6. 4° FM 18835 - Mémoire pour le Sieur Le Mercier... ci-devant commandant l'Artillerie en Canada (C.P.A. MG 18 G8 (4) pp. 159-235).

7. 4° FM 25325 - A Messieurs les commissaires du Conseil en cette partie (Requete de K-J-H Pean... accused) [C.P.A. MG 18 G8 (5) 108-153].

8. 4° FM 25326 - Mémoire pour Michel-Jean-Huges Peau... contre M. Le Procureur-General du Roi. [This is the principal testimony of one of Bigot's alleged chief collaborators.] [C.N.L.]

9. 4° FM 25327 - Although inventoried by Fréguault as relevant to the affaire du Canada this piece is the Mémoire pour le 5° Peau... Demande de vacatio d'un Arrêt du Parlement de Bretagne de 13 May 1761. Apart from throwing some light on his private affairs it is of no immediate importance.

10. 4° FM 25328 - Observations pour le Sieur Peau [C.P.A. MG 18 G8 (5) 94-107].

11. 4° FM 28835 - Mémoire pour le Sieur Duverger de Saint-Ain, lieutenant d'artillerie dans les troupes étant ci-devant en Canada. [C.N.L.]

12. 4° FM 3433 (2). An inventory of documents which, according to Bigot, establish his innocence.

13. 4° FM 34331 (3). Mémoire pour Jean-Victor Varin à Vgr De Sartine [C.P.A. MG 18 G8 (3) pp. 11-43].

15. 4° FM 34331 (5). Addition au mémoire du Sieur Bréard. This contains more price and profit calculations.

16. 4° FM 34331 (6). Réponse du Sieur Bréard... aux mémoires de M. Bigot et du Sieur Penn [C.P.A. MG 18 G8 (3) pp. 144-190]

17. 4° FM 34331 (7). Supplé Guillaume Estèbe a M. le Lieutenant General de Police [C.P.A. MG 18 G8 (3) pp. 392-444]

18. 4° FM 34331 (8). Pour le Sieur Estèbe, Tableau... marchandises seches... Angelique et le St. Maudet. [C.P.A. MG18 G8 (3) pp. 445-463]


20. 4° FM 34331 (10). Mémoire pour le Sieur Martel... ci-devant Garde-Magasin du Roi a Mont-Téil [G.N.L.]


23. 4° FM 34331 (13). Supplement au Mémoire de Jean-Baptiste Martel...

24. 4° FM 34331 (14). A Messieurs Les Presidents of Commissaires... [Cour/ Jean Corpron [C.P.A. MG18 G8 (3) pp. 450-497]

25. 4° FM 34331 (15). Mémoire pour le St. Poussaisauld [C.P.A. MG 18 G8 (3) pp. 231-249]
26. 4° FM 34331 (16). A Messeigneurs Les President et Commissaires...

pour François Maurin [C.P.A. KG 18 G8 (3) pp. 199-230]

27. 4° FM 34331 (17). Also under 4° FM 32145. Mémoire pour Le Marquis de Vaudreuil [C.N.L.]

28. 4° FM 34378. Mémoire pour Daniel de Joncourt-Chabert, ci-devant Commandant au petit fort de Niagaran... [C.P.A. KG 18 G8 (4) pp. 7-155]

2° FM 11445. Réponse de la Marquise de Pontcalm à des Imputations calomnieuses... [C.N.L.]

In addition to these printed sources the C.P.A. hold a few scraps of which the originals have not been located. They are:


30. KG 18 G8 (4), pp. 1-6 - Notes of the Sieur Karteil

31. KG 18 G8 (5), pp. 16-23 - Observations on commercial practices in Canada and elsewhere.

Manuscripts Français:

Vol. 11342 - three letters from Bigot to Harvy
Vol. 16207; pp. 47-129 - A favourable report on Bigot and a request that he be allowed to return from exile; 1773.

Manuscripts Français, nouvelles acquisitions:

Vol. 22253.

This contains a number of letters relative to the trial including one addressed by Bigot to Gradis on the 10 October 1748 and another to Puyssigulx on the 1 June 1761, pp. 155-156; 163-164. pp. 165-166 reproduce the Société du Canada contract of 1748. And pp. 167-168 are a report by the Intendant of Bordeaux on the documents found in the Gradis Archive in 1762.

Printed Sources

Of immediate use in the preparation of this thesis were:

1. Barbier A. 'La Baronnie de la Touche-d'Aurigny et le duché de Chatellerault sous Francis I; B.N. Soc. 2048 d 49 8°/18 0.100

   2. Lettres du Levis concernant la guerre du Canada, 1756-1760.
   3. Lettres de Versailles à Dieskau, Montcalm et Levis.
   4. Lettres et pièces militaires, instructions, ordres, mémoires, plans de campagne et de défense 1756-1760.
   5. Lettres de Bourlamaque à Levis
   7. Journal de Montcalm, 1756-1760.
   8. Lettres de Vaudreuil à Levis
   9. Lettres de Bigot à Levis
   10. Lettres de divers particuliers à Levis
   12. Table analytique de la collection des manuscrits de Levis.

3. Courville/ Mémoires sur le Canada depuis 1749 jusqu'à 1760. En trois parties; avec cartes et plans lithographiés, Quebec 1873.


Theses


Periodicals


'Bourbon Protestant Families in Canadian Trade, 1740-1763';

ibid, November 1974.


General Works


8. De la Chenaye - Desbois et Badier, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*


    Paris, 1938.

11. La Politique coloniale de la France; le Ministere


    Quarter Century of the Town and District of Gladstone in the Province
    of Manitoba*, Winnipeg, 1946.


20. Lacour-Gayet, G. *La Marine Militaire de la France sous le regne de


25. McLennan, J.S. Louisbourg from its Foundation to its Fall. London, 1918.


29. de la Morinerie, L. La Noblesse de Sainte-Croix et d'Aulnoy convoquée pour les États Généraux de 1789.


34. Williers du Terrage, Baron Haro, les dernières années de la Louisiane Francaise, Paris, 1905.