

- Jean-Louis Le Loutre, Letter Oct 1rst, 1738.

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n° 87 Lettres R f. m. g.
Monsieur

vous êtes le seul à qui j'ay l'honneur d'écrire, ma situation
présente, ne me permet pas d'écrire à mes Supérieurs, et si j'ay écrit
à mon frere, je l'ay fait dans un tems où je ne pouvois marquer quelle
seroit ma destination, ny l'emploi auquel le Seigneur m'appelleroit, j'ay pu
que vous voudriez bien suppléer au défaut de mes lettres, je proteste
que je leur devay toujours soumis, et je les prie de ne me pas priver de
leur lettres par lesquelles ministrieroient et m'informent. Je commence
M^r le gouverneur a donc changé ma destination, et du port royal où je
devois aller remplace M^r de St-Joncy, ma place à Maligabèche pour y
passer l'hiver avec M^r Maillard afin d'apprendre sous sa discipline à
connoître les mœurs et la langue des Sauvages. Je trouve que c'est un
vaste champ où le zèle le plus fervent trouveroit de quoy à occuper sans
relâche, il faudroit d'autres apôtres, des ouvriers plus laborieux que moy
pour le mettre en valeur, nous les connoissons sans doute, mais de St-Vincent
vous en aura fait le portrait au naturel, je passe donc sur cet article, mais
comme c'est le trouvaux dont le Seigneur veut bien me confier la conduite
je vous fey connoître les difficultés qui nous empêchent de faire tout le
bien qu'on pourroit faire.

nous avons trois missions de Sauvages la rive s'appelle Maligabèche
dans le Cap Breton à 23 lieues de Louisbourg avec Natitgoneiche sur les

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October 1st 1738

J.m.J

Monsieur

You are the only one to whom I have the honour to write, my present situation does not allow me to write to my superiors, and if I wrote to my brother, I did it at a time when I could not mark what would be my destiny, nor the employment to which the Lord would call me, I hope that you will kindly make up for the scarcity of my letters, I protest that I will always submit to them, and I beg them not to deprive me of their letters because they instruct and animate me; I begin Mr. Governor has therefore changed my destiny and from the port royal where I had to go and replace Mr de St poncy, he placed me in Maliga8èche to spend the winter with Mr maillard to learn under his discipline to know the manners and the language of the *Sauvages*; I find it to be a vast field where the most fervent zeal would find something to occupy itself without release, it would take other apostles, more laborious workers than me to highlight it, you probably know them, Mr de St Vincent would have provided you with their portrait in the natural, So I pass on this article, but as it is the flock of which the Lord wants to entrust me with the conduct I will let you know the difficulties that prevent us from doing all the good we could do.

We have three missions of *Sauvages* the first is called maliga8èche in Cape Breton 23 leagues from Louisbourg with natkigoneiche on the

Page 2

english lands 12 or 20 leagues from maliga8eche that is the division of mr maillard: the 2nd is Malpek in the Isle of St Jean, 27 leagues from the port la Joye with five or six other villages under his responsibility, the *Sauvages* have no missionaries since many years ago, it is true that Mr de St vincent wintered there for a year, moreover the missionary of maliga8eche goes there every year with mr the governor, for the distribution of presents, but it is for such a short time that we do not notice that he has passed, finally the 3rd is chigabenakady with all the *Sauvages* de l'acadie, it has been from eleven to twelve ^{years} that mr. the Governor promises them a missionary, those are the three missions served by priests.

the first difficulty is that we have neither house nor church; Let me explain, the church of Maliga8èche is falling into such disrepair that it is impossible to spend any other winter there, despite the prayers that the mrs of Louisbourg made to him mr Maillard spends winter in Natkitgonëiche which begins to threaten ruin. there has never been a church or a house in Malpek, in chigabenakady there is a fairly good one. we were made a lot of promises, but these are for the

coming year and this year never comes, we have great hopes for next year, the presence of our Governor and that of the *commissaire ordonnateur* will do a lot at Court, and we will perhaps get something for the upkeep of our chapels which are very poor devoid of a cross for the procession, of sun, of thurible, of altar front and it is impossible for a missionary to do good among the *Savage* without a church and the ornaments necessary to perform the office; besides we cannot remedy the second difficulty which makes their virtue fail, it is the inconstancy, the lightness and the laziness of our *Sauvages* joined to the trade that they have with the French, when under the eyes of their missionaries they appear like saints, they have the modesty of angels when they are at church, they are docile to their patriarch and obedient to what they say, but it is only a passing good

Page 3

Everything is lost because of their different wanderings, if they come to the house of the Frenchman, it is only an abomination, although His greatness has forbidden under penalty of reserved cases that missionaries cannot absolve from giving brandy to the *Sauvages* despite that his majesty has forbidden under the penalty of a fine of five hundred *livres* and that our governor renews the ordinance almost every year, it is given with impunity, without any moral qualms, those who are to put the ordinance of our prince into execution are the first to prevaricate, one has to close his eyes in spite of himself and content himself with moaning in secret from all the disorder, here is however the principle of all the crimes which are committed among our *Sauvages*. the remedy for such a great evil would be to fix them and to make them build in the French way and clear the land, this is what we are working on with all our might and if the Lord bless our businesses we hope to come to succeed.

finally, the third difficulty comes from what they forget and corrupt all the prayers and instructions that the missionaries give them because not having always had missionaries, they do not have people who can help them. to remember nor correct them, mr worked this winter against this universal evil among them and developed his system about which he had been thinking for a while. They are different hieroglyphs to which he determined meaning by means of which our *Sauvages*, after having learned the meaning, like children who learn the meaning of alphabetical letters, read in the notebooks given to them as well as the French in their books. I have no doubt that mr maillard will send you the *Cabiers Sauvages* to give you the intelligence of his system. I find it very useful for our nation and I hope that in a few years our prayers will no longer be subject to the same inconveniences, If the Lord preserves us our *Sauvages* will know how to read and write

Page 4

I started to notice the difficulty of the language, I did not believe it so difficult, but I realized my mistake, I can't find even now a difference between the situation of a Young Missionary who learns their language and that of St Jerome when he learned Hebrew. you must turn your tongue a thousand times, hiss from your throat to

pronounce a word, so harsh and barbaric is this language, the progress that I made are very small, but they still exceeded my expectations. I spent the winter under a good master, and learned more under his discipline than I had done by myself in four years, I will always be indebted to him for all that I will ever know of mikmak, it is true that we have neither grammar nor a dictionary in this language, but I hope that if the Lord keeps him another ten years among this nation, we will have some, this missionary is a treasure to whom I believe the Lord has given the gift of tongues, it is amazing to see the progress he has made in the short time he has been there. He is an indefatigable workman for the study and continual work inseparable from these missions, he is a minister filled with apostolic hope, finally a model to imitate I would be happy if I could follow from afar his traces, to have lived with him for six to seven months is a great grace that the Lord has given me, but I look at my separation as a punishment he sends me. I had hoped to winter this year with him but despite my insurances it was not possible for me to determine him to grant me this favour because of the great scarcity of priests in this country: so here are my progresses, mr maillard gave me all the prayers of the *Sauvages* with an interpretation of the words contained therein the hieroglyphs, a very ample notebook to confess them, with a notebook where are assembled all the *sauvages* words ^{he knows} with a few sentences and a few general rules for this language. I am starting to mumble it

Page 5

and to make myself understood. I understand pretty well what they mean, I give them catechism, I sing and teach them their prayers, and make them notebooks, finally I started to confess them since Pentecost, I had almost no more hope, but it grows stronger day by day, the accent does not put me off by the fact that it is somehow similar to Basque, English and even Breton which is my first language, I received this spring a very polite letter from mr. armstrong the english Governor of annapolis royale in which he told me that he was very surprised at my delay, and that he did not know the reasons Mr. de Brouilland had to keep me in cape breton since I was destined by my Paris superiors to replace mr de St poncy, he begs me to fulfill my destination and leave as soon as his letter is received, with however, the approval of the mrs. of Louisbourg, he finally assures me that I can count on him and that he will always protect me, he also wrote in a similar way to mr de Bourville the commander of louisbourg and to mr Le Norman *commissaire ordonnateur* and I have since been assured that he wrote to mr de Combes, of this little inconvenience I am the cause though innocent, I asked mr. de brouilland after he had changed my destination, what he thought fit to do with the letter that mr de Combes had written about me to mr armstrong, he said that it should be burned so that he had no knowledge of it,

when I went to put it in the fire, I no longer found it, I believed it was lost, but it happens that by surprise I had put it among the letters that I had for mr St poncy, we hoped to appease mr Armstrong by sending him a new missionary whom we were expecting by the king's ship following the promises made to us by mr. de

Page 6

Brouilland, but our surprise was great when we heard that there were no missionaries neither for the french nor for the *Savage*, the mrs of Louisbourg were very embarrassed when they found themselves unable to fulfill what they had promised to the english governor I saw myself on the point of passing from the savage to the french but finally, we conclude to wait for the arrival of mr maillard in louisbourg sad stay for me and where however I had to wait two months and a half, finally for conclusion we decide to write to mr armstrong to wait until next year, and for me to continue to live among the *Sauvages*.

my mission is that of Chigabenakadie, meaning the *Sauvages* of l'acadie with the french of Tahamig8eche and gobekitk and all the french dispersed and far from the priests who are there, the *Sauvages* are a very heavy burden for me, and french people have been added to it I must therefore succumb if the Lord does not lend me my hand, but it is in him alone that I place all my confidence. I left Louisbourg for my mission on the 22nd of September, after having suffered the winds and storms we arrived fortunately on the eighth day, this is the moment that I spare to write and give you my news.

I received your letter with great pleasure, I see mr Lefebvre left for the Indies pleased to God that we had similar ^{missionaries} here. I took the wisest option, I only see them out of necessity and very rarely out of propriety, a profound silence suits me since I cannot remedy the evil, but now I am delivered from this boring company because of my distance from Louisbourg. In

Page 7

fact louisbourg is dead for me, and me for louisbourg, l'acadie will henceforth be my pathmos and the place of my delights. you may think that we are very rich and that we don't we lack nothing, but where would our wealth come from, our salary is very modest especially for a country as hard as this one, trade is unworthy of a minister of the altars, I explain, mr maillard wanted last year to relieve the misery of his mother but as he wanted to do it secretly, I told him that he had only to ask my brother, and that by this means no one would have knowledge, the Lord did not allow the charity of a child to his mother remains unknown, I can assure you that it is only by

with care and even sometimes by depriving himself of the necessary that he collected this sum, you know mr that when he left paris for this country, it had been proposed to our superiors to secure a pension for his mother, he left in doubt, he did not want to clarify the fact for fear of appearing importunate, but the letter he received this year from Mr Chatel puts him to rest as he assures him that our Superiors give her a small sum ^{every year}, if that is so, his worries will cease, and he will henceforth live in peace.

allow mr to turn to you for my little needs, I no longer have a brother in paris, forgive me the freedom that I take.

I beg you to send next year a case with three or four razors, the stone the leather and the scissors, I have none I had to go three or four months without shaving, four fabric caps, I forgot to buy some at la rochelle and I just lost the one I had during the crossing, a brief,

Page 8

six dozen catechisms from Paris, with a few dozen of the hymns that saw at the seminary for the use of the missions, as you know many charitable nuns, please add as many rosaries as you can, don't forget me, don't deny me this grace, address the package to mr bourgin to pass it on by the king's ship, you will have the kindness to mark the sum and I you reimburse you.

I have the honor to present my respects to Monsieur de Combes, de Montigny,