The Establishment of the Royal Colony: 1663

A number of key events happened just prior to 1663 that caused France to establish a Royal Colony in New France. In 1657, control over the fur trade returned to the Company of 100 Associates. The Company of Habitants was in debt and could not meet the colony's expenses. By 1658, increased Iroquois attacks threatened to destroy the colony. The Iroquois did succeed in blocking the fur trade and destroying New France's trading allies, the Huron. Neither the trading companies nor the Roman Catholic Church could deal with the Iroquois. New France sent an appeal for help to France in 1661.

over the colony, making it a Royal Colony. This meant that New France would be governed directly by the king, just as if it were another province in France. The trading companies would become businesses in the colony.

Absolute Monarchy

King Louis XIV was an absolute monarch. Absolute monarchs have unlimited power over their people. Absolute rulers believe they have the right to rule given to them by God. The ruler was supposed to govern his subjects fairly—that was part of his responsibility. Under this system of government, the monarch has control over his subjects, although power is spread throughout the various levels of government. The people have no role or influence in government affairs, although absolute monarchs usually appoint advisory councils that actually run the government. While these groups may give advice to the monarch, he may not follow their advice.

King Louis XIV of France was not the only absolute monarch in Europe. Many of the countries of Europe at this time, including Spain and Portugal, were governed by absolute monarchs.

King Louis XIV

New France's appeal came when King Louis XIV had time to become interested in the fate of the colony. He was between European wars and very eager to increase France's power and wealth by sponsoring wealthy mercantilistic colonies. In 1663, he took control of New France away from the trading companies and assumed direct control.
Royal Government

The study of government is very complex. To make this study easier, we will look at three areas of absolute rule: (1) government participation, (2) decision-making powers, and (3) majority rule. Examples are given for New France.

Characteristics of an Absolute Monarch

1. In an absolute monarchy only the people selected by the ruler are allowed to participate in the government.
   - In France and New France King Louis XIV was an absolute monarch.
   - Only those people selected by King Louis XIV were allowed to participate in government affairs. These people are shown on the chart on page 47 as the king's advisors. They had some influence on the king but he did not have to listen to them.

2. In an absolute monarchy one person, the king, has the power to make decisions.
   - Absolute monarchs believed that their power was inherited from their ancestors.
   - Absolute monarchs believed they were responsible for the well-being of their subjects.
   - Absolute monarchs decide what is best for the people. They may or may not find out what the people want. They may or may not put the people's wishes into effect.
   - The power to make decisions about New France was held by King Louis XIV.
   - This does not mean that King Louis XIV of France made all the decisions. He appointed advisors, who made up the government of France, to make the decisions for him. If King Louis was unhappy with the decisions his council of advisors made, then he appointed new advisors who would make the kind of decisions he wanted.
   - The advisors in the French government passed on the king's decisions to the government in New France. The government in New France made up of the governor, intendant, bishop, and Sovereign Council. If the government of New France did not follow the decisions made by the king's advisors (and the king), then they were recalled to France and were not allowed to keep their jobs.
   - In theory the people as a whole had no role or influence in the decision-making process.
   - In practice, because the distance from France to New France was so great, messages took up to a year to travel back and forth. This allowed the people of New France greater autonomy (greater freedom to make their own political decisions).

3. Majority rule does not exist in an absolute monarchy. Minority rule and one person rule exist in an absolute monarchy.
   - The government of New France was made up of appointed officials in France and in New France. Minority rule existed in New France. The majority of the people did not have a say in the government.

Meeting of the Sovereign Council, by Charles Huot. Headed by the governor, intendant, and bishop, the Sovereign Council included officials in the government of New France who were appointed to carry out decisions made by the king and his advisors in France.