

# The Government

## The Governor

You read in the previous section about the structure of the government. Now you will examine some of the key positions in it, and the responsibilities of the people who held them.

The governor was the top official in New France. He was responsible for seeing that the king's orders were carried out. He appointed members to the sovereign council, which made laws and decided what taxes the people should pay. He was also responsible for relationships between New France and any other European groups in North America.

The governor was a symbol of the king, and was expected to act a bit like a king. He held lavish dances at his residence, inviting the top people to attend. With his family, he travelled around the colony each summer.

The most famous governor of New France was Louis de Buade, Count Frontenac. He held the position from 1672 until his death in 1698. He was a French noble and had been an officer in the armies of France and Venice. But he was heavily in debt, and wanted to make his fortune in the colony.

Frontenac was sent to New France with orders from the king to keep the settled area to a few places close to trade routes with France. He was also ordered to develop the seigneuries and not to expand the fur trade. The king felt that this could stir up disputes with the Dutch and the English, who were involved in the fur trade farther south. Frontenac ignored the king's instructions. He saw the fur trade as the source of greater wealth, especially if he could get some of it for himself. He sent military parties out to explore farther inland and to find ways of keeping the Dutch and the English out. He built a series of forts to serve as a first line of defence. Perhaps the most famous of these was Fort Frontenac, in what is now Kingston, Ontario. In 1982, part of the original fort was uncovered by archeologists.



Statue of Louis de Buade, Count Frontenac, in the National Assembly building in Québec City. What memorials are part of your community? Why?



France had three kings during the 1600s: Henry IV, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV.

The French efforts in the interior encouraged the First Nations peoples to compete among themselves for furs to supply their European partners. The Iroquois supplied the Dutch and launched a series of wars against the Huron, the Illinois, and the Abenaki peoples. In 1680, the Iroquois ejected the French from Illinois territory.

The king, Louis XIV, was angry that Frontenac had ignored his orders, and recalled him to France in 1682. Frontenac persuaded the king to reappoint him to New France in 1689, by which time the Iroquois Confederacy nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca peoples) were attacking New France. This time, Frontenac's orders were to seize the New York area, where the Dutch were supplying the Iroquois with firearms. Again he ignored his orders, and launched an attack on the English settlements in New England. Frontenac continued to profit personally from the fur trade. By the late 1690s, he had exasperated the king. He would probably have been recalled a second time to France, but he died suddenly in 1698.

## WORDS MATTER

**intendant** a high-ranking government official

**commoner** someone who is not born into the upper classes of society

## The Intendant of New France

The **intendant** did the day-to-day work of government, being responsible for finance and justice and seeing that the rules and laws of the council were obeyed. The governor was usually of noble birth, and the intendant was usually a **commoner** (of lower status). It was the intendant who oversaw activity in the colony. He made sure that the people paid their taxes and that lawbreakers were punished.

## Profile of an Intendant: Jean Talon

From 1665 to 1668, Jean Talon was intendant of France's northern territories, including New France, Acadia (what is now Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island) and Newfoundland. He returned to France, and was later appointed for a second term, from 1670–1672. In 1666, he conducted a census of the population. Here are some of his other achievements:

- He carried out a survey to find out what resources New France could supply besides fur.
- He organized the building of sawmills, shipbuilding docks, the fishery, and a brewery.
- He increased New France's trade with the French colonies in the Caribbean.
- He increased immigration from France and was responsible for setting up the *filles du roi* program.

All these developments increased New France's wealth.

After Talon's term as Intendant ended in 1672, he returned to France, where Louis XIV named him Count d'Orsainville.



Hard times for New France were ahead. Trade with the Caribbean failed, the new industries declined, and even New France's agriculture experienced a slowdown. Talon had set up an efficient administration in New France, but Louis XIV was involved in a series of expensive wars with England and the Netherlands. He did not want to invest more money in New France, so some of Talon's efforts did not produce the results they could have.

Some of New France's potential was lost because the king did not want to spend much on its development. For this reason, it continued to be vulnerable to attack from its enemies, especially the English.



Jean Talon, first intendant of New France. Find Talon in the painting on page H 17.

### THINKING It Over

1. Based on the profiles you have read here, what were the main duties and responsibilities of the governor and the intendant? Which of the two appointments would you have preferred? Why? 
2. Which person, Count Frontenac or Jean Talon, had the greatest effect on New France during the 1600s? First, make a two-column list of each man's contributions to the colony. Then, write an extended paragraph to support your choice. 

# The Church Organization in New France

In Chapter 1, you learned about the missions of the Roman Catholic Church. In this chapter, you will learn about how the Church was organized. At first, all **clergy** came from France, since there were no teaching facilities in the colony. But once New France was fully established, the Church developed its own local organization.

## The Bishop

In 1659, François de Laval arrived in New France. The pope (the head of the worldwide Roman Catholic Church) had given Laval the task of organizing all aspects of the Church's work there. In 1674, he was appointed first **Bishop** of Québec.

One of Laval's most important accomplishments was setting up the Seminary of Québec in 1663. This was a school to train men for the priesthood. Once it was functioning, there was no need to rely on France as the source of priests. It was the first of many seminaries set up during the almost 30-year period that Laval was bishop. He resigned, at the age of 65, in 1688.

Laval's major goal was to create a **diocese** of Québec. A diocese is an area under the control of a bishop. In fact, not all Church officials were under the bishop's control. Many of the missionaries, for example, took their orders from their own leadership in Europe. Laval set up a Church court to try clergy accused of crimes.

### During **READING**

#### Checkpoint

The Roman Catholic Church has certain rights in Canada, such as a separate Catholic school system in some places. Read this section to find out why.

### WORDS MATTER

**clergy** people trained to lead religious organizations

**bishop** a high-ranking Church official, usually in charge of a district or diocese

**diocese** a geographical area in which all the churches of a particular denomination are overseen by a bishop



A 1931 painting by Lawrence R. Batchelor titled "First Ursuline Nuns with Indian Pupils at Québec."



François de Laval, the first Bishop of Québec. Laval and Talon are shown greeting the *filles du roi* in the painting on p. H 17.

In many European countries, including France, the king and the pope competed for power in religious matters. Kings often claimed that they were appointed by God. Popes replied that while kings might rule on earth, popes' authority went deeper, governing not just the body, but the soul. People such as Laval were often caught up in disputes between the two authorities. But he had no difficulty choosing sides. He believed that the Roman Catholic Church should be supreme and that its rules were superior to the king's laws.

## The Clergy

Once Laval had been appointed Bishop of Québec, he was able to create new **parishes** in New France. A parish is a local church district. New priests coming out of his seminary were assigned to these parishes. The priests were able to expand the influence of the Church as the population increased. In this way, the Roman Catholic Church became a dominant influence throughout New France.

### WORD MATTER

**parish** the area served by a local church

**lay organizations** religious organizations run by people who are not clergy

## Lay Organizations



There were also many **lay organizations**. These extended the influence of the Church, by providing opportunities for working, learning, and participating in the life of New France. For example, the *Congrégation Notre-Dame* was an organization of lay women established in 1658. Its members were teachers, who set up schools for girls in a number of parishes. Laval officially approved their work in 1671, and later, the organization became a religious organization of nuns.

### During READING

#### Checkpoint

Revisit your organizer to check your predictions

### THINKING It Over

1. In your opinion, why was Laval's work so important in spreading the influence of the Roman Catholic Church? 
2. What were parishes? In your opinion, why was it important to create new parishes as the population expanded? 
3. Examine the painting in this section closely. Who are the children? How are they dressed? What are they doing? What role is religion playing in this painting? 