

THE ROLE OF THE INTENDANTS DURING
THE MINISTRY OF RICHELIEU

THE ROLE OF THE INTENDANTS
IN
ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRALIZATION DURING THE MINISTRY
OF
THE CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU

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CHAPTER I

The administrative history of France before 1789 is characterized by a growing centralization of institutions against the resistance of adamant provincialism. In general, there was a relentless progress toward the centralization of justice and administration which began with Hugh Capet and was achieved only after the Revolution. But the immense size of the realm and the haphazard process by which it was incorporated made unitary administration virtually impossible: The diversity of laws and privileges of the various provinces became part of the royal inheritance when the provinces became part of the realm, and this diversity placed severe limitations on royal efforts to unify administration.¹

At the core of the trend toward centralism was the dynamic force of the French monarchy. This force was exerted in two ways: In the formulation of an exalted theory of monarchy, and in the actual steps taken by kings of France to consolidate their power and authority. To the concept of the king as the supreme feudal overlord, the early Capetians added their decision to adhere to a strict hereditary basis for kingship. This foundation was built upon by the medieval jurists, who, by making use of the Carolingian heritage of secular authority, portrayed the king as the giver of laws and as the highest judge of the realm. The Capetians'

¹J. Russell Major, Representative Institutions in Renaissance France, 1421-1599, (Madison, 1960), 6-8; John S. C. Bridge, A History of France from the Death of Louis XI, (Oxford, 1936), V, 15-16.

steadfast support of the Papacy brought its reward in the reasoning of medieval churchmen, that kings were set apart by God for their task.² Moreover, the French kings were careful to cultivate all the "sacred" associations of kingship.³ The ampoule of oil at Rheims used for the anointing of kings, it was claimed, never emptied. Also, the anointed king had the magical gift of healing "the King's evil", scrofula. Most important, the canonization of Louis IX brought an immense prestige to the Capetian line.

Concurrent with the development of a theory of monarchy were the practical steps on the part of the French kings to augment their power and to centralize administrative authority in their hands. The initial moves to escape from the chaos of high feudalism were made by Louis VI (1108-1137). First, Louis undertook to consolidate the royal fiefs and to bring his vassals into subjection: Secondly, by refusing to do homage for the county of Vexin, which he held in fief from the abbey of St. Denis, he established the precedent that the French king could do homage to none, but was suzerain of all.⁴ Finally, Louis broke the hereditary control his most powerful vassals held over the great offices of the realm. During his reign, the offices of both sénéchal and chancelier were brought under royal control.⁵

The power of the crown was further augmented during the reign of

²Robert Fawtier, The Capetian Kings of France, translated by Leonel Butler and R. J. Adam, (London, 1940), 88-94.

³Ibid., 57-58.

⁴Ibid., 80.

⁵Ibid., 173.

Louis' grandson, Philip Augustus (1180-1223). It was then that Normandy was captured from the Angevins. This conquest provided the opportunity for a great renovation in the administration of the realm. Until this time, administration of the royal domain had been left in the hands of prévôts, royal farmers who bought their prévôtés by auction, and, in return for an agreed portion, administered the royal lands.⁶ This direct relationship between the prévôts and the king had become increasingly cumbersome as the area under royal control, and thus the number of prévôts, grew. The acquisition of Normandy added roughly another third to the royal domains and made such a direct relationship between the king and each of the prévôts completely unfeasible. Philip, hence, borrowed from the more sophisticated and efficient administration of the Anglo-Normans to create a new official, the bailli, who was appointed and paid by the crown and who held his office entirely at the king's pleasure.⁷ These baillis were to administer royal justice, to collect feudal dues and to supervise the work of the prévôts.⁸

Philip also continued the practice begun by his father of residing most frequently in Paris,⁹ and this custom proved to be of great significance for the French monarchy. In Philip's reign, the royal archives were deposited at Paris and the treasury was placed at the Paris Temple

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 176; Charles Guignebert, A Short History of the French People, translated by F. G. Richmond (New York, 1930), I, 220.

⁸Fawtier, 177.

⁹Ibid., 186.

under the guard of the Paris Templars.¹⁰ In the century which followed, Paris became the administrative centre for the whole of France. The Parlement of Paris, which began to separate itself from the rest of the Royal court under Louis IX (1226-1270), later won the distinction of being the one court of appeal in France. The Chambre des Comptes, organized by Philip the Fair (1285-1314) as the sole financial court of the realm, also made Paris its centre of operations.

Under Philip Augustus' son, Louis VIII (1223-1226), the appanage system, whereby large tracts of the royal domain were entrusted to the king's younger sons to rule, was inaugurated. This system contained a mixture of advantages and disadvantages. On the negative side, the system of appanages retarded the growth of the royal domains, upon which the crown was mainly dependent for its resources.¹¹ More seriously, it provided rebellious Princes of the Blood with a stronghold from which they might recruit forces to act against the king, as was the case with Burgundy during the Hundred Years War. On the other hand, the system also made a significant contribution to unity. Capetian princes carried the language, the ideas, and the political customs of the royal court into the provinces.¹² Moreover, by remaining attached to France, these princes were able, when the direct line ended, to provide heirs to the throne who maintained a distinctively French viewpoint.

¹⁰Ibid., 187; Earnest Lavisse, ed., Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution, (Paris, 1902), III, pt. i, 244.

¹¹Lavisse, II, pt. ii, 340; Gaston Zeller, Les institutions de la France au XVI^e siècle, (Paris, 1948), 86-87; Bridge, 10-11.

¹²Bridge, 11.

Philip's grandson, Louis IX, provided the model for French kingship, not only by the saintly quality of his life, but also in his capable administration, which did much to augment the power of the monarchy. Perhaps his greatest contribution was in the field of justice. Out of St. Louis' deep concern that royal rule should be just, arose the designation of certain members of the curia as Curia in Parlamento.¹³ In this lay the origins of the highest law courts in the realm, the parlements. Out of the royal concern that taxation should be justly levied and collected grew another specialization within the curia, that of the Curia in Compointis.¹⁴ This was the beginning of a separate administrative organ for finance, the Chambre des Comptes. Moreover, Louis cut back the abuses which had already become rampant in the administration of the baillis and sénéchals by sending out inspectors from the court to investigate complaints against royal administration.¹⁵

Under Philip the Fair, the tendencies toward specialization which had begun to manifest themselves under St. Louis, came to maturity. The Curia in Compointis was transformed into a well-developed administration for the collection and regulation of taxes. The treasury was removed from the care of the Knights Templars and placed in the Louvre under the supervision of the newly instituted Treasurer. The Parlement, as the judicial branch of the curia, became differentiated into three courts, the Grand' Chambre or Court of Pleas, the Cour des Requêtes,

¹³Lavisse, II, pt. ii, 327.

¹⁴Ibid., II, pt. ii, 331.

¹⁵Ibid., II, pt. ii, 348.

and the Cour des Enquêtes.¹⁶ However, by sending representatives of the high courts to the outlying provinces of the realm, Normandy, Champagne, and Languédoc, Philip prepared the way for the later establishment of separate provincial courts which would claim a measure of independence from the central government.¹⁷ A third specialization of the curia also became evident during Philip's reign. This was the Majus Consilium or Grand Council, which advised the king in the governing of the realm.¹⁸ Under Philip IV, this council was largely made up of lawyers, most of whom owed their position of importance to the king alone and who were, thus, strong partisans of royal authority.

The end of the direct Capetian line and the resultant dispute with the English kings over the succession to the French throne brought a temporary halt to the progress of royal centralization, and, indeed, to the development of administrative institutions. Although the Salic Law was upheld, and the crown passed to the Valois line, both Philip VI (1328-1350) and his son, John (1350-1364) lacked the aptitude for politics and the singlemindedness in the pursuit of power which had characterized their predecessors. And, after 1338, the Valois monarchs found themselves engrossed in a protracted war with England. In the century of intermittent battles which followed, many of the accomplishments of Capetian administration were destroyed. The great vassals of the crown regained much of their independence and the necessities of war often made

¹⁶Ibid., II, pt. ii, 328-330; Guignebert, 365.

¹⁷Ibid., 265; Lavissee, II, pt. ii, 346.

¹⁸Lavissee, II, pt. ii, 337.

the king dependent on their will. Moreover, the war was the breeding ground for numerous local insurrections; and during its course, even the bourgeoisie for the first time attempted to make the crown conform to its will.

Nevertheless, in spite of these setbacks, the monarchy emerged from the turmoil in many ways more powerful than it had been at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The advantage won by the nobility was overshadowed by the decimation of their numbers on the fields of battle.¹⁹ It is true that the Estates General attempted to play the role of checking upon and limiting the crown; but the mutual distrust of clergy, nobility and bourgeoisie prevented it from gaining additional power beyond the right to confirmation on behalf of the nation of royal acts and of special taxation in time of difficulty.²⁰ The influence of the "good towns" on royal policy might have been greater if the war had been shorter. However, the excessive length of the struggle sapped their financial resources and resulted in more frequent opportunities for the "king's agents" to intervene in their affairs.²¹

When the English were driven out, France was left in ruin, misery, and disarray, and a strong monarchy seemed the only means of restoring order.²² Perhaps the devotion of Joan of Arc to the dauphin, Charles, set the example for the nation; for out of the Hundred Years War, there

¹⁹Guignebert, 365-367; Edouard Perroy, The Hundred Years War, translated by W. B. Wells (London, 1951), 327-328.

²⁰Guignebert, 363.

²¹Ibid., 369

²²Ibid., 362; Perroy, 327.

emerged a crude patriotism expressed in loyalty to the crown.²³ Henceforth in France, the king was to be the personification of the nation.

In the period from the end of the Hundred Years War to the death of Henry II in 1559, there was a resumption of the progress toward centralization and greater royal administrative authority. Yet, accompanying this, there was some decentralization of royal institutions, first for efficiency of administration on the local level, and later, as a means of creating more offices which might be marketed in order to replenish the royal treasury.¹

Charles VII (1422-1461) did much to capitalize on the favourable position in which the crown found itself at the end of the wars with England. In particular, he made innovations in financial policy. Charles contrived to continue levying the faillie, a non-feudal tax previously granted provisionally by the Estates General or by negotiation with provincial Estates and towns, even though he did not call together the Estates General after 1440.²⁴ When questioned about the continued collection, Charles defended his action by stating that he had sought consent whenever possible, but that he had the right to levy the taille on his own authority because of the emergency in which the kingdom found itself. Furthermore, he stated that it was not necessary to call together the Estates in order to levy tailles since this only placed a further burden upon the common people who had to pay the cost of sending represent-

²³Guignebert, 362, 365; Perroy, 328-329.

²⁴Major, 34.

atives.²⁵ Henceforth, negotiations for the levying of tailles were to be carried out on the local level only.

Nevertheless, Charles did not hesitate to use and to develop the financial administration set up by the Estates General in the fourteenth century to facilitate the collection of taxes.²⁶ This system involved the appointment of élus, financial officers at the local level, who were responsible for the collection of taxes in districts which at first corresponded to the ecclesiastical dioceses.²⁷ Charles placed over these élus, four Generals of Finance, each of whom was responsible for the administration not only of the tailles, but also of the gabelles, or salt taxes, and of aides, or customs taxes, in one of the four administrative divisions of France--the généralités of Langoeil, Languedoc, Normandy, and Outre-Seine. Charles also revised the administration of the old feudal taxes payable to the crown.²⁸ The realm was divided into four parts or charges for this purpose, and these charges were presided over by new officials called Trésoriers de France. These financial reforms led to an increased revenue annually in the royal treasury and thus aided the growth of monarchical power.

In the administration of justice, a decentralization was begun under Charles VII.²⁹ It is true that following the recapture of Paris

²⁵Ibid., 34-35.

²⁶Guignebert, 388.

²⁷Bridge, 114-116.

²⁸Lavissee, IV, pt. ii, 258.

²⁹Major, 5.

from the English, Charles brought the Parlement back to that city from Bourges, whence it had fled in 1420, and restored it to its former position as the highest court in the land. However, in 1443, he established a second Parlement at Toulouse to have jurisdiction in the south of France.³⁰ Eight years later, another was established at Bordeaux.³¹ Louise XI (1468-1483), Charles VIII (1483-1498), and Louis XII (1498-1515) continued the process of decentralization of royal justice by setting up parlements in Dauphiné at Grenoble, in Burgundy at Dijon, and at Aix. With the accession of Francis I (1515-1547) to the throne, a parlement was created for Brittany.³²

The financial courts also were decentralized. Provincial chambres des comptes were established at Montpellier, Rouen, Dijon, Grenoble, Nantes, and Aix in the century following the end of the Hundred Years War.³³ Charles VII also decentralized the cour des aides, the financial court which had been established in the fourteenth century to handle matters arising from the administration of non-feudal taxes. Sovereign bodies were formed in Languedoc, Guyenne and Normandy to augment the original court at Paris.³⁴

In other ways, however, an increased centralization of monarchical authority was evident. The taille was paid by the people of all provinces

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., 6.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

whether they lived on the royal domain or the lands of one of the great lords, since the distinction between lands held in fief from the king and those held directly by the monarch, was wiped out. When the nobility protested by rebellion in 1440, the stronger royal army was able to subdue them. In this way, royal authority moved one step nearer to absolute control.

The monarchy of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries also began to use its popularity with the nation as a whole as a basis of power. There was a fostering of the idea of intimacy between the king and his people. Frequent consultations with the vocal elements of the French population were a feature of Renaissance Monarchy in France, although local and even national assemblies no longer wielded any power.³⁵ From an Assembly of Notables at Tours in 1506, Louis XII won the title of Père du Peuple. Also, the loans to Francis I by the municipalities of Paris (1522) and Lyon (1526) marked the beginning of a growing interest in the personal rule of the king among the wealthy urban merchant class.³⁶ This trend toward the popularization of the monarchy finally reached its peak after the Wars of Religion in the immense popular appeal of the first of the Bourbons, Henry IV (1589-1610).

Another factor in the trend toward monarchical centralization was

³⁵The most common of the bodies called together for consultation was the Assembly of Notables. Members of this assembly were usually selected by the king from all three estates and were not chosen locally. See Major, 47-49, and Zeller, Les institutions, 341-344.

³⁶R. Doucet, Les institutions de la France au XVI^e siècle, (Paris, 1948), 389; C. A. J. Armstrong, "France of the Hundred Years War and the Renaissance", in J. M. Wallace Hadrill and John McMannus, France: Government and Society, (London, 1957), 86.

the codification of local customs begun under Charles VII.³⁷ This work extended through his reign and into those of his son and grandson. The resulting compendium brought all matters of civil law under royal authority. Henceforth, changes in custom could be instrumented only through royal edicts. Under Francis I, some districts began a second stage of the process, that of revising the law and making it uniform.³⁸ This development was not, however, an unqualified triumph for the crown, since the consultation of royal commissioners with provincial estates had the effect of strengthening these bodies as centres of local interest.³⁹ Also, after local customs were written down, they could be used by obstructivists as the basis for arguments against future royal encroachments on local rights.

Perhaps the most influential spur toward centralization of royal authority was the return of most of the appanages to royal control between 1477 and 1513. With the death of Charles the Bold in 1477, Ducal Burgundy was reunited with France. The extinction of the house of Anjou three years later brought Anjou, Bar, Maine and Provence under direct royal control. Brittany was also incorporated into the royal domain by the marriage of Anne of Brittany to Charles VIII and then to Louis XII, and the marriage of Claudia, daughter of Anne and Louis XII to Francis I,

³⁷Zeller, Les institutions, 203-205; Bridge, 64-67.

³⁸Zeller, Les institutions, 205

³⁹In the sixteenth century, Provincial Estates in Pays d'Etats had the right to consent to royal taxes as well as responsibility in public works and in certain provinces, the right to determine tariffs. However, their right to collect taxes was disputed by the crown and it was only with royal permission that they might meet. See Zeller, Les institutions, 65-66.

the first of the Valois-Angoulême kings. Moreover, the accessions of Louis and Francis to the throne also brought the appanages of the Orleans and the Angoulêmes back under direct royal administration.

The rule of the great feudal houses was replaced by the appointment of governors for many of the provinces. These governors were members of the higher nobility but they now received their positions by the favour of the monarchy. Before 1499, they exercised or sought to exercise as many nonjudicial prerogatives as possible.⁴⁰ In that year however, an ordinance was passed restricting their powers. While they remained a substantial force, capable of becoming the centres of provincial resistance, henceforth their role was to be only in governmental administration and in military defense. To some extent in this latter task, they relied on the prévôts des maréchaux, officers created early in the sixteenth century who, as representatives of the commanders of the royal armies, the Marshalls of France, commanded local levies, administered marshal law, and performed the important task of maintaining law and order.⁴¹

Another administrative change which took place in the century following the end of the Hundred Years War was the reorganization of the royal council.⁴² A threefold division into finance, justice and general administration became apparent, with the last division retaining residual powers of justice and finance.

⁴⁰Gaston Zeller, "L'administration monarchique avant les intendants: parlement et gouverneurs", Revue historique, 198, no. 2 (1947), 208.

⁴¹Bridge, 41.

⁴²Ibid., 32; Zeller, Les institutions, 196-201.

The judicial branch of the Royal Council was known as the Grand Conseil.⁴³ It was set up by Louis XI as an independent judicial committee having exclusive jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs. Louis also used evocation of cases to this court as a means of overruling the Parliament of Paris when that body opposed the royal will. In its initial form, the Grand Conseil came under much criticism as a mere instrument for the service of royal caprice;⁴⁴ however, with the judicial reforms of Louis XII,⁴⁵ the court was given the functions of a supreme judicial administrative tribunal, and, in this form served the important end of providing a unity of control.

In this period also, members of the council began to meet with the chief treasury officials to formulate royal budgets and to exercise control in financial matters. The result of these meetings was a council known as the Conseil des Finances. With the development of the Conseil des Finances, and the creation of the Trésor de l'Epargne by Francis I as a reserve fund,⁴⁶ the efficiency of the French financial system was vastly improved.

Perhaps the most important development within the royal council was the reorganization of the administrative section, which had become known as the Conseil Privé. Although the ultimate selection of council-

⁴³Ibid., 188-190; Bridge, 34-38.

⁴⁴Ibid., 38.

⁴⁵Ibid., 81.

⁴⁶Georges Pagès, "Essaie sur l'évolution des institutions administratives en France du commencement du XVI^e siècle à la fin du XVII^e", Revue d'histoire moderne, nouvelle série, I, no. 1 (1932), 20-21.

lors depended upon the king, the Princes of the Blood, a few great feudal magnates and prelates, and officers of the Crown had enjoyed a prescriptive right of attendance. Under Charles VIII, an unofficial smaller group of advisors, summoned especially by the king, began to carry on the bulk of the business of the realm, while the Conseil Privé as a whole was summoned only to approve routine matters of government. Francis I placed this smaller body on a permanent basis under the title of Conseil des Affaires.

A final salient feature of royal administration beginning in the late fifteenth century and extending and multiplying in occurrence throughout the sixteenth century, was the sale of royal offices.⁴⁷ From the death of Louis XI, venality in offices of finance was tacitly authorized although venality in judicial positions was officially prohibited.⁴⁸ The records of sixteenth century monarchs, however, are studded with ordinances against judicial venality, a proof of its widespread existence. When the ideals of justice were pitted against the pressing financial commitments, first of the Italian Wars, then of the struggle against Charles V, and finally of the religious wars, the latter cause always emerged supreme.⁴⁹

The revenues from the sale of offices were first placed directly under the control of the Trésor de l'Epargne at its creation in 1523. Nine years later, however, separate bodies, the bureaux des parties,

⁴⁷Zeller, Les institutions, 132-141.

⁴⁸Roland Mousnier, La vénalité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII, (Rouen, 1947), 20.

⁴⁹Ibid, 21.

were set up to deal with the traffic in offices.⁵⁰

In 1586, a list of venal offices was prepared for Henry III (1574-1589). It included

all the offices of the Chambres des Comptes, even the presidents; all the offices of finance: Trésoriers des Parties Casuelles, diverse treasurers of the king's household, paymasters and controllers of war, of the Swiss Legions, of the navy, of the artillery, officers of the bureaux des finances, of the élections, of the greniers à sel, all types of receivers and controllers, all the officers of Waters and Forests, all those of the chancellery, even the grands audenciers and the king's secretaries, the lower offices of the parlements of the Grand Conseil, of the Cours des Aides, of the Requêtes du Palais, of the mint, that is to say the receivers and disbursers of wages, the procureurs postulants, the bailiffs, the gardes des livres, the assayers, administrators of taille and contregardes, the notaries and the sergeants, the offices of administration such as supervisors of hay, measurer of wheat, maître juré maçon, and curiously,⁵¹ some judicial offices, those of the viscounts of Normandy.

The effects of this widespread venality were several. Venality coupled with the financial exigencies of the crown, led to the creation of new offices to be sold. In a few cases, such as the creations by Henry II of présidaux, new courts which heard appeals from a group of bailliages, the result was an increased efficiency.⁵² However, the majority of the new offices were merely an additional burden to the nation. In many cases, the purchase of a royal office became a license for extortion. Even when the practice of selling offices was in its infancy under Louis XI, Philippe Comynes noticed that "large sums would be given for posts that were paid meagerly or not at all, because the purchasers meant to

⁵⁰Ibid., 22.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Doucet, 264-267.

get from his job as much as ever it could be made to yield".⁵³ Moreover, although these officers were initially loyal partisans of the king, the fact that their offices could be hereditary often placed limits on their loyalty. Inheritors of the offices, several generations removed, would see the perpetuation of their own positions and powers as a goal more to be sought after than the maintenance of royal authority.

The religious wars which ravaged France in the latter half of the sixteenth century were in a very real sense a reaction of the feudal nobility against the growing power of the crown. However, this reaction ended in failure because of the division of the nobility into two and sometimes three factions struggling for preponderant influence over the crown. The rivalry between the Guise family and Constable Montmorency under Henry II was a prelude to the struggle between the Guises, the Bourbons, and the Montmorencys during the intermittent civil wars which ravaged France for more than thirty years. The assumption of the position of lieutenant-général of the Huguenots by Condé and the association of the Guise with the championship of strict Catholicism, culminating in the formation of the League led by Henry of Guise, turned feudal struggle into religious war.

The failure of the feudal reaction was due in a large measure to this division in the nobility. As the wars dragged on, the idea of a strong and stable monarch, uncontrolled by any faction, grew increasingly attractive to a growing number of people. After the death of the popular Henry of Guise, the League was shown more and more to be the puppet

⁵³B. de Mandrot, ed. Mémoires, I, 56: used as an illustration in Bridge, 91.

of Philip II of Spain. The conversion of Henry IV to Roman Catholicism essentially eliminated all question of the legitimacy of his succession. That assured, Henry was able to move toward further augmentation and consolidation of royal power.

In the years between the Peace of Vervins (1597) and his assassination in 1610, Henry IV rebuilt the strength of the monarchy. In the first place, he used bribery on a wide scale. The Edict of Nantes (1598), which established religious peace, gave the Huguenots the additional security of numerous fortified towns to be held for a period of eight years. The nobles were bribed by lucrative sinecures. Another piece of persuasion, somewhat more subtle, was the edict of 1604, which instituted the paulette or droit annuel whereby holders of venal offices paid one sixtieth of the purchase price of their offices as an annual tax in exchange for the right to pass the office freely on to an heir. Previous to this time, venal offices could be sold or inherited only if the vendor remained alive for forty days after the transfer. Otherwise the office reverted to the crown. This act did much to renew the loyalty of venal officeholders to the crown and also provided a new source of royal revenue. Moreover, Henry also continued the practice of selling offices himself and even created some new posts for this purpose.

Henry's administration was carried out with the advice of the royal council. However, the primary criterion for membership in the council once more became singleminded loyalty to royal supremacy. Moreover, it was always abundantly clear that the council had no power apart from the king. In the final analysis, Henry ruled alone.

During the regency of Marie de Medici (1610-1697), the grip of

the monarchy was much less sure than it had been under Henry. In the face of this weakness, the latent opponents of royal authority refurbished their armour. The chief cause for complaint was that Marie did not call upon either the great nobles or the Parlement of Paris for advice, but rather placed her fellow countryman, Concini, in the position of greatest responsibility. When, in 1614, Marie was forced to call together an Estates General to gain approval of the conduct of her regency, the nobles, the Parlement and other special interest groups asserted themselves in an effort to obtain privileges at the expense of the crown. However, by playing upon the rivalries among the Estates, the Queen Mother emerged triumphant.⁵⁴ The parties of opposition were crushed, and the Estates General remained no longer an effective instrument for controlling the king.

The beginnings of the personal rule of Louis XIII (1610-1643) continued in the spirit of the regency. Royal authority remained supreme in spite of numerous threats. Louis' favourite, the Duc de Luynes, in many ways, merely substituted himself for Concini in royal government and soon the nobility was once again alienated and plots against the royal ministers began to brew. Now the Queen Mother was added to the list of malcontents. Moreover, Luynes' strict Catholicism led the crown into a renewed struggle with the Huguenots which was only temporarily solved by the Peace of Montpellier signed in 1622. The situation was not greatly improved by Luynes' death in 1621; there was no extension of royal authority largely because of a lack of vision on the part of the royal advisors. This stagnation ended in April, 1624, with the entry into the royal coun-

⁵⁴George A. Rothrock, "The French Crown and the Estates General of 1614", French Historical Studies, I, no. 3, 316.

cil of Cardinal Armand du Plessis de Richelieu, the protégé of the Queen Mother, the former Secretary of State for War under Concini. His conciliar debut and gradual rise to pre-eminence marked the beginning of a new epoch in growth of monarchial authority.

CHAPTER II

The intendants were by no means an innovation on the part of Richelieu. Their ancestry stretched back to medieval times to the royal commissioners, whose exercise of authority first took on regular character in the enquêteurs-réformateurs appointed by Louis IX to inspect the work of his provincial administrators and to hold annual hearings of grievances against misuse of royal authority and injustices in the royal courts.¹

Beginning in the fourteenth century, these commissioners were occasionally appointed from among the king's personal judicial assistants, the maîtres des requêtes de l'hotel du roi,² and when the functions of the maîtres des requêtes were defined by royal edict in 1493, among them was the responsibility for making circuit rides into the provinces and the right to preside on the benches of bailliages and sénéchaussées to hear grievances and to correct abuses.³ Moreover, it was from the ranks of these maîtres des requêtes and especially from the maîtres des requêtes en chevauchées that the majority of the intendants were to be drawn.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the number of maîtres

¹Lavissee, III, pt. ii, 348.

²M.E. Esmonin, "Observation critiques sur le livre de M. Hantaux: Origines de l'institution des intendants des provinces". Bulletin de la société d'histoire moderne, IV, (1931), 7; Doucet, 154.

³Doucet, 156.

des requêtes appointed by the king grew rapidly as a result of the general expansion of the sale of offices by the crown. In 1553, when their maximum number was theoretically set at twenty,⁴ they formed a corps at the very centre of royal judicial administration. From mid-century onward, their activities began to diversify. Those en chevauchées seem to have remained in various provinces for longer periods at a time. They began to undertake such tasks as the supervision of passage of armies through the province.⁵ In 1555, a further augmentation in their number permitted the sending of twenty into the recettes générales,⁶ the centres of financial administration. Perhaps most important, in the various missions confided to them after mid-century they are often cited as "commissaires départis pour l'exécution des ordres du roi".⁷ This is the same formula that was later used in the commissions of intendants.

The term "intendant" was first used to describe a magistrate charged by royal commission to administer royal justice and sometimes to handle certain matters of finance and good government directly on the king's behalf. In 1555, Pierre Panisse, president of the Cour des Aides at Montpellier was sent as an intendant de justice to the island of Corsica, which had recently been acquired by France from Genoa.⁸ His commission gave him "the superintendance for the exercise and admini-

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 158.

⁶Esmonin, "Observations", IV, 7.

⁷Doucet, 425.

⁸French possession of Corsica at this time lasted only until the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559.

stration of justice" as well as many specific powers.⁹ In 1565, Jacques Viole was appointed intendant of Touraine by Charles IX. His commission included such terms as:

to have cognizance of all cases, whether civil or criminal, including malversation of judges, illegal carrying of arms, illicit assemblies, seditions and other similar cases; to preside in all seats at the baillage level of justice; to call before him cases from inferior judges, to act as a judge of last resort with ten councillors of the baillage or advocates chosen by himself; to call together in assembly officers and habitants, to oversee the work of the élus, checking their work for abuses, malversations and negligence, notifying His Majesty of these matters.¹⁰

Also during Charles' reign, intendants were placed in charge of the administration of trade in grain. This had previously been a matter of disputed jurisdiction between the provincial parlements and the governors. In this way, it was placed essentially in the hands of the royal council.¹¹

However, the commissions of these first intendants were usually only for short terms.¹² This was also the case with the more common royal commissioners, the commissioners de l'édit, of Henry III's reign. In this period when the provinces were often in open rebellion, the crown was forced to accept loyalty on provincial terms. This meant that royal administration often sat lightly. The most common reason for sending the com-

⁹Henry II to Panisse, (1555), in Gabriel Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution des intendants des provinces, (Paris, 1884), 179-186.

¹⁰Charles IX to Viole, December 4, 1565, in ibid., 25.

¹¹Zeller, "L'Administration monarchique", 213-214.

¹²An obvious exception to this was Pierre Buslart who served as intendant in one region from August, 1566, until 1580. Caillet, L'Administration en France sous le ministère de Cardinal de Richelieu, (Paris, 1861), 15.

missioners into the provinces at this time was to carry out the execution of edicts of pacification, hence the title commissioner de l'édit. The main duty of such magistrates was to promote good will in the province and to reorganize the resources of the province in order to begin war again as soon as possible in a better position.¹³

The first intendants to hold office for a relatively long period of time were appointed in the first decade of Henry IV's reign. In these years of disorganization and turmoil, the only real centres of royal power were the armies. In order to restore royal authority in the provinces, it was necessary to work through the armies and thus it was also necessary to raise taxes for the purpose of maintaining the troops. Henry chose to use the intendants, whom he attached to the service of the military commanders-in-chief or governors, for this purpose as well as for the exercise of justice within the army. In their commissions, such individuals might be called intendant de justice, intendant de l'armée, intendant de justice et d'armée, intendant des finances et des vivres en une armée, or intendant de justice, de police, des vivres, et des finances en une armée.¹⁴ Also, there was a tendency for commissions to be general, capable of covering a multitude of needs. A typical commission of an intendant stated:

You shall have charge of overseeing the recovery of sums which must be levied for the maintenance of the said army, artillery, provisions and munitions; you shall direct the returns of those (persons) under our cousin ... together with the taxes and assessments which must be levied on our subjects in the said province for want of funds, by virtue of our commissions. In all these things keep a good and faithful audit in order to render

¹³Ibid., 18.

¹⁴Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants de justice", Revue Historique, XIX, (1882), 311.

an account to us when it is needed ...; and use for the recovery of these sums any restraints that you deem necessary, which restraints shall be carried out by your ordinances against all those whom they concern.¹⁵

Such a formula served only as the basis for action on the part of the intendant and left him free, to a great extent, to interpret his administrative duties. At least one commander, the Marshall d'Ornano, governor of Lyonnais, felt that the intendant commissioned to serve with the army under his command had interpreted his duties beyond their scope. However, when he wrote to the king complaining that the intendant's authority was encroaching his own, Henry informed him that his position was to command the army and that the intendant was there to see to their pay and to investigate the activities of the officers of finance. Moreover, the intendant would remain at his good pleasure until such time as the king chose to recall him.¹⁶

In some provinces, there were two intendants de l'armée, one designated as an intendant of justice and the other as intendant of finance. This was the case in Brittany. Here, the first record of an intendant of justice dates from 1590, when Jean de Cucé was given that position attached to the army of the Prince of Dombes. Cucé remained until at least July, 1592.¹⁷ In the same period, the first intendant of finances for the army in Brittany was appointed. Jacques Nau was sent to the

¹⁵In Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 44-45.

¹⁶Pagès, 41.

¹⁷Severin Canal, "Les origines de l'intendance de Bretagne", Annales de Bretagne, XXVI, (1911), 121.

province with this title in January, 1590, and probably remained there until 1592.¹⁸ In 1593, François Myron, a member of the king's council and trésorier général des finances in Brittany, is mentioned as being intendant of finances in the army of the Duke of Montpensier. He held this post at least until 1598.¹⁹ In the period between Nau's departure and the arrival of Myron, the functions of intendant des finances seem to have been exercised by the Sieur de Saint-Martre.²⁰ Concurrently with these latter two intendants des finances, Jean Avril, Sieur de Grée, a councillor of state, maître des requêtes and premier président of the Chambre des Comptes of Brittany, was intendant of justice in the royal army. He took over this post in the middle of 1593, and remained until September, 1595, when he was replaced by Charles Turquant because of suspicions that he was conspiring with the Duc de Mercoeur.²¹

When peace became permanent, some of the intendants remained in the provinces after the armies withdrew, becoming intendants des provinces.²² Turquant, for example, remained in Brittany after the peace of Vervins until 1602, changing his title to intendant de la justice et police près des personnes de Monsieur le Duc de Vandôme et Messieurs des lieutenants généraux de Sa Majesté. His official task was to see that the Edict of Nantes was executed in the province. However, he also was

¹⁸Ibid., 122.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XIX, 313.

successful in 1599 in settling a quarrel between the governor of the province and the city of Nantes.²³

The authority of intendants who remained behind in the provinces was not looked upon with approval by the existing officials, who resented their exercise of superior powers now that what had ceased to exist. In many cases, there was a clash of wills between the intendant and the provincial officers. Perhaps because Henry wished to maintain the goodwill of the officers and at the same time create a large number of new offices after 1603,²⁴ the use of intendants gradually declined during the second part of his reign.

A new sort of commissioner, however, appeared in the first decade of the seventeenth century. This was the commissioner of finance, who was used extensively by Henry's minister of finance, Maximilian Sully, in his attempts to reorganize the French financial system. These commissioners were to go into the provinces and investigate the real returns of taxes. They were also given the power to suspend officers of finance whom they found committing malversation and embezzlement.²⁵ It is to be emphasized that these commissioners were not intendants. The terms of their commissions were entirely different from those of the intendants de la justice as was the role they carried out in the provinces.²⁶ However, the financial prerogatives which were given to these commissioners

²³Pagès, 42.

²⁴Mousnier, La Venalité, 115.

²⁵Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XIX, 326-327.

²⁶Ibid., 327.

later fell into the hands of the intendants, adding to their powers.

With Henry's preparation to go to war in 1610, the intendants de l'armée reappeared.²⁷ However, it was in the period of the regency of Marie de Medici that the intendants became almost an institution. This was because these years were marked by general discontent, especially among the nobility. In this situation, it was essential for the crown to have officers in the provinces upon whose loyalty it could depend. In 1612, Le Coudray, a conseiller of the Parlement of Paris was sent to La Rochelle as intendant of justice.²⁸ In 1614, intendants sent out with the armies against the first rebellion of the Prince of Condé stayed on in the provinces after the rebels had been defeated.²⁹ They tended to be men of proven ability, the most brilliant members of the council. Many had served under Henry IV. They had the power of the crown behind them in full force and their very existence was, in a sense, a proof of the growth of that power: The king no longer promulgated; he merely willed and he was obeyed.

Moreover, the functions of the intendant were flexible and could be altered to meet the needs of the situation in which he was placed. A comparison of the work of various intendants in the decade before 1624 is proof of this fact. For example, in 1616, when le Sieur de Courgues was sent as intendant of justice to Guyenne and Poitou, he was instructed not only to investigate the sources of troubles and abuses, but also to take

²⁷Ibid., 330.

²⁸Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XX, 74-75.

²⁹Ibid., 76.

steps to remedy them. Also, he was given a special commission to investigate the activities of the officers of both justice and finance. However, he had no power to act in this matter, but was to report his findings to the royal council.³⁰ Jean Bochart de Champigny, who was sent to Poitou the following year as an intendant of justice, on the other hand, was given a rather vague commission which allowed him to begin encroaching, on the royal behalf, on the local powers within the province. He was to carry out an investigation to determine whether justice was being rendered exactly in all the cities of the province and to have a seat and a preponderant voice in all jurisdiction. He was to judge on a provisional basis all differences between officers of justice and to hear protests of cities and other communautés against the judgments of existing provincial officers.³¹

The third intendant assigned to the district in this period, le Sieur de Monthelon, held a commission for justice, police,³² and finance. His powers of justice were perhaps more extensive than those of either of his predecessors. He could enter all jurisdictions of the province and sit on all benches to insure that justice was properly rendered, and was empowered to render judgment himself, and to judge disputes between royal officers. Moreover, all judges and officers of the king were

³⁰Louis XIII to Gournes (1616), in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 234-236.

³¹Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XX, 81-82.

³²The word police as applied to the intendants is to be interpreted in its widest meaning. It refers to the exercise of a general administrative programme of policy rather than merely the maintenance of law and order, as does the present day meaning of the word.

ordered to lend him aid. As intendant of police, Monthelon's powers were so far-reaching that he had an administrative role in all facets of local government. Here, he was commissioned:

to hear and to listen to both the general and the particular pleas of our subjects, to be able to provide for them summarily as well as one can, except where they can be taken care of by the local judges or such others as you will designate, to inform yourself of the state of our affairs and services in the said cities and provinces and especially of that which concerns the observation of our edicts, ordinances and rules, the peace and succour of our said subjects, for, in order to remedy all, report to us or send an ample official report to our said council in order to provide for these things as well as those things that we will consider to be necessary for the good of our service.³³

Monthelon's authority in finance was considerably less extensive. Here, he had no power to make changes. Nevertheless, he had the right to enter any bureau of finance at any time and as many times as he found it necessary, to preside and to examine all records of levies and returns in the generality; and he was expected to make a report to the court on these matters.³⁴

The terms of the commission given to Séguier d'Autry as intendant de la justice in Auvergne in April, 1621, were similar to those of Monthelon's commission. However, there was a careful delineation made between the powers exercised by maîtres des requêtes sent to the province and those to be exercised by the intendant. The maîtres des requêtes were given powers of surveillance and investigation. Séguier, as intendant of justice, was given authority to take action. He was given full power and authority to initiate procedures, to make decrees, ordin-

³³Louis XIII to Monthelon, September 2, 1617, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 99.

³⁴Louis XIII to Monthelon, September 3, 1617, in ibid., 241-243.

ances and judgments, and to override any objections, appeals, challenges and quarrels, no matter who should make them. He was also given authority to preside in all royal courts in the province. Moreover, royal officers within the province were charged to obey him and to aid him in carrying out his tasks.³⁵

Four months later, in July, Séguier received a second commission, that of intendant de justice, police et finances in the army of Limousine, Saintonge and Aunis. In this capacity, he was to administer justice within the army, to hear civilian complaints against military personnel, to prosecute and punish anyone found guilty of crimes. He was also to supervise the financial administration of the army, to prosecute persons guilty of malversation or other abuses, and to see that the troops were paid and supplies obtained promptly. As had been the case with the royal officers within Auvergne, the commander of the army, the Duc d'Epéron, was ordered to give the intendant co-operation in the exercise of the commission.³⁶ Séguier exercised the powers of this new commission and those of intendant in Auvergne simultaneously.

In spite of these examples, it is to be emphasized that the position of the intendants was not yet firmly entrenched. Not every intendant held as much authority as Monthelon or Séguier. Moreover, there were not intendants in every province. In Dauphiné, there is no record of an intendance from 1610 to 1628,³⁷ and in Brittany, only commissionaires extra-

³⁵Louis XIII to Séguier, April 27, 1621, in ibid., 244-247.

³⁶Louis XIII to Séguier, July 4, 1621, in ibid., 248-250.

³⁷M. E. Esmonin, "Les Intendants du Dauphiné, des origines à la Révolution", Annales de l'Université de Grenoble, XXXIV, (1932), 39-40.

ordinaires seem to have been sent into the province after 1603. The next individual bearing the designation of intendant did not appear in Brittany until 1627.³⁸

There also continued to be signs of immanent resistance against the authority of the intendants, especially from the members of the provincial parlements, and to a lesser extent, from the governors.³⁹ The parlements were especially competent in finding loopholes in the vast and sometimes contradictory body of ordinances published by former monarchs. These they attempted to use against the intendants. If the parlement could not curb or delay the exercise of the commissions through this sort of judicial ministry, they would withdraw to another ground, that of enregistrement. They would refuse to recognize the validity of any act which had not been submitted to them for verification.⁴⁰ By doing this, they could theoretically delay the intendant from the exercise of his powers for an indefinite period. In practice, however, the battle of wits between the parlements and the intendants usually ended with a triumph on the part of the latter if not by their own force of will, then by royal edict prohibiting the parlements from obstructing them.

Occasionally, the battle of wits developed into a more serious dispute. For example in 1617, Mourant de Mesnil-Garnier was sent into Normandy to supervise the trial of one sieur d'Heurtement, who it seems as an agent of the revolted princes had aroused many in the province to

³⁸Canal, XXVII, (1912), 510.

³⁹Hanotaux, "Les premier intendants", XX, 70.

⁴⁰Ibid., 71.

favour them in their attempts against the regency.⁴¹ The sending of an intendant was in accord with the general policy of the central government; however, this intervention removed the culprit from the jurisdiction of the local court which had already taken the matter in hand. The Parlement of Rouen, which it seems already had a cause for quarrel with Concini, was quick to come to the aid of its subordinates against this usurpation of their authority. The parlement published an act prohibiting Mesnil-Garnier from investigating any criminal procedure and interdicted the exercise of his commission. Moreover, it issued a writ of arrest against him and seized his possessions. This affair was brought to a compromise solution only after Concini's fall from power. By royal order, d'Heurtement was brought to Paris and tried there by the Cour des Requêtes.

Nevertheless, it would seem safe to conclude that although the intendants held their posts only on a temporary basis and had no legal position beyond their commissions from the king, they had begun to prove their worth in the royal service before Richelieu came to power. The very impermanence of their commissions, in fact, made them all the more useful. The royal officers within the provinces were dependent on their venal offices for their positions in the royal administration. They tended to be an inflexible and closed order, opposed to any change in the methods by which the royal service was performed. The intendants were dependent for their positions not so much on their commissions as on the royal favour. They could break tradition; their only concern was to get

⁴¹Ibid.

the job done. If they succeeded, they would rise in the royal favour. If they failed, the king could recall them and send others with no loss of prestige. In the case of Mesnil-Garnier, the intendant was recalled and lost his commission. However, the edict of the Parlement of Rouen was also declared null and void. Thus, the supremacy of the king over the provincial courts was asserted.

In the years before Richelieu took office, the royal power had accustomed itself to putting its own agents, the intendants, above all local authorities who sought to resist their activity. Richelieu was to follow this tendency even further by sending intendants into situations where they would encounter resistance for the specific purpose of breaking that resistance down.

CHAPTER III

Before describing the role of the intendants in centralization under Richelieu, it would seem fitting to examine as far as possible the Cardinal's aims and ideas in the field of administration. There are four sources from which this information may be gleaned. The most reliable of these from the point of view of authenticity and objectivity are Richelieu's letters.¹ Unfortunately, the correspondence also has the common disadvantage of most collections of letters: It usually deals with specific rather than general matters, and contains very little political or administrative theorizing. The most notable exception to this is a memoir written by Richelieu to the king soon after his rise to power.² In this memoir, the Cardinal set forth his ideas for the administration of the realm, for reforms in finance and the church, and for ordinances which would restrict the powers of the nobility, such as that prohibiting dueling.

The second source of Richelieu's thoughts are his Mémoires.³

¹A. L. M. Avenel (ed.), Lettres, instructions diplomatiques, et papiers d'état du Cardinal de Richelieu, eight volumes, (Paris, 1835), (Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, CCLXIV-CCLXX I). Hereafter cited as Lettres.

²Réglement....., (1625), ibid., 169-171.

³L'Académie Française (eds.), Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu, four volumes, (Paris, 1907-1920); Société de l'Histoire de France (eds.), Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu, ten volumes, (Paris, 1929); C. B. Petitot (ed.), Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu sur le règne de Louis XIII depuis 1610 jusqu'à 1638, ten volumes, (Paris, 1810), (Collection

These are essentially a history of Louis' reign and Richelieu's part in it through the minority and into the period of the Cardinal's tenure as chief minister. Two editions cover only the period up to the "Day of the Dupes", while the others continue the account to 1638.⁴ They tend to serve primarily as a justification of the Cardinal's behavior and policies and provide a valuable sampling of Richelieu's opinions of the work of his predecessors and his opponents for power.

The most enlightening source of the Cardinal's political thinking is his Testament Politique,⁵ written in the final years of his ministry as a political legacy for Louis in the event of his death. The Testament is divided into two parts: The first is a summary of the policies he had carried out and some of those he had hoped to carry out during his ministry; the second deals with the more abstract matter of the practice of Kingship. Much of this latter part is similar in spirit and, to a lesser extent, in content to the fourth source of Richelieu's thought, the Maximes d'état et fragments politiques du Cardinal de Richelieu.⁶

complète des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, 2^e série, XXI-XXX); J. F. Mibhaud and J. J. F. Poujoulat (eds.), Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu sur le regne de Louis XIII depuis 1610 jusqu'à 1638.--Testament de Richelieu, three volumes, (Paris, 1836), (Nouvelle collection des mémoires pour servir l'histoire de France, 2^e série, VII-IX).

⁴See also C. B. Petitot (ed.), Mémoires de Richelieu, (Collection complète des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, 2^e série, XXI), (Paris, 1821). This is a reprint of a work published in 1730 intitled Histoire de la mère et son fils. It covers the years 1610-1620.

⁵Louis André (ed.), Testament Politique du Cardinal de Richelieu, (Paris, 1947).

⁶M. J. Hanotaux (ed.), Maximes d'état et fragments politiques du Cardinal de Richelieu, Mélanges, III, Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, (Paris, 1880).

This similarity has led Gabriel Hanotaux to consider the Fragments as an earlier formulation of the Testament.⁷

Richelieu has at times been regarded as a great innovator. However, when a close study is made of his ministry, it seems evident that he had in mind no overall plan of far-reaching reform for the realm. In the first chapter of the Testament Politique, the Cardinal represented the primary aims of his ministry as having been threefold: "To ruin the Huguenots as a political party, to reduce the power of the great nobles and to exalt the prestige of France among the nations".⁸ These aims were all undergirding for Richelieu's ultimate goals of breaking down provincial resistance to a unified France, and of exalting royal authority.

Moreover, the Cardinal's ideas of how these goals might be achieved, as revealed in the Testament Politique, and the means by which he actually sought to accomplish his ends, were not radical departures from the traditional policies of French monarchy. As a member of a noble family whose fortunes had been made in the service of the king, Richelieu was convinced that the true position of the nobility was one of "peacefully and courageously serving the monarch".⁹ His views regarding Spain were to a large extent learned through the experience gained when he had

⁷Gabriel Hanotaux, Sur les chemins d'histoire, (Paris, 1924), I, 175.

⁸Testament Politique, 95.

⁹Ibid., 219-220.

served as secretary of state for war under Concini in 1617.¹⁰ His first step toward rendering the Huguenots impotent as a political party, taken in 1626, was the termination of the letters patent granting Huguenots "towns of bounty". This would seem to be the sort of action that might have eventually been expected from Henry IV, had his reign been prolonged.¹¹ As for the Cardinal's views on financial matters, it seems virtually certain that they were adopted piecemeal from Barbin, the Contrôleur Général under Concini, and a man whom Richelieu very much admired.¹²

Hanotaux has contended that the internal reforms made by Richelieu during his ministry were but a scaffolding, which he had plans to tear down and replace with a more lasting system as soon as a definitive place was attained in the foreign sphere. However, before he could accomplish this aim, the Cardinal was stopped by death.¹³ This supposition might be accepted as reasonable but for the fact that Richelieu left no record of his plans for these final reforms.

Generally, the Cardinal was content to use the administrative machinery at hand. From the beginning of his tenure in power, Richelieu used the royal council as his chief means of administration. His intentions in this regard were as clear in the memorandum he addressed to the

¹⁰James Breck Perkins, France under Mazarin, with a Review of the Administration of Richelieu, (London, 1886), I, 74; Richelieu to Schomberg, December 20, 1616, Lettres, I, 223-224.

¹¹Gustave Fagniez, Le Père Joseph et Richelieu (1577-1638), (Paris, 1894), I, 380.

¹²Carl J. Burckhardt, Richelieu, His Rise to Power, translated and abridged by Edwin and Willa Muir, (London, 1940), 80; Gédéon, Tallent des Reaux, Historettes, (Paris, 1960), I, 234.

¹³Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 61.

king early in 1625¹⁴ as they were fifteen years later when he expressed them in the Testament Politique.¹⁵

In the memoir of 1625, Richelieu asserted the desirability of having all administrative business which was of interest to the king himself channelled through four councils. The first of these was to be composed of four ecclesiastics, cardinals or prelates of great dignity and merit, and two specially chosen laymen. This council was to advise Louis chiefly concerning the qualifications of individuals seeking benefices and prelatures. The second council, made up of the constables, princes, marshalls of France, and field marshalls plus two councillors of the long robe and any other persons whom the king might choose, were to advise the crown on munitions and fortresses, the state of the army, and grievances between the army and civilian authorities. They were also to oversee the conduct of the parlements, to see that the jurisdiction of those courts was exercised as set forth in royal ordinances. However, their duties did not include any investigation of cases which by royal evocation were placed under the jurisdiction of the Grand Conseil. The conduct of this latter court was to be overseen by the council of justice or the Chancellor. The president of this second council was to summarize their deliberations for the king, who, with his conseil secret, would make decisions concerning the defense of the nation and the affairs of war.

The third council suggested by Richelieu was to be made up of

¹⁴Réglement..., (1625), Lettres, II, 169-170.

¹⁵Testament Politique, 287-317.

the chancellor, the keeper of the seals, the superintendants of finance and three councillors of state, one from each estate, who were to hold their positions on a permanent basis, plus nine councillors of state, three from each estate, who were to change quarterly. This council, assisted by the controller-general of finance and the intendants of finance¹⁶ was to treat matters pertaining to the administration of royal finance, especially the levying and collection of taxes.

The fourth and final council was composed of the chancellor, the keeper of the seals and six councillors of state, two from each estate, to sit on a permanent basis, and nine councillors of state, three from each estate, who would rotate quarterly, with several maîtres de requêtes who also changed quarterly, to assist them. The purpose of this council was to consider religious disputes from the provinces and other evocations which might prove of use to the royal authority.

Although this idea proved impossible to carry out completely because of the objections of the clergy to their minority position in the fourth council,¹⁷ the plan is certainly an indication of the Cardinal's

¹⁶Originally, the intendants of finance had not been commissioners, but rather members of the central financial administration. They were generally four in number and alternated for three month periods as controller-general. The intendants of finance seem to have divided among themselves the responsibility for the handling of correspondence of local officers of finance with the conseil du roi. However, under Louis XIII they also seem to have played a part in administration outside of the financial sphere. In this role their activities tended to be very similar to those of intendants des provinces given commissions for the carrying out of a specific task. Because of this, it seems proper to class them with the intendants when they are engaged in those tasks. See Orest A. Ranum, Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII, (Oxford, 1963), 40; and Marsel Marion, Dictionnaire des institutions de la France au XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, (Paris, 1923), 299.

¹⁷Lavissee, VI, Pt. ii, 359.

emphasis on the council as the chief instrument of royal administration.

In practice, there was little difference between the several councils, since they tended to be largely made up of the same personnel. Above them were the great officers of the crown: The Chancellor, the keeper of the seals and the superintendants of finance. Under Richelieu, these officials were responsible for the maintenance of the councils as effective organs for royal administration.¹⁸ Also, above the three strictly advisory councils, was that legacy from Francis I, the conseil secret. In his Testament Politique, Richelieu suggested four as the ideal number of members for this council.¹⁹ However, during his own ministry, the minimum number seems to have been six: The Chancellor, the two superintendants of finance, two of the secretaries of state, and himself.²⁰

This conseil secret was the very heart of Richelieu's administration, for, in addition to providing the link between the king and the lower administration, its members were often also responsible for placing Richelieu's ideas before Louis.²¹ Moreover, this group illustrates what is perhaps the most salient characteristic of Richelieu's ministry, the tendency to fill positions as far as possible with men who owed him their personal loyalty.²² This policy, more than any other factor, al-

¹⁸Ranum, 1.

¹⁹Testament Politique, 305.

²⁰Ranum, 16.

²¹Ibid., 18-22.

²²Ibid., 8, 24.

lowed Richelieu to use the existing administrative machinery with much greater efficiency than had ever been previously possible.

How did the intendants fit into Richelieu's administration? More than this, how did they establish themselves as the instruments of royal power par excellence in this short period of less than twenty years? The Cardinal's estimate of their usefulness in his Testament Politique would give them only a minor position in the administration. Here, he stated:

I believe that it will be very useful to send handpicked conseillers d'état or maîtres des requêtes into the province frequently. These will not only perform the function of magistrates in the chief towns of the province (a role which can be inclined to serve the intendants' vanity more than the public good) but also will go into all places in the provinces and investigate the behaviour of the local officers of justice and finance to see that the taxes are levied in conformity with royal ordinances and that the receivers are not committing gross injustices that vex the people. They will also observe how these officers are exercising their commissions and how the nobility is conducting itself. They will stop the course of all sorts of disorder, especially the violence with which the powerful and the rich oppress the weak and the poor subjects of the king.²³

He thus envisioned a continuation of the use of the intendants as agents of the conseil who would supervise and inspect the work of the local officers. This is his only mention of their use in the administrative system.²⁴

For the exercise of the day-to-day administration of the realm, Richelieu favoured the continuation of the traditional officers in the provinces. These he felt, might be streamlined by cutting down redun-

²³Testament Politique, 246-247.

²⁴Gabriel Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 155-156.

dant officers and reinforced by a renewed commitment of loyalty to the principle of extending royal power in the provinces. From the beginning of his ministry, Richelieu set before himself the goal of eliminating the paulette and venality among the officers.²⁵

In 1626, he began to put this policy into practice with the suppression of the sale of offices in the king's household and in military charges.²⁶ However, because the crown found itself constantly in need of increased revenue, it was impossible to carry the program any further. In 1625 and 1626, a subsidy was paid to Holland and the offensive in the Val Telline was undertaken. Between 1627 and 1629, the seige of La Rochelle placed a drain on the royal treasury.²⁷ Then after 1630, France became committed to the war in Italy and indirectly to a greater and greater extent to the war against the Hapsburgs in Germany and finally into open war with Spain in 1635.

The sale of offices was perhaps the most lucrative means at the disposal of the crown for raising ready cash.²⁸ Thus, in spite of Richelieu's design for an abolition of venality and a reduction of the number of officers, it was necessary instead to create more positions for marketing.²⁹

The struggle for pre-eminence between Richelieu and the Keeper

²⁵Richelieu to Louis XIII, (1625), Lettres, II, 160; Mousnier, La Vénalité, 119, 604-606.

²⁶Ibid., 313.

²⁷Ibid., 115-116.

²⁸Ibid., 286.

²⁹Ibid., 605.

of the Seals, Michel de Marillac, which ended with the Day of Dupes, was more than a rivalry between two men; it was also a clash of two policies.³⁰ By the end of the siege of La Rochelle, it had become clear that it was impossible to make war and carry out internal reform at the same time. Marillac wanted to place a program of reform first. Richelieu believed that it would be more advantageous to postpone internal measures until the threat of Spain to France's frontiers had been overcome. Bit by bit the king opted for the policy advanced by the Cardinal.³¹ In 1628, the decision was made to deliver Casal. At the end of the following year, French armies prevented Spain from occupying the Val Telline and in April, 1630, they captured Pignerol. On the Day of Dupes, Richelieu once and for all won the support of his king. Now, he was free to follow the policy of emnity to Spain with no impediment. The decision to place France on a permanent footing for war involved the shelving of internal reforms. There was no possibility of lowering taxes or dispensing with extraneous officers. The machinery of administration had to continue to work without alterations. The existing officers had to be humoured by the retention of the paulette, but also to be certain that their inefficiency did not increase, it would be necessary to send out intendants to inspect their work. Also, with the decision to embark on a policy of war, intendants were again used in the administration of the army.

Moreover, Richelieu found that the intendants, directly depen-

³⁰Ibid., 611.

³¹Ibid., 612-613.

dent on royal favour for their authority, and in many cases owing a direct loyalty to himself, were zealous in extending royal authority in other matters. Placed in charge of building up the navy in the west and north, they performed with great efficiency, daring to defy the crustiest of opponents to royal centralization.³² Assigned with the task of trying rebels and restoring order in revolting provinces, they again proved their worth.³³

Gradually, the intendants accumulated greater and greater powers. Because in some provinces the same intendant remained in authority over a long period of time,³⁴ and in others, where tenures were of a shorter duration, one intendant was immediately succeeded by another, the provinces became accustomed to their authority.³⁵ Even more important, the central government became dependent on their services.³⁶ Although it would seem from the Testament Politique that Richelieu did not recognize that the intendants had passed beyond the role of inspectors and magistrates in circuit, and had become so well established in the provinces as to be an institution, the records of his contemporaries indicate that they saw the intendants as permanent officials representing the crown in

³²Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 69-70.

³³See Gabriel Hanotaux and the Duc de La Force, Histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu, (Paris, 1934) IV, 182-215.

³⁴For example, Louis Lefebvre, Sieur de Boissy, was intendant in Picardie for 32 years, while Villemontée, who was sent as intendant of Angoumois, Poitou and Saintonge in 1631 and remained until after 1648, was known at Poitiers as "nôtre intendant perpétuel". See Pagès, "Essai sur l'évolution", 48.

³⁵Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 63.

³⁶Ibid.

the provinces after 1635. In July, 1648, Omer Talon, advocate-general of the Parlement of Paris in his address to that body, argued that

it is not just since the beginning of the Regency that the intendants have been sent into the provinces; fifteen years ago they were sent when conditions warranted it and they have been established in all the provinces for eleven years.³⁷

Similarly, a statement attributed to Chancellor Séguier gives 1635 as the date when the intendants became a permanent institution.³⁸ Perhaps most important, Louis XIII himself realized the importance of the intendants, especially in the administration of finances. In April, 1643, he gave them a permanent position to oversee financial affairs in the provinces by royal edict.³⁹

³⁷Omer Talon, Mémoires, edited by J. F. Michaud and J. J. F. Poujoulat, (Nouvelle collection des mémoires pour servir l'histoire de France). (Paris, 1838), 246. Cited by Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", pt. iv, 85.

³⁸Journal du Parlement, (Paris, 1649), 28. Cited by Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", pt. iv, 85.

³⁹Roland Mousnier, "Etat et commissaire. Recherches sur la création des intendants des provinces", Forschungen zu Staat und Verfassung Festgabe für Fritz Hartung, (Berlin, 1958), 339.

CHAPTER IV

Because there was no conscious attempt on the part of the Cardinal to develop the intendants into permanent agents of royal authority in the provinces, there was also no homogeneity in the functions they exercised and the powers they gained during his ministry. Nevertheless, there was a definite progress and development everywhere. To obtain a complete picture it would be necessary to follow each of the intendants into the provinces and to observe the exercise of his power there. Such a task, however, would be impossible since in many cases documentation is missing. Instead, we shall trace the general pattern of this development, picking out highlights which demonstrate the growth of the intendants' powers.

There seem to be three stages in the development of the intendants under Richelieu: The first embodies the early years of his ministry to 1629; the second is bounded by the years 1624 and 1635; and the third extends from 1635 to 1642. One of the Cardinal's first moves upon attaining power in 1624 was to cut down the number of intendants in the provinces.¹ This policy was undertaken in an attempt to win the support of provincial officers. Two years later, however, he refused to grant the demands of an assembly of notables that the institution be entirely scrapped.² Then in 1629, the Cardinal took careful steps to place the

¹Mousnier, La Venalité, 607.

²Ibid.

existence of the intendants in a written act, thus guaranteeing their preservation as an institution. This act would seem to form the first watershed in our examination of the intendants' development because it indicates that the Cardinal had recognized the value of the intendants as efficient instruments in assuring the execution of the royal will in the provinces, and that he wished to be certain that they would remain available for his use.

The second period in the development under Richelieu is characterized by a number of significant developments in the careers of a few outstanding intendants who seem to have served as models for their less colourful colleagues.

The final and most important chapter in the development of the intendants begins with the direct involvement of France in the Thirty Years War: This reaches its climax four months before the Cardinal's death, in the Edict of August, 1642, whereby the intendants were installed in each généralité completely in charge of financial affairs and in a position to supervise the officers of finance.³ It gave the intendants a permanent position of great importance in provincial administration and determined their future function as it was to develop under Louis XIV (1643-1715). In order to assess the importance of the Edict of August, 1642,⁴ in establishing the intendants as a permanent institution, it would seem well to extend the general considerations to 1648, and the beginnings of what was in part a reaction against the fact of

³Mousnier, "Etat et commissaire", 336-338.

⁴This Edict of August, 1642, received confirmation in a royal decree published on April 16, 1643.

their establishment.

In the years between 1624 and 1629, the intendants justified their existence by proving useful in the execution of two major projects undertaken by the Cardinal. These were the overhaul and reform of the French navy and the seige of La Rochelle.

French naval policy had been rather haphazard. The navy had been under the command of the Admiral of France whose main qualification for the position was his membership in one of the great noble families, but more frequently there were several provincial admirals, those of Guyenne, Brittany, Languedoc and Provence.⁵ The admirals, however, had virtually no standing navy to command. Because a standing navy was too expensive to maintain, the French marine had consisted mainly of merchant vessels pressed into service and converted to men-of-war when the occasion demanded, then returned to merchant service when the crisis eased.⁶ The result of this lack of permanent organization was that French maritime activities were severely limited. Pirates plagued French shipping in the Mediterranean and the Bay of Biscay, crippling the already scanty marine; the bulk of French goods were carried by English, Dutch and Italian ships.

Richelieu's ministry marks the birth of the modern French navy. In 1625, the Cardinal suppressed the office of admiral and took over the administration of maritime affairs himself under the title of Grand Master

⁵Doucet, Les institutions, 653.

⁶Ibid., 657-658.

⁷Perkins, I, 109.

and Superintendent General of Navigation and Commerce. Richelieu's immediate plans called for the construction of thirty new ships to defend the coasts. He proposed to reduce the cost of these by eliminating inefficiencies and wastage in the administration of naval affairs. There was considerable resistance to this move among the minor administrative officials within the navy who owed their appointment to the Admiral of France rather than the king, and who were the chief cause of inefficiency.⁸ In order to combat this resistance and to carry out his plans, Richelieu required the services of loyal and energetic officials. These he found in the intendants of the coastal provinces, who, beginning in 1627, received the title intendant de la marine and added to their powers the special attributions of this new office.⁹ Men such as Abel Servien in Guyenne, Gaspard de La Thuillerie and later Villemontée at Rochelle, Charles de Machault in Brittany, and Dreux d'Aubray and Charles de La Potherie in Provence, were given this title between 1627 and 1632.¹⁰ Moreover, in 1627-1628, other special commissioners were sent to all coasts with the same powers as the intendants de la marine. Although these commissioners do not seem to have been given the title of intendant, all of them had similar functions, for they were engaged in activities such as arming ships and enrolling men, and all exercised judicial powers in cases relating to naval affairs.¹¹ Most important, there was

⁸Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 69.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.; Louis XIII to M. de La Thuillerie, December, 1628, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 290-291.

¹¹Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 70.

in the conduct of these officials a characteristic which manifested itself over and over again in the service of the intendants under Richelieu: They allowed no opportunity to pass in which they could claim rights for the Superintendent of Navigation against the governors, who argued that the powers of admiralty were inherent in their titles, or against the provincial parlements, who claimed that matters of navigation came within their competence.¹²

One of the best examples of this sort of defense of the Superintendent of Navigation against the claims of the provincial establishment is the dispute between Abel Servien, the intendant in Guyenne and the Parlement of Bordeaux over the fate of a Rochelais ship wrecked at Boucaud in April, 1628.¹³ Servien was a stubborn and haughty man, but a man of remarkable intelligence and aptitude to which he added an exceptional application to his work. Hanotaux speculates that it was this very mixture of qualities and faults that led Richelieu to choose him for the position, because the governor of the province, the Duc d'Epéron, was also a stubborn man, a noble of great landed wealth who held his office firmly and would not be easily shaken loose.¹⁴ When Servien came to the province in 1627, war was smouldering between France and Britain. British privateers were attacking French merchant ships in the

¹²Ibid. Also see Richelieu's letter of January 20, 1627, to Machault, in which he instructs the intendant to use all his influence with the Parlement of Rennes to gain support for the Cardinal. Lettres, II, 346.

¹³Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 76-80.

¹⁴Ibid., 76.

Bay of Biscay.¹⁵ In May, 1627, commerce between the two nations was cut off. This resulted in a great outcry from the natives of Bordeaux, who thus were barred from the profitable British market for their wines.¹⁶ The popular resentment against this measure fell on the Superintendent of Navigation and, more specifically, on his representative, the intendant in the province. Nevertheless, Servien, with a characteristic stubbornness, began to carry out his duties as intendant with complete application. On June 7, soon after his arrival, he wrote to Richelieu describing the situation.

Monseigneur,

The ill disposition of affairs in my territory requires a spirit more capable and industrious than mine in order to surmount the difficulties accompanying the exercise of authority. In searching shipwrecks, I am fighting against the interests of a lord who is powerful in his lands and in his hold on government; and in the sale of the English vessels I am fighting against the Parlement and the whole city of Bordeaux, who complain that the interruption of commerce has cut off the sale of their wines. These latter consider no reasoning beyond their present interest and give much more help to the foreigners than to me. I believe, Monseigneur, that you judge by what I have written to Monsieur d'Oquayre and of which I did not dare to trouble you, that the proceedings of the Jurats of the city is worthy of some reprimand. Without their aid, I captured 52 English vessels in the port, seized all the equipment which had been dispersed and hidden in more than 50 different houses in the city, and established guards throughout. I am sending to the surrounding cities to advertise the sale of these goods which I will carry out in ten or twelve days; meanwhile, I will work on making a report of the exact state of affairs here and send it to you as soon as possible.¹⁷

¹⁵Richelieu to M. de Themines, January 27, 1627, Richelieu to M. Destourelles, March 22, 1627, Lettres, II, 351; 420.

¹⁶Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", 76-77.

¹⁷Servien to Richelieu, June 7, 1627, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 260-261.

Moreover, he refused to give one inch to the Duc d'Epéron's pretensions in naval matters, and partially equipped a fleet against the governor's will with 111 cannons from the Place de Blague, the chief fortress of the city.¹⁸

The crisis, however, came in April, 1628, after the siege of La Rochelle had already begun. A ship carrying salt and several Rochelais soldiers ran aground and broke up. Servien sent out admiralty officers with a military escort to make an inventory of the wreckage. The actual cargo was of little value; however, the Rochelais soldiers on board were a great prize. Servien was convinced that these had been sent to Britain and that their mission in the Bay of Biscay was piracy. He therefore determined to try them for their crime in his capacity of intendant de la marine.¹⁹ The Parlement of Bordeaux had other ideas. On May 5, it passed an edict prohibiting Servien and any other royal officers from exercising powers of justice and government in the province of Guyenne without the specific permission of the parlement.²⁰ In this action, it was in no way hindered by its traditional foe, Governor d'Epéron.²¹ The squelching of the intendant was as much in his interest as in that of the Parlement. But Servien merely ignored these proceedings of the parlement: The accused men were tried, found guilty, and promptly either

¹⁸Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 77.

¹⁹Servien to Richelieu, April 18, 1628, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 263.

²⁰Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 78.

²¹Ibid.

hung or sent to the galleys.²²

On May 17, the Parlement took further action. Servien, as the king's agent for the admiralty, was summoned to appear before the Parlement to answer charges and until his appearance was prohibited from either entering the Parlement or exercising his charge in any other matter.²³ Again the intendant ignored the action.

The Parlement now struck a third blow. On June 9, it issued a warrant which stated that judgements of the intendant were to be entirely disregarded and that he was to be arrested and his possessions seized. At the same time, it addressed a letter of recrimination to the court, setting forth the idea that the powers of intendants in the provinces ought to be very severely limited. Moreover, on St. Peter's Eve, riots against the royal authority broke out in Bordeaux, which, according to Servien's report, neither governor nor parlement made any attempt to quell.²⁴

Richelieu, however, was in no mood to humour the Parlement of Bordeaux. As soon as the news of its pronouncements reached him, he took action. The three chief officials of the court were summoned to appear before the king within the month. As a result, the charges against Servien were dropped and he was restored to his full power as intendant de la justice et de la police in Guyenne with the right to entry,

²²Arrêt du Conseil d'Etat portant cassation de trois arrêts du Parlement de Bordeaux, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 265.

²³Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", 78.

²⁴Ibid., 79.

seat and deliberative voice in the Parlement of Bordeaux.²⁵ Thus, Richelieu, by backing the intendant, was able to extend his authority.

An instance of even more ruthless action on the part of an intendant in maintaining the powers of marine and navigation for the Cardinal is exemplified by Charles Machault, who was sent to Brittany in 1627 with the title of surintendant de la marine et commerce.²⁶ When he found the parlement in that province opposed to him, he determined to fight and had several of the parliamentarians sent to the Bastille.

The role of the intendants in the siege of La Rochelle was much less spectacular than their contributions to the building of French maritime strength. Nonetheless, it also was an important factor in convincing the Cardinal of the intendants' worth. As had been the case under Henry IV and during Louis XIII's minority, intendants were sent out with the royal armies to look after matters of administration, justice and logistics. There were three intendants commissioned to serve at the siege of La Rochelle: Châteauneuf, La Thuillerie and d'Estampes.²⁷ These, in addition to the usual duties exercised by intendants de la justice, de la police et des finances, also were placed in charge of the hospitals set up to treat soldiers who contracted swamp fever.²⁸ The high quality of their administration is evident in reports of the siege. Richelieu him-

²⁵Arrêt du Conseil d'Etat portant cassation de trois arrêts du Parlement de Bordeaux, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 264-268.

²⁶Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 207-208.

²⁷Louis XIII to Châteauneuf, La Thuillerie and d'Estampes, February 9, 1628, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 279-281.

²⁸A. J. Grant, The Huguenots, (London, 1934), 119.

self reported that the conduct of the royal army would have done credit to a monastery.²⁹

After the surrender of the Protestant stronghold, La Thuillerie remained as intendant de la justice, de la police et des finances in the city of La Rochelle and in the surrounding provinces of Aunis, Poitou and Saintonge from the Loire to the Gironde and the Garonne. In this position, he was to see to the regulation and reformation of justice according to royal ordinances, the best interests of royal authority and the peace and relief of the people. He was given authority to preside in all royal courts in the provinces, to hear grievances from the people and to take steps to remedy these and render justice without exception. He was also to direct and command the prévôts des maréchaux, their lieutenants, clerks and archers, as well as other royal officials in the cities required for the administration of justice and good government. He was to preside at assemblies held in the cities to consider matters of royal concern and to make certain order and authority were maintained. He was to see to the management of royal taxes levied on the towns, making certain no malversation was taking place and to see to it that nothing was done by the towns which was prejudicial to the royal service or the observation of royal ordinances. He was to work closely with royal officers in the provinces and to be certain that they were carrying out their tasks with diligence. He was to act as mediator in cases of disputed authority; and if anyone should plot rebellion or disobedience against the royal edicts, he was to investigate and arrest those who

²⁹Richelieu to Louis XIII, January 13, 1629, Lettres, III, 190.

were suspected, suspending them from their office (should they be officers of the crown) until such time as their guilt or innocence could be proven. If those found guilty were royal officers, they were to be referred to the conseil du roi for sentence, but other persons were to be sentenced by the intendant.

As intendant des finances, La Thuillerie was to oversee the administration of finance and for this purpose he was given authority to enter the bureaux des finances at Limoges and Poitiers and to inspect their accounts to be sure that no corruption and abuses existed. In La Rochelle specifically, La Thuillerie was to see to the destruction of fortifications, making certain that no abuses were committed in that city by the troops carrying out the demolition work. He was also entrusted with the delicate task of establishing and maintaining royal authority in the city in such a way that the Rochelais would become loyal subjects of the crown.³⁰

The sweeping powers given to La Thuillerie in this commission would seem to be an indication of the Cardinal's growing confidence in the intendants. This is even more evident when one considers that La Thuillerie was not responsible to a provincial governor, as intendants de l'armée who had stayed on in the previous reigns had been. Instead, his responsibility was only to the royal council.

By 1629, Richelieu had apparently shed any doubts he might have had concerning the usefulness of intendants in the exercise of royal administration. The proof of this was the legal acknowledgment of the in-

³⁰Louis XIII to La Thuillerie, November 16, 1628, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 282-288.

stitution in the Ordonnance sur la réformation des royaume, more commonly known as the Code Michaud. This ordinance, largely the work of the keeper of the seals, Michel de Marillac, aided by the procureur général of the Parlement of Paris, Mathieu Molé, was a laborious compilation consisting of 461 articles touching all points of legislation. It may be considered as the response of the government to the cahiers of the Estates General of 1615 and the Assemblies of Notables of 1617 and 1626. It reproduced the most important points of former ordinances and added to them some new measures, most of which concerned the repression of feudal independence. In this document is to be found the first official mention of the intendants.

The article in which they are mentioned is separated from that portion of the ordinance dealing with the maîtres des requêtes en chevauchées. This separation plus the vague definition of the powers of the intendants are a tribute to the government's foresight. Article 58 dealing with maîtres des requêtes was merely a restatement of the tasks which these officers had been carrying out for some time. They were to continue to ferret out abuses and infringements in the provinces and to try offenders and to oversee tax collection.³¹ Since the maîtres des requêtes were given no new powers, it seemed likely that the parlements would raise little objection. Then several pages later appears the article dealing with the intendants. As the material concerning the intendants

³¹Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 82; Ordonnance sur les plaintes des états assemblés à Paris en 1614 et de l'assemblée des notables réunis à Rouen et à Paris en 1617, et en 1626 par François Isambert and others, Récueil général des anciennes lois françaises, (Paris, 1822), XVI, 241-242.

follows immediately upon an article instructing officers of the court how to attire themselves properly, it was undoubtedly hoped that this part of the Ordonnance would be passed over lightly by all but the most scrupulous of readers.³² This article stated:

that no one shall be employed in the charge on intendant of justice or of finance, that we assign to our armies or provinces, who is a menial councillor or engaged in business or a near relative of the generals of the said armies or the governors of the said provinces. We prohibit this very strictly to our chancellors and keepers of the seals and make them dispatch no commissions.³³

The actual functions of the intendants were not defined. Since most of them were also maîtres des requêtes, it might be assumed that they would exercise the powers given to those officials, but there was no limitations to such functions. Thus, the intendants remained, as before their acknowledgement, flexible instruments for the exercise of royal power.

The second stage of the development of the intendants during Richelieu's ministry took place between 1629 and 1635, the year in which war was openly declared on Spain. During this period, the tasks entrusted to the intendants became increasingly more important, although their exercised power still remained essentially temporary. Probably the best proof of this growth in power is the fact that both Séguier and Omer Talon stated later that it was during this period that the institution of intendants had been created.³⁴

However, it was not only the increasing responsibility given to

³²Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 83.

³³Ordonnance sur les plaintes..., in Isambert, XVI, 250-251.

³⁴Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 85.

the intendants during these years which made France more aware of their existence. There was also a marked increase in the resentment of local officials to the sending out of intendants, a development which was not entirely due to the action of the intendants themselves. Certainly their increasing prominence in the management of royal affairs did nothing to endear them to the provincial officials, but this unpopularity was further complicated by the increasing pressure of taxes on venal officers themselves, and compounded by an increase in the number of offices for sale.³⁵

To a large extent, the success of the intendants depended on their ability to cultivate rivalries among the different bodies of provincial officers. A good example of such a situation lay in their struggle with the provincial parlements to control the administration of justice. The frequent refusal of provincial parlements to register their commissions often led the intendants to work through the présidaux instead. This did much to diminish the importance of the parlements and to enhance that of the présidaux. Theoretically, the parlements could prevent the intendants from carrying out their functions by sending an order to the présidaux to revoke the intendant's right to issue edicts and to refer all cases to the higher court. However, the présidaux, whose members were also often civic officials in the town where their court met, were loath to admit that their position was inferior to that of the parlements and usually were willing to ignore the orders of parlements and to

³⁵Mousnier, La Venalité, 280, 286, 619.

continue working hand-in-glove with the intendants.³⁶

In exercising the financial prerogatives given them by royal edict, the intendants were on less secure ground. Here, there was no second group of officials to be played off against the resistance of the bureaux des finances. They were forced to rely on the weight of public approval of their actions in remedying abuses, an expedient which was somewhat less than a total success, since the money which they recovered from extortions did not return to the people, but was absorbed by the ever increasing rate of taxation. Moreover, the local officers were quick to vilify the intendants for any particle of local privilege violated by the crown.³⁷ Nevertheless, these local officials were fighting a losing battle. The intendants became adept at ignoring their protests and as had previously been the case, the crown was quick to back up the authority of the intendant, now with a part of the royal army if necessary.

In the period between 1629 and 1633, the intendants were used specifically as a tool for crushing revolts against royal power and imposing central control on the unwilling provinces. This policy was undertaken as a result of the decision by Richelieu in 1629 to convert the remaining Pays d'Etats into Pays d'Elections,³⁸ thus augmenting royal

³⁶Ibid., 618-619.

³⁷Boris Porchnev, Les soulèvements populaires en France de 1623 à 1648, (Paris, 1963), 56.

³⁸Pays d'Etat were provinces only lately incorporated into the realm which had retained a measure of administrative independence from the crown, especially in matters of finance. They had provincial Estates which negotiated with the crown to determine the total amount of taxation to be paid by the province to the crown. It was impossible for the crown

power by bringing them under direct financial control and also enabling the creation of a large number of new venal offices.³⁹

This conversion was strenuously opposed by the provinces involved. In February, 1630, the first revolt broke out in Dijon, capital of Burgundy. Although this uprising involved only the common people, the crown held the local officers also responsible in part because they did not take steps immediately to quell it.⁴⁰ After royal forces had put down the insurgents, Paul Hay du Chastelet, intendant de la justice of the king's armies in Savoy, was given the title of intendant de la justice et police in Burgundy.⁴¹ His commission gave him full powers in the province with authority to override even the decisions of the governor, the Duc de Bellegarde.⁴² Dissatisfaction, however, continued to linger within the province because no clear-cut decision had been made in the method of financial administration. Bellegarde, who resented the imposition of an intendant with power superior to his own, sought to capitalize on this dissatisfaction. In July, 1631, he gave his support to Gaston d'Orleans, expecting to win the backing of the people. However, Chastelet anticipated his move and called in a royal army. The governor's

to obtain revenues beyond this amount from the province. Pays d'Elections, on the other hand, were older provinces under the direct financial control of the central government. There, taxes were levied arbitrarily on the basis of généralités, with the provinces having no right to set a limit.

³⁹Mousnier, La Venalité, 182-183.

⁴⁰Porchnev, Les soulèvements, 141.

⁴¹Caillet, I, 276.

⁴²Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 233.

attempt at rebellion was thus stopped and he was forced to resign his post. The crown replaced Bellegarde with the Prince of Condé and restored the provincial estates in Burgundy; but even then, the province was given a higher annual assessment.⁴³ Also, when Chastelet left the province in 1632, he was immediately replaced by a new intendant, le Sieur de Thou. Henceforth, the succession of intendants sent to Burgundy was uninterrupted.⁴⁴

The same year, a similar insurrection broke out at Aix in Provence for the same reason.⁴⁵ In this case, two intendants, Dreux d'Aubray and Charles de La Potherie were sent to investigate, but were forced to remain at Tarascon for several months because the rebels had gained the upper hand in Aix and refused to admit them.⁴⁶ Moreover, it was suspected that the Duc de Guise, governor of Provence, gave support to the rebellion.⁴⁷ Certainly the rebels had cause to hope for his support because of his quarrel with Richelieu over whether he should be compensated for the loss of his office as Admiral of the Levant as a result of Richelieu's reorganization of French naval forces.⁴⁸

While Guise delayed, his position became increasingly difficult. In July, the intendants' commissions were renewed and Guise could not es-

⁴³Ibid.; Gaillet, I, 276-277.

⁴⁴Gaillet, I, 66.

⁴⁵Porchnev, 143; Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 184.

⁴⁶Porchnev, 143.

⁴⁷Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 184.

⁴⁸Richelieu to Bullion, February 3, 1630, in ibid., 184.

cape their surveillance. His position at the court became more difficult because of a quarrel with the Queen Mother, his erstwhile defender against Richelieu. Then, when he attempted to regain face by coming personally to the king during the latter's illness at Lyon in September, his position became totally untenable. Louis not only accepted his vows of loyalty, but set him at the head of a royal army to crush the rebels at Aix!⁴⁹ The commissions of d'Aubray and La Potherie were confirmed and the commissions as intendants in Guise's army added to them. They were now given powers more extensive than those of investigation. In part, their commission reads as follows:

His Majesty is resolved to lay siege to the city of Aix, in order to capture its parlement, cour des comptes, bureau des finances and the seat of the sénéchal; and to which end the troops are to advance in an orderly manner; if the inhabitants should again refuse entry, attempt to encamp in the suburbs, or to reduce them to submission. And whether they capitulate immediately to His Majesty's arms as soon as they appear, as they ought to, or some time later when necessity forces them to, he wishes that there be proceedings against the authors of these disorders by the said Sieurs de La Potherie and d'Aubray whom His Majesty entrusts not only with carrying out the above, but with letters patent containing the transferring of the above-mentioned court, seat and office, which they will dispatch according to the order that they have received from His Majesty.

As there are a number of officers of the said courts who have fomented these past disorders and as none of them have been constrained by fear on seeing sovereign justice established elsewhere than in the said city of Aix; and as, by giving notice of the said transferrals, it might bring on a new sedition and enlist further royal authority in the punishment of the guilty and as the very fear of life and loss of goods will serve as a pretext to those who desire to prevent the exit of the said companies, His Majesty does not desire that anything be sent or disclosed until the time that the troops are on their way to the said city and then there will be sent the sealed letters patent both to the sovereign companies and to the subalterns, bearing a commandment to vacate and it will be declared to them that the

⁴⁹Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 188-189.

Said troops are advancing in order to assist their withdrawal.⁵⁰

By the end of October, the revolt had died down, apparently because of a lack of leadership. However, while d'Aubray was in Paris in December, the insurrection was renewed. La Potherie, unable to deal with the disturbance himself, asked for aid, and an army under the Prince of Condé was sent. Condé's presence overshadowed Guise in the province and the latter fell rapidly into disfavour. In July, 1631, Guise was compromised in the flight of Marie de Medici and asked permission to go into exile.⁵¹ After his departure, the last signs of resistance died away.

La Potherie and d'Aubray remained in their positions and took charge of returning the province to a state of peace and order. With the parlement discredited for taking part in the insurrections, they were free to exercise their powers of justice in full measure. Moreover, when the new governor, de Vitry, an ardent royalist, arrived, the intendants remained to advise him, to continue in their task of reorganization and pacification. In addition, they carried out a survey of the military and naval strength in the province, and an assessment of its resources. During the course of 1631, they sent a series of detailed reports of their work in this regard to Paris.⁵² Finally, after the provincial estates, meeting at Tarascon late in that year, had consented to the imposition of élus, the two intendants left the province--and then, only

⁵⁰Louis XIII to La Potherie and d'Aubray, September 3, 1630, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 298-299.

⁵¹Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 190-192,

⁵²Ibid., 194-195.

on condition that should de Vitry need them, they might return.⁵³

An even more significant example of the growth of the intendant's powers during these years is to be seen in the part played by the intendants of Languedoc in putting down the revolt of the Duc de Montmorency in 1632. The loyalty of Languedoc, like that of Provence, tended to be of a questionable quality at all times. Moreover, potential rebels might well look to the young, ambitious and very popular governor, the Duc de Montmorency, for leadership. Montmorency, whose family had traditionally held the rank of Admiral of France, was opposed to Richelieu's naval policy. Thus, it seemed well to the Cardinal to send to Languedoc, in addition to Robert Miron, the intendant already assigned to the province,⁵⁴ another loyal servant of the crown in the person of Michel Particelli d'Hémery. Hémery, who was serving as intendant de l'armée in the Italian War, was given an additional commission as intendant in Languedoc with the specific task of keeping the governor under surveillance. He did his job so well that the duke's sister, Charlotte de Montmorency, held Hémery chiefly responsible for her brother's execution in 1632 as a rebel.

During 1632, unrest built up in the province. There was ill feeling over the re-imposition of édits. Then in July, Montmorency joined Gaston d'Orleans in revolt. Hémery immediately sent an account of this action to the Cardinal, who in turn send an order to the intendant

⁵³Ibid., 195.

⁵⁴See Florentin Astre, "Les intendants du Languedoc", Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, Inscriptions et Belles Lettres de Toulouse, 5^e série, III, 21-26, (1849), for a description of Miron's background and Richelieu's decision to send him to Languedoc.

to arrest Montmorency. Unfortunately, this letter containing these instructions was intercepted and Hémery was arrested by the governor. Montmorency also attempted to arrest Miron, but failed, the latter intendant having left the city.⁵⁵ Richelieu now sent in an army under the command of the Duc de La Force and granted judicial powers within the province to his intendant de l'armée, le Sieur de Machault. Machault, whom we have seen from his activities in Brittany in 1627, as a man of action, was ruthless in his measures to suppress the revolt. Over 300 persons were sent to the galleys, while Montmorency was captured, tried for treason and subsequently executed by the order of the king.⁵⁶

When the crisis had subsided, both Hémery and Machault left the province. Hémery, although he continued to bear the title of intendant in Languedoc, soon became fully involved in the Italian Wars as French ambassador to Savoy.⁵⁷ Machault, who was given the task of supervising the demolition of fortresses in the south of France, ceased to exercise other powers in Languedoc.⁵⁸ Miron, however, remained in the province until 1639, and in that position exercised considerable authority.⁵⁹ In many cases, he acted in lieu of the new governor, the Prince of Condé, who was engaged in military campaigns. In 1633, he presided at the Estates of Montpellier on behalf of the king. Moreover, this duty seems

⁵⁵Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 206-207.

⁵⁶Ibid., 208.

⁵⁷Richelieu to Hémery, December 1633, Richelieu to M. de St. Chamond, August 17, 1633, Lettres, VII, 1004; VIII, 257.

⁵⁸Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 214.

⁵⁹Astre, 31-37.

to have become more or less customary, since it is recorded that he was unable to perform it in September, 1638, because he was ill, and the estates were instead opened by a royal envoy on his behalf.⁶⁰

A further indication of the growing role of the intendants in administration is to be seen in the activities of Villemontée, La Thuillierie's successor as intendant de la justice in Poitou, Saintonge and Angoumois in 1631. In 1635, this intendant was sent to Bordeaux to act as mediator in the quarrel between the Duc d'Epéron, still governor in Guyenne, and Henri d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux and the Cardinal's chief lieutenant in naval matters.⁶¹

The feud between Epéron and Sourdis had been instigated by the governor who resented the fact that Sourdis, rather than Epéron's third son had been appointed Archbishop of Bordeaux. This resentment had deepened when Sourdis gave his support to the governor's traditional foe, the Parlement of Bordeaux.⁶² Epéron tormented the archbishop with many inconveniences and discourtesies, all of which Sourdis merely ignored. However, when on October 29, 1633, Sourdis was stopped by the captain of Epéron's guards in public and ordered to yield to the governor's authority, Sourdis retaliated by excommunicating the captain and his troops. Epéron thereupon occupied by force one of the chapels of the church of the Récollets and had mass said by his almoner for those who had been ex-

⁶⁰Ibid., 35.

⁶¹Richelieu to Louis XIII, November 10, 1633, Lettres, IV, 501.

⁶²Eugene Sue (ed.), Correspondance de Henri d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, Archevêque de Bordeaux, (Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France), (Paris, 1839), I, lxi.

communicated. Then, encountering the archbishop in front of his cathedral, the governor insulted him and dealt him several blows with his staff; and a general scuffle broke out between Epernon's guards and the priests in attendance on the archbishop. Because of this action, on November 2, Sourdis excommunicated the governor and placed the city under interdict.⁶³

It was into this situation that Villemontée was sent. He was to investigate the grievances on both sides and to get an impartial third point of view from the Jurats of Bordeaux. He was then to attempt a reconciliation of the two sides. However, the latter task proved impossible since the quarrel had progressed too far for an immediate settlement.⁶⁴ The Duc d'Epernon received a royal order to retire to his estates at Plessac, while the archbishop was summoned to Paris. With the antagonists separated, the case was submitted to the Parlement of Paris, which ruled in favour of the archbishop.⁶⁵ In September, 1623, Epernon was forced to sacrifice his pride and receive absolution publicly on his knees from Sourdis at the Cathedral of Bordeaux.

Villemontée's role in this affair emphasizes the involvement of the intendants in a new area of activity--that of diplomacy. This trend may be followed one step further if it is pointed out that during the period before 1635, a number of other intendants became involved in the exercise of French foreign policy. Hémerly was from the beginning more

⁶³Ibid., I, lxii-lxvi. Lavissee, VI, pt. ii, 363-364.

⁶⁴Richelieu to Louis XIII, November 10, 1633, Lettres, IV, 501.

⁶⁵Lavissee, VI, pt. ii, 364.

a diplomat than an administrator. In 1630, as intendant de l'armée with the Maréchal de Créqui, he was given orders to attempt negotiations with Savoy.⁶⁶ In the same year he was given the additional commission of an intendance in Languedoc, which has been previously treated. After turning over activities in that province to Machault and Miron in 1631, Hémerly returned to his post in Italy. During 1633 and 1634, he was active in the fortification of Pignerol.⁶⁷ Then in January, 1635, Richelieu proposed to send him to Provence with Servien, but evidently decided against such a step, since, in March, he was at Thoulon in charge of erecting fortifications there, an activity for which he received the Cardinal's commendation.⁶⁸ However, in June, 1635, Hémerly was returned to diplomatic chores. In that month, he was sent to Piedmont on a mission concerning naval affairs⁶⁹ and the following year, he was given the post of ambassador.⁷⁰

Another intendant-turned-ambassador was La Thuillerie. In 1633, he was sent to Venice as ambassador, and from that post carried out nego-

⁶⁶Richelieu to the Duc de Savoy, December 13, 1630, Lettres, IV, 69-70.

⁶⁷Richelieu to Hémerly, December 1633, Richelieu to M. de St. Chamond, August 17, 1633, Richelieu to Hémerly, April 1634, Richelieu to Hémerly, November 13, and 19, 1634, ibid., VII, 290; 291; 1004; VIII, 257; 264.

⁶⁸Richelieu to Bullion and Bouthellier, January 10, 1635, Richelieu to Hémerly, March 30, 1635, Richelieu to Louis XIII, April 23, 1635, ibid., IV, 649; 696; 724.

⁶⁹Richelieu to Hémerly, June 16, 1635, ibid., VIII, 106.

⁷⁰Richelieu to Hémerly, March 18, 1636, ibid., VII, 1017.

tiations with the Pope.⁷¹ In July, 1635, he was one of the negotiators with Savoy, still using Venice as his base for operations.⁷² In 1638 and 1639, he was moved to Mantua to act as France's official representative there.⁷³ Then, in late 1639 or in 1640, he left Italy and went to Holland where he remained until the end of Louis's reign.⁷⁴

Another area in which the intendants became involved in this period was the demolition of private fortresses, especially those in the south of France. This policy was undertaken as a means of breaking the power of the nobility and of assuring that the Protestants of the south would not again be tempted to revolt. As the agents of this piece of public works, the intendants gained nothing in popularity. This was in part due to the fact that the persons who happened to be involved in the task were some of the most efficient and ruthless of the intendants: Machault, René d'Argenson and Laubardement are the outstanding examples.

Machault began his tour of demolition in 1632 as a part of his task of chastizing the partisans of the Duc de Montmorency.⁷⁵ After he had finished trying the prominent figures in the rebellion, he was sent with the Maréchal de Camp, Tavannes, at the head of an army into the dis-

⁷¹Richelieu to le Duc de Créqui, September, 1633, Richelieu to le Maréchal de Créqui, May 14, 1634, *ibid.*, IV, 554; VIII, 259.

⁷²Richelieu to La Thuillerie, July, 1635, *ibid.*, V, 107; 115.

⁷³Richelieu to La Thuillerie, May 20, 1638, and November 13, 1639, *ibid.*, VII, 1032; 1039.

⁷⁴Richelieu to Chavigny, April 23, 1640, Richelieu to La Thuillerie, August 13, 1642, *ibid.*, VII, 1045; 1055.

⁷⁵Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 214.

tricts of Cevennes and Vivarais to raze châteaux and other fortified places belonging to those who had taken part in the revolt. Because this castle-wrecking was carried out with the same firmness as his judicial tasks had been, he met with little resistance in his activities and was able to complete his work by February, 1633, when he returned to Paris to submit a written report of his activities to the Cardinal.

Argenson was not in charge of actual demolition, but was sent as intendant de justice to Limousin and Auvergne in 1632, in order to quiet ill-feeling concerning demolitions which were about to be made. This area, the former Protestant stronghold, bristled with castles. Nearly every hill boasted some sort of fortification.⁷⁶ Thus, there was likely to be much opposition to the royal policy. As soon as he arrived, he felt resistance to be brewing and after carrying out a rapid investigation, arrested, tried and condemned the ringleaders.⁷⁷ This action dampened the spirits of the other would-be rebels and allowed the intendant to carry out his other tasks in the provinces without further resistance.

Laubardemont, who is chiefly remembered for his part in the affair of Urbain Grandier at Loudun,⁷⁸ was sent to Poitou in 1629 to oversee the destruction of the Château de Mirabeau. The following year, he received a similar commission for the demolition of the citadel of Rouen. Then in 1631, he was given the task of demolishing fortifications at Loudun,

⁷⁶Ibid., 200-201.

⁷⁷Ibid., 201.

⁷⁸Grandier was accused of heresy and of practicing sorcery against a group of Ursulines who had a nunnery in Loudun. See Hanotaux and La Forge, IV, 241-260 and E. Dénjoun (Ed.), Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France depuis Louis XI jusqu'à Louis XVIII, 2^e série, V, 183-279.

a former Protestant stronghold.⁷⁹ While he was there, accusations of sorcery and heresy were made against Grandier, who had the ill-luck to fall into disgrace with Richelieu for political reasons. Laubardment, called upon as intendant de la justice to act as judge in the trial of Grandier, found him guilty and condemned him. As in the cases of Machault and Argenson, this ruthlessness insured him little resistance in carrying out his task within the province.

As France became increasingly involved in the affairs of Italy and Germany during this period, the number of intendants carrying out tasks associated with the maintenance of the royal armies also grew. As before, there was again a close connection between these activities and the duties of intendants de la justice, police et finances in the provinces. Individuals were often used interchangeably in military and civilian commissions. Hémery served as both intendant de l'armée in Italy and intendant in Languedoc in 1630 to 1631. Argenson, as intendant in Dauphiné in 1631, was also very much involved in the supplying of the Italian armies.⁸⁰ Likewise, Paul Hay du Chastelet, intendant de la justice, de la police et des finances in Burgundy, took an active role in the military administration in that province.⁸¹ Hémery's brother-in-law, Le Camus, an engineer, was also an intendant de l'armée in the Italian campaign,⁸² and in 1634, he added the civilian commission of intendant de la justice in

⁷⁹Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 241-242.

⁸⁰Ibid., 198-199; Richelieu to Schomberg, November 2, 1630, Richelieu to Argenson, January, 1631, Lettres, IV, 4; 89.

⁸¹Relation..., April 8, 1631, ibid., IV, 123.

⁸²Richelieu to Toiras, December 17, 1631, ibid., IV, 207.

Dauphiné to his military responsibilities.⁸³

Moreover, intendants whose commissions had originally endowed them with civilian administration were in some cases entrusted with tasks of a military nature. This was especially true of intendants sent to cities near the border which were likely to be besieged by France's enemies. For example, the Sieur de Sève, intendant de justice, police et finances at Abbéville and the county of Pontieu, was entrusted with seeing to the provisioning of the troops garrisoned at Abbéville and other cities on the frontier of Picardy. He was also to administer justice both in cases involving civilians and those involving military personnel and to see that instructions of the royal engineers regarding construction of fortifications were carried out.⁸⁴

In the same manner, an intendant assigned to military tasks might take upon himself a certain amount of civil administration. This was the case with Sublet de Noyers, intendant des finances with the armies of the North from 1632 to 1636. When he arrived at Amiens in 1633, he found that city ravaged by the plague and famine. It would have been impossible for the city to pay any contribution for the maintenance of the armies. Noyers was moved with pity and wrote on their behalf to the chancellor; asking not only that they be excused from paying their allotment, but that some arrangement be made to send food and supplies to combat their ills.⁸⁵

⁸³Astre, 34.

⁸⁴Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 307-310.

⁸⁵C. Schmidt, "Le rôle et les attributions d'un intendant des finances aux armées, Sublet de Noyers, de 1632 à 1633, Revue d'Histoire

Another important feature of the administration of the intendants de l'armée during this period was the tendency of these individuals to exercise a rather large amount of independent authority which it seems they claimed as residual in their commissions. Thus, in June 15, 1630, Paul Hay du Chastelet issued an edict for the rebuilding of a bridge, which reads as follows:

Paul Hay, seigneur du Chastelet, conseiller du Roy in his conseil d'état and conseil privé, maître des requêtes ordinaire de son hôtel and intendant de justice in the army of His Majesty, has read through an official report made today by the captain and the Châtelain of Conflans which contained the news that flood waters have broken and carried away the bridge at the Harbourage and have placed the bridge at Chevres in such peril that there seems little likelihood that it will be able to resist the pressure of the said waters if there is no immediate relief. This breach prevents the supplies of victuals and munitions from being transported to Saint-Maurice where the armies of His Majesty are encamped. Nor can troops, artillery horses, and other things necessary to the said armies pass freely to go to the places His Majesty has ordered. This would mean a significant delay in the execution of his commandments. For these reasons, we have directed the inhabitants at the halting place of Moutiers, at Conflans and at Faverges who draw convenience from the said route to come to Conflans to begin work immediately to reconstruct the said bridges, and to that end they will be constrained by all means, even by groups; and in order to supervene the necessary costs, on each one of them will be levied a demi-quatier, and in the nearest places, they will take what is to be found in timber, whether standing or fallen. This money and these timbers will be used according to the orders of the Sieur de Verdun, captain and governor of the said Conflans, managed and employed by the châtelains and syndics of the said place in doing what they must. And in the same proportion as the said levy is not made up promptly, the châtelains and syndics of the said places will be constrained personally to furnish the necessary sums and our present ordinance will be executèd against them and all other subjects upon whom His Majesty depends and they will be subject to the present letter as a body notwithstanding objections, and until otherwise it should be prescribed by His Majesty to counter-vene it, they will be subject to a fine of 1000 livres. Performed at the camp before Charbonnières under our signature and the

seal of our arms, 15 June, 1630.⁸⁶

The Cardinal did nothing to limit this exercise of power by the intendants. In fact, it would seem that it was this quality of being able to make a decision and carry it out without having to consult Paris that Richelieu prized most in the men he sent to carry out his policies in the provinces. The men who were given commissions as intendants by Richelieu were individuals whose judgment he could trust. In an emergency, he expected them to fulfil this confidence by taking firm action to remedy the situation, even if their solution was not always what he would have prescribed had the opportunity for consultation existed. The proof of this conclusion lies in the fact that those who dallied or acted in a half-hearted manner were ruthlessly dismissed,⁸⁷ while men who were willing to act on their own initiative--men like Servien, Machault, Paul Hay du Chastelet and Isaac de Laffemas⁸⁸--made steady advances in the administrative hierarchy.

⁸⁶Ordonnance de P. Hay du Chastelet, intendant de la justice dans les armées du roi (en Savoy) pour la rétablissement d'un pont nécessaire aux communications de l'armée, June 15, 1630, in Hanotaux, Origines de l'institution, 333-334.

⁸⁷For example, when de Vitry as governor of Provence failed to act promptly in face of a Spanish attack in September, 1633, he lost his position and was imprisoned in the Bastille. See Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 195.

⁸⁸Laffemas is probably the best example of an intendant who gained the Cardinal's favour because of his initiative and his zeal for the royal service. He began his judicial career as a member of the Parlement of Bordeaux, but around 1627 entered Richelieu's service. In 1631, he acted as one of the judges in the trial of the Maréchal de Marillac, an accomplishment which won him the title "the Cardinal's hangman". Sent to Champagne and the bishoprics of Metz, Toul and Verdun in February, 1633, as intendant de la justice, he defended the province ably against attacks of Gaston d'Orleans and Charles, Duc de Lorraine. He also arrested the Chevalier de Jars, a nobleman who had been exiled to Eng-

The continued growth in the authority of the individual intendants was, however, only a part of their expanding administrative role during this middle period of Richelieu's ministry. As France's involvement in war increased, so did the need for money in the royal treasury. In order to meet this expanding need of the treasury, in December, 1633, the crown decided to send commissioners to the provinces to regulate the tailles and other direct taxes. This task involved both an investigation of abuses and a re-division of the tax load among the parishes and taxpayers in proportion to their ability to pay. The commissions for this task were issued in May, 1634, most of them to the intendants of justice in the various provinces.⁸⁹

During the following year, the intendants were everywhere, interviewing people, poking their noses into every activity of daily living.⁹⁰ Moreover, they were given superior authority over the cour des aides and the élus to act as judges in appeals of overassessment.⁹¹ Thus, although their inquiries were probably greeted with a measure of suspicion by the inhabitants of the provinces, they nevertheless began to emerge as the champions of the common people against the inequalities of taxation. In many areas they came into conflict with the trésoriers

land in 1624, and had returned to aid Gaston. He tried de Jars and several other Frenchmen implicated in Gaston's revolt. However, they were pardoned by the king. In spite of having taken this action which was not in accord with the wishes of the king, Laffemas was retained in office with the same powers he had previously held. See Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 221-228; Caillet, 67-68; Lettres, V, 345; VIII, 254.

⁸⁹Mousnier, "Etat et Commissaire", 331.

⁹⁰Ibid., 332.

⁹¹Ibid.

de France. At moulins, the trésoriers attempted to prevent Le Fauvre-Caumartin from reforming the tailles by refusing to admit him to the bureau des finances, while at Lyon, the Trésoriers took up arms against the intendant after ordinances they had issued against him were declared invalid.⁹² In addition to giving the intendants a favourable public image, the financial commissions of 1634 also gave them a very thorough knowledge of the financial conditions within the area they administered. This knowledge was to be put to good use in the final period of Richelieu's ministry.

In May, 1635, France declared war on Spain. The need for an expansion of royal revenue became crucial. Confronted with the continued inefficiency of the bureaux des finances, Richelieu was forced to abandon his experiments in reform and to take forceful steps to make the financial system work. These steps were to involve the use of intendants not only in the task of supervision as the Cardinal was to conceive in his Testament Politique, but also in the actual administration of taxation and finance. Moreover, it was in this role of financial administration that the intendants were to prove their indispensability and thereby establish themselves as permanent representatives of the central government in the provinces.

It is to be emphasized that the comprehensive financial commissions issued in 1634 were of a temporary nature only. That the royal government had no intention of replacing the regular officers by intendants was evident in the revisions made in the bureaux des finances in

⁹²Ibid.

May, 1635. In an edict published that month, four members of each bureau were given the rank of intendant général et président and were to be responsible for the supervision of the activities of the bureau.⁹³ Riche-lieu still believed that the customary officers could be made to carry the increased load. Their failure to do so in 1635 and the first half of 1636 proved him wrong.⁹⁴ In September, 1636, a commission was sent out by the Superintendent of Finance to the intendants des finances, giving them general control of finances. In 1637, an édit was promulgated calling for forced loans from the cities. This edict was to have been carried out by the trésoriers des finances, but when the government found itself confronted with formidable opposition to this measure by the townsmen who considered it a veritable taille, the administration of the loans was instead entrusted to the intendants. Moreover, some of the intendants also had commissions to oversee the collection of tailles. In July 19, 1637, Villemontée, still intendant in Poitou, Angoumois and Saintonge, wrote that he was "working at the département des tailles and the loans from the provinces of my intendance" and that he was keeping troops ready to assure payment of the taxes.⁹⁵ The extent to which

⁹³Edit de création des intendants, in Isambert, XVI, 442-450.

⁹⁴The division of authority among four men of equal power rather than its concentration in the hands of one was perhaps the first reason for this lack of improved efficiency. The second reason was that the new officials remained members of the regional companies instead of being representatives of the conseil du roi. Their primary loyalty was to the bureau and not to the central government. See Mousnier, "Etat et commissaire", 333.

⁹⁵Villemontée to Séguier, July 19, 1637, in Mousnier, "Etat et commissaire", 334.

Villemontée had taken over financial administration in these provinces is evident in a letter written to Séguier in June in which he makes recommendations for changes in the tax structure in the provinces under his charge.⁹⁶ These recommendations are based on a thorough first hand knowledge of the existing financial conditions.

In face of what would seem to have been a sweeping takeover of financial control, what was the reaction of the financial officers in these provinces? There is no indication in Villemontée's letter. In other areas of France, however, there was definite opposition to the new powers given to intendants. This reaction is well described in the letter of another intendant to the chancellor. In May, 1637, Le Provost, intendant at Lyon, wrote to Séguier:

I have received a commission on the part of the Council to attend to the matter of the loans for which I thank you with great humility; before going to work, I wished to communicate it to the trésoriers de France of this city and sent them a copy of it, following a settlement made by the council through the agency of the late M. Ollier, being then intendant, and the said trésorier de France: and by the same means I declared to them that it was my intention to enter their bureau according to that which it had pleased His Majesty to permit me by my commission. They sent me six from their body with the procureur du roi to tell me that they had great cause to complain about this commission because it removed from them the greatest and most honorable function of their charges; and that they could not accord me the right of entry unless I would be willing to work with them in the achievement of the said commission, which thing they would only do when they should be designated, and that, though that would be acceptable, they would not wish to allow me to enter their bureau outside the execution of the said commission. I insisted on the contrary until, seeing them very obstinate in hindering me both in the carrying out of my said commission and the entry into their said company, I believed I ought to give you warning of it and send you my official report in order to attend to it. They claim to have letters from Messieurs les Surintendants (des finances) to that effect, which orders, together with yours, I am

⁹⁶Villemontée to Séguier, June 27, 1637, in Pagès, 124-126.

awaiting in order to conform to them. I beg you to consider that if you do not do me the honour of upholding me in all the points of this commission and particularly in the matter of the said entry, it will greatly diminish the authority which it pleases the king to give me in this province and reduce the confidence of the people. That will hinder me from working effectively in the service of His Majesty. You know how they have worked against M. de Chapponnay, and that up to the present have prevented the execution of his ordinances, doing largely what they believe and obeying when they please. I leave to your discretion the consideration of the consequences. As for me, I desire nothing but to obey your orders and to conform to whatever you will be pleased to prescribe.⁹⁷

It is difficult to trace the growth of the intendant's control of financial administration between July, 1637, and June, 1640, because of a great gap in the correspondence addressed to Séguier. However, it would seem from the complaints of the trésoriers de France against the intendants addressed to the central government in 1640 that the intendants continued to take over financial control whenever opportunities occurred, although general decrees for the collection of taxes were still addressed to the bureaux des finances.⁹⁸

In November, 1641, when the edict with instructions for the collection of tailles for 1642 was issued, the regular officers were warned to collect taxes without abuses or inequalities according to the rules, and were threatened that, if they did not obey, they would be replaced by commissioners.⁹⁹ Article 13 of the edict set forth the consequences of ill service:

In as much as the observation of the present edict and regulation is very important.... that, for this execution and observa-

⁹⁷Le Provost to Séguier, May 19, 1637, in ibid., 55-56.

⁹⁸Mousnier, "Etat et commissaire", 335.

⁹⁹Ibid.

tion, it had been proposed to His Majesty to establish commissions in each élection, in place of the officers (thereupon as the said officers up to the present have not taken care to observe equality and have favoured and released each one in their élections, a part of the best parishes and the most powerful tax payers) notwithstanding His said Majesty, wishing to keep the said officers ... has directed and ordered them to executé and observe exactly this (edict): declaring to them that should they default in taking a hand punctually to assess and tax with equality the said following year 1642, there will be provided for the year 1643, be it for the establishment of commissioners instead of the said officers or in another way, in such a manner it will be resolved and ordered by His said Majesty.¹⁰⁰

When this ultimatum failed, the threat was carried out. An edict issued by the conseil du roi on August 22, 1642, gave the intendants legal control of finance.¹⁰¹ Commissions were to be hereafter addressed jointly to the intendant and the trésoriers de France. The intendants were to have charge of the division and surveillance of the levy of tailles, taillion and monies for the provisioning of troops, while the trésoriers de France were reduced to the role of technical advisors and administrators of judicial formalities. The intendants were to preside over the bureaux des finances to make certain that their orders were carried out. Moreover, the intendant was also to be in charge of circuits into the élections, although the trésoriers were allowed to choose several of their members to accompany him. In each élection, the intendant was to choose three élus and with these, the trésoriers who had been chosen to accompany him, the procureur du roi, the receiver of tailles and the clerk of the élection, was to administer the tailles in that district. If the élus did not do a satisfactory job, he could dismiss them and

¹⁰⁰In ibid., 335-336.

¹⁰¹Ibid.; Cailliet, II, 52-53.

choose others. The intendant was also to collect the paulette from the officers in his jurisdiction and with the trésoriers was to make certain that the accounts of the receivers of taille were in order. If these accounts were to prove bad, the intendant could appoint an agent in place of the offender. He was also given power to try anyone who hindered the levying and collection of tailles. There was to be no appeal of his decisions in this matter. In summary, the intendant was to have authority over all the officers of finance and ordinary judges. These were deprived of their rights of appeal and resistance, and were to continue to exercise authority only when they had proven their loyalty as individuals.¹⁰²

The intendants began to carry out the terms of this ordinance immediately, even though it was not given the full force of a royal declaration and edict until April 16, 1643, four months after Richelieu's death.¹⁰³ From Saumur, the intendant of Touraine, De Heer, wrote in February, 1643, "I have all but finished the work of tailles and have only the élection of Richelieu left".¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Vautorte, intendant of Provence, reported on April 7, "I am carrying out the work of tailles and of supplies for the present year".¹⁰⁵

With Louis XIII's death on May 14, however, the regular officers began to resist the authority of the intendants. In July, de Chazé, in-

¹⁰²Mousnier, "Etat et commissaire", 336-337.

¹⁰³Ibid., 337.

¹⁰⁴De Heer to Séguier, February 12, 1643, in ibid., 338.

¹⁰⁵Vautorte to Séguier, April 7, 1643, in ibid.

tendant in Dauphiné, wrote describing the situation there.¹⁰⁶ The trésoriers had been very much opposed to the ordinance of August, 1642, and had planned to initiate litigation against him. This had been overcome, and when the intendant had discovered malversions in the accounts of the receiver of tailles at Vidime in December, he had appointed in his place a clerk whom the trésoriers at Grenoble had sent with him. However, after Louis' death, the trésoriers had decided to throw off the control of the intendant. They had dismissed the clerk as an agent of the intendant and called the receiver to account before their own body. They then threw out the ordinance of the intendant against him and justified their action by an edict which they persuaded the Parlement of Dauphiné to publish in their favour.

The situation in Dauphiné, however, does not seem to have been the general rule. The Council of the Regency regarded the Royal Edict of April 16 as law, even though the Cour des Aides had declared that it must register the act before it became valid. One proof of this lies in an instruction from the Council dated July 10, addressed to the intendants de la justice, police, et finances in each généralité.¹⁰⁷ They were directed to prevent the receivers of tailles from seizing the property of persons who were unable to pay their taxes and from prosecuting anyone who was in default for the years 1635-1637. The intendants were also instructed to release any persons who had been imprisoned for non-payment between 1638 and 1641 and to check the receipts and payments of

¹⁰⁶De Chazé to Séguier, July 12, 1643, in ibid.

¹⁰⁷Instruction..., July 10, 1643, in ibid., 339.

the receivers of tailles.

On July 21, the Cour des Aides published its Act of Verification. This act placed several limitations on the royal edict:¹⁰⁸ The Cour des Aides claimed the right of approval of intendants' commissions and re-asserted its right to act as the court of final appeal in cases dealing with taxation; it also ruled that although the intendants were to be allowed entry to the bureaux, they were not to preside nor were they to have the power to act independently of the trésoriers in case of delay. Moreover, the intendants were to do the work of tailles with six élus, who would serve in rotation following a list, rather than three whom the intendant had chosen. These élus were not to be questioned or dismissed by the intendant no matter what the circumstance.

The Act of Verification, however, seems to have had little effect on the activity of the intendants. The central government, it would seem, ignored it. Commissions of the intendants were certainly not presented to the Cour des Aides. From the letters of both intendants and trésoriers, it is clear that the intendants continued to act at every stage of taxation, and in some cases carried their powers beyond the terms of the royal edicts, when it was in the interest of the king.¹⁰⁹ By 1647, some intendants were naming the trésoriers whom they wished to accompany them rather than allowing the bureau to choose them.¹¹⁰ Moreover, not all the financial officers remained irrevocably opposed to the

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 337-338.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 340-342.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 342.

intendants. Some were very willing to co-operate and to aid them in their work. The intendants were entirely willing to accept this aid. For example, when de Chaulnes, intendant at Amiens, fell sick and could not carry out his tasks in June, 1646, he entrusted his administration to M. Pietre, one of the trésoriers de France in the généralité.¹¹¹

Thus, by 1648, the intendants were firmly established in the provinces. The final stage of transition from commissioner to permanent official was their takeover of financial administration. In the process, moreover, their duties of justice and police remained undiminished. Of course, this establishment was threatened by the Fronde. But the effects of the Fronde on the institution were varied and there was no consistency in the way in which the intendants fared.

Perhaps one good example in a remote province is offered in Florentin Astre's account of the intendants of Louis de Tonnelier, seigneur de Breteuil, in Languedoc.¹¹² Breteuil arrived in the province in February, 1647, and remained through the period of the Fronde until August, 1653. Languedoc, in spite of its separatist tendencies had, by 1647, become quite accustomed to the authority of intendants. Capable men had succeeded one another in the province without interruption since 1630. Therefore, the situation into which Breteuil entered was stable and calm and the powers he exercised, reaching into every part of administration were, on the whole, not the result of an emergency situation but those customary for an intendant carrying out day-to-day administration.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Astre, 106-122.

The secret of Breteuil's excellence in his administrative tasks seems to have lain in his attention to public opinion and his abilities in conciliation. Because of these abilities, he was able to win the confidence of the factious provincial estates, which, to show its approval of his work, in 1647 granted him an annual salary of 3000 livres.¹¹³ He also worked at building an understanding between the king and the province by giving notice of the cancellation of a tax as soon as he knew of it himself. He kept his ears open for any sound of trouble and when he learned that some contractors were still attempting to collect the cancelled tax, he immediately imprisoned their chief. Moreover, even when legitimate taxes were in arrears, he did his best to intercede and to prevent the sending in of ill-disciplined troops. Above all, he lost no opportunity to recommend his administration to the king's subjects, to flatter them, and to win them over.

When the influence of the first disturbances of the Fronde began to be felt in Languedoc, Breteuil managed to persuade the provincial estates to maintain its loyalty to the crown. He continued to behave in a gracious but firm manner to all who opposed him and to work against excess in taxation. He halted all seizures and executions of beasts of burden of those in arrears and welcomed complaints against inequalities and abuses in the tax system.

Throughout the period of the Fronde, the intendant worked tirelessly smoothing the feathers of provincial discontent, compromising when necessary and keeping the province loyal to the crown; this contin-

¹¹³Ibid., 108.

ued loyalty of Languedoc played no little part in strengthening the crown against the Frondeurs.

The only serious crisis of Breteuil's intendance came in 1651. Differences had arisen between the estates and the Parlement of Toulouse, which was trying to enlarge its powers in the province.¹¹⁴ Breteuil found himself on the side of the estates in this quarrel and denounced the usurpations of the Parlement. At one point, the Parlement seemed about to arrest Breteuil; however, the support of the estates plus action on the part of the conseil du roi to break the edicts promulgated by the Parlement and to confirm Breteuil in his power resulted in a victory for the intendant. Moreover, Breteuil's firmness in the face of uproar in the city of Toulouse resulted in an early end to disorders there in the same year and the return of the province to peace and tranquillity.

Breteuil's administration is typical of the intendants who remained in control during the Fronde. These not only offered an example to those intendants who were to be re-established in the other provinces after 1652, but were in a large measure responsible for the triumph of the crown over the reactionary desires of the Frondeurs. The solid backing of the crown by several key provinces¹¹⁵ played a large role in strengthening the crown against the rebels.

Thus, in the quarter-century following the coming to power of the Cardinal de Richelieu, a profound change had taken place in the func-

¹¹⁴Ibid., 116-117.

¹¹⁵Intendants remained in the provinces of Languedoc, Provence, Picardy, Burgundy, Lyonnais and Champagne during the entire course of the Fronde.

tions of the intendants. At the beginning of Richelieu's ministry, they had been used mainly as the Cardinal described their functions in his Testament Politique, as periodic inspectors of the local officers of justice and finance and as special judges when the crown felt that a more direct jurisdiction in the provinces was in its interest; but by the period of the Fronde they had become the most useful instrument at the disposal of the crown for enforcing and extending its authority throughout the realm.

CHAPTER V

We have observed how the intendants became a permanent institution during the ministry of the Cardinal de Richelieu. It now remains to suggest a few of the reasons why they became permanent.

The first reason lies in the quality of Richelieu's administration: The personal relationship between the Cardinal and his creatures. The individuals sent out to the provinces were hand-picked men whom Richelieu felt he could trust. Because of this confidence, he was willing to use them not only in the tasks originally given them, but also for any other investigations or enforcements of royal will in the provinces to which they were sent. Thus, the intendants became involved in naval administration and diplomacy as well as in numerous other activities within the provinces to which they were assigned. In most cases, these new activities were not touched upon by their original commissions, although if the tasks which they undertook were of more or less permanent duration, an assignment might appear in the commission of their successors in the same province. Also, the intendants were largely drawn from the same noblisse de robe background as the higher echelons of the venal officers.¹ But, while the venal offices were dependent on the nature of the offices themselves for their position in the administrative hierarchy, the intendants, as Richelieu's creatures, relied only on the approval of

¹Mousnier, La venalité, 60, 524, 530-532.

the Cardinal for advancement. Such approval was to be gained chiefly by their contribution to the furtherance of royal interests in the provinces.

Secondly, it might be noted that two of the three goals which the Cardinal had set forth to accomplish--the breaking of the Huguenot power and the abasement of Spain--were to be accomplished only by war. Thus, throughout the period of Richelieu's ministry, the royal armies remained mobilized and the number of intendants occupied with the administration and supplying of armies did not decrease. Any complaint of the provincial officers of finance or the parlements fell on deaf ears: The intendants were fulfilling a vital function. Moreover, because armies remained in the frontier provinces to guard against the threat of invasion, and because intendants attached to the armies were usually also active in provincial administration, there was a direct succession of intendants in the frontier provinces throughout the whole period of Richelieu's ministry. It is perhaps significant that it was these provinces which remained, as a whole solidly behind the crown in the period of the Fronde.

Even more important to the progress of the intendants was the accomplishment of Richelieu's third goal--decreasing the authority of the great nobility. Included in the classification of "great nobility" were most of the governors of the provinces.² In the course of Richelieu's ministry, most of these were replaced by individuals loyal to the

²Richelieu to Schomberg, December 29, 1616, Lettres, I, 231-232.

king.³ Some of the latter, however, had little administrative ability, while others, like the Prince de Condé, were engaged in military activities as well and had little time for seeing to the administration of their provinces. The position of governor tended to become honorary, while the governor's former duties of administration and good government were taken over by the intendants.⁴

At La Rochelle and in Poitou, Aunis and Saintonge, intendants played the major role in administration after 1629.⁵ In Dauphiné, men such as Argenson, Chaponay, Jacques Talon and Alexandre de Sève were in control as intendants without interruption from 1628 until the Frondeurs demanded their withdrawal in August, 1648.⁶ In Provence, the intendants exercised considerable influence following the expulsion of the Duc de Guise in 1631 and even more after de Vitry's dismissal in 1633.⁷ The intendants also exercised the largest part of administrative authority in Burgundy after the expulsion of Bellegarde in 1631.⁸ In Brittany, intendants were established on a regular basis after 1634⁹ and in Languedoc, intendants took charge of administration in 1632 and remained in the province even throughout the period of the Fronde, although in that province

³Caillet, 43-44; Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 317-319.

⁴Gaston Zeller, "L'Administration monarchique", 215.

⁵See above, pages 56 and 68.

⁶Esmonin, "Les intendants du Dauphiné, 40-58.

⁷Hanotaux and La Force, IV, 214.

⁸Ibid., 216; Caillet, 66.

⁹Canal, pt. ii, 510; pt. iv, 525-526.

the governor, after 1632 the Maréchal de Schomberg, a personal friend of the Cardinal, also played an active role in administration up to 1646.¹⁰ By the end of Richelieu's ministry, all but two or three of the seventeen généralités of the realm had intendants and these few were the areas nearest Paris which could be governed directly by the central government.¹¹

As the intendants replaced the governors in administration, they also replaced them in their rivalries with the provincial parlements.¹² This struggle for dominance in matters of justice between parlements and intendants during Richelieu's ministry is in many ways a prefiguration of the struggle between parliamentarians and the conseil du roi for control of royal policy during the Fronde. In both cases, the parlements were fighting against the royal will. Their temporary success during the Fronde arose from the fact that the king was still a minor and could not declare his will. Soon after, Louis XIV's majority was declared in 1652, the disturbances ceased, because the Frondeurs no longer had any tenable grounds for their protests.

Richelieu certainly had little sympathy for the parlements. He regarded their perpetual self-interest and resistance to policies undertaken for the good of the state as a great evil.¹³ During his ministry, their resistance was met with harsh countermeasures. For example, in

¹⁰Astre, 106.

¹¹Hanotaux, "Les premiers intendants", XXI, 64.

¹²Zeller, "L'Administration monarchique", 215.

¹³Testament Politique, 248.

May, 1631, the king forbade the Parlement of Paris from interfering in the affairs of state as a result of its refusal to register an edict accusing conspirators with Gaston d'Orleans of lèse-majesté. In this situation, the Cardinal welcomed the efforts of the intendants to keep the parlements' opposition in check.

Thus, it might be argued that the establishment of the intendants as permanent officials in the provinces was essential to the progress of royal centralization, a characteristic feature of the whole fabric of French history. The intendants replaced the governors as better representatives of the crown and as opponents of sectionalism in the provinces. Once this step had been taken and control of all aspects of administration in the majority of the provinces was in the hands of the intendants, there could be no retreat. The only circumstance in which the intendants could have been returned to a role of mere temporary royal commissioners would have been if the crown had found a better means of establishing royal authority in provinces which, even in the seventeenth century, were vastly different in customs and outlook. Such an alternative could not be found, and therefore the intendants remained the chief instruments of royal authority in the provinces right up to the Revolution.

However, whereas the governors had exercised general and sweeping powers within a province and left the lower administration largely to those officers of the crown especially appointed to carry it out, the administration of the intendants permeated much more deeply into the specific details of government. This was particularly the case in the administration of finance.

The most salient reason for the establishment of the intendants

as permanent officials under Richelieu lay in the extreme financial need in which the monarchy found itself, especially in the period after 1635. This need was met in part by the continuation of venality in royal offices, which in turn resulted in the exercise by the intendants of administrative powers of a depth which the governors had never claimed. The multiplication and hereditary character of offices bred inefficiency. However, the continuation of venality was essential to the financial welfare of the nation. Had Richelieu been able to carry out his scheme of reducing the number of officers and eventually of totally abolishing the sale of offices, it is possible that royal administration of finance might have been carried out without the intervention of the intendants at every stage of financial administration. But, because venality continued and grew, the Cardinal found that he had no choice but to entrust the intendants with an increasingly larger share of the actual administration of taxation until August, 1642, they were given complete control. In the period after Richelieu's death, the royal government remained encumbered by debt. For the sake of efficiency, the regency continued to rely on the intendants for the management of financial affairs in the provinces. This financial need continued into the period of the Fronde and was without doubt in part responsible for the resistance of the crown to demands that the intendants be recalled,¹⁴ and for their

¹⁴This resistance was carried beyond the speeches of Talon and Séguier to the Parlement. In spite of the Edict of July 17, which recalled the intendants from the provinces, the regency insisted that it was necessary to maintain intendants in the frontier provinces because of the war. The intendants, given this pretext, dug in and prepared to hold their ground. For example, the trésoriers at Poitiers wrote to their colleagues in Paris that Villemontée, "notre intendant perpetual", under the pretext of the war was maintaining his intendance in the

re-establishment in 1652 in many of the provinces in which the Frondeurs had forced them to withdraw.

The intendants were to remain the chief instrument for centralization because they combined qualities of permanence and mobility. During Richelieu's ministry, they had become a permanently established institution in the provinces. The survival of the institution during the Fronde was the final proof of its permanence. The administrative powers of the intendants were farther reaching than any other royal officials previously given authority in the provinces. However, unlike the governors, the provincial estates, the bureaux des finances and the provincial parlement whose authority was now exceeded by their own, the intendants remained directly dependent on the king and the royal council for their power. They could be recalled or moved to another province at the royal pleasure. For this reason, they remained effective and efficient tools of the crown right up to the Revolution.

province, making La Rochelle his centre of operations, and that they feared that he would attempt to continue to exercise his control over them and to usurp their functions. See Pages, 123.

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