



The most important decree concerning French trade with her colonies

(Caribbean) **Lettres Patentes Du Roy, Portant Reglement Pour le Commerce des Colonies Françoises. Données à Paris au mois d'Avril 1717.**

[Paris: 1717] small quarto, 11, [1] pp., some very slight ruffling to bottom edge, otherwise a fine copy.

This is the most important decree concerning French trade with her colonies, on which all subsequent regulations were based. This decree remained in force for a considerable time, suffering periodic amendments, to suit varying economic and political changes. Article I appoints the following ports as trading centers with America: Calais, Dieppe, Le Havre, Rouën, Honfleur, St. Malo, Morlaix, Brest, Nantes, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Bayonne and Cette. Article II declares that "Toutes les denrées & marchandises, soit du crû ou de la fabrique du Royaume, mesme la vaisselle d'argent, ou autres ouvrages d'Orfeverie; les vins & eaux-de-vie de Guyenne, ou autres Provinces destinees pour estre transportez aux Isles & Colonies Françoises, seront exempts de tous droits de sortie & d'entrée, ..."

and the same applies according to the next article, to the ships' munitions and provisions. By article X goods coming from abroad to be shipped to the French colonies pay the "droits d'entrée" into France but are exempt from the "droits de sortie," except in the case of foreign salt beef, which is exempt from both. As regards goods coming from America and destined for foreign countries, these also pay no dues, on condition that the necessary declarations are made and that the goods awaiting the conclusion of such sales are warehoused in any of the ports mentioned above, except St. Malo, Morlaix, Brest and Nantes. Five classes of goods may be imported for sale abroad at these four harbours as well, namely "sucres terrez ou cassonades, indigo, gingemvre, rocou & cacao provenant des Isle & Colonies Françaises," to be transported by land along certain specifically defined routes. The following are the Customs duties levied on imports from the Colonies for consumption in France: "Les Moscovades ou Sucres bruts, le cent pèsant, Deux livres dix sols... Les Sucres terrez ou Cassonades, le cent pèsant Huit livres... L'Indigo, cent sols le cent pèsant. Le Gingemvre, quinze sols. Le Cotton en Laine, trente sols... Le Rocou, Deux livres dix sols... Les Confitures, Cinq livres... La Caffé ou Canefice, une livre... Le Cacao, Dix livres ... Les Cuirs secs & en Poil, cinq sols de la Piece, Le caret ou Ecaille de Tortue de toutes sortes, Sept livres du cent pèsant," this always in addition to any local dues. All goods from the Colonies had to pass through France, or at least a French port, and heavy penalties were imposed in cases where goods were shipped direct from the Colonies even to some neighboring foreign land, nor were ships destined for the Colonies allowed to load wine or other goods in any foreign country, not even in Madeira. This decree contains a number of other purely administrative regulations connected with French colonial trade. By a later decree these regulations were made to apply also to Canada.

Unrecorded variant issue of Wroth and Annan 592. See Maggs, *French Colonisation of America*, 94 for their description of another variant issue. (£25 in 1936). \$ 4500.00