

## The French Commander's Reply to Governor Dinwiddie, December, 1753.

[December 15, 1753]

Sir,

As I have the honor of commanding here in chief, Mr. Washington delivered me the letter which you wrote to the Commander of the French troops. I should have been glad if you had given him orders, or he had been inclined, to proceed to Canada to see our general, to whom it belongs, rather than to me, to set forth evidence of the incontestable rights of the King, my master, to the lands situated along the Ohio, and to contest the pretensions of the King of Great Britain thereto.

I shall transmit your letter to the Marquis du Quesne. His reply will be a law to me, and, if he order me to communicate it to you, Sir, you may be assured that I shall dispatch it forthwith.

As to the summons you send me to retire, I do not think myself obliged to obey it. Whatever may be your instructions, mine bring me here by my general's order; and I entreat you, Sir, to be assured that I shall attempt to follow them with all the exactness and determination which can be expected from a good officer.

I do not know that anything has happened during the course of this campaign which can be construed as an act of hostility, or as contrary to the treaties between the two Crowns; the continuation whereof, interests and pleases us as much as it does the English. If you had been pleased to go into detail regarding the facts which caused your complaints, I should have had the honor of answering you in the most satisfactory manner possible for me.

I have made it a duty to treat Mr. Washington with all the respect owing to your dignity and his personal merit, and I flatter myself, Sir, that he will do me the justice to be my witness for it with you, as well as the evidences of deep respect with which

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very humble and very obedient servant,

LEGARDEUR DE SAINT-PIERRE

From the fort on the Riviere aux Boeufs,  
December 15, 1753.

**Credit:** George Washington, *The Journal of Major George Washington Sent by the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, Esq.....*(London: T. Jefferys, 1754), 31. Quoted in <http://explorepahistory.com/odocument.php?docId=1-4-18>