**Louis XIV**

In the late 1500’s, France was torn apart by religious conflict between French Protestants, called Huguenots, and Catholics. In an event called the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre, thousands of Huguenots were slaughtered. In 1598, King Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes to protect Protestants. This granted the Huguenots religious toleration and other freedoms.

After Henry’s assassination in 1610, his nine-year-old son, Louis XIII, inherited the throne. Louis appointed Cardinal Richelieu as his chief minister. Richelieu sought to strengthen royal power by crushing any groups that did not bow to royal authority. In 1643, five-year-old Louis XIV inherited the French throne. When his chief minister died, Louis XIV resolve to make himself the Sun King to symbolize his vital role in the nation.

Louis XIV expanded the royal government and appointed intendants, royal officials who collected taxes, recruited soldiers, and carried out his policies in the provinces. To fuel the country’s economy, Louis’s finance, minister Jean Basptiste Colbert, expanded commerce and trade. Taxes helped finance the extravagant lifestyle.

Under Louis XIV, France became the strongest state in Europe. However, the country’s prosperity began to erode. This loss of wealth was caused by some of Louis’s decisions. HE fought costly wars to extend French borders, but rival rulers resisted in order to maintain balance of power. Louis also revoked the Edict of Nantes, driving over 100,000 hard working and prosperous Huguenots out of France,

Questions

1. How did Louis XIV come into power?
2. What was the purpose of intendants?
3. What were the main reasons why France lost economic strength?
4. How did Louis XIV strengthen the French monarchy? Identify key details that contributed to France becoming the leading power in Europe.