

NECKER, (J.).

De l'administration des finances de la France. 3 Tomes. - [A SEMINAL WORK OF PRE-REVOLUTION ECONOMICS]

Référence : 41464

(Paris?), 1784. 8vo. Bound in three nice, uniform brown half calf bindings with title- and tome-labels to spines. A very nice, clean, and fresh copy. VII, (1), CLIX, (1), 352 pp., one folded table VII, (1), 536 pp." VIII, 468 pp. The table in volume one lying loose.

Commentaire : The very rare first edition, first printing (see Carpenter) of Necker's seminal main work - a work which helped cement Necker's great reputation and which furthermore constitutes the only authentic account of the finances of France before the Revolution. The French banker Jacques Necker, who was appointed French Minister of Finance during three periods (1777-1781, 1788-1789, 1789-1790), was famous for his opposition to the physiocrats. He replaced Turgot in as Minister of Finance in 1776, and attacked Turgot's plan for free trade in grains. He initiated economic reforms which were designed to help the poor French economy. Instead of using the more traditional method of raising taxes he, on the contrary, raised the interest rates and kept the comparatively low income-tax. At the time he was regarded a financial genius primarily because of his ability to aid the American Colonies in their war of independence against England without raising taxes. Thereby he used his economic skills not only to help the domestic economy but also as a mean of foreign political pressure. His most famous contribution to French history in general is the publication of his "Compte rendu au Roi" ("Report to the King"), in which the public for the first time could read about the government income and expenditures. His will and ambitions to inform and educate the people together with the fact that he was a commoner made him popular with the people. Partly due to his public popularity, on July 11th 1789 he was dismissed, an act which caused public rioting. These riots, combined with the economic crisis and high inflated corn-prices, led to the storming of the Bastille on July 14th 1789. During his retirement, Necker wrote his famous "Traité de l'administration des finances de la France", which today is regarded the most comprehensive and in-depth explanation of Necker's economic thoughts. It had such an enormous success with the general reader that within a few days, more than 80.000 copies were sold! According to Carpenter, no less than 7 issues were printed during the first year of publication, and they are very difficult to know from each other "All are printed from the same setting of type, but they differ slightly in terms of the pagination... These slight variations indicate great demand. There were also pirated French editions." (Carpenter). According to Carpenter, the present copy is the rare actual first issue of this seminal work, which contributed greatly to bolstering Necker's reputation. Carpenter XXIX(1) Einaudi A.582 Goldsmith 12732 INED 3358 Kress B752.

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