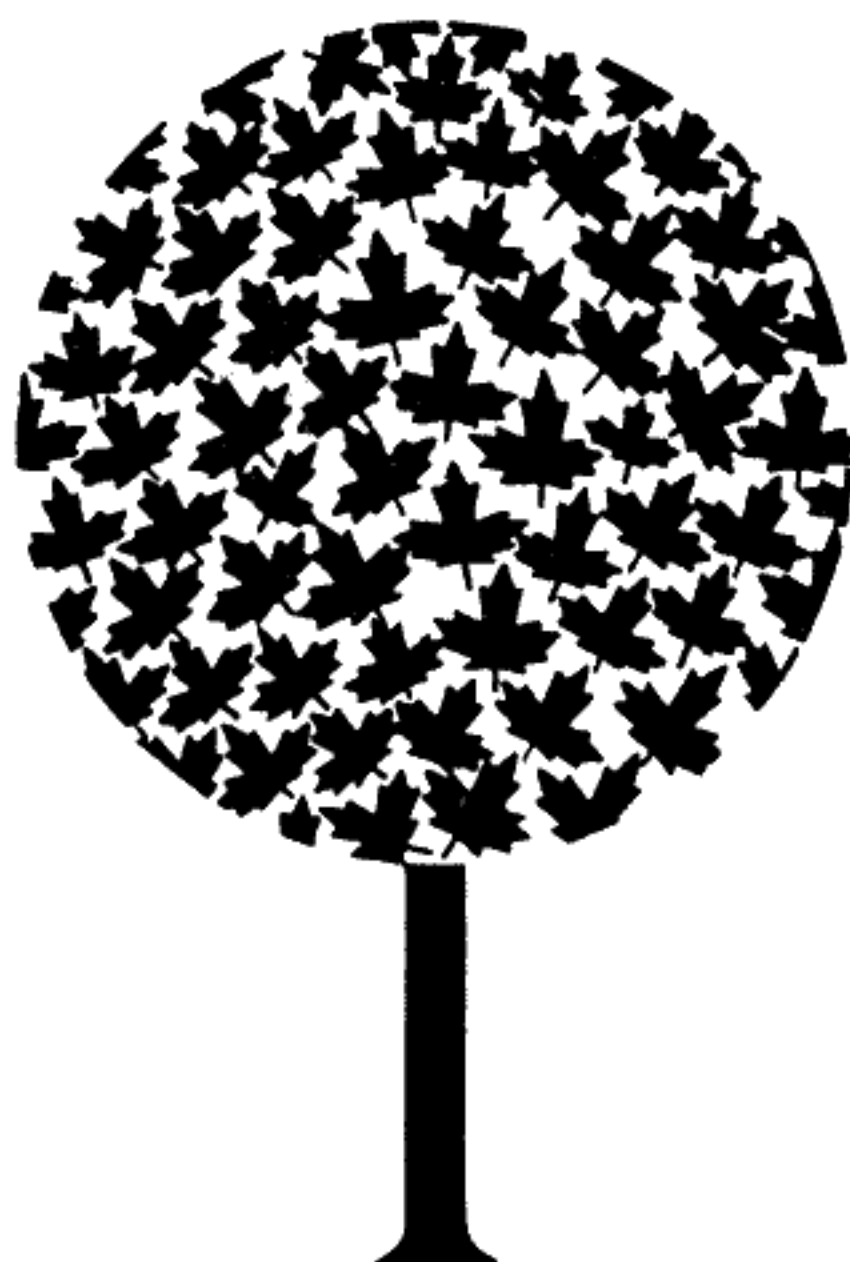


THE MAKING OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES 1713-1784

W. S. MacNUTT

THE CANADIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



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THE MAKING OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES 1713-1784

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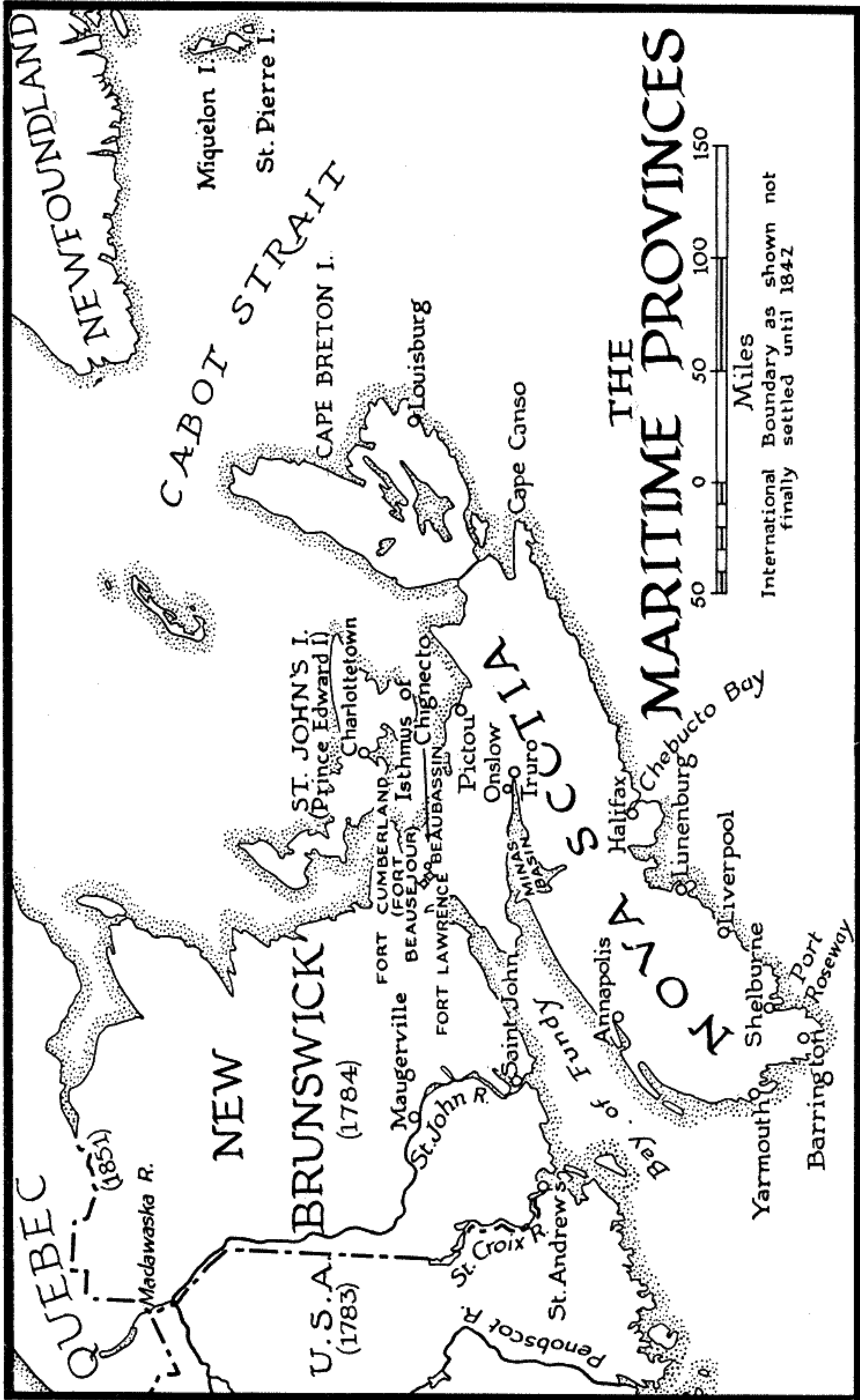
The Maritime Provinces were born of war. A glance at the map will show how they formed a natural theatre of contention for the two great imperial powers of the time. To the northwest was the French empire on the St. Lawrence. To the south were the energetic and commercially-minded inhabitants of New England. Across the ocean were France and Britain, each conscious of the value of colonies in the creation of wealth for the parent state. The area was a strategic one. From it could be dominated the approaches to either Quebec or Boston. Before the struggle for the control of the interior of North America could be decided a conflict would be necessary here.

It was geography which largely determined the kind of development both during and after the eighteenth century. The relatively small land mass is cut into segments by arms of the sea. Great forests composed difficult barriers between communities and emphasized division. Communication by sea was the rule and men learned to look outward rather than inward for control and authority. There were a hundred entrances and exits. Champlain had abandoned this widely dispersed seaward area mainly because it was impossible to control the activities of the few score fishermen and fur-traders who operated from its harbours. From the first, small and independent communities had been formed and the establishment of central authority had been difficult.

Even by the eighteenth century the two expressions, "Acadia" and "Nova Scotia", were old ones. They were rather indiscriminately applied to the whole Atlantic area south of the St. Lawrence and northeast of New England. The interior country was not effectively explored until well into the nineteenth century so that certain geographical definition was impossible.

THE BACKGROUND OF CONFLICT

The treaty of Utrecht of 1713 laid the framework of the struggle for empire. By it the French ceded Acadia to Great Britain, but reserved to themselves Cape Breton and the islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The treaty's omission to state what were the limits of Acadia prepared the way for future uncertainty and conflict. The predominant facts developing out of this sit-



uation for many years were those of British indifference and French anxiety. The British Government could see no profit in heavy financial expenditures. Other colonies offered better inducements for British settlers. For thirty years the little fort at Annapolis, garrisoned by a handful of badly disciplined and ill-attended soldiers, was the only important visible evidence of British interest in the new colony.

The French, on the other hand, sensed the necessity of preserving their communications with Quebec and constructed on the eastern tip of Cape Breton the great fortress of Louisburg, as strong as stone and iron could make it. From it the maintenance of a great French fishery was possible. They strengthened their attachments to the few hundred of Abenaki, Micmac and Malecite Indians who inhabited the debatable wilderness of the interior. Legally the British were masters, but the French possessed a moral and military initiative. Nova Scotia was a frontier zone for the British, not a colony.

What caused the country to be valued was a factor which tended to keep it unpopulated. This was the activity of the seafarers of both nations who, ever since the time of John Cabot, had been making use of the harbours and indentations of the Acadian coastline as bases from which they conducted one of the greatest fisheries in the world. The shallow waters off the Atlantic shore and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence were the breeding-ground of cod, mackerel, halibut and other species of fish in great profusion, and a great industry had been established. Fishing and agriculture were hostile to one another and it was not surprising that fishermen carried to other countries accounts of the bleak climate and rocky soil of Acadia. It was to their interest that permanent settlers should not arrive to dispute with them the possession of coves and inlets, the free use of which they considered indispensable. The habits of the fish were migratory so that fishermen were compelled to follow them from one shore to another and erect the flakes and stagings on which they dried and salted their produce before marketing it in Europe.

The boundary of the interior of the province was a matter of indifference to both Crowns. Yet each took careful measures to protect the interests of its fishermen. This was because the fishery was a source of great revenue, especially to the British. Payments for fish sold in the Catholic countries of the Mediterranean very heavily contributed to the achievement of a favourable balance of trade and the importation of gold bullion, a condition which, according to the prevalent theories of mercantilism, was highly desirable.

Although continental expansion offered no prospect of profit, the fishery was an important element in the economy of both nations. It was essential as a nursery for the seamen of both navies. For the first thirty years after the peace of Utrecht

Acadia became a subject of serious international rivalry only when fishermen disputed possession of the little islands of Canso on the eastern shore of the peninsula opposite Cape Breton. A few rocky islands, wooded and offering fresh water, with wide beaches for the construction of flakes, created fierce hostility at a time when the future of the continent seemed a problem that was abstract and unpractical. Their occupation by British troops ended the diplomatic negotiation which was taking place in Europe. They were ideally suited to the purposes of the fishermen for they offered quick entrance to either the Gulf or the Atlantic. Here New Englanders met Jerseymen, Guernsey men and fishermen from the west of England. The quintal of fish was the unit of currency. There were the usual conflicts between shoremen and seamen, between New Englanders and Old Englanders. New England traders brought rum and other smuggled merchandise from Martinique and other West India islands under French or Spanish rule. The men of Canso boasted that their produce was worth more to the revenue of Great Britain than that of any other British colony.

The New England influence predominated at Canso and other harbours along the Acadian shore. Ever since Plymouth had been founded shallops from New England ports, often with crews of only four or five men, had made their way to the wealth-producing waters which they fiercely disputed with the French. They regarded the shores and seas of Acadia as their birthright. They considered Acadia merely an extension of New England or, as one writer has declared, New England's outpost.

THE FOUNDING OF HALIFAX

The final struggle for dominion in North America really commenced in 1744, and, quite suddenly, an astonishing event happened. Inspired by puritanic zeal as well as material interest, the New Englanders, assisted by a British fleet, reduced Louisburg in a siege of a few weeks. Louisburg had been strong by reputation rather than in arms and the quality of the troops who had defended it, but the fall of the "Dunkirk of America" represented a very great triumph for colonial troops who in Europe were regarded as incapable of serious military operations. Very dramatically and successfully New Englanders had asserted their "ancient right" in Acadia.

Persistent French attempts to regain Louisburg revealed the degree of success which had been attained. Before the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 three expeditions from Canada of French regulars, Canadian militia and Indians had entered Acadia for the purpose of regaining ascendancy and restoring command of the St. Lawrence approaches. They concentrated on the Isthmus of Chignecto and three times their attacks on Annapolis came to

grief. The French failed to gain command of the sea and therefore an assault upon Louisburg was impossible. In 1746 one of the greatest fleets France had ever sent abroad, commanded by the Duc d'Anville, arrived in the spacious harbour of Chebucto for the purpose of co-operating with the land forces from Canada. Its ships had been buffeted by storms, the crews decimated by pestilence. Counsels were divided. The commander and second-in-command both suicided so that nothing was accomplished. When peace came the British, chiefly owing to their superior sea-power, remained in control of the great fortress.

Yet French arms had done well in Europe and in India, and France had the bargaining power to persuade Britain to abandon her American conquest. The peaceful restoration of Louisburg constituted an affront to New England, particularly to the great colony of Massachusetts Bay whose governor, William Shirley, had led in organizing the expedition. Owing to the great clamour which arose the British Government indemnified the colony for its financial outlay and embarked upon other measures to conciliate opinion in Massachusetts. To do this it was necessary to create in Acadia a power which could look Louisburg in the face, to make Nova Scotia "instead of a gangrene a sound and useful member of the body politic". A plan was devised with purposes that were three-fold — to found in Acadia a centre of British population which up to this time had been absent, to create an important military and naval base, and to establish a centre for the British fishery.

In 1749 the new colony of Halifax — the only colony in America ever founded by the direct action of the British Government — came into existence in consequence of the restoration of Louisburg to France. It was located on the great harbour of Chebucto where d'Anville's fleet had dwindled to decay three years before. It was called after Lord Halifax, the President of the Board of Trade, who took the lead in pushing the great scheme to execution.

Halifax filled the roles for which it was intended. The original three thousand discharged soldiers and sailors, "the King's bad bargains", were reinforced by a considerable immigration of fishermen and traders from New England who were attracted by the large expenditure of public money and who, in a year or two, became the dominant element in the population. Settlers from Germany were introduced because they were Protestant and in good supply. The first governor of Nova Scotia under the new establishment was Edward Cornwallis, an army officer who ably supervised the construction of the new town which grew up beneath the high hill overlooking the harbour. British naval, military and financial strength were lavishly expended in the building of a place of strength from which the King's legal right to Acadia could be practically enforced.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE ISTHMUS

The French were alarmed by the establishment of Halifax. An English visitor to Quebec in the summer of 1749 declared that the settlement of Chebucto was regarded as a source of danger greater than if the British had retained Cape Breton. There was peace in Europe between 1748 and 1756 but, as in other parts of America and in India, a succession of incidents which created a condition tantamount to war took place. The time for a fight to the finish had come. The French were heavily outnumbered and had largely to depend upon their Indian allies. Late in 1749 an "Indian war" which placed the British on the defensive opened in Nova Scotia. The settlers in Halifax were unsafe beyond the stockade. The energetic missionary, Joseph Le Loutre, came to Acadia and directed the forays of the Indians who were frequently accompanied by Frenchmen in disguise. The strength of the French reaction became apparent when the Chevalier de la Corne landed on the Isthmus of Chignecto with six hundred men and announced that he had taken possession of the northern shore of the Bay of Fundy for his master, the King of France.

Cornwallis answered this sharp challenge by the dispatch to the isthmus of British troops under Charles Lawrence, a man whose impact upon Nova Scotian history was to be fateful. On opposite sides of the little river Missiquash, now the boundary between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the two armies faced one another in a sullen and uneasy peace. La Corne raised a fort which he named Beauséjour. In answer the British constructed Fort Lawrence on the southern fringe of the marshland which is today known as the Tantramar. Chignecto had become strategic. Control here would imply mastery over almost the entire Acadian region. In Europe, Britain and France had appointed a commission of plenipotentiaries to determine by legal interpretation how much territory had been involved in the cession of 1713. But this did not moderate the enthusiasm of the men on the spot who knew that arms alone would answer the question.

When operations of war commenced in 1755 Lawrence, who was now governor of Nova Scotia, possessed the strength which would enable him to seize the initiative. In addition to several battalions of British regulars he had under his command two thousand New Englanders who had been recruited for service in Nova Scotia. Massachusetts had again been roused to activity by the necessity for removing from her northern hinterland the peril which overshadowed her frontiers both on land and sea. In June Lawrence dispatched a large force against Beauséjour. The fortress failed to reveal the strength which had been boasted of it. After a siege of nine days the British were masters of the isthmus and in a dominant position in Acadia.

It is this favourable military situation of the British in June of 1755 which explains the tragedy that followed. Lawrence had expelled all important French forces from the mainland of Acadia. British vessels sailed the Bay of Fundy unchallenged. His patrols ranged far up the St. John River. The months of best campaigning weather were still ahead and the New England troops would leave his command at the onset of winter. While he had time and overwhelming force at his command he determined to achieve a solution to the problem of the Acadian people.

THE ACADIAN DILEMMA

The Acadians were descendants of Norman peasants who had settled along the Bay of Fundy shore in the seventeenth century. Since Longfellow wrote *Evangeline* other sympathetic writers have tended to idealize them, but there is little reason to suppose that they were different from other peasant peoples. Until 1749 no government, French or British, had been strong enough to deal firmly with them. They had been virtually free from taxation and the weight of administrative ordinances. Their priests had represented the only form of real authority and justice had been dispensed from the portals of their churches.

One important factor which explains their subsequent ruin was the location of their settlements. Their farms dotted the rich marshlands, periodically flooded by the Fundy tides, which were the only extensive cleared lands in the province. The uplands were wooded and often barren, but the rich marshlands of the Acadians offered the means of prosperity. A British population, entering Nova Scotia at a later date, would be compelled to accept the difficult task of clearing the wilderness. Compared with European peasants, the Acadians were fortunate. Contemporary writers frequently mentioned their abundance of horses, cattle and other livestock. They had spread to the northern shore of the Bay of Fundy but their principal settlements were at Annapolis, Minas and Chignecto. Altogether they numbered about ten thousand.

By the treaty of Utrecht the Acadians had been free to move from British territory within one year of its signature. The French had tried to persuade them to move to Cape Breton, but they had chosen to remain on the far richer lands they possessed in British territory. British policy, faced by the refusal of the Acadians to take the oath of allegiance and to assume the obligations of British subjects, had been hesitating. There were hopes that in course of time the Acadians would become tranquil subjects of the Crown. There were fears that a strong policy would force their removal to Cape Breton where their presence would enormously increase French material strength. On the other hand it had been argued, especially by New Englanders, that the com-

plex situation in Acadia could be clarified only by their expulsion. For many years they had been able to maintain a position comparatively independent of both powers. The French were never able to capitalize upon racial and religious feelings which might have made them open enemies of British rule. The Acadians frequently referred to themselves as Neutral French.

The gathering strength of French and British in North America made neutrality highly unrealistic. This situation became clearly apparent when the British established Halifax in 1749. Cornwallis summoned deputies of the people to take an unqualified oath of allegiance to the British Crown. By refusing to do so they assumed an equivocating position. While attempting to extract terms from the British which would extend their "neutral" position they wrote letters to the Governor of Canada imploring assistance. Pressure from one side invited pressure from another. British strength at Halifax composed one claw of the pincer movement by which they were enveloped. The second was the descent of La Corne upon the isthmus. Here the Acadians of Beaubassin were given no choice. Le Loutre ordered them to burn their dwellings and retire to the north of the Missiquash where the French held sway. The British had denied neutrality to the Acadians with threats, the French in this particular locality by force of arms.

The five years in which British and French faced each other on the isthmus steadily increased pressure on the Acadians. The British hoped that they would remain quiet, the French that they would, at the opportune time, rise and assist in the expulsion of the British from the peninsula. The greater part of the people wanted to keep out of the war and be left to themselves. Yet their position was prejudiced by a great deal of evidence that they had assisted the French by the supply of provisions and intelligence, that many of their adventurous younger men had joined the French forces. Neutrality may have been a worthy aspiration but it simply could not be maintained.

THE GREAT EXPULSION

Charles Lawrence was a soldier who could see a situation only in the line of duty. To him the Acadians were an important military factor in the struggle with France. In the summer of 1755 he seized the advantage which military circumstances provided. He could force a choice upon the Acadians. They could take either the oath of allegiance or the consequences for refusing to do so. In his own mind expulsion loomed as the alternative and following expulsion there would be a possibility of transplanting a British population on the lands of the Acadians. A friendly population would be a source of military strength. His appreciation was a military one but there were other considerations too.

The New Englanders at Halifax could say with reason that it would be much easier to induce their fellow-countrymen to migrate to Nova Scotia if the farms, dwellings, horses and cattle of the Acadians were available for distribution.

The war was going badly for Britain elsewhere. As his troops occupied the Acadian hamlets following the fall of Beauséjour, Lawrence took anxious precautions to ensure that the Acadians should not receive intelligence of Braddock's severe defeat in the Ohio valley. He feared a mass uprising. On the seas British and French fleets had locked in combat with results that were indecisive.

In July the Governor called Acadian deputies to Halifax to take the oath of allegiance. Again the demand would have imposed upon them the full obligations of British subjects. Again they refused, though the array of British military power must have tempted many to yield. Lawrence at once commenced preparations for expulsion. He came to this decision on his own responsibility without reference to the British Government. The affair was entrusted to New England troops who at the time were available for the purpose. A request for transports was sent to Boston. Several anxious weeks followed. A drastic turn in the fortunes of war, in Acadia or elsewhere, might have created an Acadian rebellion. The demeanour of the people was, however, fundamentally peaceful, though French emissaries were present to urge resistance by violence. It seemed clear that they had no suspicion of the Governor's specific plan.

Early in October the business was accomplished. From Annapolis, Minas and Chignecto the transports, loaded with their human cargo, set sail for the various British colonies to the south. Generally speaking the treatment of the Acadians was humane, but at Minas, in the hurry of embarkation, families were divided. Lawrence reported the expulsion just as if it were an incident in the campaign, "I believe the French will not now be so sanguine in their hope of possessing a province they have hitherto looked upon as ready peopled for them, the moment they could get the better of the English". The British Government was surprised, for in London it had not been believed that expulsion was feasible or possible. Lawrence was later vindicated of any opprobrium when the Board of Trade reported that the measure was "absolutely necessary for the security and preservation of the province". It was a verdict based upon military exigencies.

The expulsion of 1755 was only the beginning of the sufferings of the Acadians. Probably only about one-third of the entire population had been transported. Deportations to Quebec, the British colonies and Europe continued until 1761 as British authority was imposed upon the entire area. Thousands of Acadians suffered privations for several years in the wilderness

of what is now eastern and northern New Brunswick. The attitude of the Halifax authorities continued to be severe. In 1762, when a French fleet captured St. John's in Newfoundland, two hundred Acadians who had been labouring in Halifax were hastily placed aboard transports and removed southward. Jonathan Belcher, who was in charge of the government, was absolutely convinced that they were not only a source of danger but an obstacle to British settlement of the province. More moderate counsel came from outside. General Amherst remonstrated against the unnecessary severity. Murray at Quebec urged that they be settled among their compatriots in that province. The British Government declared that they should no longer be considered a source of danger.

Many have written upon the Acadian tragedy, both in French and English, from points of view that are sentimental. Expulsion was a grim remedy for the difficulty that faced Lawrence and his administration. But the point of view which emphasizes the rights of humanity unhappily bears little relationship to the facts of the Anglo-French conflict in America and is entirely out of context. Each side in that struggle hoped to expel the other from the continent. The Seven Years War, like most wars, was a bloody business; and in the course of it both sides were guilty of worse atrocities than the expulsion of the Acadians.

THE PRE-LOYALIST SETTLERS

The peace of 1763 and the royal proclamation following resulted in the establishment of an enlarged province of Nova Scotia, extending inland as far as the St. Croix River and the hills of Gaspesia, and including the large islands of Cape Breton and St. John. The importance of the Acadian region had been strikingly demonstrated in the peace negotiations. France had been willing to surrender Canada as a colony of no profit, but the Duc de Choiseul, Louis XV's chief minister, declared that he would rather be stoned in the streets of Paris than surrender the entire fishery. In consequence of his firm stand the British had agreed that France should retain the small islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon from which her fishermen could share the wealth of the Acadian seas.

British conquest did not result in rapid settlement. Only the vacated lands of the exiled Acadians were quickly occupied. In accordance with a policy that was partly military New England settlers were established on the shores of the Bay of Fundy before the war was over. They were few in number but for many years they were the true core of the population. They were industrious in their daily lives, chiefly Congregational in religion and brought to Nova Scotia the social and political attitudes of the frontiersman. Other New Englanders established fishing villages such as

Yarmouth, Barrington and Liverpool on the southern shore. Still others encroached on the wilderness region of the St. John valley, selecting fertile interval lands on which to settle. At the mouth of the river, even before the hostilities with the French had finished, traders from Rhode Island had commenced to deal with the Indians and became the founders of what was later to become Saint John. The great St. John River valley had seen almost no permanent settlement in French times and had been important only as a means of quick communication between Quebec and Chignecto during the winter season.

Other elements were added to the population in these years. In 1753 the Germans who had been brought to Halifax were able, owing to the slackening of the strife with the Indians, to settle on the sharply indented coast to the south of Halifax, a region to which they gave one of their own names, Lunenburg. Farmers from the north of Ireland colonized Truro and Onslow. In 1773 Yorkshire farmers settled at Chignecto. They came rapidly under the influence of the Methodist movement and, not far from the spot where the New Englanders had erected the first Congregational church in what is now Canada, the first Methodist church appeared. About the same time the first of many immigrations of Highland Scots appeared on St. John's Island and in the previously unoccupied vicinity of Pictou. As the ban of distrust lifted, many of the Acadians returned, not to their original habitations but chiefly to the north and east shores of what is now New Brunswick and to the Cape Breton fishery.

In spite of these immigrations the progress of Nova Scotia was disappointingly slow. With New France in British hands the strategic importance of Halifax declined; and other colonies offered to settlers arable lands in much greater proportions. When the war of the American Revolution broke out in 1775 the population of the whole far-flung, broken region was considerably less than twenty thousand.

THE BEGINNINGS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN CANADA

Nova Scotia had been a strategic region in the struggle in North America. Its place in Canadian history is unique for another reason, for it was here that British self-governing institutions were first established. The new inhabitants of Nova Scotia, led by their merchants, were aware of the necessity for popular representation in government. Wartime Halifax became the scene of a constitutional struggle as well as the base for the fleets and armies which conquered Louisburg and Quebec. The community was small, the specific grievances were trivial, but the principle was the historic one — whether or not British subjects were entitled to consultation in the direction of their public affairs. The New Englanders had brought to Halifax their faith in “the

good old cause", the belief that government by the Crown should be subject to the consent of parliamentary bodies. "The rights of Englishmen" commanded just as great respect in Halifax as in Boston or Westminster.

Aspirations to self-government seemed out of place in a community whose reason for existence was the expulsion of the French from North America. Lawrence, the governor, had a good case when he argued that the role of Nova Scotia was a military one, that nothing should stand in the way of the purpose for which the colony had been founded. There was virtually no taxation of the few hundred civilians in Halifax so that the cry, "No taxation without representation," seemed irrelevant. He derided the merchants as a group of self-seeking demagogues, eager to dip their fingers in the public purse. The merchants declared that the government of Lawrence was military and arbitrary, oppressive to the rights of free men. "We are as much slaves here as they in Barbary," said one of their petitions.

The British Government could not resist the popular appeal for the application of historic British principles. Though Halifax was merely a military outpost, Lawrence was ordered to defer to the demand and to call an assembly representative of the people. After delaying as long as possible the execution of a measure which he regarded as unnecessary and distasteful, the Governor yielded. In October, 1758, the first general assembly of Nova Scotia met at Halifax. It was a landmark in the development of political democracy not only in what is today Canada but in the overseas British Commonwealth.

The constitutional issue of the oncoming American Revolution, whether or not the British Parliament could tax the American colonists without their consent, hardened during the years following 1758. The general assembly of Nova Scotia exhibited the tendencies which were evident in those of other colonies. Local politicians wished to take power from the hands of the Governor and rule the colony according to their own interests. It was inevitable that on the question of the Stamp Act many Nova Scotians should reflect the half-rebellious attitude which was present in Boston. New Englanders in the "back parts" of the colony raised a great deal of agitation against the centralized power of the government at Halifax and strove to create purely local institutions of their own, the familiar democratic apparatus of the New England township. Governor and assembly frequently quarreled so that Nova Scotia failed to become the "model" colony to which its founders had aspired.

It is not always possible to sympathize with "tribunes of the people" who in the assembly were asserting the rights of their constituents against the Governor. Many of them were working for narrow and selfish purposes and not always for the good of

the colony. This was especially true of the conflict between the assembly and Governor Legge in 1773-76. The merchant legislators were all attached to the great trading interests of Joshua Mauger, Brook Watson and Michael Francklin who monopolized the trade of the colony. But, in a general way, they represented the cause which posterity has vindicated, the sovereignty of the people. They professed to believe that there was a natural right vested in British subjects to govern themselves. Without such parliamentary battles on little theatres, of which this was one of the first, Canadian democracy, as we know it, would never have emerged.

While the practices of parliamentary government were established in Nova Scotia the province was exposed to other ideas which posterity has not applauded. Many Englishmen who contemplated the increasingly difficult colonial problems in America considered that the origin of the trouble lay in the absence of a colonial landed aristocracy. The connection with Britain, they maintained, could be preserved only by the establishment of an English type of society, a privileged order based upon "Connection, Order, Gradation and Subordination". The Board of Trade did not believe that American soil could receive such a society, but a remarkable experiment was made on the Island of St. John, later Prince Edward Island. In 1767 about sixty individuals to whom the British Government was under obligations each received a grant of twenty thousand acres of land on the island and a planter society had been created. To extend the scheme the Island was in 1769 constituted as a separate province. This method of settlement never showed signs of general success and actually retarded the development of the new province. Even on a fertile island like St. John's land was worth little more than the labour expended upon it. Men would not labour as tenants when they could obtain free grants of land elsewhere.

THE NEUTRAL YANKEES

The war of the American Revolution was a fundamental parting of the ways for Nova Scotia. Prior to this great schism in the British Empire the colony had been an inconspicuous appendage to a long line of older, wealthier provinces which stretched from Nova Scotia to Georgia. It was to emerge as one of the original members of a second British Empire with its wealth, importance and possibilities vastly increased.

Why did Nova Scotia not become a fourteenth revolting colony and ultimately join the American Union? The basic facts in the situation might lead to belief that this destiny was inevitable. An early ultimatum of the Continental Congress mentioned the unity of the colonies from Nova Scotia to Georgia. Bonds that were racial, cultural and geographical seemed to dictate a course that would destroy the connection with Britain.

Actually, the situation was highly complex, so sensitive to many factors that a slight shifting in the weight of circumstances might have brought Nova Scotia within the fold of the Congress at Philadelphia. Like the Acadians of twenty years before the Nova Scotians were in a middle position. Their territory was debatable ground between the revolutionaries and the forces of the Crown. Like the Acadians they felt an urge for neutrality. They wished to be free of the embarrassment and ruin that war might bring. This attitude was so pronounced that the standard work on the period is entitled "The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia". An able novelist has designated the Nova Scotians of the revolutionary war as "His Majesty's Yankees".

The Nova Scotians had just begun to establish themselves on the soil and constitutional issues made no real point of contact with their daily lives. In these years the chief element which brought a sense of uplift to their pioneer communities was not political but religious — the burning zeal of Henry Alline and the New Lights whose activity, though fringing upon political radicalism, was not directed against British ascendancy. Their loyalties were those of the frontiersman, devoted to the tangible values of the workaday world. Unlike the Acadians they were never compelled to make a choice. If they had been it is probable that their inclinations would have led them to espouse the cause of the colonies. In 1775 a petition from the inhabitants of Yarmouth, so exposed to American attacks by sea, asked for a concession of neutral rights from the Nova Scotian government. It may be regarded as characteristic of the attitudes of the majority of Nova Scotians. "We were almost all of us born in New England, we have fathers, brothers, sons in that country, divided between natural affections to our dearest relations, and good faith and friendship to our king and country . . . It is self-preservation and that only which drives us to make our request."

A number of factors worked increasingly in favour of the British connection as the war proceeded. The spark which might produce civil war would have to come from the outside and, so long as Britain controlled the sea, this was unlikely. The great naval base at Halifax served against the Americans just as it had served against the French twenty years earlier, as a bastion of British power. So long as British control at Halifax remained unshaken American invasion of the province in force was highly impracticable and George Washington refused to listen to proposals for attempting it. Control was never seriously threatened though the Americans carried on operations that were major nuisances. Their privateers preyed upon trade and raided Nova Scotian fishing hamlets. At one time, in 1776, serious threats developed on the mainland and on the isthmus. American emissaries concluded a treaty of alliance with the St. John River Indians. Under persuasion of inflammatory rebels from Maine the inhab-

tants of Maugerville foreswore their British allegiance. An expedition of several hundred rebels from Maine, under the leadership of Jonathan Eddy, besieged Fort Cumberland on the isthmus. Alarmist reports, believed in large part by the Governor, declared that the whole province was on the brink of revolt. But British naval and military measures in the Bay of Fundy proved effective. Their control, as the war proceeded, became absolute.

Material interest bound the Nova Scotians to Britain. While Halifax occupied her wartime role the merchants, easily the most influential and articulate element in the civil population, made enormous profit. The eventual separation of America and Britain, which became more certain as the years passed by, promised a brilliant commercial future. From the time of the blockade of Boston in 1774 it had appeared possible that Nova Scotians might take the place of the rebellious New Englanders in Britain's empire of trade, especially in the West Indies. The trade of the empire was exclusive, reserved in large part for British subjects by the authority of the Navigation Acts. Independence, for which the Americans were fighting, would deny them legal entrance to the rich carrying trade of the British Sugar Islands. This prospect became more and more glittering for the mercantile interests of the province. The New Englanders of Minas and Annapolis, as they sold cattle and other produce to the British commissariat at Halifax for high prices, dismissed from their consciences any prepossessions in favour of their rebellious cousins.

There had been no prejudices sufficiently powerful to excite local revolt. Circumstances, military and material, had been responsible for the continuance of Nova Scotia as a member of the British Empire.

THE LOYALISTS

Prospects for the future greatly improved because of the doubling of the population. Nova Scotia was the logical land of refuge for the American Loyalists of broken fortunes who had supported the Crown. Ever since 1774 they had been appearing at Halifax and other Nova Scotian points. But the main body of those who had fought in the army were at New York under the command of Sir Guy Carleton. They had lost their property by confiscation and the new state governments were unwilling to accept the commitments made by Congress in the treaty to restore it. Owing to the fury of patriot mobs they could not return to their home communities. Emigration to territory remaining in British hands seemed imperative.

In the spring of 1783 the movement commenced. Virtually all portions of the coastline received new inhabitants. Small washings of the great human tide which numbered about thirty thousand came to rest on the rocky eastern shores of the penin-

sula, on Cape Breton and St. John's Island. But the main points of penetration were two, the valley of the St. John and the harbour of Port Roseway on the south shore of the peninsula. At the latter place the Loyalists established the town of Shelburne which, they vowed, would become a greater place than Halifax. Shelburne became a forlorn monument to their disappointed expectations. They had come from a land of plenty and had encountered rock and forest. From a population of ten thousand in 1783 the town, in a year or two, became a fishing hamlet of a few hundreds. To many of the Loyalists Nova Scotia became "Nova Scarcity". Several of the units of the former "provincial army", as they were disbanded upon such hostile soil, encountered conditions of extreme adversity.

The St. John River valley received nearly ten thousand Loyalists. At the mouth of the river a city sprang into existence. Provincial regiments, with their families, were established by companies and platoons upon the interval lands and rolling slopes of the valley for as far as one hundred miles into the interior. At St. Andrew's, on the estuary of the St. Croix, a group of Loyalists chiefly from Maine raised a town which, within a year, was exporting timber and fish to the West Indies.

Many who had been raised to a life of ease and gentility found conditions in the new country too difficult and sailed for England, or as the passions of war abated, ultimately returned to the United States. But enough remained to ensure the success of the great experiment. Many of them were lukewarm in their loyalty. The British Government could offer only a wilderness in exchange for the civilization they had lost. Yet the payment of pensions and half-pay to discharged officers fostered loyalty. The free grant of provisions and tools, necessary to sustain them on the land for three years, gave to those willing to labour a good beginning in the building of a new country. As had been anticipated the West Indies provided a ready market for almost everything they could export. This was the commercial factor which, as Ward Chipman said many years later, alone made possible the success of such a vast transplantation of people.

Many have written of the Loyalists to create the impression that they were a group of enlightened aristocrats who, having fought for correct constitutional principles, heroically accepted a life in the wilderness. It is true that there were many well-educated men among them, but those who settled and remained in the Maritime Provinces were a cross-section of the people of the thirteen colonies, representative of all classes. Many of their leaders aspired to an aristocratic society, based upon large landed estates, primacy of the Church of England, and the strengthening of the royal prerogative against the attacks of popularly elected legislatures. Yet the mass of the new settlers were thoroughly

democratic in sentiment. The New England town meeting appeared on the banks of the St. John and authoritarian leaders professed to see the growth of republicanism in the new land. The attempt of high-ranking Loyalists to secure valuable water-lots on Saint John harbour and enormous concessions of land in the interior was intensely and successfully resisted by the masses of the people. Loyalist leaders secured offices of government and constituted themselves as colonial aristocracies, but from the first the common people fought against their undue ascendancy. Too much, perhaps, has been written of Loyalist authoritarianism and not enough of Loyalist democracy.

THE PARTITION OF NOVA SCOTIA

The coming of the Loyalists resulted in the partition of the original province of Nova Scotia. Geography and the long distances of the new settlements from Halifax really dictated a partition which had been considered on many occasions prior to 1784. The challenging attitudes of the Loyalists brought the questions to the fore. They had no love for the "old" inhabitants of Nova Scotia whom they considered half-traitorous to the Crown or for the government at Halifax whom they blamed for the mismanagement of settling them on the land. During the war many of them had advocated a new province of their own to the north of the Penobscot. At New York, where Carleton's army had been preparing for withdrawal, ambitious provincial officers, many of whom were serving in the commissariat under Brook Watson, had taken the lead in an agitation for a new provincial establishment on the St. John where Loyalists alone would rule.

The Halifax government opposed the scheme, but the influence of high-ranking officers who had served in America was too powerful. After a great many uncertainties the new province of New Brunswick was created in August, 1784. Lord Sydney, the Colonial Secretary, presided over the partition, but several years later a letter from a committee of the New Brunswick legislature to William Knox, the Under-Secretary, referred to him as "the father and founder of the province". The policy of creating several smaller provinces rather than maintaining one large one was further applied by the creation of Cape Breton as another new province. One eminent writer interprets the partition as a consequence of the British Government's determination to keep the remaining colonies small and disunited.

In 1783 and 1784, by reason of the doubling of the population and the political reorganization which followed, the Maritime Provinces came into existence. The new Nova Scotia, now confined to the peninsula, witnessed the disorderly conciliation of "new" and "old" inhabitants. The few hundred Loyalists who

settled on St. John's and Cape Breton Islands substantially added to their populations and imparted solid elements of new character. New Brunswick was most distinctively the product of the circumstances of these years. Its population of discharged soldiers justified the designation of "the Loyalist province", though this character was to become less marked as later years brought new and diverse immigrations.

An interesting corollary in the thinking of those who determined policy was the decision to move remnants of the Acadians from the lower to the upper St. John valley. As the Loyalists came in from the south these unfortunate people who had experienced thirty years of exile and continual uprooting moved northward before them into the distant region where the Madawaska joins the main river. There they joined with Canadians who had come over the hills from Kamouraska to found a new community which has always been noted for its particularist qualities. The bilingual character of New Brunswick's population is largely owing to the casual homeward movements of hundreds of Acadian exiles. But Madawaska developed from the plans of Governors Haldimand and Parr at Quebec and Halifax whose great concern was the establishment of a continuous belt of population between their two seats of government. The idea was really military in character. Communication in the winter season could be greatly facilitated if this remote but pleasant valley were settled. The policy was sustained after 1784 by the provincial authorities of New Brunswick, though there were acrimonious exchanges with Quebec upon what seemed a logical sequence, that the boundaries of Canada should extend as far south as Grand Falls.

It was upon the circumstances of two great wars, the first between Britain and France, the second between Britain and the thirteen colonies, that the Maritime Provinces established their roots. Geography had suggested a complex pattern of development and history had intensified the complexity. In 1784, though there were thousands of cases of individual disappointment, the general feeling was one of optimism. The inhabitants had good reason to anticipate the continued bounty of the British Government. Energetic traders took rapid advantage of the preferred position offered their produce in the West Indies. Long before Ottawa or Toronto or Vancouver had been founded or Canada, as we know it, had been conceived, their legislatures were acquiring the experience which would prepare the way for self-government and the wider union in which all British North America would share.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

There is a large body of literature dealing with the history of the Maritime Provinces in the eighteenth century. Most of the books are today out of print, but some are listed below for the benefit of those who may wish to press the inquiry more deeply. A great deal of the writing on the expulsion of the Acadians, both in French and English, is tendentious in character and, to a certain extent, unreliable.

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