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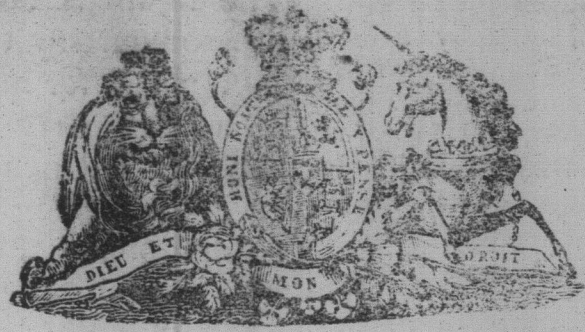
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## AND CONCEPTION BAY JOURNAL.

Vol. III.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1837.

No. 139.

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### CANADIAN CORRESPONDENCE OF THE NEW-YORK DAILY ADVERTISER.

MONTREAL, OCT. 12, 1836.

When you have examined the geographical position of the Canadas, you will naturally inquire why, where nature has done so much, the people have done so little? Why, instead of being by their supineness and want of energy, a blot upon the Continent, they have not advanced in wealth in power, corresponding to their American neighbours? I answer, they want Institutions.

Upper Canada is peopled by Americans, and natives from the British Isles. She is yet in political infancy, that is, the influence of the population of foreign birth preponderates over that of native born. Of the recent settlers so many are decayed gentlemen with useless families—young men nearly moneyless, with indolent habits, shooting apparatus, dogs and fishing tackle—half-pay officers and pensioners, mighty in pride, but little in ability, that one sees the exhaustion of a decayed state, where there should be a vigorous one. The characteristic "go-a-head" principles of the pioneers of civilization. In Lower Canada, to which I shall confine myself, the population is about four-fifths of French extraction, all born in the province, and the remaining fifth is composed of British and American settlers, or their descendants—the former may amount to 475,000, and the latter to 125,000, of whom one half may glory in true British blood, and the remainder be contented to enjoy it, filtered through the veins of Americans, who have found their way into the province. In so large a population of native born, national and patriotic feelings should exist. Why then is Lower Canada backward, poor and ignorant? She wants institutions. 600,000 people who have existed for 76 years under the domination of a nation that we do not call barbarous, have not at this day one single municipal right or one single common school. They are still cursed with the old French system—a government in which the people have no concern. There are no local tribunals—from the cities all orders must proceed, and to the cities all must come, instead of being permitted to manage their own affairs in their own localities. How can a people endure such a deprivation of what in America are considered natural rights? They have never been permitted to know that they had rights.—In the United States the people have, for two centuries, enjoyed their municipal powers, and their town meetings, which De Tocqueville says are to liberty what primary schools are to science. In Canada they never heard of a town meeting. In Massachusetts they celebrated a few days since the second Centennial Anniversary of Harvard University. In Lower Canada we have not at this day, in the middle of the 19th century, one common school.

The first settlement of Canada by the French was nearly simultaneous with that of the Atlantic coast by the English. So early as 1549, Francis 1st, imagining that Canada and Hochelaga, (Montreal), "made one end of a sea on the west side, and delighted that therein dwelt a people, not only furnished with bodies and members," but also "well disposed in spirit and understanding"—living, however, "without the use of reason"—upon the usual plea of spreading christianity among benighted savages, gave Jacques Cartier a commission for taking possession of the country, accompanied by an order upon all the jailors of France for a choice of fifty rogues, such as he should consider "proper, sufficient and capable" to aid as missionaries in the pious undertaking. Little was, however, effected towards colonization, until the commencement of the seventeenth century, when in the hands of a chartered company, the colony became a sort of proprietary government, which lasted until 1663, when the

charter was resigned, and a Royal government established. This government, which continued until the conquest in 1759, exactly corresponded with our ideas of a Turkish Pacha, with all its tyranny, pecculation, and mal-administration. An Intendant was appointed in France, who, with the Governor, Bishop, and a few others of their own choice, of whom one was the Attorney-General, forming a Sovereign Council to make and execute whatever laws and ordinances seemed good in its own eyes, from which there was no appeal. "Cognizance of all causes, civil as well as criminal—to judge sovereignly and in the last resort." Lest the Council would not be sufficiently despotic, the Intendant was supreme head of "Police, Finance and Marine," with authority to "act alone without the council, and order at discretion." The lands were granted under the title of "Fief" and "Seigneurie," with the charge of "faith and homage" to the castle of Quebec, to officers and official men (and women), of the class "noble," upon condition of causing them to be cleared and cultivated within a limited time. The seigneurs were intended to be as complete feudal lords as the petty princes of Germany, with their rights of fishing, hunting, and courts of Justice; but as to the people, they were only considered as slaves and serfs, and commanded to build on the front of their narrow concessions as closely as possible, to prevent the Indians from cutting them up—for the plenitude of power of the French crown always supposed the right of appropriating at will the lives and fortunes of all his Christian majesty's subjects to its own pleasure. They seem indeed to have been considered in no other light than as an agricultural army, stationed along the St. Lawrence, to command its course and defend it against the colonies of England. Every man, from 16 to 60 years of age, was enrolled as a soldier and liable to be called into the field, whenever government required his services. In 1682, M. De la Barre requested the king to send over 1500 labourers to cultivate the farms of the inhabitants who had been sent away to make war upon the Five Nations on Lake Ontario. To preserve the regular troops, the whole weight of war was often thrown upon the militia, and these services, together with *corvees* for public labour, effectually prevented the colonists from acquiring either agricultural or commercial strength.

It is quite probable that France intended Lower Canada to be one grand military post, the key to vast national projects. Every nation of Europe, during the 17th century, was in a speculative fever, like our modern adventurers of the sea board, for "western lands."—Spain and Portugal had possessed themselves of the south; English, Dutch and German stragglers had "squatted" along the north coast of the continent, leaving nought to the French but the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.—*La Nouvelle France*, strange as it may sound, comprehended all the country west of the Alleghanies, from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi, and the West Indies were sometimes included in the same government. It was so late as 1763, insisted upon that Louisiana was included in the capitulation of Montreal.

People often express surprise, that the French should have perched themselves among these northern snows. It was not to possess Canada, but to control the St. Lawrence, that the French government spent its treasures in maintaining the Colonies, while the English settlers toiled laboriously upon the barren seaboard, looking upon the interior, the "glorious west," as only a refuge for agues, rattlesnakes and Indians; the French explored the richness of the land, discovered that the St. Lawrence proceeded from a luxuriant country to the south-west, superior in climate and soil to the English seaboard; and imagining from its magnitude

that it must extend to near the Pacific, they sent an expedition of discovery to follow the route by Lake Superior. It discovered no ocean, but returned with such quantities of furs from the north-west, that a trade of enormous profit became at once established. From the Indians it was discovered that another immense river ran in a direction towards the Gulf of Mexico, and to ascertain such an important fact, an inquiry was intrusted to Father Marquette, a Jesuit, and Joliet, a geographer, who in 1673, entered Fox River from Lake Michigan, struck the Mississippi at 42½ deg. N. lat. near the present north line of the State of Illinois, and proceeded down the River as far as Arkansas, when convinced that it discharged itself into the Gulf of Mexico, they returned to Quebec with their information. Yes, that very Fox River which has been the sport of speculators in 1836, was appreciated by the French more than a century and a half ago. The French Government looked upon the map. It saw the fisheries of Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence below. It saw the timber and the furs of the northwestern interior above, and that garden of the world the south west, compared to which all the country north-east of the Alleghanis is barren unprofitable land; it saw that it could mock the power of England—that it could overawe her colonies, while it commanded one channel and one outlet. The French new the importance of Lower Canada.—Will not the rapidly increasing nations of the west know it? and will they not talk of it?

During the reign of Charles IX, it would appear, from many loose papers, that vast schemes of emigration occupied the public mind in France. As a means of subduing popular commotion, it was proposed to reduce the population, and as the great Admiral Coligny was interested in the project, it is possible that had not the same end been accomplished by the work of St. Bartholemew, the valley of the Mississippi would have been settled by Huguenots.

The circumstances attending the conquest of Canada by the British in 1759 and 1760, are too familiar to require repeating; but it must not be forgotten, that previous to ratifying the treaty of 1763, the government and people of England looked upon the map, and when the question arose whether to give up Canada or the captured West India Islands, they decided to restore the fragrant Isles, and retain the inclement north.

Thus under the dominion of France, it would appear that Canada was governed by no fixed laws.—Arbitrary and despotic Governors, unrestrained by law, knew no bounds in their capricious decisions, and the people were debased into mere instruments, for adorning private fortunes and ulterior projects. Education was confined to few, and discouraged, for the government had forbidden the introduction of a printing press; and though much has been said of the advantageous change to British supremacy, the Canadians up to this day owe but an amazing small debt to their rulers. After seventy-six years experience, their political condition could not have been much worse, though the flag of France in all its glory had continued to float over the citadel of Quebec.

By the capitulation, their prospects, their religion, and the civil jurisprudence of France were guaranteed to them; but a valuable portion of the community, the rich, the educated, indeed all who could, left the country with the conquered army. We look in vain among the Canadians for the posterity of the renowned men who once flourished here, whose memory is preserved in history and in the names of our rivers, Seigniories and Parishes.—The higher intelligences in a great measure departed, leaving behind that mass of men trained to naught but hunting and warfare that had been brutalized by misgovernment. A depreciated paper currency was left unrequited by the go-

vernment that issued it, to add pecuniary ruin to the forlorn prospects of sixty-thousand disconnected people without local institutions, without education, scattered along a line extending from the Bay de Chaleur to Lake Superior, cut off from all relationship with, and expecting no sympathy from the rest of the world. One thing remained to the people of Lower Canada—their religion, and with it the priests of that religion. In 1760, when all who could, from the Governor to the trader, took advantage of the capitulation, by which the British government engaged to send them to France, the clergy, from the bishop to the curate, remained faithful to their charge, declaring that they would never leave in desolation those among whom they had happily officiated in brighter days. If the Canadians did not sink lower in abasement than the savages of the country, or if any of them obtained the means of becoming educated, we must do homage to the untiring zeal of the clergy, who continued to apply the revenues secured to them to the purposes for which they were intended.

The change of masters did little to improve the social condition of the people. They were kindly treated, because they did nothing to merit severity—nothing was extorted from them, because they were too much impoverished to pay tribute. They continued to be ruled by a military Governor and his advisers, until 1791, when the present Constitution was introduced. Though no longer called out for continual wars, the troubles of the American Revolution showed that peace might be frequently disturbed.—The old noblesse, in whom they might have confidence for the security of their possessions, were replaced by strangers, whom they could not but mistrust. New adventurers greedy for official rapine, and new merchants came for profit, but none from an interest in the country. New fur traders appeared to give employment to the *voyageurs*, but nobody dreamed of improving the condition of the people—all orders still went from the cities, and they continued cursed with a government in which they had no concern. The few enlightened men of their own race might have remonstrated, but it required years to elapse before the cry of treason and the threatened gallows ceased to give omnipotence to military satraps, whose greatest ambition was to keep the people as they were.

The Canadians have been blamed for not having joined in the American Revolution, when the invasion of Arnold and Montgomery offered such an admirable opportunity. Why, they would look upon such a contest with the same indifference that a Hindoo Nation regards the warlike hordes, that choose to make its Territory the scene of conflict. Both parties were hateful, but especially the Americans; for the policy of the parent states had kept the respective colonies in the amiable position of two mastiffs chained at a convenient distance, from their masters occasionally loosen out for combat, and separate again before either has obtained a complete mastery. Another feeling, so far as regards the Canadians, exists to-day.

### STATISTICS OF GLASGOW.

An interesting report, detailing the past and present state of Glasgow, by James Cleland, L. L. D., was read at the late meeting in Bristol of the British Association for the advancement of Science.

TRADE.—The increase of trade at Glasgow, in consequence of the improvements on the river, almost exceed belief. Less than fifty years ago, a few gabbers, and these only about 20 or 40 tons burden, could come up to Glasgow. The recent improvements have been such, that in 1831, vessels drawing 13 feet 6 inches water, were enabled to come up the harbour; and now large vessels, many of