

36 THE HABITANT, HIS ORIGIN AND HISTORY

By the subsequent treaty peace was secured in Canada for sixteen years.

Talon then directed his attention to the internal affairs of the colony and achieved remarkable success. He had a clear vision of its possibilities if Louis XIV could only be persuaded to send out emigrants. Louis had but lately come to his majority, although some time previously he had taken the helm with a decidedly firm hand, and Talon's telling description of a future great domain in America fascinated him. Colbert shared the king's enthusiasm, and both resolved to follow the advice of the intendant. In 1659 and the following year some emigrants had been dispatched to Canada at Bishop Laval's pressing request, and in 1665 it was resolved to send three hundred settlers each year. Unfortunately, the long journey, lasting as it did over two months, in closely packed ships induced sickness and mortality, and nearly one quarter of these prospective settlers died before they reached New France. Still, within a few years over eight hundred emigrants had arrived in Canada. Talon, however, was not satisfied. To supply, in a measure, the deficiency, he persuaded the king and his minister to allow such soldiers from the Carignan-Salières regiment as were willing to remain in Canada to become settlers. This famous corps had come over with Tracy to fight the Iroquois. Peace had been restored and the regiment ordered back to France; but Talon's scheme found favour, and over a thousand soldiers became heads of flourishing Canadian families.

The policy of Louis XIV, so far as it went, was very advantageous to the colony, for it initiated and assisted the immigration movement. The first four hundred settlers on the farms received each one hundred francs, provisions for a year, clothing and agricultural implements; and later settlers were as liberally treated. Some were even given farms ready for the plough, while other colonists were paid for two years while they cleared their land, and were entitled to seeds for sowing two acres—a gratuity equivalent to forty francs per acre. To turn unbroken forests into farm-land proved very arduous labour. A settler could not clear