

opinions. The motives which prompted the giving of the ancient pledge continuing the French language in Canada, will always be the subject of controversy, since men will read history in the light of their own ideals. Personally, I prefer to think Thurlow and the other statesmen who voiced their opinions on the floor of the British Parliament, were honest, and intended to acknowledge the sacred right of racial self-expression. Be this as it may, there are few students of the history of the period who will not readily agree with Wyatt Tilby that "the policy was fully justified by its results."

WHEN the English-speaking British of America threw off their allegiance to the King of Great Britain, "no stone was left unturned, no means were left untried to induce the French to revolt," says this historian. "Inflammatory proclamations inciting to rebellion were issued from the printing presses of Boston and Philadelphia, and posted at dead of night by mysterious, unknown hands on the doors of the Canadian churches. The agents of the republic infiltrated every village along the St. Lawrence, alternately cajoling and threatening the inhabitants. Freedom and assistance were promised to those who threw off the yoke of slavery; and the sword of the avenger was denounced on the cowards who meekly submitted to the British tyrants at the critical time when the rights of man were endangered and the friends of liberty in peril."

At the outbreak of the revolution there were only about a thousand British regulars in Canada, and not a single armed vessel. Of the civilian population, only a few hundred were English-speaking, and many of these, we are told, were "recalcitrant," by no means enthusiastic in the cause of Great Britain; many of them having come from the disaffected colonies were more inclined to throw off than to hold on to British sovereignty. Except for the handful of British regulars and the few hundred half-loyal English, the inhabitants were French-Canadian; clearly, by numbers and training the French-Canadians were masters of the situation.

With the Quebec Act in operation only a few weeks, the people were not wholly convinced of the genuineness of its guarantees. So the response to the governor's call for volunteers was not immediate. There was no bilingual question in those days, no one to dispute the right of self-expression of the French-Canadian race in the land east or west of the Ottawa River, but the "new subjects" wanted assurances for the future.

There was also dissatisfaction because the inhabitants were not allowed to choose their own officers. Many of the seigneurs had returned to France after the country had been turned over to the British, and leadership fell largely upon the church. Fortunately, the principal laymen and clergy of the colony believed that the assurances of the Quebec Act were something more than an expedient of the hour, and accepted them as an enduring pledge of the main-

tenance of French civil laws, of French customs, and of French culture in Canada. The young men capable of bearing arms were rallied to the British standard in sufficient numbers to resist the invaders and preserve the colony for the British.

An attempt has been made to picture the Canadians of that day as unintelligent yokels, submerged in a slough of inertia and ignorance, whose assistance was not of material service. But we know better. Francis Parkman has given us a graphic description of the country and its inhabitants at the close of the French Regime, only a few years before. It may be true that many French-Canadians of that period were unschooled, although, as we shall see, New France was farther ahead in education than New England. Whatever the faults of French colonial government, its system had, at least, one advantage needful for the day. As Parkman tells us, "It favoured military efficiency. The Canadian population sprang in great part from soldiers, and was to the last sympathetically reinforced by disbanded soldiers. Its chief occupation was a continual training for forest war; it had little or nothing to lose, and little to do but fight and range the woods."

THE seigneurs were admittedly splendid soldiers, but the common people had also an aptitude and training for war. "As for habitant, the forest, lake, and river, were his true school," says Parkman, "and here, at least, he was an apt scholar. A skilful woodsman, a bold and adroit canoeer, a willing fighter in time of need, often serving without pay, and receiving from government only his provisions and his canoe, he was more than ready at any time for any hardy enterprise; and in the forest warfare of skirmish and surprise there were few to match him."

For many years the Canadians had successfully defended their country from the inroads of the American colonists, who were backed up by the British Government; and had they been so minded at this critical period, without the shadow of a doubt they could have established their independence, or at least have thrown off British sovereignty.

They elected, of their own free will, to remain loyal.

I have suggested the possibility of the French-Canadians achieving their independence, and indeed it was more than a possibility of the times. It must be remembered that this was a dream of the resourceful and ambitious Vergennes, at that time the masterful dictator of the foreign policy of France. Vergennes is best known to fame as the French statesman who brought about the "Treaty of Alliance," concluded at Paris, February 6, 1778, and ratified by Congress, May 4, 1778. The motives of France in backing up the revolution in Great Britain's American colonies, have been the subject of speculation; but historians do not differ as to the effectiveness of French intervention. Edward S. Corwin, Professor of Politics at Princeton University, re-

cently wrote a book entitled, "French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778," in which he states: "The great majority of students to-day would, I suppose, concede that but for our alliance with France, the War of Independence would have ended without independence."

Although France, in the Treaty of Alliance, expressly "forever renounced any part of the Continent of North America which, before the Treaty of Paris in 1763, or in virtue of that treaty," belonged to Britain, there was another course open by which her ancient colony might be wrested from Great Britain and at the same time be prevented from falling into the open arms of the United States. This plan lay in independence under French protection. This was Vergennes' own original plan for Canada and Nova Scotia. He hoped to expel the English and establish a free "agricultural and commercial state which should govern itself under the protection of France. In this way, he argued, the country would be peopled by the French themselves, and 'by any who choose to go there,' and a national spirit, grounded on similarity of language, customs, and national character, and kept alive by constant intercourse, would be created substantially identical with that of France herself."

The plans of Vergennes came to naught because of the stubborn loyalty to Britain of the French-Canadians.

There was also more than a suggestion of independence in the proclamation of Baron D'Esterre, Commander of the French fleet in American waters, calling upon the French-Canadians in the names of Levis and Montcalm, to assert themselves against the loosely-held British power. Further still, we are told that the three commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll, appointed by Congress to win over the French-Canadians, finding this impossible "tentatively suggested that Canada might retain an independent position in its relation to the rest of the states." Whether Canada would have become independent, or a state of the Union, if the French had listened favourably to these suggestions, will never be known; for, relying on the inviolability of a British pledge of the right to self-expression, they remained true to Great Britain in the years when her Empire appeared to be crumbling to pieces. When peace was declared the Union Jack waved over no other part of the North American Continent than that dominated by the French-Canadians. Out of the mass of intricate forces which governed conditions during the War of the Revolution, the salient fact stands forth that the English-speaking Americans threw off British sovereignty and the French-speaking Americans retained it.

NONE save those who close their eyes to this page of the country's history will argue for the unifying force of a common language as compared with a recognition of the sacred rights of national self-expression. (Concluded on page 23.)

# SHIPS AND TRADE GRABBING

HONESTLY—there are grave reasons for doubting whether we Canadians are going to gallop into the foreign trade field when the war is over and capture the business we talk about capturing. Don't for a moment suppose that these reasons-for-doubt outweigh the reasons-for-hope in this connection. They may—and they may not. But when we, the Canadian businessman and Sir George Foster, get talking together after a nice forty-cent lunch in our local tavern—when we get to sizing up the Russian market as though it was our own personal apple, which we polish on our palms, and twiddle in our fingers, and hold up and squint at while deciding whether to bite the red part or the yellow part first—I say then it's time to (to change the figure) look at the other side of the carpet.

On the top-side of the affair we have verdant generalities and rosy possibilities. Sir George rears the bottom of his whiskers clear of the chairman's head and with a lean fist stabs the table till the iron-stone coffee cups dance in their juice. He tells us we must prepare! We must be ready to seize the great opportunities that are certain to present themselves! . . . And we applaud heartily, hoping in our own minds that the man sitting to our right, and the man to our left, and the man before us and the man behind us—in fact every man in the room except ourselves, will take Sir George's words to heart and start practising right away the art of grabbing the fore-locks of opportunities. We exclude ourselves from this, however, because we know our own busi-

## *The Relation of One Neglected Canadian Business to the Problem of Post-War Prosperity*

By BRITTON B. COOKE

ness and know how mighty hard it is to sell cheese-cloth in New Westminster, let alone Paraguay. And we DON'T exclude the other fellows in the room because we DON'T know their business, and because we can't for the life of us see what's to hinder THEM bringing home the trade Sir George is talking about—and thereby making life in Canada just that much busier and the outlook for cheese-cloth—or dental supplies, or fire extinguishers or pop, that much more agreeable to the eye.

And yet there ARE reasons why these other men in the room are thinking exactly as you are thinking. They, too, are leaving it to YOU to get after these pink-toed opportunities that are going to fling themselves on somebody's neck when the spiders in France start sewing up the mouths of the cannon. It is all very well to think of the American factories that are going to crowd into our cities after the war in order to get the benefit of tariff-entente among the allies. It's all very well, too, to think of the American rich man, groaning under his burden of wealth, coming over here like a neglected cow coming home to the barn-yard, to be relieved of his wealth by investing in Canadian undertakings. These things will undoubtedly happen, and we'll have less trouble putting our men to work again than any other

country now in the war. BUT in the matter of foreign trade we shall lack several of the assistant weapons which older and wiser states have provided or are now providing for themselves. For one thing, we haven't that money-lending capacity which is so closely allied

with selling goods to some of the new countries that will then be in the market for goods. We haven't that variety of output which enables a customer to do all his shopping in the one country—as is the case when a foreigner comes to England's counter, or, as it used to be, in Germany's shop. AND—we haven't ships! That, it might be said, is the most serious obstacle in sight to the building up of a lusty Canadian foreign trade. We MAY be able to do the money-lending stunt, as it were, vicariously: that is to say, the United States may and probably will advance large sums to various other countries and may find it to her advantage to divert the resultant crop of orders-for-goods to the Canadian branch factories which Americans are certainly likely to establish here. We MAY not find the small range of our manufactures as great an obstacle as it now looks, and if Sir Thomas White keeps on astonishing us by the rare sight of a good average business man running the Finance Department at Ottawa, he MAY devise a scheme of bank co-operation such as existed in Germany before the war and enabled German exporters to make such rapid gains. But with all these obstacles removed and with no better provision for ships and ship-building than we now have, or than we had before the war—we shall gain nothing.