

as it struggled into life nearly two centuries ago. Let us glance briefly at our province as it was before Halifax came into being.

On the 2nd of October, 1710—a red letter day in Nova Scotian records—a picturesque and history-making scene was enacted in and about the old French fort at Port Royal, when Governor de Subercase and his garrison marched out with drums beating and colours flying, and Colonel Francis Nicholson took possession in the name of Her Britannic Majesty Queen Anne. No retrocession followed as in the case of Louisbourg a few years later; and in spite of almost constant attack and trouble during the next forty years, in spite of gross neglect and mis-government, the foothold was maintained, and Acadia became nominally a British province. In 1748 the district could be roughly described as comprising all the mainland of Nova Scotia, and all of what is now New Brunswick but with boundaries vague and undefined. In this vast region there were but two feeble English settlements—one at Annapolis Royal—one at Canso; and a few scattered French hamlets in the western part of the peninsula. Indians and French half-breeds—*couriers de bois*—roamed through the woods intent on massacre and plunder; and any English speaking person who ventured out of the narrow limits of the settlements carried his life in his hands.

With the incoming colonists thus in constant danger of violent death or cruel captivity—it is not to be wondered at that when the new era of government recognition began in the establishment of the town of Halifax, one of the first steps was the organization of the settlers into a militia. During the earlier period (1710-48) such a force seems to have been nominally formed at Canso, as the provincial records show the appointment of a certain John Henshaw and John Richards to be captains of companies of militia there. Nothing is known of the organization of these companies, and one can only conjecture that they were formed among the traders and fishermen of Canso and vicinity for the purpose of defending that settle-