

of Land to the Georgian Bay, and on one of his voyages founded the City of Quebec. Then La Salle, the most daring of all, crossed by way of the Illinois River and down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, and Verandrye, another explorer, traversed the continent as far as the Rocky Mountains. So persistent and extensive were these explorations that before the middle of the 18th century the King of France claimed nearly the whole of North America by right of discovery.

But in those days it was one thing to discover unoccupied territory and quite another thing to settle and protect it. Owing to the hostile attitude of the Indians and the fear that at any moment Great Britain might dispute its right to the lands so discovered, the French Government was obliged to devote its attention to the erection of forts for self protection rather than to the settlement of its possessions and the cultivation of the soil. It was on this account that Louisburg, on Cape Breton Island, and Quebec, the gateway to the Western possessions, were so strongly garrisoned and fortified. For internal protection military posts were established along the lakes, beginning with Fort Frontenac at the entrance to Lake Ontario and Fort Niagara at its western extremity, with other forts at Detroit, Mackinac and at different points along the Ohio, Illinois and the Mississippi Rivers.

For many years British statesmen felt that France had secured more than a fair share of the unoccupied lands of North America. Canada was the most valuable part of these possessions. To weaken France in America would weaken her prestige at home, and so Great Britain was prepared to attack Canada whenever the proper occasion arose. The Seven Years' War furnished the occasion, and William Pitt, England's great war minister, was not slow in using it. His first attack was upon Louisburg, at the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which was captured in 1758. Next year he mustered all his forces for the attack upon Canada.

The plan of campaign against Canada was to divide the French forces by an attack at three different points: By way of New York against the French forts on the Ohio; by way of Lake Champlain, to approach Quebec from the rear; and by way of the St. Lawrence to attack Quebec on the front. In this tripartite campaign about 60,000 men were engaged—the fleet and transports which carried them from Great Britain consisting of 277 ships of the line. By the capture of Fort Niagara in the west the French forces were prevented from coming to the relief of Quebec. The successful advance