

Indian woman and papoose in Canadian West.

ments, which had fallen into the hands of the English attacking from the south.

Under the new regime, which lasted until 1760, Canada was governed by a Sovereign Council, appointed by the King and guided by his instructions. The principal officers were the Governor, the Intendant and the Bishop. The Governor was responsible for defence, the Intendant for trade and administration, the bishop for spiritual welfare.

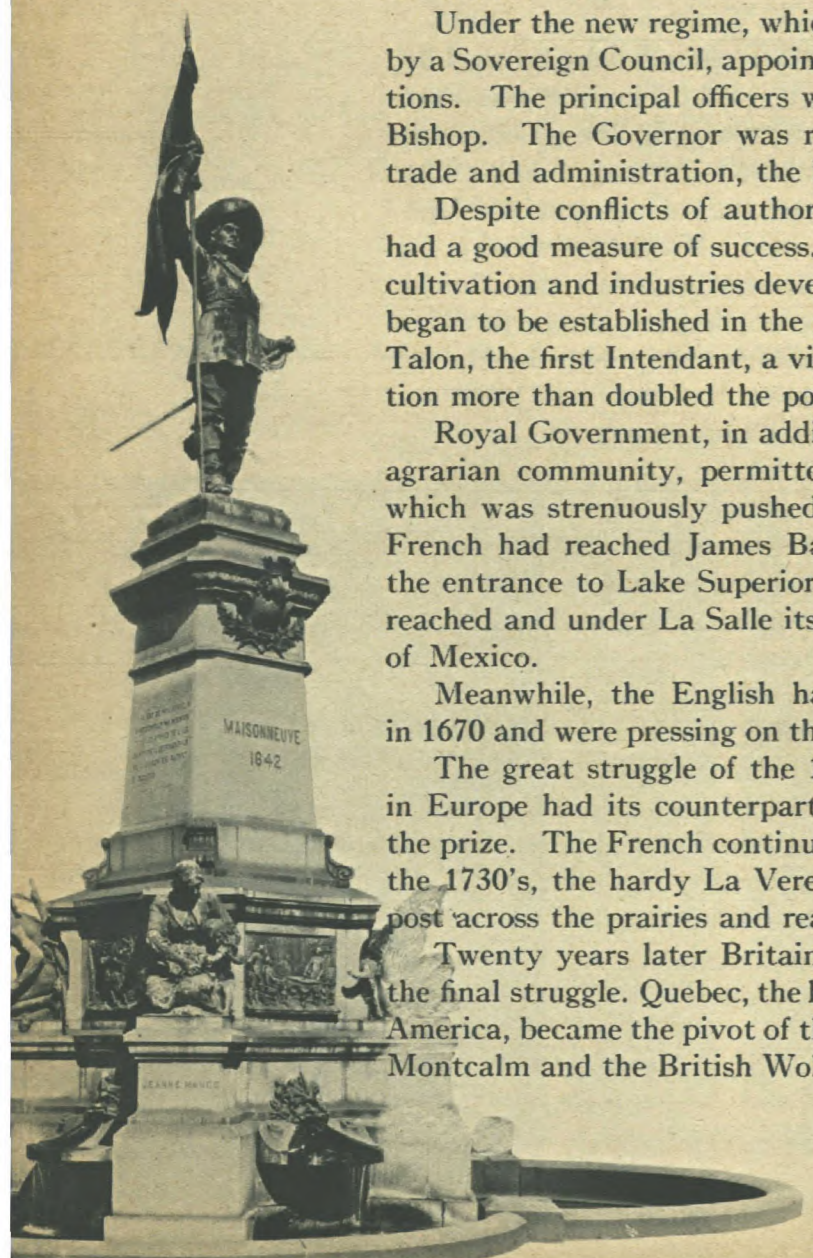
Despite conflicts of authority in the Sovereign Council, the system had a good measure of success. Settlement was speeded, land put under cultivation and industries developed. The normal institutions of France began to be established in the colony. Under the administration of Jean Talon, the first Intendant, a vigorous policy of state-supported immigration more than doubled the population of the colony.

Royal Government, in addition to providing security for the growing agrarian community, permitted a vigorous expansion of the fur trade which was strenuously pushed into unexplored territory. By 1670 the French had reached James Bay in the north and Sault Ste. Marie, at the entrance to Lake Superior. In the south, the Mississippi had been reached and under La Salle its exploration was pushed right to the Gulf of Mexico.

Meanwhile, the English had founded the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 and were pressing on the French fur trade from North and South.

The great struggle of the 18th century between France and Britain in Europe had its counterpart in North America with the fur trade as the prize. The French continued to expand westward, however. During the 1730's, the hardy La Verendrye and his sons established post after post across the prairies and reached the foothills of the Rockies.

Twenty years later Britain and France were bracing themselves for the final struggle. Quebec, the heart of the sprawling French possessions in America, became the pivot of the conflict. Two great generals, the French Montcalm and the British Wolfe, vied for its possession.



Quebec was secured for the British in 1759 by the historic Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Both Montcalm and Wolfe died gallantly in action. Today a single monument honours them there—a symbol of mutual respect between the two races whose destinies in Canada were linked upon that field.

The French had opened the way for the development of a continent. The sixty thousand French colonists along the St. Lawrence now wondered what would happen to their institutions, their religion and their culture under British rule.

THE HUNDRED YEARS TO CONFEDERATION

After eleven years of provisional government, during which the pattern of life in Canada remained virtually unchanged, the Quebec Act was passed in 1774—giving the French traditions a new and permanent security. French civil law was re-established though the criminal law of England was introduced. The French semi-feudal system of land tenure was recognized. The Roman Catholic clergy were accorded "their accustomed dues and rights".

The American War of Independence, by which the thirteen British colonies to the south established their sovereignty as the United States of America, began the following year. Overtures were made to Canada, especially to the French colonists, to join the revolt, but without result, and Canada remained British.

The British connection was further strengthened by the immigration into Canada from the United States of refugees who had remained loyal to Britain—forty thousand in all. Accustomed to agriculture, they began to clear the pine forests and establish new farming settlements.

The desire of the "Loyalists" for representative government, shared by later American colonists who came in search of free land, was reflected in the Constitutional Act of 1791 which established popular assemblies. Canada was divided at the Ottawa River into two provinces, Upper and Lower Canada (roughly the present Ontario and Quebec), each with its elected legislature. Although the provincial Governors, with their appointed Executive Councils, still retained control, the first step toward democratic administration had been taken.



Quebec, three centuries old.

