

A Frenchman's former "kingdom" becomes government property

Anticosti Island, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which has been privately owned since the time of Louis XIV, belonged at one period to a French millionaire, and was coveted by the Nazis, has become the property of the province of Quebec for the sum of about \$30 million.

This territory of 3,150 square miles, 360 miles northeast of Quebec City, with a population of only 235, was conceded by the King of France three hundred years ago to Louis Jolliet (1645-1700) who, along with Father Marquette, discovered the Mississippi River in 1673 and who later explored Labrador.

In 1891, the island's 675 inhabitants were divided into two groups: French-speaking Catholics, from either Acadia or Quebec, and English-speaking Protestants who came from Newfoundland. Both groups lived mainly by fishing and farming.

In 1895, Henri Menier, a wealthy French industrialist, purchased Anticosti Island for the sum of \$125,000 and proceeded to make it his own kingdom. While he persuaded the French-speaking inhabitants to sell their land to him, the *anglophones*, on the advice of a Methodist minister, refused. In the end, however, after losing a long and costly court battle, they were forced to leave the island.

The former Parisian hired engineers, agronomists, building contractors and local labour to construct farm build-

ings, shops, and, finally, a chateau (which was destroyed in 1953).

Menier's rule was both very harsh and very paternalistic. He owned everything and everyone worked for him. He forbade the people alcohol, fire-arms, hunting, fishing and domestic animals, but provided them the free services of a priest, a doctor and a teacher as well as education and health care. The residents were restricted to Port-Menier, the village at the southwestern tip of the island. They were expected to doff their caps when Mr. Menier went by. Those who broke his rules could be expelled from the island.

Wildlife imports

Henri Menier imported horses and all kinds of wild animals and birds to the island — moose, white-tailed deer, buffalo, wapiti, beavers, hares, frogs, pheasants and pigeons. He lived in grand style, organizing hunts for his guests from France and excursions on his private steamship the *Savoy*.

The island was already a superb fishing area, specially for Atlantic salmon.

Some of the animals found it difficult to survive but the white-tailed deer multiplied rapidly; in recent years deer hunting has been permitted in order to prevent their becoming too numerous and dying of hunger. There are also many beavers on the island.

Following the death of Henri Menier in 1914, the island became the property

of his brother Gaston, who sold it to the Anticosti Corporation in 1926 for \$6.5 million. In 1938, a year before the beginning of the Second World War, representatives from Nazi Germany tried unsuccessfully to buy this privately-owned island, which would be useful to them during the war. It was later taken over by lumber companies interested in its pulpwood; the last of these was Consolidated Bathurst, which, it is alleged, refused an offer of \$24 million for the island. The Quebec provincial government then decided to expropriate it.

The lives of the inhabitants changed little under these commercial owners. Many services were still supplied free of charge, and during the depression of the Thirties the companies attended to the needs of the inhabitants.

A village storekeeper hopes the provincial government will make the island a park. Others have suggested ranching.

"We have rich forage," one said, "the deer are as fat as pigeons."

Further six months for Canada's UN Cyprus Force

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan J. MacEachen, announced recently that, following a request from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Canada would continue to participate in the United Nations Emergency Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for a further period of six months from December 15, 1974. He noted that the Force was on an important mission in Cyprus maintaining stability, bringing humanitarian relief to the needy and facilitating conditions under which the necessary political negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the island's problems could take place.

The United Nations Force is composed of personnel from Australia, Austria, Britain, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, as well as Canada. The Canadian contingent, the second largest in Cyprus, is composed of the 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, from London, Ontario; personnel from 2 Combat Group with headquarters in Petawawa, Ontario; and personnel provided from National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa.



Henri Menier's residence on Anticosti Island.