

necessary to reduce the rate of interest to a fair average. A fraction only of the four hundred and fifty millions now locked up would soon reduce the rate from ten per cent to five; in that case the business capital would be practically doubled.

Let us, in all our legislation, remember the leading maxim of finance: *Greater security means a lower rate of interest and a proportional increase of capital*; as the contrary means higher interest and less capital. A bank dealing in mortgages can at any moment secure all its debts; what the present system cannot pretend to do. A manufacturer applies to any of the banks for a discount line, say \$10,000. He is required to furnish *endorsed* notes which he declines, as risky; but having real estate he gives a mortgage on adequate property, and as in the drawing account of the Scotch banks, is charged interest for the money used—and no contraction of loans distrusts his business, while his property is good security, and the interest regularly paid.

Now look on the other picture. A dealer in foreign goods has been in business 10 years. His assets in goods amount to \$30,000, and bills payable at the bank \$20,000. While thinking himself worth \$10,000, foolish man, a stringency is created by the bank, and he is forced to realize and pay his maturing bills at a loss, perhaps, of 33 per cent. Where then, is he? Such is the fortune of the hour!

ALPHA.

THE STORY OF THE OKA INDIANS.

No. II.

THE DEEDS OF CONCESSION.

It is easy even at this day to understand the enthusiasm which provoked the spirit of adventure among laymen and clerics in the Old World, when the New one was discovered, with its fabulous wealth and its wild races of men. On the one hand the Gaulish zeal went forth in a spirit of conquest and commerce: on the other, in a frenzy to win converts and power. With the latter only we have to deal.

We need not split hairs in argument as to the aims and objects of the Seminary of St. Sulpice of Paris when it first came to Canada. It is well to agree at the outset of a journey, even if we must part company in opinion on the way: and on this point, at least, I think there is no difference or doubt. What was the avowed aim of the Seminary in coming to Canada? Was it to erect trading posts for the French, or missions for the natives? Was it to compete with the merchants of Rouen and Rochelles for the red-skin's paltries, or to fight the devil and his emissaries for possession of the red-skin's soul?

In the middle of the 17th century there existed in France a society of priests and laymen, organized for the special, and exclusive purpose of converting the Indians of this country. I have no doubt of the sincerity of its intentions, and that it had no ulterior object in view, notwithstanding the fact that the zeal of a Loyola was often merged in the ardour of abstract adventure, when the Jesuits pierced the fastness of Canadian woods and sang *Te Deums* on Mississippi waters. This society was a rival, or perhaps more justly speaking, a contemporary of the Seminary, both being established about the same time. The Company of New France, then holding from the Crown the whole of Canada, made a grant, in 1640, of the Island of Montreal, *en Fief*, to the former society; but in 1663 this latter organization executed a deed of gift of the whole island to the Seminary, conceiving that the great object of their association, namely the conversion of the Indians, would be better accomplished by the Seminary, whose priests had already been in the field. It is as clear as language can express it, that the Seminary at Paris—and inseparably so, as defined in the Deed—was the recipient of this donation; and not as a body of traders or speculators, but as missionaries, *pur et simple*, to the Indians.

Here now we may meet a cross road in opinion, and differ as to what a "mission" meant. But that it did not mean a license to trade with the red-skins, is shown from the complaints made to the home Government that the priests—not exclusively of St. Sulpice—were trafficking in furs, as well as from the plain interpretation of their obligations towards the natives by the Sulpicians themselves, and from the fact that with these exceptional cases, which invariably provoked opposition, the priests observed the usual duties of missionaries, until the ratification of 1735, which permitted them to trade with the Indians "within the limits of said Seigniorship on the following terms, provisions and conditions." Doubtless the same questionable pretext was made to secure this privilege in 1733, as was presented to obtain the second grant of St. Placide, viz.: "that the transfer of the said Mission from the Island of Montreal to the Lake, the stone church, the presbytery, the wooden fort which they have built thereon, have caused them expenses far exceeding the value of the lands conceded to them by the present Deed and by that of 1718." Yet it can scarcely be assumed, that even this privilege of trading was meant for broader purposes than the maintenance of the body itself, and the particular mission work it had to do.

All the religious orders originally established in France for purely religious objects, came here with the clearly avowed aim of evangelizing and civilizing the Indian; and be it marked, that every grant made to these bodies was clearly and explicitly made for this purpose and no other. The fact cannot be gainsaid—that not only did the Seminary of St. Sulpice come here to evangelize and civilize the red-skin, but that it got its gift of the Island of Montreal in 1663, as well as its grants from the French King, *to enable it to do this*, and not in any way to promote the temporal or even spiritual interests of emigrants from France, or to increase the material wealth of its own body.

Let us, however, try and get at the motives of the Seminary in asking for the Seigniorship of the Lake of Two Mountains and the subsequent grant of St. Placide: also the motives of the King of France in conceding them.

It will be remembered that the Okas were living at Sault au Recollet; evidently very much under the moral influence of the Seminary: its friends and protectors: recognized by the French as a distinct nation and as allies, and brought to their councils in critical affairs. Nomadic tribes of Iroquois were constantly threatening the western end of the island, as well as the approaches from the Ottawa valley, and, as has been already shown, would have easily

exterminated the French, but for the watchfulness and defence of the Okas. Clearly the latter had earned French and Sulpician gratitude. Their union with their brethren would have ensured the destruction at the time of both.

Two motives on the part of the Seminary are presented. The Seminary clearly had a *purpose* when it petitioned the King for a grant. It was no freak or sudden fancy. Did it want or need the Seigniorship of the Lake of Two Mountains for its own use? Clearly not. The Island of Montreal, thirty-six miles long by nine wide, watered by the St. Lawrence in front and the Ottawa in rear, afforded all the scope it needed for material support. The Lake of Two Mountains was then only fit for the Indian who loved the dense forest. Remembering, therefore, the state of the country; the good feeling existing between the priests and the Okas, at first on the Fort on the Mountain, and afterwards at Sault au Recollet; that everything had tended to cement this confidence and increase this friendship, would it not be judging the Seminary harshly to assume that it did not mean to be grateful to the Okas; that it did not actually mean to secure them more room for hunting and fishing, more "advantage," to use the words of the Deed? Will the Seminary deny that it intended to act honestly towards the Indians: that when it represented to the King "that it would be to the advantage of the Indian mission" to remove it to the Lake, and that it "would be advantageous not only because of the conversion of the Indians, who being further from the city would also be beyond the danger of becoming drunkards, but also to the colony, which, in this way would be protected from the incursions of the Iroquois," that it did not mean all it said? Or will it use its peculiar sophistry, and reply that "the advantage of the Seminary was that of the Indians?"

I have done it the justice before of believing that its old Gallican instincts prompted it to the consistent kindness which began on the Fort at the mountain. I cannot believe, and history shows us nothing to make such a belief possible, that the Seminary then was playing a treacherous or hypocritical game with the people who had been so faithful to its interests. I cannot believe either that the reasons presented to the King to secure the grant were neither sincere nor necessary.

Nor is it likely that the Indians, holding as they then did on the island, a balance of power, would either have moved to the Lake at peremptory bidding, or under such conditions as are now maintained by the Seminary to have existed from the beginning. Not likely that having saved the French and Sulpicians from annihilation, they would have voluntarily placed their necks under the feet of either. Such a suggestion of servitude or mere squattership was more than either Seminary or French King dared offer. What would have been the answer to the Seminary had it in 1718 told the Okas that it wanted them to occupy the Seigniorship of the Lake as squatters, liable to be turned away, to have their lands alienated from them, and to be the mere tools of their ambition? It would be one of the mournful pages of Sulpician history. In no instance was such a policy shown or meant by the old priests. The only safe policy was one of conciliation and kindness, not of conquest or duplicity. I can easily from this standpoint reconcile the good will of the Seminary towards the Indians with the natural desire it had to become trustees; and also the natural generosity of the French King to the religious order which had been solely instrumental in securing the friendship of an important Indian tribe. From first to last the latter were mostly in the dark as to the real nature of the Deeds of Concession, just as they were afterwards, but more cunningly, kept from knowing the real conditions of the ordinance of 1840, which confirmed the Seminary title. No tradition, however, is more clearly fixed in their minds than that these conceded lands were and are held for them by the Seminary in trust, and by no means as its absolute property.

Let us now in fancy erase the history of Canada since the Conquest, and let us put the Okas back again at Sault au Recollet, the Seminary back again in its humble nook at the foot of Mount Royal. Let us imagine the Seigniorship of the Lake of Two Mountains a hunting ground, unpeopled by any but the original occupants—these very Okas, who crossed the lake in their canoes and lived a nomadic life in its woods. Let us put ourselves in the place of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, holding the views held by it to-day, and which it maintains were the only views which guided the petitioners of 1717. Imagine a body asking the King for a concession of land in its own name and as its absolute property, complicating such a petition with obligations towards a certain tribe of Indians, *the non-fulfilment of which obligations would cause the said concession to revert to His Majesty's domain!* Imagine a body soliciting a concession as to its absolute property, placing such motives and objects as the following:—

"Upon the petition presented to us by Messieurs the ecclesiastics of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, established at Montreal, by which they show us that it would be to the advantage of the Indian Mission at Sault au Recollet, in the Island of Montreal, of which they are in charge, to be without delay transferred from the island, and established upon lands at the north-west shore of the Lake of the Two Mountains, which Mission would be advantageous not only because of the conversion of the Indians, who being further from the city would also be beyond the danger of becoming drunkards, but also to the colony, which in this way would be protected from the incursions of the Iroquois in the time of war: praying us to grant them for the said Mission a piece of land three and a-half leagues front, commencing at the brook which falls into the large bay of the Lake of Two Mountains, and stretching thence up the shore of the said Lake and the River St. Lawrence, with a depth of three leagues, with title of Fief, &c., &c., to the others which they make to pay all the expenses of removal of this Mission, &c., &c., to which giving ear, we, &c, give and grant, &c."

With respect to the second concession, this preamble is not mentioned, but the Plea of the Seminary, produced on 24th August, 1876, in a suit still pending in the Superior Court, Montreal, states that this Deed was "*au même litre que ci-dessus*," or "with the same title or object as hereinbefore."

The motives of the French King no doubt were more selfish than the mere "desire to be propitious" to the Seminary. Any one can learn from Garneau's History the great importance he and his Government attached to securing the friendly alliance of the Indians, then, it may be said, holding the balance of power between the French and English. The above preamble plainly states that one object of placing them at the Lake was to prevent Iroquois incursions, a bit of military foresight that possibly originated outside the Seminary pale.

The principles and intentions which actuated the King in granting Seigniorships to his civil or military officers or other laymen, were altogether different from those which led him to concede Seigniorships to religious orders. In the former