

THE LUXURY OF TRAVEL UNDER FRENCH RULE

EXTRACT FROM MR. WEIR'S FORTHCOMING WORK "FROM PADDLE TO PROPELLER."

When Bigot travelled, it was in truly royal state, and as illustrating the glamor that was thrown over court progress in Canada as compared with the hardships of plebeian travellers, the charming study of "Bigot et sa Cour", by Mr Marinette, Assistant Archivist of Canada may advantageously be consulted. It may be pleasant to close the history of travel in Canada during the French regime amid the pomp and luxury of a brilliant, if corrupt, court, especially as the study will bring out several characteristics of the people, notably their open-handed hospitality, which went far to remove obstacles and mitigate the tribulations of travel along inhabited routes.

The Sieur Franquet was commissioned from France in 1751 to inspect the fortifications of Canada and Acadia and, among other incidents, his journal contains an account of his journey from Quebec to Montreal in the private barge which the Intendant had placed at his disposal. The little vessel of about four tons burden was flat-bottomed. It had in the centre a cabin of about five or six feet square, made by an awning like a carriage-top with curtains at the side. In this the travellers could seek shelter from the heat of the sun, or the rain, while round it were numerous benches cushioned in blue, for use when the party remained outdoors. The boat was propelled either by oars or wind, there being a mast to carry a large sail and a topsail when desired. It was, in fact, a private yacht, capable of accommodating from twenty to twenty-five persons.

When it became known that Franquet was going to Montreal in the Intendant's barge, there was no lack of applicants to share his good fortune. His own immediate party comprised himself, M. de Couagne, sub-engineer of Quebec who was instructed to accompany him and defray expenses, and two servants. He had, how-

ever, accepted the companionship of Father Boniface, superior of the House of Charity at Louisburg, M. de Maizieres, lieutenant, and Messrs de Charly and Deplissis, ensigns, all three of the Regiment of Cape Breton (Isle Royale,) who with their servants swelled the list of passengers to ten. The crew numbered thirteen, and the captain considered the vessel to be overloaded.

Franquet and his companions left Quebec 24th July 1752 in the face of adverse wind and tide, and after three days of towing and rowing arrived at Three Rivers, where they were cordially received by the Governor, Rigaud de Vaudreuil. This hospitable gentleman received only a thousand livres annually, and although he lived rent free in a house which had belonged to the king, his income seldom or never equalled his expenditure, as his house, situated about halfway between Quebec and Montreal, was the rendezvous for travellers upon this route, and he is credited with according the same hospitality to the small as to the great. Franquet dined with him and Madam de Vaudreuil. The table was set for twenty, and the meal prodigal in abundance as well as exquisite with imported wines and luxuries. A quadrille followed.

At four o'clock in the morning of the twenty-ninth the party resumed their route, the sailors stimulated by gifts of tobacco, liquor, bread and bacon according to custom, under the influence of which they promised to cast anchor at Montreal in another three days. Each night the party landed, having the right to billet themselves at any homestead, but they wisely selected the best and most frequented houses. "It is usual," says Franquet, "to pay twelve livres for the accommodation of a whole party, in addition to such expenses as they might choose to incur." The Sunday experience of this merry party was not calculated to excite religious fervor, except