

during the American War of Independence, when the province was invaded by the Arnold-Montgomery expeditions. In all the years that the colony had been under French dominion a single word from any seigneur was enough to summon every one of his able-bodied habitants to arms. But now, only a dozen years after the English had assumed control, the answer made by the habitant to such appeals was of a very different nature. The authorities at Quebec, having only a small body of regular troops available for the defence of Canada against the invaders, called on the seigneurs to rally the old feudal array. The proclamation was issued on June 9, 1775. Most seigneurs responded promptly and called their habitants to armed service. But the latter, for the most part, refused to come. The seigneurs threatened that their lands would be confiscated; but even this did not move the habitants to comply. A writer of the time narrates what happened in one of the seigneuries, and it is doubtless typical of what took place in others. 'M. Deschambaud went over to his seigneurie on the Richelieu,' he tells us, 'and summoned his tenants to arms; they listened patiently to what he had to say, and then peremptorily refused to accede to his