

ing large interests in America and familiar with conditions there. Furthermore he had been consulted by Government both before and during the war and had evinced a desire to serve the state. But he was entirely without experience in diplomacy and but meagrely educated. He could not even speak French and an interpreter was employed when he called upon the French Minister, M. de Vergennes. He was guileless innocence itself in his interview with the astute Franklin. "I told him," Oswald records, "that I could not but congratulate him in his present happy situation, since I considered the settlement of a peace on a fair and equitable basis to be entirely in his hands. Since, to speak the truth, I could not help thinking, that when they as Commissioners of the Colonies were satisfied, they had it in their power to draw the line of such reasonable termination as ought and must content the other powers."*

Franklin naturally wrote to Shelburne that if he desired the negotiations to succeed he should entrust them to Oswald. Finding the British agent wedded to the American view, Franklin suggested a lasting peace by cession of Nova Scotia and Canada and the complete withdrawal of Great Britain from this continent. Oswald thought the demand reasonable and asked that the proposal be put in writing, undertaking to deliver it to Shelburne. Franklin cautiously replied that as the other American Commissioners had not arrived he was speaking only for himself. However, he obligingly drew up a memorandum of his claim for all the British possessions in America, and Oswald took it back with him to London.

On the receipt of this valuable suggestion, Shelburne had an opportunity of putting himself right. The unfitness of Oswald for such negotiations must have been evident. He could have been thanked for his

services and an experienced man sent to replace him. The document, which came to be known as the "Canada Paper," might have been shown to the Cabinet. When the proposal ultimately became known to the other ministers, they were startled, especially Fox. Shelburne handed it back to Oswald without comment, although Oswald thought, mistakenly it seems, that it would be dealt with later, and probably form part of the terms of settlement. He encouraged Franklin, on returning to Paris, with this assurance, and the other American Commissioners were brought to consent to receive most of the North American continent instead of only a part of it. As the "Canada Paper" is not usually found in histories of the period it may be quoted here:

To make a peace durable, what may give occasion for future wars should, if practicable, be removed.

The territory of the United States and that of Canada by long extended frontiers touch each other.

The settlers on the frontiers of the American provinces are generally the most disorderly of the people, who being far removed from the eye and control of their respective Governments, are most bold in committing offences against neighbours, and are for ever occasioning complaints and furnishing matter for fresh differences between their states.

By the late debates in Parliament and public writings, it appears that Britain desires a reconciliation with the Americans. It is a sweet word. It means much more than a mere peace, and it is heartily to be wished for. Nations make peace whenever they are both weary of making war. But if one of them has made war upon the other unjustly, and has wantonly and unnecessarily done it great injuries, and refuses reparation; though there may for the present be peace, the resentment of those injuries will remain, and will break out again in vengeance, when occasions offer. Those occasions will be watched for by one side, feared by the other; and the peace will never be secure; nor can any cordiality exist between them.

Many houses and villages have been burnt in America by the English and their allies, the Indians. I do not know that the Americans will insist on reparation. Perhaps they may. But would it not be better

*The Administrations of Great Britain, by Sir G. C. Lewis.