

The Maroons, after their complete surrender, were transferred to barracks, strongly guarded, and preparations were made for their shipment, it being the intention to settle them in Lower Canada on lands acquired for that purpose. Upper Canada had also been suggested as a suitable place, but finally the decision was arrived at that they were to be taken to Halifax, there to remain until instructions were received from the Secretary of State and Messrs. Quarrell and Ochterlony, the commissaries who were to accompany the banished Maroons, were directed accordingly. On the 26th of June, 1796, the transports having them on board sailed from Port Royal harbour, in company with a large fleet bound for Europe under convoy, from which they parted on reaching the coast, and on the 24th July Governor Wentworth wrote to the Under Secretary of State that they had arrived at Halifax, but were not yet landed, and that he thought they would make excellent settlers. The date of arrival is not given in Governor Wentworth's letter; one of the vessels arrived on the 21st, and the rest on the 23rd of July, the passage having thus taken close upon seven weeks.

The first employment in which the Maroons were engaged after landing at Halifax was on the fortifications erected on the demand of the Duke of Kent, then general in command of the district, an attack being apprehended from the squadron under command of Admiral Richery, in prosecution of the war by revolutionary France then in progress. The Maroons were housed in temporary huts, rented houses and tents close to the place of their employment; and they worked cheerfully under the direction of the Duke, offering, indeed, to work for the King's son without pay, an offer which, of course, was not accepted. Their conduct gave general satisfaction, relieving the people of Halifax of the apprehension that had prevailed from the accounts they had received of the ferocious and bloodthirsty character of the new arrivals. The weather, too, was favourable to the diffusion of a spirit of satisfaction among the Maroons, as they arrived in the warm season, the heat of which approached, if it did not equal, that of the island which had been their home. By the end of October they were settled on the lands purchased for them, not without internal disputes, and their want of experience in defending themselves against the cold must have caused great discomfort, although the correspondence does not show this, Wentworth writing in November that they were enjoying comfort and happiness.

From the first the Governor did not place much confidence in the commissaries, but assumed the whole care and management, alleging that the commissaries were strangers to this business, and, as far as can be judged from the correspondence, there was a mutual dislike. The winter passed over quietly, but in the spring, after the experience of the cold season, a spirit of restlessness seemed to prevail among the Maroons. Whether this prompted the proposal of Ochterlony, one of the Jamaica