

NOTES ON MADAWASKA, No. II.

By W. O. RAYMOND, M. A.

The Acadians living on the St. John river, when the Loyalists arrived in 1783, seem to have well merited the term applied to them by the committee sent by Major Studholme, the Commandant at Fort Howe, to investigate the state of settlement of the river — namely, that they were “an inoffensive people.” They were also an unfortunate people. From the time of their expulsion from their homes along the shores of the Bay of Fundy, they continued for thirty years to be the football of fortune.

Governor Carleton and his Council decided that it was not desirable to interrupt the continuity of settlement upon the river by English-speaking people; and finding the Acadians had scarcely any of them a legal title to the lands on which they had settled, a proposal was made—in which they seem to have acquiesced—that they should be removed to the upper St. John, where they would be nearer their compatriots of the Province of Quebec. One could wish that on this occasion our government might have been more generous. True, most of the Acadians had settled on the St. John river contrary to the desire and intention of the government of Nova Scotia,¹ and they had no other title to their lands than that of possession. Nevertheless, they had taken no hostile part against the government during the late war, and some of them had rendered important services to Major Studholme. The New Englanders in the townships of Mauderville, Burton and Gagetown had, in numerous instances, improved lands to which they had no legal title, and were allowed compensation for their improvements, although, as a class, they were less loyal than the Acadians; and in some cases even assisted the Americans.

¹ See the following extract :

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, Halifax, 20th August, 1768.

GENTLEMEN,—The Lieut.-Governor desires that you will give notice to all the Acadians, except about six families whom Mr. Bailly shall name, to remove themselves from St. John's River, it not being the intention of the Government that they should settle there, but to acquaint them that on their application here they shall have lands in other parts of the Province. * * *

I am, etc.

RICHARD BULKELEY,

To John Anderson and Francis Peabody, Esqs.
Justices of the Peace for the County of
Sunbury, River St. John.