

The English occupation was immediately followed by the establishment of sympathetic relations between the people and their new masters. In the month of October the Vicar-General, Mr. Briand addressed a letter to all the parish priests, requesting them to send in lists of the poor families in their several parishes. "His heart naturally full of humanity and pity for the unfortunate", said he, in speaking of Murray, "has suggested to him a means of securing help, which has succeeded beyond all expectation". (1) In fact, the governor had requested the officers of the English army to raise a subscription among the troops and to distribute the proceeds among the most indigent, each man further giving a days' ration to meet the most urgent wants.

The Secretary of State, Lord Egremont, wrote to Sir Jeffery Amherst, on the 18th December, 1761, asking him to notify the governors to issue precise and very express orders to prevent soldiers from insulting the French inhabitants, who were now the subjects of the same king, forbidding any to offend them by churlishly recalling the inferiority to which they had been reduced by the fate of arms or by making insulting remarks upon their language, their dress, their manners, their customs or their country or by uncharitable and unchristian reflections upon the religion which they professed. (2).

The English officers, who had experienced the worth of the Canadians on the battlefield, could not do otherwise than respect and treat them with mildness and humanity. This they gladly acknowledged in the petition they addressed to the king in 1774. (3).

The military regime was therefore not the period of absolutism which these two words would seem to denote, but rather one of peace and tranquillity which contrasted remarkably with the closing years of French domination. Canada's new masters desired to conciliate the former subjects of the King of France.

Nevertheless, the Canadians did not yet believe that France would definitely abandon them. But their illusions were dispelled when they learned that, by the treaty of peace concluded between the Kings of France, England and Spain and signed at Paris, on 10th February, 1763, New France had been ceded to England and their lot irrevocably settled.

That event precipitated a fresh exodus among the nobles, the officials and the merchants. (4) This emigration, however, did not extend to the rural parts; the farmers had grown attached to the soil; Canada had become their country; they were the real Canadians and bound to remain such.

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(1) Pastoral letters of the bishops of Quebec, Vol. II, p. 149.

(2) Cited by Mr. Sulte. *The Military Regime*, M. S. K. C., 1905, p. LVI.

(3) Petition of the French subjects to the King—1774.—Const. Doc. (1760-1791), p. 354.

(4) Murray says that the number who departed in consequence of the Treaty of Paris amounted at the most to 250 persons.