

agriculture ceased to be profitable in Lower Canada. It became a difficult task for a farmer to make both ends meet. In this predicament a young man, member of a numerous family, having to part with his parents to look for a home, was faced with two alternatives, either to take an ax to clear land and open a farm, or to wend his way to the manufacturing centres south of Canada. The second alternative appeared more attractive, as it did not involve so much effort.

How many French Canadians are there in the United States, in Ontario, and in the prairie provinces? Opinions differ greatly on this point, owing to the absence of reliable statistics. There are not a few who place the total of this emigration at over a million and a half souls, but this is an evident exaggeration.

When England took possession of Canada the French population was set down at 65,000; since that time it has doubled every twenty-eight years. A calculation on the basis of this increase would place the present French population at 2,500,000 if there had been no exodus. According to the last census there are now in the Province of Quebec 1,200,000 French Canadians. But this is not the only item to be taken into account in this calculation. The French population in Ontario and Western Canada can be set down at over 250,000. These figures will go far to show that there cannot be more than one million French Canadians in the United States, but even this number is far too large and constitutes an enormous loss to Canada. For Quebec it is almost a national calamity, involving a considerable decrease of influence in parliament. The upbuilding of the French-Canadian nationality has involved one hundred and fifty years of steady effort. What a misfortune if this magnificent community was to be allowed to diminish in size and strength!

To complete this rapid glance at the evolution of the French race in North America, let us return to the habitants still firmly bound to the land wrested by their ancestors from barbarism. They considered themselves the happiest people on earth in the peaceful enjoyment of full liberty.