

been taken, a great many subsequent troubles would have been avoided. But in their desire to be generous the English authorities failed to do what was prudent, and the seigneurial system remained.

Many of the seigneurs, when Canada passed under British control, sold their seigneuries and went home to France. How great this hegira was can scarcely be estimated with exactness, but it is certain that the *émigrés* included all the military and most of the civil officials, together with a great many merchants, traders, and landowners. The colony lost those who could best afford to go; in other words, those whom it could least afford to let go. The priests, true to their traditions, stood by the colony in its hours of trial. But whatever the extent and character of the out-going, it is true that many seigneuries changed hands during the years 1763-64. Englishmen bought these lands at very low figures. Between them and the habitants there were no bonds of race, religion, language, or social sympathy. The new English seigneur looked upon his estate as an investment, and proceeded to deal with the habitants as though they were his tenantry. All this gave the seigneurial system a rude shock.