

Haldimand and the ... Loyalists ...

*Troubles Connected with the
Settlement of Missisquoi Bay,
as Set Forth in Letters
Written by the Governor.*

So much has been said and written as to whether or not the first settlers on Missisquoi Bay were really loyalists that the following correspondence culled from the Haldimand collection cannot fail to be read with interest.

It will be seen that Governor Haldimand was very determined that the loyalists who came into Canada in 1783 and 1784 should not settle in that part of the country, he being of the opinion that there would be danger of friction between them and the people on the other side of the line.

On October 24, 1873, Haldimand wrote to Lord North concerning the representations of the people of Vermont that they were desirous of being annexed to Canada. They were setting New York at defiance and settling down to line 45 degrees. The settlements by New York were dangerous to this province. He spoke of the bad effect of allowing settlements of Canadians, encouraged by the State of New York, to settle near the boundary, as these would form an asylum for the discontented.

In a second letter to Lord North on November 6th, General Haldimand wrote concerning the proposed settlements of loyalists in different places, and the advantage of such a population. He mentions that there are petitions for a House of Assembly and for the repeal of the Quebec Act, one of the grounds for the petitions being the expected settlement of the loyalists. In another letter on November 18th, he states that he is making arrangements for settling loyalists at Cataraqui (Kingston). Ten days later he writes again, and in this letter he gives it as his opinion that Canada will not be of much use as a commercial country, and that expense should not be incurred in defending it.

FOR FRENCH-CANADIANS.

The frontier east of the St. Lawrence should be left unsettled for some time and then the settlement should be made by French-Canadians as an antidote to the restless New England population. The settling of loyalists who could not agree with the Americans would, he thinks, be dangerous. He will settle the loyalists on the St. Lawrence, towards the Ottawa and on the Bay of Chaleur.

On January 15th, 1784, Mathews, a secretary of Governor Haldimand, wrote to one Meyer that His Excellency had declined to settle the lands in the neighborhood of Missisquoi Bay on account of the inconvenience of settling so near the Americans. Many valuable tracts have been discovered elsewhere. Their situation will be made known, and arrangements made during the winter for the settlement of the loyalists.

On January 16 there is a letter from Mathews to Maurer, who may or may not be identical with the Meyer of the previous letter, to the effect that provisions will be issued to the disbanded loyalists in the district of Montreal. Returns of the families of loyalists are to be sent to DeLancy to be included in his returns.

On December 29, in the previous year, 1783, Mathews had written to Stephen DeLancy that no distinction was to be made between the loyalists who came last from New York and those who had been longer in the Province.

On January 22, Mathews wrote to DeLancy that arrangements were to be made that the

loyalists might proceed to their lands as early as the season will permit. Returns were to be sent of loyalists not incorporated into crops and their previous condition was to be stated. On the same date Mathews wrote to Lieuts. French, Jessup and Rogers to hasten the returns, in order that the loyalist settlements might be made as early as possible. On the same day Haldimand wrote to Sir John Johnson concerning the preparations for settling the loyalists.

SOME OTHER REASONS.

That there were other reasons than loyalty credited to those who came into the province from the American colonies at this time is indicated in a letter written on January 29 by Mathews to Major Campbell, saying that he is to wink at the desertion of loyalists, as the province is well rid of those who do not remain out of choice.

On February 5, Mathews writes to Lieut. French that rations are to be continued to certain loyalists (named) for their usefulness in the secret service. Here we have a hint that some of those who came in brought valuable information to the authorities, in return for which they were willing to do something to relieve the distress of those who furnished it.

On the same day (February 5), Mathews writes to Sir John Johnson that His Excellency regrets to find that ill-disposed persons are vitiating the minds of the credulous among the loyalists. All instructions relating to them have been made known, but he has no instructions as to provisions. In that and everything else he will, however, grant all the indulgence possible. He cannot hold out a promise of all the privileges granted to those in Nova Scotia, the King's order being explicit, but he will recommend their case to the Ministry. Those who prefer settling on the Seigniories may do so, but those who settle on the King's lands are better entitled to indulgence and will receive the preference. He is to undeceive the ignorant and counteract the designs of those who have prejudiced them.

In another letter of the same date, Mathews wrote to Taylor in answer to a memorial from loyalists at St. John's, that His Excellency has determined not to settle the lands asked for, but to grant lands elsewhere equally good. That this refers to the Missisquoi Bay lands is evident by a previous letter and by one which Mathews wrote on February 16 to Meyers that the application for leave to settle on Missisquoi Bay cannot be complied with, for reasons already given and now repeated.

INDEPENDENCE OF SETTLERS.

The importunity, not to say impudence, of some of the new settlers is exposed in a letter dated March 2 from Mathews to DeLancy, acknowledging the receipt of a memorial signed Grass, on account of the loyalists, which cannot be complied with, as the stocking of farms, etc., is utterly impossible. There can be no change in the form of government, and if it does not suit the views of Mr. Grass and the others, a passage will be provided for them to Nova Scotia should they prefer it.

But the newcomers are persistent, for we find that on March 8 Mathews writes to one

Wear that His Excellency is surprised at his (Wear's) persistence in the request to settle on Missisquoi Bay. Reasons against it which have been given still exist. His Excellency is most anxious to satisfy the loyalists, but cannot give an acre to gratify individuals at the expense of the public good.

On March 8, Mathews wrote to Sherwood that a Mr. Case is referred to him as to the advantage of a settlement at Cataraqui. Representations as to the difficulties proceed from ignorance and misinformation. Arrangements are made for the transport of the loyalists. They will have lands and provisions, but not stock. The writer is very doubtful if the statement that seigniors or private individuals will, as stated, give the latter. The refusal to allow the Loyalists to settle on Missisquoi Bay was arrived at after mature deliberation, but His Excellency desires to have a full and detailed account of any loyalists that may be there, their situation, etc. His Excellency does not believe any of them would venture to settle contrary to express commands.

CONTRARY TO COMMANDS.

It is possible to believe, however, that this latter must have been the case, for we find on March 22 Mathews wrote to Sherwood, and in the letter the fact is mentioned that Major Campbell is ordered to have the settlement making by Capt. Meyers visited, to ascertain if the settlers are within the line; if within the American lines, all provisions are to be withdrawn, and the principals to be ordered to headquarters. On the same date there is a letter to Major Campbell containing the instructions referred to in the letter to Sherwood, to visit settlements made by Meyers, Pritchard and others on Missisquoi Bay.

If the loyalists, as our school histories of Canada have always led us to believe, gave up everything they possessed in order to come to Canada to prove their allegiance to the King, there is not wanting evidence to prove that some of them at least expected to be fully reimbursed for their supposed self-sacrifice, for Mathews' letter to Major Ross on March 29 refers to the extravagance of the demand for tools by some of the loyalists. Then, again, many who came in were not, even at that time, looked upon as loyalists, though, no doubt, their descendants of the present would have no hesitation in boasting that they came of U.E.L. stock. On April 5 there is a letter from Mathews to Sherwood, in which a Mr. Sumner is to be informed that there will be no objection to grant lands on the same terms as to the loyalists, but it must be in the situations assigned. Missisquoi is precluded, and no provision will be given to his settlers as has been done to the loyalists who took part in the war and have become destitute.

Here, again, we see that permission to settle on Missisquoi Bay is expressly refused. Those who had already settled there were not allowed to remain, if we believe a letter written on April 8 by Mathews to Major Campbell, stating that the families settled on Missisquoi Bay may remain there till the season admits of them being removed with convenience.

NO SPECIAL PRIVILEGES.

On April 15 Mathews wrote to DeLancy and mentions the extraordinary nature of the letter from Grass. He and his associates are to get no special privileges, the most of them who came into the province with him being, in fact, mechanics, only removed from one situation to practice their trade in another. Mr. Grass