

the oath of allegiance." He was determined, however, to bring the unsatisfactory relations which had so long existed between them and the government to an end. He was satisfied that the only way for England ever to hold her possessions securely was to colonize the country with her own people, and to make the French inhabitants take the oath of allegiance or displace them. He was a soldier, and fully realized the danger of sending these people to swell the ranks of the enemy. On August 1st, 1754, he wrote the Lords of Trade, setting forth the condition of affairs, and in this letter, speaking of the Acadians, declares it as his opinion, "that it would be much better, if they refuse the oath, that they were away." Can we wonder at this opinion? For more than forty years they had baffled the attempts of the English governors to make of them loyal subjects. The situation was one full of perplexities. War was likely to break out at any time between France and England, and here was a rapidly increasing population, which even if it were not an active ally of the enemy, would at least be, as Mascarene declared it to be, "a dead weight" to the government. At a council held at Halifax, July 3rd, 1755, the final test of loyalty was placed before the deputies who represented the Acadians. They were asked to show the proof of their fidelity to the government, which they had affirmed, by taking the oath of allegiance. This they declined to do. They were informed that for "Six Years past the same thing had been often proposed to them, and had been as often evaded under various frivolous pretences, that they had often been informed that some time or other it would be required of them and must be done, and that the Council did not doubt that they knew the Sentiments of the Inhabitants in general, and had fully considered and determined this point with regard to themselves before now, as they had already been indulged with six Years to form a Resolution