W. S. MacNUTT *

The Loyalists: A Sympathetic View

For two hundred years the world has been persuaded that the American Revolution was an act of public revulsion against tyranny, a forerunner of a series of events that brought modernity and freedom to the nations of western civilization. To the Loyalists the Revolution was the antithesis of modernity and freedom, a conspiracy of reckless and designing men to raise themselves from adversity to affluence, from public disfavour to high prominence. To the amazement of many the conspiracy succeeded. A revolution was contrived and its authors, by a combination of British error and a series of fortunate contingencies, became the rulers of a new state. Though admitting the individual imperfections of many of the Revolution's leaders, Lorenzo Sabine, the first American historian to write candidly upon the Loyalists, preferred to regard the question of their motives a somewhat idle one.[1] The world has in general agreed with his opinion that the Revolution was justified by the material success and exuberant expansion of the new

* No words can adequately describe the sense of loss Canadian historians must feel on learning of the death of W. S. MacNutt on 9 February 1976. Over the years, through his books, his articles and the students whose work he inspired, Professor MacNutt made an outstanding contribution to national and regional historical studies. The extent of that contribution is well known. Perhaps less well known is the fact that during the latter years of his life his scholarly energies were directed to Loyalist studies. At the time of his death, he had completed the manuscript of a book on Loyalist memorials and he planned to deliver a summary of his controversial and occasionally idiosyncratic (I do not think that he would have objected to this description) views in a paper to the June, 1976, annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association. Unfortunately, he did not live to complete the paper and his colleague at the University of New Brunswick, Wallace Brown, appeared in his place to present a paper extracted from Professor MacNutt's lengthy manuscript. It is this paper which is reproduced here. Obviously, if Professor MacNutt had lived, the paper would not have appeared in this form, but since this paper has been extracted with virtually no editorial revisions from his near complete manuscript, it does give something of the flavour of his views and we are grateful to Miss Mary Prudence MacNutt for permission to publish it as a tribute to a man who played such a major part in reviving interest in the history of the Atlantic Provinces and establishing this journal. In the year of the bicentennial Stewart MacNutt did not want the Loyalist case to go unheard. It is our tragedy that he did not live to present that case himself. — *Editor's note.*

1 Lorenzo Sabine, *Biographical Sketches of the Loyalists of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1864), chs. VI and VII.

nation. Destiny declared, it seemed, that those who opposed the Revolution were opposed to progress.

Yet the heritage of the Loyalists of the American Revolution is still relevant. There was no doubt in their minds of the ruinous course taken by the leaders of the rebellion, followed by a violent and articulate section of the public, though a much smaller section than popular accounts would have us believe. The Liberty Men of the Boston waterfront coupled the name of John Hancock with that of Freedom, though his reputation was clouded by impending bankruptcy and limitless litigation. That he withheld until his death over £15,000 of the funds of Harvard College, of which he was a trustee, has made as little difference to later generations of Americans as to his own.[2] Samuel Adams' career gave supporters of the Crown opportunity to pride themselves on their own virtues. A discredited tax collector of dubious honesty, he was possessed of what appeared to be a diabolical cleverness that could organize rebellion from Maine to the Carolinas, a capacity to convert private frustrations to issues of public principle. Foremost among the makers of American independence, he persuaded many of his compatriots that legislation providing for a reduction in the price of tea was designed to enslave the colonies.

The Boston Tea Party has been immortalized as a demonstration of the rights of free men to determine their own government, of protest against the powers of Parliament to tax unrepresented citizens. As a classic example of mob violence and of the terrorizing of legitimate civil government by a highly organized minority it has been relatively ignored. The Boston mobs were controlled by Hancock and Adams for the purpose of making mischief on any pretext whatever. This was the allegation of the Loyalists and the rebel retort has inevitably been that proof is lacking. For what it is worth, a deposition was made by a certain New Englander, Samuel Dyer, on board the *Captain,* then off Spithead, on 30 July 1774. Charged with attempting to persuade soldiers to desert, he had been arrested and sent to England for trial. His confession avowed meetings with Samuel Adams for the purpose of arranging a signal by which large numbers of shipwrights and carpenters could be collected at a moment's notice in the north end of Boston, especially because a quantity of tea was expected. At the time it actually did arrive, in the previous December, he was ill but "the captains of the gang" were Mr. Short who lived near the Mill Bridge and Captain Hood who was in the employment of Hancock. Dyer further revealed that Hancock promised him £4 for every soldier deserting. Horses would be available and a boat, if required, would await him at Hancock's wharf. Fearful that his fellow-prisoners would reveal that he had given such damaging evidence against

2 J. M. Stark, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1910), p. 50.

the leaders of Boston's protest against "tyranny," Dyer appealed for asylum in England.[3]

This purposeful type of organization, pursued with skill and supported by allegations of lost liberties, achieved its triumph when the British Parliament suspended the charter of Massachusetts and closed Boston to commerce. Late in August, 1774, the violence of the mobs, comparatively quiescent for several years previously, was worked to a state of frenzy on the outskirts of Boston. Throughout the province the authority of magistrates took second place to that of committees. Threatening mobs compelled the newly appointed *mandamus* councillors to resign or to flee to Boston for protection from the King's troops. On September 2 thousands of persons surrounded the home of Lieutenant Governor Oliver at Cambridge and forced him, at peril of his life, to resign his office. Homes of men who urged moderation were daubed with pitch and tar. In the Loyalist view mobocracy was almost everywhere outside Boston in the ascendancy, the consequence of Adams' propaganda and the extension of his system of corresponding committees. Reason disappeared before the resort to force that was designed to create the appearance of unanimity. Men who had publicly spoken of the necessity of preserving order were threatened with destruction. Insolence was magnified by reports of Whig speeches at Westminster. In some quarters the Quebec bill, regarded as a threat to religion, was considered more loathsome than the loss of the provincial charter.[4]

Before 1774 was out the breakdown of civil authority was general north of New York. Only in Boston did Britain possess military force capable of dealing with a situation which by now was frankly termed rebellion. But the apparent helplessness of General Gage in taming mobs on the borders of the city gave encouragement to those elsewhere whose private and public circumstances favoured a disposition to flout authority. If anything, the temper of opinion was more violent in Connecticut than in Massachusetts. Charged with deterring the men of Hebron from joining the provincial levy that was organized to relieve Boston from imaginary perils, the Reverend Samuel Peters witnessed the entry to his home of a mob from adjacent Windham County, the burning of his books and papers, the death of a brother, and found himself at the foot of a gallows from which he was mercifully

3 Admiral Montague to Admiralty, 1 August 1774, with enclosures, Colonial Office [hereafter CO] 5/120. All references to CO, Audit Office [AO], or Admiralty [Adm] files are to the originals in the Public Record Office in London. (Occasionally Professor MacNutt's manuscript did not include the date of a document and specific page references. Where possible Professor Brown has attempted to discover this information but it was not always possible to do so without checking the sources in London.—Ed.).

4 For a good summary of the events of this week from the Tory side, see Benjamin Hallowell to Grey Cooper, 5 September 1774, CO 5/175.

delivered by the peremptory interference of his parishioners.[5] Sheriff Tyng of Falmouth, early stigmatized as a Tory, was compelled to surrender his authority to a mob armed with muskets who entered the town from the surrounding countryside.[6]

In London, Lord Dartmouth was reluctantly compelled to revise the good opinions of the people of New Hampshire he had earlier acquired from Governor Wentworth.[7] Violence, however, did not appear until December 13 when Paul Revere rode into Portsmouth with a dispatch from Boston. The local committee was convened and four hundred men gathered for an attack on Castle William and Mary, defended by Captain John Cochran with ten soldiers. Capitulation came after a defense of an hour and a half, and the rebels achieved their object by carrying off one hundred barrels of gunpowder. Uneasy quiet came a week later with the arrival of HMS *Scarborough* and *Canceaux*, in time to prevent the removal of the guns from the islands in the harbour.[8] A similar type of armed peace was in effect at Rhode Island. When HMS *Rose* arrived on December 11, Governor Wanton informed Captain Wallace that he had no power. The people of Providence had seized the cannon on Fort Island. At Newport a mob assembled to tar and feather Wallace but thought better of it when he assembled eighteen of his crew to defend the home of George Rome where he had been visiting. In their disappointment they sacked the customs house.[9]

Lexington merely made rebellion more formal and official. As a Congressional army came into being General Gage had to accept blockade in Boston. His force was the only large one in the thirteen colonies and only the Navy could be expected to represent the authority of the Crown in all. Hard pressed with a few line-of-battle to keep Boston open by sea, Admiral Samuel Graves had to disperse an inadequate force along the coastline from Halifax to Florida, chasing rebel privateers, challenging the authority of multitudinous committees whose decisions were commencing to supplant those of the magistracy. At Machias, the men of northern Maine, seldom reconciled to law from any quarter, suddenly discovered their freedom had been sullied, and attacked and captured the *Margranetto*, an armed schooner on customs surveillance. While his home was stripped of silver plate and

5 Memorial of Samuel Peters, AO 13/42. Hostile writers have ridiculed the accuracy of Peter's writings. He was a convert to Anglicanism and his memorial imputes religious motive to his persecution. Several congregations of Windham County, he declared, were dispatched from "the house of God" to "the house of priest Peters".

6 Memorial of William Tyng, with supporting documents, AO 13/51.

7 Memorial of John Wentworth, with Dartmouth's letter of 3 August 1774, AO 13/40

8 John Wentworth to Graves, with enclosures, 14 December 1774, Adm 1/485; Berkeley to Graves, 20 December 1774, *ibid.*

9 Wallace to Graves, 12, 15 December 1774, *ibid.*

other articles of value Sheriff Tyng of Falmouth boarded the *Canceaux* for safety. Governor Wentworth fled from his magnificent estate at Wolfboro with his wife and infant son at her breast. His great house, one hundred feet long and manned by fifty servants, became prey to a mob who commandeered the wallpaper along with the furnishings.[10] Lexington was the signal for a general plunder.

By April 26, exactly one week after Lexington, Captain Montague of the *Kingfisher* reported that New York was in rebellion. Here, as elsewhere on the coast, the Navy could deter rebel committees from going to extremities, could offer safety to refugees and could even force the committees to agree to the supply of the ships from ashore, for the guns of the *Kingfisher* and of the *Asia*, presently to join her, could destroy most of New York. Farther south, Lord Dunmore reported by May 1 that commotion was hourly increasing, that with his wife and family he had taken refuge aboard the *Fowey*, that the well disposed required protection from small armed vessels that could navigate the creeks of Virginia. Lord William Campbell reported from Charleston that the fate of His Majesty's dominions in that quarter depended on a ship or two. Governor Martin of North Carolina and Sir James Wright of Georgia were in agreement with him.[11]

It is classic to say that most revolutions are made by minorities and that the permanence of revolution depends on the capacity of a new government to give protection to the population. The American Revolution attained an initial repute amongst the population at large at a time when British withdrawal was in effect almost everywhere. From April 1775 to July 1776 the only British land force of significance was in Boston and this occupation came to an end in March of the latter year. Congress filled the void of government and almost everywhere loyalism to the Crown was driven underground. Tories who publicly expressed their sentiment were compelled to flee. Most, rather than leave their families and properties, outwardly submitted to the local rebel authority, waiting for the day when the legendary might of Britain would assert itself. Congress was in the saddle but beneath the surface of rebellion there was much conviction that its ascendancy could not last. Not unusual was the case of David Isaac Brown, a rebel committee man of Hackinsack, New Jersey, but one who preferred measures of moderation and did all in his power to mitigate the plight of refugee Loyalists. Reviewing his whole career the Parliamentary Committee concluded, when the war was over, that "upon the whole" Brown had been loyal to the Crown.[12] Even

10 Memorial of John Wentworth, enclosing Paul Wentworth's letter of 22 March 1784, AO 13/40.

11 Lord William Campbell to Graves, 30 June 1775, CO 5/121.

12 Alexander Fraser, ed., *Second Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario, 1904* (Toronto, 1905), p. 543.

while the forces of the Crown were in general retreat there was an element of unbelief about revolution. "Dare I to presume what government is about? Is this fine and opulent country to be lost to England?" In rage and astonishment these questions emerged from the principal fount of anonymous letters, Philadelphia. "Our royal master spoken of as if he were a culprit at the Old Bailey" while "a parcel of antimonarchical Presbyterian republicans" were building 64-foot long rowboats to attack HMS *Nautilus*. "The deluded fools" were promising themselves an importance equal to that of the States of Holland.[13]

As the initiative gained by the rebels gathered momentum during 1775 every citizen of the thirteen colonies faced a crisis of conscience. Nearly all preferred peace and security of person and property. Real or pretended compliance with the authority of Congress was essential. At Boston the British position steadily became more straitened and the Congressional Army waxed in numbers. At the end of the year the principal remnant of royal power in the South collapsed. Driven from his capital at Williamsburg, Lord Dunmore maintained a small fleet and army at Norfolk and Portsmouth. He actually gained a small success over rebel forces at Kemp's Landing, giving heart to Loyalists of the coastal counties where success or failure, as elsewhere, would play a major part in determining allegiance. Not content with a holding action that kept rebellion at bay, Dunmore, with one hundred and twenty British Grenadiers, detached from the north to serve as his bodyguard, attacked several hundred rebel riflemen entrenched behind a stockade and in the woods surrounding The Great Bridge. The result was tantamount to murder. In less than ten minutes seventy of his men were killed or wounded. The rebels reported one officer wounded in the hand. Norfolk and Portsmouth were abandoned. A great many dedicated Loyalists went afloat with Lord Dunmore. Hundreds of others, with assumed goodwill, accepted the control of the rebel military.

Having alienated the planter class by offering freedom to the blacks whom he proposed to organize into an army, Dunmore had been the author of "an extravagant folly" by his attack on The Great Bridge. "His Lordship has much to answer for — besides sacrificing a handful of brave men he has ruined every friend to government in the colony," said one of the few survivors.[14] In South Carolina numerous Loyalists tamely submitted to rebel committees that followed the protocol established in Massachusetts. The result was the same in North Carolina except for the uprising of a few hundred immigrants recently arrived from Highland Scotland. Though only half of

13 Copies of letters to Philip Stevens, 10 and 29 July 1775, CO 5/121 and CO 5/122.

14 Letter of J. D. to the Earl of Dumfries, 14 January 1776, CO 5/40. This is an excellent account of events in Virginia from the hand of a British officer. See also Ivor Noel Hume, *1775, Another Part of the Field* (New York, 1966).

them were armed they faced the expert riflemen of the rebel militia at Moore's Creek Bridge on 27 February 1776 when this gallant but pathetic venture of Loyalism in the South was quickly snuffed out.[15] A British fleet and army, dispatched to reinforce and supply, arrived too late. The ease with which the rebels acquired control of Georgia, where the population consisted principally of recently arrived immigrants from the British Isles, is still more remarkable. It is not difficult to see reason in the remark of Colonel Prevost, the later conqueror of Georgia, that "the easy circumstances" of southern gentlemen made them less warlike than "the hardy and needy peasantry of the north."[16] This was an opinion oblivious to the savage quality of the guerilla warfare that later emerged in "the back parts."

The contrast between rebel energy and British lethargy during this first year of the Revolution goes far to explain its ultimate result. Having exposed themselves to the penalty of being hanged in the event of failure, rebel leaders remorselessly applied pressure not only upon those who were frankly loyal but also on those who preferred to wear no label, to keep out of trouble by the semblance of neutrality. Gangs of vigilantes, mouthing slogans of liberty and acting under the authority of committees, moved through the countryside to force compliance on all and sundry. Neutrality could be just as obnoxious as avowed enmity. Plunder became commonplace amid these visitations to persons who were suspect. Unprotected women and children were frequently stripped of their belongings and driven from their homes. The observation of a Georgian lady that "the scum rose to the top" was to some degree applicable everywhere as the badge of a revolutionary carried with it a license to plunder.[17] Bullying and dragooning became normal features of life. Many an honest Loyalist who subsequently fought for the Crown was in this year forced to abjure his Oath of Allegiance and put his name to a rebel association. Refusal meant ruin, not only loss of property but violations of the persons of self and family. Seldom has this systematic terror of the American Revolution been presented in popular accounts. Admittedly there was no guillotine but there is opportunity to speculate on

15 An effort described by Washington as one of "those universal instruments of tyranny, the Scotch". John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (39 vols., Washington, D.C., 1931-44), IV, p. 454.

16 Prevost to Germain, 18 January 1779, CO 5/182. Of the minor refinements of war in the south see the testimony of John Kennedy who lost the use of his right hand: "They laid hold of him and held his arm and then two of them twisted his hand round until they brought the thumb to the back of his wrist." AO 12/99.

17 Wallace Brown, *The King's Friends* (Providence, 1965), p. 233. It must be acknowledged that although pillaging became a normal feature of the Revolution at its very outset, the British retaliated. During the occupation of Boston neutrality was denied to the inhabitants and at the evacuation a great deal of movable property of notorious rebels was taken to Halifax.

the relative merits of tarring and feathering as against the compulsory and liberal doses of castor oil administered by Mussolini's *squadrone* in Italy. Ideologies differed but in the quest for unanimity of opinion methods of persuasion were not too dissimilar.

The Revolution brought a despotism that was employed in the name of freedom. As the juggernaut of rebellion made its way from Massachusetts into the other colonies, freedom of speech disappeared. Treason was charged against those who remained faithful to age-old loyalties and to an empire which but a dozen years before had triumphed over a coalition of enemies who had contended for America as a prize of war. Amid the high carnival of loot and of humiliating the rich and the proud, of scrambling for the spoils of rebellion, the assemblies of Westminster and Philadelphia where issues of principle had been learnedly discussed, began to appear more like theatres, remote from the brutalities that were occurring. As untrusting of the Tories as any rebel leader, Washington urged the provincial assemblies to set up courts for the trial of "disaffected persons," asking for test acts to distinguish friends from foes, highly approving of the Connecticut law of "none to write, speak or act against proceedings of Congress."[18] Commencing with Queen's County, New York, a succession of regulations of provincial congresses denied rights of citizenship, making outlaws of those who refused to conform and exposing them to violations of person and property.

The first year of peace was as unkind to the Loyalists as had been the war. It was against the background of prolonged rebel persecution that the remainder of British North America acquired a new character. Immigration, more than doubling the English-speaking population, continued into 1784 when persecution slowly subsided. According to the gleeful interpretation of the Reverend Samuel Peters the bitter prejudices of the American public relaxed because of the realization that there could be no favours in trade from Britain while Loyalists were harried so brutally. The British employed all their diplomatic resources to reinstate them in their homelands. At New York Carleton was able to gain a measure of grace for eminent individuals. Those who came to Nova Scotia and Canada were for the most part men whose performances in the war made continued residence in the United States too dangerous to contemplate. Many had piloted British warships, had guided British troops on punitive operations, had made themselves so conspicuous as to become the objects of local and special animosities. Among them there was burning royalist ideology but, as in most human affairs, especially when individuals are deprived of all they own, ideology was adulterated by keen self-interest. Ideology could be fortified by recollection of monumental injury and unspeakable indignity inflicted upon them by the triumphant re-

18 There is no footnote to this quotation in the original manuscript, but it is likely drawn from *The Writings of George Washington.* — Editor.

publicans. Having been ridden on a rail, plundered, witnessed the arrival of a starving family under a flag of truce, who could seek accommodation with one's neighbours? It is easy to admire the unbending loyalty of a man like George Leonard, the religiosity of his faith in the virtues of the British Constitution. The admiration should be coupled with the reflection that he, like the great majority of those who emigrated in 1783, had no choice.

The communities formed in 1783-84 gave assurance of the maintenance of a British Empire in North America. Sir Guy Carleton was emphatic in his assertion that continued British control of the remaining colonies depended entirely upon the Loyalists.[19] What is of greater contemporary significance is that the essential ingredients for the Canada of 1867 came into being. The population of peninsular Nova Scotia was doubled. New provinces, New Brunswick and Cape Breton, appeared. The Island of St. John received an important addition to its population, much greater than is commonly supposed. The French of Canada whose loyalties, where discernible, had vibrated with the record of military success or failure, were to discover that the relative simplicity of life under the Quebec Act would be no more, that an English-speaking population was created on their flanks with an apparently limitless frontier to the westward.

There were few expressions of stirring faith in the future. Enthusiasm was contained by the daily fare of back-breaking labour, salt pork and hard biscuit, shortages of most essentials for breaking new soil, and, except for the few privileged, complete absence of luxuries. Through all the settlements, from Niagara to Shelburne, there was a sensation of unfairness, that the British Government owed infinitely more than was given. Few were willing to believe that the lotteries, or other capricious methods of assigning land grants, did them justice. Even on the good intervale lands of the St. John valley movement rather than settlement was general for a full three years as Loyalists moved up and down the river and its tributaries in search of greener pastures. The provincial regiments, settled north of Maugerville-Burton, established but little permanent identity with the countryside. Disbanded in a cold and wet October, many of the soldiers accepted the poor shelter of the incipient towns at the mouth of the river. Others bedded down for the winter among the pre-Loyalist populations of Burton, Maugerville and Gagetown. The First Battalion of DeLancey's, having drawn the northernmost block, refused the assignment. Fear of the Indians, still rather more than a nuisance, and remoteness from the sea, the highway to civilization, militated against settlement in the deep interior of what became New Brunswick.

Shelburne, named by Governor Parr for the statesman who gave the Loyalists great offence by offering the rebels such a generous peace, wit-

19 Minutes of the Board of Trade, 16 March 1784, British Museum Additional Manuscripts [hereafter BM Add Mss] 38,388.

nessed dissatisfaction much more acute. The magnificent harbour was uncomplemented by agricultural hinterland. For those unschooled to going down to the sea in ships the prospect was appalling and a distracted government made its own lot, as well as that of the settlers, no easier by laying out "farms" on a hypothetical road across the peninsula to Annapolis. Benjamin Marston was not the only official who could say "This curs'd republican spirit has been the ruin of us."[20] Amid the rhetoric of disappointment Loyalists were prone to demagogery. The familiar North American predilection for land-grabbing had to be restrained. Not only at Shelburne did the first arrivals attempt to monopolize the good land and force latecomers to purchase. Up to nearly 15,000 at one point, the population eventually dissipated itself down the coastline towards Yarmouth or wherever opportunity offered. St. John's Island, New Brunswick and Canada acquired many. After the persecution mania subsided in the United States, some, especially of the more affluent, felt it safe to return.

The settlement of Port Mouton is a classic story of Loyalist odyssey and travail, told with strong feeling and accuracy of detail.[21] The soldiers of Tarleton's Legion, cheek by jowl with the military bureaucrats of the administrative branches, could not abide them but all endured the chilling despair of a Nova Scotian winter beneath hastily improvised shelter and all witnessed the loss of their possessions by fire during an unusually dry spring. Most were dispersed to the four winds but they made impacts that proved permanent, notably the towns of St. Stephen and Guysborough. Very late in 1783 the Loyalist remnants of the garrisons of Charleston, Savannah and St. Augustine were settled along Nova Scotia's "eastern shore." A multitude of harbours, miniature Shelburnes, could accommodate but handfulls. Each maintained a small quota of permanent settlers but once again the story was one of persistent movement in search of more fertile land. The Gilroy list of grantees for the County of Sydney, showing a very high proportion of Scottish names, indicates that escheats were relatively few.[22] On the contrary there seems little doubt that many grants were sold for trifling considerations and that many of these settlements of the eastern shore Loyalists, Carolinians deposited on a bleak coastline at an unseasonable time of year, retained merely the suggestion of permanence. Here Loyalist identity disappeared probably as quickly as anywhere else.

20 Benjamin Marston Diary, 8, 16 May 1783, in the Winslow Papers, vol. XXII, University of New Brunswick Archives.

21 See T. H. Raddall, "Tarleton's Legion", Nova Scotia Historical Society *Collections,* XXVIII (1947), pp. 1-50.

22 Marion Gilroy, ed., *Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1937), pp. 119-44.

Much later Edmund Fanning expressed the feeling of southern Loyalists, of whom an indeterminate number remained in the Atlantic Provinces, when he proclaimed their willingness to return southward to fight the Spaniards in 1790.[23] Their attitudes reflected a general sentiment that the British Government had failed to provide adequate compensation for good land in an easier climate. On the other hand it is easy to argue that the total generosity extended was unexampled in the history of colonization. Many of the military settlers were not prepared to take advantage of any kind of generosity. On St. John's Island, wrote the deputy of the Muster Master General, the disbanded troops were scattered about the country in idleness and dissipation. They had sold their provisions for drink, some to Lieutenant Governor Patterson who declared they had a right to do so.[24] Yet, in spite of the legend of privation and suffering, the whole movement from south to north and the settlement of the next three years were accomplished with an efficiency that was possible only with massive aid from government. During the first winter Admiral Digby ordered the transports from New York to remain offshore for the "covering" of the larger settlements against isolation from the outside world.[25] Individuals such as Fyler Dibblee could not cope.[26] But much of the correspondence produces an impression of immense industry and lively commercial activity. Scores of little ships facilitated movement. By 1785 many Loyalists were methodically travelling to and from the United States for the purchase of cattle. "The expectation of our being in want has made so many adventurers that we have a better supply of cattle than I have ever known before."[27]

The Loyalists of the northern frontier, those who had retreated into Canada, shared experiences little different from those who came to the Atlantic Provinces. Apart from the troops, thousands of Loyalist refugees were gathered in cantonments at St. John's, Chambly, Sorel, in the seigniory of Yamachiche commonly known as Machiche, and elsewhere in the vicinity of Montreal. Distant Niagara harboured Butler's rangers and their dependents. Those who had fled northward at the outset of the rebellion had, in anticipation of a quick return, left their families behind and the consequences were frequently harrowing. Women and children, enduring appalling hardships, had all through the war passed through the forests and over the lakes under flags of truce. Loyalist families, left behind under the supervision of rebel committees, suffered brutal and systematic persecution. "God knows where I shall get a place to lay my head," wrote Mary Munro to her husband, "my

23 Fanning to Grenville, 20 November 1790, CO 226/12.

24 Charles Stewart to Winslow, 25 June 1784, Winslow Papers, vol. III.

25 Digby to North, 1 October 1783, CO 5/186.

26 See the memorial of William Jarvis, March 1778, AO 13/41.

27 G. Townshend to Winslow, 26 September 1785, Winslow Papers, vol. IV.

own relations are my greatest enemies . . . . The mills they have had a long time in their possession, likewise all your tenants' lands and houses."[28] Robert Rogers described the plight of his brother's family, confined to a hut "or rather a wretched hovel" with the milk of one cow and a few ears of Indian corn for sustenance. The corn they were compelled to carry to a rebel miller who took a high toll.[29] Adding to the variety of refugees making their way to the British lines were many blacks who, amid the ebb and flow of the war's fortunes, experienced many interludes of personal liberty. Joseph King had twice been recaptured and sold at public vendue by "the Yankees" but ultimately escaped through the woods to Canada bringing two white men with him.[30] The status of runaway slaves was always dubious. Loyalist traders and loyal Indians on occasion attempted to acquire them as property.[31] Mrs. René La Force, a Loyalist widow who made her way to Detroit from Virginia with five children and thirteen slaves, lost "all her property" when the slaves were seized and sold by a party of soldiers and Indians.[32]

As news of "the shameful peace" reached the St. Lawrence Valley, Haldimand had on his hands about 5,600 people requiring resettlement. His first predilection was to move them eastward. Thinking on military lines, he was primarily concerned with the establishment of a strong communication with Nova Scotia. The unreliability of intelligence from across the Lakes, the remoteness of the Canadian interior from the civilizing amenities of tidewater, caused him to look to Halifax rather than to the lone land beyond the rapids of the St. Lawrence. In the last years of the war he had developed a fairly efficient courier service with the small post at Oromocto on the St. John and Fort Howe at the mouth of the river. He secured the consent of Governor Parr to the grant of islands in the upper St. John for Louis and Michel Mercure, able but extortionate Acadian runners of the woods who had carried his dispatches. Their ambition was to lead the fragmented Acadian populations of the lower St. John northward to its confluence with the Madawaska where they could count with more confidence on the regular observance of the offices of religion.[33] In the summer of 1783 Haldimand had two hundred men labouring on a road from Kamouraska to Lake Temiscouata.[34] For the defence of a much reduced British North America it was logical to move his Loyalists in Canada to a location where they could

28 Mary Monro to Captain John Monro, undated, BM Add Mss 21,821.

29 Rogers to Haldimand, undated, *ibid.*, 21,820.

30 King to Haldimand, 17 October 1778, *ibid.*, 21,809.

31 Johnson to Haldimand, 3 June 1780, *ibid.*, 21,818.

32 Mrs. LaForce to Haldimand, undated, *ibid.*, 21,808.

33 Parr to Haldimand, 14 January 1784, and Haldimand to Parr, 27 November 1783, *ibid.*, 21,810.

34 Haldimand to Parr, 22 June and 27 November 1783, *ibid.*

play a military role. This was the same kind of thinking that impelled Sir Guy Carleton at New York to suggest the settlement of his own Loyalists on the St. Croix, along with "reinforcing settlements," "like the cantonments of an army," on the St. John.[35]

The lands about Cataraqui and on the upper St. Lawrence presented features that were forbidding. Even the friendly Indians, the Mohawks who had fought for Britain, were untamed and untrusted. Commercial men declared that the cost of forwarding produce from Cataraqui to Montreal would be half the value of the cargoes. Abraham Cuyler prophesied that the fur trade would support but ten traders, that a mere one hundred farmers could supply the troops of a garrison. He was not the only Loyalist leader to argue that it would be dangerous to settle these angry and demanding people along the 45th parallel because their "natural animosity" to republicanism would lead to trouble.[36] Even though Carleton at New York was dispatching Loyalists in search of western lands to Canada, Haldimand's disposition was to look eastward. As late as December 1783, large numbers of Loyalists at Machiche declared a preference for Nova Scotia because of its reputation for plenty of fish and game.[37]

An area receiving favourable attention was that of Bay Chaleur. Justus Sherwood, the Vermont Loyalist who had played a strong role for Haldimand during the war in the gathering of intelligence, made a thorough reconnaissance of the Gaspé coast in June and July of 1783. Mountainous terrain presented "the very picture of indigence" but Sherwood could see opportunity for several hundreds of families to live by the fishery. Two acres of good land, he reasoned, could sustain a fisherman and his family. He had harsh words for "a few designing traders" whose interest it was to discourage settlement and keep the handful of settlers in debt. On the Miramichi he could see a river "perhaps the richest in fish of any in America" but not ten people were settled on it because the firm of Davidson and Cort owned 120,000 acres.[38] In consequence of Sherwood's recommendations over three hundred Loyalists, including 31 men of the 84th Regiment with their families, left Quebec for Bay Chaleur between June and November, 1784. Their settlement was to endure but never to prosper.[39]

The sea also beckoned Abraham Cuyler, the former mayor of Albany who came to Quebec in October, 1782 as Inspector-General to "the unincorpor-

35 Carleton to Parr, 26 April 1783, CO 5/109.

36 Cuyler to Haldimand, 10 August 1783, BM Add Mss 21,822.

37 Samuel Adams and Stephen Tuttle to Mathews, 4 October, 11 December 1783, *ibid.*

38 Sherwood to Haldimand with extracts from his journal, 23 August 1783, *ibid.*, 21,828. Haldimand later forbade monopoly of the fishery on Bay Chaleur.

39 See *ibid.* for a return of Loyalists and discharged soldiers embarking for Bay Chaleur. For considerable detail see A. D. Flowers, *The Loyalists of Bay Chaleur* (Victoria, 1973).

ated Loyalists," those untied to military obligations. The island of Cape Breton, denied to colonization since 1763, appeared as an admirable base for maritime enterprise of all kinds and Cuyler made it his business to go to London for the winter of 1783-84 and play his part in the Loyalist demand for the partition of Nova Scotia. A favourable report from Captain Jonathan Jones whom he sent on reconnaissance late in 1783 whetted his confidence but the small group of twenty men with their families, a total of seventy-four people who dedicated their futures to the realization of the proposal, did not leave Quebec until September of 1784.[40] They were headed by Jones and John Peters, a member of the Loyalist family of Hebron, Connecticut, who had migrated to Vermont, another disappointed officer of senior rank who had shepherded Loyalists back to Ticonderoga immediately before the surrender at Saratoga.[41] Cape Breton was ill favoured by the eccentricities of its first lieutenant-governor, Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres, of David Mathews, former mayor of New York, and of Cuyler who never missed an opportunity to harass DesBarres.[42] The colony was soon a starveling where Loyalist predominance quickly disappeared.

Perhaps in deference to the rather unknowledgable advice of Lord Shelburne that the northern Loyalists should be settled "at or near Detroit," the strategic enticements of the east took second place in the mind of General Haldimand, as in August of 1783, his aides began to speak of the plan to settle lands about Cataraqui. Major Samuel Holland was directed to write a report and no sooner had the indefatigable Sherwood returned from Gaspé than he was dispatched westward. Between September 19 and October 6 he explored the country from Lake St. Francis to the Bay of Quinte. Taking care to reconnoitre the land three miles back from the river he produced a statement that was generally favourable. Some of his party were convinced that the land was the best they had ever seen, though he himself thought that above New Oswegatchie, where he planned a domicile for himself, the quality deteriorated. Between Lake St. Francis and this point, he told Haldimand, there was room for twelve townships, each six miles square. At Cataraqui two townships, one on each side of the portage, could be formed.[43] Simultaneously Haldimand sent an officer with seven Loyalist soldiers, two Canadians and an Indian guide to explore the valley of the Ottawa. The report

40 Return of Loyalists to go to Cape Breton, 11 September 1784, BM Add Mss 21,828. For correspondence re the settlement of Cape Breton see *ibid.*, 21,825. An estimate of the Loyalist population of Cape Breton is probably as difficult as it is anywhere owing to the many transients. DesBarres never sent detailed accounts to London. For as careful a reckoning as can be found see R. J. Morgan, "Orphan Outpost: Cape Breton Colony, 1784-1820" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1975), ch. I.

41 Memorial of John Peters, with enclosures, AO 13/79.

42 Haldimand's Diary, 18 January 1786, BM Add Mss 21,893.

43 Journal of a Journey from Montreal to Lake Ontario, BM Add Mss 21,825.

contained many references to the finding of good land. But "from our entrance into the river Ganonoque . . . to its fall into the St Lawrence I did not discover as much good land conveniently situated as would serve one farm."[44]

During the great migration from New York in 1783 no similar activity took place in Canada where Haldimand, delayed by the late arrival of instructions from London, was compelled to postpone all official movement until the following year. The disbandment of three battalions at posts above Montreal, ordered for December 24, did not occur until the following spring. Those in and about Montreal were disbanded on the appointed date but the men were permitted to continue their residence in barracks and to draw rations. There was no joy as the impending move to Cataraqui was proclaimed. Many had hoped to spend the winter within the town of Montreal and to enjoy its limited amenities but this was denied. Idleness in barracks made ideal conditions for demagogues who told the Loyalists that the military planning for the Cataraqui proposal, if accepted, would make them soldiers and slaves for the rest of their lives. To live within the boundaries of the province of Quebec, where institutions were patterned for the French-Canadian élite, was undignifying to men who had lived under the colonial constitution of New York in the good year of 1763, as Michael Grass, one of their leaders, expostulated in a petition. There were demands for an elected legislative council. Rather than face the uncertainties of the western wilderness many Loyalists preferred to remain at their existing locations, especially at St. John's and Sorel. The seigneurial privileges of the land-holders, principally the monopoly of milling, were inconsistent with the free enterprise they had known in their homelands.

It was not merely bewilderment concerning the future or the grief and frustration of men who had served a losing cause that produced a discontent equivalent to endemic indiscipline. Landed proprietors of Old Quebec, seeking settlers to increase the value of their properties, urged Loyalist soldiers to become their tenants. To his anger and mortification Haldimand encountered open opposition to the plan to settle the Cataraqui area. Charles de Lanaudiere, seignior of Ste. Anne, offered land free of rent for ten years. Colonel Henry Caldwell declared he could accommodate thousands of families on a seigniory he had recently purchased on Lake Champlain where to many Loyalists the waters were friendly and familiar, far safer than in "the strange country" of the upper St. Lawrence. Both proprietors were members of the Legislative Council. Haldimand regarded the second offer as much the more dangerous for it proposed settlement close to the American frontier where the particularisms of French Canadian settlers could form a much more satisfactory barrier against the vices of republicanism. In spite of

44 Report of Lieut. G. French, 29 October 1783, *ibid.*

official refusal many Loyalists during the winter of 1783-84 moved to Caldwell Manor on Mississquoi Bay. Promoting the settlement for Caldwell were John Peters, Daniel Bliss of Massachusetts, later a member of New Brunswick's first Council, several officers of Rogers' King's Rangers, and others of notable service such as Alexander Macdonald, Samuel Anderson and John Munro. Justus Sherwood was certain that the Quebec seigniors provided the motivation. Cattle and other *douceurs*, it was alleged, were promised to those who would become tenants of the seigniors in preference to the Crown.[45]

In spite of acrimonies and delays the Cataraqui settlement began to take shape in May of 1784. Movement up the river from Montreal was governed by the availability of batteaux and schedules could seldom be observed. There were some who still owned cattle in the vicinity of Saratoga and permission was asked to cut a trail through the woods from that place to Cataraqui, making a march, it was estimated, of seven days. There was little enthusiasm for the venture. Many wished to leave their families behind in reasonably comfortable barracks rather than take them into the bush, a request Haldimand peremptorily refused. Arrival at the projected sites for townships produced more discontent. Much land proved to be "indifferent" and the pattern of military settlement was broken by many who abandoned their assigned holdings and squatted elsewhere. Reductions of rations to the Nova Scotian scale created unfavourable comparisons with the Nova Scotia coastline that teemed with fish. At one stage it was reported that all wished to return to Montreal.[46] Shortage of surveyors made it impossible to assign lots, often before the onset of winter. Not until October could Peter Van Alstine and his associates of the Fourth Township commence to clear their portions. Officers of the provincial units were angered by Haldimand's insistence that "complete impartiality" should be observed in the drawing of lots, that they, by the caprices of the lottery, might be compelled to accept land remote from the banks of the river. Even though Loyalists were still crossing the Lakes to join the new settlements, there was danger of desertion caused by intelligence that rebel persecution in the lost thirteen colonies had moderated.

In spite of the morass of complaint and despair, presided over by Major Holland, the settlement of eight townships succeeded. Justus Sherwood, an optimist, wrote from New Oswegatchie (opposite the old, the later Ogdensburg) that "any farm is tollerable good."[47] A slim belt of population extended

45 See E. A. Cruikshank, *The Settlement of the Loyalists on the Upper St. Lawrence and Bay of Quinte* (Toronto, 1934), pp. 54, 55, 64, 65, 71, 85, 93-97.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

as far westward as the Bay of Quinte, ultimately to Niagara.[48] Those who deprecate and ignore the significance of this seed-bed of the future Upper Canada should draw comparisons with first settlements in other parts of America where the lot of the pioneers almost always brought complaint and despair. Some of the first settlers of New England, whose pioneers have received so many accolades, finished their days while fighting for Cromwell in Ireland. Few Canadian historians have elaborated upon the meaning of this slim thrust of effective British occupation beyond the rapids of the St. Lawrence, but there was no doubt in the mind of at least one American writer. "We became the founders of Upper Canada," lamented Lorenzo Sabine in 1847 as he contemplated the consequences of the brutal postwar treatment of the Loyalists.[49] Possibly he was echoing the contemporary opinions of Alexander Hamilton whose eloquent protests against the anti-Tory laws made such little impression. The loss of "too large a number of valuable citizens" to fill up "the wilderness of Nova Scotia" was not to the advantage of the newly independent State of New York.[50]

Sabine did not live long enough to see a new nation on the northern borders of the Union. But he could contemplate with annoyance a group of British colonies that could challenge the Union in many branches of commerce, especially in the fisheries, shipbuilding and the carrying trade. British North America, with the ambitions of its slim populations looking increasingly to the westward in conscious rivalry with the States, was a contradiction to the ebullient patriotism of Americans, by this time thoroughly brainwashed in the virtues and highmindedness of the men who had made their revolution. There were few like Sabine who could see that it was all because of the want of foresight of the national heroes of 1782-83.

Early American scholars regarded the Loyalists as a shameful and reactionary minority resistant to inevitable destiny and to the myth of liberty with

48 For the returns of September and October see BM Add Mss 21.828. Maps and plans are in *ibid.*, 21,829. A rather surprising feature of the migration is the number of Loyalists ieft behind. At Sorel there were 316, Chambly 66, St. John's 375, Lachine 207.

49 Lorenzo Sabine, *The American Loyalists* (1847 ed.), pp. 89-90.

50 H. C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, 1961), vol. III, pp. 367, 431 *et passim*. "I am the more hurt at it because it appears to me unmixed with pure and patriotic motives. In some few it is a spirit of blind revenge and resentment but in more it is the most sordid interest. One wishes to possess the house of some wretched Tory, another fears him as a rival in his trade or commerce and a fourth wishes to get clear of his debts by shaking off his creditor or to reduce the cost of living by depopulating the town." Hamilton to R. Livingston, 30 August 1783, *ibid.*, p. 434.

which the Revolution has been enshrouded. British historians have tended to ignore them, the first of many loyal minorities sacrificed in the liquidation of empire. Yet there is nothing peripheral or forgettable in their contribution to Canadian history. For over thirty years they composed the principal English-speaking ingredient among the many elements that were to transform British North America into the Canadian nation, a link between colonialism and nationality second to none.