

EARLY SETTLEMENT AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

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OWING to lack of authoritative statistics, the utmost confusion has existed in regard to the early population of St. John's Island (Prince Edward Island). This confusion has been intensified by the fact that many of the estimates made from time to time were prompted by interested motives on the part of both the proprietors, who wished to give the impression that they were settling their lots in accordance with the terms of their grants, and the early governors, who were always haunted by the fear that, if the Island did not have the appearance of prosperity under their administration, it would be reduced to a county of Nova Scotia, with the consequent loss of their official dignity in addition to the unsuccessful termination of their personal speculations. For these reasons, unless their estimates can be corroborated by other evidence, they must be accepted with reserve. But, fortunately, in the period prior to the American Revolution, two specific returns have been preserved, and they may be taken as approximately correct.

According to the first of these returns which was made by Isaac Deschamps, July 21, 1768, there were twenty-four heads of families with thirty-four women and children, making a total of sixty-eight immigrants under the British régime; and forty-one Acadians employed in the fisheries, who with their wives and children made a total of two hundred and three, survivors of the French régime, (271 in all). The British were New Englanders or adventurers from the British Isles with New England connections; and they employed the Acadians at Malpeque, Rustico, Tracadie, St. Peters and Bay Fortune.¹

It is difficult to see how, in the existing state of communication, Deschamps could have failed to overlook isolated British fishermen or Acadian families; but, as the same objection applies to all estimates submitted prior to the first official census in 1827, we may take

1. M. Vol. 471. p. 47. Unless otherwise stated, references are to the Prince Edward Island state papers in the Public Archives of Canada.

two hundred and seventy-one as a useful figure for purposes of comparison.

The second return was made six years later by Governor Patterson, in reply to a series of questions submitted by the Earl of Dartmouth. At this time, Patterson had no motive for misstatement, and he wrote; "The whole number of whites of all ages and sexes, according to the last return, amounts to twelve hundred and fifteen souls. There are no blacks They have increased from almost nothing to the present number within these three years. The reasons are, the natural prolificacy of the climate and some having been imported".²

In the face of these figures, when the fullest allowance has been made for "prolificacy", it is obvious that more have to be accounted for by importation than by natural increase; and it so happens that the period between 1770 and 1774 was the most active period of immigration to the Island during the eighteenth century. It was also an active period of emigration from Scotland, which was the motherland of most of these early immigrants.³

The first of the land speculators to bestir himself was Sir James Montgomery, who had drawn lot 7 in 1767; and by 1775 had acquired one half of lot 12, lots 30 and 34, and two-thirds of lot 59. He sent out about sixty settlers from Perthshire, who arrived in May, 1770 and established themselves chiefly at Covehead, though a few went to Three Rivers.⁴

Among these settlers at Covehead were the Lawsons, who were warm friends of Governor Patterson; but not of Sir James; for, although the latter has received much praise for his early interest in the settlement of his lots, it must not be supposed that he himself contributed towards the emigration expenses of the settlers. He merely directed them to his own lands and offered to lease them wilderness land at one shilling per acre. On this point, Dr. MacGregor, who visited Covehead in 1791, makes the following illuminating commentary:

2. A, 11, 204-23, May 1, 1774:

3. See, Margaret I. Adam, *The Highland Emigration of 1770, The Scottish Historical Review*, XVI (July 1919), 280. She says Emigration "reached its zenith in the early seventies, and in 1775 received a decided check—". The emigrants were drawn from a fairly wide area. Perthshire and Strathspey contributed a few; the mainland districts of Argyllshire, Ross and Sutherland contributed more; but the bulk of the mainland emigration was supplied by the glens of Invernessshire, Strathglass, Glenmoriston, Glengarry, and Glen Urquhart.

The really sensational departures, however, were not from the mainland but from the islands; and the places that figure most largely in the records of the exodus are Skye, the two Uists, Lewes, Arran, Jura, Gigha, and Islay."

4. A, 1, 195, Duport to Hillisborough. A, 1, 155, Patterson says *families*; so that one can only guess at the numbers, probably 200.

I found that Mr. Miller was from the parish of Muthil, twelve miles from Loch Earne, where I was born. He told me of Mr. Lawson, MacEwan, and others, who came out at the same time. At hearing Mr. Lawson's name, I instantly recollected that when I was a little boy, I heard much talk of a Mr. Lawson and others going out to America. They were decoyed out by one of the great proprietors to settle his land. They were to pay a shilling rent per acre, and they thought it cheap till they came out and saw it; but then they found it dear enough. After them came a number from Dumfriesshire, who settled here and in St. Peter's. On their first arrival they were like to perish with hunger, as the few settlers who were before them had little enough for themselves; and they could not all have lived, had not a number of them got over to Pictou and obtained relief there from the old settlers.⁵

In September, 1770, Robert Stewart and his family arrived in Malpeque with about sixty settlers or families, upwards of two hundred souls, for the half of lot 18, which had been granted to his brother-in-law, Lt.-Colonel Robert Stewart, brother of Peter Stewart, who later became Chief Justice of the Island. For want of a pilot their vessel, the *Annabella*, ran on shore at the entrance to the harbour and was lost, together with part of the cargo. Though no lives were lost, these immigrants suffered severely from want of clothing and provisions during the first winter. They came from Argyleshire, the home of the Stewarts, and among them were the names of Ramsay, McGougan, McKenzie, McArthur, McDougall, Murphy, England and McKay. In the following autumn they were joined by some seventy persons, who came on their own account.⁶

Between 1768 and 1772, six or seven families had been established on lot 28 by Captain Holland, the original grantee, and Mrs. Phillips Callbeck, to whose father, Nathaniel Coffin, Holland had sold the eastern half of the lot. In 1770, Mr. James Richardson had brought "about fifteen settlers" to the vicinity of Charlottetown; and, in the autumn of 1771, Lieutenant Governor Desbrisay had sent nine families to lots 31 and 33, which he had secured possession of, for the time being, from Adam Drummond and General Richard Worge.⁷

5. Rev. George Patterson, *Memoir of the Rev. James MacGregor, D.D.*, Philadelphia, 1859, p. 212.

6. A, I, 155, 195; A, I, 267; A, II, 263.

7. A, I, 267; A, II, 161, 199, 225, and 245. In April 1770, Desbrisay had purchased lots 31 and 33 and embarked upon settlement with enthusiasm. His methods were objected to by Government in the following pointed despatch from J. Pownall: "These complaints have been laid before the king together with a copy of one of your advertisements, by which it appears that you have not only

The largest of all the settlements of this period was made at Tracadie, Lot 36, by Captain John MacDonald of Glenaladale. He was not an original grantee, but purchased lot 36, in 1771, from George Spence and John Mill, merchants of London, in order to provide for some Roman Catholic tenants of Alexander MacDonald of Boisdale, who was trying to convert them to Presbyterianism. In transferring these tenants to the Island, he was assisted by a memorial fund raised by the Catholic Church.

An advance guard of seventeen families went out in the summer of 1771; but the main body did not arrive till 1772. They consisted of two hundred and ten persons, one hundred from the Island of Uist and one hundred and ten from the mainland. They arrived in the ship *Alexander*, in the month of June; and were led up the Hillsborough by Donald MacDonald, brother of Captain John, to Scotchfort, whence they portaged to Tracadie. In the party were John MacDonald, a brother-in-law of Captain John, Rev. James MacDonald, a secular missionary priest, and Roderick MacDonald, a medical doctor. In the following year Captain John himself arrived with his wife and family, bringing with him a ship-load of provisions which he had purchased at Boston, on hearing that a previous supply ship had been lost. The total immigration directed by MacDonald, upwards of three hundred in number, ultimately spread over several lots in the eastern part of the Island; and the descendants of their leaders played an important part in its development.⁸

One other attempt at settlement in this period deserves notice; not for its success, but because of its pretensions: the attempt of Robert Clark, a merchant of London, to found New London, lot 21, in 1773. Three contemporary accounts of this project have

held out encouragement to emigration as a proprietor of lands in the Island of St. John, but that you have unwarrantably presumed to recite in the preamble of those advertisements the offices which you hold under the King's Royal Commission, evidently with a design to give the greater color of authority to your proposals. I am commanded therefore by the Earl of Dartmouth to acquaint you that all such publications must be immediately suppressed, and that if it shall appear that any of the King's subjects in Great Britain or Ireland shall have emigrated from these kingdoms, in consequence of any encouragement you may have offered, you must expect to receive the strongest marks of His Majesty's displeasure." This mediated protest of the Irish landlords compelled Desbrisay to cancel arrangements he had made with some four hundred prospective emigrants. He then revived a scheme of Manul Lutterloh, a major in the German service and resident agent at London to Prince Ferdinand and other German princes. He proposed to get four thousand German families, at least four to a family, within three years, at the rate of £1000 for each two hundred families. But the scheme came to naught; and in the meantime Desbrisay, unable to make payments, had to surrender both lots to their original owners; while the nine families, unable to get title or lease on the Island, lost their money and joined other settlements.

8. A, I, 258; Lecture, Rev. D. MacDonald, Charlottetown, 1881; Memorial Volume, *The Scottish Catholics in Prince Edward Island, 1772—1922*.

survived, one by John Stewart, one by Governor Patterson, and another by Thomas Curtis. Stewart for the time being was biased in favour of Clark, Patterson against him, but Curtis had no reason for giving other than a plain account of the facts as he saw them. Stewart's account is brief: On lot 21, "a handsome settlement was begun in 1773 and carried on for several years at considerable expense." Patterson had clashed with Clark over the land sales of 1781, and, because of that, his account, though valuable for its detail, must be taken *cum grano salis*. After discussing an attempt of George Spence & Co. to establish trade and a fishing establishment, he says:

The other was undertaken by an old Clothsmen of London, Mr. Robert Clark (the present petitioner against the sales). He came out here with a cargo of merchandise and Idlers, and landed at one of the Northern Harbours of the Island, where he began building a Town. I thought him at first a great acquisition to the Country and did everything in my power to serve him. Soon after his arrival, I was informed he was ruining himself, by expense and want of care; and to try if I could be of use I paid him a visit; when I immediately discovered the report was true, and I took the liberty of saying so to himself.

He landed his goods before he had a House to store them, a part were on the open beach, the remainder covered with the sails of his ship, all open to whoever chose to take of them.

He had above a hundred people to feed, and to pay, among whom were all the Vagabonds of the Island, for those Gentlemen flocked to him from all parts. They had Wages, Victuals and Drink at will, and did as they pleased. They soon discovered he was open to flattery. He was vain of the numbers he saw about him, and they made him believe all the people in the Country would come and settle at his New London. He really thought himself a second Penn and believed he would transmit as great a name to Posterity. From being a Methodist, he had turned Quaker a little before he left England, and to give his change the appearance of real conviction, he outdid his whole Fraternity in Sanctity.

Depending on his powers as a Preacher, and the purity of his Figure, he brought out, with the hopes of reclaiming them, a number of wild youths, who had before baffled all the attempts of their Friends. Of those he made Overseers, and I counted no less than eighteen, who only played and kept the others idle. I told him so, and advised him to turn about their business a number whom I named; and asking him how he could bring such People with him from England. He said he hoped to make New London a place for recovering of Sinners. This, and his saying it was a Vision which occasioned his coming to this Island, let me know enough of Mr. Clark; and I saw very clearly, that save who he would, he must in a short time be himself lost, and so it turned out. He returned to England in the fall of the same

year, leaving in the care of the boys what remained of his Property, and he has not appeared here since.⁹

Though the tone of this account needs to be softened, the main facts can be corroborated from other sources. In regard to numbers, Benjamin Chappell, who joined Clark's settlement in 1774, included in his list one hundred and twenty-nine persons, "in Mr. Clark's service or else dependents on his store." In this list, names of settlers are given, with their wives and children. Attached to each household or next door is the number only of men and boy labourers, totalling thirty-six men, two carpenters, fourteen fishermen, three boys and one girl. In his own house, three "gentlemen" reside.

An unbiassed comment on Clark's enthusiasm for his settlement, after he returned to London, and also on his qualifications to be an emigration agent, may be found in the narrative of Thomas Curtis.¹⁰

Curtis was a young man, from Hampshire, who thought of improving his circumstances by emigration; and, on learning of Clark's venture on the Island, he interviewed him at his home in London, in the summer of 1775. Clark informed him that he had some thousands of acres of land to sell, well stocked with timber, and that he might purchase as much as he pleased at 4d per acre, for life, or one shilling per acre, freehold; that he would find a ready market for timber, as captains or masters of ships, who were frequently coming in, would purchase all he could cut; that sawyers were better paid there for their labour than in England; that the rivers abounded with fish and the country with game, free to all; that deer and turkeys might sometimes be shot, "from the windows," and that, when at work in the woods, one might shoot enough to serve one's family, without loss of time. In short, he assured Curtis that any man could live more comfortably there than in England.

"Such a favourable account from so respectable a man," says Curtis, "I sucked like sack; Nay don't think if anyone would have given me £500 I should have been satisfied to have stayed in London"

"He likewise informed me that there were great numbers of fowls, and also beasts such as bears and foxes, whose skins were valuable, and some black fox skins were worth £5 each, and many

9. A, VI, 124-27, Patterson to Sydney, Dec. 2, 1784.

10. Public Archives of Canada, MS. "A Narrative of the Voyage of Thomas Curtis to the Island of St. John's in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in North America, in the year 1775."

other advantages peculiar to this Island; and that he had a vessel in the river bound there which would sail in about two weeks."

Curtis immediately decided to go on that vessel. He was not without means. He took with him—10 suits of clothes, several pairs of shoes, 4 dozen white shirts, 1 dozen check, 4 guns, 50 lbs. of powder, 3 cwt. of shot, one of ball, £20 worth of saws, a large quantity of thread for making nets, 1000 gun flints, with powder flasks and shot pouches, "and every article a man could wish for to go on such an expedition." Having laid in these supplies, and believing that he could buy food on the Island, he gave Clark 80 guineas, in return for a draft on his agent there.

But, even before he had sailed from London, Curtis had occasion to doubt Clark's glowing account of his settlement. When he went on board the vessel, Clark was there to see it off, and to enquire what stock of provisions he had taken for the winter. When he replied, "None", Clark exclaimed, "*What, do you mean to go there to be starved?*" At this belated interest in his welfare, Curtis was much surprised, and almost wished that he had not been committed to the venture.

He felt further misgivings as to Clark's integrity when he presented his draft for payment in New London. The agent informed him not only that he must take goods instead of cash, but that "Clark knew very well there was no cash in circulation and that they did not see so much money in a year."

Curtis was now "much surprised at Robert Clark's deception", and reflected that he had been deceived not only in this particular but in "many other instances of consequence, such as deers and turkeys to be shot from your windows, without loss of time." During the seven months "I was confined there," he adds, "I heard from many of the inhabitants that there had not been such a thing seen on the Island by the oldest inhabitants."

Nor was New London itself up to expectations:—

At first entering New London, from the woods, it was cut down within a quarter of a mile of the first house. From the path on our right, we could see a little row of log houses, and one large house on our left: in all about sixteen houses: that on our left, where the agent lived, might be two storey high; but, I believe none else were. This comprised the whole of the famous New London.

One further extract from this narrative of Curtis tends to confirm Patterson's view that Clark was being imposed upon by his vagrant labourers:

My curiosity led me once to see a saw mill that was erected for R. Clark's use at a considerable expense, it being six or seven miles from New London, up the River on a convenient spot, and the finest timber growing around it I ever saw. The mill was calculated to work only one saw at a time. I was informed by respectable people that there were upwards of seventy men one winter employed to keep this saw at work in cutting boards, etc. From this circumstance I think the boards must be very dere if they were sold for their cost, as the mill was not half its time at work, with all those hands; from what I could learn, one pair of sawyers, if they had their work pitted, would have been able to have cut as much boards in the course of the winter as this mill.

This completes the contemporary survey of immigration prior to Governor Patterson's estimate of May 1, 1774. As few of these reports give specific numbers, as some use the words *settlers* and *families* interchangeably, and as all immigrants were not married it is difficult to strike an average per family; but if we take as a basis for computation the British part of the return of 1768, twenty-four men and sixty-eight persons, it will give an average of three. Taking the families or settlers sent out by Montgomery, Stewart, Desbrisay, Richardson, Holland and Coffin at one hundred and fifty, and allowing three to a family, it would give a total of 450. These, added to two hundred and seventy-one of the 1768 return, three hundred sent out by McDonald, and one hundred and twenty-nine collected by Clark, make a total of 1150, a very satisfactory check upon Patterson's estimate of 1215, leaving sixty-five to be accounted for by the "natural prolificacy of the climate," during three years, when accident and privation left little room for an excess of births over deaths, and when single men roamed from colony to colony according to the exigencies of trade and the fisheries.

In the summer of 1774, the *Lovely Nelly* brought sixty-seven immigrants to the Island from the port of Kirkcudbright, Scotland, most of whom later migrated to Pictou.

In the following year two groups of immigrants arrived, both of which suffered much hardship, and one of which also took part in the migration to Pictou. The first of these to arrive was a party sent out for the Smith brothers, proprietors of lot 57. They arrived in the *John and Elizabeth* during the summer—seven families, fifty-two souls. According to Patterson, the proprietors recommended them to his care, but would not pay for the provisions that were purchased on their account. "Unfortunately for these settlers," he adds, "the greatest part of the provisions which had been purchased for them was carried off by two American privateers

in November, 1775, and they were reduced to such extremity that it is said they eat their own children, the report of which hath prevented hundreds from coming among us." In the same report he says "being at a distance from any other inhabitants in a very few months they all deserted without leaving a trace behind them".¹¹

In this despatch Patterson was refuting a claim on behalf of the Smiths that settlement had been made on their lot, prior to the sales of 1781, and naturally he states the disaster as strongly as possible. He was writing eleven years after the event; and, curiously enough, the memorial of the proprietors which he was refuting had claimed credit for only fifty-two persons, whereas John Budd writing from Charlottetown in November, 1775, reported the arrival of one hundred and three settlers, late in the fall for Smith & Co. In view of the fact that the memorial of the proprietors was compiled without close co-operation among those concerned, it is probable either that Budd's figure is correct or that the one hundred and three were additional to the passengers who sailed on the *John and Elizabeth*.¹²

The tragic experiences of these immigrants has been recorded in moving language by Dr. George Patterson, who gathered his information from their descendants. Six of the fifteen families, which he enumerates as having migrated to Pictou, were passengers on the *Lovely Nelly* in 1774. His account is in part as follows:

They commenced a settlement with fair prospects of success when their hopes were blighted by a remarkable visitation [of field mice]. These animals swarmed everywhere, and consumed everything eatable, even the potatoes in the ground. In some of the houses at West River are still preserved books of which the leather on the covers has been gnawed by them.

The new settlers would have had difficulties enough under any circumstances, but this filled their cup to the brim, and during the eighteen months that they remained there they endured all the miseries of famine. For three months in summer they subsisted on lobsters and other shell-fish which they gathered on the shore. In the spring they had obtained from Tatamagouche a few potatoes for seed, but the mice devoured them in the ground and everything else in the shape of crop, so that when winter came, they were on the verge of starvation.

Waugh had brought a supply of provisions and other articles so that the first summer they did not suffer much, but at the end of the second season he had all his goods in the store of a man named Brine, who traded with the small fishing vessels

11. A, VIII, 112, 117.

12. A, III, 36.

from the colonies. A number of these vessels happened to be in the harbour and before returning home the crews came ashore for a carousal. The American Revolution was just commencing and they were leaving with the idea of not returning, expecting when they reached their homes to serve either as soldiers or sailors. Before going on board they plundered Brine's Warehouse of all it contained, carrying off all Waugh's property.

That winter they would have perished were it not for a French settlement some miles distant from which they received supplies, principally potatoes, in exchange for the clothing they had brought with them from Scotland, until they scarcely retained sufficient to clothe themselves decently. From scarcity of food the men became reduced to such a state of weakness, and the snow was so deep, that they became at last scarcely able to carry back provisions for their families, and when with slow steps and heavy labor, they brought them home such was the state of weakness in which they had left their children, they trembled to enter their dwelling, lest they should find them dead, and sometimes waited at the door, listening for any sound that might indicate that they were alive.

In the spring of 1776 they sent David Stewart over to Pictou to investigate conditions there; and about fifteen families moved over and settled at West River, Middle River and East River.¹³

The last accession to the population of the Island, in 1775, consisted of the passengers on the snow *Elizabeth*, Robert Clark's vessel, which was wrecked at the narrows of the long sandbar, between Malpeque and Cascumpeque. This vessel brought Chief Justice Peter Stewart and part of his family, together with a miscellaneous list collected by Clark, thirty-five in all. On the way they spoke the British fleet going to war with the American colonies.

During the war there was no increase in the population of the Island by immigration; but rather a decrease, as thirty-three men were recruited in the Royal Highland Emigrants for the defence of Quebec and a few for the Nova Scotia volunteers. It is probable that, when allowance has been made for the emigration to Pictou and for recruiting in the colonial forces, less than a hundred should be added to Patterson's return of 1774, making the population of the Island on the eve of the American Revolution not more than thirteen hundred.¹⁴

II

It will be seen from the above accounts of early immigration that such settlements as were made had been placed at or near

13. Reverend George Patterson, D. D., *A History of the County of Pictou*, Montreal, 1877, p. 94.

14. Can. Arch. Rep. 1904, p. 384.

former French settlements, and, in all instances, beside the sea. This was a double advantage, in that it gave ready access to sea food and made the problem of clearing the lands less acute, although much shrubbery had overrun the French uplands even by the date of Holland's survey in 1765.

Settlement on the sea coast also made communications possible, if difficult, and enabled intercolonial coasting vessels to call occasionally with articles of trade. The inadequacy of communication at this time cannot be described better than in Governor Patterson's own words:

We are likewise much distressed by the badness of our communications from this town to the different parts of the Island. Almost the whole depending on water carriage which is very expensive, uncertain and tedious. For instance, from here to Princetown and all that quarter of the Island, a single man is obliged to hire a boat to the head of the Hillsborough River, from thence to travel by land to St. Peters, and there wait for a passage by water to Richmond Bay. That is at present the only communication, which cannot sometimes be performed in less than two weeks.

From here to Georgetown they go as above to St. Peters, they are obliged to be ferried over St. Peter's Bay, from whence they travel to Bay Fortune by land and there wait for a passage by water to Georgetown. It may be very easily seen by the map how roundabout, inconvenient and uncertain a communication this I have described is, and how easy, short and certain it might be made by cutting a road from the south side of Hillsborough River to the head of either Cardigan, Brudenell or Montague Rivers.

The passage from the head of Hillsborough River to this is by no means certain on account of the westerly winds, which prevail here very much for the greatest part of the summer, which makes it very necessary to have a road made from this town to join that which leads from St. Peters to this River. By these three roads being made there would be a good communication for the present to all the principal parts of the Island from the seat of government, and I am certain there are very few things contribute more towards making a country prosper than roads.¹⁵

Notwithstanding Patterson's valiant efforts to have roads made, little was done to improve communication for many years. When Dr. MacGregor visited the Island in 1791, he found little change in this respect;

There was not a road on the Island, with the exception of one between Charlottetown and Cove Head. There was

15. A, I, 168.

scarcely even a blaze between other settlements. The greater part of the travelling was along shore, and there is one peculiarity of the Island, which rendered this particularly difficult, viz., the number of deep creeks and inlets of the sea, which either rendered a long circuit necessary to go round them, or else must be crossed in canoes. Thus from Charlottetown to Princetown, the course was to proceed up the banks of the Hillsborough, then cross to Cove Head, and thence to proceed along the north shore of the Island.¹⁶

Though access to the sea made trade possible, it had not made much advance by 1775, partly because such ships as came from the British Isles were chartered for immigration purposes alone, and partly because the only return cargo was fish and timber. In reply to Dartmouth's questions on this point, Patterson says:

I would rather say what I think the trade likely to be, than what it is at present, as in our infant state when it is impossible there can be anything to export, every trade must be against us. It is true, there is every summer some fish made, and there hath been some timber sent home; but the inhabitants having not yet fully supplied themselves with provisions of their own growth, and owing to the great increase which the importing of that article adds to its price: the principals who have been concerned in both, have hitherto been losers.

Hitherto our imports have been so irregular I cannot possibly form any estimation of them, and though every article we wear, and use, of both clothing and utensils are originally English, they have come to us from Boston, Quebec, etc., in trading vessels mostly, out of each of which we purchased what was immediately necessary, without making any regular entry of the quantities or of the sorts of the goods.¹⁷

Of the three isolated Scottish settlements, that of Covehead had the best start, having landed without accident, and thus saved their provisions, clothing, and utensils. They, like the people of Princetown and Tracadie, had not been entirely destitute of means, nor driven from home by stress of poverty. Rather, they had sought to improve their condition and acquire lands in a new world as yet uncrowded. The Malpeque people had lost their supplies at their very door, later settlers at Covehead and St. Peters had been plundered by American fishermen and privateers, and the Tracadie clan had lost one shipload of provisions, so that all were more or less victims of fate; but they were men of pluck and resource, fit subjects to found a new colony.

16. Patterson, MacGregor, op. cit., p. 209.

17. A, II, 204—23.

In the period under consideration no settler rose above the log hut; but there was plenty of wood to burn; and, although wind and snow beat through the cracks, a cheerful fire flamed in the chimney; and their rude beds of straw were piled high with blankets. Curtis slept in a straw bed, like a cabin bed, under ten blankets.

Luxuries were unknown and necessities were scarce; but there was food in the woods and in the sea, to be had for the taking. Though the first hut Curtis entered looked like a cow house, a goose was cooking for dinner; and, though he lived most of the winter on salt fish and potatoes supplemented by a little bread, he was never in better health. At times rum, sugar and molasses could be bought; but these were uncertain.

On the whole, it was a struggle for bare existence without thought of social relaxation, educational and religious facilities. From the point of view of religious guidance, the Tracadie settlers were better off, in that Father James MacDonald served them as well as the Acadians. The other settlers were largely Presbyterian, and saw no clergyman of their own faith prior to 1791. On that date, Dr. MacGregor found that there were good books in circulation at Covehead, but the young people of Malpeque, 19 years of age, had never seen a minister and did not know how to behave in church. Even in Charlottetown two visits from Rev. John Eagleson, in 1773 and 1774, afforded the only opportunity for religious observance, prior to the arrival of Parson Desbrisay in 1775. At this date also, there was not a school nor a school teacher on the Island.

The following excerpts from Benjamin Chappell's diary throw much light upon social and economic conditions at this time; and, to him with ears to hear, tell a story of courage in privation, perils by land and sea, decent burial without priest or candle, and faith in the Unseen:

January 19, 1775—Myself in woods with Geddes squaring timber for ye counting-house. Foster, Parratt and Cooper order'd to go to Great Rusticoe to fetch our own lowercargo. Coming over our own bay, they broke in and drown'd two horses. Mens lives saved, bless God.

February 5th—Sunday at 11 clock arriv'd a slay with 1/3 of a barrel of coarse sugar, half a barrel of flower, one barrel of pork. No rum, no molasses.

February 21st—We have now no flower, no rum, no meat, no bread in the stores this day.

March 23rd—Arrived Mr. Berry from Charletown with a little rum.

- March 24th—Sick of the ague through the cold, doing but little work.
- March 25th—Through the want of provisions some of the people refuse all work and grow very violent.
- March 27th—Geddes and myself, by order of Mr. Allen, attempt to make a pair of stocks by way of a prison.
- March 29th—The people through want of provisions are outrageous. They form a plan and party to surprise Charlottetown. About noon they march off near the fol. order, Anvil, Chaters, Foster, Parrat, Cooper, Allen, Warren, Rooke, Shipard and joined by Barnet and Mitchel.
- April 1st—Sunday Mr. Mellish buried the remains of Jane Duport who died yesterday. To all appearances for want of the common necessaries of life. Aged 12 years.
- May 5th—A scooner off the Harbor from Salem put in at Malpeck. Proves to be Coffins from Salem.
- May 20th—Went over the bar fishing and took 30 codfish.
- June 7th—4 of our people sail for Narrowshack. Finding no master a-coming nor no provision nor no regular business but sawing and my mate Geddes leaving the Island through want of provision and conclude to quit it likewise.
- June 8th—Tuesday, My wife and self in great consternation about leaving the Island.
- June 9th—Friday, Conclude not to remove but trust God for food. Setting up ye garden pales and making boxes for cabbages.