

THE SECOND EXPULSION OF THE ACADIANS¹

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NEARLY half a century after Nova Scotia had become a British province, its population was still predominantly French. This was the anomaly which Governor Lawrence sought to remove when he expelled the Acadians in 1755. Apparently satisfied with the thoroughness of his work, he wrote to Governor Shirley of Massachusetts early in the year 1756: "... I thank God they are removed from amongst us ... we feel already some of the happy effects of it." But the clash of civilizations in the little peninsula had not yet ended. Many of the Acadians escaped deportation in 1755 and, in the years which followed, the number of those who remained in the province was continually increased by returning refugees. To the authorities resident in Nova Scotia the presence of the so called "Neutral French" during a time of conflict between France and England was a menace to British supremacy, and their removal appeared to be the only justifiable course. It may be said to-day that the fear—even panic—which resulted in the second expulsion was unfounded; military contemporaries such as Sir Jeffery Amherst considered the Acadians harmless. Whether justified or not, the fact remains that seven years after the tragic event of 1755 there was a definite attempt to remove the last of the Acadians from Nova Scotia. The ill success which attended this venture was owing, not to lack of determination or initiative on the part of the officials at Halifax, but to circumstances entirely unforeseen. The purpose of this article is to tell why there was a second expulsion of the Acadians, and why it failed.

At the end of the year 1755, Nova Scotia was practically depopulated.² The Seven Years' War was just beginning³ and if "the key to British interests and dominion in America" was to remain in British hands, new settlers were a necessity. Governor Lawrence looked forward to a wholesale emigration from the

(1) This article is based on original sources found in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. I am indebted to Professor D. C. Harvey and to Professor J. B. Brebner for their valuable help in its preparation. I alone am responsible for any errors which may have been made.

(2) Outside of a few military posts and some fishing stations, the most important being at Canso, the entire population of the peninsula was seated at Halifax and Lunenburg, both on the Atlantic coast. Although many Acadians escaped deportation, they were obviously unable to live on their former lands.

(3) War was not formally declared until the summer of 1756, but hostilities in America began in 1755.

continent, particularly from New England. But a period of six years was to pass before the evacuated lands of the Acadians again yielded their rich harvests. The reason for this delay in settlement is quite clear. It was a time of war; and a frontier province, where embittered Acadians and hostile Indians sulked in the forests, held little attraction for immigrants.

The early years of the Seven Years' War were open seasons for combined Acadian and Indian attacks on the scattered British outposts in Nova Scotia. Parties of volunteers, in addition to the regular troops, kept up a guerilla warfare against the hidden enemy. But the military force in the province was pitifully weak, and the numbers of the Acadians were continually strengthened by returning expatriates.¹ At the close of the year 1756, Governor Lawrence wrote to the Board of Trade, acknowledging his inability to re-settle the province:

What scheme can I propose or what terms of encouragement can be granted that will induce hardy and industrious settlers to plant themselves in a frontier country, liable to have their throats cut every moment by the most inveterate enemies. . . I say, My Lords, that until the Country can be possessed in peace I am but too apprehensive that no inducement whatever will prevail with the people upon the continent to attempt settlement upon the Acadian lands.

The fiasco of Loudoun's "cabbage planting" expedition against Louisbourg had one good result: the military position in Nova Scotia was definitely stronger. Lord Loudoun placed additional troops on both the Atlantic and Fundy coasts of the province,² but he failed to attain his real objective. While the great French fortress still dominated Isle Royale, it was an obstacle to further British settlement of Nova Scotia as well as a source of encouragement to the Acadians still fighting for their native land. The last siege of Louisbourg in 1758 was the principal turning point in the long international struggle for control in the pivotal peninsula. When the suspense was broken and the summer over, the French no longer remained on the Atlantic sea-board.

The fall of Louisbourg stirred Governor Lawrence into immediate action. He issued his well known proclamations on October 12th, 1758, and January 11, 1759, inviting the continental colonists to settle in Nova Scotia. These proclamations were received with enthusiasm in the northern provinces. In April, 1759, the fore-

(1) The Acadians began to return to Nova Scotia in the summer of 1756. With passports from the Governors of Georgia, South Carolina and New York, they came up the coast in small boats. Many of them were detained at Boston.

(2) The soldiers relieving the Bay of Fundy garrisons were ambushed by the Acadians at Bloody Creek in December of 1757.

runners of the New England migration, agents "appointed by some substantial families residing in the Colonies of Connecticut and Rhode Island", appeared before the Council at Halifax. After a visit to the former Acadian lands at Annapolis and around the Minas Basin, arrangements were made whereby settlement was to begin in the following autumn. Townships grants were issued, and in July preparations were made for transporting the New Englanders to Nova Scotia. But the project had to be deferred, at least for the year 1759. Increased and dangerous hostility of the Acadians and Indians unexpectedly postponed Lawrence's plans for settlement.

Their depredations had been synchronous with the coming of spring. The terse language of Lawrence, in April, 1759, records their activity:

The Indians have again opened the Spring with Fresh murders amongst the settlers at Lunenburg. . . Five soldiers have likewise been killed & scalped near Fort Cumberland and a provision Vessel, boarded by French and Indians in conjunction, was taken very lately in the Bay of Fundy and carried up the River Pet-coudiack.

The attacks did not cease with warmer weather. According to a report from Captain Cobb, when he and some agents, proposing to settle a township, landed at Cape Sable, they were fired upon by about 100 Indians and Acadians.¹ From Pisiquid (Windsor), the commanding officer at Fort Edward sent word that a similar number of Acadians and Indians had appeared before the Fort "in hostile manner" and had refused to move for several days. Off Canso, three fishing vessels were captured by Acadians. Five persons were murdered on the east side of Halifax Harbour, opposite Cornwallis Island. "The enemy" frequently appeared in the environs of Lunenburg and Fort Sackville. In a word, since the hostile element in the province was greater than had been imagined, and since the military force was insufficient to guard any additional settlements, the New England migration was postponed to the following spring.

Such a vigorous opposition to British authority could not continue for ever. The capture of Louisbourg doubtless did much to dispel the hopes of the Acadians that the French would retake the peninsula, and to mental discouragement was added the threat of starvation. Living in the forests and hunted by British red coats, the Acadians found life by no means pleasant, but they still swore fealty to the King of France. Such consistency was

(1) A statement difficult to believe. See next paragraph.

admirable, for they must have realized that it was a losing fight. The "Neutral French" at Cape Sable were the first to give up the unequal struggle. Twice the victims of military expeditions from Halifax, one hundred and fifty-two of these people voluntarily surrendered themselves in the spring of 1759.¹ They were taken to Halifax, and then shipped on a transport bound for England.

When Quebec fell in 1759, even the Acadians began to realize that the end was only a matter of time. After the reduction of the French stronghold, 200 of them "in a starving condition", with certificates from H. T. Cramahé, Secretary to General Murray, showing that they had taken the oath of allegiance and given them permission to settle, appeared on the river St. John. Governor Lawrence considered that these certificates had been issued in the belief that the Acadians belonged to Canada—not Nova Scotia. The Council advised their immediate removal to Halifax, where they were to remain as prisoners of war until they could be shipped to England.

Other groups were yielding to their difficulties. In November 1759, 190 Acadians at Petitcodiac and Memramcook offered to surrender to Colonel Frye at Fort Cumberland. They declared that they were starving, having provisions enough to keep only two-thirds of their number alive until spring. Colonel Frye, with the approval of the Governor and Council, agreed to allow sixty-three of them to winter with him at the Fort, and he gave permission to the others to live in the former French houses on the Petitcodiac and Memramcook rivers. A few days later, on November 18th, deputies from about 700 Acadians at Miramichi, Richibucto and Buctouche arrived under a flag of truce to ask for provisions. It was agreed that 230 of them should stay at the Fort during the winter, while the others were to congregate at Bay Verte in the spring. Colonel Frye estimated that there would be about 900 Acadians under custody at Fort Cumberland and Bay Verte. The Council agreed that the necessary provisions should be allowed, provided that the Acadians surrendered all their arms and gave hostages for their appearance in the spring. It was probably at this time also that Fort Edward began to be a victualling post for the French in the Pisiquid district.²

The surrender of these Acadians at the end of 1759 was followed a few months later by the submission of the Indians, with whom a

(1) These raids took place in 1756 and 1758. Although on each occasion approximately seventy prisoners were taken, there were at least 152 Acadians at Cape Sable in the spring of 1759.

(2) Later records of the Acadian prisoners at Fort Edward are still extant. In the autumn of 1761, for instance, the list of those receiving victuals totalled 231. The number may have been greater earlier in the year. Lieutenant-Governor Belcher wrote to Isaac Deschamps at Windsor in March, 1761: "Upon your representation to me that the victualling the Acadian French will deprive the Soldiers in the Fort of their Provisions, I think it necessary to direct that so many of those persons as will be an Incumbrance to the Fort should be forthwith sent to Halifax."

series of treaties was made. The prospect for a successful emigration from New England in the spring and summer of 1760 was now definitely brighter, but the possibility of danger to the future British settlements was not entirely removed. The pertinent problem was what to do with the Acadians now that they had surrendered. The authorities at Halifax had no doubts on the matter: they would remove them to a place where the chance of their return was reduced to a minimum. The final responsibility for the Acadian prisoners, however, rested upon Sir Jeffery Amherst, Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces in America.

It will be remembered that the Council had advised the Governor to send the Acadians at St. John river to England. General Amherst, on being informed of this plan, wrote from New York to Governor Lawrence on February 5th, 1760: "... You have done perfectly right not to suffer them to Continue there, and You will be Equally right in sending them, when an Opportunity Offers, to Europe as Prisoners of War". This approval of their policy was communicated to the Council in March and, at the same time, they were told that the Acadian prisoners at Fort Cumberland, when collected, would number about 1,200. It was decided to send transports to take them all away. Such action was deemed "absolutely necessary, in order to facilitate the Settlement of the evacuated Lands by the persons who are coming from the Continent for that purpose; who otherwise would always be liable to be obstructed in their Progress, by the incursions of these french Inhabitants: whereas, on the contrary, if they are removed out of the Province the Settlers will remain in perfect Security, as the Indians are unanimously inclined to Peace, and Treaties are already made with several of the Tribes". For ten years now, it had been an article of faith that control of the Isthmus of Chignecto was essential to the safety of Nova Scotia. Early in the following August, when word was received from Fort Cumberland that between 300 and 400 Acadians were assembled there and that nearly 700 more at Restigouche were daily expected to make their surrender, the Council advised the Governor to send transports to bring them to Halifax, where they would be disposed of as thought proper. Most of them, however, were allowed to remain under supervision near, and west of, Fort Cumberland, while occasional groups were detailed as working parties to assist the New England immigrants on the old Acadian lands around Minas Basin.

Meanwhile, the successful defence of Quebec against a French counter attack, and an increasing confidence that the fate of Montreal and with it of Canada was determined by the multiple attacks so

carefully planned for 1760, had led Amherst to change his mind about the potential menace of the Acadians to Nova Scotia. When Lawrence wrote asking for more troops to defend the province, Amherst replied on April 5th, 1760:

You do me Justice, Sir, in Your Sentiments of my Friendship towards the Province of Nova Scotia, which no One desires more than myself to See flourish and Encrease, and I could Wish to have it in my power to Contribute towards it, in granting Your Request; not that I think, it can have any thing to fear from the Handfull of Neutrals and Indians, that still remains scattered. . .

He wrote again on July 24th, saying that he saw no reason "to apprehend anything of Consequence from the Indians, Who seem to be so well Convinced of the Inabilities of the French to Supply them with Necessaries, that they are glad to desert them." Lawrence too had changed his mind, for he wrote on June 2nd to Edward Whitmore, commanding at Louisbourg, that inasmuch as he had very few troops and was busily employed in establishing the new settlers, he did not think it a good time "to attempt Extirpating the French Neutrals that inhabit the Coast from Mirimichi to Canso."

On October 11th, 1760, when Montreal and Canada had fallen, and when land-hungry New Englanders were straining the resources of the Nova Scotian Government by their demands for new townships, Lawrence died, and the administration passed into the hands of Chief-Justice Belcher, a timorous civilian whose legalisms too often ran away with his common sense. Even before he became Lieutenant-Governor he consulted the Council about the possible menace of the Acadians to the cherished new settlements; for, although he felt that Acadian labour and dyke-making skill were critically needed, he was extremely anxious to avoid any survival of Acadian claims to the arable lands of the province. In February, 1761, he read to the Council Amherst's letters of 1760, but they were not impressed and advised him to write again concerning "the present situation of the French Acadians in the Province who had not yet surrendered and their danger to the settlements".

The victorious Amherst thought that Belcher and the Council were absurdly apprehensive, and did not hesitate to say so. He wrote on March 22nd, 1761, from New York, expressing his candid opinion of the "Neutral French" in Nova Scotia:

I have nothing more at heart than the Advantage and Security of the Province of Nova Scotia; if the removal of the Acadians still remaining within the same could add to Either, I should be the first to advise their Expulsion, but as under the new circum-

stances of that Valuable and flourishing Province I do not see that it can have anything to fear or apprehend from these Acadians but on the Contrary that great Advantages might be receipt (*sic*) in employing them properly. I must own I should incline towards letting them remain in the province under proper regulations and restrictions. Another Motive that induces me to lean on that side is that their Transportation to England must be a heavy burden on the publick and their Maintenance when there a still greater. I would therefore recommend it to you, prior to taking any further Steps hereupon, to represent those and any other Considerations that shall occur to you to His Majesty's Ministers, and to wait the King's pleasure thereon.

From this stand he never swerved. Belcher sent his assurance that he would not take "any Steps on so momentous an occasion without your [Amherst's] Concurrence or express directions from His Majesty", but then forwarded the Council's opinion on the removal of the Acadians to the Board of Trade. In their reply, their Lordships stated that such a move appeared to them to be "a very untoward circumstance in the present state of the Province", but as the subject did not come within their department, they had referred it to the Secretary of State.

In the meantime, there were still many Acadians on the Gulf shore who had not surrendered under the Capitulation. The Indians in that vicinity were also not very friendly. In nearly all his letters to General Amherst, Belcher expressed great apprehension for the people from New England who were to settle at Chignecto in the spring of 1761. On April 15th, he passed on the rumours which he had heard concerning

the hostile designs of the numerous body of Acadians at Ristigouch and the neighbouring parts in fitting out Piratical Vessels to Cruise on His Majesty's Subjects...[they] are now forming desperate designs, which cannot be imputed to a necessity of procuring provisions, as they know that on their Submission they would receive Supplies of that sort...

He pointed out, as an additional reason for fear, that many of them had not lost hope of regaining their former lands. Amherst did not share his apprehensions. He wrote, on April 15th, very bluntly differing from Belcher and his Council, and on the 28th he wrote again:

I can't say I am under any Apprehensions for the Settlements which are to be Established this Summer in the District of Chignecto...The Acadians may not be so thoroughly well disposed as I could wish, but I expect a different behaviour from them than what has yet appeared for they never have been in the

situation they are now in, and they can hardly be mad Enough to attempt any thing against the Establishment of the province at this time—If they are they must be made to suffer for it as they deserve.

Fourteen days before Sir Jeffrey penned the above words on April 14, 1761, the Council at Halifax resigned themselves to the necessity of settling the Acadians in Nova Scotia. At least, they drew up a plan for such a move which Belcher sent to the Board of Trade. It recommended that the Acadians, 1300 at Miramichi, Restigouche etc., 240 at Chignecto and 445 at Halifax, should be distributed, in groups of ten to twelve families, among the coastal townships from Halifax to Annapolis, where they would be capable of the least mischief. The danger of settling them *en masse* or near the frontier was pointed out. It was stated that the designated townships would not accommodate all the French, and also that they would require the assistance of the Government for two or three years. The sincerity of the Council may be doubted; all during these years they clung tenaciously to one policy; remove the Acadians once and for ever. Probably they realized a plan requiring "assistance of Government" would not be acceptable to the Lords of Trade. In any event, the plan dropped out of sight during the exciting last three years of the Seven Years' War.

While the Council's plan of settlement gathered dust in a Board of Trade pigeon-hole, definite military action was being taken against the Acadians in the north-eastern parts of the province. In August, 1761, a story came down from Chignecto that the Neutrals at the Bay of Chaleur had refused to surrender and had declared that they would live by plundering the settlers of their stock and cattle. At the end of November, Captain Roderick McKenzie was receiving the thanks of the Council for his "active zealous and prudent conduct" in making prisoners of upwards of 700 Acadians in the Bay of Chaleur district. Actually, according to a later report, only 335 Acadians were captured while the others, to the number of 452, promised to surrender. There had been no actual warfare, but the "Neutrals" had been reminded of their status as prisoners of war. As the result of this action, all was quiet on the Acadian front by the beginning of 1762.

To understand the attitude of the officials in Nova Scotia during this period, one thing should be remembered: while the Acadians, surrendered or independent, remained in the peninsula, there was a continual and inordinate fear of an internal uprising of Acadians and Indians. It is worthy of note that the new immigrants came from colonies in which French and Indian attacks were an ugly

tradition. In the year 1762, this uneasy apprehension felt by the authorities and settlers alike was to develop into a province-wide terror which led directly to the second expulsion of the Acadians. When General Murray's letter, asking whether the "Neutral French" were to be settled in Nova Scotia or sent to Canada, was read to the Council, in March, the opinion was expressed that "it was by no means thought Convenient or Safe by the Government to give Settlements to the Acadians . . . in this province; and that they were here to be disposed of according to the directions of General Amherst, or agreeable to his Majesty's pleasure". No more than two weeks later the Assembly asked the Council to join them in a petition to the Lieutenant-Governor to prevent the "French Prisoners . . . from carrying Fire Arms, or going at large about the Country." Belcher readily acceded to this request and, as the military and naval forces of the province had been reduced, he also considered it necessary to direct "an immediate array and regulation of the Militia in the Several Counties."¹ No sooner had he reached this decision than news came of enemy ships off Newfoundland and of the capture of St. John's.²

With the news of the descent on Newfoundland, fears of the capture of Halifax and an Acadian uprising in Nova Scotia reached a fever pitch. The province was ill prepared for the combination of external aggression and internal revolt. During the first days of July, the Assembly resolved that the Acadians should be put under guard immediately, and not be permitted the use of boats or shallops or be allowed to go about without the proper passports. A Council of War was held at the Governor's House on July 10th, with the Lieutenant-Governor, Major-General Bastide, Lord Colville, Naval Commander in North America, Colonel Richard Bulkeley and others, including Lieut.-Colonel Winslow, in attendance. This Council of War was to meet twelve times between July 10th and August 17th. Under its direction, preparations were made for the expected attack on Halifax. All the fortifications of the capital were strengthened. The North-West Arm was cut off by a boom placed across the entrance, and guarded by an armed sloop. A new battery was erected on Cornwallis Island. The precautions of the Council of War even extended to placing a special guard at St. Margaret's Bay to watch for any attempted landing. The people of Lawrencetown were also ordered to be on the look-

(1) At this time, the militia numbered nearly 600 in Halifax, with a corresponding number in King's County, while there were fewer than 100 in Cumberland County.

(2) Although America was now in British hands, the Seven Years' War still continued. After Pitt resigned, the new ministry found itself forced to put his policy into effect by declaring war on Spain. Early in January, 1762, the Board of Trade sent the declaration of war to Halifax.

out. The British at Halifax were certainly determined not to be taken unawares.

The Council of War, following the Assembly's advice, decided to keep all the Acadians under military supervision.¹ Acadians "who were at work for the inhabitants" in various parts of the province were now ordered to be brought into the capital.² Owing to the insufficiency of regular troops, the county militia were used to accomplish this end. Martial law was declared temporarily on July 13th. Without further delay, Colonel Denson and Major Sutherland, of King's and Lunenburg Counties respectively, collected the available Acadians in their districts and marched them under militia guard to Halifax. Even the French who were out fishing were picked up by a special boat and taken into the capital.

By the end of July, well over 1,000 Acadians were under military guard at Halifax.³ Their fate was promptly determined. Belcher twisted the conditional clause of Amherst's old letter of March 22, 1761, into approval of an expulsion. On July 26th, the Council decided to expel the Acadians without further delay. They were confined only in open barracks and, in the event of attack on Halifax, it was feared that they would probably escape, set the town on fire and join the enemy. An address from the Assembly, advocating a second expulsion, gives a highly coloured account of the situation, but at the same time it is an expression of the prevalent tension:

no sooner was the *Spanish* war declared, and the junction of *Spain* and *France*, than they assumed fresh Courage, and began to be insolent to the Settlers in the Townships where they were at work, telling them *That they should soon regain possession of their Lands and cut every one of their Throats.* And the Numerous appearance of Savages this Summer, from the most distant parts of the Province, joined with their insolence, and the invasion of *Newfoundland*, has had such an effect on the minds of the new Settlers. . . that great Numbers have been induced thereby to quit their

(1) It had been reported from King's County that the menacing attitude of the Acadians had caused 150 settlers to leave one of the townships. The Minutes of the Council of War give a more moderate statement: "Above Seventy of the Settlers" had left the township of Horton, and there was "apprehension of the desertion of many more from the other Townships." There were other reasons for this exodus, but the Acadians provided the cause for everything in the summer of 1762. Able-bodied Acadians, numbering 130, under a guard of 100 militiamen, were taken from King's County. The records at Fort Edward for July show 217 women and children being victualled there but only 12 men, unable to go to Halifax because of sickness. After the Acadians had been taken away, it was discovered that they had been concealing in secret places "a considerable quantity of ammunition for small arms." The Indians, who had been incited by the Acadians, gave the King's County people cause for worry when the men were away on military duty, but they were easily dispersed on the return of the militia.

(2) Acadian labour was used extensively in repairing dykes and building roads.

(3) On July 9th, Belcher wrote to Amherst saying that there were 915 Acadians in the barracks at Halifax. The Acadians from King's County, numbering 130, did not arrive at the capital until July 20th or 21st. Then there were also the Acadians from Lunenburg County, as well as those picked up while fishing.

habitations, and retire to the Continent for Safety; and there is much reason to apprehend that if this panick should spread itself further among them, most part of the rest will follow the same Example.¹

Among the six reasons given for expelling the Acadians, the Assembly declared that they would never regret the loss of their former lands and consequently would "lay hold of every favorable opportunity for regaining them, at any, even the most hazardous Risk". Their religion also was seen as a potent factor in their hostility to British rule, because of "the early principles of Policy" instilled into them by their priests. When the Council of War, meeting on July 30th, re-echoed these charges, the die was cast. On the same day, the Acadians were embarked on transports lying in Halifax Harbour. Sailing orders were held up by the arrival of dispatches from General Amherst.

Looking over the military situation from New York, the Commander-in-Chief saw no reason to apprehend an attack on Nova Scotia. Before he had heard of the capture of St. John's, he had not even credited the news of enemy warships off the coast: "I had received the intelligence of the supposed Spanish Fleet from Boston two days before your [Belcher's] letter came to hand, I must own I cannot give credit to it, for I am yet to think those Vessels will turn out to be some Victuallers bound to Quebec..." But even when he knew that the ships were not "Victuallers", he had no fear for Nova Scotia. He wrote on July 29th: "...I am a little afraid of Louisbourg, but with regard to Nova Scotia, I must own I cannot entertain the least fear, for when I consider that there are near 1,500 men in the Town of Halifax besides your Militia who it seems are likewise armed I cannot help despising any thing the Enemy could attempt against You". Sir Jeffery considered that Boston was more open and more liable to attack than Halifax. From the tenor of this correspondence, Belcher felt that perhaps the Acadian deportation should be deferred, but the Council of War, called on August 10th, were unchanged in their determination to remove the French. Thus it was that in the middle of August, 1762, transports, loaded with expelled Acadians, again left the shores of Nova Scotia. By the end of the month, five vessels filled with Acadian prisoners were lying in the continental harbour of Boston under the guns of Castle William.

General Amherst accepted the *fait accompli*. Belcher had written to him on August 12th, when it was too late to receive contrary instructions:

(1) Italics in the Journal of the Assembly.

I shall give Orders to the Transports to proceed to Boston, & there remain with the People on board, untill they receive Your Excy's directions for the disposal of them, & that they may lye in that Harbour under the Command of the Castle until that time. As they are treated as Prisoners, I presume it may be indifferent in what part of the King's Dominions they are detained, provided they are much inferior in Number to the Inhabitants, whose Superiority may keep them in Awe, & I would hope that this measure can little interfere with Your Excellency's views of settling some of the Acadians in the upper parts of Canada, as General Murray informed in his Letter of 20th September last.

Amherst replied on August 30th to say that he had received Belcher's dispatch and also word of the five transports arriving at Boston. He continued:

Altho' I can't help thinking that these People might have been kept in proper Subjection, while the Troops remained in Nova Scotia, Yet I must own I am glad you have taken these Measures for Removing them, as they might have become Troublesome when the Province was Drained of the Forces, which I have been Obligated to Employ on a very Essential Service: I Doubt not but You have Wrote to Governor Bernard concerning them; but I shall, by the return of the Express, Desire he will be pleased to Dispose of the Acadians in such a manner as he Judges best, in the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, where they must Remain for the present taking Care to Separate them as much as possible, to prevent their doing any Mischief, as well as Returning to their Old Habitations. I Could have wished that those who Inhabited the Back Parts of the Province had been sent to Canada, agreeable to Gov. Murray's Request, by which means You would not only have Saved the Expence of bringing them down the Country, at this time, but have been Eased of any Dread from that Quarter.¹

In spite of Amherst's acceptance of the second expulsion, it proved to be a dismal failure. Before a month had passed, the Acadians were back again at Halifax. The General Assembly of Massachusetts had "absolutely refused" to make even a temporary settlement, as General Amherst suggested, for the French from Nova Scotia, and requested Governor Bernard not to permit them to land. Bernard's most earnest urgings to co-operate with Nova Scotia went for naught. Sir Jeffery, hearing of the Assembly's action, sent a dispatch to Bernard asking that their vote be reconsidered. But it was too late; the Assembly had been prorogued before the arrival of the General's letter.

(1) Belcher evidently misread this last paragraph, for he wrote to Amherst that considerable expense had been saved by sending *the Acadians from King's County* to Boston instead of Canada. Amherst refused to bear the cost of the unsuccessful deportation of the Acadian prisoners, as a Committee of the Council at Halifax suggested. The arrears finally had to be made up by the Nova Scotian Government.

The blame for the actual return of the Acadians was laid at the door of Mr. Thomas Hancock, Province Agent at Boston, by the Committee of the Nova Scotian Council which investigated the whole affair. Captain Brooks, commanding the convoy of transports, on interviewing Governor Bernard and being told that the Acadians could not be landed, had been directed to Mr. Hancock, who, according to the Committee, had been given "full and explicit orders... to supply the Said Acadians with Provisions and all necessaries till the final determination of Sir Jeffery Amherst in what manner they should be disposed of". Mr. Hancock failed to uphold the interests of the province he represented. In the words of the Committee:

... Mr. Hancock being Agent for this Province and fully acquainted with the purpose & Intentions of sending the said Acadians to New England, as they had been kept here only as Prisoners of War; and as he well knew the dangers to which this Province was exposed by their Residence here, We are further of Opinion that he neglected the Interest and Safety of this Province, which the Lieutenant Governor had reposed in him, by discouraging the Proposal made by Captain Brooks of sending a fresh Express, and waiting for further Orders from Sir Jeffery Amherst, or sending an Express to the Lieutenant Governor of this Province; and particularly by declaring to Captian Brooks that he was not empowered to furnish him with any thing but such little Expences as might occur till Sir Jeffery Amherst's pleasure could be known, as appears by Capt. Brooks own Declaration, and by precipitately advising and perswading Captain Brooks to return with the Acadians back into this Province, to the great danger thereof, and Distress of all its Inhabitants.

The luckless expatriates were once again in their native land. Within a few weeks the British recaptured St. John's, and the war scare subsided as quickly as it had arisen. No longer a menace by any reasonable standards, the Acadians were a useful supply of labour for a province which always found labour its dearest commodity. Yet no decisive Acadian policy emerged. The distribution plan of 1761 was left in the limbo, and for six years expediency and uncertainty were the rule in dealing with the Acadians. Gradually common sense and a feeling of security triumphed over unreasoning panic, but the halting fashion in which a compromise between the two nationalities in Nova Scotia was finally reached is the theme of another story.