

## CHAPTER II.

Foundation of a post at Quebec, 1608—Trading companies—The Indians—  
Battle with the Iroquois, 1609—Champlain in the upper Ottawa and  
the Huron country, 1613, 1615—Fur trade—New trading companies—  
No actual settlers—The Recollets, 1615—The Jesuits, 1625—Louis  
Hébert—State of the colony, 1617-1627—Fort erected at Quebec, 1621,  
1626.

It was on the 3rd of July, 1608, that Champlain marked out the site of the first building in the city of Quebec. The situation appears to have been not far from the church of Notre-Dame des Victoires in the lower town. The style of the building followed the uses to which such a structure must be put; for it required to be not only a dwelling, but a store house for the company as well. In addition, as a safeguard from possible attack, it must needs serve as a fort. An illustration of this historic building, drawn probably by the founder of Quebec himself, is to be found in almost every Canadian history, reproduced from the original in Champlain's own narrative. The "Abitation de Quebec," as the traders called it, took all the labour before winter set in, of the men who had come out on the expedition. While the structure was going up Pontgravé trafficked for a cargo of furs, and when he was ready to sail back to France with the results of his trading, preparations had been completed for housing Champlain and twenty-seven men. The latter were mostly clerks and traders in the company. Once more, as in the expeditions under Cartier and Roberval, the dreaded *mal-de-terre* made its appearance during the winter, and only eight men survived to see the return of Pontgravé and his ships the next spring.

From now till his death in 1635, Champlain is the central figure in the history of the colony. All the forces at work in developing the settlement or in retarding its progress touched him so intimately that his career is the best epitome of the general movement. How thoroughly complex, and

at the same time discordant, the movement was, the difficulties under which Champlain laboured make only too clear.

For the first ten years after the founding of Quebec, Champlain served in the interests of merchants in France who saw in Canada a rare opportunity for exploiting the fur trade. For the success of this traffic two things were essential; one of which obviously was that the Indians should be willing to traffic. The other involved wider considerations. As yet the French in Canada counted a mere handful of men at a fortified trading post. In case of an emergency, immediate safety might be found behind the walls of the habitation, at Quebec; but ultimate safety depended upon the good will of the Canadian Indians. As for the latter, some explanation is necessary.

The Indians whom Cartier found at Gaspé, and later in Stadacona and Hochelaga, are inferred to have been of Huron-Iroquois stock. Since Cartier's time Stadacona and Hochelaga had disappeared, together with the peculiar type of Indian settled life which Cartier described. In place of the Iroquois was to be found an Algonquin stock divided into various tribes scattered along the lower Ottawa and St. Lawrence. The Iroquois themselves (the Five Nations) occupied a stretch of land running westward from the upper waters of the Hudson to the shores of Lake Ontario. Between Lake Simcoe and Lake Huron clustered the villages of the Wyandots, or Hurons, kinsmen of the Iroquois. As Champlain discovered, between the Algonquins and the Hurons there existed an alliance born of their common dread and hatred of the Iroquois. Such was the situation as it presented itself to Champlain in the spring of 1609, at the time when some steps towards a definite policy with the Indians became urgent. So far the company had secured its furs from the Montagnais, a branch of the Algonquins on the lower reaches of the St. Lawrence. From a few of the Indians who had come to the trading post at Tadoussac he had heard of the general enmity of the Canadian Indians towards the Iroquois, and had even made an indefinite promise of the assistance of his men to help them in their war parties against their common foe. In the spring of 1609, while waiting for the arrival of Pontgravé from France, Champlain had taken a short trip up the river and had come upon an Algonquin council discussing plans for an



expedition that season to the Mohawks, the easternmost branch of the Iroquois. The expedition was to be made in conjunction with the Hurons, who were coming down from the Georgian Bay district. Champlain agreed to assist in the campaign, thus taking the irretrievable step which determined for the next century and a half the relations between the French and the Indians. With a few Frenchmen he followed his Huron and Algonquin allies along the historic waterway which leads from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson. Suffice it to say that the French muskets, seen by the astonished Mohawks for the first time, gained a victory for the Canadian Indians. For Champlain the immediate fruits of the victory were a closer association with the Algonquins and also with the Hurons, who promised to allow the traders of the company to accompany them in their canoes back to the Huron country. Some years later, in 1615, Champlain himself undertook the long journey up the Ottawa and over to the Huron villages, and there assisted them in an expedition against the Senecas, the western branch of the Iroquois. This drew closer the relations with the French and the Hurons—relations which were in turn strengthened by the work of missionaries. From the Huron country a plentiful supply of furs found their way into the company's storehouse at Quebec. The traffic, once established, continued for years, though at the expense of protecting it from the Iroquois, who, from the fateful expedition of Champlain in 1609, strove unremittingly to annihilate it.

But while smoothing the way for future traffic with the Indians Champlain had other questions to confront. Against the problematical success of the association with the Hurons and Algonquins, he had to balance the ever increasing difficulty of relations with the colonial authorities at home. The real conception of a colony had scarcely then begun to unfold itself. Colonial administration as a political art was then, so far as England and France went, in its infancy; and Champlain, and Canada with him, suffered from the early crude and unintelligent experiments in that direction. As a commercial enterprise the subject of the Canadian trade divided the merchants of the French seaport towns into two hostile factions. The popular demand called for free trade, that is to say, an unrestricted traffic with the Indians. Judged solely on its merits as a commercial issue, the opponents

of free trade may perhaps be awarded the better side of the argument, for, as Pontgravé himself had learned from experience, open competition with the Indians made the traffic in furs almost unprofitable. Pontgravé became the foremost advocate of monopoly on no higher grounds than economic justification. But it was precisely at this point that Champlain could take up the question and lift it to a different plane. As a statesman and a churchman he saw that a trading company, given its right to a monopoly, might be made to subserve the higher purpose of colonization. We can, therefore, understand his policy in not countenancing unrestricted traffic.

For Champlain in Canada the problem reached an acute stage before the trading post at Quebec had lived through its first year. When Pontgravé returned to Quebec in 1609, he brought news that the company of associates under de Monts had failed to secure a renewal of their charter, which indeed had only been granted for one year. Consequently the St. Lawrence was open to all traders alike, indiscriminately, and the associates under de Monts had to take their chances in the open barter with the Indians. Trading vessels no longer stayed at Tadoussac, but made their way up the St. Lawrence as far as the Sault St. Louis (Lachine) in their endeavour to barter for a cargo. The Indians showed a keen understanding of the altered situation, for they would hold back their furs till all the trading fleet had arrived, and would then drive their bargains amidst the competition of all the traders. Beaver skins, which formerly had exchanged for a knife or two loaves of bread went up to twenty times their former value. For four years at least Champlain witnessed this scramble. But we may well believe it was not the financial loss to the de Monts associates which appealed to him so much as the spectacle of license on the part of the traders, and the delay in bringing about the settling of the colony. For the traders came only for the season; they were not colonists. Consequently we find Champlain returning to France every winter in an effort to have the question of free trade or monopoly settled again.

Judging that the retention of a monopoly depended upon court influence, Champlain strove to withdraw the fortunes of the colony from the vortex of petty court intrigue. De Monts had borne the title of lieutenant-general and governor of Canada. But Champlain could urge that the



building up of New France, and more especially the mission to the Indians were objects worthy of a patronage at once exalted and disinterested. His views prevailed. Canada was raised to the dignity of a vice-royalty, and the office of viceroy bestowed upon one of the princes of the blood royal, the Comte de Soissons. The scheme of a vice-royalty was one which had many obvious merits. Best of all, it enabled Champlain to repair to Quebec with a full knowledge that his plans for the upbuilding of the colony had the high sanction of the king and the court. Canada retained the status of a vice-royalty until 1627, that is, roughly speaking, fifteen years, for the Comte de Soissons was gazetted viceroy in 1612. Owing to the death of the Comte de Soissons, the title and dignity passed that same year to the Prince de Condé. Some years later it was transferred, for a consideration of 11,000 crowns, to the Duc de Montmorenci, Admiral of France; and from him, in 1625, to the Duc de Ventadour. Each viceroy commissioned Champlain in turn with the office of lieutenant and governor of the colony.

In the meantime Champlain had succeeded in organizing a new company and in securing from the viceroy the sanction of a monopoly. Yielding to the clamour for free trade, the viceroy divided Canada into two zones, drawing the line of division at Quebec. Below Quebec trade was to remain free, while above the company controlled the traffic. As a result Tadoussac, at the mouth of the Saguenay, in the free trade zone grew into a thriving port, quite outstripping its rival. While Champlain's authority as lieutenant-governor extended over all Canada, his position as guardian of the interests of his company naturally confined his attention to the upper St. Lawrence. To offset the traffic which followed the course of the Saguenay to the free trade zone he was led to improve his relations with the Hurons, and to confirm them in the good understanding already begun by the attack on the Mohawks in 1609. To this end, the company's clerks and traders were sent into the Huron country, while, at the same time, though keeping their storehouse and headquarters at Quebec, the company made Three Rivers a new centre of traffic. As mentioned above, Champlain himself made the journey into the Huron country in 1615 and won the good feeling of the tribe by assisting them in a foray against their nearest Iroquois neighbours.



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In all this Champlain satisfied the shareholders of the company. But soon after the Huron expedition, a divergence of opinion manifested itself. The company's charter required it to further a mission to the Indians, and to promote the settlement of colonists. The merchants shirked the latter duty. Both they and their successors, the associates under de Caën, seemed to fear that the presence of settlers in the colony, other than the employees of the company, would interfere seriously with the course of traffic with the Indians, inasmuch as the settlers could hardly be restrained from trading on their own account. Their fears were not groundless, for this very situation arose sometime later. But Champlain insisted upon the fulfilment of the terms of the charter, and to overcome his insistence the company took the futile step of dismissing him from its service in Canada, appointing Pontgravé in his stead. Freed then from the company's control, Champlain fell back upon his single responsibility as lieutenant and governor for the viceroy. A crisis in the history of the colony had been reached. The merchants apparently thought that their choice of Pontgravé might induce the viceroy to confer upon him the office of lieutenant. Had this come about, the whole colonial movement might have been reduced to the sordid level of a commercial venture. Fortunately the king and the viceroy both supported Champlain, and he was enabled to assert his civil position as governor at Quebec, despite the opposition of the company's supporters. The policy of colonization had carried the day.

Hardly had the crisis passed when news reached Quebec that the company had been dissolved. Ostensibly on the ground that the stipulation for promoting settlement had not been met, the viceroy confiscated the charter and conferred its monopoly upon a new company. The leading figure in the new association was Guillaume de Caën, a Huguenot; the new body, in fact, was of a decidedly Huguenot complexion. Eventually the de Caën company absorbed the shareholders of the old association. They retained their charter with the monopoly of the fur trade until 1627, when the affairs of Canada came under the direction of Cardinal Richelieu.

Under the administration of viceroys and trading associations the colony so far had made little noticeable progress. Immigration was confined to traders and clerks; scarcely a family had ventured to try its for-



tunes on the soil of the new world. In 1620, twelve years after the founding of Quebec, the post numbered only sixty souls; in 1628 it could count only seventy-six. The first record of a family settling in Quebec belongs to the year 1617. It was the family of Louis Hébert, later *Sieur de l'Espinay*, and consisted of his wife, two grown-up daughters, and a boy. One of the daughters, Anne, married during the year of their arrival, and thus had the distinction of the first marriage in Canada. If the account of Friar Sagard is to be credited in this respect, the Hébert family endured every conceivable hardship at the hands of the company. Persecution was of no avail, for Hébert refused to be driven away. He was the first colonist to receive a grant of land upon a seigniorial tenure; he was also the first to undertake agriculture in a serious way. It has been said that some of the traders sought Indian wives and brought them to the settlement at Quebec, but no proof of this can be found. The history of every family settled in Canada during the 17th century is easy to consult; there is no ground for such unions. It is true that on some occasions, between 1650 and 1700 the Church did not discourage these marriages when the sacrament was duly performed; though, to judge from the complaints of the Fathers, not a few of the traders followed in this respect, as in many others, the loose standards of Indian life and were lost to the colony.

Champlain took the first step towards a mission to the Indians by offering the field of Canada to the Recollets, a branch of the order of Saint Francis. In 1615, four members of the order reached Quebec: Father Denis Jamay, Father Joseph le Caron, Father Jean d'Olbeau, and a lay brother, Pacifique du Plessis. Father le Caron had dedicated himself to the Huron mission, and, scarcely stopping in Quebec, proceeded, immediately after his arrival to the Huron rendezvous at Three Rivers, to find a passage to the Huron country in the canoes returning from the annual fair. Father d'Olbeau spent the winter in a tedious sojourn with the Montagnais, trying to familiarize himself with their habits of life and ways of thinking. To Father Jamay and Pacifique du Plessis were left the station at Quebec, consisting of a house and a roughly constructed chapel, probably not far from the habitation. For the next few years the Recollets performed all the functions of secular clergy. By 1620 they had begun the erection of a

monastery (Notre-Dame des Anges) on a site at some distance from the habitation on the banks of the St. Charles. Their buildings consisted of a dwelling house, a church, and later a seminary. The Fathers endeavoured to make their estate self-supporting, in this respect setting an example to the shiftless traders who depended altogether upon supplies from home. Aside from their missionary labours the Fathers actively seconded Champlain in his efforts to bring settlers to Quebec. They would accompany the governor to France to second his appeals for the welfare of the colony. The very year following their arrival in Quebec they induced a few settlers, some of them, it would appear, with their families, to come to New France. It was they, doubtless, who prevailed upon Hébert to emigrate with his family in 1617. Other settlers came: Couillard, Pivert, Martin, Desportes, Duchesne. Among the names of the traders in Quebec during these early years we find the names of Brulé, Hertel, and the Godefroy.

For ten years the Recollets laboured alone. Their expenses were borne, grudgingly enough, by the company, which was required by its charter to maintain six clergy. It fulfilled this requirement by maintaining five. To one of these, Father Gabriel Sagard, who came to Quebec in 1623, we owe a contemporary history of Canada. Father Sagard is not an impartial historian and he seems to have little appreciation for the genius of Champlain. But he chronicles the work of the Recollets, which otherwise would have been passed over lightly; for Champlain's mention of it in his works is by no means too favourable, a fact which had led to the conjecture that Champlain's original text may have passed through the hands of an editor unfriendly to the Recollets. From Father Sagard we learn of the difficulties which the early missionaries had to encounter in their work among the Indians. They found conversion by preaching a somewhat hopeless task, and they soon recognized that evangelization could only come as the result of the careful, patient training of the savages. Institutions for the education of Indian children were essential, but the Recollets by their vows of poverty could not hold property in their own name. Without the necessary funds the mission to the Indians would languish. According to Father Sagard, the Recollets appealed to the Society of Jesus in the hope that this order would come to their assistance by sharing the evangelization of



the savages. Such a plan accorded only too well with the wishes of the viceroy, at that time the Duc de Ventadour. Both in spirit, for they were born of the devotion of the Counter-Reformation, and in means, for they were not hampered by vows of poverty, the Jesuit Fathers were pre-eminently qualified for the work in Canada.

It would be out of place here to attempt an eulogy of the members of the Society of Jesus, who from the earliest days of the colony down to the present time have furthered the cause of the Church and of education in Canada. The first members of the order reached Quebec in 1625. The Huguenot traders, feeling the Recollet Fathers more or less under their control, were not pleased to see an order of independent means finding a foothold in the colony. The Jesuit Fathers were not given a very cordial reception. No dwelling was provided for them, and they had to accept the hospitality of the Recollets. The first arrivals were Charles Lalemant, the Superior, Jean de Brébeuf, Ennemond Masse, and two lay brothers, François Chartres and Gilbert Buret. The year following, the Duc de Ventadour granted them the seigniory of Notre-Dame des Anges, lying along the banks of the St. Charles river. This grant to the "Reverend Fathers of the Society and Company of Jesus" was the first of the many estates with which the order was endowed, and which made it in the course of time the largest individual landholder in New France. Father Lalemant chose as the site of their mission house the tongue of land at the junction of the Laitet and the St. Charles, near the spot where Cartier and his followers had wintered in 1535-36. Here, with the services of twenty carpenters brought over from France, the early home of the Fathers was erected. The same year Father Brébeuf inaugurated the work of his order among the Hurons. Eventually twenty-seven mission stations were to be found among the villages around Georgian Bay. (The exact location of these stations we owe to the researches of the Rev. Arthur E. Jones, S.J., whose map of the Jesuit missions in Huronia has recently appeared.) In the course of time the Jesuits superseded the Recollets in Canada, indeed it was inevitable that they should do so, as they enjoyed the distinct preference of Cardinal Richelieu.

Quebec had been in existence nineteen years before the colony came

under the supervision of Richelieu, yet in all that time nothing had been done to develop the agricultural resources of the country. The soil around Quebec was fertile, and Champlain himself found it well adapted to the cultivation of cereals. But he never succeeded in inducing the company's servants to touch the soil; and the earliest settlers found trading with the Indians more congenial than the arduous work of clearing and ploughing. Louis Hébert seems to have been the one exception to the general rule, and he has been aptly described as "the first farmer in Canada." The Recollets, also, cleared their ground and brought it under cultivation. Champlain made the land at Cap Tourmente a pasture for cattle to supply the men of the fort. But for many years Quebec lived precariously upon the supplies sent out yearly from France. Even as late as 1660, when the population around Quebec numbered in all 1,675, a ship had to be despatched to France late in the season for a load of flour. Often the settlement experienced a shortage of supplies, especially if the season's ships from France were late in arriving.

While agriculture languished, the traffic in beaver skins flourished. Writing in 1625, the year of his arrival, Father Lalemant estimated the annual export of the company at from 15,000 to 20,000 skins, valued at one pistole apiece. Traffic with the Indians was then to be seen in all its picturesque details at the annual fair at Three Rivers. To this point came the Hurons from Georgian Bay, taking six weeks or more for the journey. The canoes would start towards the end of May, and reach Three Rivers early in July. The fair lasted about seven days, and both the Jesuit and the Recollet Fathers frequented the gatherings. The annual fair at Three Rivers, and the arrival of the fleet from France in the spring made up the two chief events of the year for the colony.

Life in Quebec in the early years was not without its darker side. Occasions arose when the settlement feared extermination at the hands of the Indians. In 1617, for instance, some eight hundred Montagnais assembled at Three Rivers, fearing the French might proceed to extremities for the murder of two Frenchmen the year before. Against such a force the sixty inhabitants of the trading post could have done nothing, and had it not been for the fortified "habitation" their lives would have been in



danger. Fortunately a crisis was averted, and Champlain, who was in France at the time, adroitly adjusted the difficulty on his return to Quebec the following spring. He could ill afford at that juncture to break with the Montagnais, for his whole Indian policy depended upon peaceful relations with the Canadian Indians. A graver cause of anxiety came from the pronounced hostility of the Iroquois. In 1622 an Iroquois war party hovered about Quebec and kept the inhabitants in daily terror for their lives. The savages laid siege to the Recollet monastery, nor did they give up its capture till, after eight days of waiting, they had found the defence too stubborn for their prowess. Their intercourse with the Dutch, now established on the Hudson, gave them a supply of firearms—an ominous outlook for the French on the St. Lawrence. For the better protection of Quebec Champlain made a beginning towards the fortification of the city. At the outset, the old habitation constructed in 1608 had served the purpose of a fort. A recent writer has aptly described this structure as the combination of a “mediæval castle and a backwoods stockade.” After twelve years of service the original habitation fell into decay, and during Champlain’s stay in France from 1618-1620 the indifference of the company’s clerks allowed one of the wings to collapse entirely. In 1620, on his return to Quebec, Champlain commenced the construction of a fort, choosing as a site the cliff overlooking the settlement in the lower town. The fort was built of wood and designed for protection from the Indians. (The Château, within the fort, was not begun till after the death of Champlain.) In 1626 the fort, known as Fort St. Louis, was enlarged by the addition of two towers, mounted with guns. The two towers collapsed in 1628, as a result of poor carpentering. As yet no garrison occupied the fort, and the armament would have proved of little value in an actual engagement.

Such, in brief, was the condition of the colony when the company under de Caën lost its rights, which the Cardinal bestowed upon a company of his own formation, the company of New France, usually known as the Cent Associés.



MONTMORENCY FALLS.