CHAPTER – 2
FRANCE DISCOVERS CANADA (1600-1663)

In the aftermath of the apparent failure of what is often described as the first serious effort by the French to colonize New France under the leadership of Cartier and Roberval, the fishing expeditions from France, as from other countries of Europe, continued unabated. In fact, there is reason to believe that there was a growth in these expeditions as volumes increased and the trade became more and more complex. Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, French fishermen from the ports of Bordeaux, Dieppe, Beauport, Honfleur, etc. continued to visit the fisheries along Newfoundland and in the vicinity. The growth in volume and the increasing importance of dry fishery made it necessary for the European merchants and fishermen to build some makeshift settlements in the coastal areas. Whereas from the earliest days of the European advent in America, there had been regular contacts with the natives, the latest developments created far greater opportunity for interactions between the two groups. These contacts of a more intense nature naturally led to barter between the two groups, in which the natives traded mainly their furs for a variety of European goods like iron tools, which were of course found far more efficient than their own stone ware. North American fur had found a market in Europe due mainly to the increased European demand for felt- hats and the exhaustion of beaver supply there. This fur trade between the two continents was destined to have a long life, and was to remain the second staple of North American trade for close to two centuries.

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1 Richard Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations, Glasgow, 1903, pp. 115-16.
In the meantime, the French state had shifted its interest in the new world to the present day South America, where it tried to set up a colony. In 1555, a French expedition under the leadership of Nicoles Durand de Villegaignon was despatched to what came to be called Brazil, but this effort ended in utter failure. Similarly, attempts by the French in 1562 and 1564 to settle in the later-day Florida were put to an abrupt end by the ruthless Spanish colonists who held a sway on the region. Faced with the fierce opposition from Spain and Portugal, France was again tempted to try its luck in what was described as New France.

La Roche and Sieur de Monts as the French Lieutenant-Governors in North America:

The revival of interest in the Laurentian valley on the part of the French monarchy came only towards the close of the century. It was in 1598 that Henry IV, the French monarch, appointed a nobleman, La Roche, as the Lieutenant-Governor of all the lands claimed by the French in North America. Like Roberval before him some sixty years ago, he was accorded the whole paraphernalia of state powers to grant lands, build forts, make laws and regulate all the affairs of the settlement that he was supposed to establish. Besides, he was granted a monopoly of trade in the entire region. Like the earlier attempts, however, this one too ended in failure. The settlement founded by the Lieutenant General of the king in the later—day Nova-Scotia came to an end by 1603. In the meantime, a French

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2 For French activities in South America, see Paul Giffarel, *Histoire de Brésil français au seizième siècle*, Paris 1878.
3 In 1565, the capture of Fort Caroline by the Spaniards resulted into the killing of more than 150 Frenchmen at the hands of Pedro Menendez Aviles. Francis Parkman, *Pioneers of France in the New World*, Boston 1874, pp. 119-39.
5 Ibid. pp. 2-15.
merchant, Pierre Chauvin de Tonnetuit, had established a trading base at Tadoussac along the confluence of the Saguenay and St. Lawrence rivers. Winter however put to an abrupt end this new enterprise, eliminating eleven people out of a total of sixteen. In the face of these disasters, Tadoussac had to be abandoned in 1601.

Despite these failures, however, the French state did not give up its general policy of expansion in America. The beginning of the seventeenth century was destined to witness more determined efforts, and with more success, on the part of the French monarchy to establish a permanent base in North America. The foundation of what came to be called Acadia was the first important development in the long-cherished French desire to colonize the new lands in the continent it claimed as its own. Acadia was defined as the territory on the Atlantic coast falling between 40 to 46 degrees, between the present day New Jersey and Cape Breton. The commission for this enterprise was granted to Pierre de Guast, Sieur de Monts, who was a favourite of the then admiral of France, duc de Montmorency. As on the earlier occasions, the beneficiary was granted the various rights befitting a Lieutenant-General of the king, which was the official title of de Monts.

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6 Œuvres de Champlain, Abbé C.H. Laverdiere ed., October 1870. See, Barry M. Gough, Canada, New Jersey 1975, p.21. De Monts seems to have enjoyed good terms with the king as well. Bourinot describes him as a 'Calvinist and a friend of the king'. John George Bourinot, The Story of Canada, Publisher, G. P. Putnam's sons, 1896, p. 50. As far as the king was concerned, the reasons for the grant of charter to de Monts were numerous. As Griffiths has put it: "Thus a commission to a man like de Monts, someone who had fought for the king during the recent hostilities, made a great deal of sense. First it stamped colonial activity as a matter of the Crown's authority, an issue of state policy. Secondly, it rewarded men to whom Henry IV owed a debt, with the possibility of making their fortunes. While no state money would be provided, de Monts commission was accompanied by the granting of royal monopolies for the exploitation of both the fisheries and the fur trade. Providing such monopolies could be enforced, de Monts would be able to finance his enterprise. Finally, the awarding of commission to de Monts, a Huguenot, was a demonstration that Henry IV intended religious toleration to be observed, at least as far as government patronage was concerned." N. E. S. Griffiths, From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755 McGill, p. 5.

7 Moreover, he was also granted the title of Vice-Admiral of Acadia by the Admiral of the Realm. See Marc Lescarbot, Histoire de la Nouvelle-France, contenant les navigations, découvertes et habitations faites par les français des Indes Occidentale et Nouvelle-France, Paris 1609, pp. 498-22; Charles George Douglas Roberts, A History of Canada, Published by The Page Company,1918,pp. 18-22.
Thus he was allowed to make laws, grant lands and govern the settlement in the name of the King of France. In addition to all this, de Monts was granted trade monopoly for ten years over Acadia and the St. Lawrence Valley. Interestingly enough, one of the duties expected of the new Lieutenant - General was to convert the natives to Christianity. However, the new settlement seems to have been planned, at least for the immediate future, more as a permanent trading and fishing base than a colony based on agriculture and other allied activities. Thus, there was no effort on the part of the French state to settle the new base with a significant number of its people, and the commission granted to de Monts required him to settle a minimum of only sixty men at the base. This should be taken as an evidence of growing realism on the part of the French state, as far as its enterprises in North America were concerned.

Advent of Samuel de Champlain: Foundation of Port Royale and Quebec:

Whatever the intentions behind the foundation of what was described as Acadia may have been, the fact remains that this was a French enterprise that was to achieve more

The charter issued by the king bestowed extensive powers upon de Monts. It said: “And in view of the proposition to us of Sieur de Monts, gentleman in ordinary of our chamber, and our lieutenant-general in that country, to make a settlement, on condition of our giving him means and supplies for sustaining the expense of it, it has pleased us to promise and assure him that none of our subjects but himself shall be permitted to trade in pelts and other merchandise, for the period of one year only, in the lands, regions, harbors, rivers, and highways throughout the extent of his jurisdiction: this we desire to have fulfilled. For these causes and other considerations impelling us thereto, we command and decree that each one of you, throughout the extent of your powers, jurisdictions, and precincts, shall act in our stead and carry out our will in distinctly prohibiting and forbidding all merchants, masters, and captains of vessels, also sailors and others of our subjects, of whatever rank and profession, to fit out any vessels in which to go themselves or send others in order to engage in trade or barter in pelts and other things with the savages of New France, to visit, trade, or communicate with them during the space of one year, within the jurisdiction of Sieur de Monts, on penalty of disobedience, and the entire confiscation of their vessels, supplies, arms, and merchandise for the benefit of Sieur de Monts; and, in order that the punishment of their disobedience may be assured, you will allow, as we have and do allow, the aforesaid Sieur de Monts or his lieutenants to seize, apprehend, and arrest all violators of our present prohibition and order, also their vessels, merchandise, arms, supplies, and victuals, in order to take and deliver them up to the hands of justice, so that action may be taken not only against the persons, but also the property of the offenders, as the case shall require.” Oliver J. Thatcher, ed., The Library of Original Sources (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907), Vol. V: 9th to 16th Centuries, pp. 342-354.

success than any so far. On this occasion, the French enterprise in North America came to be associated with the figure of Samuel de Champlain, who is often regarded as the second most important presence in the early history of the French in the newly-discovered continent. He was primarily a cartographer and draftsmen who had already visited the West Indies and thus possessed some experience of the new world. It was at the behest of the Vice - Admiral de Chastes, who was instructed by the French monarch, Henry IV in 1603 to study the prospects of colonization in what was described as New France and submit a report thereon, that Champlain had been drawn into his first enterprise in North America. During the course of his visit to Acadia and other parts of what was called New France, Champlain was able to establish a friendly relationship with the native tribes of Montgains and Algonquins, situated in the Laurentian valley. He had also visited Tadoussac and Gaspé, and gathered some reports about the presence of copper mines in the latter region. Moreover, his interactions with the natives had convinced him that a passage to China across the continental landmass could be found.

Upon the grant of commission from the King of France, de Monts, who had known Champlain for quite some time, requested the latter to accompany him on the Acadian venture. Thus, the year 1604 once again found Champlain in America trying to figure

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9 For a detailed history of Acadians up to the middle of the 18th century, see N. E. S. Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755*, McGill, 2005


11 In taking Champlain to Acadia, de Monts had the blessings of the King who valued the experience the former had of the new world. *Œuvres de Champlain*, Abbé C.H. Laverdiere, ed. Quebec 1870, pp. 154-55 and 705-06. Also see Champlain and His Associates: An Account of Early French Adventure in North America with introduction and explanatory notes by Francis Parkman, New York: Maynard, Merrill, c1890.
out the prospects of setting up a permanent base on the relatively warmer Atlantic coast. It was in the same year that de Monts founded what he named Port Royal in Acadia, meant to serve at this time more as a permanent base for trading and exploration of the territories far and wide and less as a colony based on permanent settlement of agricultural land. Champlain thus describes the reasons behind the choice of the place and its physical environment:

"A quelques jours de là, le sieur de Mons se délibéra d'aller découvrir les cotes de la baie française: et pour cet effet partit du vaisseau le 16 du juin et passâmes par le détroit de l'île Longue. Continuant nous entrâmes dans un beau et grand port, qui pourrait contenir 2,000 vaisseaux en sûreté. L'entrée est large de 800 pas, puis on entre dedans un port qui a deux lieux de long et une de large, que j'ai nommé Port Royal, où descendent trois rivières, dont une assez grande, ayant un quart de lieue de large à son entrée, où il y a une île, laquelle peut contenir une demi-lieu de circuit. Nous fumes 14 ou 15 lieues où la mer monte, et ne va pas beaucoup plus avant dans les terres pour porter bateaux. Dans le port il y a une autre île, distante de la première de deux lieues."

Whatever the original intentions of the founders may have been, Port Royal turned out to be the first French settlement in North America that proved to be of a permanent nature in a long-term perspective. In the immediate future, however, the settlement received a setback when in 1607, under pressure from the fish and fur merchants, the trade monopoly granted to de Monts was revoked by the state. Moreover, adaptation to the new environment was not easy for the settlers. Once again, winter proved to be disastrous for the French party. As Champlain puts it:

12 See W. M. MacVicar, A Short History of Annapolis Royal, the Port Royal of the French, Publisher The Copp, Clark Company, 1897.
13 Les voyages de Samuel de Champlain au Canada, Québec 1908 pp.40–41.
14 From the very outset, the monopoly granted to de Monts was opposed by the traders of St. Malo and other French ports, and the Parliament of Rouen had objected to it strongly, refusing to register it. It was thus only a matter of time before the monopoly was revoked. Sully, Économiques Royale, Volume II Ch. 26. See Francis Parkman, The Old Regime in Canada, 1895, pp.11-20.
"Durant l'hiver il se mit une certaine maladie entre plusieurs de nos gens, appelé mal de terre ou scorbut. Il s'engendrait en la bouche de ce qui l'avait de gros morceaux de chair qui leur faisaient jeter force sang par la bouche. Après, il leur prenait une grande douleur de bras et jambes, lesquels demeuraient gros et durs, tachetés comme de morsures de puces, et ne pouvaient marcher. Ils avaient aussi des douleurs de reins, d'estomac et de ventre; une toux fort mauvaise et courte haleine; bref, ils étaient en tel état que la plupart des malades ne pouvaient se lever ni remuer, et même ne pouvait se tenir debout, de façon que de 79 que nous étions il en mourut 35. Et plus de 20 qui en furent bien prés. Nous ne pûmes trouver aucun remède pour ces maladies et l'on fit l'ouverture de plusieurs pour reconnaître la cause de leur maladie."

Despite these setbacks, however, Port Royal was a successful venture in the first few years. In 1604, the very first year of its existence, the volume of sales mounted to 150,000 livres. The withdrawal of trade monopoly granted to de Monts proved to be disastrous for Port Royal, as it took away the economic basis of the whole enterprise. Without profits from monopoly trade in furs, de Monts could not sustain a permanent base. Fortunately, however, the settlement was not abandoned; it was rather handed over by de Monts to Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt, who organized a fresh expedition to Acadia in 1610. This expedition was accompanied by a Christian priest, Jessé Flesché, who earned a major success for the evangelical effort when, within a few days of his arrival at Port Royal, he converted some eighty natives of the Micmac tribe to Christianity. The success was more apparent than real, for the natives who were thus 'converted' were completely ignorant about their new faith. They understood baptism as a confirmation of their alliance with the French. These facts however, did not matter much for the devout at the French court and, encouraged by the reports of 'conversion',

15 Les Voyages de Samuel de Champlain au Canada, Québec 1908, p. 49.
Marquise de Guercheville, wife of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld Liancourt, and a very devout lady who wielded a lot of influence at the French court, sent, in 1611, two Jesuits, Fathers Biard and Massé to New France. The Jesuits, however, came to blows with Poutrincourt and his son, as they were seen by the latter as rival centres of authority. In any case, the Jesuits worked hard to put Christianity on a firm footing among the natives. Realizing the superficial nature of the conversions carried out among the Micmacs, they decided to go about the task in a systematic manner. They started studying the Micmac language and teaching the natives the basic tenets of Christianity. This work could not be sustained for very long and fresh trouble started between the Jesuits and Biencourt, who was the son of Poutrincourt and in charge of Port Royal. Disgusted with this bickering, Madame de Guerchiville once again intervened in the affairs in the settlement, and decided to move the Jesuit base elsewhere to avoid the problems facing their work in their present location. Accordingly, in 1603, she sent a ship from France laden with supplies sufficient for a year under the leadership of La Saussaye and Charles Flory, with the instruction to establish a new base for the Jesuits. This new base came to be established at a nearby island, which was christened as St. Sauveur, the present day Mount Desert Island.

The French in Conflict with the Dutch and English:

The foundation of the new French base at St. Sauveur, however, brought to the blows the French and the English interests in the region. The English had taken an early interest in America. As mentioned earlier, the King of England, Henry VII had sent a mission to the

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid. pp. 43-46.
newly-discovered lands under the command of a Florentian navigator, John Cabot, as early as 1497. At the same time, the English fishermen had been active in the area around Newfoundland and some other coastal parts of North America. The English, like other Europeans, were motivated to involve themselves with exploration work because of their preoccupation to find a passage to the wealth of Asia, which the North American land mass denied them. For much of the latter half of the sixteenth century, they pursued an alternative plan of action in this regard. Blissfully unaware of the Arctic Ocean and the polar region, they hoped to find a route to Asia by trying to sail to the north of Europe. The failure of three consecutive missions to find a northward passage to Asia brought about a change of approach on the part of England. They again started looking for a passage in the North-Westerly direction. In 1602, an English mariner, George Weymouth, discovered what came to be called the Hudson Strait. This was followed in 1610 by the discovery of what is now called the Hudson Bay by an English expedition headed by Henry Hudson— a development that soon led to the establishment of trade relations between the English and the natives. A little while later, the Dutch also came to set up their base in the Hudson bay region and began to carry out a vigorous trade with the natives of the region.

Side by side with these developments, The English came to develop a strong base on the more southerly parts of the Atlantic coast. In 1603, the English crown granted a charter to Virginia Company to establish permanent trade settlements on the coastal regions between 34 and 45 degrees, with the proviso, however, that these areas should not already be in the possession of ‘any Christian prince or people’. In accordance with the terms of the charter, the company founded, in 1607, a base at what was called
Jamestown. This was to be the first English colony of Virginia on the Atlantic coast. Within the span of a decade, this colony would prove to be a great success in terms of its population and economic gains to the company through the sale of tobacco.

Thus the stage was all set for a long - drawn out rivalry between France and England in North America. The first direct conflict between the two powers came to occur soon after the foundation of Port Royal. As described above, the French party sent by Madame de Guercheville set itself up at what it called St. Sauveur Island. Soon after its establishment, however, the French base here was attacked by the English settlers of Virginia under the leadership of Samuel Argall, who claimed right of possession over the area under the pretext that it fell south of 45 degrees north, which was supposedly the legal boundary of the area granted to it by the English charter. In reality, of course, it was a simple case of clash of interests between the different European powers that would lead to these fights for the next one and a half century. Thus, legality or the language of rights was drafted into service more as the proverbial fig leaf to cover what was little more than a fight based on the time- tested principles of brute force. Owing to the fluid situation in America in those early days, all the European powers were trying to outperform the others in their efforts to entrench themselves in what was seen by them as a virgin land, despite the presence of the natives. We would come back to the theme of conflict between England and France in North America in due course of time.

For the moment, it is important perhaps to return to the endeavours of the indefatigable Samuel de Champlain. As mentioned earlier, he was primarily an adventurer who took a keen interest in the discovery of new routes, places, etc. in what he describes as New France. Consequently, during the period between the foundation of Port Royal in 1604

\[22 \text{Œuvres de Champlain, Abbé C.H. Laverdiere, ed. Quebec 1870, pp. 92- 93.}\]
and its abandonment by de Monts in 1607 due to repeal of his monopoly, Champlain preoccupied himself in the crucial task of geographical exploration and discovery. In fact, as early as 1603, he had explored the Saguenay River and reached its source23. In the same year, he had sailed up the St. Lawrence River up to the rapids at Lachine, the point visited by Cartier before him some six decades ago. Following this he explored what later came to be called Nova Scotia. Whereas the temporary setback suffered by Port Royal in 1607 compelled him to return to France, he did not lose his love of exploration and discovery. His knowledge of the region had convinced him that in order to be viable in a commercial sense any new base would have to be located on the St. Lawrence River, and not on the Atlantic coast. This belief was rooted in the fact that any trade monopoly was far more difficult to defend on the Atlantic coast, which was open to ships from all European countries, than in a more interior region, secluded from the fisheries of the coast, which tended to complicate the whole issue of trade monopoly in the coastal areas. At any rate, there was the calculation that the Laurentian valley would be able to provide furs of better quality in increased volumes.

Whereas the monopoly granted to de Monts was rendered meaningless by the Dutch interlopers, Henry IV intervened to extend it for a period of one year only. Thus, in 1608,

23 Champlain's account of his exploration of the Saguenay River makes an interesting reading: "Meanwhile I managed to visit some parts of the river Saguenay, a fine river, which has the incredible depth of one hundred and fifty to two hundred fathoms. About fifty leagues from the mouth of the harbor there is, as is said, a great waterfall, descending from a very high elevation with great impetuosity. There are some islands in this river, very barren, being only rocks covered with small furs and heathers. It is half a league broad in places, and a quarter of a league at its mouth, where the current is so strong that at three-quarters flood-tide in the river it is still running out. All the land that I have seen consists only of mountains and rocky promontories, for the most part covered with fir and birch, a very unattractive country on both sides of the river. In a word, it is mere wastes, uninhabited by either animals or birds; for, going out hunting in places which seemed to me the most pleasant, I found only some very small birds, such as swallows and river birds, which go there in summer. At other times there are none whatever, in consequence of the excessive cold. The river flows from the north-west." Oliver J. Thatcher, ed., The Library of Original Sources (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907), Vol. V: 9th to 16th Centuries, pp. 347-348.
Samuel de Champlain was able to return to New France at the head of a fresh mission organized by de Monts. He was now called upon to find a suitable base for a new French settlement of a permanent nature based primarily on the fur trade. It was this quest for a new base that led to the foundation of Quebec at a narrow point in the river in that same year, and which, in the opinion of some scholars, entitles Champlain to be called the veritable founder of a French colony in North America. Why and how did he come to found the new base at what was called Quebec by the French? According to Champlain's own testimony:

<< ... Je cherchai un lieu propre pour notre habitation, mais je n'en pus trouver de plus commode, ni de mieux situé que la pointe de Québec, ainsi appelée des sauvages, laquelle était remplie de noyers. Aussitôt j'employai une partie de nos ouvrières à les abattre pour y faire notre habitation, l'autre à scier des ais, l'autre à creuser la cave et faire des fossés, et l'autre à aller quérir nos commodités à Tadousac avec la barque. >>

The choice of Quebec as the new base for the French enterprise in North America was to prove fortuitous in a variety of ways. Considering the fact that the St. Lawrence was the only means of travelling to the interior of the continent in those days, Quebec was very well located. From this point, it was easily possible to travel up to the whole region up to Lachine, where the rapids blocked further progress of ships and larger boats. It was also well-situated in the sense that the river, which was as wide as twenty miles in its lower reaches, had narrowed by this point to a width of about a mile, which could be important from the military and economic point of view, since it allowed the French to effectively block the entry of any other group of traders beyond this point. In addition to this, Quebec was situated on a higher plain in comparison to the surrounding low-lying areas.

24 Les voyages de Samuel de Champlain au Canada, Québec 1908 pp. 89-90.
which made it even more defensible in the event of an attack. That this was a good choice was to be borne out by the subsequent history of warfare in the continent over the next one and a half centuries. Unlike in Cartier’s time- when this region was occupied by the Iroquois tribes, it was now visited by the Algonquians, whose nomadic life did not require them to claim ownership rights over the land. This fact also went a long way in facilitating the French settlement at Quebec. What is described as the French – Indian alliance in America had had its beginnings at Tadoussac. The French needed the native help for various reasons. To begin with, the natives had lived in the continent for thousands of years and had vastly superior knowledge of its geography, flora and fauna, climate, etc. and were well adapted to their environment. For Europeans, it was a totally alien environment that they faced in North America. With native help, the task of exploring the continent, as well as trade and colonization could become relatively easy.

As we mentioned earlier, even the harsh winter of Quebec was something of a challenge for the French for more than a century. Just as in the time of Cartier, large number of those wintering in Quebec with Champlain some eighty years later perished due to the combined effects of harsh winter and scurvy. The first winter in Quebec in 1608 proved to be catastrophic for the French party. According to Champlain’s own account:

<< Les maladies de la terre commencèrent à prendre fort tard, qui fut en février jusqu’à la mi-avril. Il en fut frappé 18 et en mourut 10 ; et cinq autre de la dissenterie. Je fis faire ouverture de quelques-uns pour voir s’ils étaient offensés comme ceux que j’avais vu dans d’autres habitations, en trouva les mêmes causes de mort.25>>

The natives, on the other hand, were well adapted to the harsh Canadian winter and it was a native ally who had told Cartier that the leaves of a plant called *anneda* were a good

25 Ibid. p. 105.
cure for scurvy. But that knowledge was lost by the time of Champlain, and, as a result, the French once again found themselves at the mercy of the harsh Canadian winter. Alliance with the natives was crucial for the French also because of commercial reasons. Since the English and the Dutch were already present in the Hudson Bay region, the natives could always trade with them instead of the French. Good relations with the natives went a long way in arresting the emergence of strong trade ties between them and other Europeans. Apart from this, the French settlers in this early period, and in fact throughout the history of New France were too few in numbers to get into a completely antagonistic relationship with the natives.

Involvement in Inter-Tribal conflicts: Beginnings of French – Amerindian Alliance:

In any case, Champlain was informed by a broad vision of developing an alliance with the Amerindians. It was due to this reason that in 1609 he entered into a war against the Iroquois in support of his native allies. It is important to realize that the natives of what is now Canada were not a homogenous group. Belonging to two broad divisions of the Indian and Inuits, they were further divided into smaller linguistic and cultural groups. While some of these tribes were nomadic, there were others of a semi-sedentary type. Intertribal warfare had had a long history among these tribes. During Cartier’s voyages, the area around what later became Quebec and Montreal was occupied by the Iroquoian peoples, the St. Lawrence Iroquois known as Stadaconans and Hochelagans. By 1580, when Cartier’s grandnephew came to trade in the region, their villages had been destroyed and the valley was uninhabited. The Hurons and the Algonquians hunted in the area. The Five Nations Iroquois in what is now northern New York State were at war
with the Hurons and the Algonquins. This was the state of affairs when Champlain entered into the picture. In order to cement the French trade partnership and alliance with the Hurons and the Montagnais, Champlain considered it desirable to join in one of their battles with the Iroquois. The original purpose of Champlain was the exploration of the Richelieu river region and the present day Lake Champlain region that was then frequented by the Iroquois. Champlain thus describes the sequence of events that led to this campaign:

<< Aussitôt que j'y fus arrivé, de Pont -grave et moi discounîmes ensemble sur le sujet de quelques découvertes que je devais faire dans les terres, où les sauvages m' avaient promis de nous guider. Nous résolûmes que j'irai dans une chaloupe avec 20 hommes et que Pont - gravé demeurerait à Tadoussac pour sonner ordre aux affaires de notre habitation, ainsi qu'il avait été résolu, il fut fait et y hiverna; d'autant que je devais m'en retourner en France selon le commandement du sieur de Mons, qui me l'avait écrit pour le rendre certain de choses que je pouvais avoir faites, et des découvertes du dit pays. Après avoir pris cette résolution je partis aussitôt de Tadoussac, et m'en retournai à Québec, où je fis accommoder une chaloupe, de tout ce qui était nécessaire pour faire les découvertes du pays des Iroquois, où je devais aller avec les Montagnais, nos alliés. >>

On the way to the Iroquois country, Champlain was joined by what he describes as '2 ou 3 cents sauvages'. These natives belonged to the Algonquian tribe and were at war with the Iroquois, as mentioned earlier. While they were of their own accord willing to accompany the French along with their other Indian allies, Champlain assured them of every possible help against their long-time enemies. As Champlain puts it:

<< Qu'il y'avait prés de dix lunes, ainsi qu' ils comptent, que le d'îles de troquet m'avait vu, et que je lui avais fait bonne réception, et déclaré que le Pont et moi désirons les assister contre leurs

26 For further details of this battle, see 'Champlain: The Life of Fortitude,' by Morris Bishop, New York 1948, pp. 138-53.

27 Les Voyages de Samuel de Champlain au Canada, Québec 1908, p. 91.
ennemis, avec les quels ils avaient, dés longtemps, la guerre, pour beaucoup de cruautés qu'ils avaient exercées contre leur nation, sous prétexte d'amitié...>>

The French help proved to be crucial in the battle that was eventually fought on July 30th, 1609 near a cape called Ticonderoga, and the allies were successful in defeating the Iroquois. Though little more than a small skirmish in terms of its scale, this battle proved beneficial for the French cause in North America, in the sense that it cemented the alliance between them and their Indian allies. Gustave Lanctot has thus written about the consequences of this battle:

<< Le grand résultat de la bataille fut d'acquérir aux français des permanente amitié des Algonquins, des Montagnais et même des Hurons, qui n'osaient jusqu'à là paraître dans le Saint-Laurent par crainte des Iroquois. Ainsi se trouver assuré par ces trois nations le marché des plus riches fourrures du pays, avec la promesse des Hurons de guider Champlain dans l'exploration de leur contrée. 29 >>

However, the negative result was the ferocious enmity of the Iroquois towards the French that threatened the very existence of the colony until the peace treaty of 1701. The native warfare was fundamentally different from the European modes of warfare. It was the typical intertribal fighting involving small bands of people, sometimes only twenty to thirty, engaged in guerrilla warfare that had its own peculiar methods. Even though most of these Indian tribes were primarily warrior tribes, their relatively small numbers and what must have appeared primitive weapons to these early European explorers and colonizers foreclosed the possibility of large-scale slaughter as a result of skirmishes. However, it must not be assumed that the numbers involved were altogether small in relation to the society in which these intertribal wars had been fought for centuries before

the advent of Europeans. The whole native population of North America in the 18th century was not much more than two millions. Assuming that there had not been much increase in this population over the last century, skirmishes involving even a few hundred people on both sides, as they often did, must be regarded as large enough in the context of the society in which they originated. Moreover, whatever the scale of the warfare and the kind of weaponry used, most Indians were fierce warriors. To the European observers, this ferocity of the native warfare seemed to be little more than cruelty, as their own modes of warfare had become relatively sophisticated and well organized by this time. Thus, Champlain was nauseated at the sight of what he thought was a most brutal treatment of the prisoners taken in the course of the above-mentioned battle. Characteristically enough, he was presented the head of an enemy warrior as a gift by his native allies. The advent of the French allies added European weaponry to the Indian ferocity, and inter-tribal warfare became probably more destructive than ever before.

The involvement of Champlain in the intertribal feuds did not come to an end with his participation in the above-mentioned battle. Rather, it was only the beginning of a long chapter of collaboration between the two groups. The very next year, 1610 to be more precise, again witnessed him engaged in a battle against the Iroquois on the side of the Hurons and Algonqians, and once again the allies were able to repulse the enemy. This time, however, the damage to the Iroquois was much greater, in the sense that around two hundred of them were killed – a large figure in the given context.

However, warfare was not the main objective of Champlain and his party. For their very survival, they were dependent upon fur trade, in which their position was still shaky for a variety of reasons. One of the most important reasons of course was that the French court

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was susceptible to pressure from a number of sources, and its decisions were generally prone to favor various interests according to the need of the hour. As a result of this, de Monts was unable to preserve his trade monopoly for any length of time. In 1610, this monopoly, granted to him for only one year, came to an end, and the pressure from the Royal Council did not permit the French monarch, Henry IV, to renew it. The fate of the embryonic Quebec was, therefore, uncertain, as it was difficult to maintain the base without a reasonable supply of revenues from the fur trade that could accrue only under a monopoly. Around this time, the situation had grown to be even more complicated due mainly, as was mentioned earlier, to the advent of the English and the Dutch traders in the vicinity.

The settlement at Quebec was little more than a trading post in this period. While the crown had shown its intent to settle what it described as New France, it did not possess the kind of resources that would be required to settle the agriculturalists from the mother country in this far-away land. This was a period of economic exploitation of resources by monopoly holders, not of state development. In any case, permanent settlement of the area was not a top priority for a scarcely unified French state, as there were other, more pressing problems, at hand. Given this state of affairs, there was only one way to create permanent settlements based on agriculture coupled with trade. Thus, the state obliged the trading concerns to agree to settle a specified number of peasants in the trading posts. The meagre resources of the traders like de Monts, however, ensured that these obligations would remain only on paper. In those early years of European enterprise in North America, the resources at the disposal of both the governments and the trading companies were inevitably limited. In the case of the trading companies, they were even
more precarious due to the vagaries of fur trade in a situation where there was little capital to fall back upon, and the failure to earn good profits even for a year could easily prove to be the end of the road for the concerned parties.

Notwithstanding these handicaps, Champlain preoccupied himself in strengthening the foundations of Quebec in his own way. He had the vision of a Quebec based on a permanent agricultural settlement, and he was convinced of the natural fertility of the soil in the region. Between 1610 and 1617, Champlain continued their efforts to strengthen the French presence in North America. In the case of Champlain at least, this effort was not motivated by purely personal considerations. He had the dream of a permanent French presence in the continent. This is acknowledged even by Anglo-Canadian scholars:

"Almost alone among these early Frenchmen he saw it in terms deeper than gain, deeper even than the extension of Christianity to the natives. He had a vision of empire and saw a New France in America. He is to be compared with that group of men who, in Elizabethan England, were dreaming the same dream in English terms and especially with one of them—Sir Walter Raleigh, the projector of commonwealths and the practical colonizer. Champlain's figure grows in retrospect brooding over the portal to the distant interior that he uncovered, the city which he founded."

With the passage of time, Champlain became convinced of the futility of appeals to the crown for greater involvement in New France. Louis XIII, the new sovereign of France, was too much engrossed in internal problems to pay attention to the remote, inhospitable land, which was the common perception of North America in those days. The outbreak of

\[\text{31 Edits et ordonnances, Vol. III, pp. 11, 13, 15, 16}\]
\[\text{32 A.R.M. Lower, Colony to Nation, Toronto 1946, p. 11. Recent historians have been less laudatory, cf. Denis Vaugeois, ed. Champlain: La naissance de l'Amerique francaise, Sellesy, 2004.}\]
the Thirty Years War in Europe in 1618 would foreclose the possibility of any greater involvement on the part of the crown in the colonial project. Under the weight of these circumstances, therefore, Champlain explored the possibility of involving the Paris Chamber of Commerce in his colonial enterprise. Estimating the potential profits in New France at more than half a million livres per annum, he requested the settlement of four hundred families in the colony along with a garrison of three hundred. While the profits involved in the venture seemed to be tempting enough, the Chamber of Commerce considered the enterprise more fit for royal intervention. Thus the whole project came a cropper.

In 1620, Duc de Montmorency was appointed the new viceroy of the colony of New France. He was the Admiral of France at the time and wielded considerable influence at the court. Soon after this, he appointed Champlain as his Lieutenant in the colony³³. However, the viceroy before long abolished the Company of Merchants and gave permission for the formation of a new company, the Company of Montmorency, which was founded by two influential ship owners of the French port La Rochelle, Guillaume de Caen and his nephew Emery³⁴. As in the case of the earlier company, the Company of Montmorency was also expected to settle at least six families every year in the colony. The powers of Champlain as the lieutenant of the Viceroy in New France were also confirmed by the charter granted to the company.

The formation of the new company, however, made little difference to the fortunes of the settlement at Quebec, which continued to remain a trading post rather than a stable

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 993-94 and 976.
agricultural colony. In the mid twenties, there were barely sixty Frenchmen at Quebec, most of them on a short-term basis. No more than one fifth of these people showed any intention of settling in New France on anything like a permanent basis, and by 1628, only 15 acres of land was under the plough. What was more, the inhabitants of this trading post were almost totally dependent upon annual supplies from France, and any failure in this regard could prove to be disastrous for them. This was the state of affairs at Quebec, despite the fact that the successive companies had been entrusted with the commission of peopling the settlement.

The Catholic- Protestant Divide in Canada:

There were a number of forces at work retarding the progress of what was still not properly speaking a colonial venture in North America. One of the most important reasons behind the relative weakness of Quebec as a self-dependent permanent base lay in the religious split in France during the sixteenth and parts of the seventeenth centuries. The rise of Lutheranism in Central Europe from the 1530s onwards was accompanied by an era of religious turmoil all over Europe. In France, the situation had divided the ruling classes as well as the common people into two antagonistic camps. While the Catholic Church remained powerful in several ways, its influence was undermined by the rise of Protestantism in France, characterized by the Huguenots, predominantly of the merchant class. The Huguenots were quite influential at the court and, in the perception of the French state, they alone possessed the wherewithal to initiate enterprises in the new world. Being the representatives of the rising bourgeoisie in France, the Huguenots were in a position to secure leadership of the majority of these commercial enterprises in New France. They often were supported by Dutch and Flemish financial interests and
merchants interested in becoming charter partners in the fur trade. This had the unfortunate effect of initiating a battle for turf between the Catholics and the Protestants. Time and again, the Huguenot merchants and ship owners refused to cooperate with the Catholics, in particular the clergy. In the latter’s case, they often refused to take them aboard from France to discourage their presence in the new world. Thus, Fathers Biard and Massé, the two Jesuits sent to New France by Madame de Guercheville, were refused passage initially by the Huguenot owners of the charter ship. Likewise, within the settlement, religious duality presented a serious problem in maintaining proper functioning of the enterprise. There were constant quarrels between the two groups over religious as well as the secular issues.

Apart from the fact that the appearance of Huguenots in the new world caused dissensions among the Frenchmen, there was the unpleasant reality of a clash between the mercantile interests and the permanent settlement of the country. As merchants, the Huguenots and Catholics as well were naturally concerned with earning profits through their commercial ventures. Permanent settlers could pose a threat to the commercial viability of the trading posts. They were likely to develop their own trade relations with the natives and thus undercut the profits earned by the monopoly merchant companies. Moreover, such settlers should not be dependent upon the commercial companies for their survival, and could thus act more independently, which could go against the interests of the mercantile class. In any case, the various companies granted the charter of trade with New France hardly possessed the kind of resources that were required to settle people on a permanent basis. Working with a limited amount of capital, these companies in effect renewed their lease of life on a yearly basis.
Champlain, however, believed that the merchants did not want a permanent settlement in New France, as that would divert funds to the spread of Catholicism among the natives. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the only missionaries coming to the settlement from France were Catholic missionaries. Protestants were prohibited to winter over from 1621 onwards.

By 1628, the conditions in France had altered in a number of ways, thus paving the way for a more concerted effort on the part of the French state to transform what was still an essentially commercial presence in New France to a more permanent and secure level. The most important development in this direction was what is frequently described as the revival of Catholicism in France. By this time, European Counter-Reformation already had a history of more than half a century behind it. In France, the Catholic Church had all along faced a tough challenge from the Protestant dissenters, but the situation had taken a decisive turn by the 1620s. The Huguenots had never been anything but a minority in France that, though influential to the extent the rising bourgeoisie would be in a mercantilist economy, was nonetheless confined to the cities and especially the port cities, and wielded little influence among the mass of people. From now onwards, their arena of activity was circumscribed even more, due to a number of developments that were in the making for some time.

The rise of religious dissent in the sixteenth century France had been a constant source of strife. The solution to the Protestant menace had been found in granting certain concessions to the Huguenots, without formally recognizing them as constituting a separate church. The Edict of Nantes, issued in 1598, was the high watermark of Huguenot influence in France, and was primarily aimed at bridging the religious divide.

\[35\] Ibid. pp. 970-75.
threatening the very fundamentals of the French society. The edict introduced in France what is often described as the policy of territorialism, in that it granted the Huguenots rights within certain specified cities and restricted areas. However, there was no provision for expansion, even for the building of new temples and schools. Within these enclosures, they were permitted to follow their faith, and, in order to provide a sense of security, these cities were fortified. In this way, the Huguenots came to possess a certain degree of autonomy, which they could often stretch to quite an extent due to the presence of a large and powerful mercantile class among them. Cardinal Richelieu was convinced that for the reinforcement of the powers of the monarchy, it was mandatory to curb the autonomy of these Huguenots strongholds, which threatened to become independent city-states, caring little for the royal authority. The ensuing tussle between the French state and the Huguenots concentrated around the port city of La Rachelle, where their presence was the strongest. The city was famished into surrender, and all its fortifications were destroyed. General persecution of the Huguenots at the hands of the state ensued after Louis XIV came to the throne in 1661.

Canada under the Company of One Hundred Associates:
The assertion of the royal authority over the religious dissenters was evidence of the growing influence of Counter-Reformation in France, and it inevitably had its consequences in New France. Richelieu was of the opinion that the Huguenots had been given enough opportunity in the sixteenth century to establish French presence of a permanent nature in the new world but they had failed in the face of Spanish and Portuguese interventions. Now they should be excluded from any future venture in the nascent settlements, so that New France could develop as a cohesive Catholic
This resolve to follow a policy of religious unity was accompanied by a renewed effort on the part of the Regency to infuse new life in what was still a highly precarious existence for New France, and led to the formation, in 1627, of the Company of New France. Since this company was formed by a hundred odd shareholders, it soon acquired the name of Company of One Hundred Associates. The preamble to the charter issued to the company is quite instructive:

"The king having the same desire as the late king Henry, his father, of glorious memory to explore and discover the countries, lands and territories of New France called Canada, and a place appropriate for the establishment of a colony, so as to endeavour, with the divine aid, to bring the nations which inhabit them to the knowledge of true God, and to cause them to be taught and instructed in the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman faith and religion... the only means of bringing those nations to the knowledge of true God is to people the said country with native French Catholics, who by their example may incline those nations to the Christian religion, and a civilized life, and even to the establishment there of the royal authority; also to derive from the said newly discovered lands some profitable trade for the advantage of the king's subjects; nevertheless, those to whom this task has been confided have had so little interest in performing it, that up to the present only one settlement has been made there, where are maintained ordinarily forty or fifty Frenchmen, rather for the affairs of the traders than for the welfare and advantage of the service of the king; and so poorly have these assisted up to the present that the king has received numerous complaints in council; and the cultivation of the land has been so little advanced, that if there had been any neglect in sending each year flour and other necessaries for this small number of men, they would have died of starvation, not having wherewith to nourish themselves for a single month after the time that the ships are accustomed to arrive there every year."

The preamble to the charter makes it abundantly clear that, if charters were anything to go by, the French state by this time was definitely looking forward to establishing a

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colony of a permanent nature based on subsistence agriculture. The settlers brought out were labourers, artisans, and soldiers and only a few were equipped to take up farming. It is true that the aspiration to do so was hardly enough in itself; and the intention here is not to assert that there was no gap between planning and implementation. It needs to be pointed out that from the above statement it cannot be concluded that the driving force behind the French colonial effort at this juncture was the dissemination of Christianity among the natives. Confident though the French were of the superiority of their own religion and culture to that of the 'primitive' natives, spreading of Christianity could never be more than a part of the enterprise. Perhaps, it is more prudent to see the European colonial endeavour, including that of France, in totality, without passing a judgment on the relative weight of different motives. There cannot be anything like a purely materialistic interpretation of the colonization of North America, for faith and material well-being constituted an integral whole.

In any case, the fact remains that the Crown was fully aware of the precarious nature of the French position at Quebec and was willing to exercise its authority to do whatever it could at the moment to ameliorate the situation. To begin with, it granted to the associates' mastery over the entire region claimed under the aegis of New France, while the title to land was to hold good in perpetuity. In contrast with the earlier companies, the new incumbent was granted a monopoly of fur trade in perpetuity, and a monopoly of all trade, except fishing, for the next fifteen years. The monopoly of trade was made even more attractive by the abolition of all export and import duties between France and Canada for fifteen years. In exchange for these vast powers granted to it, the company was required to settle four thousand people over the next fifteen years in what was surely
planned at this moment as a permanent colony. The charter also obliged the company to maintain a certain number of Catholic priests in the colony, Protestant dissenters being excluded from the planned settlement. While the monopoly of the company over the fur trade was granted in perpetuity, the settlers in the colony were granted the right to purchase furs from the natives, provided they sold them to none but the agents of the company. In this way, whereas the settlers were granted a right to trade on an internal basis, the monopoly of the company to trade between the colony and the mother country was left intact. The company marked a departure from its predecessors in a more significant way. Whereas the other companies were dominated almost exclusively by the mercantile interests, in the case of the company of one Hundred Associates most of the shareholders belonged to the state officialdom and merchant class. There were a couple of lesser officials (including Champlain) and a priest. It would be naïve to argue that this particular composition of the company somehow reflects any lack of a profit motive. Recent studies indicate that commercial motives continued to dominate colonial policy.

The Company of One Hundred Associates was a vastly more ambitious French attempt at the colonization of the new world than any thus far, and it was a private company only in a partial sense. Like all the mercantilist ventures of the age, it was, for all intents and purposes, a venture undertaken by the French state and worked in tandem with the latter. Given the large measure of support that the company enjoyed at the court, and resources it had at its disposal, more than a hundred - thousand livres to begin with, the company organized its colonization effort in New France on a grand scale. Thus, in 1628, the very

38 List of members of the new company is available at LAC( Library and Archives Canada) ottawa, formerly PAC then NAC, Reel C- 12868, pp- 1-8.

first year of its formation, it sent four hundred settlers in two ships to the colony. The charter required only the passage of persons to the colony and not a provision for permanent residence. Only some settled permanently, especially since most were labourers not accompanied by women and children.

By this time, however, England and France were already in the midst of a war that had its genesis in the volatile religious situation in France. We have referred earlier to the tussle between the French state led by Richelieu, on the one hand, and the Huguenots, on the other. Impelled by a desire to help the Protestant cause in France and to establish its own supremacy, England came to the rescue of the Huguenots, and the two countries fought a battle in 1627 leading to the defeat of the latter. This defeat apart, the English were steadfast in their efforts to put a spanner into the work of the newly formed French company, and, therefore, decided to organize, in collaboration with a French Huguenot, an unofficial attack on the French colony in North America. To carry out this resolve, an English privateer, Gervase Kirke was entrusted with the task of driving out the French from North America\(^{40}\).

The two ships sent by the company with four hundred men and a large quantity of supplies were subsequently captured by Kirke and his brothers\(^{41}\). Their loss delivered a serious blow to Champlain and his men in Quebec. Very soon their supplies started running short, and over the coming winter they were almost reduced to starvation.

Even though Kirke and his brothers were privateers, it would be erroneous to conclude that this hostile act on the part of the English was a simple clash of interests between two mercantile groups, belonging to the two rising European powers. There was a strong


\(^{41}\) Ibid.
undercurrent of rivalry in North America between the French and the English and it would be impossible to make a clear distinction between individual acts of aggression and uniformed warfare. This is not to say that any fight between the two groups was necessarily motivated by the idea of strengthening one's own country, but to acknowledge that the individual effort manifested in the actions of a privateer like Kirke was ultimately bound to assist the larger national cause of dominance in North America. The Anglo-French conflict in North America cannot be seen purely in terms of a conflict between two European states. In any case, Kirke had the blessings of the English crown.

At any rate, the very next year, 1629 to be more precise, Kirke, as a logical culmination of the capture of French ships, attacked Quebec itself. Owing to the outbreak of war with England, the French had not been in a position to send any supplies to the post after the capture of the two ships commissioned by the company. Consequently, Champlain, who was still in charge of Quebec, had hardly any resources to put up a fight against the English pirates, and had to surrender Quebec to Kirke.

The capture of Quebec by Kirke and his accomplices led to extensive losses for the settlement, in the sense that the English destroyed a number of buildings, including a part of the Jesuit convent. In addition, the encroachers destroyed almost all the furniture in some other buildings and they captured the furs stored at Quebec. Despite this loss, the occupation of Quebec by the English proved to be short-term, however, and the settlement was handed back to France by the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye in 1632.

By the terms of this treaty, all the French possessions in North America captured by the

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43 Ibid.
44 Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires et autres documents historique relatif à la Nouvelle-France, Quebec 1883-85, 1, Traite 'de Paix, 1632, pp. 86-94. And Rapport de Archives canadiennes, pp. 24 ff. cf.
English were to be restored to France along with payment of indemnities for the merchandise that was captured or destroyed in the course of the campaign. Thus the capture of Quebec proved to be little more than a momentary setback, even if it brought into sharp relief the vulnerability of French settlements in North America in the event of a war with England. The Company of New France had sustained five years of heavy financial losses.

While Quebec was restituted to the French authority, the company was no longer in a position to send another expedition to the settlement. Nor was the Crown in a position to come to the rescue of the company at this juncture. The circumstances thus forced the regency to take recourse to Huguenot assistance in reoccupying Quebec. Guillaume de Caen, the Huguenot ship owner from La Rachelle, was directed to take an expedition to New France in exchange for a year of monopoly in fur trade. This goes a long way in demonstrating the limited nature of resources that the French state had at its disposal. It must not be assumed, however, that its rivals had vastly superior ones. In fact, the situation was only a reflection of the budding stage of mercantile capitalism in Europe.

At any rate, the French reoccupied Quebec in 1632 with the help of the Huguenots. The next year Champlain arrived at the colony with three ships. This time there were about 250 passengers, including some families, with him planning to settle in the colony. However, the company, like its predecessors, and for the same reasons, failed to deliver

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45 Ibid.
48 Affaires Étrangères, Angleterre, Contrat, 20 janvier 1632, fol. 43; fol. 32; Commission, 7 février 1632, fol. 110.
49 In recognition of his services in the new world, Champlain was now given the title of Lieutenant of New France by Cardinal Richelieu. Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires et autres documents historique réelit à la Nouvelle-France, Québec 1883-85, I, p. 112.
on its promise to settle four thousand people at Quebec by 1643. Moreover, many who came to the colony returned to France rather than settle at Quebec and environs. Constantly plagued with the problem of inadequate resources, it was never in a position to keep its word, so far as this part of the charter was concerned. In order to find a solution to the vexatious problem of peopling the colony, the company fell upon the expedient of granting land to seigneurs, who, in turn, were expected to settle people on their concessions at their own expense. Thus, in 1634, Robert Giffard became one of the first seigneur and recruteur of New France. He was a surgeon and an apothecary and had visited New France several times. He was granted a large tract of land, measuring some six hundred arpents, at the confluence of St. Laurence and Beauport rivers near Quebec. In association with Pierre le Bouyer de Saint-Gervais, lieutenant-general of the baillage of Perche, Giffard planned to settle the land granted him by the company. Owing to his personal influence, he was able to persuade several families to accompany him to the colony in order to settle there permanently. In this way, colonization of New France made some headway from this point onward. But the settling of land on an increased scale was perhaps one of the most important reasons behind the renewed Iroquois hostilities against the French that had resulted in the killing of two, while at the same time creating a general atmosphere of terror in the colony. Whereas Champlain did augment the defenses of Quebec to face the Indian threat, his efforts were hampered by the lack of sufficient resources. As yet, there was no garrison at Quebec. In

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53 Alfred Cambray, Robert Giffard premier seigneur de Beauport, Cap de la Modeleine
54 Ibid. Gifford was required by the company to submit every year a report on the concessions he had made on his lands. A History of Quebec, Benjamin Sulte, Montreal 1908, p. 386.
any case, Champlain’s day was soon to be over. On 25 December 1635, the founder of Quebec breathed his last. While there may be some dispute on the immediate success of his work in New France, there can be none that Champlain was one of the greatest visionaries produced by the colony. Gustave Lanctot thus describes his achievements:

<<Avec Champlain disparaissait la plus remarquable figure des début de l'histoire canadienne. Il fonda Québec, et pendant vint-sept ans, voix unique dans le désert, combattant une opposition mercantile, il maintint vivantes l'idée et l'entreprise d'une colonie française en Amérique, basée sur la traite, l'agriculture et l'apostolat. Soldat, découvreur et géographe, il explora le continent de la baie française au lac Huron, et conquis à la France un <<nouveau monde>>. Pratiquant la plus haute fraternité humaine de l'Évangile, il s'attacha les indigènes, leur offrant à tout le christianisme, la civilisation et la citoyenneté française. Sans lui, visionnaires des lendemains, la colonie de Québec n'aurait peut-être jamais existe. A lui revient la gloire unique d'avoir été, dans tous les secteurs politique, religieux et social, le père de la nouvelle France. 55>>

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The demise of Champlain created a lot of uncertainty for the colony, as for the past three decades he had been the man in charge and it was his will to maintain the French presence in the continent that had played a crucial role in lending some degree of respectability to the French claims in North America. Even so, the colony was already past the most difficult initial phase of its history and its prospects soon started looking up. Since the clearing of the land on a significant scale was already underway, the nascent colony was soon to see some better days. Even though the few colonists showed considerable enthusiasm in settling the land, that in no way mitigated the challenge presented by the task. On an average, one man, working full time for a year, could hope

to clear no more than one and a half arpents of land. Despite the obstacles thus presented, the work continued more or less unabated throughout the decade, so that at the end of 1640, there was vastly more land available for cultivation than at the beginning of the decade.

Demographic Origins and Growth of Canada:

We have seen in the course of this chapter that the growth of population in the Laurentian colony was an excruciatingly slow process due to a variety of reasons. It is now incumbent upon us to give a more detailed treatment to the population issue. A number of questions assume importance in this context.

What were, for example, the reasons behind the relatively slow growth of population in New France in the period under review? What was the regional distribution of those who did come from France? What was their occupational background? Why did they migrate to the colony?

There is no linear explanation for the relatively sluggish growth of population in the Laurentian colony, compared to the English or the Dutch population during the same period. Thus, in 1627, after nearly a century of French enterprise in North America, the total French population in what was described as New France was no more than a hundred people. Around the same time, the total population of the two other European powers mentioned above was upwards of 2,000, which would appear to be a massive difference. By 1663, whereas the population of New France had miraculously grown to some 3,000 habitants, the English population in the colony of Virginia alone far

56 Relations des Jésuites, 1636, p. 45.
surpassed that number, and the total number of the Dutch and English inhabitants in the
continent was as high as 90,00057.

A number of factors may have been responsible for the sluggish growth of population in
New France. One of the most important factors may have been the sheer difficulty of
settling in a faraway land notorious, from the very beginning, for its harsh climate. It has
been seen earlier how the various merchant companies at the helm of affairs in New
France tried to get around the responsibility of settling people in what were then, for the
most part, trading posts constructed for the organization of fur trade. The argument that
these companies were interested only in profits and, in any case, were apprehensive of
losing their monopoly of fur trade in the event of the permanent settlement of a
population capable of intercepting their trade is too restrictive to account for their
behaviour. In a profitable but highly unpredictable enterprise like the fur trade, these
companies, down to the Company of one Hundred Associates, were never able to
accumulate sufficient capital to embark upon ancillary activities like settling the
population on anything close to a large scale. The total cost of settling people in the
colony was very heavy—some estimates put it as high as 1,000 livres per person—taking
into account the scale of mercantilist enterprise. The cost of trans-Atlantic passage alone
was fairly high and, indeed, beyond the paying capacity of the average French peasant in
the sixteenth century. Add to this the cost of supplies for the initial period—that could
extend to three years—and one has the picture of a commercially unviable project.

During the period of One Hundred Associates, some progress was made in the growth of
population, but most of it was achieved by taking recourse to the seigneurial regime in

268. Out of 90,000, New England had a population of forty thousand in 1660, Virginia 30,000, while the
rest was constituted by the Dutch colonies in the Hudson River valley and the Delaware. Ibid.
which the seigneurs were responsible to people their land. And the growth achieved between 1641 and 1663 was substantial, in comparison to the preceding period. Perhaps, the pull factor making New France an attractive destination for the Frenchmen was missing. Conditions in the colony towards the middle of the seventeenth century were nothing less than testing for anyone thinking in terms of settling there. The settlement of land required a great deal of effort on the part of the habitant, a man working full time clearing no more than one and a half acres of land in a year. The long winter meant that only one crop a year could be grown, in addition to the fact that, compared to soils in France, those in the Laurentian valley did not have a very high natural fertility. The warfare with the Iroquois certainly posed a serious threat to the whole project of settlement. The frequent Iroquois raids must have created rather unsettled conditions in the colony, endangering the life and property of the community of habitants.\(^58\)

Another factor that contributed to the relatively slow growth of population in the colony was perhaps the fact that the French state was, for the most part, unwilling to develop New France as a penal colony, even though some prisoners and vagabonds had been allowed to settle there. The exclusion of the Huguenots from the colony from 1628 onwards may have been rather detrimental to the demographic growth of the colony but it would be untenable to cite that as a really important factor in this regard. Prior to 1628, when the entire enterprise in North America was in their hands in a very substantial measure, they had shown little enthusiasm to settle in the colony, perhaps for the same

\(^{58}\) The small population of the colony, in turn, further emboldened the Iroquois to carry out their raids on the Laurentian settlements with impunity. As Jack Verney has put it: "What made the French settlements particularly vulnerable throughout those years was their chronic underpopulation. This fact was never more evident than during the years after the Huron dispersal, in 1648, when the French just did not have the manpower to counter effectively the almost unremitting attacks upon them and upon their Indian allies as they brought their cargoes of furs to the St. Lawrence." Jack Verney, *The Good Regiment: The Carignan-Salières Regiment in Canada 1663-1668*, McGill, 1999, p.4.
reasons as the rest of their countrymen. Moreover, it should not be imagined that their legal exclusion from the colony constituted an insurmountable barrier to settlement. In fact, throughout the later part of the seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth, there was some Huguenot presence in the colony.

France had traditionally been the most populous country in Europe. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, it is estimated to have had a population of around 15 million, which was more than three times that of England. This demographic scenario continued to persist for more than two hundred years. To the extent that pre-industrial societies had a direct relationship between the carrying capacity of the soil and the population, a higher population can be taken to suggest a generally more prosperous agriculture. Prosperity was reflected not so much in the higher standards of living but in a larger population. While this is not the place to go any deeper into this argument, it is perhaps reasonable to conclude that the relative prosperity of agriculture in France was a factor behind the reluctance of the Frenchmen to migrate to the Laurentian colony.

Among those who did settle in the colony by 1663, those from the Atlantic coast of France were predominant, while the province of Roussillon on the Mediterranean coast and all the eastern provinces went completely unrepresented. Normandy contributed close to 23 percent of the total number of inhabitants, followed by Aunis (16.4), Perche (11 percent), Poitou (7.6 percent), Paris (7 percent); three provinces of Maine, Saintonge and Anjou represented around 5 percent each; Ile de France was the origin of some 3

60 Ibid. In 1700, France had a population of 21. 47 million, while U.K. had only 8. 56 million. Ibid. It was between 1700 and 1820 that U. K. made impressive progress in population growth, with a total population, in 1820, of 21 million as against 31 million of France. Ibid.
percent of the *habitants*; Orelais, Brittany, Champagne, Anjoumois, and Picardy represented close to two percent each; sixteen other provinces accounted for slightly more than five percent of the population in the three Laurentian settlements of Quebec, Trois Rivières and Montreal.

It is obvious from these figures that the French colonists in New France represented a highly heterogeneous group. In view of the fact that France in the sixteenth century was still in the process of becoming a modern nation state, it would be erroneous to believe that there was necessarily an overarching category capable of containing these diverse elements. Whereas they may have been described as French, there is nothing to show that the expression meant the same thing to all the *habitants*. The French they spoke was not the standardized version spoken in Paris and its vicinity but the dialects or patois, as they were called. What is important is to note that, despite their diverse origins, these early colons did not show any inclination to live in regional ghettos in the colony. Rather, there was a free intermingling of these people in New France, which, no doubt, marks the beginning of an emerging new identity.

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62 Ibid., pp. 258-59.
64 The initial diversity of the Canadian population and its subsequent evolution of a unified identity have been widely acknowledged. In particular, there was a standardization of the French language by the eighteenth century that immensely helped in this process. As J.M. Bumsted has put it: “It is now clear that, linguistically, first years of the settlement of the St Lawrence Colony saw the transplantation of a variety of French dialects and speech patterns. However, the importation after the royal takeover of the colony in 1663 of a large number of women from the Paris region contributed greatly to standardizing the language spoken in Canada, and while by eighteenth century the French spoken there had some new vocabulary (mainly taken from the Indians) and a distinctive accent, the Canadians came to use Parisian French rather than any of the regional dialects or an Americanized one. *The Cultural Landscape of Early Canada* by J.M. Bumsted in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed., Bernard Bailyn, Philip D Morgan, University of North Carolina Press, 1991, p. 369.
As far as the male-female ratio is concerned, New France exhibited the imbalance in favour of men that is characteristic of most migrant groups, especially the pioneering ones. Thus, in 1663, men constituted 62.9 percent of the population, women accounting for only 37.1 percent. Huge as this imbalance was, it was even more so, if we compare the respective percentages for the men and women of marriageable age. For every woman in this group there were two men. This imbalance, as we shall see later, resulted in the inability of a significant number of men to get a spouse. This trend was bound to affect the normal growth of population in the colony. However, the natural fertility rate in the colony was rather high, and, with 50 percent of the population below twenty, it was likely to remain so in the near future.

Occupational information on the habitants is available for no more than one half the people of working age. From this, we learn that construction activities formed the most important occupation, followed by agriculture, military, tool making, food trades and clothing trades in that order. Important as these categories are, they should not be taken to mean that there was any strict division of labour in the fledgling community in the colony. The small population and the pioneer nature of the community would work strongly against the emergence of watertight categories in this regard.

It is imperative to note that out of the three thousand or so people settled in the three places, Quebec, Trois Rivières, and Montreal, a full one third were already born in the colony, signalling the Canadianization of the population. Owing to a rather selective migration from the mother country, the colony had a remarkably high literacy rate of

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66 Ibid. p. 263.
67 Ibid. , pp. 263-64.
around sixty percent at this stage. This would be a very high figure for those days, were it not for the small size of the sample that allowed this distortion to come up. The relatively high number of missionaries and priests, merchants, army men and administrators largely accounts for the high literacy - three times higher than that of France at that time.

Thus, we have the picture in the beginning of 1660s of a population of some three thousand people, two thousand of them born and brought up in different parts of France, settling in the Laurentian valley, especially in Quebec, which accommodated close to two thirds of the total population, Montreal and Trois Rivières accommodating the rest. The environmental influences working on these early colonists would soon give rise to the emergence of a shared identity of les Canadiens. The very fact that they were not a very large community, nor were they dispersed over a large area, would tend to generate more harmony than would exist in a larger community, simply because the very survival under the prevailing circumstances would be jeopardized in the absence of a higher degree of cohesion. What New France lacked in numbers would be furnished by a strong community life.

The Native Influences:

It is important to bear in mind that this community we have been discussing did not live in isolation with the natives, particularly the Hurons, the Algonquins and other tribes, who constituted what may be described as the periphery or the outer ring of the embryonic colony. The French-native alliance had a dual origin, justified as much by the practical difficulties of existence in the new world as by the desire on the part of both the French state and the missionaries to win the native 'pagans' to what might be termed a French-Christian mode of life. The official support to this policy was expressed quite
categorically by the charter issued by Cardinal Richelieu to the Company of One Hundred Associates. The document declared the professed intention of the state to recognize as ‘natural-born Frenchmen’ those natives ‘who shall be brought to the knowledge of the Faith and make profession thereof’. These newly-born Frenchmen, the document went on to assert, would be free to acquire, bequeath, inherit and accept gifts and legacies, as do the native-born Frenchmen, without being required to take letters of declaration or naturalization. What the charter was proposing, in theory at least, was a composite nationality of the Frenchmen and the natives, and there is no reason to believe that the intent was different from expression in this case.

Whereas it could not have occurred to Richelieu that the natives may not wish to become a part of the professed arrangement on the terms required, his intentions were an expression of the French idea of colonialism in the new world that was to be based on an alliance with the natives. That New France involved, from the very outset, an alliance between the two groups is hardly to be doubted, whatever may have been the relative position of the two alliance-partners. The French explorers from Cartier onwards depended upon the native support for their exploration work, even for their survival in the harsh Laurentian winter. The natives had far superior knowledge of the geography of the continent, about its forests and plains, rivers and lakes and of climate. Added to their naturally increased resistance to cold be their beaver furs, their toboggans, their snowshoes, all of which combined to enable them adjust perfectly well with environment.

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69 It is important to note, however, that this offer applied only to those who were willing to live in France. Ibid.
Their canoes were undoubtedly the best means of travel in the North American rivers, especially the St. Lawrence. The habitants had to acquire all this for their own good.

During the initial period, the natives were needed because of their sheer numerical strength in the region, far surpassing that of the French colonists in the seventeenth century. The French explorers, discoverers and later colonists were always too small in numbers to develop a completely antagonistic equation with the natives. For all his confidence in the fighting abilities of his crew, Cartier did realize that it would be simply impossible to fight with the large number of natives who were being antagonized by the actions of his men. Champlain’s participation with his native allies in the battle against the Iroquois was a deliberate act aimed at cementing the French-native alliance. He saw in such an alliance the only way he could explore the continent, with fighting and exploration combined for the moment. The natives, on their part, perceived Champlain and his band as an auxiliary corps to lend a helping hand to their own warriors.

The French dependence on the natives was accentuated by their rivalry with England and Holland in North America. The establishment of English and Dutch trading posts and later colonies from the beginning of the seventeenth century posed a serious threat to the French enterprise in the region. Within the expanse of a few decades, the French settlers in the colony would be heavily outnumbered by their European rivals. The alliance with the natives would tend to afford a greater sense of security from the very beginning. It would be seen later how this French-native alliance was developed further into a highly elaborate set of policies used to maintain New France as a French colony.

The alliance with the natives was also required by the forces of Counter-Reformation in France. The Catholic missionaries, especially the Jesuits, were enthused by the idea of
converting the natives to Christianity. Whereas they did succeed in winning over some natives to Christianity, their evangelical labours were more instrumental in cementing the alliance than in creating a New Jerusalem in New France.

The fact that French way of life was being influenced by the native ethos is attested to by the interesting case of the *coureur de bois*, coming into existence from about the middle of the seventeenth century. Obliged to pass much of their time with the natives, these young men often became too similar to the 'savages' and 'pagans' to receive severe censure from the Jesuits, who were concerned about what they saw as their lack of morals. The French willingness to adopt Indian ways was the result partly of their sense of superiority, which gave them the self-assurance that they would continue to remain Christian and French. Thus, when the *coureur de bois* adopted the native dress, means of transportation or married a native woman, they did not lose their existing identity.

Out of sheer necessity, the colonists had to develop some taste for the native food. It was thus that maize or corn was introduced in their diet. The Indians prepared *sagamite* with the help of corn and any other food items that might be available. While it was apparently difficult for the French pioneers to be perfectly happy with the native food, those living in the company of natives would often have no other option available to them. Also added to the French diet were items like the flesh of moose, beaver, outardes, tourtes, etc. What are described as 'local pumpkins' were also added to the new comers' menu; blueberries could be preserved for the winter, and they were a new kind of fruit for the colonists. It was from the Indians again that the settlers learnt the use of maple sap, which was extracted from a tree and had a honey-like taste. Leascarbot, writing in the early part of the century, was to lament the use of tobacco by his countrymen, some of whom were so
dependent on 'tobacco intoxication that they no more can do without it than without food and drink'\textsuperscript{70}.

The French pioneers also learnt the technique of what is described as 'forced germination' of seeds from the natives. These seeds were germinated through the process of soaking them in water and putting them in a warm place for some time, sowed in small boxes\textsuperscript{71}. Transportation of wood was a difficult task for the early colonists. The natives had an efficient technique of transporting wood by dragging it on the surface of snow that used to cover the earth for half the year; the French acquired this technique from the natives\textsuperscript{72}.

The native languages were also destined to leave their imprint on the language brought by the colonists from France. In the period under review, the French made serious efforts to learn the native languages which were numerous and not easy to learn, as they did not follow the linguistic patterns familiar to the Europeans. The French had to take the initiative in learning the Indian languages primarily for two reasons. Firstly, the Catholic missionaries were enthused by the idea of winning over these 'savages' to Christianity, and they obviously could not depend upon the reluctant native to learn French in order to learn a message that made little sense to him. Secondly, the learning of native languages by the French pioneers was simply a reflection of their greater dependence upon the natives in this period than the other way round. The fur trade, which provided the chief financial motive for the enterprising activities, was too dependent upon the cooperation


\textsuperscript{71} Gabriel Sagard, Histoire du Canada, (Tross ed.) op. cit., I, p. 267. This technique was used by the native women especially for the purpose of germinating pumpkin seeds. Ibid.

of the natives. And, in any case, until the middle of the seventeenth century, the natives still retained their dominant position in North America, which would normally rule out any desire on their part to learn the language of the new-comer.

In a strict sense, the few ‘marriages’ that took place between the Frenchmen and the native women should not be seen as marriages. In most cases, these alliances were entered into by the colonists for the sake of sensual indulgence, which was easy enough to gain among the natives because of their different standards of sexual morality. It would be wrong, however, to look upon all such marriages in terms of an exploitative relationship, with the native women at the receiving end. It is mentioned that Robert Giffard, the well-known seigneur, had wanted to marry a native woman out of a deeper feeling than mere sensual gratification, but was refused permission by her family.73

Whatever may have been the nature of the marriages that did take place, these should not be taken as the evidence of the growing Indian influence upon the French settlers. Whenever the ‘savage’ women did marry Frenchmen, the former were expected to learn ‘our language and our customs’, as stated by le Clerq.

X

The period between the foundation of Quebec in 1608 and the advent of Louis XIV represents the first stage of the development of Canada as a French colony. By the beginning of 1660s, the colony had come to a critical stage in its evolution. Quebec had been maintained as a French colony for more than five decades now, while some other settlements had also been founded. Whereas the life of the habitants was still rather precarious, the foundations of a permanent French colony in North America were laid during this period. The Laurentian colony was set up in surroundings that were

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73 Ibid., V, p. 250.
remarkably different from anything that the early colonists were familiar with. In North America, there was a lot of geography and very little of history, as far as the newcomers were concerned. On the whole, the society as it was evolving in the colony was undoubtedly an extension of the mother country, though there were important departures from the French pattern.

The freedom afforded by the North American wilderness proved to be one of the determinants of the evolving pattern⁷⁴. Political freedom, or freedom from the control of the state, was not very important in this context. The French state of the time, though undergoing a process of transformation, was still a pre-modern state, and did not exercise any overwhelming influence upon the people. However, the social and economic freedom accorded by the colonial surroundings was certainly of great significance. At this level, the small size of the community, and the embryonic nature of the colony permitted the habitants a degree of freedom from the established norms of the French society. Land, the primary factor of production in pre-industrial societies, was abundant, enabling even the humble peasant to own a hundred acres. This would give rise to some degree of egalitarianism in the emerging society. Of course, the seigneurs were there, but they had little resemblance to their counterparts in France. Trade was also relatively free, and the settlers could act as mediators in the fur trade to earn some extra money. Towards the end

⁷⁴ North American wilderness is often regarded as a fundamental influence on the way Europeans came to perceive North America. This is true of Daniel G Payne who asserts: “The defining aspect of the North American continent was its wilderness, and this was reflected in nearly everything that was written for at least the first hundred years of the colonial period. The early writers described the land, indigenous plant and animal life, native inhabitants, the weather and other natural phenomena in minute detail, leaving abundant documentary evidence of their reactions to the wilderness they confronted. Shaped by European preconceptions (and misconceptions) about nature and the American wilderness the opinions of European writers about their new surroundings ranged from wastelands to paradise, but one impression stands out as nearly universal- the land needed to be radically transformed in order to make it fit for the European settlement.” Daniel G Payne, Voices in the Wilderness, Hanover, 1996, p. 1. Also see Jack P Greene, Construction of America: Exceptionally and Identity from 1492 to 1800, University of North Carolina Press, 1997, pp.1-34.
of this period, the *coureur de bois* had already started visiting the remote parts of the continent to earn money through fur trade. Since requirements of capital were quite modest, even ordinary people could participate in it. Moreover, the settlers were free to hunt and fish in the colony, there being no authority to control these activities to their detriment. Owing to the nascent structure of the society at this stage, there was little legal control over the people. Whereas the Jesuits did exercise considerable influence in the colony, it is important to remember that in an organized sense the church started developing only towards the end of this period. Parishes started to be made only after the appointment of a bishop at Quebec in 1659. We have seen how the *habitants* chose to settle along the river rather than in a circular village, which would have permitted more surveillance by the church in the later period. Apart from all this was, of course, the fact that the community as a whole had to fend for itself in totally alien surroundings, encouraging the cohesiveness of the community. The Iroquois warfare that started in this period posed a common threat to the colony, and it had to be faced collectively. All these factors contributed to the rise of a relatively egalitarian, cohesive society in the making, with a French past and a Canadian future.