

Nova Scotia Loyalists

1783-1785

by Neil MACKINNON *

They had lost more than a war. They had lost their homes and property. They had lost their birthright, their place in history and, long before the official peace, they had lost their faith in their cause. This loss of faith and sense of betrayal enveloped the Loyalists as they set sail for Nova Scotia in "this hour of Darkness, Calamity & Confusion."¹

Was there ever an instance, my dear Cousin, can any history produce one, where such a number of the best of human beings were deserted by the government they have sacrificed their all for?²

There were brave epithets cast over their shoulders, about quitting "this damned country with pleasure."³ But they were not leaving because of an abhorrence for Republican principles. They were leaving because they could not stay. They were "wretched outcasts of America and Britain."⁴ They would react to the elements of their exile with common instincts and a common rhetoric shaped in the crucible of revolution, and significantly tempered by this sense of desertion. But the bond of allegiance encompassed many types. These Loyalists had fought the war for varied, complex and personal reasons. The post-war release from the centripetal force of their loyalty would allow the differences among them to emerge, and the harsh environment of "Nova Scarcity" would accentuate them.

They came to Nova Scotia because they had little other choice. It was the most accessible land in which to re-settle. Canada was a distant interior wilderness, inhabited by people of a different faith and

* Mr. MacKinnon is a graduate student at Queen's University, where this paper was originally read in Prof. G. A. Rawlick's seminar. The author would here like to thank Prof. Rawlick for his criticisms, suggestions, and encouragement.

¹ Public Archives of Canada, A-170, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel: "C" Series, Box 1/1, Nova Scotia, 1752-1791, No. 39. Isaac Browne to Dr. Maurice, September 26, 1783.

² *The Winslow Papers*, ed. W. O. RAYMOND (St. John, N.B., 1901), p. 79. Sarah Winslow to Benjamin Marston, April 10, 1783.

³ Public Archives of Nova Scotia, The White Collection, Vol. III, No. 193. C. Clopper to Charles Whitworth, April 18, 1783.

⁴ Jacob BAILEY, quoted in A. W. H. EATON, *The History of King's County, Nova Scotia* (Salem Press, 1910), p. 107.

language. Some had gone to the West Indies, but most considered it an alien land of excessive heat and yellow fever. For different reasons, Britain was also an alien land. It was too grand, and without money and connections, "the Man is lost — he is Nothing — less than Nothing and Vanity — & his Contemplation of his own comparative Littleness, is Vexation of Spirit."⁵ Moreover, they were Americans, marked by the land in many subtle ways. And to the northeast there was Nova Scotia, a short journey by sea, where rumour had it good land was available. It was on the periphery of the world they had known, with the promise that only a colony can have, but a Royal colony, in a temperate clime. They had little time to study this land of fog and exile, and yet because they were being expelled there was a certain bravado in their attitude to the land. Loyalists who had gone earlier, and agents of various groups who had come to scout the colony, sent back encouraging reports. The land was good, the cattle plentiful, the taxes few, the government cheap and loyal. The country was strategically located for the fisheries, the West Indies trade and the British market, protected from the Americans by a Royal government, and with great potential. Joseph Pynchon, writing his report as agent to the Port Roseway Associates of New York in January of 1783, discussed in some detail the tremendous advantages of Port Roseway over both Halifax and New England.⁶ "The Governor and Sir Andrew are both of the same opinion, that it will be one of the *Capital ports* in America."⁷ There was, moreover, some small consolation in the fact that so many Loyalists were going to Nova Scotia. Part of the promise of the land lay in these people who would settle it, for "every body, all the World moves on to Nova Scotia."⁸

Letters from Loyalists in England seemed to confirm their wisdom in choosing Nova Scotia. The disillusionment of two friends of Timothy Ruggles concerning their plight in England had induced him to come to Nova Scotia.⁹ A friend of Jacob Bailey had written him concerning his appointment to the mission in Annapolis. "You are now on *good*

⁵ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 14. Jonathan Sewall to Edward Winslow.

⁶ P.A.C., M.G. 9, B.6, pp. 60-61. Joseph Pynchon to Port Roseway Associates, in *Minute Book of the Port Roseway Associates*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁸ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 124. Major Upham to Edward Winslow, August 21, 1783.

⁹ R. S. LONGLEY, "An Annapolis County Loyalist," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, XXXI (1957), 89.

bottom and must be much more happy than tho' you were here, dancing attendance for an uncertain pittance."¹⁰

To many Nova Scotia was a mixed blessing, with the present discomfort outweighed by the promise of the future. Timothy Ruggles, in the Annapolis Valley, was very much impressed with the fertility of the soil and was actually boastful of the apples and other produce he was growing.¹¹ Gideon White spoke as favourably of Chedabucto. "That situation is one of the best in this country."¹² Edward Winslow found the country crowded, expensive and miserable, and yet a place of opportunity for a man — like himself — of talent and ambition.¹³ Jason Courtney was very discouraged on his arrival at Shelburne, yet again he perceived the considerable potential. The fish "never was more plenty nor easeyer come at, than from this place," the land "far preferable to any about Halifax" and the harbour was one of the "best in the World exceeding easey of access."¹⁴

The reality could be lost amidst the promises of both the colony and the people settling it, and what sometimes emerged was a loser's wishful thinking that it would eclipse the republic they had left. They might be "laying the foundations of a New Empire," and establishing "a place chosen by the Lords elect."¹⁵

But this sense of mission seemed limited to a few, and threatened by the harsh reality of re-settlement. Most Loyalists were not so sanguine and would not have argued with the reference to "Nova Scarcity."

All our golden promises have vanished. We were taught to believe this place was not barren and foggy, as had been represented, but we find it ten times worse It is the most inhospitable climate that ever mortal set foot on. The winter is of insupportable length and coldness, only a few spots fit to cultivate, and the land is covered with a cold, spongy moss, instead of grass, and the entire country is wrapt in the gloom of perpetual fog.¹⁶

¹⁰ P.A.N.S., The Bailey Papers, Vol. III. — to Jacob Bailey, February 13, 1782. N.B. All references to Jacob Bailey, other than quotations from secondary sources, come from the research and generosity of Ron Macdonald, of Halifax.

¹¹ *The Winslow Papers*, pp. 106-107. Gen. Timothy Ruggles to Edward Winslow, Sr., July 17, 1783.

¹² P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 300. Gideon White to Thomas Melish, August 3, 1784.

¹³ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 97. Edward Winslow to Ward Chipman, July 7, 1783.

¹⁴ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 210. James Courtney to Archibald Cunningham, July 1, 1783.

¹⁵ White Collection, Vol. III, No. 283. William Parker to Charles Whitworth, June 8, 1784.

¹⁶ James S. MACDONALD, "Memoir of Governor John Parr," *Coll. N.S.H.S.*, XIV (1910), 51.

The letters going back to the United States begin to echo this assessment. A Philadelphia newspaper in 1783 gives some idea of the changing picture of Nova Scotia. "Many of the refugees who have settled at Port Roseway have wrote their friends in New York by no means to come to that place."¹⁷ The New York group of loyalists for whom Amos Botsford was agent were disillusioned quite early. In May of 1783 they had written to say they were "both sorry and surprized that our affairs in your province are in so unpleasant a situation."¹⁸ Captain Callbeck could not congratulate Edward Winsow on his arrival in Halifax, for that would be "a very chilly and unmeaning compliment, the Country you have left is in every respect (but as to Loyalty) a Paradise in comparison."¹⁹ Joshua Chandler, in writing from the United States in July of 1783 expected to see all of his people back within 3 months, for "Nova Scotia is not the place for Happiness, or I am greatly deceived."²⁰ And at Shelburne, especially, the dream of the Loyalists was being shouldered aside by reality.

I am told most Horrid accounts of the place that many people have ruined themselves by building large & spacious Houses that the Land is most Intolerably bad and Totaly unfit for Cultivation at these Accounts I am Exceedingly distressed for many of the porr Suffering Loyalists who have Emigrated thither if this is True must be ruined why was not the place Sufficiently Explored before the people went this Surely was bad management Indeed if what I hear is true.²¹

Nor was their attitude to the Nova Scotian any better. It was one of contempt, sometimes patronizing, and always self-righteous. The Nova Scotians were lazy, "languid wretches" who had been forced into some industry through shame of the Loyalists' accomplishments and energies.²² A Loyalist traveller through Nova Scotia in the summer of 1783 found that "the people seem to live and let tomorrow provide for itself. You see a sameness in the countenance of everyone except the Refugees who

¹⁷ W. O. RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne; Benjamin Marston at Halifax, Shelburne and Miramichi," *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society*, No. 8 (1909), 250.

¹⁸ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. I, No. 11. New York Agents to Amos Botsford *et al.*, May 31, 1783.

¹⁹ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 149. Capt. Callbeck to Edward Winslow, November 21, 1783.

²⁰ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. I, No. 13. Joshua Chandler to Amos Botsford, July 1783.

²¹ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 310. Thomas Milledge to Gideon White, September 4, 1784.

²² *The Winslow Papers*, p. 251. Edward Winslow to Sir John Wentworth, November 27, 1784.

are quite a Different set of people.”²³ They were also shrewd to the point of greediness, and willing to turn the refugees’ tragedy to their own advantage. To S. S. Blowers, they were “accumulating wealth at a great rate by the exorbitant prices which they extort from the Strangers.”²⁴ Jacob Bailey also found that they “have enriched themselves by selling their produce by no means at a moderate price to these unfortunate adventurers.”²⁵ This alleged greed had been detrimental to the growth of Annapolis, for the landowners had demanded such extravagant prices of the Loyalists that the more affluent had been driven to Shelburne, Halifax and the Digby area.²⁶

Occasionally, however, beneath this aura of persecution, more general impressions of the Nova Scotian and his particular character can be found. In a journal kept by Mather Byles III, there is a description of a brief visit among some natives of Yarmouth “to see their manner of living,” a description which tells something of both Bluenose and Loyalist.

The houses, or rather huts, are very miserable, some thing like those inhabited by the French people on the road to Birch Cove—I stopped at four different cottages to see their manner of living, and amuse myself with a little *right down Yankeyism*—In one of them liv’d a New England shoemaker, who immediately after the first salutations began to question me *concerning the faith*—He told me he had been putting up his petition for rain “And I dare say” says he “we shall have a *spurt* before to morrow evening.”—He asked my opinion of Allan’s treatise, said he begun it : but finding it was not *right sound doctrine* he *hove* it by again. Allan, he says, died in New England last spring. His wife was receiving a visit from a young lady of about twenty, who had travelled from a back country settlement called Zebouge for her education—She goes to school, and *larns all fine sort of work and siche-like*.²⁷

Byles’ superior tone in amusing himself with a simple yet shrewd Yankee tells us less of the typical Nova Scotian than of those characteristics which the Loyalist was beginning to classify as typically Nova Scotian. Yet this type of description is not frequent, for the Loyalist at this time could not, without difficulty, measure anyone except by the yardstick of the rebellion and its tragic consequences. It was thought that because of the particular attitude of the Nova Scotian towards the rebellion, “their envy and malignity will induce ’em to throw every obstacle and

²³ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. XV, No. 1539. Diary of an unnamed Loyalist, August 18, 1783.

²⁴ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 135.

²⁵ P.A.N.S., Bailey Papers, Vol. XIV. Jacob Bailey to Dr. Maurice, October 28, 1785.

²⁶ Same to same, May 12, 1786.

²⁷ P.A.N.S., The Byles Papers, Vol. I, Folder 2, p. 14. Journal of Mather Byles III.

impediment in your way. I am astonished that they have not art to conceal the principles by which they are actuated."²⁸ As much as any of the rebelling states, during the late war they had been "King Killers,"²⁹ and had lived with "loyalty upon the tip of their tongues and rebellion in their hearts."³⁰ Nor had the cessation of hostilities weakened this feeling, for they were still "inclined to favor the Americans in other words are Rebels,"³¹ and Halifax was "that source of Republicanism" that nourished the rest of the colony.³²

The people in this Country having caught the Contagion early and indeed I wonder it has remain'd in the stamp of Government as 7/8ths of the people are Bigotted to the American Cause.... The people in this country don't deny their principles and are in general like the same class of N. England from which they ransome for Debt.³³

Yet the Bluenose Nova Scotian was merely an incidental factor in the early struggle for survival among the Loyalists. On the other hand the British government and its efforts were all important and loomed far larger in the Loyalist mind. The attitude of the Loyalist towards the crown in these early years was one of utter dependence and great distrust. They feared not receiving what they would treat with contempt when received. Because of the repetitious petulance of many of their requests and comments it is easy to forget the prevailing mood of desperation. It was there before they left New York, upon the initial announcement of receiving only six months provisions.³⁴ And it was there in the initial period in Nova Scotia. Although there were complaints about receiving "nothing here but His Majesties' rotten pork and unbaked flour,"³⁵ the fear was in not receiving the rotten pork at all. Although provisions were continued for three years or more, the Loyalists were never really certain or assured as to how long the provisions would continue, and thus memorials such as that of the magistrates of Shelburne in January of 1784,

²⁸ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 291. Edward Winslow to Ward Chipman, April 4, 1785.

²⁹ Church Historical Society, Austin, Texas, Papers Relating to the Rev. Jacob Bailey (Microfilm). Jacob Bailey to —, May 4, 1780.

³⁰ P.A.N.S., Bailey Papers, Vol. XIII. Jacob Bailey to Mrs. Rachel Barlow, November 8, 1779.

³¹ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. XV, No. 1539. Diary of an unnamed Loyalist, August 22, 1783.

³² John Garner, "The Electoral Franchise in Colonial Nova Scotia" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1948), p. 52.

³³ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. XV, No. 1539. Diary of an unnamed Loyalist, September 5, 1783.

³⁴ P.A.C., M.G. 9, B.6, pp. 193-194. Minute Book of the Port Roseway Associates.

³⁵ Macdonald, "Memoir of Governor Parr," p. 51.

for a continuance, are common.³⁶ That it was often inadequate or unequally distributed was the crux of many Loyalist complaints throughout the colony. Charles Morris, the Surveyor General, writing to Amos Botsford of Digby in September of 1783, referred to the discouragement of the people concerning the promises of supplies not being kept by the government.³⁷ And as late as 1785, Mather Byles had "an abundance of distressful stories from Shelburne, Passamaquoddy, St. Mary's Bay, &c, complaining of the shortness of provisions & the danger they are in of starving."³⁸ To harried officialdom they appeared as insatiable ingrates. They complained loud and long about the promises delayed or not kept, and yet met extra concessions with something bordering disdain.

It is but a few weeks ago I heard of your Regiment being fixed on the British Establishment; I sincerely congratulate you on the event; Yet I confess it is no more than what equity and justice demanded.³⁹

And yet their attitude of ingratitude should be understood in the context of their claims, and their weighing of what they had sacrificed with what they had received for that sacrifice. If they were to be too grateful, they would be selling short the only marketable commodity they really had, their loyalty. The Loyalists believed that Britain had sacrificed them for the sake of peace, and in Nova Scotia they were filled with a strong fear that Britain would sacrifice them again, for the sake of economy. Britain might thus be moved less by gratitude than by guilt, and if this were so, it would be necessary to keep before Britain the uniqueness of their loyalty and the price they had paid for it. Perhaps there was a trace of this pragmatism in their self-consciously strenuous celebration of such Loyalist holy days as the King's birthday,⁴⁰ and "the anniversary of the glorious and ever memorable TWELTH of APRIL, 1782," the day on which Admiral Rodney had defeated a French fleet in the West Indies and a day celebrated, at least in Shelburne, "with all the Joyous mirth due, from every loyal subject, on so great an occasion."⁴¹

³⁶ Col. Cor. N.S., Vol. 12, p. 30, from *Report of the Public Archives of Canada*, 1894 (Ottawa, 1895), p. 412. Memorial of the Magistrates of Shelburne to Parr, January 3, 1784.

³⁷ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. I, No. 4. Charles Morris to Amos Botsford, September 3, 1783.

³⁸ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 264. Mather Byles, Jr., to Edward Winslow, January 25, 1785.

³⁹ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 326. Charles Whitworth to Messrs. Geo. & Geo. Debloise, October 21, 1784.

⁴⁰ *Port Roseway Gazeteer and Shelburne Advertiser*, June 9, 1785, p. 3, col. 2.

⁴¹ *Royal American Gazette* (Shelburne), April 18, 1785, p. 3, col. 3.

Perhaps there was also a slightly pragmatic as well as emotional basis for their hostility to the Nova Scotians, for their rebellious tendencies made an excellent foil for the loyalty of the refugees.

This stress was to be found in almost every letter to or concerning government officials, whether it was Charles Inglis' reference to "that sovereign for whom they had sacrificed everything but a good conscience,"⁴² or the memorial to Parr from the Port Roseway Associates, "who have been great Sufferers in the present Unhappy Contest."⁴³ The appeal was to be found most clearly expressed in the briefs drawn up for indemnification of the Loyalists, in which the nobility of the Loyalists stands in stark contrast to the quibbling of the British government over indemnification of fortunes that "have been sacrificed by the State itself to the public peace and safety."⁴⁴

If the Loyalists' anger towards the crown had to be controlled, and expressed only indirectly through agents in London, their attitude towards local officials could be shown more directly. And it was. To the Loyalists, the officials in local control of the King's generosity were indifferent to their plight, or interested in it only as a source of exploitation. At quite an early stage, the spokesmen for the Port Roseway Associates were bitterly complaining of the treatment received and obstacles placed in the way of settlement.⁴⁵ Governor Parr was early accused of being unwilling to escheat,⁴⁶ and faulted for both the shortage and the incompetence of his surveyors. In defending himself to the home government against such charges, he simply underlined the wide extent of them.⁴⁷ There were constant clashes between surveyor and loyalist,⁴⁸ in which "the Surveyors (poor devils we are) are reflected upon in the Grossest Manner."⁴⁹

Moreover, government officials were frequently charged with procuring fees, specifically against the King's orders. Charles Morris, except for

⁴² P.A.C., M.G. 23, C.6, Pt. I, p. 4. Correspondence of Charles Inglis.

⁴³ P.A.C., M.G. 9, B.6, pp. 34-35, Memorial to Governor Parr, December 21, 1782, in *Minute Book of the Port Roseway Associates*.

⁴⁴ *Royal American Gazette* (Shelburne), June 13, 1785, p. 2, col. 2.

⁴⁵ Esther C. WRIGHT, *The Loyalists of New Brunswick* (Fredericton, 1955), p. 35.

⁴⁶ W. S. MACNUTT, *New Brunswick, A History: 1784-1867* (Toronto, 1963), p. 34.

This reference is to land in the St. John valley.

⁴⁷ Beamish MURDOCH, *A History of Nova Scotia or Acadie* (Halifax, 1865), III, 31.

⁴⁸ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 274. John McPherson to Gideon White, May 16, 1784.

⁴⁹ P.A.N.S., Vol. 395, Letterbook of Surveyor General Charles Morris. Charles Morris to Robert Gray, January 2, 1785.

some minor and borderline nepotism, could refute such charges.⁵⁰ But others could not. Richard Gibbons, who was Attorney-General until 1784, never hesitated to charge fees of the Loyalists whether he had the right or not.⁵¹ Loyalists complained of John Wentworth who, as Surveyor General of the King's woods, charged fees against the King's regulations.⁵² Benjamin Marston, who rarely praised the Loyalists of Shelburne, had as little use for Halifax officialdom. He commented on the arrival of a customs man from Halifax, "Mr. Binney was sent there to pick a little money out of the people's pockets under pretense of entering their vessels."⁵³ That few government officials were exempt from the hostility of the Loyalists is indicated by Charles Morris in commenting on the "unmeritted ungenerous complaints which have been made against all the officers of Government without Exception."⁵⁴

Nor did the Loyalists feel it was any part of their function to help the surveyor in any way, unless for money. This refusal to help was a frequent complaint in Marston's diary, and a regular litany in the letter-book of Charles Morris.⁵⁵ By 1785 the government was reduced to threatening the Loyalists with the loss of their lots to more willing refugees if they did not furnish the necessary assistance of axe and chain men.⁵⁶ Moreover, there appeared to be a double standard among many of the Loyalists. If the government was obliged to be honest and conscientious towards them, it did not necessarily mean that they had also to be honest and conscientious towards the government. Benjamin Marston was, from the earliest days of Shelburne, concerned with the threat of speculators and adventurers.⁵⁷ One of the simplest and favourite ploys was for the captains to have minors and servants included in the application for lots.⁵⁸ General Campbell was forced to set up a new board to check into the many abuses and frauds in relation to the provisions.⁵⁹ Loyalists were

⁵⁰ Charles Morris to Robert Gray, February 6, 1785.

⁵¹ Mr. Justice DOULL, "The First Five Attorney-Generals of Nova Scotia," *Coll. N.S.H.S.*, XXVI (1952), 41-42.

⁵² MURDOCH, *History of Nova Scotia*, III, 44; W. S. MACNUTT, *The Atlantic Provinces* (Toronto, 1965), p. 108.

⁵³ RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," p. 213.

⁵⁴ P.A.N.S., Letterbook of Charles Morris. Charles Morris to Major Studholm, November 12, 1784.

⁵⁵ Charles Morris to Rev. Edward Brudenell, March 24, 1785.

⁵⁶ *Port Roseway Gazeteer and Shelburne Advertiser*, May 12, 1785, p. 3, col. 2.

⁵⁷ RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," p. 226.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 235, 240.

⁵⁹ A. & W.I., Vol. 406, p. 145, from *Report of the Public Archives of Canada*, 1894, p. 417. Campbell to Sydney, April 20, 1784.

claiming for families that had long since departed, and Campbell finally had to order a complete muster of Loyalists and soldiers in the colony to stop such abuses. This did not solve the problem, for many refugees left in the following spring, the frauds increased, and Campbell had to order another muster.⁶⁰ Nor had the speculation in the land been deterred, for in 1785 Morris noted, "we are well assured the People in every District are disposing of their land for much less than it has cost Gov^r for laying out and never mean to settle in the country but to make the most of us."⁶¹

Behind the surveyor, stood the shadowy presence of the government at Halifax, and the Loyalists distrusted both its power and its motives. Antill Gallop expressed some reservations concerning its impartiality. "From such d_____d G____rs, S____ys', Courtiers and brothers in Law God Lord deliver us."⁶² Edward Winslow referred to the Halifax clique which controlled government and anything else worth controlling as "nabobs,"⁶³ and Jacob Bailey dismissed them as "a few self interested republicans at the Metropolis."⁶⁴ The focal point for most of this contempt was Governor Parr. He had come to Nova Scotia hoping for a comfortable little niche in which to pass his waning career, only to find himself facing a horde of hungry Loyalists. There were completely unexpected demands on leadership, administration and energy, and a factious situation in which he was bound to make enemies. What the Loyalists considered his incompetence would have assured hostility. But he was also the protégé of the hated Lord Shelburne. The Loyalists felt, moreover, that part of the land destined for them had been granted away by Parr to the old inhabitants.⁶⁵ On top of that he had sold out to the Halifax faction who, according to Bailey, "by artifice and profound dissimulation acquired an influence over the governor and directed him to dispose of honours and emoluments according to their sovereign pleasures."⁶⁶ Parr's great sin was not in accepting the existence of a powerful clique, but in accepting one not dominated by the leading

⁶⁰ A. & W.I., Vol. 406, p. 432, from *ibid.*, pp. 433-434. Same to same, June 24, 1785.

⁶¹ P.A.N.S., Letterbook of Charles Morris. Charles Morris to Rev. Edward Brudenell, February 12, 1785.

⁶² P.A.N.S., Bailey Papers, Vol. III. Antill Gallop to Jacob Bailey, December 19, 1783.

⁶³ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 240. Edward Winslow to George Leonard, October 5, 1784.

⁶⁴ P.A.N.S., Fort Anne Papers, Bailey Letterbooks 1784-1785 (Microfilm). Jacob Bailey to Colin Campbell, March 17, 1785.

⁶⁵ P.A.N.S., Bailey Papers, Vol. XIV. Jacob Bailey to Dr. Peter, November 16, 1785.

⁶⁶ Bailey Papers, Vol. XVI. Jacob Bailey to Thomas Brown, January 31, 1784.

Loyalists. He did not welcome them quickly into the seats of power. Moreover, he demanded their physical presence to claim the land, and limited the land allotments to a size suitable only for "peasants," or the humbler Loyalist. Consequently, one of their most cherished objectives was to secure the recall of John Parr, and to see the Executive Council and the Assembly then purged and replaced by "honest Loyalists."⁶⁷

The hostility towards local officials, although not always as intense as among the elite, was nevertheless an emotion held by all Loyalists. Like their contempt for the Nova Scotian and the view of their sacrifice as a debt outstanding upon the British government, the degree to which it was held would vary widely among them. Yet, to some degree, it was held by all. Such views, shaped by their recent past, constituted a common Loyalist attitude.

As important as their common fears, frustrations, and villains, however, was their attitude to each other, for next to the republicans and nabobs of Nova Scotia, what the Loyalist feared and distrusted most was another Loyalist. One can take the typical Loyalist attitude only so far, for there was no typical Loyalist. There were twenty thousand individuals, a complete spectrum of backgrounds, mores, motives and ambitions. There were the very rich and the very poor. There were ex-Governors and major placemen and there were the dregs of the port towns. There were those who had supported Britain because their livelihood or ambitions depended upon it, and there were the naive sorts who supported her out of such simplistic notions as loyalty and law. Some would carve out a career from their past misfortunes. Others would turn their backs on the past, to build their houses and clear their two hundred acres. There were those who had left early in the Revolution, and there were those who had left only when they had to. There were the Loyalists who had spent the war in the womb of New York, and those who had spent it in the dirty, dangerous campaigns of some of the provincial regiments. There were the opportunists and the desperate. And there were some "niggers" with their "black wenches,"⁶⁸ who could be hanged

⁶⁷ *The Winslow Papers*, p. 172. Rev. Charles Mongan to Edward Winslow, March 23, 1784.

⁶⁸ P.A.N.S., Shelburne Records, Special Sessions, March 13, 1786; RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," p. 234.

for stealing a bag of potatoes⁶⁹ and whose frolics and dances could be prohibited by local by-law.⁷⁰ Most came as servants, but within months reverted to their original status; some of them were free, to be rented out on five-year contracts,⁷¹ to be burned out when they became uppity and sold their labour more cheaply than the whites.⁷² They were all Loyalists, and the schisms among them were as marked as the attitudes they shared towards the non-Loyalist world.

There was a world into which the common Loyalist would never be invited, a delightful world of banquets and concerts and influence. In Mather Byles' journal to his sister is portrayed a Loyalist world of relative affluence and gentility. It is marked with such comments as the buying of "a magnificent carpet for my grand Parlor : & on the 23^d had the Pleasure of entertaining a Number of my Refugee Friends from N York at Dinner."⁷³ He sought sympathy when he described himself, "sick, weak & dispirited, & grievously exercised with a troublesome Succession of sore Boils," dragging himself off in true Loyalist respect for the Queen's birthday, "to dinner at the Governor's & to a public Ball & splendid Supper in the Evening."⁷⁴ There is a letter from Captain Brownrigg to Gideon White describing an assembly night in Halifax and such major crises as quarrels over a partner for a minuet.⁷⁵ Sarah and Penelope Winslow give several descriptions of the gay life of the privileged. On Sarah's trip from New York, for example, Brook Watson, the Commissary General, saw to it that she had "a thousand advantages that no other family has had," including "an excellent Vessell without one passenger but those we chose ourselves."⁷⁶ Concerning the house she occupied in Halifax, "I leave you to judge whether the rooms are not very good when I tell you that this day week General Fox with sixteen of our Friends dined with us with great convenience."⁷⁷ Penelope Winslow, in a detached

⁶⁹ MACDONALD, "Memoir of Governor Parr," p. 64.

⁷⁰ P.A.N.S., Shelburne Records, Special Sessions, May 12, 1785.

⁷¹ Phyllis BLAKELEY, "Boston King : A Negro Loyalist Who Sought Refuge in Nova Scotia," *Dalhousie Review*, XLVIII (1968), 352-353.

⁷² RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," p. 265.

⁷³ P.A.N.S., Byles Papers, Vol. 1, Folder 1, p. 5a. Mather Byles to his sister, February 20, 1784.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3. Same to same, February 6, 1784.

⁷⁵ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 345. Capt. Brownrigg to Gideon White, January 24, 1784.

⁷⁶ *The Winslow Papers*, pp. 141-142. Sarah Winslow to Benjamin Marston, October 18, 1783.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150. Same to same, November 29, 1783.

fashion, described the life of her friends in Halifax, "pursuing pleasure with ardour. Feasting, card playing & dancing is the great business of Life at Halifax, one eternal round The new Imported Ladies continue to be the Belles."⁷⁸ The fairest belle of all was a refugee, Mrs. Wentworth, in her gown of sylvan tissue with a train four yards long, and her hair and wrist ornamented with real diamonds.⁷⁹ Yet such an exciting life could not detract from the tragedy of the late rebellion, or the courage with which these people met it. "With becoming firmness I supported our first great reverse of fortunes," Penelope wrote. "I bid a long farewell to an elegant house, furniture, native place and all its pleasures The banishment to this ruder World you are a witness I submitted to with some degree of chearfulness."⁸⁰

The humbler Loyalists were also affected by the banishment. They were perhaps not as sensitive as Miss Penelope. They were, however, very hungry. The backdrop for the social life of Sarah and Penelope was a Halifax where almost every church, shed, and outhouse was being used as a shelter for destitute refugees, and where bread lines were a prominent part of the street scene. Thousands were surviving on a diet of codfish, corn and molasses, and hundreds died from lack of sanitation, food or shelter.⁸¹ While some were "pursuing pleasure with ardour" the ship *Clinton* lay at anchor for the winter, "crowded like a sheep-pen" with destitute southerners, chiefly women and children.⁸² Nor was Halifax isolated in its misery. A child's impression of a Shelburne in which "strong, proud men wept like children, and lay down in their snow-bound tents to die"⁸³ is misleading, but Shelburne in the winter of 1783-84 was a city of tents.⁸⁴ A Miss Van Tyne "called on some of our friends in their tents I thought they did not look able to stand the coming winter, which proved a very hard one."⁸⁵ At Port Mouton, Tarleton's Legion was living in tents or huts of sod and log, with clothes too few

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 288. Penelope Winslow to Ward Chipman, April 2, 1785.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 252. Same to same, November 28, 1784; MACDONALD, "Memoir of Governor Parr," p. 56.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 287. Same to same, April 2, 1785.

⁸¹ MACDONALD, "Memoir of Governor Parr," pp. 54, 56.

⁸² Col. Cor. N.S., Vol. 15, p. 149, from *Report of the Public Archives of Canada*, 1894, p. 412. Parr to Lord North, January 15, 1784.

⁸³ T. W. SMITH, "The Loyalists at Shelburne," *Coll. N.S.H.S.*, VI (1932), 66.

⁸⁴ H. C. MATHEWS, *The Mark of Honour* (Toronto, 1965), p. 112.

⁸⁵ J. R. CAMPBELL, *A History of the County of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia* (St. John, 1876), p. 87.

and blankets too thin for the coming winter.⁸⁶ Annapolis was more fortunate in that there were existing buildings in which the Loyalists could seek shelter. Bailey mentioned that several hundred were packed in the church, although larger numbers could not be provided for.⁸⁷ Isaac Browne described "the daily increase of the number of distressed & Starving Loyalists" at Annapolis in the fall of 1783.⁸⁸ Throughout the colony, for the great majority of Loyalists, it was a basic matter of finding enough food and shelter to survive the first winter, and the gnawing fear that if the promised supplies were not forthcoming, "Numbers must and will inevitably perish."⁸⁹ Thus while some of the more fortunate were chiefly concerned with placement and position, most were concerned solely with survival. They were all Loyalists, but motivated by different fears and different ambitions; their attitude towards many facets of life in Nova Scotia would vary widely.

In a land peopled so quickly and with so few surveyors there were bound to be innumerable conflicts and legal squabbles over boundaries and ownership. These conflicts were inevitable and widespread,⁹⁰ but Shelburne was the major centre of strife, especially in the spring and summer of 1784.⁹¹ Because of the "Discontents and disturbances having arisen at Shelburne," the Executive Council was forced to appoint special agents to assign the land and to hear allegations.⁹² But if such conflict was inevitable, it was also the source of stress among the Loyalists, and this issue was of fundamental importance. The pent-up hostility and resentment of Loyalist grievances, instead of being channelled to the outside world, turned inward. Loyalist bickering with Loyalist over fundamental questions of property, and the ensuing tension, strained the common bond of loyalty.

In the White Collection at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia there is to be found a series of nineteen provisions for settling the land disputes

⁸⁶ Thomas RADDALL, "Tarleton's Legion," *Coll. N.S.H.S.*, XXVIII (1954), 33.

⁸⁷ C. W. VERNON, *Bicentenary Sketches and Early Days of the Church in Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1910), p. 137.

⁸⁸ P.A.C., A-170, S.P.G. : "C" Series, Box 1/1, No. 40. Isaac Browne to the Secretary, December 31, 1783.

⁸⁹ *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, October 28, 1783, p. 3, col. 2.

⁹⁰ P.A.N.S., Letterbook of Charles Morris. Charles Morris to Jonathan Prescott, October 12, 1784.

⁹¹ Col. Cor. N.S., Vol. 12, p. 118, from *Report of the Public Archives of Canada*, 1894, p. 418. Parr to Nepean, May 1, 1784.

⁹² P.A.C., M.G. II, N.S.B. 18, p. 148. Nova Scotia, Minutes of the Executive Council, 1780-85.

in Shelburne, drawn up in August, 1784. Perhaps most significant are the supplementary comments on town and water lots, comments permeated with charges of favouritism and unfairness.⁹³ The land had been drawn for by lottery, and yet a favoured few had managed to subvert this fair policy by applying to the government for extra grants of three hundred acres. "And to this impolitic or rather inadvertent Conduct," it was observed, "is owing in some Measure the want of Lands in the Vicinity of Shelburne to satisfy the just demands of other Loyalists."⁹⁴ The author also spoke of grave injustices concerning water lots where, by a legal technicality of definition, "Persons who had come but newly into the settlement" managed to nullify the rights of the owners, and to usurp the claims themselves.

Now, while these Instances of Injuries remain constantly before the Eyes of the people, their minds must be as constantly irritated, and till these injuries can be somehow or other redressed, many Subjects who would Scorn to be in the Breach of the Peace themselves, will nevertheless show much Reluctance at assisting the Magistrates when called upon, if they should even consent to assist them at all.⁹⁵

These injustices were being committed, not by Nova Scotian Yankees, but by fellow Loyalists.

This too, in a sense, was inevitable. Twenty thousand Loyalists had descended upon a poor and insignificant colony, seeking land, office, and security. It was apparent that the market value of their loyalty was hurt in such an inflationary situation, and that oaths against the rebels and nabobs would succeed only to a certain degree, for there were twenty thousand other refugees with the same claims to the government's gratitude. There were simply not enough loaves and fishes, and often ambition had to be satisfied at the expense of other Loyalists. There was an air of *sauve qui peut*, of taking care of oneself and one's friends, devil take the hindmost. "Keep this Hint to yourself," Charles Morris advised Dugald Campbell, "let the others do as they please."⁹⁶ One could erase another Loyalist's name from a memorial and insert one's own to get the land.⁹⁷ One could claim land on behalf of his wife's loyalty, and demand the land of another Loyalist to boot, for the latter "is a person

⁹³ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 308.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ P.A.N.S., Letterbook of Charles Morris. Charles Morris to Dugald Campbell, August 26, 1784.

⁹⁷ Letterbook of Charles Morris. Charles Morris to David Archibald, April 14, 1785.

every way unworthy of your favour and who in the place of being an acquisition, to our Province as (recommended) has proved himself to be nothing more than a nuisance.”⁹⁸ A man of slight influence could manage to take away the partially cleared land of a fellow Loyalist and have it put under his servant’s name.⁹⁹

There was conflict and jealousy between the various groups into which the Loyalists were organized, between the New York group, for example, and the Port Roseway Associates. This group loyalty and suspicion of outsiders tended to splinter the common Loyalist front into smaller fragments. When another Loyalist group appeared to be receiving any particular attention, “they cannot comprehend it, that others should have everything and they Nothing. The people for that Reason are discouraged and dispirited.”¹⁰⁰ In Port Mouton, there was resentment by the veterans of Tarleton’s Legion towards Brook Watson’s New York staff who, having sat out the war in New York, seemed to be getting more material aid in Nova Scotia.¹⁰¹

There were the inevitable power struggles within the groups, for these people had been lifted out of their environment and placed, often with acquaintances of a short time, into a new, alien, and fluid environment, where old forms and standards meant little, and status was in a state of flux. In his letters to Gideon White, R. F. Brownrigg described the jockeying for position among the Loyalists in Chedabucto. On his arrival he had found that the early comers had seized the best of the town lots and that some had already sold their tools and rations to the local inhabitants. The local Pooh-Bah appears to have been a Dr. McPherson who “seems to wish to become Dictator to the inhabitants of Chedabucto.” Brownrigg and friends refused to extend such homage automatically. “Don’t misconstrue me — we mean to live in perfect harmony — but to act with spirit.”¹⁰² Apparently Brownrigg was too sanguine, for in July of 1784 he wrote White from Halifax, and in mentioning the clique in

⁹⁸ P.A.N.S., Vertical Mss. File, Loyalists. Memorial of William Martin to Governor Parr.

⁹⁹ P.A.N.S., Letterbook of Charles Morris. Charles Morris to William White, March 24, 1785.

¹⁰⁰ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. I, No. 41. Amos Botsford to Charles Morris, September 3, 1783.

¹⁰¹ RADDALL, “Tarleton’s Legion,” pp. 29-30, 34.

¹⁰² P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 284. R. F. Brownrigg to Gideon White, June 8, 1784.

this rather muted letter, simply states, "they are very troublesome, and have partly drove me hither."¹⁰³

The conflict which arose among the Loyalists in Digby is indicative of the tensions which could split a Loyalist settlement. A board of four had been appointed by the captains and heads of classes to divide the government material among the refugees. At the request of some discontented Loyalists, the board decided to look into the accounts of Amos Botsford, the agent. With this done, they should have ceased functioning as a board, but they apparently assumed the powers of a permanent committee, "powers which the people did not intend."¹⁰⁴ What ensued was a contest between this board and the agents for political control of the community. As the struggle continued, the community divided behind either Botsford or the leader of the board, a Major Tempany. Both men sought aid in Halifax. A Thomas Osburn had stated that if Botsford had his way in Halifax, "he Osburn would head a mobb and Parade the Streets of Digby."¹⁰⁵ Isaac Bonnell, on the other hand, stated that "It is fully thought by the Better kind of people here Should Tempany Return with any Power the settlement must be Broke up. I shall for my own lot leave it notwithstanding the great Expence I have been at."¹⁰⁶ Although the incident was not necessarily typical, it does illustrate the division, animosity and bitterness that such a conflict could create within a Loyalist community.

There was a tendency in the summer of 1783 for a harassed and overworked government to give scant attention to the individual Loyalist. Under pressure from the associations, Charles Morris conceded "that I will to the utmost of my influence prevent any *Separates* carrying their Points, whatever Pitifull Complaints they may make."¹⁰⁷ With such an attitude, the government was allowing the particular organization in an area to assume responsibility for the stray Loyalists and at the same time permitting the association to assume more authority over land distribution than it had a right to.¹⁰⁸ It was in effect placing the fate of the individual

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, No. 293. Same to same, July 11, 1784.

¹⁰⁴ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. 2, Deposition of John Hooton, Digby, October 2, 1784.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Deposition of B, October 7, 1784.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Isaac Bonnell to Amos Botsford, October 7, 1784.

¹⁰⁷ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. 1, No. 20, Charles Morris to Amos Botsford, July 12, 1783.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 23, Same to same, July 16, 1783.

Loyalist into the hands of a partial and competing body, and allowing that body to assume an almost monopolistic control of land grants in the area. When seven families asked for land in the Conway area, Charles Morris ratified their request but Amos Botsford, the local agent for the New York association, evaded the issue. This action prompted a stern order from Morris and the Governor to place them on the land, "Provided it does not materially Interfere with the General Settlement of Conway."¹⁰⁹ A captain who came to the Conway area to draw a lot found that the new corps had usurped all the lots not yet drawn for.¹¹⁰ Concerning another band of Loyalists, Morris was demanding of Robert Gray in 1785 "why these people have not had a common chance of drawing Lands with others."¹¹¹ Benjamin Marston referred several times in his diary to the almost dictatorial power of the Port Roseway Associates at Shelburne. "The Association from New York are a curious set," he observed, "they take upon them to determine who are the proper subjects of the King's grant. They have chosen a committee of sixteen who point out who are to be admitted to draw for lots."¹¹² A short while later he wrote, "They wish to engross this whole grant into the hands of the few who came in the first fleet, hoping the distresses of their fellow-loyalists, who must leave New York will oblige them to make purchases."¹¹³ Together with the struggle to survive, these conflicts among and within the groups dominated their early days in Nova Scotia. These Loyalist clusters provided the immediate sources of tension and discord, over land, provisions, and position. Under such circumstances, the native of Nova Scotia, frequently separated from him by miles of bush or coast, was often a rather nebulous enemy, known of only at second hand.

Sometimes a part of this struggle, sometimes apart from it, but always a major factor, was the schism between the elite of the Loyalists and the so-called "rabble." The members of the elite were basically those who had been or known someone of influence before or during the Revolution, and hoped to be someone of influence again. The rabble were all those who had been nobody, and had little chance of being anything else.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 17. Same to same, July 4, 1783.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 25. Same to same, July 21, 1783.

¹¹¹ P.A.N.S., Letterbook of Charles Morris. Charles Morris to Robert Gray, February 23, 1785.

¹¹² RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," pp. 213-214.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

There were various shades of grey between, people who could not easily be fitted into either category; but there was an attempt to categorize by the two extremes, or, at best, to divide the Loyalists between the elite and the others. Strangely, the levelling factors of a bankrupting war and a province that was almost a frontier had not lessened the awareness. In a fluid situation, with neither guide lines nor assurance of influence, the elite, in their desperate scramble for position, wrapped their exclusiveness about them like a mantle. With their sense of class, status, and privilege, and their contempt for the lower classes, these Loyalists were far closer to the oligarchy in Halifax than to the more common refugee. The only major separation between the two elites was the lack of office and influence. But between the elite and the masses, there were far too many barriers, and the only thing they had in common was their loyalty, a tenuous cord, frayed by many basic differences.

There was the aura of the snob in the announcement of the death of Lord Charles Montague by Mather Byles of the red carpet and boils. Montague had led a Carolinian Regiment to Nova Scotia, where he died on February 3, 1784.¹¹⁴ "He died suddenly at a little hut in the Woods of Nova Scotia." Byles writes, "& was Committed to the Earth with much military Foppery & ridiculous parade."¹¹⁵ It is difficult to judge which Byles held more in contempt, the "ridiculous parade" or the death of the man in a common hut in the woods of Nova Scotia. James Gautier called the people of Shelburne "banditti."¹¹⁶ N. Ford wrote of his delight in the fact that Isaac Wilkins "has got into an office now, that puts it out of the power of the rabble of Shelburne to remove."¹¹⁷ Perhaps the best illustrations of the gentleman's contempt for the rabble is the journal of Benjamin Marston. Before his appointment as surveyor to Shelburne he had been staying in a Halifax tavern with Loyalist officers, "Such another set of riotous vagabonds never were."¹¹⁸ The Loyalists in Shelburne he found indolent, clamorous,¹¹⁹ and mutinous.¹²⁰ Their captains "are a set of fellows whom mere accident has placed in their present

¹¹⁴ VERNON, *Bicentenary Sketches*, p. 103.

¹¹⁵ P.A.N.S., Byles Papers, Vol. I, Folder 1, p. 5C. Mather Byles to his sister, February 20, 1784.

¹¹⁶ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 302. James Gautier to Gideon White, August 10, 1784.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 427. N. Ford to Gideon White, August 23, 1786.

¹¹⁸ RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," p. 205.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.

situations; . . . Real authority can never be supported without some degree of real superiority.”¹²¹

They are like sheep without a shepherd. They have no men of abilities among them. Their Captains, chosen out of their body at New York, are of the same class with themselves—most of them mechanics some few have been shipmasters, they are the best men they have. Sir Guy Carleton did not reflect that putting sixteen illiterate men into commission, without subjecting them to one common head, was at best but contracting the mob.¹²²

He found pathetic the attempts of these captains to play the role of gentlemen, while their wives and daughters were ladies “whom neither nature nor education intended for that rank.”¹²³

The select few believed that their compensation should be greater than their sacrifice or sufferings might warrant. They implied that the spoils of defeat should be based more upon what one had been than what one had done.

The Merit of an American Loyalist consists, according to the Terms of the foregoing Resolves in a Compliance with the Laws, or much more in Assisting in Carrying them into Execution Where those Principles are found to have been uniformly profess'd and acted upon they Constitute a Degree of Merit which, independant of all Consideration of Loss of Property gives the Persons who have thus acted a fair Claim to Attention and to a Support proportion'd to their Situation in Life and the disadvantages to which they have been subjected in Consequence of such their Conduct.¹²⁴

Moreover, true reimbursement was not to be found as much in official claims and compensation as in position and appointments, and here merit was barely incidental, connections everything. *The Winslow Papers*, for example, are replete with the wielding of influence for family and friends, portraying almost a parasitic coterie trading upon one another's favours.¹²⁵ Mather Byles III, in referring to his father, summed up their expectations: “as every mortification and suffering which he has undergone, has been the effect of the purest principle, he has every reason to hope that his future prospects will brighten as they unfold, and the evening of his life be gilded with the rays of prosperity.”¹²⁶ To the mass of the Loyalists, the outcome of the rebellion was a loss to be

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

¹²⁴ P.A.C., M.C. 23, A.4, Vol. 67, p. 144. Unsigned Memorial to Lord Shelburne, October 1782.

¹²⁵ *The Winslow Papers*, pp. 61-62.

¹²⁶ P.A.N.S., Byles Papers, Vol. I, Folder 2, p. 9. Mather Byles to his aunt, May 5, 1784.

compensated. To the elite, it appeared to have been an opportunity to exploit. The petitions for land grants strengthen this impression. Most of the memorialists, although emphasizing the services rendered and the losses sustained, seek little more than "such proportion of lands . . . as may be most consistent with his Majesty's most gracious intentions."¹²⁷ Memorialists like James Benvie and Thomas Lockwood, "having served during the late war in The Regiment Late, the Royal Fencible Americans," were granted a hundred acres each.¹²⁸ However, one finds James Twaddle, a cripple from a wound received in the revolution, receiving fifty acres, and Nathaniel Thomas, "late one of the members of His Majesty's Council for the Province of the Massachusetts Bay," twelve hundred.¹²⁹ Stephen Skinner, who was among the fifty-five Loyalists who felt themselves entitled to especially large grants, also applied as an individual for an extra "quantity of land as is generally given to Gentlemen in the like circumstances."¹³⁰ The New York agents could write to Amos Botsford for special allotments, for "the People will not object to our having an exclusive Choice of Lands."¹³¹ Among his other grants, Isaac Wilkins managed to gain for himself ten of the town lots in Shelburne, and a public rebuke by the humbler Loyalists.¹³² When General Ruggles was granted his ten thousand acres in Wilmot rather than Annapolis, so that it might not "prove very Injurious to the Settlement in General and very much Disgust the People,"¹³³ he was terribly put out by it all.¹³⁴

The awareness of the many concerning the privileges to the few did not strengthen the fraternity of Loyalism. The petition of the fifty-five gentlemen, and the counter petition rebutting it, exemplify both the demands and philosophy of the elite, and the resentment stirred up among the majority by such demands. In July of 1783 a group of fifty-five gentlemen petitioned Sir Guy Carleton for approximately 275,000 acres in Nova Scotia. They requested to be put on the same footing as field

¹²⁷ P.A.N.S., Land Grant Petitions, Vol. 14. Memorial of Edward Liskman, September 1785.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 15A. Memorial of Benvie, Lockwood, and Burns.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10. Memorials of James Twaddle and Nathaniel Thomas.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2. Memorial of Stephen Skinner, August 28, 1783.

¹³¹ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. 1, No. 10. New York Agents to Amos Botsford *et al.*, May 25, 1783.

¹³² *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, April 19, 1785, p. 1, col. 1. Wilkins, explanation of the affair is in p. 2, col. 1-2.

¹³³ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. 1, No. 16. Charles Morris to Amos Botsford, July 2, 1783.

¹³⁴ R. S. LONGLEY, "An Annapolis County Loyalist," p. 91.

officers, have the land chosen by their own agents, surveyed at government expense, "and the Deeds delivered to us, as soon as possible."¹³⁵ Their claim to this land rested upon the fact that they were no longer living in the manner to which they had been accustomed, and "that the Settling such a Number of Loyalists, of the most respectable Characters, who have Constantly had great influence in His Majesty's American Dominions — will be highly Advantageous in diffusing and supporting a Spirit of Attachment to the British Constitution as well as to His Majesty's Royal Person and Family."¹³⁶

Carleton obviously was impressed by such a claim, for he recommended it to Parr, who actually began the survey.¹³⁷ The less respectable Loyalists, however, were not as impressed, and they reacted quickly and angrily. They had come to Nova Scotia, "little suspecting there could be found amongst their Fellow sufferers Persons ungenerous enough to attempt ingrossing to themselves so disproportionate a Share of what Government has Allotted for their common benefit." Those particular gentlemen demanding such claims were "more distinguished by the repeated favors of Government than by either the greatness of their sufferings or the importance of their Services."¹³⁸ This rift increased the resentment and the cleavage between the "most respectable" Loyalist, and the others.

Religion exemplified the diversity of attitudes among the Loyalists. Benjamin Marston found the Loyalists of Shelburne an irreligious lot, in no hurry to have ministers among them.¹³⁹ Dr. Walter was not quite as critical, but he did feel that they consisted "of persons of very various Characters Dispositions & religious Sentiments," and that it would be only with difficulty that one could "systemize" them under the Church of England.¹⁴⁰ A great many of the Loyalists in Nova Scotia were not members of the Church of England at all, but even among the large percentage who were, a slight Americanization had occurred which struck

¹³⁵ Marion GILROY, *Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia* (P.A.N.S. Publication No. 4 [Halifax, 1937]), p. 146.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹³⁷ Col. Cor. N.S., Vol. 15, p. 166, from *Report of the Public Archives of Canada*, 1894, p. 414. Parr to Secretary of State, March 4, 1784.

¹³⁸ GILROY, *Loyalists and Land Settlement*, p. 148.

¹³⁹ RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," p. 220.

¹⁴⁰ P.A.C., A-170, S.P.G. : "C" Series, Box 1/1, No. 50. Dr. Walter to the Secretary, July 1783.

the missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel as foreign, and perhaps dangerous. The outstanding example of how the American way might differ from that of Nova Scotia was to be found in the protracted struggle between Dr. Walter and the Rev. George Panton for control of the Church of England in Shelburne. It exposed an inherent conflict among the Loyalists between Old World and New World attitudes.

Mr. Panton had been rector of Trenton, New Jersey, and later chaplain of the Prince of Wales' American Volunteers. He had been invited by some of the leaders of the Port Roseway Associates to be minister to the refugees at Shelburne. He indicated his interest, and received both blessing and salary from the S.P.G.¹⁴¹ Because of confusion over his intentions and his health, some Loyalists had assumed he was not going to take the position. Dr. William Walter, rector of Trinity Church in Boston, and later a chaplain with DeLancey's Brigade,¹⁴² had written to the S.P.G. in July, 1783, that the people of the proposed settlement had no clergyman, and that he was offering his services as minister.¹⁴³ The ministers arrived in the community within two days of each other, both claiming to represent the Church of England in Shelburne, and each seeking support for his claim from parishioners, governor, and the S.P.G.

The Rev. Mr. Panton based his claim upon the invitation of the leading Loyalists and the S.P.G.'s approval of him as missionary. Dr. Walter displayed petitions from Shelburne to show that he was the people's choice, and had no doubt that the Society, "on knowing the affectionate agreement which subsists between the people & me," would see that his claim was recognized.¹⁴⁴ When neither the Governor nor the S.P.G. showed any enthusiasm for his claim, he placed greater and greater emphasis upon the necessity for popular support, insisting upon "the Privilege and Right of the Parishioners by Law to chuse their own minister."¹⁴⁵ His supporters insisted that he had been chosen and accepted "by the unanimous invitation of the members of the Church of England in Shelburne."¹⁴⁶ As for the claim that Panton was supported

¹⁴¹ W. O. RAYMOND, "The Founding of the Church of England in Shelburne," *Coll. N.B.H.S.*, No. 8 (1909), p. 279.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁴³ P.A.C., A-170, S.P.G.: "C" Series, Box 1/1, No. 50. Dr. Walter to the Secretary, July 1783.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 51. Same to same, October 17, 1783.

¹⁴⁵ J. L. BUMSTED, "Church and State in Maritime Canada, 1749-1807," *C.H.A. Report*, 1967, p. 50.

¹⁴⁶ *Royal American Gazette* (Shelburne), January 24, 1785, p. 2, col. 3.

by the leading figures in Shelburne, it was obvious that they gave him such support "only because they conceive it will please the governor whose favour in grants of land & Public Offices they may wish."¹⁴⁷ Emphasis was also placed upon the fact that Mr. Panton had been one of the fifty-five, "who solicited for no less, I believe, than five thousand acres each."¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, Walter was accused by Mr. Panton of "opposing public authority."¹⁴⁹ He was also accused of encouraging a "dangerous Tendency, as Opening an Avenue for a Majority of *Sectaries* to introduce Clergymen of Obvious Principles equally dangerous to the Church and Government."¹⁵⁰ Panton's supporters placed more emphasis upon the need to rally 'round "King and Country,"¹⁵¹ and upon the fact that "no *genuine* member of the Church of England, and principled Loyalist, can, consistently and conscientiously, oppose a public establishment, by proper authority, which interferes with no person's rights and that such opposition must arise from *sinister* views."¹⁵²

Eventually Mr. Panton gave up the fight and retired from Shelburne, but the struggle had revealed a basic cleavage between the appeal to democratic principle and the appeal to authority, between the right of the parishioners to choose their minister, and the duty to support a public establishment, and public authority. It also illustrated another aspect of the clash between the elite and the masses, for Panton's supporters did stress the "respectability" of their members, and Walter's followers did indict both Panton's association with the fifty-five, and his supporters' desire to please the Governor. Moreover, the fight revealed a new connotation being given to the term Loyalist. It was no longer simply a term to connote past deeds and sacrifices. It was also to suggest certain present principles, such as the support of King, Country, and Authority.

Throughout Nova Scotia, the Church of England failed to make the inroads it should have among the Loyalists. Although no great number of

¹⁴⁷ P.A.C., A-170, S.P.G. : "C" Series, Box 1/1, No. 55. Dr. Walter to the Secretary, January 1785.

¹⁴⁸ *Royal American Gazette* (Shelburne), January 24, 1785, p. 2, col. 4.

¹⁴⁹ P.A.N.S., Assembly Papers, 1777-1785, Vol. 1A, No. 10. Mr. Panton to Governor Parr, December 24, 1785.

¹⁵⁰ BUMSTED, "Church and State in Maritime Canada," p. 50.

¹⁵¹ *Royal American Gazette* (Shelburne), January 24, 1785, p. 3, col. 2.

¹⁵² *Loc. cit.*

adherents were lost to the Dissenters, the Church, by failing to touch the masses, did not make the gains it might have in these chaotic times. It did not change to meet the new demands of pioneering communities, and it had too many missionaries less interested in bringing the Word to isolated hamlets than in the vicious in-fighting for posts and patronage.¹⁵³

There were many Presbyterians among the refugees. The Shelburne Presbyterians had petitioned William Pitt for government aid, because they could not carry the expense of Church and minister, "Numerous tho' they are."¹⁵⁴ They had a minister in Rev. Hugh Fraser who had been acting chaplain to the Seventy-First Regiment during the Revolution.¹⁵⁵ However, although it would retain the loyalty of the Scots, its emphasis upon a professional clergy and a more orthodox organization, and its lack of missionaries, would preclude it from winning a great many new souls among the poorer Loyalists.

Baptist churches were organized under David George, a Negro preacher who had arrived in Halifax with a body of Loyalists in 1784. He began preaching in Shelburne, "but I found the white people were against me. . . . The black people came from far and near; I kept on so every night in the week, and appointed a meeting for the first Lord's Day, . . . and a great number of white and black people came."¹⁵⁶ The Baptists were not alone in preaching to the Negro Loyalists. Phyllis Blakeley, in her article on Boston King, describes the Methodist interest in Birchtown, and the conversion of both King and his wife to Methodism.¹⁵⁷ William Black, the prophet of Methodism in Nova Scotia, won many adherents among the Loyalists. A large number had been influenced by Methodist teachings before coming to Nova Scotia. Some, such as Robert Barry, had served previously as preachers. He had organized a "class" shortly after Black's first visit to Shelburne.¹⁵⁸ Joseph Tinkham wrote to Gideon White on Black's preaching and hoped "he made some of you Shelburnites better by his Preaching there."¹⁵⁹ Freeborn Garettsen,

¹⁵³ S. D. CLARK, *Church and Sect in Canada* (Toronto, 1948), pp. 71-76; BUMSTED, "Church and State in Maritime Canada," p. 49.

¹⁵⁴ MATHEWS, *The Mark of Honour*, p. 120.

¹⁵⁵ SMITH, "The Loyalists at Shelburne," p. 73.

¹⁵⁶ CLARK, *Church and Sect in Canada*, p. 49.

¹⁵⁷ BLAKELEY, "Boston King," p. 352.

¹⁵⁸ GEORGE COX, "John Alexander Barry and His Times," *Coll. N.S.H.S.*, XXVIII (1954), 133-134.

¹⁵⁹ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 392. Joseph Tinkham to Gideon White, October 6, 1785.

a missionary from the United States, could write from Shelburne in 1786, "Blessed be God, there have been many as clear and as powerful conversions in this township, as I have seen in any part of the States."¹⁶⁰

Like his religion, the politics of the Loyalist was not necessarily that of the establishment. He had once been an American colonial seeking greater autonomy from a growing centralization on the part of Britain, until reform had turned to rebellion, and rebellion had polarized the combatants. Yet once freed from the loyalty-rebellion decision, it is unlikely that he would have completely abandoned what was a natural American reflex, the desire for self-government. Benjamin Marston indirectly explains much of this attitude when speaking of an incident in Shelburne; "the settlers were all called upon to take the oath of allegiance to the King and subscribe a declaration acknowledging the supremacy of the British Parliament over the whole Empire, but this was explained as not to extend to taxation."¹⁶¹ The fact that the explanation was needed indicates that the Loyalists in Nova Scotia were not so much Tories as Americans who had remained loyal in a polarizing situation. The organization of the refugee associations to handle the exodus was very democratic, as in the case of the New York agents, where the refugees "chuse their Captains & they appoint two Lieutenants for every class."¹⁶² Nor did the democratic element end with the choosing of their officers, for Marston was continually frustrated by it. In May of 1783, when the captains had chosen the site for Shelburne, the multitude objected to the site and decided to choose three men from each company to do it all over again. Marston complained, "This cursed republican, town-meeting spirit has been the ruin of us already, and unless checked by some stricter form of government will overset the prospect which now presents itself of retrieving our affairs."¹⁶³ Whether they were voting to seize the boards of a private saw mill and convert them to public use,¹⁶⁴ or were drawing for lots and "indulging their cursed republican principles,"¹⁶⁵ to Marston they were indistinguishable from the rebels they had fled. Governor Parr shared similar sentiments, for their manner of treating governors was one

¹⁶⁰ CLARK, *Church and Sect in Canada*, p. 85.

¹⁶¹ RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," p. 268.

¹⁶² P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. I, No. 10. New York Agents to Amos Botsford *et al.*, May 25, 1783.

¹⁶³ RAYMOND, "The Founding of Shelburne," p. 211.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

that he found neither customary nor congenial. Some time in the summer of 1783 he received a rather harsh note from Amos Botsford, in whose correspondence there are two letters referring to the matter. One is from Parr stating that he was doing all in his power for the Loyalists, had an immense amount of sympathy for them, but was not to be dictated to by Botsford. He suggested that Botsford should write less and work more.¹⁶⁶ The second letter, from Charles Morris, regretted Botsford's "dictatorial Style" and pointed out that Parr was "the King's Representative, and that there was a difference between him and a Governor of Connecticut — of the Peoples own making whom they may reject and chuse another when they please."¹⁶⁷

The Loyalists' knowledge of the system of government in Nova Scotia was often scant, and based on hearsay, for some believed that the legislative assembly was appointed for life.¹⁶⁸ They were consequently apprehensive. Moreover, they brought with them a tradition of self-government, and both fear and tradition dictated that they oppose any form of taxation by a body upon which they were not represented.¹⁶⁹ Such an attitude would lead them in the first years of settlement into a dual movement of seeking representation upon the provincial assembly, and of gaining as great a measure of autonomy as possible for their local governments.

As to the internal Police of the Settlement, we must expect to be under the laws of the province — I am in hopes a Corporation may be obtained — I think it will unless the Jealousies of other parts of the province, make it necessary for the Peace and Quiet of the Governor, to be otherwise.¹⁷⁰

There was a fear among the Shelburne people of seeing what money they had made its way to Halifax. It could take the form of a memorial from the magistrates of Shelburne asking that impost and licence duties remain within the town.¹⁷¹ It could also be found in the protests of a man brought to court for defying the magistrates of Shelburne and serving liquor without a licence. He believed "the licence money went to support a set of people who walked the streets with their hands in their pockets,

¹⁶⁶ P.A.C., M.G. 23, D.4, Vol. I, No. 21. Governor Parr to Amos Botsford, July 12, 1783.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 20. Charles Morris to Amos Botsford, July 12, 1783.

¹⁶⁸ SMITH, "The Loyalists at Shelburne," p. 67.

¹⁶⁹ P.A.C., M.G. 9, B.6 (2). Memorial of B. Ross, C. Campbell, and A. Robertson, n.d.

¹⁷⁰ P.A.C., M.G. 9, B.6, p. 63. Report of Joseph Pynchon, January 23, 1783, in Minute Book of the Port Roseway Associates.

¹⁷¹ P.A.N.S., Assembly Papers, 1777-1785, Vol. 1A. Memorial of the Magistrates of Shelburne, November 2, 1785.

& therefore it was wrong to pay any licence money."¹⁷² Their memorials on government often combine the demand for a new Assembly with Loyalist representation and the appeal for substantial autonomy in local administration, justice and education.¹⁷³

The announcement that the fifth Assembly was to be dissolved after fourteen years made the Loyalists fear that the election was designed to allow the formation of a new Assembly before they could qualify as electors.¹⁷⁴ Their fears were not justified, for the decision to dissolve the Assembly had been made by the British government before their coming, and Parr was insistent upon their representation in the new House.¹⁷⁵ Even the existing Assembly expressed its desire "to see as soon as possible Representatives from the several new Settlements Joining us in such our Endeavors."¹⁷⁶ In December, 1784, an Act was passed creating six new seats for the Loyalist areas.¹⁷⁷

The Assembly, which had existed since 1770, was dissolved on October 20, 1785, and the polls in Halifax opened on November 8.¹⁷⁸ It was a heated affair with nine elections contested before the House, and in certain ridings it appears to have represented the crystallizing of the Loyalist identity in his conflict with the pre-Loyalist Nova Scotian. It would definitely appear that way in the fight for Annapolis county between Loyalist David Seabury and native Nova Scotian Captain Alexander Howe. In an election "conducted with unexampled temper and decency, considering the struggle between the former inhabitants and the new adventurers,"¹⁷⁹ David Seabury won. Howe, however, challenged the results on the ground that the sheriff had been extremely partial in allowing non-freeholders and Catholics to vote for Seabury and not for himself. On December 6, 1785, the Assembly declared the election null and void.¹⁸⁰ A new election was called, and the ensuing contest created an atmosphere in which "such a bitterness rancour and virulence prevails as exceeds all

¹⁷² P.A.N.S., Shelburne Records, Special Sessions, September 15, 1785.

¹⁷³ P.A.C., M.G. 9, B.6 (2). Memorial of B. Ross, C. Campbell, and A. Robertson, n.d.

¹⁷⁴ GARNER, "Electoral Franchise in Colonial Nova Scotia," p. 52.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁷⁶ P.A.N.S., Journals of the House of Assembly, 1784-85, p. 11. November 2, 1784.

¹⁷⁷ GARNER, *Electoral Franchise in Colonial Nova Scotia*, p. 53; MURDOCH, *History of Nova Scotia*, III, 37.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 44.

¹⁷⁹ P.A.N.S., Bailey Papers, Vol. XIV. Jacob Bailey to Mr. Sower, November 25, 1785.

¹⁸⁰ P.A.N.S., Assembly Papers, 1777-1785, Vol. 1A. Minutes of the Council of the Whole House, December 6, 1785.

description."¹⁸¹ Thomas Barclay, an elected Loyalist from Annapolis, appealed to leading Loyalists in the valley to give their all "to support our Interests, and we shall deserve our fate if we permit Capt. Howe to carry his Election."¹⁸² The appeal must have been effective, for Seabury won; but again the House annulled the results, and Howe sat as one of the M.L.A.'s for Annapolis. Moreover, when the House took up the matter of Barclay's letter accusing it of partiality, a straight Loyalist-pre-Loyalist division occurred on the motion to dismiss.¹⁸³ This same appeal to Loyalist solidarity occurs in a letter of James Clarke concerning the new House. "Blowers deserves every Attention and Mark of Respect from the real Loyalist," he had written to Gideon White. He insisted that "For political Reasons . . . , do not be pointed towards Uniacke nor discover any Thing that has the Appearance of Faction or the warmth of Party — Consult Wilkins in every Thing for be assured he ought to be looked up to as the Pole-Star of the Loyalists."¹⁸⁴

There are factors, however, which distort slightly this portrait of Loyalist solidarity. Not all Loyalist communities, for example, put up local champions to represent them. Guysborough, recently populated by Loyalists, was represented by two Haligonians, James Putnam, Jr., a Loyalist Barrack Master, and J. M. Freke Bulkeley, son of the Provincial Secretary. To one county historian, the Guysborough inhabitants were simply too busy in re-settling "to give any time to any except the most pressing problems."¹⁸⁵ Moreover, there were factors concerning the Annapolis election that might call into question the obvious conclusions drawn. Captain Howe was not a representative Nova Scotian, for although born in Annapolis, prior to 1783 he had been an officer with the Thirty-Sixth and 104th Regiments.¹⁸⁶ Nor would David Seabury automatically win the support of the Loyalist rank and file, for he had been one of the infamous fifty-five.¹⁸⁷ What helped to split the community into Loyalist and pre-Loyalist camps was the sense of injustice felt by both sides. The one party felt that they had been terribly abused by the

¹⁸¹ P.A.N.S., Bailey Papers, Vol. XIV. Jacob Bailey to Peter Fry, December 15, 1785.

¹⁸² P.A.N.S., Journals of the House of Assembly, 1786, pp. 23-24. June 23, 1786.

¹⁸³ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁸⁴ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 404. James Clark to Gideon White, March 1786.

¹⁸⁵ A. C. JOST, *Guysborough Sketches and Essays* (Guysborough, 1950), p. 184.

¹⁸⁶ C. BRUCE FERGUSON, *A Directory of the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia, 1758-1958* (Halifax, 1958), pp. 163-164.

¹⁸⁷ GILROY, *Loyalists and Land Settlement*, p. 147.

marked partiality of the House. The other party, and many members of the House, felt that the large pre-Loyalist minority should, in justice, have at least one of the four seats for the Annapolis region. And yet Jacob Bailey mentions that some native Nova Scotians who were "formerly great friends to the American Revolution have given their interest very warmly for Mr. Seabury."¹⁸⁸ It is doubtful that those considered by James Clarke as "real" Loyalists and Pole-stars would be accepted as such by the rank and file. Isaac Wilkins was not only another of the fifty-five, but had already earned the wrath of many in Shelburne with his greed for town lots, and the congratulations of his peers for securing a position that placed him beyond the rabble.¹⁸⁹ S. S. Blowers, on the other hand, would later gain the distinction of being one of the earliest to sell his fellow Loyalists out for the sake of government patronage.¹⁹⁰ And in the pure Loyalist soil of Shelburne the long hand of the Halifax clique was felt, for in an earlier letter to Gideon White, Clarke had stated that "Colo. Tongue connected himself with McNeill and Leckie, who availed themselves of that Connexion to serve Largin."¹⁹¹ Largin had the position of Deputy Naval Officer, which White coveted; McNeil and Leckie were newly elected members of Shelburne, and Colonel Tongue was a leading pre-Loyalist power in the Assembly.

The sixth Assembly would in many ways be a reforming Assembly, and much of the impetus for that reform would come from the Loyalist members. However, it was more a matter of their adding greatly to the strength of existing reform sentiment than creating a Loyalist party of reform. Except for the issue of Barclay's letter, there was not to be a straight Loyalist-pre-Loyalist vote in the new Assembly. There would be too many combinations with pre-Loyalists and against fellow Loyalists to speak easily of a Loyalist party, for they "had no platform, no consistent policy, and above all, no opposing party."¹⁹² Yet they were still to play a dominant role in the fight for reform.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ P.A.N.S., Bailey Papers, Vol. XIV. Jacob Bailey to Peter Fry, January 5, 1786.

¹⁸⁹ GILROY, *Loyalists and Land Settlement*, p. 147.

¹⁹⁰ J. M. BECK, *The Government of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1957), p. 29.

¹⁹¹ P.A.N.S., White Collection, Vol. III, No. 400. James Clarke to Gideon White, February 3, 1786.

¹⁹² Gene MacG. MORISON, "The Evolution of Political Parties in Nova Scotia, 1758-1848" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1949), p. 18.

¹⁹³ Margaret ELLS, "Nova Scotian 'Sparks of Liberty,'" *Dalhousie Review*, XVI (1936-37), 476.

They had men of outstanding ability among them, and, as important, they were able to lift reform out of the mud of sedition. Previously, the "Church and State Party" had been able to brand any attempts at local reform or any threats to their power as rebellious and republican. The Loyalists could not as easily be accused of sedition. Quite naturally, they would seek reform because they were on the outside looking in. They were represented in the Legislative Assembly, but not within the executive. They would consequently seek the supremacy of the legislature. Some among them, once invited into the realm of executive power, would quickly jettison their crusading zeal and don the attitudes of the oligarchy. But these were a very small percentage of the refugees, and the desire of the Loyalists for the supremacy of the elected branch of the government had roots other than exclusion, and as compelling. As Americans they had been nurtured on certain standards of representation, and they found the Nova Scotian government wanting.

This is the misfortune of Great Britain in respect to the colonies—placing in their own minds the landholders in the colonies upon a footing with those they call peasants in Britain, when really that character is scarcely to be found in the colonies.¹⁹⁴

It is perhaps as Americans that their attitudes are most easily understood. They were not a right wing splinter of American society, but a broad and complex variety of types and opinions. They varied greatly in occupations and social strata, political and religious views. That they had supported a common cause and suffered a common fate conditioned their response to a new environment. This experience permitted the caricature of the Nova Scotian and his government, and shaped the love-hate relationship with Britain. It found expression in the election of 1785, with a situation in which lines could be drawn, the enemy defined, and the cry of Loyalist brought forth and exploited. But the intensity could not last, and the common bond could not dominate. There was much conflict with the Nova Scotian, yet it was neither constant nor intense enough to supply the cohesion necessary for a dynamic Loyalist attitude.

The danger from without was too weak, while the dissension within was too strong. The many refractory elements among the Loyalists

¹⁹⁴ Joseph Pyncheon to the Committee of the Port Roseway Associates, February 1783, as quoted in SMITH, "The Loyalists at Shelburne," p. 67.

inhibited the growth of a common front. Land squabbles, opportunism and group loyalties broke down Loyalist attachments, while the basic conflict between elite and the masses strengthened the fragmentation. The select were usurping the Loyalist image and shaping it to their own ends, whereas the great majority were placing greater emphasis upon the democratic principles and instincts that had been their pre-revolutionary heritage, but had lain dormant for close to a decade.