

La Patrie: Quebec's Repatriation Colony, 1875-1880

John I. Little

Volume 12, Number 1, 1977

Fredericton 1977

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/030821ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/030821ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0068-8878 (print)

1712-9109 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Little, J. I. (1977). La Patrie: Quebec's Repatriation Colony, 1875-1880. *Historical Papers / Communications historiques*, 12(1), 66–85.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/030821ar>

Article abstract

Après quelques tentatives de mettre fin à l'émigration massive de Québécois vers la Nouvelle-Angleterre, le gouvernement modifia sa stratégie et élaborait un programme visant à favoriser le retour des émigrants au pays. Une loi fut votée et une colonie de rapatriés fut fondée sous la direction de Jérôme-Adolphe Chicoyne sur des terres de la Couronne dans les Cantons de l'Est. En dépit de l'établissement de nombreux colons et même de la fondation du village de La Patrie en 1875, le nombre de rapatriés qui voulurent se prévaloir des avantages du programme fut restreint. Même parmi ceux qui revinrent, beaucoup s'en retournèrent aux États-Unis, une fois le prêt empoché. Même si le projet ne fut pas un échec complet et que les établissements qui furent alors fondés continuèrent de se développer régulièrement, les réalisations concrètes de rapatriement s'avèrent quand même passablement limitées en comparaison des objectifs que l'on s'était fixés.

J.I. LITTLE

Précis

Après quelques tentatives de mettre fin à l'émigration massive de Québécois vers la Nouvelle-Angleterre, le gouvernement modifia sa stratégie et élaborait un programme visant à favoriser le retour des émigrants au pays. Une loi fut votée et une colonie de rapatriés fut fondée sous la direction de Jérôme-Adolphe Chicoyne sur des terres de la Couronne dans les Cantons de l'Est. En dépit de l'établissement de nombreux colons et même de la fondation du village de La Patrie en 1875, le nombre de rapatriés qui voulurent se prévaloir des avantages du programme fut restreint. Même parmi ceux qui revinrent, beaucoup s'en retournèrent aux Etats-Unis, une fois le prêt empoché. Même si le projet ne fut pas un échec complet et que les établissements qui furent alors fondés continuèrent de se développer régulièrement, les réalisations concrètes de rapatriement s'avérèrent quand même passablement limitées en comparaison des objectifs que l'on s'était fixés.

JOHN I. LITTLE
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

*La Patrie: Quebec's Repatriation
Colony, 1875-1880*

The most traumatic development of the latter half of the nineteenth century, in the eyes of Quebec's lay and clerical leaders, was the massive exodus of French Canadians to the United States.¹ The Catholic Church was convinced that the expatriates were doomed to lose their language and faith in an English-speaking Protestant environment, while nationalists of all political stripes felt that Quebec's population somehow had to keep pace with the proliferation of anglophones in the rest of Canada. From the first, the principle remedy envisaged was colonization of the province's Crown lands, both in the Eastern Townships and North of the St. Lawrence Valley. Many realized that a more effective antidote would have been the improvement of farming techniques and urbanization, but agricultural education, though promoted, was much too slow a process to meet what was considered to be a national emergency; as for commerce and industry, they were still preserves of private enterprise, not suitable fields for Church or government interference.

During the eighteen-fifties and sixties lay and clerical leaders joined forces to reform the land-holding system, build colonization roads, and establish new settlements, thereby opening vast new tracts of land to French Canadian colonists.² This activity did not stop the exodus, however, for during this period 145,000 Quebecers departed, primarily to New England's mill towns.³ By 1870 not only was the rate of exodus continuing to grow, but most of the available land had been developed.⁴ The young provincial administration, under pressure to do something, passed the Colonization Societies Act which provided government grants to those groups organised to assist colonists or found new settlements. After an initial outburst of enthusiasm, the authorities had to admit that the programme had been of little value. The subsidies were finally terminated in 1875.⁵

By this time railroads had become the chief preoccupation of the legislature,⁶ but colonization was not forgotten. In 1874 the newly-formed de Boucherville ministry, with unanimous support from the Assembly, launched its repatriation colony project in three of those townships in Compton which had recently been the scene of operations for colonization societies. This was the first official attempt to persuade francophones to return to Quebec. What had suddenly caused the provincial authorities to feel that they could reverse the tide of migration after thirty years of failure to stop its southward flow? Even more

puzzling, what possible attraction could such an isolated and underdeveloped part of the province have to the urbanized Franco-Americans? Was the government motivated entirely by wishful fantasy, or were solid pragmatic considerations involved? This paper will attempt to answer these questions, as well as assess the role that religious and agrarian values played in the actual structuring and operation of the colony.

Quebec first started promoting repatriation in a small way in 1870, when it appointed Father J.-B. Chartier⁷ of Coaticook in Stanstead county to be a colonization agent. One of his duties was to travel to New England in order to address potential repatriates. In 1871 he published a pamphlet entitled *La colonisation dans les Cantons de l'Est*, and distributed a third of its three thousand copies in the United States. Chartier's propaganda seems to have had some effect, for in 1871 he claimed that he was able to spend only ten days south of the border due to the large numbers of prospective colonists (765) arriving in Coaticook from the old parishes and New England. Most of the visitors were directed to the nearby townships of Barnston, Barford, Hereford, Clifton, Ditton, Chesham and Stoke. Those from within the province tended to buy already-cleared farms, but the Franco-Americans posed a problem. While repatriates generally returned to Quebec out of desperation for money, they refused to become servants or farm labourers. Since buying cleared land was out of the question, they insisted upon settling in the wilderness against the advice of Chartier, who felt that they lacked the qualities required of successful colonists.⁸ Such reticence on Chartier's part may have hampered his effectiveness in the eyes of the Department of Agriculture and Public Works, for Assistant Commissioner Simeon LeSage⁹ was not satisfied with his work. The agency was subsequently terminated in December, 1873.¹⁰

Although Chartier's campaign brought relatively few Franco-Americans back to Quebec, and did little to stem French Canadian emigration, it does seem to have aroused some interest in New England. By 1873 expatriates were more willing to heed the call to return home because depression had struck the New England cotton textile industry.¹¹ John Henry Pope, the influential federal representative for Compton county and Minister of Agriculture, took advantage of this situation to appoint Father P.-E. Gendreau¹² of Cookshire to be special visiting agent to the New England French Canadians, as well as to make suggestions on what Ottawa could do to encourage repatriation. In his report Gendreau claimed that the money used to encourage Europeans to immigrate to Canada would be much better spent if diverted to a programme for the thousands of Franco-Americans eager to return to their homeland. By the time the report was presented, however, Pope was no longer Minister of Agriculture, so Gendreau's suggestions were ignored.¹³

Because the Crown lands were a provincial responsibility, any hope for a sustained programme of this nature lay with the Quebec government. Already in 1872 Assistant Commissioner LeSage had been ordered to design such a project.¹⁴ He sent immigration agent J.-A. Chicoyne to New England on a study

mission the following year. Chicoyne and Father Chartier each presented proposals, but LeSage drew up his own instead, perhaps because he was skeptical of the practicality of any repatriation scheme.¹⁵ He advised that European immigrants, and even Quebec inhabitants, should enjoy the same advantages as those Canadians who returned from the United States, but he also suggested the appointment of a full time agent in New England for the first time. LeSage presented his proposals to the provincial Cabinet in the autumn of 1873, but no immediate action was taken. Then, on June 24, 1874, more than ten thousand Franco-American delegates attended the Saint-Jean-Baptiste day celebrations in Montreal where they fervently proclaimed themselves in favour of repatriation.¹⁶ With the formation of the de Boucherville ministry in September, the project finally moved beyond the talking stage. A modified version of LeSage's report became a ministerial measure, and on February 23, 1875, the Repatriation Act was passed. In order to more effectively concentrate resources, overseas immigration was placed exclusively in the hands of the federal government for five years, and all of Quebec's agents but one were withdrawn.¹⁷

Under the Repatriation Act, the settler would be provided with a home and small cleared acreage with easy payment terms. Every head of family could select a hundred acres, with a dwelling house and four acres ready for seeding, at the regular price of sixty cents per acre, plus \$140 for the improvements. This sum was to be repaid within ten years: the lot itself during the first five, and the \$140 (interest-free) during the last five. As an alternative, the colonist could clear the first four acres himself, build his dwelling and receive the \$140 as a loan which he would repay in the same manner. No letters patent (clear title) would be issued until all payments were completed. The department chose the townships of Ditton, Chesham and Emberton in Compton County to be the site of the original colony because they were still largely unsettled, they were reasonably accessible by rail, they were close to the United States, and, the publicly subsidized colonization societies had recently built roads and cleared land in all three townships. Should the new scheme prove successful, the government hoped to extend it throughout the province.¹⁸

In charge of the repatriation colony was Jérôme-Adolphe Chicoyne, a former immigration agent who had toured Quebec and New England preaching the virtues of colonization.¹⁹ He was to be directly responsible to the Ministry of Agriculture and Public Works, because the failure of the Colonization Societies Act had taught the government to avoid intermediary bodies. Even the Catholic clergy (who had provided most of the local agents for the colonization societies) were by-passed when Chicoyne decided to move from Sherbrooke to the site of the colony itself. However this layman posed no real threat to clerical authority because he himself was a staunchly conservative Catholic. Born on a farm near Saint-Hyacinthe in 1844, at the age of three Chicoyne moved to town to live with his childless god-parents.²⁰ In 1856 he entered the local classical college, but he seems to have been too solitary and too independent to adjust to his new environment. He became so dissatisfied that, after putting in his year at the college, he ran off to New England with visions of making his fortune. The thirteen-year old

youth worked for a year and a half in a Connecticut factory, and then went to school for a year in Vermont. By this time he had become completely disillusioned with his adventure — in his memoirs he reported that he had barely avoided contamination in “cet ocean de dissolution”. This unhappy experience helps to account for Chicoyne’s future zeal in promoting repatriation.

In October of 1859 the young Chicoyne returned to his home, and to the fervently ultramontane Collège de Saint-Hyacinthe.²¹ Suddenly attracted to academic life, he became a very successful student. He studied philosophy during the 1864-65 school term, and law during the summers. At the same time he began to publish articles in the local bleu mouthpiece, *le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*. His evolution from a democrat and revolutionary (to use his own words) to a confirmed conservative was now complete. In the fall of 1865 the sudden death of a fellow classmate, his most intimate friend, pushed Chicoyne towards religion; in December he became a novice with the Oblates in Montreal. However his strong-willed temperament was not suited for the rigorous community life, and in May he returned to his legal studies in Saint-Hyacinthe, where he practised law from 1868 to 1872.²² In 1870 he became Secretary-Treasurer of the newly-formed Saint-Hyacinthe Colonization Society. Two years later Chicoyne’s interest in land settlement led to his appointment as provincial immigration agent in Montreal. In 1873 his duties were extended to promoting repatriation of French Canadians from the United States,²³ and, in 1875, he was placed in direct charge of the repatriation colony.

At the other end of the repatriation line was Ferdinand Gagnon, editor of the Worcester, Massachusetts *Travailleur*. He was “entrusted with the care of making known and popularizing among our fellow citizens in the United States the law passed in their behalf.”²⁴ Born in St-Hyacinthe in 1849, Gagnon had left the province in 1868 to become New England’s foremost French language journalist. He proved to be an excellent choice as American agent, for his influential newspaper published a steady stream of articles promoting the movement, and he travelled extensively among the Franco-American communities to recruit colonists.²⁵

Each family head who wished to go to the colony from the United States was supposed to present Gagnon with a character reference from his parish priest. He would then receive a certificate from Gagnon which entitled him to a reduced train fare. Although the Department of Agriculture and Public Works asked Gagnon to enlist only those settlers who had some capital, he did not always follow this rule.²⁶ Anyway, the certificate actually meant little, for even those who went entirely on their own initiative were not turned away.

Chicoyne was optimistic about the finances of the colonists, for he attempted to make arrangements whereby some could purchase the cleared lots of the Bagot and Saint-Hyacinthe Colonization Societies rather than the forested Crown lands. The Bagot Society offered its lots for the sum invested, plus interest (about ten dollars above the regular sixty cents per acre for wild land).²⁷

When Chicoyne argued that demanding interest constituted speculation, its secretary replied that some compensation had to be made for the time sacrificed by the members, not to mention the travel expenses which amounted to two or three dollars per year for six years. Unconvinced, Chicoyne charged that even his fellow Saint-Hyacinthe Society members were motivated by ambition and self-interest.²⁸

Meanwhile, Chicoyne's hands were full with more serious problems. In early April, Assistant Commissioner LeSage informed him that already repatriated families were waiting in Sherbrooke, and that they were becoming very impatient. When sixteen of these individuals left for La Patrie a week later, they had to walk for two days due to the poor condition of the roads.²⁹ Gagnon had forwarded over sixty people before he was told to delay the movement until May 15. Even that date still found snow in Chesham and Ditton, with the Salmon and Ditton Rivers flooding and causing widespread road and bridge damage. Because construction on the large house to shelter the new arrivals in Chesham could not begin until June 1, the settlers had to be placed in camps and private homes.³⁰ By May 22, although almost all the available Ditton lots had been claimed, many could not be touched because the government had not completed requisitioning uncleared lots from the colonization societies. Another annoying obstacle was the absence of roads — Chicoyne was so desperate that he even offered to oversee construction himself, at no additional salary.³¹ Combined, the weather, land and road problems resulted in the American agent again being asked to halt the movement for fifteen to thirty days. On June 7, a frustrated Gagnon informed LeSage that discouraged colonists were returning to New England. Repatriation would be easy, he said, but *“vous n’êtes pas organisés, vous n’allez pas assez vites.”*³²

Throughout the summer Chicoyne continued to bombard LeSage with requests that the cancellation of claims be speeded up.³³ Not surprisingly, the strongest opposition to the proposed expropriations came from English-speaking interests, many of whom had been hostile to the project from the beginning.³⁴ Glasgow Canadian Land and Trust, a Scottish-owned colonization company, seems to have been the principal complainant; its mouthpiece was William Sawyer, the local M.L.A. Chicoyne replied that had Sawyer visited the establishment after the special invitation personally extended to him, he would have realized that certain interested parties were attempting to arouse national and religious prejudices, because not only Anglophones, but French Canadians as well, would lose their land claims.³⁵ Chicoyne eventually had his way, for in September the lots were cancelled.

This action was defended after an investigation by the regional inspector of colonization agencies, but it was accompanied by a number of less defensible expropriations from Highland Scots in nearby Marston and Ditchfield townships.³⁶ As a result the repatriation project was added to a list of grievances (which included the province's freeze on subsidies to south shore railroad con-

struction) proclaimed at a meeting of settlers from seven local townships. In the opening address, the chairman, a local Presbyterian minister, complained of the

partiality shown to French-Canadians above all other nationalities, whether Protestants or Roman Catholics, as manifested by the iniquitous working out of the grand repatriation scheme of the hierarchy *alias* the Quebec Legislature; the cancelling (sic) the lands of Protestants at Lake Megantic, as well as that of two Irish Roman Catholics who cannot be led by Ultramontanes as sheep like French-Canadians.³⁷

The angry Scots decided to form a branch of the Protestant Defence Alliance,³⁸ with one section of their local charter proclaiming that the so-called repatriation colony was operated by “the Church of Rome for French Canadians solely.”³⁹ Nevertheless, the repatriation colony remained a peripheral issue in the minds of the local population; the agitation died quickly once the Marston and Ditchfield colonists were given back their land.

Meanwhile, in spite of the endless summer rain which reduced the roads to all but impassible muddy trails, one hundred lots had been granted and eighty families settled by July 1.⁴⁰ Only half were repatriates — ten were Europeans, and the others were French Canadians from the old parishes.⁴¹ With the Chesham house finally ready to accept newly-arrived colonists, the future looked brighter. Even the harrassed Gagnon grew more optimistic after his August tour. The American colonists appeared so satisfied with their lot that he decided to send his elderly father to live in the colony.⁴² Nor was life in the colony all drudgery, as Chicoyne never missed an opportunity to organize a religious and patriotic celebration. To him, “une petite fête de temps à autre est loin de nier aux progrès de la colonie.” On Corpus-Christi day there was a high mass during which Chicoyne presented the colonists with the numerous loaves of holy bread donated by the Commissioner of Agriculture himself. The visit of Bishop Racine of Sherbrooke to the colony a couple of weeks later offered still another occasion for a religious demonstration.⁴³

By November, when the influx of colonists had stopped for the winter, 240 families (1100 people) had settled in Ditton and Chesham. Ninety-two families were from the United States, 102 from within the province, and 36 from Europe.⁴⁴ The expenses were \$10,837.56, with \$3,441.57 going towards organization and labour for the colony itself, and the remainder towards local roads, bridges, and advances to colonists.⁴⁵ Technically the latter items could not be counted as repatriation expenses, but in fact few colonists would ever pay back the money advanced to them.

In order to maintain close control over the winter operations, Chicoyne bought land near the Ditton headquarters, appropriately christened La Patrie,⁴⁶ and moved his family there from Saint-Hyacinthe.⁴⁷ By this time he was concerned with attracting professionals and industries to give stability to his colony. Unfortunately neither endeavour met with much success. In his fruitless search

for a doctor Chicoyne's standards may have been too high, for he carefully checked into the history of all applicants.⁴⁸ After two years with no result, Chicoyne still insisted that the candidate be a good citizen, which appears to have meant a staunch Catholic and loyal Conservative: "Nous avons déjà malheureusement une élément libéral et anti-religieux très-prononcé, il nous faut des soldats pour le combattre."⁴⁹ The lack of professionals may not have been entirely to Chicoyne's distaste, since it left him in unchallenged control of the colony. In addition to being the government agent, he was mayor of the municipal council, justice of the peace, emergency doctor, pharmacist, merchant, and an important landowner.⁵⁰ But Chicoyne's ambitions did not prevent him from launching a determined, and successful, attempt to have a priest appointed to La Patrie. As the colonists were too poor to support one by themselves, Chicoyne suggested to the Department of Agriculture and Public Works that a priest be appointed as his assistant colonization agent. The government would pay half his salary, permitting him to fulfill the additional function of local curé. The department accepted the proposal, allowing the Bishop of Sherbrooke to choose Victor Chartier, younger brother of the Reverend J.-B. Chartier of Coaticook.⁵¹

One might expect that Chicoyne's careful screening of professionals, in order to protect his community from demoralizing influences, would have been applied to industries as well. After all, his articles printed in *le Pionnier* dwelt upon a constant theme — the evils of the New England factories in contrast to the virtues of Quebec's soil. However, much of this rhetoric seems to have been stimulated by the fact that agriculture was still the major attraction an industry-poor Quebec had to offer its growing population, it certainly did not prevent Chicoyne from attempting to set up factories several times throughout his career.⁵² In 1875 he did his best to lure a shoe company to La Patrie. He offered two years of free water power, free buildings, free land and free construction of roads to the plant. He also promised that labour would be twenty percent cheaper than in the larger towns, and that within a few months Pope's International Railroad would be only eight miles away.⁵³ The offer was in vain. In a less ambitious direction, Chicoyne reasoned that because a market for the ashes produced in clearing land would be a valuable source of income for the colonists, the government should finance the operation of a pearlshery. The colonists would keep it in repair, and use it for a nominal fee. Chicoyne also wished to establish a model and industrial farm for the poor of the municipality, but nothing seems to have resulted from either project.⁵⁴ As for the potentially more lucrative enterprises of manufacturing lumber and operating a general store, Chicoyne was willing to invest the necessary capital himself. He quickly raised \$10,000 by selling shares at \$100 each. His store opened its doors in the spring of 1876, and by August his steam sawmill was ready for business.⁵⁵ The enterprising colonization agent was certainly not exaggerating when he proclaimed, "J'ai fini par assimiler mes intérêts à ceux de cette colonie; son succès fera mon succès, de même que sa déchéance pourrait me compromettre."⁵⁶

Unfortunately for him, the mingling of public duties with private interests left Chicoyne vulnerable to suspicion of profiteering. Soon after his store

opened, one colonist complained that its prices were double those in a neighbouring township, and that Chicoyne sold only to settlers with cash.⁵⁷ The opposition Liberal Party did not fail to take notice of these accusations. It proclaimed publicly that Chicoyne was benefiting from his official position at the expense of the colonists.⁵⁸ The hostile Sherbrooke *Progrès* also charged that Chicoyne sold his own goods as merchant to himself as government agent.⁵⁹ It is impossible to determine how much truth there was in these allegations, but the government maintained its confidence in Chicoyne for the time being at least.

Other early criticisms of Chicoyne were of a less serious nature. In January, 1876, *le Progrès* attacked him for hiring two local English Canadian contractors to clear one hundred acres and build fifty houses. To Chicoyne's reply that none of the colonists had the means to direct the operation, and that they would gain needed employment from it, *le Progrès* countered that a Franco-American could have been found to handle the contract.⁶⁰ However, the insinuation that Chicoyne was soft on nationalism was rather inconsistent with allegations made by two Irish Catholics that he had rejected their land claims because they were not francophones.⁶¹ When *le Progrès* reported that there was a lack of work for the colonists, Chicoyne replied that all those not employed by the two contractors were either working on their own land, or bringing logs to his sawmill.⁶² Bishop Racine was convinced that the opposition to Chicoyne was stirred up by those who resented his blocking of a liquor licence for the colony (they even spread the rumour that Chicoyne was selling liquor under the counter).⁶³ The source of much of the animosity towards Chicoyne was Pierre Vaillant, a Franco-American who, before it came under the 1875 legislation, had planned to start his own repatriation colony in Chesham.⁶⁴ Vaillant's hostility became overt when he began to suspect that Chicoyne had interfered with his appointment as postmaster for Chesham. He was also upset because Bishop Racine and many colonists opposed the use of his name for the new village.⁶⁵ Chicoyne attempted to make peace by suggesting that Vaillantbourg be the name used for the village post office, and Notre-Dames-des-Bois (the bishop's choice) for all other purposes. Not only was this recommendation adopted, but Vaillant replaced the original postmaster.⁶⁶ This won Chicoyne a temporary reprieve, but a year later Vaillant was again attacking him in a series of letters to the accommodating *Progrès*.⁶⁷

On the surface at least, Chicoyne met the many reprovals philosophically. He wrote to Gagnon in the spring of 1876:

Tu me demandes les nouvelles de tes colons. C'est toujours la vieille et antique histoire: les uns trouvent le pays excellent et sont enchantés que tu les aies dirigés ici, les autres ne disent pas grand chose, mais on voit qu'ils regrettent un peu les oignons d'Égypte. Bûcher du matin au soir, vivre au lard, à la soupe aux pois (sic), c'est si dur pour des gens habités à *weaver* et à *spinner* et dont l'estomac ne digère que des *puddings* et des *boston-crackers* depuis des années. D'autres sont en diable et permettent de te dénoncer dans les journaux.⁶⁸

He rationalized that a certain amount of grumbling was inevitable among such a mixed population, especially with most of them having been pushed into the colony by straitened circumstances. In fact, Chicoyne had little reason to be discouraged in the spring of 1876. By June 30 the repatriation colony had made significant progress, with 1871 people occupying 3095 cleared acres.⁶⁹ Indeed, far from being disillusioned, Chicoyne's idealism waxed stronger than ever. He planned to start a newspaper called *La Patrie* which would ignore the burning issues of the day; its only aim would be to morally strengthen the people. He still felt that the colony would become "un foyer d'où rayonnera sur le peuple canadien-français en général le flambeau du patriotisme et des vertus civiques."⁷⁰ Religious and patriotic ceremonies continued to be held. On June 24, both Saint-Jean-Baptiste day and the anniversary of the first mass in Chesham were celebrated with a long procession (led by a statue of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes and French Canada's flag) from La Patrie to Vaillantbourg. Along the way, fourteen crosses were erected, with the curé reciting an invocation to the Virgin Mary at each one. Near Vaillantbourg he unveiled a thousand pound statue (donated by Chicoyne) of Notre-Dame-des-Bois standing on a huge rock. This spot subsequently became a pilgrimage shrine for the area's colonists, inspiring Chicoyne to write a long poem in its honour.⁷¹

Despite the optimistic atmosphere of the early summer, the colony's problems were far from over. Settlers arriving from New England were disappointed to find that they were not eligible for the \$140 loan when they settled on lots already cleared by the contractors.⁷² Moreover, not only was the government planning to reduce its injection of money into winter programmes, but autumn rain and snow hampered the harvesting of potatoes and other crops. In October, 102 residents signed a petition demanding government aid.⁷³ They were not supported by Chicoyne who, as late as December, requested only strict necessities for a few families in exceptional straits.⁷⁴

Father Chartier reported that four families had eaten nothing but potatoes for several days, and that there was no longer enough food in Chesham to feed half the population,⁷⁵ yet Chicoyne insisted that he personally could assist the colonists by buying logs from them for his sawmill. He asked permission to have all of the wood which was collected from the clearings delivered to him tax free. Also he wanted wood taken from outside the clearings to be subject to a five cent tax only, though regulations of the Crown Land Department forbade colonists to cut timber outside their clearing limits until they had received their letters patent. He realized that official permission could probably not be given, but tacit approval would satisfy him, for he felt that no court would condemn a colonist for cutting a few trees to maintain his family.⁷⁶ Of course, Chicoyne himself would be the chief beneficiary of such an arrangement. It was beginning to appear as though he were trying to profit from the settlers' poverty by forcing them to work for him, rather than receiving government assistance.

In late January the Department of Agriculture, no longer able to ignore reports of misery among the colonists,⁷⁷ asked Chartier to report on the situation

and for advice on how to help.⁷⁸ Chartier, like Chicoyne,⁷⁹ claimed that the root of the problem lay with the colonists' penniless state upon arrival. Not only had they been forced to work in the woods, thereby neglecting their seeding, but the situation had been aggravated in Chesham by that "ennemi dangereux", Pierre Vaillant, who had assured the settlers that there was no need to seek jobs in the fall because the government would come to their assistance. Chartier suggested that those who had no future prospects in the colony should be assisted in leaving, while the sick should be aided immediately, and the fifty or so families in less dire straits should be given work on local roads.⁸⁰ As a result, the government set aside \$2,000 for relief. Needy colonists received \$868.77 in cash, while \$787.63 in potatoes, oats, barley, and buckwheat seed was distributed in April and May. Transportation and administrative expenses absorbed the remainder of the grant. Repayment was to be in the form of road work.⁸¹ The whole affair was kept scrupulously secret because the government did not wish to encourage either demands from other areas, or ridicule of its project.⁸²

Chicoyne, who played a secondary role in the relief operation, had become very unpopular by this time. Though his pecuniary interests in the colony may well have been to its benefit, and though his transactions were probably within the strict definition of the law, he had set himself up as a ready-made scapegoat for anyone with a grievance. Even the local priests became critical.⁸³ Finally, in May of 1877, the Department of Public Works allowed Chicoyne's appointment as repatriation agent to expire. The colony's status as a repatriation centre thereby officially ended.⁸⁴

The government had expended \$80,000 on the project. Of this amount \$28,000 went toward building houses, and \$52,000 toward clearing land and constructing roads.⁸⁵ The short-term results were quite impressive, with a total of 1604 new settlers arriving in the area.⁸⁶ However the results in terms of repatriation were disappointing, because only 782 of the colonists were from the United States.⁸⁷ Predictably, the majority of these were from mill towns in Massachusetts, though a few came from as far away as Minnesota and Michigan. Gagnon himself admitted to a Massachusetts board of inquiry in 1881 that no more than six hundred families had moved back to any part of Quebec, and that about half of these had subsequently returned to New England.⁸⁸

This is not surprisingly because the French Canadians had gone to New England in the first place to escape the rigours and uncertainties of marginal farms. Furthermore, there was considerable opposition from within the Franco-American community itself. In 1875 Gagnon wrote that those newspapers supporting the project faced criticism and financial loss. Only three were willing to take this risk. The *Jean-Baptiste* of Northampton, Massachusetts mocked the enterprise in doggerel verse:

Partant pour la Patrie
Un char plein de colons
Pour faire de l'abattie

Dans ce vaste Canton.
 Ils ont mangé des croutes,
 Ne faut pas en douter
 En regrettant sans doute
 Les jobs qu'ils ont quittés.⁸⁹

A second source of resistance was the Franco-American merchants and professionals, who were uneasy at the prospect of losing their clientele. More surprisingly, dissenting voices could also be heard among New England's French-speaking clergy. None seem to have gone beyond a tacit approval, while two or three actually denounced the project.⁹⁰ The *Pionnier* commented sardonically that the expensive churches being built in New England motivated the curés towards discouraging repatriation: . . . "le désir de briller, d'éclipser les Canadiens du pays natal, la vaine glorieuse, en un mot, ainsi que l'intérêt personnel, y jouent un grand rôle."⁹¹ Finally, to the further disgust of the *Pionnier*, Manitoba was a more attractive site than Quebec to many of the repatriating French Canadians.⁹²

There is little wonder, therefore, that the Compton colony did not stimulate a general movement back to Quebec. With the return of economic prosperity in 1879, the émigrés quickly lost all interest in abandoning their adopted homeland. In the final analysis, the whole repatriation scheme only served to injure the French Canadians of New England because it reinforced the hostility of American nativists, sensitive to any resistance to the great melting pot.⁹³

As for the other colonists who took advantage of the government subsidies, the only Europeans were four families from France and three from Belgium. In fact some of the English and Norwegian families introduced to Ditton by J.H. Pope and his Compton Colonization Society seem to have taken advantage of the sudden demand for land by selling their farms and moving elsewhere. From 124 in 1875, the number of Europeans in the township declined to 99 in 1876. Most settlers moved to the colony from Quebec itself, the majority from within the Eastern Townships, and quite a number from the Lac Saint-Jean-Saguenay region.⁹⁴ This would indicate that available land was becoming scarce within these two traditional colonization zones, and that an outward migration had already begun. In addition the recession hit Canadian cities almost as soon as it did those in America,⁹⁵ so that forty-seven of the colonist families were from the urban centres of Montreal, Quebec, Trois-Rivières, Sherbrooke, and Coaticook.⁹⁶

The Franco-Americans were not alone in deserting their holdings once they had collected the government loan. Not only did public funds dry up in 1877, but there followed a succession of crop failures. In 1879 Father Chartier reported that frosts had prevented the colonists from growing enough food for their own subsistence. Conditions were such that some would have to leave the colony. In 1880 he wrote that the population had been diminished by frozen crops and lack of winter employment. In fact, according to the curé, Ditton's population

experienced a drastic drop from 900 in 1879 to 570 in 1880.⁹⁷ Still he remained optimistic. The unsuitable ones who had forced themselves into the colony were gone for good, but most of those *departees* who had kept their farms would return.⁹⁸

Very few of the departing colonists ever did return, as the government found out when it attempted to collect the \$60,320 still owing from the loans advanced to colonists for clearing their lots.⁹⁹ The mayor of Ditton claimed that many of those who had originally taken lots had come only for this "loan", and had subsequently disappeared. An 1885 meeting of Ditton, Chesham and Emberton colonists claimed that 223 of the repatriation lots had been abandoned. Anyone wishing to take over one of these abandoned lots would be saddled with the \$140 debt, as well as the regular Crown land price of sixty cents per acre. Furthermore, these lots were far from being a bargain, for their houses were frequently either in swamps, on stony ground, or where there was no water. In some cases the improvements made valued only \$60, though the government had invested the full \$140. Even those lots which once had been promising were by 1884 grown up in brush, with their houses in ruins.¹⁰⁰ Finally, in 1898, the Department of Crown Lands was forced to admit that none of the loans would be repaid, and it cancelled all sums owed for improvements on the repatriation lots.¹⁰¹

Though few of the repatriation colonists remained on their holdings, the \$80,000 invested in the project was not entirely wasted. Upon collecting the money for improving their assigned lots, many of the settlers may simply have moved to nearby land outside the reserve in order to avoid repayment. Whatever the reason, the population of Ditton, Chesham and Emberton did not decline after the project ended, but rose slightly, from 1927 in 1877 to 2112 in 1880. By 1880 64,577 bushels of grain and root crops and 2674 tons of hay were harvested.¹⁰² There were three churches (two with *curés*), five schools, five post offices, ten sawmills, two flour mills, five forges, five stores, one hotel, three well-organized municipalities, and sixty-five miles of roads, including one to the railroad station at Scotstown.¹⁰³ Though many of these developments were not a direct result of the repatriation programme, all of them must have been stimulated by the funds which poured into the area through that project.

But the settling of three obscure townships was a far cry from the benefits which its proponents had boasted the repatriation programme would bring. Once it had exhausted the scheme's political potential, the government arrived at the conclusion that this was not the most profitable way to invest its severely limited resources, especially when railroad expenditures were pushing it dangerously into debt.¹⁰⁴ Aside from a small colony in Temiscouata township,¹⁰⁵ the whole repatriation idea was dropped after 1877. Furthermore, with an employment crisis in Canadian cities, the province was actually forced to stop encouraging large numbers of francophones to return from the United States — after 1877 only those who could support themselves would be welcome.¹⁰⁶ No other Quebec government became directly involved in land settlement through-

out the remainder of the century. Church-sponsored colonization societies and profit-oriented colonization companies rather ineffectively (in the Eastern Townships at least) took over the role of developing the province's Crown lands.

In launching the repatriation project, then, the Quebec government was apparently motivated by the rather unrealistic dream that the province's isolated and mountainous Crown land could be made as attractive as the American mill towns, not only to French Canadians in Quebec, but in New England as well. In the case of *La Patrie* the problem was not so much that the colony was isolated, for the railroad helped to alleviate that problem, but it was high and rugged terrain, where the valleys themselves were afflicted by a short growing season. Nevertheless a considerable number of francophones did remain in the area. More might have stayed on the cleared lots had Chicoyne chosen the sites with greater care, but it was probably inevitable that even serious colonists would move in order to avoid repaying their \$140 loan. It made more sense to invest some of that money in better land held by private interests, than to reimburse the government.¹⁰⁷

Doomed to failure or not, given Quebec's obsession with its departing population, it is hardly surprising that an attempt was made to repatriate the exiles who finally seemed willing to return. And what choice was there but to turn to colonization when the province's own factories were laying off workers? In fact the project attracted some of Quebec's own unemployed labourers who had nowhere else to turn in an age when social welfare was very limited.¹⁰⁸ The people directly involved in the project were themselves certainly not motivated by blind idealism. It was accepted by the Assembly without opposition, but without any great outbursts of enthusiasm.¹⁰⁹ As for the settlers, most were simply in desperate need of the money offered by the government, while the motives of John Henry Pope were plainly mercenary for he was the grantee of a large tract of Crown land in Ditton, land which he was under some pressure to develop.¹¹⁰ The draftsman of the project, Simeon LeSage, was skeptical from the first about the practicality of repatriation. He certainly favoured colonization as one means of keeping French Canadians in Quebec, but his biographer calls him a pragmatic, as opposed to a doctrinaire "apôtre de la colonisation".¹¹¹ Ferdinand Gagnon was clearly committed to repatriation at this time, but he was, after all, a paid agent of the government, and he himself did spend the rest of his life in New England. Finally, J.-A. Chicoyne was the person most actively involved in and most devoted to the colony. There can be no doubting his moral conviction in promoting colonization throughout the remainder of his life. He seems to have managed *La Patrie* almost as a paternal despot, placing a great deal of emphasis upon religious and patriotic ideals within the community. But he too had a personal investment in the colony. It offered not simply prestige and authority, but a chance for capital investment as well. To all concerned, then, the repatriation project offered certain immediate and concrete benefits. This is not to deny that French Canadian nationalism,

imbued with conservative Catholic ideals, was a primary motivating force, but it does remove La Patrie from the realm of romantic agrarian visionaries.

NOTES

¹ The 1849 parliamentary inquiry into the emigration problem claimed that 20,000 Lower Canadians had left the province since 1844, when the exodus first became widespread. *Appendix no. 2 to Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Canada* (hereafter *J.L.A.C.*), VIII (1849).

² See J.I. Little, "The Peaceable Conquest: French Canadian Colonization in the Eastern Townships during the Nineteenth Century", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1976, pp. 174-245.

³ Jacques Henripin et Yven Perron, "La Transition Démographique de la Province de Québec," in Hubert Charbonneau, ed., *La Population du Québec: études rétrospectives* (Les Editions du Boréal Express, 1973), p. 37. The attraction to the mill towns became particularly prevalent after 1860. Ralph Dominic Vicero, "Immigration of French-Canadians to New England, 1840-1900: a Geographical Analysis", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968, pp. 290, 296.

⁴ For a description of the remaining Crown land in the Eastern Townships, see *J.L.A.C.* XX (1862), p. 157; Province of Quebec, *Sessional Papers* (hereafter *S.P.Q.*), IV (1870), pp. 70-73.

⁵ See Little, pp. 324-64.

⁶ Marcel Hamelin, *Les Premières Années du Parlementarisme Québécois (1867-1878)* (Québec, 1974), pp. 96, 98ff, 206, 236.

⁷ J.-B. Chartier was born at La Présentation near Saint-Hyacinthe, on May 14, 1832. He studied at the Saint-Hyacinthe Seminary and, after being ordained in 1856, he became a professor and then a director of students until 1863. He then became curé of Clifton (Compton county) and finally of Coaticook. In 1876 Chartier returned to teach at the Saint-Hyacinthe Seminary, where he died in 1917. Cyrien Tanguay, *Répertoire Général du Clergé Canadien* (Montréal, 1893), p. 310.

⁸ *S.P.Q.*, VI (1872), pp. 350, 355.

⁹ LeSage was the chief administrator of the province's colonization programme from 1869 to 1888. For a detailed study of his career see Pierre Trépanier, "Siméon LeSage, Haut Fonctionnaire (1835-1909) Contribution à l'Histoire Administrative du Québec", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1975.

¹⁰ Archives du Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe, Fonds Jérôme-Adolphe Chicoyne (hereafter *J.A.C.*), Correspondance générale, P.-E. Gendreau to Chicoine, 20 Dec. 1872; *S.P.Q.* VII (1873-4), p. 305.

¹¹ Vicero, pp. 208-9, 232.

¹² Gendreau was born at Saint-Pie in 1840, and ordained at Saint-Hyacinthe in 1862, when he became vicar of Compton. Two years later he was curé of Saint-Bernardin de Waterloo. He moved to Cookshire in 1868, remaining there until 1874 when he became "procureur" of the Saint-Hyacinthe Seminary. Six years later he moved to Ottawa to join the Oblates, and in 1884 he became first President of La Société de colonisation du Lac Temiscamingue. Tanguay, p. 346; Trépanier, p. 342.

¹³ Dominion of Canada, *Sessional Papers* (hereafter *S.P.D.C.*), VI (1873), p. 66; *Annuaire du Séminaire Saint-Charles Borromée* (Sherbrooke) (hereafter *Annuaire*), 1896-9, p. 282.

¹⁴ *Annuaire*, 1896-9, p. 276.

¹⁵ *J.A.C.*, Correspondance générale, P.-E. Gendreau to Chicoine, 20 Dec. 1872;

National Archives of Quebec, Quebec Department of Agriculture and Public Works (hereafter N.A.Q., P.W.), Lettres Envoyées, XVI, no. 9314, LeSage to Gendreau, 10 Nov. 1873; N.A.Q., Fonds Siméon LeSage (hereafter S.L.), Correspondance, II, p. 174, LeSage to J.-C. Taché, 27 Feb. 1875; Hamelin, pp. 181-2; Trépanier, pp. 312-3.

¹⁶ *Annuaire*, 1896-9, pp. 283-4; Hamelin, p. 181.

¹⁷ Hamelin, p. 180; Norman Macdonald, *Canada, Immigration and Colonization 1841-1903* (London, 1939), p. 96. After 1870, Quebec had attempted to attract French-speaking immigrants from Europe, but with little success. France and Germany (for Alsace-Lorraine) charged stiff fees for permission to solicit emigrants, and local opposition was encountered in Belgium. In addition, most of the francophones who did move to Quebec soon grew discontented and left. *S.P.Q.*, VI (1872), pp. ix-x, xiii, 299-306, 341-2; VII (1873-4), pp. 178, 304. For more details see Hamelin, pp. 170-181 and Trépanier, pp. 259-311. See also *S.P.C.*, Reports of Ministers of Agriculture, for the break-down by nationalities of immigrants arriving in the Eastern Townships.

¹⁸ *S.P.Q.*, IX (1875), p. 12; N.A.Q., S.L. Correspondance, II, p. 229, LeSage to O'Neill, 2 July 1875.

¹⁹ His name was spelled Chicoine until 1879 when he changed it to the form used by his ancestors in France. N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Envoyées, IX, no. 5283, LeSage to Barnard, 7 March 1872; XIII, no. 7316, LeSage to Chicoine, 24 Jan. 1873.

²⁰ The following biographical material is taken from *J.A.C.*, V, *Mémoires*, 31 July 1866.

²¹ For a description of this college at the time of Chicoyne's attendance, see Pierre Savard, *Jules-Paul Tardivel, la France et les Etats-Unis* (Québec, 1967), pp. 15-19.

²² Elie-J. Auclair, *Figures Canadiennes*, II (Montréal, 1933), p. 189.

²³ *J.A.C.*, Correspondance générale 1882-96, Order appointing Chicoyne Chief Emigration Agent for Montreal, 27 June 1873.

²⁴ *S.P.Q.*, IX (1875), p. 12.

²⁵ Donald Chaput, "Some Rapatriement Dilemmas", *Canadian Historical Review* XLIX (1968), p. 401; Alexandre Belisle, *Livre d'or des Franco-Américains de Worcester, Massachusetts* (1920), p. 155; Vicerio, p. 268.

²⁶ N.A.Q., P.W. Lettres Envoyées, XXI, no. 11983, LeSage to Chicoine, 7 April 1875; Alexandre Belisle, *Histoire de la presse franco-américaine* (Worcester, 1911), p. 97.

²⁷ *J.A.C.*, Correspondance générale, Gendron to Chicoine, 8 May 1875. In March Gendron had asked \$90 per lot for 16 lots, with 5 acres cleared and sowed on each. N.A.Q., P.W. Lettres Reçues, no. 29577, Gendron to LeSage, 6 March 1875.

²⁸ *J.A.C.*, Correspondance générale, Gendron to Chicoine, 8 May 1875; *J.A.C.*, R.L., I, Chicoine to Rev. Monsieur, 14 May 1875.

²⁹ *J.A.C.*, Correspondance générale, LeSage to Chicoine, April 1875; N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Envoyées, XXI, no. 11983, LeSage to Chicoine, 7 April 1875; *J.A.C.*, R.L., I, Report to Colonization Bureau, 30 April 1875.

³⁰ Belisle, *Histoire*, p. 99; *J.A.C.*, R.L., I, Chicoine to LeSage, 14 May 1875.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 22 May 1875.

³² Belisle, *Histoire*, p. 100.

³³ *J.A.C.*, R.L., I, Chicoine to LeSage, 24 June, 1 July, 13 July, 19 July, 31 July 1875.

³⁴ On January 12, 1876 the anti-Catholic Montreal *Daily Witness* charged that: In the estimates of last year a sum of \$50,000 was appropriated for the ostensible purpose of bringing back from the United States, Canadians who had left their country. This has turned out to be simply a plot for the purpose of populating the Eastern Townships, etc., with French Canadians, to the exclusion of English-speaking settlers. Instead of taking English or French-

HISTORICAL PAPERS 1977 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

Canadians indiscriminately from the United States, (. . .) the immigrants are taken from the North Shore from the old settlements and induced to take up land on the South Shore (. . .) No English, Irish, Scotch or German need apply.

Even the Conservative Sherbrooke *Gazette* denounced J.H. Pope's speech supporting the repatriation project. *Le Pionnier*, 22 Feb. 1878.

³⁵ J.A.C., R.L., I, Chicoiné to Hon. H.-G. Malhiot, 25 Sept. 1875.

³⁶ Quebec, Archives of the Department of Agriculture and Colonization (hereafter A.C.), Section West, adj. 4472, Report by John Hume, 10 March 1876.

³⁷ *Daily Witness*, 27 January 1876.

³⁸ The P.D.A. sprang from a dispute between Catholics and Protestants at the Oka Indian Reserve. The only other branch to appear in the Townships was in Lennoxville. *Le Pionnier*, 4 Feb. 1876.

³⁹ *Daily Witness*, 29 Jan. 1876.

⁴⁰ J.A.C. R.L., I, Chicoiné to Gagnon, 24 Aug. 1875; Chicoiné to Hon. P. Garneau, 1 July 1875.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Chicoiné to LeSage, 1 July 1875.

⁴² Chicoiné to LeSage, 18 Aug. 1875. Quoted in Belisle, *Histoire*, p. 106; J.A.C., R.L. I, Chicoiné to Gagnon, 28 Sept. 1875.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Chicoiné to LeSage, 19 May 1875, 25 May 1875.

⁴⁴ *Le Progrès*, 17 Dec. 1875.

⁴⁵ *S.P.Q.*, IX (1875), p. 14.

⁴⁶ This site had become the centre of the Bagot Colonization Society's activities in 1873, when a Catholic chapel was built there, prompting a Franco-American to move his hotel (which included the post office, store and weekly stagecoach) from the nearby English-speaking hamlet of West Ditton. Abbé Gendreau of Cookshire erected a sawmill at the new site shortly afterward. *Le Pionnier*, 12 April 1872, 10 April 1879; *Annuaire*, 1896-9, p. 275.

⁴⁷ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoiné to Gagnon, 28 Sept. 1875.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Chicoiné to Tellier, 11 Oct. 1875.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Chicoiné to P.-A. Gendreau, 3 May 1877.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Chicoiné to Ernest Gagnon, 14 Oct. 1876.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Chicoiné to Hon. P. Garneau, 13 July 1875; N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Envoyées, XXIII, no. 13194, LeSage to Racine, 21 Sept. 1875; C.-Edmond Chartier, "La colonie du rapatriement," *Revue Canadienne*, XIV (1914), pp. 47-48. Victor Chartier remained on the government payroll until 1881. Trépanier, p. 379.

⁵² In 1873, for example, Chicoyne had been involved in the opening of a French ribbon factory in Saint-Hyacinthe. N.A.Q., S.L., Correspondance, I, p. 317, LeSage to Chicoiné, 13 Feb. 1873; N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Reçues no. 19278, Chicoyne to LeSage, 21 Dec. 1872; no. 19797 1/2, 19 Feb. 1873.

⁵³ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoiné to Louis Coté, 31 Oct. 1876.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Chicoiné to LeSage, 10 Oct., 11 Nov. 1875; Chicoiné to Hon. P. Garneau, 30 Aug. 1876; N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Envoyées, XXI, no. 11966, LeSage to Gagnon, 6 April 1875; XXIII, no. 13203, LeSage to Chicoiné, 22 Sept. 1875.

⁵⁵ *Le Pionnier*, 26 Aug. 1876; J.A.C., Correspondance générale, Chicoiné to Hon. C.-B. de Boucherville, 29 April 1876; *Stanstead Journal*, 9 March 1876. Prior to this, the trees cut in the clearing operation had simply been burned. *Etat des Comptes Publics de la Province de Québec*, 1876, pp. 157-158.

⁵⁶ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoiné to Hon. J.-A. Champleau, 31, Oct. 1876.

⁵⁷ J.A.C., Correspondance générale, F.-X. Larose to 'Monsieur', 10 April 1876.

⁵⁸ *Le Pionnier*, 8 Dec. 1876.

⁵⁹ *Le Progrès*, though still a Conservative supporter like *le Pionnier*, vehemently op-

posed almost every local project favoured by its older and better established competitor. *Le Progrès*, 24 Aug. 1877.

⁶⁰ *S.P.Q.*, IX (1875), p. 16; *Le Progrès*, 7 Jan. 1876.

⁶¹ N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Envoyées, XXIV, no. 13951, LeSage to Chicoine, 25 Jan. 1876; no. 13880, 5 Jan. 1876.

⁶² *Le Progrès*, 7 Jan. 1876. These reports did not fail to reach LeSage. N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Envoyées, XXIV, no. 13721, LeSage to Chicoine, 18 Dec. 1875; J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to Gagnon, 4 Jan. 1876.

⁶³ Eastern Townships Historical Society, Fonds Victor Chartier, Mgr. A. Racine to V. Chartier, 27 April 1876, 28 April 1876.

⁶⁴ *Le Pionnier*, 9 May 1879. Pierre-U. Vaillant was born in Assomption county in 1830. He taught school for seven years, then edited the *Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, taught French in Vermont and Illinois, worked as a carpenter for three years in Fall River, Massachusetts, became correspondent for the *Protecteur Canadien* and *l'Etendard National*, and helped to found *l'Echo du Canada*. In 1873 he moved to Chesham where he operated a sawmill, only to return to the United States and journalism in 1881. Belisle, *Histoire*, p. 301.

⁶⁵ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to Gagnon, 24 May 1876; Fonds Chartier, Mgr. A. Racine to V. Chartier, 2 April 1876.

⁶⁶ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to Vaillant, 11 May 1876; Fonds Chartier, F. Bilodeau to V. Chartier, 10 Aug. 1876; Chesham petition, 15 Oct. 1876. Bishop Racine was not content to concede the final victory to Vaillant, for in 1878 he recommended that the post office change hands and name. Fonds Chartier, Mgr. A. Racine to V. Chartier, 31 Oct. 1878.

⁶⁷ *Le Progrès*, 20 April, 28 June, 21 Sept., 5 Oct. 1877.

⁶⁸ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to Gagnon, 12 May 1876.

⁶⁹

Township	No. of Families	No. of People	Buildings	Acres Cleared
Ditton	198	921	278	2,055
Chesham	142	636	177	713
Emberton	69	314	66	327
	409	1,871	521	3,095

S.P.Q., X (1876), p. 8.

⁷⁰ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to Gagnon, 24 May 1876.

⁷¹ *Le Pionnier*, 23 June 1876; *Notre-Dame-des-Bois de 1877 à 1952 (Programme souvenir)* (Sherbrooke, 1952), pp. 25, 27, 31, 37; Fonds Chartier, Notre-Dame-des-Bois, Notes (n.d.)

⁷² N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Reçues, 1876, no. 35752, Gagnon to LeSage, 13 July 1876.

⁷³ *Le Progrès*, 27 Oct. 1876.

⁷⁴ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to LeSage, 20 Dec. 1876.

⁷⁵ Fonds Chartier, V. Chartier to C.-B. de Boucherville, 19 Dec. 1876.

⁷⁶ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to LeSage, 12 Jan. 1877.

⁷⁷ *Le Progrès*, 26 Jan. 1877; J.A.C., Correspondance générale (Sec. F, Dos. 5, AR2, Bte. 4), 37 Emberton colonists to C.-B. de Boucherville, (N.D.).

⁷⁸ Fonds Chartier, LeSage to V. Chartier, 20 Jan. 1877.

⁷⁹ J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to LeSage, 20 Dec. 1876.

⁸⁰ Fonds Chartier, U. Chartier to LeSage, 24 Jan. 1877.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, V. Chartier to J.-O. Fontaine, 30 June 1877; J.-O. Fontaine to V. Chartier, 11 April 1877, 20 April 1877, 26 April 1877. In addition the Diocese of Sherbrooke contributed \$265.34. Archives de la Chancellerie de l'Archevêché de Sherbrooke, (hereafter A.C.A.S.), Parish Papers, Saint-Pierre La Patrie, no. 7, "Sommes payées à divers colons

HISTORICAL PAPERS 1977 COMMUNICATIONS HISTORIQUES

nécessiteux de Chesham, Ditton, et Emberton depuis le commencement de l'hiver".

⁸² Fonds Chartier, J.-O. Fontaine to V. Chartier, 21 Feb. 1877; LeSage to V. Chartier, 20 Jan. 1877.

⁸³ J.A.C., Correspondance générale, 1876, Elisée Noël to Chicoine, 3 Nov. 1876.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, J.-A. Chapleau to Chicoine, 13 Oct. 1876; J.A.C., R.L., Chicoine to J.-O. Fontaine, 7 May 1877.

⁸⁵ *Le Pionnier*, 17 Aug. 1877. The original sum set aside was \$50,000.

⁸⁶

	April 16, 1875	Oct. 31, 1876
Ditton — Quebec inhabitants	110	372
Europeans	124	99
Repatriated Canadians	74	498
	308	969
Chesham — Quebec inhabitants	6	320
Europeans	0	27
Repatriated Canadians	1	289
	7	636
Emberton — Quebec inhabitants	0	240
Europeans	8	12
Repatriated Canadians	0	70
	8	322

Annuaire, 1896-9, pp. 290, 398, 406.

⁸⁷ Gilles Paquet's figure, based on the Dominion *Sessional Papers*, is 960. Gilles Paquet, "L'émigration des Canadiens français vers la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1870-1910; prises de vue quantitatives", *R.S.*, V (1964), p. 339.

⁸⁸ Viceroy, p. 234. This was a drastic drop from the 3000 repatriating families Gagnon reported in 1876. *Etat des Comptes Publics* . . ., 1876, p. 154. The 1880-81 *Census Reports* record only 181 American-born in the three townships, though it must be remembered that most of the parents and some of the children would have been born in Canada.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Belisle, *Histoire*, pp. 98, 340.

⁹⁰ N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Envoyées, XXII, no. 12500, LeSage to Gagnon, 30 June 1875; *S.P.Q.*, IX (1875), p. 365.

⁹¹ *Le Pionnier*, 13 March 1874. See also the editions of 9 Jan., 13 Feb., 20 Feb. 1874; and Viceroy, p. 234.

⁹² *Le Pionnier*, 10 Jan. 1879. Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples* (Toronto, 1940), p. 171.

⁹³ Viceroy, p. 357.

⁹⁴ *Quebec Colonists under the Repatriation Act*

	Ditton	Chesham	Emberton	Total
Eastern Townships	89	212	114	415
Montreal-Quebec-Trois Rivières (cities)	30	32	59	121
Lac Saint-Jean-Saguenay	64	13	0	77
Other	68	80	64	212
	251	337	237	825

Etat des Comptes Publics . . . 1876, pp. 136-153

⁹⁵ *Le Pionnier*, 29 Oct., 23 Dec. 1875; Jean Hamelin et Yves Roby, *Histoire Economique du Québec 1851-1896* (Montréal, 1971), p. 195; Viceroy, p. 198.

⁹⁶ Three of the major industries in Sherbrooke were forced to close their doors in 1876, causing an exodus of 500 people that year. *Stanstead Journal*, 27 July 1876; *Annual*

Reports from Different Departments of the city of Sherbrooke for the Year ending 31st December, 1890, p. 5. Coaticook was hit even more severely by the recession. *Le Pionnier*, 23 Dec. 1875; Albert Gravel, *Histoire de Coaticook* (Sherbrooke, 1925), p. 88.

⁹⁷ A.C.A.S., Rapports sur les paroisses, Saint-Pierre la Patrie, 1879, 1880. This figure may have been inaccurate, for the 1880-81 *Census Reports* record 898 inhabitants for Ditton.

⁹⁸ *S.P.Q.*, XIV (1880), p. 400.

⁹⁹ A.C., adj. 4839, Memo. by W.E. Collins, 20 Jan. 1881.

¹⁰⁰ A.C., O.C. 1108, Report of Ditton, Chesham, and Emberton Committees, 16 Feb. 1885; P.-L.-N. Prévost to Commissioner, 5 Aug. 1884; Nagle to Taché, 31 Aug. 1886. A watchman had to be hired as early as 1877 to prevent the dismantling of the houses. Fonds Chartier, J.-O. Fontaine to V. Chartier, 27 Oct. 1877.

¹⁰¹ A.C., O.C. 1244, Rapport d'un Comité de l'Hon. Conseil Executif, 16 Nov. 1898.

¹⁰² This was fairly respectable in comparison to the thirty year old colony of Winslow, to the North, where a population of 1810 raised 55,816 bushels in crops and 3077 tons of hay. However, the fact that Winslow placed a greater emphasis on hay and oats (in Winslow the priorities were oats, potatoes, buckwheat — in Ditton, Chesham, and Emberton, the reverse) would indicate that her farmers raised more livestock and were more attuned to a market economy. (Livestock was not broken down by township in the 1880-81 *Census Reports*).

¹⁰³ *Le Pionnier*, 30 May 1879.

¹⁰⁴ Marcel Hamelin, p. 270. The 1875-76 provincial budget included only \$58,569 for colonization roads, and \$57,200 for agricultural promotion. *Etat des Comptes Publics* . . . , 1876, pp. 16, 118, 129, 134.

¹⁰⁵ N.A.Q., P.W., Lettres Envoyées, XXVIII, p. 252, Magnon to Gagnon, 13 March 1877.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, N.A.Q., S.L., Correspondence, II, p. 438, LeSage to Gagnon, 1 Jan. 1877. Gagnon continued to receive a small grant from the Quebec government until January, 1880. Trépanier, p. 315.

¹⁰⁷ Much of the land in the area was still owned by speculators. Fonds Chartier, V. Chartier to Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works (Summer, 1877); V. Chartier to Superintendent of Public Instruction, 21 Oct. 1878.

¹⁰⁸ Government assistance was just about the only way to persuade French Canadians to colonize during periods when the price of timber was low enough to reduce the activity of lumbermen who were the colonists' principal market and winter employers. See Marcel Hamelin, p. 238.

¹⁰⁹ Assemblée nationale du Québec, *Débats de l'Assemblée Législative*, 1874-75 (Québec, Journal des Débats, 1976), pp. 202-5, 207-8, 277-8, 304.

¹¹⁰ On most occasions Pope was quite sensitive to any potential threat to English Canada's position in Quebec. See P.A.C., Alexander Galt Papers, J.H. Pope to Galt, 29 July 1864; Public Archives Ontario, Edward Blake Papers, Russ Huntington to Blake, 1 Jan. 1876. But he had acquired 4210 acres of crown land in Ditton township in order to monopolize the gold deposits, paying only sixty cents an acre rather than the usual one to two dollars for mineral-bearing land. He was therefore obliged to comply with settlement conditions. Unfortunately for him, local English-speaking residents of Compton showed little interest in moving further East, and most of the Norwegian and English settlers he introduced to the area in 1869 soon left. The subsidy acquired under the Colonization Societies Act brought no more success, which in turn encouraged his involvement with repatriation. Little, pp. 349-52.

¹¹¹ Trépanier, pp. 249-50.