



[Transcription: Circular letter from the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, Charles Lawrence, to the governors of the American colonies, explaining the reasons for the deportation of the Acadians, August 11, 1755. CA ANC MG53 main series 6 n^o 71]

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Halifax, in Nova Scotia, 11th August, 1755

Sir

The success that has attended his Majesty's arms in driving the French from the encroachments they had made in this province, furnished me with a favourable opportunity of reducing the French inhabitants of this colony to a proper obedience to his Majesty's government, or forcing them to quit the country. These inhabitants were permitted to remain in quiet possession of their lands, upon condition they should take the Oath of Allegiance to the King within one year after the Treaty of Utrecht, by which this province was ceded to Great Britain : With this condition they have ever refused to comply, without having at the same time
from

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from the governor, an assurance in writing that they should not be called upon to bear arms in the defence of the province, and with this General Philipps did comply, of which step his Majesty has disapproved; and the inhabitants pretending therefrom to be in a state of neutrality between his Majesty and his enemies, have continually furnished the French and Indians with intelligence, quarters,

provisions and assistance in annoying the government; and while one part have abetted the French encroachments by their treachery, the other have countenanced them by open rebellion, and three hundred of them were ~~openly~~ actually found in arms in the French fort at Beausejour when it surrendered.

*Notwithstanding all their former bad behaviour as his Majesty
was*

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was pleased to allow me to extend still further his Royal Grace to such as would return to their duty, I offered such of them as had not been openly in arms against us, a continuance of the possession of their lands, if they would take the Oath of Allegiance unqualified with any reservation whatsoever, but this they have most audaciously, as well as unanimously refused; and if they would presume to do this when there is a large fleet of ships of war in the harbour, and a considerable land force in the province, what might not we expect from them when the approaching winter deprives us of the former, and when the troops which are only hired from New England occasionally and for a small time, have returned home?

*As by this behaviour the inhabitants have forfeited all title to their
lands*

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lands, and any further favour from the government; I called together his Majesty's Council, at which the Honourable Vice Admiral Boscawen, Rear Admiral Mostyn, assisted to consider by what means we could with the greatest security and effect, rid ourselves of a set of people, who would forever have been an obstruction to the intention of settling this colony, and that it was now from their refusal of the Oath absolutely

incumbent on us to remove.

*As their numbers amount to near seven thousand persons, the driving them off with leave to go whither they pleased would have doubtless strengthened Canada with so considerable a number of inhabitants, and as they have no cleared land to give them at present, such as
are*

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are able to bear arms, must have been immediately employed in annoying this and the neighbouring colonies. To prevent such an inconvenience it was judged a necessary, and the only practicable measure, to divide them among the colonies, where they may be of some use as most of them are healthy strong people; and as they cannot easily collect themselves together again, it will be out of their power to do any mischief, and they may become profitable, and it is possible, in time, faithful subjects.

*As this step was indispensably necessary to the security of this colony, upon whose preservation from French encroachments, the prosperity of North America is esteemed in a great measure dependent, I have not the least reason to doubt of your Excellency's
concurrence*

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concurrence, and that will receive the inhabitants I now send and dispose of them in such manner as may best answer our design in preventing their reunion.

As the vessels employed in this service are upon monthly hire I beg the favor of you to expedite as much as possible their discharge and that they may be furnished with a certificate of the time thereof agreeable to the form enclosed.

*I am Sir
Your most obedient and
most humble servant*

CHAS.LAWRENCE