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The Scots Crown and the Restitution of Port Royal, 1629 - 1632 *

Compared with the efforts of Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century, the nations of northern Europe, including Scotland, were slow to engage in colonisation. Nonetheless, while the respective crowns and state authorities of northern Europe were too preoccupied both internally and in Europe to take any active interest in the New World, the sixteenth century did see a considerable growth in skills and concepts which would later become relevant to colonisation. Continued interest in the Newfoundland fishery — an important aspect of the economic life of France and England — brought about a closer and keener awareness of North America and of the possibilities of extended landings there, even on a temporary basis; and it provided pools of expertise and manpower that could be drawn upon for voyages not only of commerce but also of colonisation. The fishery, and later the fur trade, also built up a mercantile network which could provide a basis for financing colonisation. Further experience and expertise were provided, particularly in England, by privateering voyages directed against the Spanish in the West Indies and in South America. The same is true of efforts to find a north-western passage to the Far East. While none of these activities had any necessary connection with colonisation as such, they added to the potential which existed in northern Europe. Once this potential was released by political stabilisation, colonising attempts would be the likely result.

Since stabilisation in northern European nations occurred coincidentally, the first thirty years of the seventeenth century saw a proliferation of conflicting claims to those American lands which were considered promising and which were far enough removed from the still-awesome power of Spain. The first phase involved the claiming of vast tracts of American land defined by latitudes. The first definition of the French colony of Acadia came in 1603 with a commission to Pierre du Gua, Sieur de Monts, as royal lieutenant-general between the 40th and 46th degrees of latitude. Three years later, the English royal charter for colonisation of Virginia granted the territory between the latitudes of 38 and 45 degrees to a group of promoters centred in Plymouth, as “the second colony of Virginia”; by the New England charter of 1620, these limits were adjusted to the 40th and 48th parallels. In 1614, furthermore, the States-General of the Netherlands granted that area be-

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tween the latitudes of 40 and 45 degrees to a consolidated New Netherlands Company.

It was into this confused situation that the colony of New Scotland was first projected in 1621. Scottish marine interests during the sixteenth century had continued in traditional patterns, established during three centuries of peace with continental European powers — a coastal fishery, and extensive trade with France, the Netherlands and the Baltic, as well as with England and Ireland. Nevertheless, even in the sixteenth century, there is evidence of some slight growth of interest in voyages to southern Europe and to Newfoundland.¹ The union of the crowns in 1603 also made available to Scots, and particularly to those Scots who removed to England with the royal court, the legacy of English experience in voyages to America. Moreover, both Scottish and English crowns, co-ordinating their efforts after 1603, had promoted colonial projects in the Celtic areas of the respective realms: the English crown in Ireland, and the Scots crown in the Highlands and Islands. Such projects added greatly to the sum total of experience which was carried forward into the colonial endeavours of the seventeenth century.²

Among the recipients of these legacies of experience was Sir William Alexander, a Scottish poet and minor landowner, whose literary accomplishments were instrumental in obtaining the favour of James VI. Knighted in 1609, at the approximate age of thirty-two, Alexander became a member of the Scots Privy Council in 1615 and thereafter served the Scots crown continuously until his death in 1640 in a variety of capacities.³ Early in his career in London, Alexander began to take an interest in colonial schemes in Newfoundland; and the quickened interest in colonisation after 1620 led him to consider colonisation as a means of advancing his own personal fortunes. Thus it was at Alexander's prompting that James VI wrote to the Scots Privy Council on 5 August 1621, noting that "sundry other kingdomes, as like wyse this our kingdome [England] of late, . . . have renewed their names imposing them thus upoun new lands", and instructing the Privy Council to

- 1 See Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: James V to James VII* (Edinburgh, 1965), pp. 247-50; Thomas N. Devine and S. G. E. Lythe, "The Economy of Scotland Under James VI: A Revision Article", *Scottish Historical Review*, 50 (1971), pp. 100-5.
- 2 On these colonising projects, see Gordon Donaldson, *The Scots Overseas* (London, 1966), ch. II; William Cook Mackenzie, *History of the Outer Hebrides* (Paisley, 1903), chs. VII, VIII, IX; George Hill, *An Historical Account of the Plantation of Ulster at the Commencement of the Seventeenth Century, 1608-1630* (Belfast, 1877); David Beers Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966); Nicholas P. Canny, "The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 30 (1973), pp. 575-98.
- 3 Thomas H. McGrail, *Sir William Alexander, First Earl of Stirling* (Edinburgh, 1940); Daniel Cobb Harvey, "Sir William Alexander", in George W. Brown, ed., *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* [hereafter cited as *DCB*] (Toronto, 1966), I, pp. 50-4.

prepare "a signatour under our great seale of the . . . lands betweene New England and Newfoundland . . . to be holden of us [by Sir William Alexander] from our kingdome of Scotland"4

The lands in question lay south of the latitude of 48 degrees, and were thus technically within the New England patent of 1620. Indeed, Alexander had certainly received encouragement from the English colonial promoter Sir Ferdinando Gorges, and Gorges later wrote that the territory had been "assigned" by him to Alexander.⁵ As Alexander made clear, however, New Scotland was at no stage merely an English scheme under a Scottish figure-head: "I shew them that my Countrymen would never adventure in such an Enterprize, unlesse it were as there was a New France, a New Spain and a New England, that they might likewise have a New Scotland".⁶ The royal charter, sealed on 29 September 1621, accordingly declared that New Scotland was to be held by Alexander from the Scots crown and joined to the realm of Scotland.⁷ The colony would have no formal connection with the kingdom of England. Alexander, for his part, emphasized the particular benefits which the colony could offer to Scotland. In addition to the general hopes for the honour and glory of empire, for an increase in trade and for the acquisition of strategic goods such as timber and naval stores, Alexander addressed himself to more specifically Scottish concerns. Scotland would at last be able to make productive use of that part of its population which had been accustomed to serve in foreign armies. Since it was generally agreed that Scotland had an abundance of labour, and with, as Alexander observed, "the necessities of Ireland . . . neere supplied", American colonisation could provide an eminently acceptable outlet.⁸ Such were the considerations embodied in the royal letter of intent in August 1621 and renewed in a further letter to the Scots Privy Council from the new king, Charles I, in July 1625.⁹

- 4 John Hill Burton, *et al.*, eds., *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* (38 vols., Edinburgh, 1877-1970), ser. I, XII, p. 774. In this article, dates are normally rendered according to the Gregorian (New Style) calendar, which was in force in Scotland and France at this time, rather than according to the Julian (Old Style) calendar which was still retained by England. Exceptions are indicated by the parenthetical addition of 'O.S.'. Where Old Style dates are used, the years are invariably modernised to begin on 1 January.
- 5 Sir William Alexander, *An Encouragement to Colonies* (London, 1624), p. 32; Sir Ferdinando Gorges, "A Brief Narration of the Originall Undertakings of the Advancement of Plantations into the Parts of America", *Maine Historical Society Collections*, II (1847), p. 48.
- 6 Alexander, *Encouragement*, p. 32.
- 7 The charter is printed in John George Bourinot, "Builders of Nova Scotia", *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, ser. 2, 5 (1899), sec. 2, pp. 104-21.
- 8 Alexander, *Encouragement*, pp. 38-9. See also Donaldson, *Scotland*, pp. 252-5; for discussion of the complexities of the relationship between Scottish economy and population, see Devine and Lythe, "Scottish Economy", p. 97.
- 9 Burton, *PC Register*, ser. I, XII, pp. 773-4; *ibid.*, ser. II, I, p. 80.

Since the territory of New Scotland was devined in the charter by landmarks rather than by latitudes, Alexander claimed with some justification “that mine be the first National Patent that ever was cleerly bounded within America by particular limits upon the Earth”.¹⁰ Extending north and east from the length of the Ste. Croix river as far as the St. Lawrence river, the grant comprehended the modern Maritime Provinces and the Gaspé; all of these lands were conveyed to Sir William Alexander, his heirs and assigns, as “one entire and free lordship and barony which shall be called in all future time by the aforesaid name of New Scotland”.¹¹ Thus defined, the Scottish grant further complicated the pattern of European claims. With New England, the proposed Scottish colony had for the moment a friendly understanding; with New Netherland, the potential area of conflict was not large, concerning only the southern part of what was later to become peninsular Nova Scotia. With New France, on the other hand, the area of conflict was much more considerable. This was especially true after 1627, when a new Company of New France was granted “tout le longue des costes depuis la Floride . . . en regeant les costes de la mer jusques au Cercle Artique pour latitude”.¹² From the start, Alexander was well aware of this conflict, although he did not, as a Scotsman, emphasize competition with France as heavily as he did the Englishman Gorges.¹³ In fact, a review of the French colonisation of Acadia led Alexander to the conclusion that the French were only “sleightly planted” there.¹⁴

When Alexander remarked upon the slightness of the French hold upon Acadia he was, of course, quite right, although his reasons — he blamed laziness and internal quarrels among the French colonists — were superficial. The truth was that no European country had yet found a practical way to make good its vast territorial claims in North America. Although by 1621 both France and England had been attempting for fifteen years to emulate the example of extensive colonisation which had been set by Spain in central and South America, the only settlements which had been established were small and isolated communal habitations perched precariously on the coasts of America. While these settlements resembled the Portuguese trading factories in Africa and Asia, for France and England they were the un-

10 Alexander, *Encouragement*, p. 32.

11 Bourinot, “Builders of Nova Scotia”, pp. 104-7, 118-9.

12 *Collection de Manuscrits Contenant Lettres, Mémoires, et Autres Documents Historiques Relatifs à la Nouvelle-France, Recueillis aux Archives de la Province de Québec, ou Copiés à l'Etranger* (Québec, 1883), I, pp. 65-6.

13 See Sir Ferdinando Gorges, “A Brief Relation of the Discovery and Plantation of New England”, in Henry Sweetser Burrage, ed., *Gorges and the Grant of the Province of Maine* (Portland, 1923), pp. 142-3.

14 Alexander, *Encouragement*, pp. 36-8.

welcome creations of necessity rather than of choice, products of the gap between vast conceptions and inadequate techniques and resources. If North American colonies had contained mines of precious metals requiring inland establishments for their exploitation, or even if colonies could have become staging points for the Far Eastern trade through a north-western passage to the Pacific, then they would have been unquestionably useful and valuable. As it was, the colonies established, such as the English settlements at Sagadahoc and Jamestown and their French counterparts at Quebec and Port Royal, had succeeded only in absorbing large amounts of capital without visible return. The communal habitation, at first intended simply as a base for the more extensive exploration of a colony and its resources, had tended to become the whole of the colony. Such an establishment could carry on the fishing and fur trades, but for these commercial purposes single voyages could be cheaper and more convenient than colonisation. When such a prominent observer as the Duc de Sully, the chief minister of Henry IV of France, failed to see any value in North American colonisation, he was not being obstinately unprogressive, but was raising a real question.¹⁵

The New Scotland colony was certainly not exempt from the difficulties which plagued all European attempts in North America. Lack of capital was, as always, a grave hindrance, and was one principal reason why an expedition of 1622-23 returned without having founded a settlement.¹⁶ The institution of an order of Knights-Baronets in 1623, a measure consciously modelled upon the Ulster baronetcies, was intended to bring in up to 450,000 merks, or £22,500 sterling, through baronets' compulsory contributions to the colony.¹⁷ Although opposition to the new order by small barons (whose status was threatened) was overcome, under-subscription of the order remained a fundamental problem.¹⁸ Whether through scepticism regarding the New Scotland colony, dislike of the *parvenu* Sir William Alexander, who had recently become royal Secretary for Scotland, or both of these, the Knights-Baronetcies were little in demand. Despite a deliberate easing of procedural formalities associated with the order, rather defensive assertions that Alexander had used the colony's funds honestly, and threatening letters to indi-

15 See Marcel Trudel, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France; Le Comptoir, 1604-1627* (Ottawa, 1966), p. 14.

16 See Alexander, *Encouragement*, pp. 33-4; also William Robert Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies to 1720* (Cambridge, 1912), II, p. 318.

17 Burton, *PC Register*, ser. I, XIII, pp. 650-1. Each of the anticipated 150 baronets would pay 1000 merks, as well as supplying six colonists or paying a further 2000 merks in lieu.

18 See Cosmo Innes *et al.*, eds., *The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland* (12 vols., Edinburgh, 1844-75), V, p. 184; also Charles Rogers, ed., *The Earl of Stirling's Register of Royal Letters Relative to the Affairs of Scotland and Nova Scotia from 1615 to 1635* (Edinburgh, 1885), I, p. 18.

viduals implying that their future advancement would depend upon their accepting the title of Knight-Baronet as “a nixte steppe to a further title”, relatively few Knights-Baronetcies were ever conferred.¹⁹ A Privy Seal register records only ninety up until 1638, though some twenty others may be added from other sources.²⁰ None of these was ever taken up in New Scotland, and the expenses of Sir William Alexander were never significantly defrayed thereby.

Nevertheless, Alexander proceeded with his efforts, making extensive inroads on his personal wealth. By the summer of 1628 a fleet had been assembled at Dumbarton under Alexander’s son, the younger Sir William. Long delayed in Dumbarton by financial difficulties and by desertions among the prospective colonists, the fleet eventually set sail for America in the spring of 1628.²¹ By this time, the outbreak of war between Charles I’s kingdoms and France had given the younger Alexander the company on at least part of his voyage of the brothers Kirke, English privateers who were active in efforts to capture the St Lawrence settlements from the French, in which they succeeded in 1629.²² In 1629 also, after Alexander had wintered elsewhere in America — perhaps on the Gaspé coast or at Tadoussac — two New Scotland settlements were established, on Cape Breton and at Port Royal,²³ although the Cape Breton settlement, under the command of Lord

19 Burton, *PC Register*, ser. II, I, p. 365; Rogers, *Stirling’s Register*, I, pp. 30, 68, 118-9.

20 Privy Seal Register PS5/1, Scottish Record Office [hereafter SRO], Edinburgh. See also David Laing, ed., *Royal Letters, Charters, and Tracts, Relating to the Colonization of New Scotland and the Institution of the Order of Knights Baronets of Nova Scotia, 1621 to 1638* (Edinburgh, 1867), pp. 120-3. Later Knights-Baronetcies were conferred, but purely as titles of honour.

21 Dumbarton Burgh Records, printed as an appendix to McGrail, *Alexander*, pp. 233-5; Burton, *PC Register*, ser. II, II, pp. 313-4.

22 See Marcel Trudel, *The Beginnings of New France, 1524-1663* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 174-5.

23 It should be pointed out that this date has been challenged, most recently in McGrail, *Alexander*, pp. 236-45. Evidence in favour of dating the settlement in 1629 has been marshalled in George Pratt Insh, *Scottish Colonial Schemes, 1620-1686* (Glasgow, 1922), pp. 214-26; a further useful review of the evidence is included in Daniel Cobb Harvey, “Sir William Alexander and Nova Scotia”, *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, 30 (1954), pp. 19-22. Without repeating the arguments advanced, it would seem conclusive that those Scots and Englishmen who favoured retention of Port Royal by the Scots crown in the peace negotiations of 1629-32 never denied that the Scots settlement had been made there after the interim Peace of Suza, which had provided that all conquests made after 23 April 1629 should be restored. In a diplomatic dispatch of 22 June 1631, the king himself stated, in relation to Quebec and Port Royal respectively, “that one of these places was taken and the plantation made in the other after the peace”. Charles I to Sir Isaac Wake, Ambassador in France, 22 June 1631, State Papers (Foreign), SP78/89, f. 210, Public Record Office [hereafter PRO], London. Also implied in this statement, of course, is the assertion that Port Royal had not then been “taken”, as had Quebec, but had been peacefully occupied in fulfilment of the long-standing New Scotland grant.

Ochiltree, was seized in September and destroyed by a French raiding force.²⁴ This raid served as a reminder that both the Kirkes and the Alexanders were regarded as trespassers by the French; furthermore, both the seizure of Quebec by the Kirkes and the settlement of New Scotland had taken place, albeit unknowingly, after the conclusion of an interim peace treaty at Suza in April of 1629. Thus it was with the sure prospect of eventual French demands for restitution that the surviving New Scotland settlement at Port Royal faced its first winter in 1629-30.

A further problem which arose during that winter, and one which had affected all infant European settlements in North America, was disease. In 1630, Claude de la Tour, a veteran French coloniser who had resided in Acadia for some twenty years, reported that "il estoit mort trente Escossois de septante qu'ils estoient en cet hyvernement, qui avoient esté mal accommodez".²⁵ Also acute was the problem, characteristic of communal colonies, of excessive dependence upon the mother country. In early 1630, Sir William Alexander the elder became progressively more agitated in London as he attempted to find capital with which to send out relief. On 9 February, he wrote to the Earl of Menteith, the President of the Scots Privy Council, of his worry "concerneing my sone's supplie, whereupon his saftie or ruine doth depend . . . ; there is no monie to be had here [in London] and therefore whatever happen, I wold the ship that is fraughted at Leith [in Scotland] were hasted away with some twentie or threttie good fellowes, and so much for provisions as she may carie . . .".²⁶ Apparently this broad hint was heeded, but the very urgency of the need for Menteith's help illustrates the dependent position of the colony.²⁷

On the other hand, there are indications that in some respects the Scottish colony, by the admittedly modest standards of other European attempts in North America, was succeeding rather well. One prerequisite for the survival of a communal colony was to have harmonious Indian relations, since the Indians played an essential role in communicating techniques for subsisting in the American environment, and in providing furs by way of trade. There was also the practical consideration that Indian hostility would almost certainly result in the destruction of any tiny European settlement which incurred it. In the case of the Scottish settlement at Port Royal, good relations seem to have been early established. The colonists were visited shortly after their arrival by "2 savages in a Canou", and a few weeks later by "9

24 Petition of Captain Constance Ferrar, December 1629, State Papers (Colonial), CO 1/5, no. 41, PRO; Memorial and Information of Lord Ochiltree, January 1630, *ibid.*, nos. 46, 47.

25 Henry Percival Biggar, ed., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain* (Toronto, 1922), VI, p. 176.

26 William Fraser, ed., *The Red Book of Menteith* (Edinburgh, 1880), II, pp. 111-2.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

savages in a Shalles [shallop] from S. Johns River with beaver skines and hydes [who] gave the generall a present".²⁸ Further, a contemporary reported in a letter of February 1631 that Charles I himself had been visited by friendly Indians from the area of the Scottish colony: "there came last week to London the king, queen and young prince of New Scotland. This king comes to be of our king's religion and to submit his kingdom to him"²⁹

There were also indications that even those French who still remained in Acadia might be willing to convert to the Scottish allegiance in return for certain guarantees. Captured by the Kirkes in 1628, Claude de la Tour was carried to England, where he apparently met with Alexander. The subsequent episode is the subject of conflicting evidence, but it seems clear that Alexander made an agreement with La Tour that he and his son, Charles (also a long-standing resident of Acadia), would be made Knights-Baronets, an agreement which Alexander fulfilled on 30 November 1629 and 12 May 1630 respectively.³⁰ By the agreement, the La Tours would hold an area in the southern part of the New Scotland peninsula, from the Cloven Cape to Mirliquesh, would divide the fur trade with Alexander, and would be free to make settlements on their territory; in return, they promised "d'estre bons et fideles sujets et Vasseaux dudit Roy [d'Escosse], et luy rendre toute obeissance et assister vers les Peuples a la reduction dudit Pais et Coste d'Acadie".³¹ The evidence of Samuel de Champlain, without giving credence to a more dramatic contemporary account by Nicolas Denys, suggests that La Tour was unable to convince his son to endorse this agreement and the father himself abandoned the Scottish allegiance later in 1630, after supplies had been sent to his son by the Company of New France.³² However, a surviving fragment of a letter of the Scots crown in February 1630, referring to

28 Anonymous Account of New Scotland, 1630, Hawthornden MSS, vol. IX, f. 149, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, MS 2061.

29 Quoted in George Patterson, "Sir William Alexander and the Scottish Attempt to Colonize Acadia", *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 10 (1892), sec. 2, p. 95.

30 Laing, *Royal Letters, Charters and Tracts*, p. 122. For a commentary upon some of the questions involved, see Robert Le Blant, "La Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France et la Restitution de l'Acadie, 1627-1636", *Revue d'Histoire des Colonies*, 42 (1955), p. 74; and George MacBeath, "Charles de Saint-Etienne de la Tour", and "Claude de Saint-Etienne de la Tour", *DCB*, I, pp. 592-98.

31 Articles of Agreement between Alexander and La Tour, 6 October 1629, Egerton MSS, vol. 2395, f. 17, British Museum, London. The dating of this document, 6 October 1629 at Port Royal, is perhaps suspect. See LeBlant, "Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France et la Restitution", p. 74. There is no reason, however, to doubt the authenticity of the contents.

32 Biggar, *Works of Champlain*, VI, pp. 172-5; Nicolas Denys, *Description Géographique et Historique des Costes de l'Amérique Septentrionale avec l'Histoire Naturelle du Pais*, ed. William Francis Ganong (Toronto, 1908), pp. 477-9.

letters received from “Charles St. Estienne [de la Tour] Baronne”, suggests that the younger La Tour may not have been altogether unflinching in his rejection of the Scots offer.³³ The very fact that such an agreement was seriously considered illustrates that the Scottish settlement at Port Royal was sufficiently well rooted to be impressive even to its enemies. Further corroboration of the increasingly strong position of the Scots colonists can be found in the report of a lieutenant of the La Tours, after their decision to give allegiance to France rather than to Scotland. In the summer of 1631 this report brought news to France “comme les Escossois ne se resoudoient point à quitter le Port Royal, mais qu'ils s'y accommodoient de jour à autre, et y avoient fait venir quelques mesnages et bestiaux pour peupler ce lieu qui ne leur appartient que par l'usurpation qu'ils en ont fait”.³⁴

While the small-scale communal style of colonisation was very far from fulfilling the European ideal of extensive colonisation on the Spanish model, a worthwhile start had been made, and on 13 May 1630 Charles I addressed an encouraging letter to Sir William Alexander the younger. Praising Alexander's “carefull and provident proceeding for planting of a colonie at Port Royall, which may be a means to setle all that cuntrie in obedience”, the king offered “hartlie thankis for the same, and doe wish you (as wee are confident you will) to continow as you have begunne, that the wark may be brought to the intendit perfectione”; this, he continued, “wee will esteem as one of the most singulare services done unto us”³⁵ This was a remarkably emphatic endorsement of the Alexanders' progress in New Scotland. Yet only eight months later, on 17 February 1631, a decision was taken in London that, in return for certain French concessions, which included the payment of the outstanding balance of the dowry of Charles I's French queen, Henrietta Maria, the Port Royal colony would be evacuated.³⁶ This decision, made in response to French demands during the negotiations which followed the interim Peace of Suza, preceded by more than a year the signing of the final peace treaty at St-Germain-en-Laye on 29 March 1632. Nevertheless, the abandonment of Port Royal was ordered by Charles I on 4 July 1631, was eventually implemented in late 1632, and virtually closed the history of settlement in New Scotland.³⁷ Although the king was still insisting on 24 April 1633, in a letter to the Commissioners for the Plantation of New Scotland, “that our said Viscount [Sir William Alexander the elder, now

33 Rogers, *Stirling's Register*, II, p. 420.

34 Biggar, *Works of Champlain*, VI, p. 199.

35 Rogers, *Stirling's Register*, II, p. 439.

36 “Contents of a letter to be written to his Majesties Agents at Paris”, 17 February 1631, SP 78/88, ff. 145-6, PRO.

37 Royal Order for the abandonment of Port Royal, 4 July 1631, CO 1/6, no. 17, PRO; see also Le Blant, “Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France et la Restitution”, p. 84.

raised to the nobility as Viscount Stirling] . . . shall prosecute the said work", no such attempt was ever made.³⁸

Why was New Scotland apparently so easily given up, after a decade of endeavour and at a time when the colony was beginning to establish itself securely? Historians of New Scotland have addressed themselves to this question and have usually found the answer in the flawed personal character of Charles I, in the faulty statesmanship of himself and his government, or in both. Most scathing in their treatment of Charles were late nineteenth-century historians, often connected with the modern Province of Nova Scotia, who wrote specifically about the efforts of Sir William Alexander. "It is difficult to account", wrote Rev. George Patterson in 1892, "for the conduct of Charles throughout these proceedings. It seems to manifest stupidity or duplicity altogether inexplicable, or as we are inclined to believe a large mixture of both".³⁹ Stupidity, or duplicity? Charles Rogers, writing in 1885, was inclined to believe that the former rather than the latter was the key to the episode, and blamed "a vacillating policy".⁴⁰ Also on the side of stupidity was J. B. Brebner, who in 1927 decided that "one can be charitable, and attribute his [Charles I's] actions to the undoubted confusion of geographical knowledge and nomenclature".⁴¹ Other historians of New Scotland have tended to attribute the restitution to a duplicity arising from Charles's financial difficulties and his consequent anxiety to obtain the balance of the queen's dowry. W. F. Ganong observed in 1908 "that Canada and Acadia were to be returned to France, for reasons which were personal with the two Kings and concerned not the good of their empires".⁴² G. P. Insh similarly concluded in 1922 that "like a later . . . Scottish colonial scheme [a reference to the Darien scheme of 1698], the Nova Scotia enterprise was to be sacrificed to the exigencies of English Royal policy".⁴³ Between Ganong and Insh, a useful impression is gained of the complex interaction of the interests of the respective crowns of Scotland, England and France; but Charles I remains as the cynical destroyer of the New Scotland colony.

Clearly there was a discrepancy between the stated aims of the Scots crown, which continued even after 1632 to avow its support for the re-establishment of New Scotland, and the actual results of the treaty of St.-Germain. Among those who have taken serious note of this are H. P. Biggar, T. H. McGrail and D. C. Harvey. In explaining the paradox, however, even these historians have invariably fallen back upon the alleged personal

38 Rogers, *Stirling's Register*, II, p. 664.

39 Patterson, "Sir William Alexander and the Scottish Attempt", p. 99.

40 Rogers, *Stirling's Register*, I, p. xxxvii.

41 John Bartlet Brebner, *New England's Outpost* (New York, 1927), p. 26.

42 Denys, *Description Géographique et Historique*, Introduction, p. 4.

43 Insh, *Scottish Colonial Schemes*, p. 85. This statement is reaffirmed in George Pratt Insh, "Sir William Alexander's Colony at Port Royal", *Dalhousie Review*, 9 (1929-30), pp. 438-47.

deficiencies of Charles I. Biggar in 1901 concluded a thorough and balanced narrative treatment of the treaty negotiations by observing that the king “seems to have taken the surrender of Port Royal very lightly”, and believed “the real truth” to be “that Port Royal was sacrificed on account of the King’s pressing need of money”.⁴⁴ McGrail, while giving Charles I credit for having “fully intended the abandonment of the colony by his subjects to be merely temporary”, nevertheless argued in 1940 that the colony had lost its chance of survival because “Charles had . . . used it to gratify his own selfish desires”.⁴⁵ Harvey similarly asserted in 1954 that the king’s “vision was dazzled by the prospects of getting the 400,000 crowns still owing in his wife’s dowry”.⁴⁶ Duplicity, stupidity, financial rapacity: with all the variations which have appeared in interpretations of the restitution of Port Royal, the motives and aims of the Scots crown have invariably been portrayed as crude, self-defeating and unsavoury in character. Yet a re-examination of the evidence sheds grave doubts upon these interpretations.

The lines along which the negotiations between French and British would be pursued in 1629-32, and the bounds of possible areas of serious disagreement as regards North America, were quickly established after the interim treaty of Suza had ended actual hostilities on 24 April 1629.⁴⁷ The French position was clearly stated in a memorial later in 1629, demanding the restoration both of Quebec and other parts of Canada which had been seized by the Kirkes in the summer of 1629, and of “les places de la Cadye” which had been settled by the Scots shortly afterwards. The French made no distinction between the occupied areas of the St Lawrence region and those of Acadia, holding both to be exclusively French territory which had been occupied by English and Scots after the interim treaty: were restitution not agreed, renewal of warfare was threatened. The memorial also noted that provisional agreement had already been reached over Canada, while the British had asked for further negotiations over the settlements in Acadia.⁴⁸

44 Henry Percival Biggar, *The Early Trading Companies of New France* (Toronto, 1901), pp. 160, 163-4.

45 McGrail, *Alexander*, pp. 117-8.

46 Harvey, “Alexander and Nova Scotia”, p. 25.

47 Although in 1629-32 there was no realm of ‘Britain’, it has been decided here to apply the term ‘British’ to the negotiators of Charles I, for two reasons: first, for convenience, and, second, because Charles himself often used the title of “Roy de la Grande Bretagne”, under which he would eventually sign the treaty of St-Germain.

48 *Mémoire sur la restitution du Canada et de l’Acadie par les Anglois, 1629*, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre [hereafter CPA], vol. 43, ff. 290-1, Affaires Etrangères, France, in transcript in Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa. The same memorial promised to allow “les Anglois” to remain in certain areas of Acadia where they were already settled, “moyennant qu’ils vivent comme nos amys et que l’on conviendra des bornes et des limites entre les Ungs et les aultres”. It seems clear that this refers to the New England settlements, which were established on territory included in the vast extent of the original Acadia grant of 1603.

On 2 March 1630, the French ambassador in London, Charles de l'Aupespine, Marquis de Châteauneuf, confirmed that Charles I was willing to give up the conquests in Canada, but was undecided on the question "du Cap Breton et Port roial".⁴⁹ The royal indecision regarding Port Royal was also remarked upon later in March, in a letter from Robert earl of Nithsdale, a Scottish nobleman who favoured a close understanding with France, to a Mr. Scott of London. The passage is somewhat obscure, but is suggestive nevertheless: "for the mater of Canada he [Châteauneuf] will get contentment for that which [is] in the pouer of the Counsell of England; and for Sir William Alexander's part, I know ther is means eused be the man he fears that the King may give satisfaction leykweyis; and I hope it sall prevail".⁵⁰ In the following month, a meeting between Charles and Châteauneuf further clarified their respective positions, not entirely to the satisfaction of either side. As the English Secretary of State, Sir Dudley Carleton, Viscount Dorchester, wrote to Sir Isaac Wake, Ambassador in France, a private agreement had been reached that Quebec would be restored "because the French were removed out of it by strong hand". On the question of the Scottish settlement, however, Châteauneuf had "seemed to go away ill satisfyed, that he could not obtayne a direct promise from His Majesty for the restoring of Port Royall, joyning to Canada, where some Scottish men are planted under the title of Nova Scotia". While Charles had promised "thus much that unles he found reason as well before, as since the warre, to have that Place free for his Subjects plantation, he would recall them", Dorchester recalled to Wake that the Scots had "there seated themselves in a place where no French did inhabite",⁵¹ and furthermore expressed a belief that on this point Châteauneuf had spoken "rather out of his owne discourse . . . then by Commission".⁵²

On Port Royal, Charles I was clearly unsure of his ground. He was prepared to stand fast if assured that the Scottish right was a legitimate one, dating from before the late war, and he doubted the strength of the French commitment to Acadia; but he was unwilling to become involved in a controversy with Châteauneuf until provided with stronger and more detailed arguments. It was in this context that the king sent his letter of encouragement to the younger Alexander on 13 May 1630; his "hartlie thankis" to Alexander and hopes for the continuance of the colony were not inconsistent with his diplomatic discussions and his ensuing effort to find arguments which would

49 Châteauneuf to Bouthilier, 2 March 1630, *ibid.*, vol. 44, ff. 32-7.

50 William Fraser, *The Book of Caerlaverock: Memoirs of the Maxwells, Earls of Nithsdale, Lords Maxwell and Harries* (Edinburgh, 1873), p. 119.

51 This was quite literally true, since the French of Acadia had not had their headquarters at Port Royal itself since 1623. See Azarie Couillard-Després, *Charles de Saint-Etienne de la Tour, Lieutenant-Général en Acadie at Son Temps, 1593-1666* (Arthabaska, P.Q., 1930), pp. 143-8.

52 Dorchester to Wake, 25 April 1630, SP 78/86, f. 253, PRO.

justify the retention of New Scotland. On 3 July the king wrote to instruct the Scots Privy Council to investigate the whole matter: “as we ar bund in dewtie and justice to discharge what we ow to everie nyghbour prince, so we most have a care that none of our subjects doe suffer in that which they have undertakin upon just grounds to doe ws service”. “We desyer”, the letter continued, “to be certifeid how far we and our subjects are interessed therein, and what arguments ar fitt to be used when any question shall occurre concerneing the same, for the defence thairof”⁵³

In reply, the Convention of Estates, an enlarged version of the Privy Council which approximated to the Parliament in membership and in certain of its powers, “having dewlie considerit the benefite arysing to this kingdome by the accessioun of Newscotland and of the successfull plantatioun already made there by the gentlemen undertakers of the same”, unanimsly agreed on 31 July “that his Majestie sall be petitioned to mainteane his right of Newscotland And to protect his subjects undertakers of the said plantation in the peacable possessioun of the same As being a purpose highlie concerning his Majesties honnour and the good and credite of this his ancient kingdome”. On royal invitation, and no doubt encouraged by the personal presence of Sir William Alexander, the Convention on the same day ratified and confirmed anew the order of Knights-Baronets.⁵⁴ The Privy Council, for its part, wrote to the king on 9 September “by order from the Estaits” to urge that he resist “the title predendit by the Frenshe to the lands of New Scotland”.⁵⁵ Enclosed was a statement drawn up by Alexander of “Reasons alleaged by the Scottish Adventurers for the holding of Port Royal”, in which Alexander derived the king’s title to New Scotland from the voyages of Cabot, and recalled the removal of the French from Acadia in 1613 by the raiding Englishman Samuel Argall, several years after which “a Colonie of Scottish was planted at Port Royal, which had never been repossessed nor claimed by the French since they were first removed from the same”. Not only had the local Indians recognised Charles I’s authority, but so had La Tour, “cheef commander of the few French then in that Countrie”, who had found “the coming in of the Scottish necessary for his securitie” and had therefore decided on “turning Tenant”. The king, it was argued, was honour bound to protect all of these subjects, and “this business of Port royall cannot bee made Lyable to the articles of the peace, seeing there was no act of hostilitie comitted thereby, a Colony only being planted upon his Majesties owne ground.”⁵⁶

53 Rogers, *Stirling’s Register*, II, p. 463.

54 Innes, *Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, V, pp. 223-4.

55 Burton, *PC Register*, ser. II, IV, pp. 46-7.

56 “Reasons alleaged by the Scottish Adventurers for the holding of Port Royal”, 1630, CO 1/5, no. 102 (i), PRO.

While support of the Convention and the Privy Council for New Scotland was predictable, in view of Alexander's active efforts in his own interest, the royal appeal for counsel had been met with a positive response. The British position in the treaty negotiations with France was now converted into one of defence of the Scottish right to Port Royal, and thus into direct conflict with the French insistence upon restitution. In the event, the French stood firm. On 7 December 1630, the British negotiators, René Augier and Henry De Vic, reported to Dorchester than even an attempt to have the matter postponed to future negotiation had been categorically refused by the French: Châteauneuf, by now recalled to France as Chancellor, had replied "que le fait dudit Port Royal estoit joint avec le reste".⁵⁷ The negotiators agreed, however, with Dorchester's earlier estimation that this attitude arose rather from Châteauneuf's personal pride than from any more calculated French regard for Acadia. What the Chancellor wished, they wrote on 17 December, was "l'execution des choses qu'il dit luy avoir esté promis [allegedly promised, that is, while Châteauneuf had been in London as ambassador] touchant le Port Royal, de quoy il fait encore son affaire propre . . ." ⁵⁸ On 21 January 1631 Augier and De Vic reported to Dorchester on certain mercantile clauses which had been agreed, but added that "le different du Port Royal . . . est l'unique accroche de l'execution de ce que dessus, et . . . seul empesche aujourd'hui cette liberté et utilité reciproque". Châteauneuf, they went on, still persisted in his view that the vital point was that "les Escossois n'y [to New Scotland] ont jamais envoyé aucune plantation en vertu desdit patentes sinon depuis cette dernière paix", and that "Mr. Alexandre Secretaire d'Escosse . . . seul empesche par son interest particulier que ces deux Couronnes ne jouissent de benefice de la paix". The French demanded the annulment of the agreements between Alexander and La Tour and Charles I's permission to remove the Scots from Port Royal "sans prejudice de l'Alliance qu'il [the French king] a avec la Nation et Royaume d'Escosse".⁵⁹

This latter proposal could not be acceptable to Charles, but a week later, in a further report from Augier and De Vic, it became even clearer that the Acadian question was posing a grave danger to the whole basis of the peace. "The only difficulty", went the report, "resteth in the accommodation of the business of the Porte-Royall". Worse still, the negotiators themselves, as they informed Dorchester with dutiful frankness, felt that the French

57 De Vic and Augier to Dorchester, 7 December 1630, SP 78/97, ff. 459-60, PRO. For notes on Augier and De Vic, see Charles Harding Firth and Sophie Crawford Lomas, *Notes on the Diplomatic Relations of England and France, 1603-1688: Lists of Ambassadors from England to France and from France to England* (Oxford, 1906), pp. 10-11.

58 De Vic and Augier to Dorchester, 17 December 1630, SP 78/87, f. 501, PRO.

59 De Vic and Augier to Dorchester, 21 January 1631, SP 78/88, ff. 38-9, PRO.

argument was “unanswerable”, unless Alexander could improve the quality of his own contentions. They believed that the French would not yield, and passed on a report that a French fleet of eight or ten ships was ready in Brittany to go to the recovery of Port Royal.⁶⁰ Thus, by late January 1631, the question of Port Royal threatened to lead to a resumption of war between Britain and France. For Charles I, this situation was as surprising as it was uncomfortable. As he was to remark a few weeks later to the French Ambassador, “places taken and held upon that whole continent of America have never binne drawne so into consequence by the Princes of Europe as thereupon to frame dispute for interruption of treatyes betwixt kingdomes and States”⁶¹ Yet the fact remained that the French were insisting upon the restitution of Port Royal, even after the British agreement to restore Quebec, and were apparently prepared to hazard the peace accordingly. France had recently obtained a degree of relief in its involvement in the Thirty Years’ War through the conclusion of the treaty of Barwalde with Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden on 23 January, and thus would henceforth be able more easily to afford a renewal of war with Charles I. Charles, on the other hand, as king of England, was particularly anxious for peace, as he was still in the early stages of his personal rule and could not afford to wage war without parliamentary grants.⁶² For all that, as king of Scotland he did not wish to lose face by repudiating his obligations in New Scotland, thereby embarrassing his Secretary for Scotland, Alexander; nor did he wish to lose the benefits in trade and prestige potentially offered by New Scotland.

Thus caught in a perplexing dilemma, the king and his advisors were ready to seize upon a further aspect of the report of Augier and De Vic of 28 January, which seemed to offer both an explanation of the French behaviour and a possible way of winning both peace with France and the retention of New Scotland. In the opinion of the negotiators, the French, and especially Châteauneuf, were more interested in Port Royal as a point of honour than in Acadia as a colony. Rumour had it, moreover, that the Port Royal fur trade “will not amount to above 800 or 1m. [1000] skinnes of Orignac by the yeare, and a few more Castors”. De Vic and Augier therefore suggested a strategy: “if Sir William Alexander wolde exchange that Seate for some other upon the same coast, and not farr distant from the porte Royall, and some meanes were founde to indemimize him of parte of the charges hee hath been att to make his plantation, it may bee that wolde give them satisfaction here in pointe of honour”.⁶³ At a meeting in London on 17 February, the king

60 De Vic and Augier to Dorchester, 28 January 1631, *ibid.*, ff. 50-1.

61 Dorchester to De Vic and Augier, 2 March 1631, *ibid.*, f. 196.

62 See Daniel Patrick O’Connell, *Richelieu* (London, 1968), pp. 254-5; and Godfrey Davies, *The Early Stuarts, 1603-1660* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1959), pp. 66-7.

63 De Vic and Augier to Dorchester, 28 January 1631, SP 78/88, ff. 50-1, PRO.

54 *Acadiensis*

and his advisors on foreign affairs decided to take this opportunity for a settlement.⁶⁴ The evacuation of Port Royal, with the temporary abandonment of New Scotland, was unpalatable and inconvenient, but it had the great advantage of securing peace. It also had the further advantage of giving Charles I the chance to require other French concessions as *quid pro quo*: it was decided to demand certain restitutions of English ships and prisoners, as well as the payment of the balance of Queen Henrietta Maria's dowry. Not least, the evacuation avoided any necessity of giving up New Scotland altogether and promised an opportunity of resuming activities in the colony within a short time.

The results of this meeting were duly conveyed to the negotiators in a letter drafted by Dorchester on 2 March. In the letter, the Scottish claim to Port Royal was asserted at some length, and New Scotland described as inseparable from the realm of Scotland; nevertheless, if a real peace would be the result, if the French would fulfill the required conditions, and if the French would guarantee not to molest the La Tours (a requirement which presented no difficulty, since the La Tours had already been accepted back to the French allegiance), the king would "dispense with all other considerations".⁶⁵ On 1 April, at Dijon, these terms were privately agreed.⁶⁶ Their formal acceptance in London was communicated by the king to Wake in a dispatch of 22 June, announcing his purpose of "laying a foundation of a firmer friendship [with France] than hath beene of late yeares . . ." From Port Royal, the king went on, "such of our Subjects as are there planted shall retire, leaving these parts in the same state they were before the peace. Which we doe not out of ignorance, as if we did not understand how little we are hereunto obliged . . . but out of an affection and desire to comply with our good brother the French king in all things that may friendly and reasonably, though not rightly and duly, bee demanded of us".⁶⁷

On 10 July, a royal warrant to Sir William Alexander ordered the demolition of the Scots fort at Port Royal; eighteen days later a formal act was issued under the Great Seal of Scotland, for transmission to the French king, relinquishing Port Royal. Both documents made it clear, however, that, as the agreement was understood in Scotland, the intent was that "Port Royall shall be putt in the estate it was befor the beginning of the warre, that no partie may have any advantage ther dureing the continuance of the same,

64 "Contents of a letter to be written to his Majesties Agents at Paris", 17 February 1631, *ibid.*, ff. 145-6.

65 Dorchester to De Vic and Augier, 2 March 1631, *ibid.*, f. 196.

66 "Escrip্ত concerté à Dijon", 1 April 1631, *ibid.*, f. 344.

67 Charles I to Wake, 22 June 1631, SP 78/89, f. 210, PRO.

and without derogation to any preceeding right or title . . .” The formal act declared that the relinquishment was made “without any prejudice to our right or title or those of our subjects in perpetuity”. At this stage, there was not even any admission on the Scottish side that the upshot would be in any sense a restitution of Port Royal to the French; although the French crown was made responsible for arranging the details of the Scots evacuation, and would thus necessarily send an expedition for this purpose, Port Royal was to be left “altogidder waist and unpeopled”⁶⁸

As was consistent with this strategic withdrawal, the relinquishment of Port Royal was accompanied by the bestowal of a number of advancements upon Sir William Alexander, which displayed, as they were intended to do, the continuance of royal confidence and favour towards him not only as a subject and as Secretary for Scotland but also as a coloniser. The patent creating Alexander viscount of Stirling had been prepared in September of 1630, “for the good and faithfull service done be him to his Majestie and for his chargeable undertaking of the plantatioun of New Scotland”; after exhibition to the Privy Council, it was delivered on 5 July 1631.⁶⁹ On 10 July, the very day on which the warrant for demolition of the Port Royal fort was dated, Stirling was elevated to the bench of the court of session and a precept was issued to the Treasurer of Scotland ordering that Stirling be assigned any royal profits arising from the coinage of copper farthings. Two days later, a royal instruction to the Treasury enjoined that special care be taken that Stirling “should enjoy the whole benefite belonging unto his place”, that is, the profits of his office of Secretary for Scotland.⁷⁰ Later elevated to be first earl of that name, Stirling continued to enjoy royal favour throughout the 1630s. In early 1632 a royal warrant for the sum of £10,000 sterling was issued “for satisfaction of the losses that the said Viscount hath, by giving

68 Rogers, *Stirling's Register*, II, pp. 544, 547-8. Historians have usually in the past regarded the Scots crown's formal act as one restoring Port Royal to France. The terms of the act, however, seem to indicate rather an empowerment of the French king to arrange for the Scots evacuation, without any implied notion of restitution. It should be noted that the translation of this document from the original Latin in McGrail, *Alexander*, pp. 243-4, appears inaccurate; the document's heading, “Pro Rege Gallorum”, for example is erroneously taken to imply “the delivering up to the French king of . . . Port Royal”. The translation used in McGrail was apparently taken directly from a rather dubious source: Ephraim Lockhart, *An Historical View of the Province of Nova Scotia and other Territories in America* (Edinburgh, 1836), attached to a *Narrative of the Oppressive Law Proceedings and Other Measures Resorted to by the British Government and Numerous Private Individuals to Overpower the [self-styled] Earl of Stirling and Subvert his Lawful Rights, Written by Himself*, p. 39.

69 Burton, *PC Register*, ser. II, IV, p. 269.

70 Rogers, *Stirling's Register*, II, p. 543, 544, 546.

ordour for removeing of his Colony at our express command". This order was most emphatic that the grant was in no way "for quyting the title, right, or possession of New Scotland, or of any part thereof, bot onlie for satisfaction of the losses . . . ; we are so far from abandoning of that bussines as we doe heirby requyre yow [the Exchequer] and everie ane of yow to afford your best help and encouragement for furthering of the same . . ." ⁷¹

This latter affirmation was reflected in virtually every royal reference to New Scotland throughout the decade. As early as 12 July 1631, the Privy Council was instructed to consider the best means to further prosecute the New Scotland scheme: "we wilbe verie carefull to mainteane all our good subjects who doe plant themselffis ther . . ." A royal letter to the Knights-Baronets just over a year later assured them of the continuance of New Scotland despite "the Colonie being forced of late to remove *for a tyme* by means of a treatie we have had with the French". ⁷² On 28 June 1633, all of Stirling's patents and rights in New Scotland were specifically confirmed by the Scots Parliament, and in the Privy Council in the following February "a letter was produced from his Majestie tuiching the furtherance of the plantation of New Scotland and ane Act passed thereupon accordinglie". ⁷³ Knights-Baronetcies issued until 1638 continued, moreover, to carry grants of American land. ⁷⁴

And yet, the continuance of New Scotland never had any basis in American reality. Despite the repeated affirmations to the contrary, the surrender of Port Royal and the shipping of the colonists to Le Havre, where they arrived on 11 February 1633, was a crushing blow to the colony. If the course of action of the Scots crown was basically neither dishonest nor foolish, why did its aims miscarry so completely? In essence, the crown had made two understandable but fundamental miscalculations, which were compounded in their results by a particular mischance. The mischance lay in the death of Dorchester on 25 February 1632, at a crucial point in the negotiations. As a result of Dorchester's illness and of the ensuing hiatus before his business was taken up by the other Secretary of State, Sir John Coke, there was a lapse of several months in correspondence between London and Sir Isaac Wake, who had by now taken over the negotiations in France. Writing to Coke on 13 April, Wake complained of delays and expressed his hope "that some of your Secretaries will take notice of the receipt of my letters, which comfort I have wanted now five months together". ⁷⁵ An apologetic reply

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 575-8.

72 *Ibid.*, pp. 545, 619. Italics mine.

73 Innes, *Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, V, p. 43; Burton, *PC Register*, ser. II, V, p. 209.

74 For an example, see the "Procuratory of Resignation by William, Earl of Stirling", 31 December 1636, GD 17/501, SRO.

75 Wake to Coke, 13 April 1632, SP 78/91, ff. 120-21, PRO.

from Coke could not repair the damage already done, which was two-fold as regards New Scotland. First, no notice had been taken of a dispatch from Wake of 20 January which contained a first hint that the French plan for Acadia might involve more than the salving of a point of honour. The French, Wake had reported, were planning an expedition to repossess Quebec; so much was to be expected. In addition, however, "Mr. de Razilly is to transport himself into those parts with five or six ships well provided, and 800 soldiers besides mariners, who may perhaps trench upon our plantation in New England".⁷⁶ Wake apparently believed at this stage that Razilly was bound for Canada rather than for New Scotland, and doubted in any case whether the French had any "ill intention". Nevertheless, it was Razilly who did eventually go to Acadia as royal lieutenant-general; furthermore, the support given by the Company of New France to the La Tours, hitherto on a small scale, had taken the more permanent form in late 1631 of the construction of a small fort on the St. John river.⁷⁷ Thus, had Dorchester been able to correlate this development with the reports passed on by Wake, he might have been alerted to the possibility that he had underestimated the French regard for Acadia.

The second damaging aspect of Wake's unfortunate isolation lay in the eventual terms of the treaty of St-Germain, which were more favourable to France than had been envisaged in 1631. Indeed, Charles I on 29 April 1632 informed Wake through Coke that "though for his own honour, hee will not free himself from the disadvantage and burden cast upon him, by disavowing those ministers to whom hee gave his powers, openly to that king and state; yet as to yourselves, hee disavoweth both your and Mr. Burlamachis [another British agent involved in the negotiations] proceedings as being without his Commission or allowance".⁷⁸ While the principal points enumerated by Coke concerned Canada and not New Scotland, a subtle change had been made by Wake in the British position regarding the latter. The British understanding in 1631 had been that Port Royal was to be left "waste and unpeopled", and a basic distinction had been carefully maintained between the removal of the Scots from Port Royal and the restitution of Quebec. In the eventual treaty, however, Charles I was obliged "de rendre et restituer a Sa Majeste Tres Chrestienne, tous les lieux occupez en la Nouvelle France, la Cadie et Canada".⁷⁹ Moreover, Wake had written from Paris on 9 April to "those of Cadie and Port Royal" that they should surrender Port Royal when summoned to do so by "Monsr. Razilly, or by some other in his name".⁸⁰ This

76 Wake to Dorchester, 20 January 1632, *ibid.*, ff. 12-3.

77 See Le Blant, "Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France et la Restitution", p. 81.

78 Coke to Wake, 29 April 1632, SP 78/91, ff. 146-7, PRO.

79 *Collection de Manuscrits*, I, p. 88.

80 Wake to "those of Cadie and Port Royal", 9 April 1632, SP 78/91, f. 106, PRO.

was clearly a shift from the aim which had been stated, for example, in a letter from Alexander, now elevated to the title of Lord Stirling, to the Port Royal inhabitants dated 3 December 1631, which envisaged leaving the site in the same deserted state as it had been found in 1629.⁸¹ The change was not necessarily crucial; given the assumption of basic French lack of interest in Acadia as such — and Wake was clearly still uncertain as to whether Razilly would even be visiting Acadia in person — it was only a matter of words. However, it left the Scottish crown without safeguards, and events were to show that this mischance would aggravate the results of those miscalculations which had already been made.

The first of these two miscalculations lay in supposing that the colonising efforts of 1628-29 could be repeated, as would be necessary if New Scotland was to be re-established from another base. A prime difficulty in all colonial projects was the mobilization of capital and here the New Scotland colony had little potential recourse. The Knights-Baronetcies had never been popular, and the withdrawal of the Port Royal colony inevitably generated further cynicism. Only thirty-three such titles were conferred from 1631 to 1638, and by 1639 the order was attracting attention chiefly as a grievance which was considered for suppression along with other monopolies.⁸² Stirling's personal finances were in chaos, to the degree that after his death in 1640 a parliamentary committee was established to administer his debts.⁸³ Preoccupied with unsuccessful attempts to attain solvency, and not helped by a Knight-Baronetcy scheme which was making little progress, Stirling clearly lacked the means to make a serious further effort to colonise New Scotland, especially if he was to be faced with active French hostility.

The second basic miscalculation of the Scots crown lay in consistently underestimating the importance attached to Acadia by the French. Charles I and his advisors had never believed that the French, after the restoration of Quebec, would retain a serious commitment to colonise Acadia, and this opinion had been confirmed by the negotiators Augier and De Vic. It was thought safe enough, therefore, to withdraw from Port Royal and temporarily from New Scotland as a whole. This view was soon belied by the power and prestige of the French expedition which sailed for Acadia in 1632, a point

81 Stirling to the Inhabitants of Port Royal, 3 December 1631, CPA, vol. 44, f. 317.

82 Laing, *Royal Letters, Charters and Tracts*, pp. 122-3. See also Edmund Rossington to Viscount Conway and Killultagh, 23 April 1639 [O.S.], State Papers (Domestic), SP 16/418, no. 41, PRO.

83 Innes, *Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, V, pp. 358, 672. The £10,000 warrant mentioned on p. 55 above was apparently never paid to Alexander, no doubt because of the increasing financial embarrassment of the crown during the 1630s. Even the payment of this sum, however, would certainly have been insufficient to allow Alexander to finance a further colonising venture.

which was made to the crown in a rather agitated note from Stirling on 16 June 1632. "It is evident", the note observed, "that the frensch have a desyne more than ordinarie herein". In addition to re-establishing "there plantacions in Canada", which had been foreseen by the king and Stirling, and "for the which there is a reason apparent in the benefite of trade", the French "have this yeare sent 300 men to New Scotland". To this unprecedentedly large expedition Stirling was inclined to attribute what was, from the Scottish standpoint, a sinister purpose: "no present benefite can possiblie redound to them in propotion to the charge they are at, and [they] are the nixt yeare as I am crediblie informed to sett out Ten shippes with planters these that are interested in it haveing bound themselves to a yearlie supplie of a great number of planters, which is a certaine prooffe of some end greater than any persons exspectation of proffect can encouradge them unto". Should the French "become stronge in New Scotland", Stirling believed, this might well prove dangerous not only for New Scotland itself but for the New England settlements further south. "The possessing of it [New Scotland] by the frensh imediatlie upon the late treatie", he complained, "be not warranted by the treatie". According to the interpretation which enjoined the leaving of Port Royal "waist and unpeopled", he was right; but the actual terms of the treaty had lacked any effective safeguards in the seemingly unlikely event, now proved all too real, that the French would send a serious expedition to Acadia.⁸⁴

Thus, Stirling's note, more than two months after the signing of the treaty of St. Germain, reflects his dawning realisation that the Scots had been outmanoeuvred in the treaty. The first hint that the French had had "a desyne more than ordinarie" had come with the selection by Richelieu of Isaac de Razilly to take the surrender of Port Royal. Razilly was the most eminent French advocate of colonisation, his advice having in 1626 and 1627 been instrumental in prompting the formation of the Company of New France. Always a strategist, Razilly had noted in his important memorial to Richelieu in 1626 that in order to establish New France on a proper footing "il fauldroyt borner les Angloys le plus proche qu'on pouroyt".⁸⁵ Hence, Razilly's nomination to head the French expedition to Acadia in itself denoted an unusual degree of importance and also indicated strategic objectives of the kind which Stirling had quite rightly, but belatedly, identified. Moreover, the expedition itself was a major one, with an unwonted amount of government participation. Razilly was granted a fully-equipped warship, the *Espérance en Dieu*, and 10,000 livres, on condition that he and the Company of New France would contribute further equipment and men. With these forces, which eventually consisted of three ships and three hundred men, Razilly would

84 "Minute of some points considerable for the King's service", June 1632, CO 1/6, no. 56, PRO.

85 Léon Deschamps, ed., *Mémoire du Chevalier de Razilly* (Paris, 1887), p. 32.

“mettra en possession au dit Port Royal la dite Compagnie de la Nouvelle France”. Razilly was intended to remain in Acadia and to develop it as a colony, and he was granted by the Company a seigneurie comprising the river and bay of Ste. Croix. He was further commissioned to stay in Acadia as the royal lieutenant-general in New France. Thus, far from sending a token force to save a point of honour, the French had rather made Acadia the headquarters of what was at that time their most serious effort so far to develop New France.⁸⁶

These, then, were the miscalculations which strangled at birth the strategy of the Scots crown. How far ought they to have been foreseen, and how far do they therefore characterise the strategy itself as an unjustifiable one? In the context of general European attitudes to American colonisation, it is hard to see the Scots crown as acting with exceptional obtuseness. The problem of mobilising capital was one which was consistently underestimated by European colonial promoters and was never solved in the generation contemporary with Stirling, least of all by Razilly and his successor, d’Aulnay Charnisay. The efforts of Razilly and d’Aulnay in Acadia were successful in the sense that a community was established first at La Hève, on the Atlantic coast, and then at Port Royal; but in financial terms, the enterprise never paid its way. By 1635, Richelieu himself, though unwilling to commit further royal funds, invested 17,000 livres personally in the Razilly Company in order to relieve the accumulated debts. By the time of d’Aulnay’s death in 1650, his personal debts arising from colonisation had risen to some 260,000 livres.⁸⁷ Sir Ferdinando Gorges, in many ways the English counterpart of Stirling and Razilly, had similarly been plunged into financial difficulties by the bankruptcy of a colonising attempt in New England between 1629 and 1634, and in the coming years was to lose much of his effectiveness in colonial affairs for this reason.⁸⁸ While in hindsight it is easy to see that Stirling’s chances of finding sufficient funds to mount a further colonising effort in New Scotland were extremely slight, the miscalculation, rather than

86 Convention avec le Sieur de Razilly, 27 January 1632, Archives des Colonies, série C11D, ff. 47-48, Archives Nationales, Paris; Commission au Sieur de Razilly, 10 May 1632, *ibid.*, ff. 50-1; Concession faite à Monsieur le Commandeur de Razilly, 19 May 1632, *ibid.*, ff. 52-3. See also Trudel, *Beginnings*, pp. 192-3; Bona Arsenaault, *Histoire et Généalogie des Acadiens* (Quebec, 1965), I, pp. 27-8; and Le Blant, “Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France et la Restitution”, pp. 82-3.

87 See Le Blant, “Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France et la Restitution”, pp. 86-7; René Baudry, “Charles d’Aulnay et la Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France”, *Revue d’Histoire de l’Amérique Française*, 11 (1957-58), p. 235; Roger Comeau, “Pêche et Traite en Acadie Jusqu’en 1713” (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1949), pp. 159-60; Trudel, *Beginnings*, pp. 199, 200, 203-4.

88 See Richard Arthur Preston, “The Laconia Company of 1629: An English Attempt to Intercept the Fur Trade”, *Canadian Historical Review*, 31 (1950), pp. 140-3.

being purely a Scottish one, was one which was characteristic of European colonisers at this time.

The outmanoeuvring of Scotland by France in the treaty of St-Germain is apparently a different matter altogether. Yet here a European perspective is also essential. The decade of the 1620s had seen in northern Europe a somewhat successful effort by such men as Alexander, Razilly and Gorges to relate North American colonisation to reasons of state and thus to enlist the support of royal influence. While the result in each case had been the formation of a large quasi-governmental body to co-ordinate and mobilise resources for colonisation, none of these schemes — the Council for New England, the order Knight-Baronets of Scotland, and the Company of New France — had implied actual royal expenditure on colonies. Insofar as scanty evidence permits any explanation of the decision of the French crown not to rely exclusively in 1632 upon private financing, this would seem to have been prompted by an immediate desire to counter-balance the enormous concurrent population growth of New England.⁸⁹ Razilly's concern to "borner les Angloys", expressed in 1626, had become much more urgent with the foundation of the Massachusetts colony in 1629 and its rapid subsequent growth. Thus, the nature of Razilly's expedition in 1632 implied a hasty departure from the normal custom of avoiding royal financing of colonial developments, and Charles I and Stirling had a right to be surprised.

Similarly, and for the same strategic purpose of confining the English expansion, the selection of Acadia, rather than the St Lawrence, as the headquarters of New France was an abrupt change of emphasis by the French. During the 1620s Acadia had been a small concern indeed, while substantial amounts of capital and effort had been devoted to Quebec and the other habitations on the St Lawrence. Acadia as such had not been mentioned in the articles of association of the Company of New France, and the Company's first major act had been to send a fleet to the St Lawrence, where it had been captured by the Kirkes. During negotiations in France, the various British agents had often reported active French interest in Canada and had rarely mentioned any such interest in Acadia except in terms of the personal pride of Châteauneuf.⁹⁰ Even the measures taken in 1630 and 1631 by the Company and the French crown to consolidate the allegiance of the La Tours were understandably, if incorrectly, interpreted by the Scots as minor efforts to prevent collapse of the French presence in Acadia while negotiations were in progress.⁹¹ There was little reason, therefore, to suppose that the French efforts would not be directed in future exclusively to the St Lawrence settle-

89 See Trudel, *Beginnings*, pp. 192-3.

90 See, for example, SP 78/86, ff. 159, 273, PRO.

91 See Le Blant, "Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France et la Restitution", pp. 76-81.

ments which had so readily been restored by the English crown. Had not Dorchester's untimely death isolated Wake from the strategic thinking of the crown, this miscalculation might have had lesser consequences; but the calculation itself had not been unreasonable.

More generally, the fact was that North American colonies were still a very uncertain quantity in Europe. They had recently become recognised as the legitimate subject of royal concern, and in 1629-32 had been brought into the treaty negotiations with unwonted prominence. Both the French and the Scots attached a certain amount of importance to colonies; that much was generally known. But as to exactly how much importance, and to which particular territories it was attached, these were matters which were much more difficult to gauge, and could fluctuate from year to year in any European country. In 1629-32, the Scots crown confronted the most strategically acute of northern European colonial promoters, in the person of Razilly, and in Richelieu the statesman who was temporarily — his interest apparently faded after Razilly's death in 1635 — the most vigorous implementor of such advice.⁹² It is perhaps not surprising that on this occasion Charles I came off worst.

Some years later, in 1635, Charles I attempted to salvage some hope of redeeming the New Scotland project by putting it into the hands of Sir Ferdinando Gorges: it is probable that Gorges was intended to take over New Scotland in his then-designated capacity of governor of New England.⁹³ Gorges, however, just as much as Stirling, lacked the means to re-establish the New Scotland colony, even if there had been no French presence in Acadia, and never in fact went to New England to take up his governorship. Stirling, for his part, continued to take an interest in America — in January 1635 he and his son became members of the Council for New England, and as late as April 1639 he was still hoping that his interests in the beaver trade might be a means of rescuing his ruined finances⁹⁴ — but never again attempted to settle a colony. New Scotland had been subsumed into the confusion of English colonial arrangements. When the name was once again used, in its Latin form of "Nova Scotia" under Cromwell in 1654, it no longer had any distinctive connection with Scotland as such.

The withdrawal of 1632, therefore, may indeed be seen in retrospect as the death-blow to Scottish colonisation in North America.⁹⁵ It is certainly not the

92 See Trudel, *Beginnings*, p. 197.

93 Rogers, *Stirling's Register*, II, p. 818; Sir Ferdinando Gorges to Secretary Windebank, 31 March 1635, CO 1/8, no. 52, PRO.

94 Minutes of the Council for New England, 29 January 1635 [O.S.], CO 1/6, no. 29, p. 18, PRO. See also Stirling to Windebank, 1 April 1639 [O.S.], SP 16/417, no. 2, PRO.

95 Future colonial schemes in East New Jersey and South Carolina were made not through the crown of Scotland, but by grant to Scottish proprietors from the crown of England. See Insh, *Scottish Colonial Schemes*, chs. V, VI.

purpose of this paper to portray the strategy of Charles I as regards New Scotland as anything other than what it was: in practical terms, a disastrous failure. What is contended here, however, is that the reasons for the failure deserve much more careful attention than they have hitherto been given. To attribute the demise of New Scotland to the duplicity, the stupidity or the rapacity of Charles is not only grossly to over-simplify and misrepresent, but also to deprive the whole episode of its greatest significance for the colonial historian. The negotiations of 1629-32, the strategies which were employed at that time, and the chance factors which affected them, afford the historian a revealing cross-section of European attitudes and actions regarding North American colonisation. For the nations of northern Europe, colonies had not by 1632 acquired any generally agreed status or value. On the contrary, colonisation was still a very recent phenomenon; there was room for considerable doubt and debate as to exactly how important it was and would become, and consequently as to how much should be committed to it in the way of resources, efforts and negotiating weight. The practical loss of New Scotland was a setback for Charles I, a personal disaster for Stirling, a diplomatic coup for Richelieu, and an opportunity for Razilly. For the historian, it is one of the changes which illustrate that fluidity in both concept and practice which was so characteristic of early seventeenth-century European colonisation in North America.