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British masters was ambivalent, initially at least it would have favoured a transfer to French-held territory. It would appear that their decision to remain in Nova Scotia rested fundamentally upon a shrewd assessment of comparative economic advantage and a truly deep attachment to their new homeland. (The Recollet missionary at Minas, Pere Felix Pain, summarized the general attitude of the people towards moving in a letter dated Sept. 23, 1713, to M. de Costabelle, governor of Isle Royale. "It would be to expose us manifestly (they say) to die of hunger, burthened as we are with large families, to quit the dwelling places and clearance from which we derive our usual subsistence, without any other resource, to take rough, new lands, from which the standing wood must be removed.... One-fourth of our population consists of aged persons, unfit for the labor of breaking up new lands, and who, with great exertion, are able to cultivate the cleared ground which supplies subsistence for them and their families.") The Acadians were mostly in the third and fourth generations by 1713 and having long been ignored, and neglected by officialdom of both old and new France they had little sense of identification with their metropolitan mother state. Also, the bulk of the Acadians lived in Minas Basin and along the inner reaches of Chignecto Bay, far away from effective surveillance of the struggling and inadequate British garrison at Port-Royal (renamed Annapolis Royal). They were thus not anxious to trade their freedom of individual action, probably unparalleled in any European settlement in North America in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, for the excessive paternalism that they could expect in Cape Breton. Even when the matter of the conflict of British sovereignty and Acadian "independent neutralism" was coming to a head in the early 1750's, when Halifax had been established as a counterpoise to a reoccupied and strengthened Louisbourg prior to the last phases of the continental struggle for supremacy, the major flow of the voluntary exodus of Acadians that did occur was to Isle St.-Jean; "by 1755 that small island may have held more people than Cape Breton itself. A few hundred Acadians did try to establish themselves on Cape Breton in those years but the vast majority of them gave up after a season or two and preferred to return to their beloved and fertile, dyke-protected wheat fields and meadows on the Fundy shores, despite existing tribulations and threats for their future. Even the attempt to attract disaffected members of the "foreign Protestant" group, who had been brought out to Halifax to be settled among by the Acadians and later dumped unceremoniously in the old La Have (later Lunenburg).