

played an important role in the lives of the Acadians, both of which were key elements of the social fabric before and after the deportation, and still today.

Territorial wars between France and England led to the deportation. Sadness and misery characterized this infamous deportation known as the Great Upheaval which continued unabated over a period of eight years from 1755 to 1763. The deportation order began with a proclamation order issued at 3:00 p.m. on September 5th, 1755 at a Catholic church in Grand Prè, Nova Scotia. Following this mass deportation order families were separated immediately, wives from their husbands, children from their crowds, many to never see each other again. The Acadians were placed under arrest and loaded on ships with their properties and goods confiscated or burnt to the ground. Historical records claim that the British destroyed approximately 6,000 Acadian houses and disbursed the Acadians among 13 colonies from Massachusetts to Georgia.

Approximately 11,000 Acadians were deported from the Maritimes. Although some were sent to France and England, mostly Acadians wound up scattered through the American colonies. Hundreds of these Acadian men, women and children perished in shipwrecks of the *Duke William* and *Violet* in December 1758. Wherever they went, the Acadians were often treated

like slaves, shunned, cheated and heartlessly allowed to die. Many of the ships used to transport the deported Acadians were not seaworthy, they were crowded, and after leaving port sickness broke out amongst the passengers, illness due to unsanitary conditions and small pox. Malnutrition and starvation therefore became the fate of many deportees and older passengers were confined to the bottom of the boats and their air infected with disease. Approximately 3,000 Acadians were deported from the Island to France in the late 1750s. Of these, only about 35% survived this terrible ordeal. Two-thirds of the deportees died either by drowning when ships that were transporting them sank or following epidemics on board the ships.

By 1752 the population of the Island was

more than 2,200 but by 1758, with the act of the deportation of the Acadians from Nova Scotia, that number then doubled, increasing to approximately 4,700. But they were soon to be deported from their new home too. One mass transport from what is now PEI was the British ship the *Duke William* was sailed out of Port Lajoie on October 20th, 1758 for France. The boat sank 40 miles off the shores of England and more than 360 Acadians drowned on December 13. Eleven of the 13 family household names that were recorded in the 1752 censuses disappeared and are thought to have been on that fatal deportation journey. In the case of the parish of Point Prim, it's believed that only one family returned to Prince Edward Island, the ancestor of all the Doirons here on the Island today. Following the treaty of Paris in 1763 Acadians were given permission to return to the Maritime provinces provided they pledged allegiance to the British Crown and remained in small isolated groups. Thus began the long journey back to the lands where practically everything they had worked for had been destroyed. Of those who survived deportation, very few returned.

The story of the Acadian deportation is one of the most tragic pages of Canadian history. While the deportation from Grand Prè, Nova Scotia, in 1755 was terrible, the deportation from Prince Edward Island was equally terrible because of the great number of people who died. Therefore it is only fitting that we would honour the great sacrifices of the early Acadians. However, as we grieve those who lost their homes, their dignity, their families and their lives during the deportation, we also celebrate the determination of the Acadian people and the survival of our culture.

All Acadians, no matter where they live today, see the Great Upheaval or the deportation as the ultimate factor of their common identity. Triumph over tragedy personifies the Acadian historical journey and our joie de vivre, or the joy of life, has helped to sustain us for hundreds of years. The Acadians are indeed a resilient people, and while we all have a role to play in helping to preserve our culture and language, each of us has a role to play in ensuring that a tragedy of this magnitude will never happen again.

I am very proud to support this resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak on this motion? If not, to close out debate the mover, the hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Thank you, Monsieur le président.

I'll be very brief in that I think the support for the Acadian community has been well expressed by members on both sides of the House. Certainly the Acadian Francophone community makes a great contribution to Prince Edward Island. I can't think but how much greater this province would be if that contribution was recognized on a continuous basis from the 1700s if we had not had the expulsion of the Acadian people. Because, truly, this is a great province because of the contribution that the Acadian people make, that members like the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche makes to his community into the province on an ongoing basis. So it's fitting that this House continue to work for the full inclusion and rights of Acadian people on Prince Edward Island, and that we say we're sorry for the deportation which took place. We undertake to never allow that kind of situation to happen again, at least within our own powers here in this Legislature.

So I thank hon. members for the participation and the debate, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour of the motion say 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

Speaker: Contrary say 'nay.'

Unanimous consent on the motion.

**Imprimerie
Dieppe Imaging, Dieppe, N.-B.**

**Graphisme et mise en page
Alexandre Roy**
