

suffering of the people, nor a tribute to those who survived to rebuild the present day Acadian community – their language, culture and religion still intact, as promised them in 1763 by the Treaty of Paris.

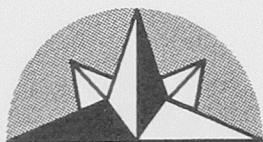
People speak of lands made holy by the blood of martyrs, but I believe that lands can also be made sacred by the suffering of innocent people, such as we have done in dedicating monuments in France to Canadian soldiers who served there, among those who died. When I visit Port-la-Joye/Fort Amherst I feel a sense of reverence in the silence of the place, made all the more profound by the lack of visitors. It is the most important historical site in Atlantic Canada, being the seat of two earliest governments as well as the site of an expulsion of thousands of innocents, and yet it is largely ignored. It is ignored because we have not known what to make of it. The Acadian people have now lived for two hundred and forty-three years with the memory of the expulsion, much of that time spent in cautious dread of the English majority, asking mostly to be left alone. For our part, our governments undertook to make them English. Until only recently, in terms of Island history, their school books were in English, their curriculum was an English curriculum, and classes were to be conducted in English. The services of their government were conducted entirely in English and little accommodation was made for those who could not understand the language. We have not understood their persistence in remaining French.

For many reasons, I have long thought that the National Historic Site should be turned over to an Acadian organization for management, under contract with Parks Canada. The Acadian people

should be welcomed back to Port-la-Joye in time for their major celebration in 2004, not to commemorate the expulsion but rather to celebrate their return and prideful survival among us.

Port-la-Joye/Fort Amherst should be a major attraction for visitors, not only for its surpassing beauty but also because there is no better setting for telling people the history of our province, and why it is a province. Some years ago we were invited to prepare a management plan for the site, which was set aside at the time because of the federal government's total and over-riding commitment to accountancy rather than program development. I believe it is now time for the plan to be dusted off, and who would have a better cause to do it than an Acadian organization through a management contract with the Government of Canada.

John Eldon Green is a descendant of refugees from the American Revolution who settled on PEI, on lands cleared by French pioneers.



**When I visit
Port-la-
Joye/Fort
Amherst I feel
a sense of
reverence in
the silence of
the place**