

New france

Literature, Russian Literature



New France was a new world far from home. Today Canada may be a hotspot for immigration, but back in the 17th century it was far from being an ideal land to start a new life. Despite various forms of persuasion and tactics, France had an incredibly difficult time colonizing Canada for many decades primarily due to the idea of emigration and the reluctance revolving around it. The act of leaving one's country to settle in a new or foreign one can be quite daunting. The consideration of many points, both good and bad, would need to be taken into account before doing so.

Factoring the length of time it takes to travel to a destination by ship, and the various misfortunes entailed with such a trip, one could say that the voyage itself "could have been a deterrent to migration" (Moogk 468). Apart from the physical journey, to "dislodge people from home and familiar surroundings" (Moogk 470), would be enough reason to cause individuals or families to be reluctant to colonize New France. But even with these hardships involved with emigration, the benefits of moving can be quite appealing.

At the time of recruitment, parts of France were facing great hardship in the forms of "hunger and unemployment" (Moogk 470). It is no wonder that it was during these times that there were peaks in recruiting engages (indentured workers) for colony work. People were given a means of escape to a new land, and from there start anew. Offerings of "free land and settlement bounties" (Moogk 475), were offered to those willing to become colonists. Some disadvantages of emigration proved to be significant barriers to settlement. With all that said, the decision of emigration is a life changing one even to this day.

As mentioned earlier, various barriers hindered the settlement process considerably. The most apparent barrier preventing settlement was to gathering people to go in the first place. People who understood the harshness of leaving home for unknown lands, thought twice about making choices regarding recruitment. The Iroquois' "threat of murderous incursions that had alarmed colonists" (Moogk 487), death can be a big deterrent. If getting people to go to Canada was not a big enough issue in the first place, preventing workers from returning home proved to be an even reater feat. Familial issues played a key role in whether or not an engages returned to France or not. The fact that some workers solely left for the sake of work, whilefamilyremained back at home, hints towards the hope of return. The indentured workers of France typically went to serve for three full years in order to "learn all the skills needed for survival in Canada" (Moogk 479). Usually this meant that when their service time was completed, they would want to return home to family and did not consider staying in New France to colonize it.

A tactic used to keep workers away from returning home and keep them on the new land was "bringing out entire families" (Moogk 476), so as to fix them in place and remove their reluctance to stay. This is not to say that the workers wanting to return home are always the cause for abandonment. There are cases, in which family from back home would remind workers of their "duty and material interests demanding their return home" (Moogk 484). So even when the worker left with the intention of becoming a colonist, their family ties would creep up on them and relieve them of their colonialdreams.

Home sickness could be a big enough reason to want to go home, regardless if a person had friend or family waiting for them. As a response to the excess number of bachelor workers who went to New France to work unwillingly, with the possibility of leaving once done, the “filles du roi” emigrated over in hopes of finding “marriage and, perhaps, a more honorable match than was possible at home” (Moogk 482), this reason of starting a family and new life could counteract homesickness.

Unfortunately, there was not always an abundance of strong hard workers, and the possibility of “persons unsuited for work because of their advanced age, infirmities, illnesses” or they were just “very weak, of low age, and of little service” (Moogk 480), being recruited would only handicap the progression of settlement. In the end it seems the biggest issue that prevented settlement was the people of France wanting to settle in new lands or not.