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Peace At A Price

WE work so far ahead of our printer that it is not possible, writing on the day on which the terms are announced, to say with any confidence what the settlement in Finland finally means. There is peace at a price, a price that we can estimate easily enough on the map; but the real payment has still to be revealed.

If the situation is what first impressions suggest, Finland has ceased to exist as an independent State. It has joined Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as a vassal state of Russia. It has lost, not only its existing defences, but both the right and the power to replace them. For there is no suggestion in the terms announced that they will be less onerous in fact than they are on paper. Russia has taken the pound of flesh and the plate on which it has been offered.

So much for the unfortunate Finns, who have been deserted by their Scandinavian neighbours, and left to make what use they can of an immortal reputation for courage. For ourselves the question is what effect the settlement has on the struggle with Germany? It is clear enough that Germany is pleased officially. Whatever the German people think, the attack on Finland was permitted, if not actually encouraged, by the German Government. It was a part of the brigands' bargain signed in Moscow six months ago. But we need not assume too hastily that it helps Germany.

It helps Germany if Russia, having achieved her immediate aims in the north-west, turns to the south-east. But it is far from certain that Russia will do this. Even if the Finns had not pricked the bubble of Russia's military reputation, which was never a very big bubble, dictatorships can't afford to be sentimental. Russia was not vulnerable in the north-west without the help of Scandinavia. She is extremely vulnerable in the south-east however the tides of war now flow. And she will not fight the Allies to help the Germans.

All we can say at this stage is that a vast amount of military material has been released for totalitarian purposes. But it will be used for Russian and not for German ends if the two are different. In the meantime Allied armies and ships have been released for Allied purposes.

NO RACE FOR AKAROA

Centennial Celebration Next Week

SOME of the legends still lingering about the "race for Akaroa" will be dispelled at the Centennial celebrations there on March 30, but the event will still be of sufficient historical importance to make this the South Island's major Centennial event.

Ministers of the Crown will attend. The French Consul will make a present of a Sèvres vase given by President Lebrun, and among the guests will be a number of direct descendants of the early French settlers.

Historical research has played havoc with much of the rumour built up around the first official landings at Akaroa. Many people still think to-day that a British vessel headed off the French by inches, or minutes; that the Union Jack was raised in the nick of time before the Tricolour could be landed.

No Antagonism to Britain

In fact, there was no race to Akaroa. There was an organised attempt at settlement by a French company which sent its ship with the naval vessel Aube to arrive five days after British sovereignty had been substantiated, and nearly two months after local signatures had been secured for the Treaty of Waitangi. There was no bad feeling, except perhaps between a representative of the French company and the representative of the French Government. There was an excellent spirit of tactful co-operation. Any territorial claims advanced by the French were not advanced by the French Government, which fathered its infant settlement with every care but without antagonism to the recognised British rule.

On May 28, 1840, the Government of New Zealand made its first direct contact with Akaroa. Major Bunbury landed from H.M.S. Herald and secured signatures to a copy of the Waitangi Treaty. Bunbury went on to Stewart Island, planted the flag there, and returned north to proclaim the South Island under British Rule in a ceremony at Port Underwood on June 17.

It was not until July that the Aube even arrived at the Bay of Islands. There her captain, Lavaud, heard that British rule over New Zealand as a whole was already established. However, Lavaud was tactful, and relations between him and Hobson remained cordial. Lavaud was promised that the Nanto-Bordelaise Company's claims for land for which it had paid the Maoris, would be given special consideration.

Hobson thought it prudent to have British officials in executive occupation of Akaroa when the French warship and immigrant ship arrived. Captain Stanley arrived with magistrates to hold court in Akaroa on August 11. They had entered the port on August 10. The Aube arrived on August 15.

The Immigrants Arrive

The immigrants travelled on the Comte de Paris, which arrived in Pigeon Bay on August 9, a day before Stanley entered Akaroa Harbour in the Britomart. At their head was Captain Langlois, who completed the distribution of trade goods to the Maoris in payment for the land.

The subsequent history of the French company was not entirely fortunate. The immigrants set to with a will to break in and cultivate their land. They were, however, more interested in viticulture and market gardening than in the pastoral farming which scattered the local British population over a much wider area. Settling closely, the French retained much of their identity, even throughout the following hundred years. Times were hard for them at first. They had not been permitted to bring their own equipment. The company would supply it. The company did; at a price.

When the company's land claims were finally adjusted they had been awarded 30,000 acres. They claimed that the settlement had cost them £12,000. Their assets were liquidated to the New Zealand Company for £4,500 in 1849.

By comparison, the behaviour of the French Government was throughout admirable.

Captain Langlois Gave Trouble

Captain Langlois's attitude had created difficulties. He was annoyed that no attempt had been made to claim the land for France. He was jealous of de Belligny, the company's commercial representative at Akaroa. There was trouble over his land claims. Once Lavaud had to put him under arrest for insolence. But always Lavaud's tact and administrative ability guided the little settlement under the watchful eyes of the parent Government. The French had lent the company the Comte de Paris to carry the immigrants, and provided the Aube as escort. When the Aube was withdrawn it was succeeded in turn by the Allier, the Rhin, and the Seine. In 1850 Canterbury was settled, and the attendance of men-o-war was evidently not any longer considered necessary. By 1857 all native land claims and trouble were extinguished.

Broadcast of Ceremony

The ceremony next week is to be broadcast.

The main items on the programme will be a re-enactment of the first exercise of British Sovereignty in the South Island, a Maori reception, a re-enactment of the landing, and the unveiling of a memorial to the French colonists. The gift from the President of France will be received by the local municipality.

Descendants of French settlers who have been invited by the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister to attend the celebration are:

- E. X. Le Lievre (Akaroa).
- C. H. de Malmanche (Christchurch).
- G. E. de Malmanche (Christchurch).
- Mrs. E. Nutt (Christchurch).
- G. Breitmeyer (Christchurch).
- L. Libeau (Hamilton).
- L. G. Francois (Motueka).
- J. W. Eteveneaux (Taihape).



CHARLES JOSEPH MARIA DE MALMANCHE was the first French child born in the settlement of Akaroa. He arrived in the light of day a few days after the Comte de Paris brought its cargo of French settlers to what is to be the scene of the South Island's major Centennial celebration. Present at the ceremony, as guests of the Government, will be de Malmanche's two sons, C. H. de Malmanche, and G. E. de Malmanche, now of Christchurch