

The Seignorial System in Canada. A Study in French Colonial Policy. By William Bennett Munro. (Harvard Historical Studies, Vol. xiii). New York: Longmans, Green & Co. \$2.00.

The custom of Harvard University in publishing only the most important of its doctor's dissertations in history produces its good fruit in Professor Munro's volume on French-Canadian government which is now before us. The attempt of France to adapt to American conditions the seignorial phases of the feudalism which was already fast becoming obsolete in the mother country has never had its careful historian. In the "imperishable volumes" of Parkman, to which our present author constantly refers, is still to be found "the most faithful portrayal of the whole political, social and economic organization of New France." But Parkman's purpose was not technical; materials to which he had no access are now available; and a growing interest in institutional history has provided a sympathetic audience for such a study as this. Beginning with an introductory

chapter on the European background of French colonization, Dr. Munro traces the history of the seigniorial grants from 1598 to 1760. After this, with the elaborate critical apparatus and bibliography of the "scientific historian," he describes the relations of the seignior to his superiors and his dependents, and the fiscal and religious systems of New France. He concludes with chapters on British Canada which strengthen our growing conviction that the American revolutionists were uninformed when they made the famous Quebec Act a chief grievance against Great Britain. For the student of colonial history this book offers a valuable sidelight; for the Canadian student its direct value must be great. It will be long before the work has to be done again.