Our neighbours, the English, laid out a great deal of money at the outset on the settlements they made; they threw great numbers of people into them; so that now there are computed to be in them fifty thousand men capable of bearing arms; it is a wonder to see their country now; one finds all sorts of things there, the same as in Europe, and for half the price. They build numbers of ships, of all sorts and sizes; they work iron mines, they have beautiful cities; they have stagecoaches and mail from one to the other; they have carriages like those in France; those who laid out money there, are now getting good returns from it; that country is not different from this; what has been done there could be done here.

Source:

This passage is a description of the thirteen colonies of New England. It is taken from the journal of Pierre Boucher, who came to Canada from France in 1635, and became Governor of Trois-Rivières and the seigneurial founder of Boucherville in Québec. His journal, Histoire véritable et naturelle des moeurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle-France, was published in 1664. This extract from the English version is from Edward Louis Montizambe, Canada in the 17th Century, From the French of Pierre Boucher. Montreal, 1883 and is reprinted in Who Speaks for Canada? (Morton and Weinfeld, 1998).

After reading this passage, discuss the following questions with a partner.

1. Is this a primary source or a secondary source? Explain your answer.
2. How would it be possible to tell if this description is true or not?
3. Boucher expresses personal opinions in his journal. List two opinions you find in this text (what the writer thinks or believes).
4. How do you think Boucher feels about New England?
5. Which do you find more interesting to read: a primary source or a secondary source? Explain your answer.