

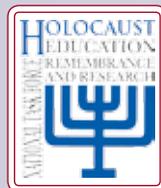
**Welcome
to Canada?**



Welcome to Canada?

A Student Resource on
Canadian Immigration Policies—
Past, Present and Future

JOHN MYERS



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Table of Contents

Preface	vii
Part I	1
Introduction	2
Chapter 1 The Voyage of the <i>St. Louis</i> : Should Canada be proud of its record?	5
Chapter 2 The World of Migration: Where does Canada fit in?	13
Part II	23
Introduction	24
Chapter 3 Pre-Confederation: An inconsistent approach	27
Chapter 4 Post-1867: Immigration as national policy	41
Chapter 5 Between the Wars: The door closes	53
Part III	69
Introduction	70
Chapter 6 Post-war Changes: Breaking down barriers	71
Chapter 7 Past, Present and Future: Where do we go from here?	83
Appendix A	
Timeline of Key Developments in Immigration During the Twentieth Century	93
References & Credits	101
Index	107
About the Author & Education Committee	112

Preface

IN June 1939, country after country refused safe haven to more than 900 Jewish refugees aboard the *MS St. Louis*, who were desperately trying to escape Nazi Germany. Canada was one of those countries. What factors influenced government policy at the time to close the door to Hitler’s Jewish victims, and where were the voices of ordinary citizens? Could they have helped to avert what would become a major stain on Canada’s reputation as a welcoming country?

Since the early days of Loyalist settlement in Canada, many other groups have sought refuge in this country, for example, runaway slaves from the United States, immigrants fleeing the Irish Famine, or the passengers on the *Komagata Maru*. How was their bid to make Canada their home received? What insights can students take from these cases when class discussions turn to more recent examples, whether immigrants seeking new opportunities, or survivors of genocide, political and religious repression, or natural disasters in other parts of the world? Why are some groups welcomed, while others are turned away?

These are just some of the questions asked in this new resource for high school students, which examines Canadian immigration policy from pre-Confederation right up until the early 21st century. It aims to apply the lessons of the Holocaust to the challenges of today, in an attempt to counter all forms of racism that lead to prejudice and bigotry against minority groups.

This publication is one of the projects of the National Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, which was created by B’nai Brith Canada’s League for Human Rights through a generous grant from the Government of Canada’s Department of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC). We wish to recognize the unique nature of the CIC’s Community Historical Recognition Program, given that governments rarely fund studies critical of their own country’s historical record. We would also like to thank B’nai Brith Canada’s National President, Eric Bissell, and Executive Vice President, Frank Dimant, for the additional funding and organizational support provided.

continued on next page

The overarching message of this Student Resource, prepared by curriculum expert John Myers, is that the rights of citizenship bring with them civic responsibilities. These responsibilities include understanding our history, being aware of the various elements that converge when it comes to decision-making on immigration and refugee policy, and accepting that we all have a role to play in ensuring government policy reflects the compassion we want our country to exemplify.

We wish to thank John Myers for the sensitivity he applied to both the Student Resource and the accompanying Teacher’s Guide. As well, we would like to acknowledge the valuable input of the Task Force Education Committee, made up of teachers from across Canada, and the efforts of our project staff, Tema Smith and Adina Klein. The result is an opportunity to engage students in an examination of complex—and often painful—issues from a variety of angles, with many possible curriculum entry points in courses such as civics, history, social sciences, geography, economics or law.

We hope the journey that students and teachers will take together through this Student Resource will encourage open dialogue, frank discussion and a commitment to take action on the key human rights issues of the day.



Professor Alain Goldschläger

Chair

National Holocaust Task Force

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League for Human Rights

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Executive Director

National Holocaust Task Force

National Director

League for Human Rights



PART I

Introduction

Chapter 1

The Voyage of the *St. Louis*:

Should Canada be proud of its record?

Chapter 2

The World of Migration:

Where does Canada fit in?

Part I

CANADA



Introduction



Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada from 2005–2010.

ON January 12, 2010, a massive earthquake caused tremendous damage in Haiti, a poor Caribbean country with a fascinating history. The last thing this fragile country needed was a major disaster. It resulted in thousands of people dying and thousands of children being orphaned, left alone without food, shelter or anyone to take care of them. Canada has had a long relationship with this French-speaking country. We have even had a Governor General who was born there.

In addition to the aid Canada has contributed to Haiti, there have been calls to adopt many of the orphans and bring them to Canada as new immigrants and, eventually, Canadian citizens. What should we do? Here are some options:

- ↗ **We have enough troubles here. We should not admit new immigrants until we have dealt with the issues we face at home.**
- ↗ We should bring some of these children to Canada once we make sure they have no family in Haiti and we have families here who can adopt them.
- ↗ **We should bring every orphan we can as soon as we can. Otherwise they will suffer horribly.**

talk about it

What has Canada done to help Haiti? Could we have done more at the time?

closerlook

Take a good look at these pictures. What would you do if you could help here?



Destruction after the earthquake in Haiti, January 2010.

Canada has a reputation as a welcoming place. With the exception of the First Nations and the Inuit, we are all descendants of people born elsewhere. The current Government study guide for newcomers, *Discover Canada*, outlines our reputation in the introduction:

“Canada has welcomed generations of newcomers to our shores to help us build a free, law-abiding and prosperous society. For 400 years, settlers and immigrants have contributed to the diversity and richness of our country, which is built on a proud history and a strong identity.”

You are part of this history. You or your parents, grandparents or earlier ancestors made the courageous decision to leave your ancestral home and journey to another part of the world.

So the story of the Haitian orphans is YOUR story.



An image from the *Canadian Illustrated News*, August 14, 1880. The text reads: “Canada welcomes these bands of immigrants who, in such numbers, last week, came to settle in the Dominion, instead of passing to the United States.”

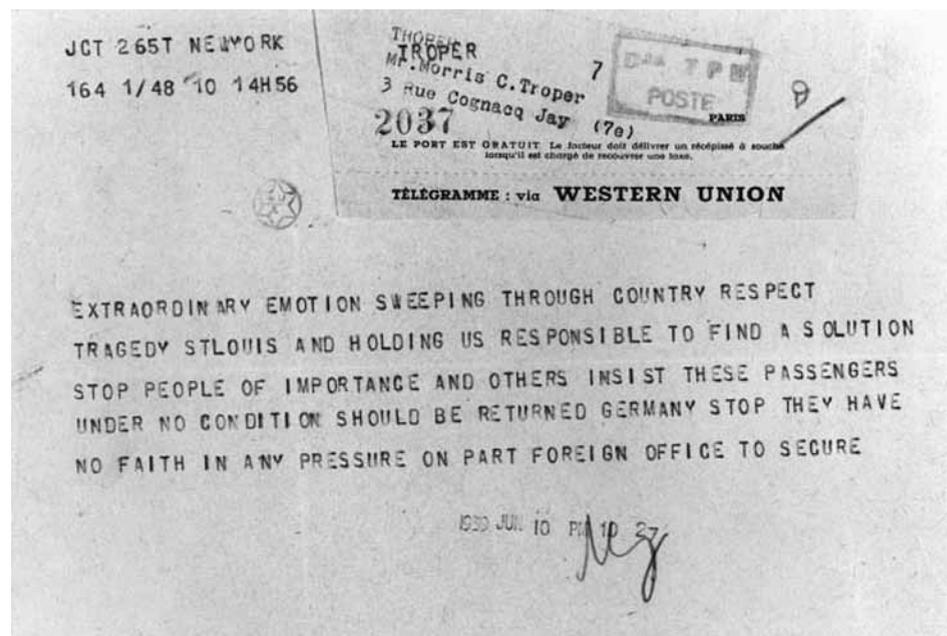
Welcome to Canada? is not a typical textbook. It will challenge you and ask you tough but important questions about your past, present and future. These questions include:

- Do we deserve this reputation as a welcoming country?
- Have we deserved this reputation throughout our past?
- What events in history have influenced our policies towards welcoming immigrants and refugees? What role has our government played?
- What role should our government play?
- What is our role as citizens?
- How welcoming should we be?
- What are the responsibilities of all of us in Canada to promote the best in Canadian society?

The chapters of *Welcome to Canada?* will help you answer these questions and ask additional ones. The first chapter describes a major event from Canada's past. The voyage of the *MS St. Louis* did not have a happy ending. As you read Chapter One, ask yourself the following question:

talk about it

Where was Canada during this crisis?



Please like this from around the world to help the *St. Louis* passengers went unanswered.



The Voyage of the *St. Louis*: Should Canada be proud of its record?



Passengers aboard the *St. Louis*.

closerlook

Take a look at this picture. What seems to be happening?

AT first glance, it does not look like the tragedy that you saw in Haiti on television, but this photograph also represents a tragedy. While there have been many efforts to help the people in Haiti, no one helped the women in this picture, or their fellow passengers on the ill-fated voyage of the *MS St. Louis*.

As you examine the following events and the map of the voyage, ask yourself: what, or more specifically, WHO is missing from the story?

talk about it

The *St. Louis* passengers had good reason for trying to leave Europe. This snapshot of events in Germany explains why:

➤ In the midst of the worldwide Depression, Adolph Hitler comes to power in January 1933.

➤ Over the next few years, the Nazis suspend democratic rights, put political opponents in jail and concentration camps, and deny civil rights to Jews and others they consider inferior, such as homosexuals, the Roma and individuals with disabilities.

➤ Jews in particular are targeted for discrimination and persecution as the primary enemy of the German *Reich*.

Their businesses are boycotted, they are barred from many occupations, they are not allowed to attend schools and universities, and they are subject to increasing violence, including murder.

➤ The 1935 *Nuremberg Laws* give a legal framework to this persecution, depriving German Jews of their citizenship and classing them officially as racially inferior, forbidden to marry or have sexual relationships with non-Jews.

talk about it

How would you feel if you were not allowed to attend school, go to university, or apply for the job of your choice?

How would you feel if the State did not allow you to date or marry someone you loved because of his/her religion?

Some Jews see the writing on the wall and leave Germany, but many think it will be safe for them to stay since they have been good German citizens contributing to their country for centuries like other Germans, even serving in the German military with distinction during the previous World War. They have done nothing to deserve the hatred directed at them.

This violence culminates in *Kristallnacht* (“Night of Broken Glass”) on November 9–10, 1938. Some of the results you see on the next page.

By this time, it is getting harder to leave Germany. Many countries require visas. Immigrants need money to settle elsewhere, and many countries have immigration quotas limiting who will be allowed in. In addition, German Jews have to pay a fee to leave—a difficult thing to do if you have lost your job and your property because of Nazi policies and state-sponsored violence.



On *Kristallnacht*, November 9–10, 1938, synagogues and stores owned by Jews were destroyed throughout Germany and Austria.

On January 24, 1939, Reinhard Heydrich becomes head of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration. Heydrich is told to rid the *Reich* of as many Jews as possible. Some Jews who are allowed to leave Germany and Austria go to Western European countries, such as the Netherlands and Denmark, hoping for peace and freedom from discrimination. Many others want to come to the Americas. The first few entries on this timeline provide a clue to the reception the *St. Louis* passengers will receive in the Americas:

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE *ST. LOUIS* SAGA, 1939

January 13

Cuba enacts *Decree 55*, which discriminates against refugees. Unlike tourists, refugees each require a visa and a payment of \$500 US—which was expensive in 1939 (approximately \$8,250 CDN in 2010 currency)—to guarantee they will not become wards of Cuba. The Cuban economy begins to slow down and Cubans blame refugees for taking away jobs.



March 18

A top secret report, “European Refugees in Cuba”, is submitted to the US State Department by Harold Tewell, US Consul in Havana, Cuba. The subject of this report is the 2,500 Jewish refugees in Cuba, as well as proposals to settle 25,000 European refugees there, and the rise in prejudice against refugees in general and Jews in particular.



April 1

A poll published in *Fortune Magazine* finds that 83% of Americans are opposed to any move that will ease immigration restrictions.



May 5

President Laredo Bru of Cuba establishes *Decree 937*, which tightens rules for immigration to Cuba. Landing certificates issued by the Minister of Immigration costing an additional \$500 US are invalidated. The *St. Louis* passengers have already paid the money. Now it is lost.

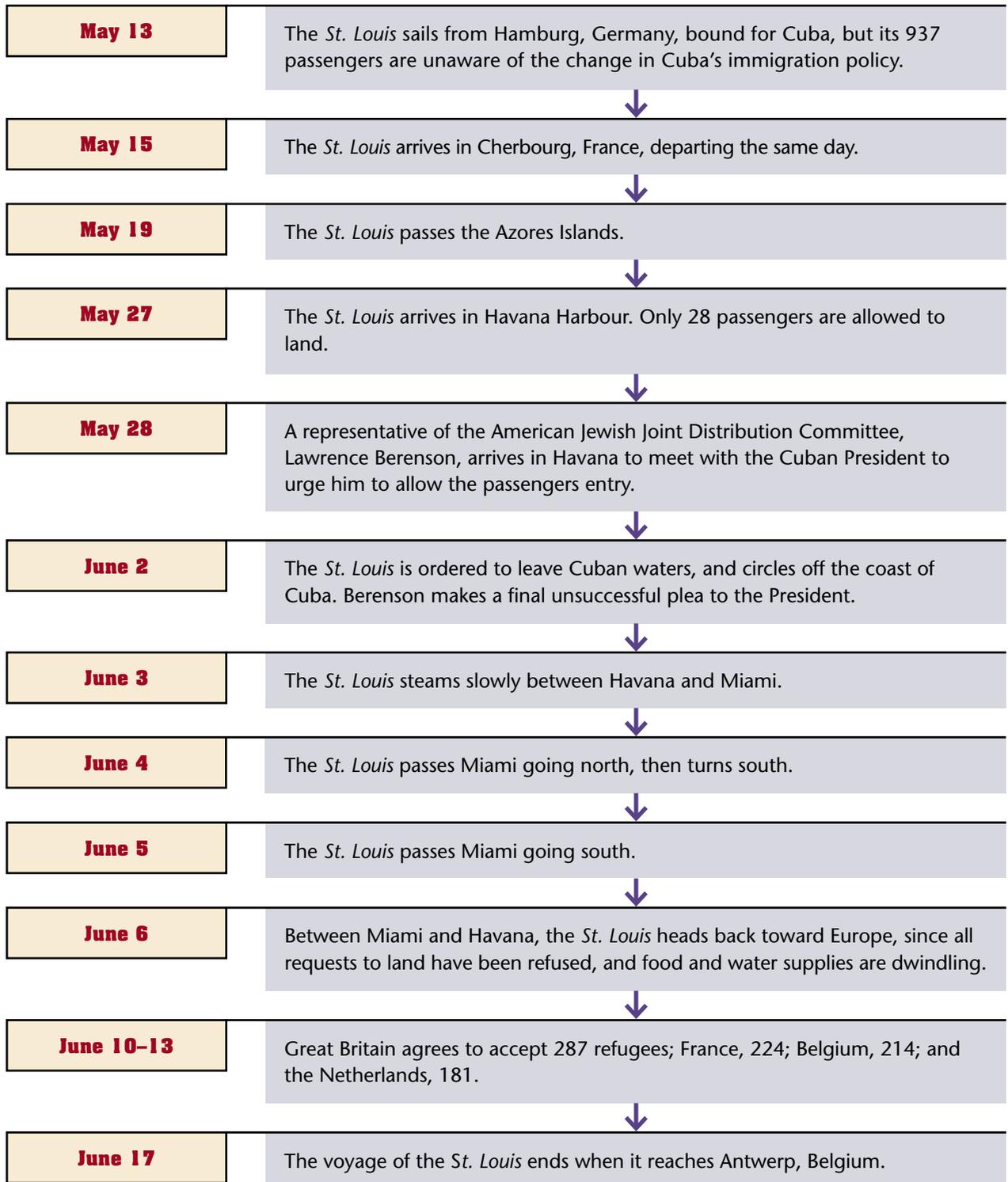


May 8

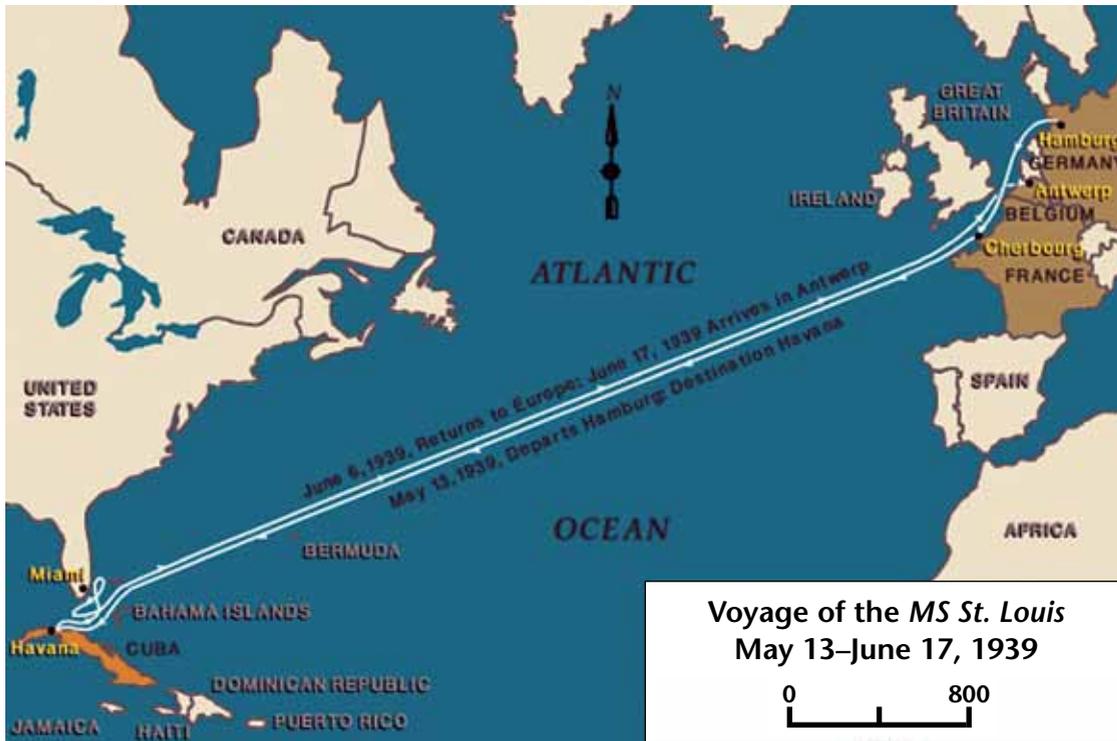
Former Cuban President Grau San Martin sponsors a protest against Jewish immigration, which is attended by 40,000 Cubans.

talk about it

The next section of the timeline fast forwards to the voyage itself. Can you predict what happens?



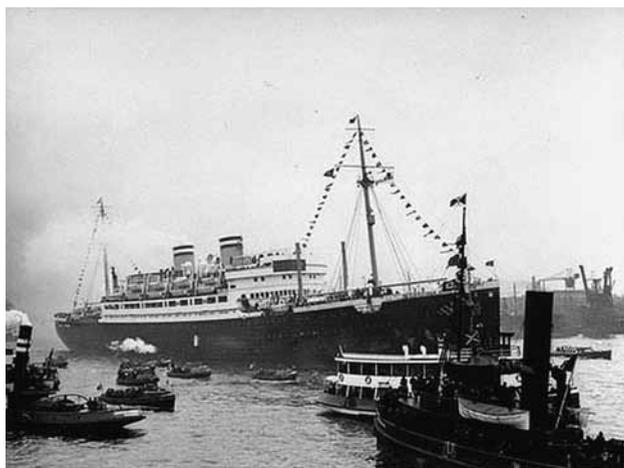
Timeline adapted from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.



Scott Miller, a researcher at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum who has tracked the voyage of the *St. Louis* in great detail, calls the fate of the passengers a “microcosm” of the Holocaust.

closerlook

Take a close look at the picture. Are the little boats there to help passengers disembark or to keep them from leaving the ship?



A view of the *St. Louis* surrounded by smaller vessels in the Port of Havana.

Passengers who went to Belgium, France and the Netherlands were only safe until the Nazis invaded these countries in 1940. Many were deported to concentration camps, never to return. Some went into hiding, while others managed to escape Europe. According to Miller, less than half the original passengers survived the war—most of them emigrating to the United States.

Do you find the fact that they eventually immigrated to the US paradoxical? Why or why not?

talk about it

And here is another paradox: an employee of the German *Reich* who tried to help his Jewish passengers.



closerlook

He never commanded another vessel. Why do you think that is so?

Gustav Schroeder, captain of the *St. Louis*, on the day of the ship's departure from Hamburg, Germany, May 13, 1939.

The Captain was staunchly loyal to Germany, but he insisted that the passengers of the *St. Louis* be treated respectfully. He also negotiated with other countries in the hope of finding sanctuary for the refugees.

During and after the war, he struggled to make a living. Grateful families of the survivors of the *St. Louis* helped him and his family after the war. In 1957, the West German Government honoured Schroeder for having saved Jewish lives. In 1959, shortly before his death, the State of Israel honoured him as a "Righteous Among the Nations".



Belgian officials at the gangplank of the *St. Louis* after the ship was forced to return to Europe. Antwerp, Belgium, June 1939.

A Final and Bitter Irony

Which country has been missing from this sad account of people in need, who were turned away by the world? **Canada— missing in action!**

talk about it

Why were we not there to help?

To answer this question, we need to look at Canada’s overall record of welcoming refugees and immigrants throughout history. In Chapter Five, we shall find out where Canada was during this tragic period.



Passengers aboard the *St. Louis* who are *en route* to Cuba, thinking they have escaped Nazi Germany.

The voyage of the *St. Louis*, it turns out, has been very significant in shaping our modern record of helping people in need.

The next chapter is a “field manual” for looking at Canada’s past, present and future role in welcoming people from around the world who wish to make our country their home.



Chapter 2

The World of Migration: Where does Canada fit in?

THROUGHOUT human history, human beings have moved from one place to another. There are still millions of nomadic people who follow their herds of sheep, cattle, reindeer and other sources of food, as well as hunter-gatherers who move with the seasons. These numbers are declining with the development of industrialized states, but still exist in many parts of the world.

Human history is also full of stories and events involving adventurous individuals looking for fame or fortune, peaceful traders, and conquering armies migrating from one place to another. Sometimes they settle temporarily. At other times, it may be permanent.

People may also move from one part of a country to another: internal migration rather than international migration. For example, thousands move every year in Canada from one province or region suffering hard economic times, to another region or province where there are more opportunities for work.

Migration was a natural feature of human life until the development of agriculture about 10,000 years ago convinced a tiny, but growing, number of people to settle permanently in a defined area or region. In the past 500 years or so, migration has become much more complicated with settlement of the Americas and Australasia, the development of nation states, and revolutionary changes in transportation and communications technology. These changes have accelerated since the beginnings of industrialization in the early 1800s.



The Bedouin are one kind of nomadic people.



Oil rigs like this one are located off the shore of Newfoundland, and they attract many people from across the country looking for work.

This chapter presents an overview of migration terms and patterns today. You can connect the terms and ideas in this chapter to other chapters as you explore the case studies and events in this [Welcome to Canada?](#) resource.

You have already looked at the passengers of the *MS St. Louis* who had decided to emigrate from their original homeland. People leave their places of origin for many reasons, which we will call “push factors”. While many leave voluntarily from their native homes to reconnect with families elsewhere or to seek a better life, the passengers of the *St. Louis*, like many other refugees, were forced out against their will. As a result, many families were torn apart.

Migration Patterns Today

Just as people make their decisions to leave a place (emigrate), they also make decisions about where to go (immigrate). These decisions are based on a variety of “pull factors”. In the examples throughout this book, you will explore many of the “push and pull factors” behind immigration to Canada.

talk about it

Push Factors are reasons why people will leave one region or country. Note that sometimes you are pushed out against your will. Can you find examples of this?

Pull Factors are reasons for going to a particular region or country. Sometimes the pull of a place is less than promised. Can you find examples of this?

Can you think of people who have moved into your community? Can you think of people who have moved away? What push and pull factors are at work in your community?

Begin a list of push and pull factors behind immigration to Canada. Add to your lists as you explore the case studies presented in [Welcome to Canada?](#)

Immigrants to a place can be classified in a variety of ways. Over Canada’s history, many have settled here with the intention of staying permanently, raising families, and eventually acquiring Canadian citizenship and taking part in promoting Canadian democratic life.

Immigrants wishing to settle permanently in a country, whether it is Canada, the United States, Australia or elsewhere, need to be “qualified” in some way. The main criteria for qualifying for “landed immigrant” status usually involve being a skilled immigrant, or already having family in the destination country. In Canada, an additional qualifier could be the possession of enough money to invest in a business, or a high net worth. As you will see in later chapters, and as you saw in Chapter One, these qualifications change according to circumstances, which results in new policies being established by the government of the period.

With the exception of Aboriginal peoples, all of us are descended from immigrants—more than 95% of all Canadians. Here are some findings from the 2006 Statistics Canada Census highlighting the impact of immigration to Canada:



New Canadians stand outside the Supreme Court of Canada after receiving their citizenship in the first official citizenship ceremony, 1947.

➤ **Virtually one in five (19.8%) of Canada’s total population is foreign-born, the highest proportion in 75 years. This is a higher percentage than the United States and lower than Australia, two other major immigrant-receiving nations.**

➤ **The Census estimated that 1,110,000 recent immigrants came to Canada between January 1, 2001 and May 16, 2006. These newcomers made up 17.9% of the total foreign-born population, and 3.6% of Canada’s 31,200,000 total population.**

➤ **Recent immigrants born in Asia (including the Middle East) made up the largest proportion of newcomers to Canada in**

2006 (58.3%). This proportion was virtually unchanged from 59.4% in 2001.

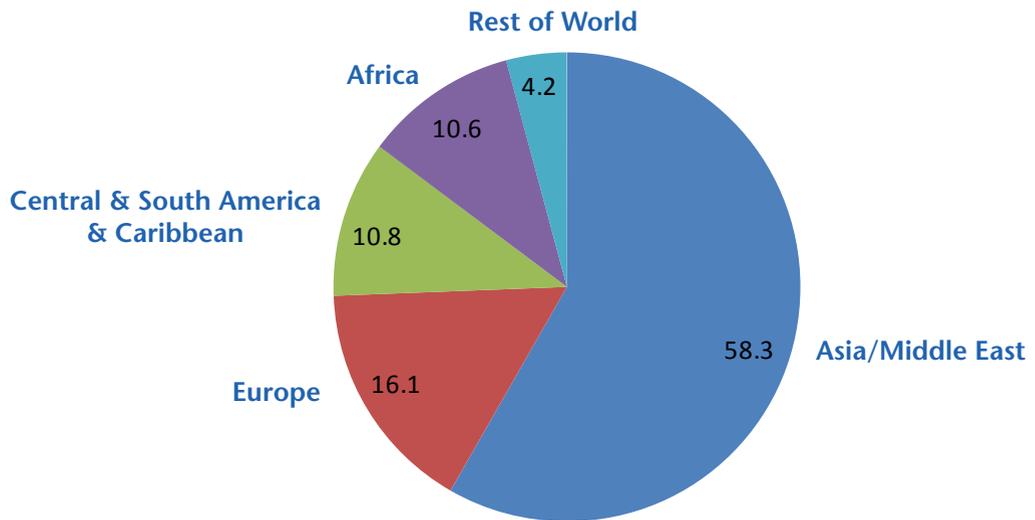
➤ **A majority (70.2%) of the foreign-born population in 2006 reported a mother tongue other than English or French. Among these individuals, the largest proportion, one in five (18.6%), reported Chinese languages, followed by Italian (6.6%), Punjabi (5.9%), Spanish (5.8%), German (5.4%), Tagalog (4.8%) and Arabic (4.7%).**

➤ **The census enumerated 863,100 individuals, or 2.8% of the population, who reported Canadian citizenship and at least one other. Most of them (80.2%) were foreign-born.**

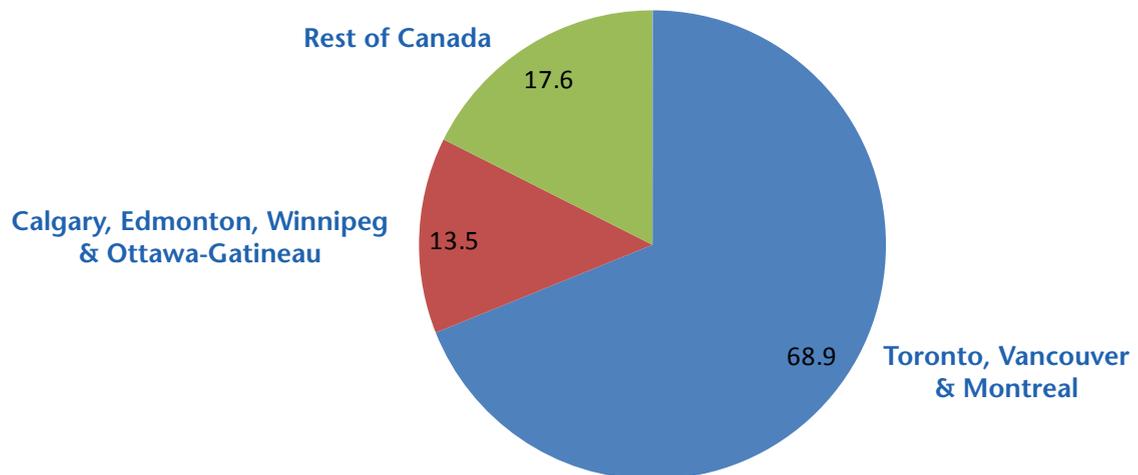
closerlook

What additional patterns and trends can you find in the 2006 Census data highlighted in these charts?

Graph 1: Recent Immigrants to Canada, 2006 Census (Percentages)



Graph 2: Recent Immigration Settlement Patterns, 2006 Census (Percentages)



Other Newcomers to Canada

Many immigrants to Canada are temporary residents. Large numbers of people come to work in the seasonal farming and harvesting industries. There are also those who come here as caregivers for children or for the elderly. Some return to their countries of origin when their work contracts are completed. Many of these people support their relatives back home and make enough money to make significant contributions to their families in their home communities.

Some temporary workers are students getting an education or professionals taking on highly skilled jobs for a period of years before returning to their countries of origin. All temporary workers, whether professional or seasonal, require some sort of work permit from the government. Below are some examples of temporary workers in this category that you may be familiar with:



Migrant workers often work harvesting produce.



Professional sports players are a less-recognized form of temporary worker.



The Refugee Category

The passengers of the *St. Louis*, had they been allowed to land in Canada, would have been considered refugees or asylum seekers.



Refugees from genocide in Darfur, Sudan—in which 400,000 civilians have perished—who are living in refugee camps in Chad. Some Darfurian refugees have come to Canada.

After World War II, there were many people in Europe who had lost their homes and families and were trying to find a new life elsewhere. Many of these “displaced persons” lived in camps. In 1951, the *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* first defined refugees as a legal group of persons who have “a well-founded fear of being persecuted on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country.”

Most refugees begin their quest for asylum (a shelter for safety) in the nearest country to the one from which they fled. In recent decades, changes in global transportation and communication have allowed people seeking asylum to travel further afield. While we still accept those fleeing war, ethnic cleansing, famine, persecution, or natural disaster, critics contend that some asylum seekers may be “economic refugees” simply looking for work, who cannot get work visas. As a result, the terms “asylum seeker” and “claimant” are increasingly being used until refugee claims are accepted.

Some people (and we really do not how many) are not here legally; they lack proper documents or permission. Some of these people have entered the country using false documents, while others may have been smuggled in. Some in this category may have simply overstayed their tourist or work visas. In the United States, illegal immigration—especially from Mexico—is considered to be a serious problem. Some people in Europe and Australia have similar concerns



Fridtjof Nansen.

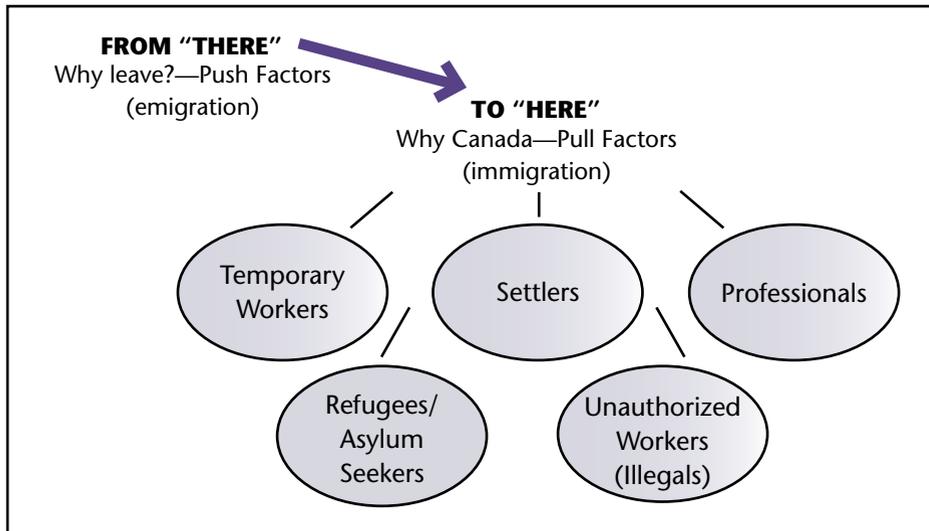
The Nansen Refugee Award, formerly known as the Nansen Medal, is given annually by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to individuals or groups in recognition of outstanding service to the cause of refugees. The award is named after Fridtjof Nansen, a famous Norwegian explorer, scientist and politician, who was the first High Commissioner for Refugees at the League of Nations, a predecessor of the UN.

The award was first given in 1954. Canada received the Medal in 1986, the only country to have received the award as a nation. It is an example often used to justify Canada's record as a welcoming country.

Does the story of the MS St. Louis justify Canada's award?

talk about it

Here is a look at the field of migration patterns and terms:



There is one area missing in the readings thus far: the role of government. With modern communications and other technology, it is impossible to just walk into most countries without being noticed and investigated. For a variety of reasons, governments are concerned about who gets in.

Take a look at the following fact from the 2006 Canadian Census:

↗ Between 2001 and 2006, Canada's foreign-born population increased by 13.6%. This was four times higher than the Canadian-born population, which grew by 3.3% during the same period.

If this is a long-term trend, then immigration will shape Canada's future.

The Role of Government

Under the Canadian Constitution, the Provinces share jurisdiction over immigration with the Federal Government, although federal legislation takes precedence. The *Immigration Act*, passed in 1976, provided for consultation with the Provinces, and created procedures for agreements between both levels of government. The Provinces are responsible for newcomers upon arrival, since they provide services to ease integration, such as education, health, welfare, social housing, etc. Quebec has the most comprehensive agreement with the Federal Government and it has immigration offices internationally to attract desired newcomers.

At the national level, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) was created in 1994 for several purposes:

- to link immigration services with citizenship registration
- to promote the unique ideals all Canadians share
- to help build a stronger Canada



The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, speaks at the League for Human Rights' international conference, "The *St. Louis* Era: Looking Back, Moving Forward", Toronto, June 2009.

In 2008, the Multiculturalism Program was moved from Canadian Heritage to CIC. The Minister is now called the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism.

The Minister in charge of immigration has had a variety of titles throughout Canada's history, such as Minister of the Interior (Sir Clifford Sifton 1896–1905), and Director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources (F.C. Blair under Prime Minister Mackenzie King in the 1930s).

talk about it

What is the significance of the current title of the Minister in charge of immigration policy?

In 2010, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration set out a vision to reflect its immigration policy. Its approach to immigration is one that:

- ↗ responds to the needs of communities in all parts of the country by creating opportunities for individuals to come to Canada to make an economic, social, cultural and civic contribution while realizing their full potential, with a view to becoming citizens
- ↗ supports global humanitarian efforts to assist people in need of protection.

Does this statement meet the standard for receiving the Nansen Medal?

Has Canada been welcoming to immigrants throughout its history?

What challenges do we face today and in the future to meet the ideals we set for ourselves?

talk about it

Look again at the title of this book, *Welcome to Canada?* and think about how you will answer the question in the title of this book as you move forward with your inquiries and research.

Read on to find out more.



De nouveaux Canadiens prêtent serment lors d'une remise de certificats de citoyenneté.



PART II

Introduction

Chapter 3

Pre-Confederation:

An inconsistent approach

Chapter 4

Post-1867:

Immigration as national policy

Chapter 5

Between the Wars:

The door closes



Part II

Introduction

THE first two chapters in Part Two introduce you to a number of case studies in an era that ended with the greatest influx of immigrants in our history. Does this mean that if the Nansen Medal were around during that time, Canada would “own it” like a gold medal in Olympic hockey? Then we will look at a period when Canada’s policy was less than welcoming, and many people were turned away.

In Chapter Three, you will explore three cases in the years before Canadian Confederation, when policy was officially controlled by Britain.

talk about it

Did the Colonies and their government share any influence on immigration policy?

In Chapter Four, you will explore examples of policy once Confederation put immigration policy under Canadian control.

talk about it

Can you identify any patterns that show why immigration and refugee policies were shaped as they were?

In Chapter Five, we look at Canada between World Wars I and II, return to the *St. Louis*, and try to answer the question raised in Chapter One:

talk about it

Why was Canada “missing in action” during this event?

Here are some persisting questions you should think about for the events and policies you will explore:

- ↗ **the direct and the underlying causes of the events in each case**
- ↗ how Canadians and their governments reacted to and shaped the events as they unfolded
- ↗ **whether they could have or should have acted differently**
- ↗ whether the case or event qualifies Canada and Canadians for a place in Canada's "Hall of Fame" or "Hall of Shame" in any museum of Canadian history

The reason these questions "persist" is that, throughout history, they always appear whenever there is a choice of what to do, or what not to do, when faced with a challenge.

As you examine each case and the history surrounding it, notice how complex the past can be.



The Delegates of the Provinces at the Quebec Confederation Conference, Quebec City, 1864.

the Thirteen Colonies (the future United States) who were looking for land to move north, since the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* prohibited settlement in the West. Groups of “foreign Protestants”, mostly German soldiers in British armies during the Seven Years War, were also encouraged to settle in previously-Catholic Acadia. There were other small groups of Scots, Irish and English migrating to the Atlantic shores of what would eventually become Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, but these movements of people were kept small by official British government policy.

One area of British policy was the practice of “transporting” criminals to prison colonies set up in such countries as Australia.

talk about it

Why do you think North America was not chosen as a destination for such convicts?

Case #1

The Coming of the Loyalists

The trickle north changed with the American Revolution and the coming of the Loyalists. During and following the war, which ended in 1783 with the triumph of the rebels or “patriots” (depending on whose side you were on), thousands of supporters of the British Crown moved north. If the word “refugee” had existed then, that is what these people would have been labelled.



Portrait of John Graves Simcoe by John Wycliffe Lowes Forster.

More than 50,000 (estimates vary greatly) came in two waves from the late 1770s through to the mid 1780s. Most of these people had left the former Thirteen Colonies with very few possessions, and appealed to the colonial governments in British North America for help. One wave of immigrants went to the Maritime colonies, which eventually became Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

The other wave went to the western parts of what was then Quebec and what would become Upper Canada and, much later, Ontario. Several thousands actually came seven to eight years after the second *Treaty of Paris*, which ended the war in 1783. The “late loyalists” came to escape what one settler termed the “Chaos, Taxes and Anarchy” of the new republic. Upper Canada’s first Lieutenant Governor, John Graves Simcoe, circulated a Proclamation throughout the Northern United States in 1792, offering free land to anyone who would swear allegiance to the King, move onto the land, improve it, and build a connecting road to a major thoroughfare.

Why do you think these “late Loyalists” came to Upper Canada?
Would they qualify as political refugees?

talk about it

The Loyalists were a diverse group. The overwhelming majority were White, but there were also more than 1,500 Black Loyalists who came in 1784 to the newly-formed New Brunswick colony. Additionally, in 1784, several thousand Aboriginal allies of Britain came north, most under the leadership of Joseph Brant.

As you read what happened to these groups of Loyalist refugees, how fairly do you think they were treated?

talk about it

British policy depended on which Loyalists went where. The thousands who went to Quebec were Protestants and English-speakers migrating into a French-speaking and Catholic area, and the good land along the St. Lawrence was already taken. As a result, this group was encouraged to settle in the “upper country” to the west of Montreal and along the shores of Lake Ontario. After a few years, this group demanded its own local government, and in 1791 the *Constitutional Act* created Upper Canada out of this western area.

Lots were drawn, usually for 100 acres (nearly 250 ha) per family, with the same amount or more for ex-soldiers in the war. The new owners then headed to their land to get busy clearing, erecting shelters and planting crops. Loyalist families often received tools and provisions, such as tents, kettles, tools, planting supplies, emergency food and even livestock, but the real compensation was land. Most people lived on the land and there were few opportunities for regular, well-paying work in the towns and small cities during this period.

Black Loyalists who were slaves in the former British colonies were promised freedom and land, including three years of provisions. Small town lots with 20 ha of farmland were one option, and most who applied got this eventually. The more attractive option was 80 ha of farmland, but fewer received this amount and much of the land was poor for farming.

Black Loyalists were discriminated against in other ways as well. While they waited to be granted their land in New Brunswick, they were forbidden to practice a trade, open a business, fish in Saint John Harbour, or vote for representation in New Brunswick’s first Legislative Assembly. This gave them only two options: working as labourers or starving.



“The Coming of the Loyalists, 1783”, by Henry Sandham.



Iroquois in native dress with rifles and traditional weapons, standing among teepees, ca. 1900.



This monument to Joseph Brant stands in Brantford, Ontario.

By 1790, many free African-Americans were so disheartened by their situation that they abandoned their land outside Saint John and elsewhere in the colony. Due to poor conditions and low pay, the work some of them found in the towns and cities was little better than the slavery they had escaped. The New Brunswick Government offered no help. While some struggled and petitioned for years, if not decades, for the land they were promised, many gave up and left. Around half the free African-Americans who had come as Loyalists emigrated to the British colony for emancipated slaves in Sierra Leone in West Africa.

The Iroquois, who had sided with the British during the American Revolution, were not even mentioned in the peace treaty ending the conflict, making them feel betrayed. In this case, the colonial Government stepped in since it wanted the support of the Iroquois in the event of another war with the Americans. A large group of Mohawk Six Nations led by Joseph Brant received a substantial tract of land on the Grand River, which came to include the present city of Brantford. A smaller group was given land near the Bay of Quinte. Both groups were also given provisions to compensate for war losses, as well as other buildings, such as a school with an allowance for a schoolmaster, and a church. The Brant group also gained a sawmill and a gristmill for its grain.

A New Century, A New Policy?

In the decades after the Loyalist migration, British policy up until 1815 was consumed with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. As a result, emigration was discouraged.

Yet, these conflicts, the development of industrialization and new approaches to agriculture caused a severe economic disruption after 1815, with farmers losing their land and going to the new industrial towns. Returning soldiers and economic adjustments to a changed Britain in peacetime resulted in labour unrest and the development of a new economic class of the urban poor. As a result, Britain offered assistance with passage to people it considered qualified to emigrate, including Irish Catholics, lowland Scots and ex-soldiers. “Shovelling our paupers” was one description of this change in policy. Also influencing this policy change was the concern that the massive immigration of Loyalists to what was Upper Canada had

created an “Americanized” colony—even after invasion from the United States of America had been successfully turned back in the War of 1812.

Still, emigration was not a mass movement. An effort to use emigration as a means to relieve poverty was rejected by the Government in the 1820s.

From then on, emigrants had to rely on their own efforts, sometimes arranging their own passage on ships, and sometimes employing contractors who would make the arrangements for a price. A 45-day trip got you to Quebec City. While the wealthy might have a cabin above deck, most were in “steerage”—the least costly lodgings aboard a ship. Life under the decks was crowded and often unsanitary, with no fresh air. Beds were rough boards, blankets served as curtains for a minimum of privacy, and a bucket served as a toilet.

If you traveled in these conditions, how would you feel? What would be the biggest danger?

talk about it

In the following decades, there were small and large migrations largely related to economic factors. These include the following:

↗ **the Red River Settlement beginning in 1812 by the Hudson’s Bay Company**

↗ specific contracts for workers in various projects, such as the building of the Rideau Canal linking rivers and lakes from Kingston to Ottawa

↗ **the migration of groups from the West Country of England and Southeastern Ireland to Newfoundland to develop its**

fisheries for the mother country, following the disruption of fishing in European waters during and after the Napoleonic wars

↗ immigration to Southwestern British Columbia in the 1850s as thousands—mostly from California and Oregon, with smaller groups from the Canadas, Britain, Europe and even China—pursue wealth following the discovery of gold in the Fraser River

As you explore the two cases that follow, consider if they are similar to, or different from, the patterns of settlement and immigration policy described above.

Case #2

The Underground Railroad

Slavery was practiced by all of the European colonial powers, and existed in those parts of North and South America in which Europeans settled. The slaves were brought from Africa to the Americas, which included Canada during its periods of French (1600–1760) and then British colonial rule (1760–1867). This forced migration replaced efforts by the colonial powers to enslave Aboriginal Canadians—a practice that may have begun in Newfoundland under the Portuguese in the early 1500s.



Harriet Tubman (far left), a heroine of the Underground Railroad, with other escaped slaves, ca. 1885.

The number of slaves in Canada (never as large as elsewhere due to the differences in agricultural practices) may have hit a peak in the 1780s, since some Loyalists brought their slaves with them. Interestingly, at this time there were small but growing movements in Britain and the northern colonies of what would become the United States to abolish the practice on moral grounds. In addition, the British used the promise of freedom as a strategy throughout its conflicts with the Americans, even though the promise was seldom kept.

In 1793, John Graves Simcoe, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, passed legislation to ban the importation of new slaves, although existing slaves remained in captivity.

In 1803, William Osgoode, Chief Justice of Lower Canada, ruled that slave importation was “not compatible” with British law. This brought Lower Canada in line with the situation in Upper Canada.

The actual trading of slaves was abolished in Britain and its colonies in 1807, although the practice of slavery itself would remain until 1833. In Canada, the last surviving former slave died in 1871 in Cornwall, Ontario.

During the War of 1812, several thousand runaway slaves came north to the Maritimes to be accepted as free citizens, but work opportunities and good farmland were difficult to obtain. Even so, African-American immigrants were treated differently from the White settlers. White immigrants received 100 acres (250 ha) of land, while Black settlers got 50 acres (125 ha) with a guarantee of possession for only three years. Nonetheless, limited economic opportunities and discrimination did not extinguish their pride and sense of accomplishment. One family account from 1818 described three armed White trespassers trying to take over their farm. The family chased them off, saying: “We are not in the United States, and we can now do as we like.”

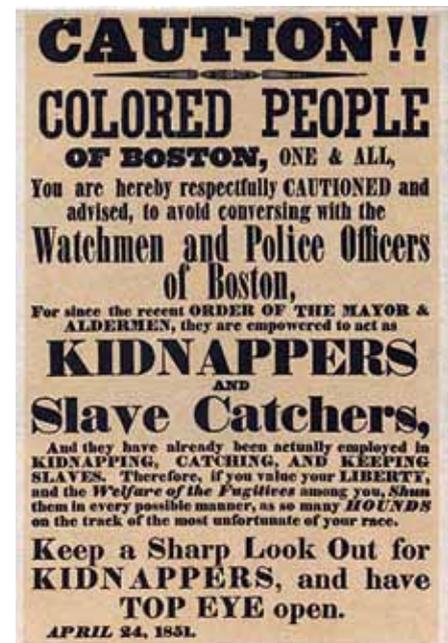
When you look at the welcome to Canada given to people of African descent from the 1600s to the 1830s, is it a line of steady progress towards freedom, or were there backward steps as well?

talk about it

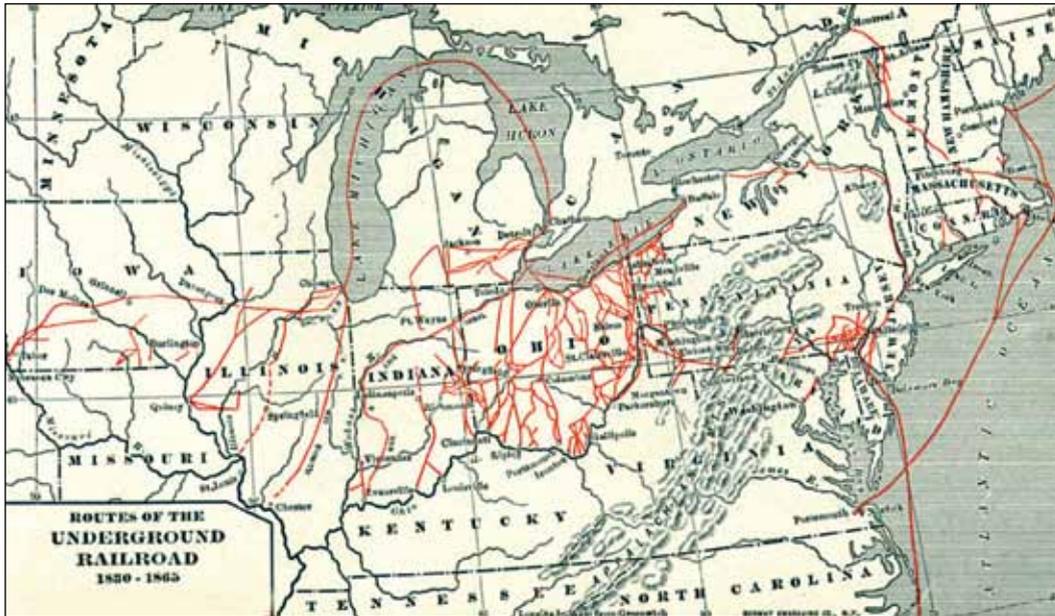
While importation of slaves from Africa was officially abolished in the United States in 1808, a year after the abolition of the slave trade in Britain, slavery continued in the US and Britain. Over the decades following the War of 1812, the US became increasingly divided between north and south. The southern states relied on agriculture, and the importance of cotton made slave labour more important to that economy. The northern states, some of which had abolished slavery altogether, became more industrialized and less dependent on slave labour. At the same time, the abolitionist movement that had been around for decades also grew in strength, increasingly viewing slavery as a moral issue.

By the 1860s, the conflict resulted in civil war, but before then the battles were political. A series of compromises in 1820 and 1850 kept the lid on the divisions, but did not heal them. Many slaves either rebelled openly with brutal consequences, or fled north to the Free States. In response, the southern states passed laws to hunt down and bring fugitive slaves back. In 1850, the *Fugitive Slave Law* was passed by the US Congress. It declared that slave owners had the right to reclaim their runaway slaves, and that government agents had to assist them, even if the fugitives had reached Free States. Abolitionists condemned it as the “Bloodhound Law” since dogs were used to track down runaways.

As a result, Canada was seen as a final destination for “passengers” on the Underground Railroad. This was not a real railroad; rather, it was a network that helped runaway slaves from the US seek asylum in Canada. Many of the refugees settled in Southern Ontario between Windsor and Toronto, as well as at other entry points along the border with the US.



A notice warning African-Americans in Boston about the dangers of slave catchers, 1831.



This map, published in 1896, shows some of the escape routes used by runaway slaves to reach Canada.

peoplestories

A famous anecdote describes how the Underground Railroad led to a diplomatic incident between Upper Canada and the United States.

Thornton Blackburn and his wife, Ruth, were former slaves from Louisville, Kentucky, who had escaped. In 1833, two years after settling in Detroit, Michigan, they were recaptured by slave hunters. The day before Thornton was to be returned to Kentucky, Detroit's African-American community rose up in a two-day riot during which the local sheriff was killed. It was the first race riot in Detroit, resulting in the first Riot Commission formed in the US. Thornton and Ruth managed to escape to Canada.

In June 1833, Michigan's Governor demanded their extradition, arguing that they were property "stolen" from their masters. The

Blackburn case was the first serious legal dispute between Canada and the US over the Underground Railroad. The Canadian courts defended the Blackburns, with Major General Sir John Colborne, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, refusing their extradition, noting that a person could not steal himself. This defence of the Blackburns set precedents for all fugitive slave cases.

The Blackburns eventually settled in Toronto. Ruth marked her new freedom by changing her name to Lucie. Thornton began a new business, designing, building and operating Toronto's first taxicab service, using horse-drawn carriages.

The Blackburns became prosperous and well-connected members of Toronto society.

The Irish Famine

Case #3

In the nineteenth century, migration of people from Europe to rebuild their lives in North America increased, even without the active encouragement of Britain or other European governments. The number of immigrants is hard to determine, since many of these people went to the United States after arriving in Lower Canada. By 1830, about 30,000 immigrants were arriving each year through the main port of entry, Quebec City, about two-thirds from Ireland. The numbers rose in the 1840s. Most newcomers arrived after spending many weeks on ships with no sanitation, at a time when cholera and smallpox epidemics ravaged the globe. The emigrant ships were often called “coffin ships” because of the spread of disease. Measures were urgently needed to help control the spread of infection, so the quarantine station at Grosse Île was established in 1832 in the St. Lawrence River, downstream from the City of Quebec. It remained operational until 1937.



A view of the quarantine station at Grosse Île, by Henri Delattre, 1850.

Cholera was a worldwide pandemic that killed millions during the 1800s until its cause and treatment were discovered; however, it was not the only disease ravaging new arrivals, as this table shows:

IMMIGRANTS	ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL	NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASES			
			CHOLERA	FEVER & DYSENTERY	SMALLPOX	OTHER
425,490	14,533	3,934	290	4,648	722	726

Table of Arrivals, Diseases and Deaths at Grosse Île 1825–47.

About a quarter of these 425,490 immigrants came in 1847 in the midst of the Irish Potato Famine.

From 1845–1852, a severe potato blight destroyed the main crop in Ireland, and since a third or more of the Irish population depended on their potato crop just to survive, there was massive starvation. This was exacerbated by the ravages of cholera, and the eviction of Irish tenants from their land by English landowners. Between 1845 and 1860, the population of Ireland dropped from over eight million to about two million. Many emigrated to North America, but their troubles did not end with the decision to leave Ireland.

Many immigrants who came to Canada went west to Upper Canada (Canada West after 1841). More went south to the United States. One of

these was John Ford, an Irish farmer whose wife, Mary, had died in Lower Canada. He set up a farm near Detroit. His grandson was Henry Ford of automobile fame. Ironically, Henry Ford was also known for his antisemitic writings, which alleged a world Jewish conspiracy.

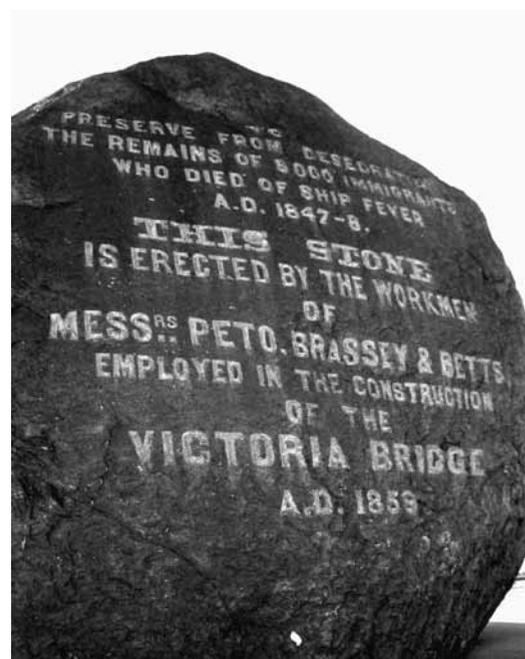
peoplestories

Particularly gripping is the story of the Willis family from Limerick recounted in a recent and very moving film, *Death or Canada*. On April 18, 1847, the Willis parents and their five children boarded the *Jessie* at Limerick with 482 other passengers. One son fell ill and had to be left in Limerick before the ship even sailed. The *Jessie* spent 56 days on the Atlantic Ocean; 26 people died during the trip, including the Willis' 18 year old son and their 10 year old daughter.

When the ship arrived at Grosse Île in June, the family spent 13 days in quarantine during which their 17 year old daughter, Mary, died.

The remaining three members of the Willis family landed at Quebec on June 26 and proceeded inland to Toronto on the way to Brantford, where the Brant Mohawk settlement had taken root more than half-a-century earlier. The family tragedy continues here with both the father and the remaining son dying of fever, leaving only the mother to carry on alone in Canada. Stories of immigration like this were common, even though many of the individuals' names have been lost.

Adapted from the Ireland Park Foundation.



This is a monument to victims of "ship fever" (typhus) erected in Montreal on the site where the remains of Irish immigrants who died in quarantine sheds were found.

The Toronto Story

In just six months, from May to October of 1847, over 38,000 emigrants fleeing the Irish Famine arrived in Toronto, a city of just 20,000 people. This led to what the Ireland Park Foundation has called “one of the greatest human tragedies in the history of the city.”

Media reports such as this one were sympathetic:



Toronto's waterfront in 1854, by Edwin Whitefield.

“The state of the emigrants daily becomes worse and worse. On Wednesday, the Steamer Sovereign brought up 1,000 souls. This is a horrible traffic in human blood . . . what the ultimate results are to be, we shudder to contemplate: but if, in December such an extent of utter want of food prevails, whence is sustenance to come, in May, June and July, and should the potato no longer be looked forward to, as a means of relief? This is a question that should come home to the heart of every man who has a heart.”

—*Toronto Mirror*, July 9, 1847

Such sentiments were widely felt in the city. This was surprising since Toronto had been a Protestant city and Irish Catholics were a recent addition to the population, and the two religious communities eyed each other with suspicion.

A pastoral letter from Bishop Michael Power, Toronto's first Catholic Bishop, was read out on May 13 from the pulpits of all the Catholic churches in and around Toronto. He urged congregations to be prepared for the influx of Irish fleeing the famine. Bishop Power had witnessed first-hand their plight during his visit to Dublin in January 1847.

Dominic J. Daly, the Provincial Secretary of what was now Canada West—the future Ontario—instructed the local municipality to build hospitals and sheds for the refugees, promising reimbursement from the province. Daly emphasized in his June 7 directives that municipalities would bear the burden of aid directed through their Boards of Health.



Ireland Park on the waterfront of Toronto features a memorial to victims of the Irish famine.

The Toronto Board of Health co-ordinated Toronto's immigrant relief efforts, including the building and supplying of "emigrant sheds", the provision of medical care to the sick, and inspection of newcomers at Reese's Wharf.

Healthy immigrants were allowed to travel on to Hamilton, rural areas around Toronto, London, and the neighbouring American states via Niagara. Those with family and friends who had already immigrated to Canada were able to re-establish ties with them. In local newspapers in Limerick, for example, letters had been published encouraging farmers to join the ranks of those who had already left.

Dealing with the sick was another matter. By late June, it was becoming clear to Toronto officials that those immigrants who were sick, or were suspected of being carriers of disease, were being passed on to Toronto from Montreal, Kingston or other towns.

peoplestories

Amongst the more famous of those who perished were Dr. George Grassett and Bishop Michael Power, who died after contracting typhus from infected persons as they administered health and comfort during their visits to the Emigrant Hospital and Sheds. Similarly, in November 1847, Edward McElderry, the immigration agent who had met all incoming Irish refugees at Reese's Wharf, died of the dreaded fever.

Along with the stories of courage and faith, there were also stories that cast the

powerful figures in Toronto in a less positive light. Local politicians and civic officials, assisted by their supporters, sometimes speculated on land and took bribes for helping their friends.



Another view of Ireland Park, Toronto.

Toronto residents and hotels were not allowed to house anyone suspected of carrying disease, and transportation companies were forbidden to bring them into the city.

Toronto's Board of Health had a two-fold mission: to protect residents from the spread of disease and to look after newcomers who had fallen ill. Constable John B. Townsend, the Board's Clerk, issued explicit instructions: only emigrants "in the case of sickness . . . or special cases as may be sanctioned by the Board of Health" were to be allowed into the sheds. In June, every day saw the arrival of hundreds more immigrants, putting increasing pressure on the Board of Health to care for the sick and find funding for medicine, beds and bigger premises. By the end of 1847, 1,100 migrants had died. They were buried in Toronto, either in allotted plots in St. James Anglican Cathedral, or in the St. Paul's Roman Catholic Parish graveyard.

As recounted by the Ireland Park Foundation, in August, a hearse being driven by an employee of Thomas Ryan, the Catholic undertaker, broke down *en route* to St. Paul's Cemetery. As a result, a coffin fell off the wagon in the middle of King Street and broke open. Onlookers were shocked to see two bodies in a coffin built for one!

There had been very precise regulations on the burial of the dead. Bodies from the "dead house" at the Emigrant Hospital were each to have their own coffin. Thomas Ryan had been given the contract for burying those who were Catholic, while H. B. Williams was to take care of Protestants and Anglicans.

Was Ryan taking in a little extra money since he had to pay per coffin at St. Paul's? Or was he being ripped off by hospital staff trying to save money by deliberately ordering too few coffins?

talk about it

Whatever the case, we will never know because charges against Ryan or the hospital staff were not substantiated, and those who were implicated were never charged.

While Toronto hosted thousands of Irish emigrants, most went elsewhere for other parts, so the effect on the city's population was less than expected at the time. The tragedy added to Protestant prejudices; thus, for decades, the Irish came to be viewed as lazy, drunken, and prone to fighting, disease and anything else considered unsavoury.

A decade later, *The Globe* expressed this view popular among English Protestants:

“Irish beggars are to be met everywhere, and they are as ignorant and vicious as they are poor. They are lazy, improvident, and unthankful; they fill our poorhouses and our prisons, and are as brutish in their superstition as Hindoos [sic].”

In 1867, a decade later, Canada became a country with its own government, which was now responsible for welcoming newcomers.

talk about it

What patterns have you seen so far in the events and cases examined in this chapter?

Which of the groups mentioned would qualify as refugees today? Why or why not?

Do you think the patterns highlighted so far will change once Canada has full control over its immigration policy?

In the next chapter, we look at the early history of the Canadian Government’s immigration policies and practices.

Chapter 4



Post-1867: Immigration as national policy

Now that welcoming newcomers is solely the responsibility of the Canadian Government, and not based on directives from France or Britain, how will we do? As you read the events of this chapter, are there major changes, or are the patterns more or less as they were in the previous chapter?

“Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose” (“The more things change, the more they stay the same”) is a French saying. What does it mean and does it apply to Canada after 1867?

talk about it

Confederation came in 1867, just after the American Civil War. Tensions were high between the Americans and the Canadians in the 1860s. Both groups remembered the War of 1812 and other disputes in North America. Beginning in 1862, Canadians needed what eventually became the passport, an official government document identifying them, before they were granted entry to the United States. In 1871, British Columbia became a province within Canada, and the land between British Columbia and Ontario was purchased from the Hudson’s Bay Company. Now, in addition to thinking about immigration from Europe across the Atlantic, there was the new interest in the West Coast and the Prairies along what became known as the “undefended border”.

The Government had very strict limits on extraditing (sending back) Americans living in Canada, a policy that evolved at the time of the Underground Railroad. Throughout modern history, American governments have at various times been very unhappy with these limits. In Canada’s early days, for example, Montreal had been labelled as a hub of crime by American newspapers, which called for greater restrictions on traffic from Canada, as well as more effort to return criminals who—they claimed—had fled the US for haven in Canada.



Sitting Bull, ca. 1885.

Americans also had concerns with Aboriginals who felt free to cross the border. The Sioux living in the American states and territories near the Canadian border had been trading with British and Canadian traders since 1767, and had sided with them during the American Revolution and the War of 1812, in order to protect trading interests.

In 1876, after their victory in the Battle of Little Big Horn, Sitting Bull and the Sioux crossed into Canada. The battle had been sparked by the failure of the US Government to keep miners out of the Sioux reservation. With soldiers close behind, the Sioux headed for the Wood Mountain area in what is now Southern Saskatchewan.

Inspector James M. Walsh and a small group from the North West Mounted Police were waiting for them. According to the terms of the agreement that was forged between them, the Sioux could stay on the condition that they would obey the law and not stir up trouble south of the border. Sitting Bull told Inspector Walsh he was tired of fighting and only wanted peace. He promised that the Sioux would obey the laws of the “Great White Mother” (Queen Victoria of Britain).

The Sioux stayed until 1881 when they returned to the US, since food was scarce in the harsh Canadian winters, causing starvation. Once Sitting Bull was guaranteed safe passage back to the US, he and his followers left to join his American counterparts who had settled into life on the reservations.

A National Policy

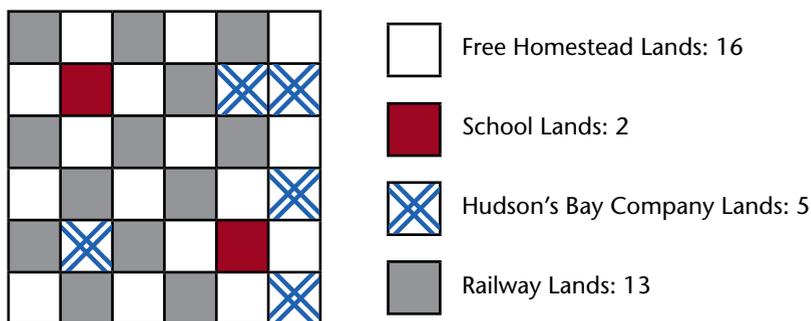
From the beginning, the new Government of Sir John A. Macdonald wanted to increase immigration in accordance with the goals of its National Policy. Without settlers, it could not guarantee tariff protection for Canadian manufacturing, or the economic benefits of its planned national railroad. According to the Government, all of these features were needed to ensure Canadian progress and prosperity. Immigration at this time was handled by the Department of Agriculture. The first *Immigration Act* in 1869 looked to the past and regulated the numbers of immigrants on passenger ships, preventing people with illnesses—both physical and mental—along with

the blind, the deaf and anyone physically incapable of working, from entering Canada. Since the early days of Canadian immigration policy, in fact, there have been restrictions which have denied or limited access to people who are sick or disabled.

What past events was the 1869 Immigration Act trying to prevent? Are such restrictions still in place today?

talk about it

After buying land from the Hudson’s Bay Company, the new Dominion Government surveyed the land and organized it into townships. The following diagram depicts a typical township, surveyed and plotted out. It makes up 36 square miles (92km²):



closerlook

As you look at how the land was organized inside this typical township, what do you notice? What is the reason for this arrangement?

A typical Hudson’s Bay Company township plan.

The land was surveyed and the railroad was built, but settlers were slow to follow. There were a few small groups of settlers who stayed in Canada, but many went south to the United States where land was available.

A group of several thousand came from Iceland due to harsh economic conditions, in order to establish a colony in Manitoba in the 1870s and 1880s around what is today Gimli and Riverton. New Iceland was autonomous, with its own Constitution. New Icelanders voted to join the Province once it had been enlarged to include the District of Keewatin. Later on, different groups of Icelanders built settlements across the Prairies and in British Columbia. Many moved to Winnipeg, hoping to enter trades and professions. Gimli is to this day the centre of Icelandic culture in Canada. In 1889, it began hosting annual Icelandic festivals.

The Mennonites, who practiced a pacifist form of Protestantism, first settled in Southern Ontario in the Niagara and Waterloo areas after the American Revolution. A century later, 7,000 left persecution in Russia to settle in Southern Manitoba with the promise of land, cultural and educational autonomy, and exemption from military service. The need for settlement and productive farming in the empty Prairies outweighed concerns about their political or religious views.

Still, these were exceptions to the slow growth of settlements. A general global economic downturn, disputes with Aboriginals and Métis leading to the Riel Rebellion of 1885, and the availability of land in the United States with its better climate and more advanced development of railroads, roads, and settlements, made the US the destination of choice for European immigrants. In fact, about 900,000 French-speaking Canadians, mostly from Quebec, left for economic opportunities in New England.

talk about it

Imagine if they had stayed, or had gone to the new western lands. How might this have changed Canada?

The Laurier Era and the “Golden Age” of Immigration

During the Laurier Era, the pro-immigration policy first attempted by the Macdonald Government continued, but with better results. The population grew from about 5.4 million in 1901 to over 7.2 million in 1911 (a 34% increase) and 8.8 million (a further 22% increase) in 1921. Almost half went to the Prairies and about 40% to Ontario and Quebec. It is hard to accurately trace the movement of people since much of the Canada-US border was open and people could walk across it. Thousands of migrants at this time were seasonal workers who would plant, harvest and build in Western Canada during part of the year, and shift southward with the seasons. In Western Canada, customs gates, passports and security checks came along later with the availability of technology.



Sir Clifford Sifton, 1910.

There were a number of reasons why the policy launched during Macdonald’s term was more successful under Sir Wilfred Laurier. Rising grain prices and lower ocean freight rates made farming profitable, and ships full of grain sailing to Europe would return with newcomers. Good land in the US had been allocated for the most part, so it was easier to keep immigrants in Canada and to fulfill the vision of Sir Clifford Sifton, the new Minister of the Interior and

Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, now in charge of immigration. Born in Ontario, but raised in the Prairies, he saw first-hand the potential for settling the West. He demonstrated considerable skill in implementing Macdonald's policy—now blessed by more favourable conditions. Among other things, he sent teams of recruiting agents to the United States, Britain and Europe. Advertisements and lectures about the opportunities available in Canada's West were used to attract newcomers.

Perhaps even more important than the numbers of newcomers was their changing ethnicity. While the British and Americans together made up the majority, there was a major effort to attract farmers, especially from Eastern Europe. Many from Britain were not suited to farming or to coping with Canada's harsh winters, and some returned home. There were even some who were so unsuited to life in Canada that a few signs reading "No Englishmen Need Apply" appeared in Prairie towns. Still, most fit easily into existing society.

Sir Clifford Sifton viewed immigration through a different lens. He saw it as a "national enterprise", like the construction of the transcontinental railway. Hoping to attract farmers, his department established immigration offices in the United States, Britain and in several central European countries.

This increasingly welcoming attitude to a greater variety of newcomers has contributed to Canada's positive reputation, especially among Canadians. Your textbook and other textbooks discuss the thousands of different people coming from Europe. Most still went to the United States, but Canada was now retaining many new arrivals. For over a decade, millions of pamphlets advertising Canada in more than a dozen languages were sent to Europe. Sifton went head-to-head with his critics, promoting the fact that the "stalwart peasants in sheep-skin coats" were succeeding in turning even the most difficult areas of the West into productive farms.

However, the story does not end here.



A Galician family at an immigration shed in Quebec, date unknown.

The Other Side of Policy

Sir Clifford Sifton's overriding priority was to build "a nation of good farmers", not a country of city dwellers. He knew there were too many urban workers and too few jobs. He was also aware of the development of slums and urban poverty in Winnipeg and also in the cities of Eastern Canada and the United States.

closerlook

This was printed by *The Canadian Courier*, April 30, 1910. If you look carefully at the descriptions under each type of potential immigrant, what do you notice?

Are these stereotypes? Which "types" of immigrants seem to be favoured?

What potential sources of immigration common today are missing from this poster? Why?



The text reads in the original:

SOME TYPES OF THE NEW-COMERS

Snapshot Poses of the Polyglot Peoples who are helping to make a New Nation
From photographs taken at Quebec and Halifax

Top row (L-R):

- English:** Just one of many Types.
- Scotch:** The kind that covers the Earth.
- German:** In Ontario, Thousands; in the West, Tens of Thousands.
- Russian:** An honest plodder, good on the Land.
- Scandinavian:** Used to come mainly from Minnesota.
- Icelander:** Thousands of these sturdy people in Manitoba.

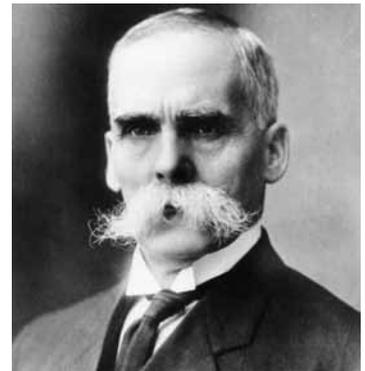
Bottom row (L-R):

- United States:** Excellent farmers.
- Bukowinian:** From Central Europe. Hates borrowing money.
- Hungarian:** Best of physique and a good worker.
- Icelander:** She'll learn English in a month.
- Italian:** Find him in the Construction Camps.
- Russian Jew:** Not anxious to farm—a dweller in cities.

Like many North Americans from British backgrounds, Sifton shared a worldview that ranked people according to their race and religion. These rankings influenced his policies and those of his colleagues. At the top were people like himself—WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Most Americans and many from Scandinavia, Germany, France and other parts of Western Europe belonged to this “club”. Next in line were people from Eastern Europe, especially if they were farmers. As a result, Ukrainians, Doukhobors and other groups from the Austrian and Russian Empires were encouraged to leave oppressive political, economic and religious circumstances. Interestingly, Sifton discouraged the urban English whom he thought could not adjust to farming life. Instead, the immigration agents sought those they felt would be more likely to endure hardships and remain on the farms. Next came Southern Europeans such as Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese and Greeks. All other peoples were considered to be at the bottom of the hierarchy of humanity and, thus, his agents discouraged the immigration of Jews, Asians and people of African descent.

Sifton’s policies were criticized for weakening the “British character” of the nation. Many of these new immigrant groups, with their different languages, customs and habits of dress, seemed unwilling or slow to conform to British-Canadian norms. One of the responses to the appearance of large non-British populations on the Prairies was a rising nativism—an attitude that home-grown Canadians were superior to newcomers.

When Frank Oliver replaced Sir Clifford Sifton as Minister in 1905, he had to respond to this growing backlash against “alien” immigrants. He agreed with much of the criticism of Canada’s immigration policy, leading to significant changes. He considered settling the West not “merely a question of filling that country with people who will produce wheat and buy manufactured goods”, but also the “building up of a Canadian nationality so that our children may form one of the great civilized nations of the world.” He supported the negative view that immigration could “deteriorate rather than elevate the conditions of our people.”



Frank Oliver, 1933.

His department therefore changed immigration policies in an attempt to “safeguard” society from what was presented as the threat of foreign cultures. Additional immigration agents were sent to Britain. They were offered higher bonuses if they could sign up “preferred” immigrants. Take a look at the numbers and decide if the new policy was successful.

In 1906, there were only 86,796 emigrants from Britain, but by 1914, this number had increased to 142,622.

Climate was often used as a reason to keep people out of Canada's West. It was presented as a racial issue at that time, and only British and Western Europeans were considered capable of prospering in Canada's climate. It was cited as the main reason for discouraging or refusing applications made by African-Americans. The claim was that the harsh Canadian winters were potentially fatal to those races used to a warmer climate. Between 1901 and 1911, therefore, less than 1,500 African-American applicants were accepted.

New legislation in 1906 allowed the Government to deport immigrants it did not want, including those with serious sicknesses. A three-year probation period was created under the 1910 *Immigration Act*, allowing for any immigrant who committed a crime during that timeframe to be deported.

With Canada in the midst of a minor economic recession, a new measure required all immigrants to possess at least \$25 CDN upon entry to Canada. This was to prove that they were not destitute.

talk about it

This change in policy received little attention from the media at the time. What does this lack of attention tell you about the attitudes of many Canadians towards the newcomers?

closerlook

What does this picture tell you?



Damage caused by the Asiatic Riots in Vancouver, BC, 1907.

Asian Immigration and the West Coast

Chinese, Japanese and South Asian immigrants had been considered undesirable since the Gold Rush days in British Columbia in the 1850s. Even though Canada brought in Chinese labour for railroad building, these workers were not welcome to stay once the job was done since they were now considered a threat to existing White workers. The United States had in effect a complete restriction on Chinese migrants, but the Government of Canada went about this in an indirect way. It passed the *Chinese Immigration Act* in 1885, imposing a \$50 CDN tax that captains of ships bringing Chinese immigrants to Canada had to collect before departure. This was later referred to as a “head tax”. The Laurier Government increased the head tax on Chinese immigrants, from \$50 in 1885, to \$100 in 1900, and to \$500 in 1903, a tenfold jump in just eighteen years.

During this time, tensions increased in West Coast communities. Labour leaders and workers first formed the Anti-Asiatic Exclusion League in San Francisco in 1905, calling for job protection for natural-born Americans. Branches spread up the coast and into British Columbia. It was this group that started a rampage by a mob of Whites in Vancouver, encouraging the violence that went on for several days in September 1907. The mob first went to Chinatown and beat up local residents. Then they moved on to Japantown, which at the time was concentrated around Powell Street. The riots resulted in many injuries and extensive property damage.

A different approach was used to limit Japanese immigration, in the form of a “gentlemen’s agreement” with Britain’s ally, Japan.

A gentleman’s agreement is something agreed to with a handshake. It is sometimes done in secret, without a paper trail.

talk about it

Why might some people, organizations or governments make this kind of agreement?

There were fewer immigrants from South Asia, including what was then the British colonies in India, now known as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. According to the 1900 Census, over 2,000 Indians, mostly from the Punjab, had made Canada their home. The number was not high relative to the total population at the time, but it was enough to unnerve politicians and some members of the public.



Head Tax certificate issued to Head Tax payer Lee Shing Dok, April 23, 1913.

Fear over losing jobs to these immigrants led British Columbia to pass laws to discourage what was referred to as the “brown invasion”. Now applicants needed at least \$200 (the equivalent of approximately \$4,000 in 2010) to enter the province. An act passed in 1908, called the *Continuous Passage Act*, required immigrants from India to travel to Canada in one uninterrupted journey. Since the trip was too long for ocean steamers of the day, these immigrants were prevented from landing in Canada legally.

British Columbia imposed other discriminatory measures on Indians as well. Legislation in 1907 denied them the vote, disallowed them from running for public office or serving on juries, and did not permit them to become accountants, lawyers or pharmacists. These measures also targeted Chinese and Japanese immigrants.

It was the continuous journey policy that South Asians challenged in May 1914 with the voyage of the *Komagata Maru*. Their challenge was unsuccessful: they were refused entry.



Sikh passengers on the *Komagata Maru*, Vancouver, May 1914.

As we learn from the *Komagata Maru* Heritage Foundation, in 1914, a wealthy Sikh living in the British colony of Hong Kong, Gurdit Singh, tested the continuous journey policy. His plan was to send a boatload of Indians to Canada aboard the *Komagata Maru*, a Japanese ship that had been adapted to hold passengers instead of cargo. The new arrivals would have been in much better health than many who came from Europe across the Atlantic during the 1800s. Right until the ship was scheduled to sail, tickets were still being sold. On the day of departure, Singh was arrested by the police for selling tickets for an illegal voyage. The ship was not allowed to leave, but was placed under police guard.

Gurdit Singh had some important connections, including the Governor of Hong Kong. On March 24, 1914, the Governor ordered his release and gave the boat permission to sail to Canada on April 4 with 150 Sikhs on board. The *Komagata Maru* picked up more prospective immigrants on the way in Shanghai, China, and in Moji and Yokohama, Japan.

When the *Komagata Maru* arrived in Shanghai, the German media first got wind of the fact that the ship was departing on April 14, bound for Vancouver with “400 Indians on board”. The news spread fast. In Vancouver, despite the fact that the vast majority of the passengers were Sikh, headlines in *The Province* declared “Boat Loads of Hindus on Way to Vancouver” and “Hindu Invasion of Canada”.

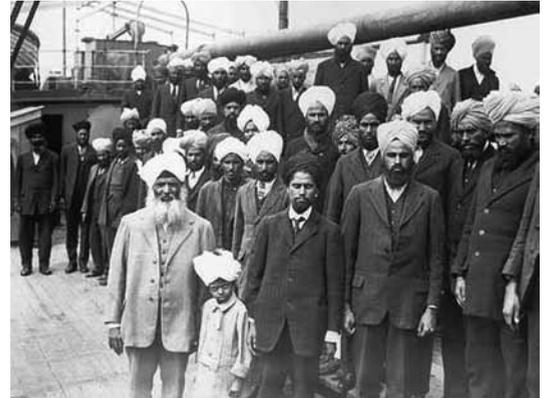
The authorities stood firm, stating that Hindus would never be allowed to land in Canada. Meanwhile, the Indian community prepared for the ship’s arrival, holding meetings, and collecting money and provisions for the passengers. The community also stood firm in a united front to counter opposition in Canada to the *Komagata Maru*.

On May 23, 1914, the ship sailed into Burrard Inlet, Vancouver’s main port area. The Canadian authorities and members of the local Indian community were both waiting. The authorities were determined to send the ship back to Hong Kong, while the Indian community had organized lawyers and prepared for the passengers’ arrival.

The Canadian authorities refused to let the passengers leave the ship, since, they claimed, it had not arrived directly via continuous passage. In fact, the passengers had circumvented laws deliberately passed to exclude them. Also, most passengers did not have the \$200 required to enter the province.

The passengers on board the *Komagata Maru*, together with the existing Indian community in British Columbia, were locked in a legal battle with the authorities. On July 23, 1914, the *Komagata Maru* was forced to sail back to Hong Kong. Only 24 passengers had been allowed into Canada.

Less than two weeks later, World War I began. It was meant to be the “war to end all wars”, but, as you know, wars did not end in 1918. Neither did the policy denying hopeful immigrants a chance to settle in Canada.



When the *Komagata Maru* docked in Vancouver, passengers were not allowed to leave the ship.

closerlook

Should we apologize
for other acts of
discrimination?
Have we?



DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

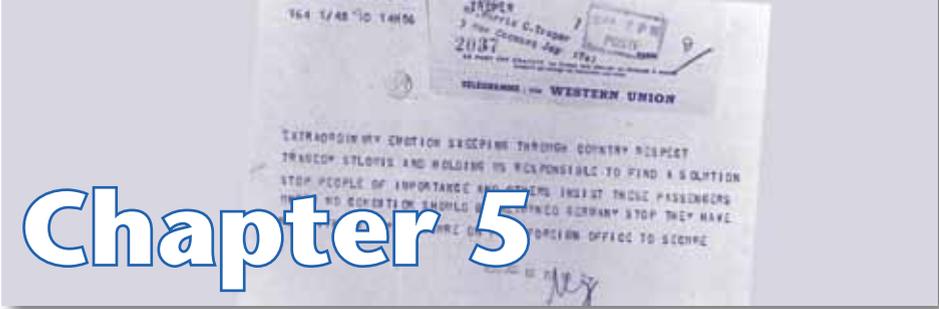
2008 Legislative Session:
4th Session, 38th Parliament, Friday, May 23, 2008

B.C. Government, Motion No. 62—Motion of Apology

KOMAGATA MARU: MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

“Be it resolved that this Legislature apologizes for the events of May 23, 1914, when 376 passengers of the Komagata Maru, stationed off Vancouver harbour, were denied entry by Canada. The House deeply regrets that the passengers who sought refuge in our country and our province, were turned away without benefit of the fair and impartial treatment befitting a society where people of all cultures are welcomed and accepted.”

The next chapter will show how immigration policy worked between the wars. You can decide whether we should be proud or ashamed of Canada’s record.



Chapter 5

Between the Wars: The door closes

During the Laurier Era, Canada was becoming more diverse, with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds finding a home here. This trend had been encouraged by Sir Clifford Sifton.

Years later, Sir William Cornelius Van Horne, the builder of the Canadian Pacific Railway, expressed his positive view of the benefits of immigration:

“What we want is population. Labour is required from the Arctic to Patagonia, throughout North and South America, but the governments of other lands are not such idiots as we are in the matter of restricting immigration. Let them all come in. There is work for all. Every two or three men that come to Canada and do a day’s work create new work for someone else to do.”

—*Montreal Star*, July 27, 1906

However, as we already saw, such diversity had limits, even in the relatively empty lands of the West where settlers were needed. People of Western European culture and tradition were still by far the majority in Canada, and in North America in general.

Examine the following quotes and take an historical perspective. How did these leaders view immigration? How did the times in which they lived influence their views?

talk about it

Sir John A. Macdonald, speaking in 1890 about the immigration of people from Slavic and Southern European countries to the United States:

“It is a great country, but it will have its vicissitudes and revolutions. Look at the mass of foreign ignorance and vice which has flooded that country with socialism, atheism and all other isms.”

—quoted in Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners*

Sir Clifford Sifton in 1901:

“Our desire is to promote the immigration of farmers and farm labourers. We have not been disposed to exclude foreigners of any nationality who seemed likely to become successful agriculturalists.

“It is admitted that additions to the population of our cities and towns by immigration [are] undesirable from every standpoint and such additions do not in any way whatever contribute to the object which is constantly kept in view by the Government of Canada in encouraging immigration for the development of natural resources and the increase in production of wealth from these resources . . .”

—a letter to Wilfrid Laurier, April 15, 1901

The *Missionary Outlook*, a Protestant Methodist publication, in 1908:

“If from this North American continent is to come a superior race, a race to be specially used by God in the carrying on of His work, what is our duty to those who are now our fellow-citizens? Many of them come to us as nominal Christians, that is, they owe allegiance to the Greek or Roman Catholic churches but their moral standards and ideals are far below those of the Christian citizens of the Dominion [. . .] It is our duty to meet them with an open Bible, and to instil into their minds the principles and ideals of Anglo-Saxon Civilization.”

—*Missionary Outlook*, June 1908

William Lyon Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, who later became Prime Minister during the inter-war years and again during World War II:

“That Canada should desire to restrict immigration from the Orient is regarded as natural, that Canada should remain a white man’s country is believed to be not only desirable for economic and social reasons but highly necessary on political and national grounds.”

—*Report on Immigration to Canada from the Orient and from India in particular*, 1906

J. S. Woodsworth was a Protestant clergyman, who later became leader of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation Party (CCF), a forerunner of the NDP. In 1909, he wrote:

“We need more of our blood to assist us to maintain in Canada our British traditions and to mould the incoming armies of foreigners into loyal British subjects.”

—J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within our Gates*, 1909

At a time when “foreigners” were considered not just different, but inferior, we have to ask why Canada admitted so many of them. Canada needed more people to build up the country, settle the Prairies and work on farms, in factories and underground in the mines but, over time, racism overcame economic self interest in the public eye. There was a growing distrust of people who spoke different languages, and concern that they would never fit in. In English Canada, the focus of discontent was concern that immigrants were taking jobs away from the Canadian-born, which could cause social tensions. In Quebec, there was the additional fear that the growing number of newcomers might upset the *status quo* in favour of non-francophones.

There was a virtual halt to immigration to Canada from Europe once World War I broke out in 1914. Potential immigrants were involved in the war effort in their home countries. It also became too difficult and too dangerous for them to attempt an Atlantic crossing while war was being waged.

Immigration from Germany, Austria, Hungary and the Ukraine, countries with which Canada was at war, was put on hold. Under the *War Measures Act* of 1914, immigrants from these countries living in Canada were classed as “enemy aliens”. Restrictions targeting them included having to register with the Government and carry ID cards.



Ukrainians and others were interned as enemy aliens during the First World War.

Thousands of “enemy aliens” were confined to internment camps, or were deported from Canada. There was only a move to start allowing them to leave the camps when shortages in the labour force became more marked towards the end of the war. War veteran groups resented this method of solving Canada’s labour shortage because they were afraid soldiers returning home would not be able to get these jobs back.

Those considered “enemy aliens” faced other discrimination as well. The *Wartime Elections Act* of 1917, introduced under the Conservative Government of Robert Borden, disenfranchised (took away the right to vote from) any “enemy alien” who had only been naturalized in Canada after 1902. Women were also given the right to vote if their husbands, sons or brothers were fighting overseas.

At the end of the war, some immigrants were dismissed from their jobs, which were given to returning soldiers.



Signs like this were common in Canada in the first half of the twentieth century.

There were, as always, some exceptions to this picture of prejudice in Canada. Hutterites from South Dakota, who were subject to prejudice because they spoke German and were pacifist, looked north to Canada for help. In 1917, the Government allowed the immigration of about 4,000 to Alberta under an Order-in-Council issued in 1899 that had originally been intended for Doukhobors.

However, antisemitism remained a common theme, and this was to have a significant effect on the formation of the Government’s policy towards the entry of Jewish applicants.

talk about it

Now look at the following testimony by Joan O'Callaghan. What conclusions can you draw?

peoplestories



Joan O'Callaghan tells the story of her family's integration in Canadian society.

My parents immigrated to Canada in 1939 as refugees from a Europe in which there was no longer any place for Jews. They were among the few thousand allowed into the country by the Mackenzie King Government, as documented in the book *None Is Too Many* by Professors

Irving Abella and Harold Troper. My parents met in Toronto and married in 1945.

Both families were allowed to enter Canada on farming permits. The Canadian Government was eager to acquire newcomers who could work the land. However, my parents were not conventional farmers. They had been estate-owners in their respective home countries of Austria, and what is now the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia). This means they did not personally grow and harvest crops or care for the animals, but relegated these tasks to their employees. However, my mother's family had no difficulty entering the country and settled on a farm near Oshawa.

Since my father had applied to enter Canada on a farming permit, the Canadian official onsite in Czechoslovakia reasoned that his hands must therefore be rough and callused. He asked my father to hold out his

hands for inspection. There were no calluses or roughness. How could he be a farmer? My father protested; he had attended an agricultural college and showed the official his various certificates and diplomas. The immigration officer responded, "That's not what we mean when we say we want farmers. What we are really looking for are men with strong backs and weak minds to go out and clear the bush." My father invited the official to visit the estate at Cestice and see the operation for himself. The visit was a success and my father was allowed to come to Canada. In the course of a few short years, he and his first cousin managed to introduce many farming innovations to Ontario. His cousin is now honoured in the University of Guelph's Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Life was not easy for the new immigrants. My father spoke no English when he arrived. He had in his pocket the grand sum of \$5 (the equivalent of approximately \$76 in 2010), and aging parents to care for. He began working in the town of Malton, Ontario, where the first airport was under construction. He hauled rocks at the site for \$1 per day. Later, he enrolled in night courses at the Brantford Collegiate Institute in Brantford, Ontario, where he learned drafting. He then worked at Koehring-Waterous in Brantford as a draftsman.

He, his parents and some cousins had to report to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) on a regular basis, and when my parents married, they were not allowed to leave Canada for their honeymoon. They traveled instead to Ottawa and Montreal.

My father's brother had not been as lucky as him. He, his wife and their 12-year-old daughter were imprisoned at Auschwitz, where his wife and daughter perished. After the war, my father and grandparents wrote to him through a cousin who lived in New York City. An RCMP officer (Mountie) visited the farm to inform my father and his parents that this practice was illegal, and they could no longer send letters this way. In fact, the RCMP had been reading the correspondence all along. However, since the official arrived in an unmarked car, so as not to arouse the curiosity of the neighbours, and was very polite, my father retained a lot of respect for the RCMP afterwards.

The Mounties were in the habit of making frequent stops at the farm. This likely had nothing to do with checking up on the newcomers with the strange accents. The women of the house, led by my grandmother, were superb cooks and bakers, and the Mounties learned quickly that they could expect to be offered a cup of coffee and freshly baked *kuchen* (coffee cake), so they found reasons to drop by with increasing regularity.

Not all the stories had a happy ending. My father assembled a group of farmers and manufacturers to apply for admission to Canada. They had a plan whereby they would all help each other. During the summer months, they would work on the farms, and in the off-season, they would help out in the factories with manufacturing concerns. Many of the manufacturers were producing goods not yet known in Canada. The word came back that the farmers could come, but the manufacturers were excluded.

Antisemitism Between the Wars

Antisemitism goes back long before Confederation to the earliest arrivals to Canada. Anti-Jewish hatred had deep roots in French and English history, based primarily on the teachings of Christianity in which the Jews were accused of killing Christ. These beliefs were brought over from Europe to the New World. The Jews were considered among the “undesirables” during the Laurier Era and beyond. The Canada of the Laurier Era was to be a country of farmers and homesteaders. Jews could not become successful agriculturalists, the argument ran. Officials and their supporters saw Jews as city people in a country that wished to build up its rural base.

For Canadian Jews in the 1920s and 1930s, quotas and restrictions were a way of life. Jews faced discrimination in many areas: admission to universities and professional schools, medical or nursing positions, judicial appointments, and employment in the legal profession, industry, education, engineering or architecture.

Here is a description from a noted book about the history of the 1930s:

“None of [Winnipeg’s] chartered banks, trust companies, or insurance companies would knowingly hire a Jew, and anyone with a Ukrainian or Polish name had almost no chance of employment except rough manual labour. The oil companies, banks, mortgage companies, financial and stock brokers, and most retail and mercantile companies except the Hudson’s Bay Company, discriminated against all non-Anglo-Saxons . . .

“Ours was a society with a well-defined pecking order of prejudice. On the top were the race-proud Anglo-Saxons, who were prejudiced against everybody else. On the bottom were the Jews, against whom everybody discriminated. In between were the Slavs and Germans. By the mid-thirties the Germans had become deeply infected with Hitler’s position and discriminated against Ukrainians, Poles and Jews.”

—James H. Gray, *The Winter Years*

There were other restrictions preventing certain properties from being sold to Jews. In addition, Jews were refused access to clubs, golf courses, hotels, cottage getaways and beaches. From coast to coast, signs at these establishments displayed messages such as “No Jews or Dogs Allowed” or “Christians Only”.

In Quebec, a campaign against Jewish businesses united both intellectuals and clergy, both Catholic newspapers and the mainstream press. This combined effort created the “Achat Chez Nous” (“Buy From Us”) movement, in which Church and nationalist leaders tried to force Jews to leave the province by boycotting all Jewish businesses. Some school boards would not hire Jews as teachers.

At a time when this anti-Jewish campaign was at its height, Jews made up only about 1% of Quebec’s population.

In the 1930s, the “Jewish question” morphed into the “refugee question”, now an issue throughout Western Europe, Britain and the Americas. The end of the Prussian, Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires had already led to massive dislocation of many thousands, given that the new nation states persecuted their own minorities. The Nazis and their supporters added to these numbers as they discriminated first against Germans who practiced Judaism, and later against other groups.

The dimensions of the problem were well-known in Canada. The 1937 *Annual Report on Immigration* stated: “There is at present a great pressure at our doors for the admission of many thousands of distressed peoples of Europe.”

Calls for the Government to admit Jewish refugees came from many quarters: the Anglican Church, the United Church, the YMCA, local service clubs and the CCF, as well as Jewish community organizations. Groups such as the Native Sons of Canada, Leadership League and Canadian Corps were loud in their opposition. Proponents of antisemitism were particularly vocal in Quebec.

In October 1938, the Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Persecution was created by the League of Nations Society of Canada. The Government used public opposition to admitting refugees to justify its restrictive policies, so the committee worked to change public perception by setting up branches, organizing public meetings and producing educational material, such as a pamphlet entitled “Should Canada Admit Refugees?”



This pamphlet illustrates the “Achat chez nous” campaign. It reads: “Buy from us to ensure a good life. A striking contrast! And whose fault is it? The fault of French-Canadians who build the fortune of others before building their own.”

The following is a newspaper report of some of their efforts:

“About 1400 in the theatre and an estimated 300 on the street supported emigration of Jewish refugees to this country after hearing Brig. Gen. Odlum, Rev. Biddle, acting president of the Ministerial Association, Archbishop Duke of the Roman Catholic diocese of Vancouver, Canon Cooper of St. James Anglican Church, Rabbi Cass, E. A. Jamieson, president of the Trades and Labor Council, Mrs. F. J. Rolston, president of the Provincial Council of Women, and others denounce the wave of anti-Semitic persecution in Germany . . . The meeting was called jointly by the City Ministerial Association and the League of Nations Society . . . German attacks on Jews were described as ‘indescribable barbarism and brutality.’ Clearly stated, too, by a number of speakers, was a fear that Nazi and Fascist regimes were enemies, not only of Jews, but of democracies, and that a final conflict may be inevitable.”

—The Daily Province, Vancouver, November 21, 1938

Here is another voice of support, this time from Gwethalyn Graham, who was active in the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation:

“There can be very few literate Canadians today who do not realize that it is the intention of the German government to wipe out the Jews of Germany and Austria if the rest of the world does not come to their rescue. Yet because the average human being’s capacity to feel what he reads about but has not seen is very limited, we appear to be largely unaware of the urgent and desperate need of the refugees. At this moment there are thousands upon thousands of men, women and children who are being herded like cattle from frontier to frontier. There is no place for them to go . . . For such overcrowded countries as England and France there was some excuse. For Canada there was no excuse whatever. These

refugees are asking only some land of their own and a chance to live in decency and peace; they do not want charity, nor would they permit themselves to become a burden upon us...By our behaviour in this crisis our national character, our ideals and our sincerity will be judged."

—*Saturday Night*, November 9, 1938

In July 1938, 32 nations, including Canada, attended the Evian Conference, which was convened to help find a home for Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. However, country after country found excuses not to accept them. Only the Dominican Republic, one of the smallest countries at the conference, offered to help.

The Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Persecution was not able to persuade the Government to change its policy, but it was successful in getting some refugees admitted. One such high profile case was the Czech industrialist Thomas Bata, along with 82 of his workers.

The Federal Government Takes a Stand, or Does It?

History is complicated. So are politics. And the Prime Minister of the day, William Lyon Mackenzie King, is a prime example of this. We are fortunate that his diaries still exist so you can read them and learn about the Prime Minister who wrote:

"... the sorrows which the Jews have to bear at this time are almost beyond comprehension. . . . I feel Canada must do her part in admitting some of the Jewish refugees. It is going to be difficult politically, and I may not be able to get the Cabinet to consent, but will fight for it as right and just and Christian."

—Mackenzie King Diaries, November 13, 1938

Where do you think Mackenzie King stands on the question of Jewish refugees based on this quote from his diaries?

talk about it

Now take a look at two earlier entries, also from the diary. The first offers an impression of Adolph Hitler during Mackenzie King's visit to Berlin:

“My sizing up of the man as I sat and talked with him was that he is really one who truly loves his fellow-men, and his country, and would make any sacrifice for their good . . . a man of deep sincerity and a genuine patriot.”

—Mackenzie King Diaries, June 29, 1937

The next day, Mackenzie King met the German foreign minister, Baron Konstantin von Neurath. Before complaining about the Jewish population of Berlin, the Baron claimed Hitler was opposed to war and had done good work since he took power:

“He said to me that I would have loathed living in Berlin with the Jews, and the way in which they had increased their numbers in the city . . . He said there was no pleasure in going to a theatre which was filled with them . . . They were getting control of all the business, the finance . . . It was necessary to get them out to have the German people really control their own City and affairs.”

—Mackenzie King Diaries, June 30, 1937

Mackenzie King went to the diplomat's house for lunch and enjoyed it very much. He described von Neurath as very kind and pleasant, in spite of his odious prejudices against Jews.

talk about it

Would you like to change your mind about Mackenzie King's position on the refugee question? Why or why not?

Canadians and immigrants of Jewish descent already faced barriers, but for European Jews desperate to escape the Nazis, the antisemitism ingrained in the upper levels of the Canadian Government was the final blow. As noted in the seminal book on the topic, *None is Too Many*, Canada's immigration policy during the period can be summed up in the words of an anonymous immigration agent, who, when asked how many Jews would be allowed into Canada, replied, “None is too many.”

Canada's record in helping Jews trying to escape Nazi Europe is illustrated in this table:

COUNTRIES ADMITTING JEWISH REFUGEES 1939-1945	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF REFUGEES
United States	240,000
Great Britain	85,000
China	25,000
Argentina	25,000
Brazil	25,000
Colombia and Mexico (combined)	40,000
Canada	4,000

closerlook

How does Canada rank compared to other countries?

This is hardly surprising given the attitudes of the people in charge. In 1936, immigration had become part of the mandate of the Department of Mines and Resources. The Immigration Branch was led by Director F.C. Blair, whose views on Jewish immigration were clear:

“Ever since the war [World War I], efforts have been made by groups and individuals to get refugees into Canada but we have fought all along to protect ourselves against the admission of such stateless persons without passports, for the reason that coming out of the maelstrom of war, some of them are liable to go on the rocks and when they become public charges, we have to keep them for the balance of their lives.”

Many Jews desperate to come to Canada wrote to Blair begging for help. He denied almost every request.

In 1939, as reported in Chapter One, the *MS St. Louis* sailed from Germany with 937 on board. Across the Americas, country after country refused to let them land. A telegram from 44 well-known Torontonians, urging Mackenzie King to give the *St. Louis* passengers sanctuary, went unanswered. The ship had to sail back to Europe, where more than half the refugees perished at the hands of the Nazis.



F.C. Blair, 1932.

This outcome was to be expected, given that Mackenzie King had received this memo from Ottawa officials the year before:

“We do not want to take too many Jews, but in the circumstances, we do not want to say so. We do not want to legitimise the Aryan mythology by introducing any formal distinction for immigration purposes between Jews and non-Jews. The practical distinction, however, has to be made and should be drawn with discretion and sympathy by the competent department, without the need to lay down a formal minute of policy.”

—Memo from the Departments of External Affairs and Mines and Resources, 1938

talk about it

Why did Mackenzie King say nothing about the matter in public?

Here are two clues from a debate in the House of Commons and a petition circulated at the time:

“I have deep sympathy for the Jews who are now being persecuted in certain countries in Europe; I think their situation is deplorable; but at the present time in our own country we have thousands of fellow citizens whose situation is also deplorable, and I believe that charity begins at home. I do not want one job in Canada to be taken by an immigrant, be he a Jew or otherwise . . . We have at present too many people on relief, and if there are jobs available they should be given to our fellow citizens.”

—Mr. Hervé Edgar Brunelle (Liberal MP, Quebec), House of Commons Debate, January 24, 1939

“I have the honour to present to this house a petition from La Société St-Jean Baptiste of the Quebec diocese, bearing the signatures of 127,364 persons, vigorously protesting against all immigration whatsoever and especially Jewish immigration; demanding with all the energy inspired

by the instinct of self-preservation [of Christian religion and French culture] that we maintain a rigorous policy of forbidding immigration.”

—Petition, House of Commons Debate, January 30, 1939

Many votes for the governing Liberals came from Quebec ridings. What do you think this means in terms of how policy was set?

talk about it

However, many ordinary Canadians were outraged at the exclusion of the *St. Louis* passengers and called on the Prime Minister to intervene. This chorus of public indignation was reflected in several newspaper editorials. The following example, published after the *St. Louis* had been forced to turn back to Europe, focused more on the benefits that Canada had lost:

“Last week we drew attention to Britain’s experience with German refugees. It has amounted to a mass migration of industries. Whole businesses have literally been lifted from Germany and set down there. And in a great many instances it is a matter of completely new enterprises, the result of highly trained craftsmen finding an outlet for their skill, initiative and the remnants of their capital . . . More recently the United States has had an outbreak of refugee industries. An unofficial check showed they employ from 3,000 workers—the exception—to a dozen or less. An immigrant who can bring with him work for twelve people is to be welcomed with open arms even in a [sic] industrial colossus like the United States—welcomed anywhere it would seem but in Canada . . . Not only have the refugees brought work, but they have brought new customers.”

—*The Globe and Mail*, June 19, 1939

Mackenzie King, on a state visit to Washington, consulted officials in Ottawa on how he should respond to any pressure to admit those on the *St. Louis*. The Canadian Director of Immigration, F.C. Blair, called on the Prime Minister to stand firm. He pointedly reminded the Prime Minister that under Canadian immigration regulations, the Jews of the *St. Louis* did not qualify for Canadian admission. What is more, any exception made for

the Jews on the *St. Louis* would open the floodgates to appeals by tens of thousands more European Jews seeking entry to Canada.

talk about it

How genuine was Mackenzie King about helping the refugees?

Mackenzie King's Justice Minister and trusted Quebec Lieutenant, Ernest Lapointe, responded that he too was "emphatically opposed" to the admission of those on the *St. Louis*. But Blair and Lapointe need not have worried. Even as they were cautioning against admitting Jews on the *St. Louis*, the ship and its passengers—rejected by every country in North and South America—were *en route* back to Europe and a fate to be decided by the Nazis.

Perhaps this explains why Canada was missing in action when the passengers on the *St. Louis* were on their desperate voyage, as described in Chapter One.

A Cruel Irony

Canada did, in fact, inadvertently admit some Jewish refugees during the war. Britain had interned 2,500 "potentially dangerous enemy aliens", many of them Jewish refugees who had managed to escape from Germany. They were shipped to Canada and imprisoned in high security internment camps. It was not until 1945 that they were reclassified as "interned refugees (friendly aliens)". Around 972 of these refugees accepted an offer to become Canadian citizens.

At the same time, however, Ottawa discussed the idea of deporting all Canadians of Japanese origin, even though most were Canadian-born. At the end of the war, 4,000 of them were "encouraged" by the Canadian Government to return to Japan.

talk about it

Why are the words "potentially dangerous enemy aliens", "interned refugees" and "encouraged" in quotation marks?

What would it take for Canada to go from the standard displayed in the events of this chapter, to one that gained them international fame as the only country to receive the Nansen Medal for its contribution to assisting refugees?

Continue on to Part III to find out.



PART III

Introduction

Chapter 6

Post-war Changes:

Breaking down barriers

Chapter 7

Past, Present and Future:

Where do we go from here?



Part III

Introduction

In Chapter Six, the policies and practices towards newcomers to Canada and the welcome offered by Canadians seem to change dramatically, as do the economic conditions surrounding these changes. Life after World War II was very different from life after World War I, but in both situations, the war resulted in many Europeans becoming stateless—on the move from their countries of origin. As this chapter shows, the policy of multiculturalism and the changes in immigration policy had both economic and humanitarian objectives.

talk about it

How do you explain the treatment these post-war emigrants received when they tried to come to Canada?

Which of these objectives is the better explanation for these changes: economic or humanitarian?

How has multiculturalism and the recognition of diversity affected your school and your community?

Chapter Seven brings us to the twenty-first century.

talk about it

How would you characterize Canada today when you think of our diversity and multicultural character?

What challenges do we face in our increasingly interconnected world?

The “we” in this question includes YOU as you move towards full realization of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, including the right to vote.

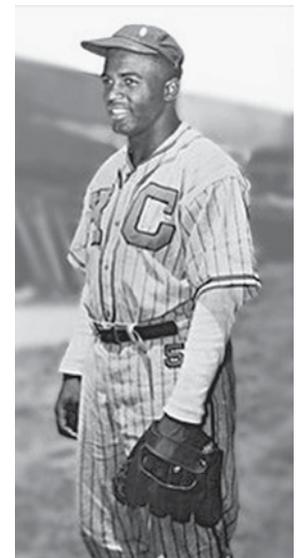
We begin Chapter Six, moving into the era after the two World Wars, with a story that would have been unthinkable a few years earlier.

Chapter 6

Post-war Changes: Breaking down barriers

The picture on the right depicts a skilled professional newcomer who came to Canada in 1946. The breaking of the colour barrier in professional sports has been rightfully seen as a major step towards racial equality in the United States. The first sport to integrate Black and White players in its Major League was baseball, when, in 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African-American Major League baseball player to break through this barrier. Before this, he had played professional baseball in the Negro League until he was called by Brooklyn Dodgers vice-president, Branch Rickey, in 1945 to join the all-White Montreal Royals, the Brooklyn Dodgers' farm team.

While playing for the Royals, Robinson was subjected to jeers and taunts from the fans; he and his family even received death threats. The colour barrier was still so strong that even members of his own team were against having a Black team-mate. In spite of all this racial abuse, which was especially bad at away games, Robinson had an outstanding season with the Royals. He led the International League with a .349 batting average and .985 fielding percentage. He was promoted to the Dodgers, winning a World Series with them in 1955. He retired from professional baseball the following year. A pioneer for athletes worldwide, he was ultimately elected to the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame. Soon African-Americans would be joined by players from Central and South America and Asia in all professional sports.



Baseball player Jackie Robinson.

Why did Jackie Robinson come to Canada? Was it because he thought Canadians would be less bigoted towards newcomers who were seen as different?

Was it because of Canada's record on the Underground Railroad a century earlier?

Does this mean that Canada had turned the corner on bigotry and entered a new era?

talk about it

The Journey Towards Official Multiculturalism



Child survivors of the Holocaust, shortly after the liberation of the death camps. Of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, 1.5 million were children.

The decades after World War II saw huge changes in immigration policy, though they were not immediate. In 1945 and 1946, Canadian immigration regulations had not changed since the restrictions imposed during the pre-war era. Doors remained closed to most refugees, including Jews, who had survived the Holocaust and were now stranded in Europe, destitute and alone. Public opinion remained opposed to immigration, even from Western Europe. There was fear that Canada could face an economic depression again, now that the demand for industry that marked the wartime years had ended. Also, there was concern that immigrants would compete with Canadian soldiers returning from the war for a dwindling supply of jobs.

However, unlike the lean years after World War I, the global economy grew rapidly as export markets for raw materials, food and manufactured goods expanded. Millions of dollars were directed through the US-backed Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe, in order to stimulate economic growth and to fortify the Continent against what was seen as the threat of communism. In Canada, there had been little spending during the war years due to rationing, but many Canadians had earned and saved money, and consumption now soared. Such spending, whether on houses, automobiles, appliances, education, leisure or travel, had not been seen since the 1920s. In fact, what Canadians needed was goods and labour, not money or jobs.

As a result, Canada had full employment for more than a decade. With increased production in farming and other primary industries, and a boom in urban construction, there were many entry-level jobs for newcomers. There were hundreds of thousands of refugees, referred to as “displaced persons” (DPs), who could fulfill this demand. The job market was so hot that Ontario even airlifted emigrants from Britain. Immigrants from Britain and Western Europe were preferred, but the need for labour soon attracted many newcomers from Central and Eastern Europe—Italy, Poland, Germany and elsewhere. They were fleeing the rubble of war, the Soviet army or both. Some of the jobs in this expanding economy were thought to be beneath native-born Canadians.

There was a need for these people, but they were often the very refugees who had been excluded. It was still thought that using Jews and Slavs from DP camps to fill the gap would mean an influx of these “undesirables”. A public opinion poll in 1946 found that a majority of Canadians would have preferred allowing in immigrants from Germany rather than Jews. Only the Japanese, whom wartime propaganda had so effectively painted as the enemy, were less popular.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King felt the tensions between those who wanted a much more open immigration policy to meet economic demands, and those who were concerned about increased immigration. In 1947, he made the following statement outlining Canada’s immigration policy:



Holocaust survivors in the Wetzlar Displaced Persons Camp stage a protest. The banner, written in Yiddish, reads: “We demand the eradication of the [DP] camps.”

“The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration. The government will seek by legislation, regulation, and vigorous administration, to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy.”

—Statement, House of Commons, May 1, 1947

Is this a clear statement of policy, or is the statement designed to give Government options, depending on the changes in the public mood or economic circumstances?

talk about it

The Prime Minister said that Canada was “perfectly within her rights in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens.” Nonetheless, he advised that it might be better to remove “objectionable discrimination”.

On the other hand, he stated:

“The people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the Orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian population.”

—Statement, House of Commons, May 1, 1947

The economic arguments won out, especially with support from religious and other groups advocating for human rights after the horrors of the Holocaust and other war crimes. Canada was being pushed by global changes, and the desire for a more interconnected world. These turbulent times were marked by:

- ↗ the decolonization and independence of many of the former colonial empires of Britain and France in Africa and Asia, leading in many cases to growth and development
- ↗ Canada’s need to establish better trade connections with these emerging states
- ↗ the general push for human rights in the new United Nations organization through

the Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and The Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), signed by Canada in 1969

- ↗ corresponding struggles and advances in human rights in the United States by African-Americans, women and other groups

closerlook

Does this cartoon support the humanitarian or the economic argument for increased immigration?



A cartoon from the Canadian Labour Reports.

Mainly because of the economic arguments, Canada gradually began to open its doors, becoming one of the first nations to admit Jewish DPs. Its 1947 Order-in-Council #1647 allowed 1,000 Jewish refugee orphans to enter Canada, a small number given the huge number of Holocaust survivors who needed a new home, but still a promising start. In 1948, with more workers needed to fuel a strong post-war economic boom, Canada's immigration policies started to change. In the next ten years, almost two million immigrants were granted entry, including thousands of Holocaust survivors.

Gradually, Canada moved forward until the late 1950s, when an economic downturn resulted in fewer immigrants seeking entry. This was followed by a second wave of immigration when the economy picked up again.

There are many examples of immigrants and refugees seeking entry into Canada, as well as government policies usually instituted in reaction to current events. They cannot all be included in these pages. As you read in this Student Resource and elsewhere about some of the people and events making up today's Canada, here are some facts to consider:



Prime Minister John Diefenbaker holds the proposed *Bill of Rights*, 1958.

- In 1960, the Conservative Government of John Diefenbaker, the first Prime Minister not from one of the two founding European groups, passed the *Bill of Rights*. While this was not legally binding on the Provinces, it was a reflection of the Prime Minister's commitment to human rights.
- In October 1967, the points system was adopted by Lester B. Pearson's Liberal Government, eliminating the last traces of racial discrimination. Points were awarded for specific skills, educational background and ties to Canada, as well as personal character, market demand, English- or French-language skills, age, destination and pre-arranged employment. This system took away most of the discretionary power that an immigration officer previously had.
- In February 1962, Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, instituted new regulations that eliminated most, though not all, clauses that discriminated according to race. Immigrants from Europe still kept the right to sponsor a wider range of immigrants than other newcomers. Many opponents feared that this "chain migration" of relatives into Canada, sponsored by family already here, would be abused.
- In November 1967, the *Immigration Appeal Board Act* was passed. Now anyone slated to be deported had the right to appeal to the Immigration Appeal Board on the grounds of law or compassion.



The Queen signs into force the *Canadian Constitution Act*, which includes the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1982. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (left) looks on.

Many of these ideas were solidified and made binding by the passage of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982.

A climax of sorts came in 1971 when the Government of Pierre E. Trudeau introduced its policy of multiculturalism. This policy was more in step with the new reality of pluralism in Canada, and was a 180 degree turn from previous policy, which tried to assimilate newcomers. It laid down the charge to all Canadians to accept this new reality. At the same time, immigrants were to be encouraged both to participate as full and equal partners in Canadian society, and to maintain their own cultural traditions and uniqueness.

This policy was given a push by tensions in English-French relations in the 1960s, such as the Quiet Revolution and the rise of separatist/sovereignist feeling among many Quebec francophones. In 1963, the Government appointed a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to examine and recommend solutions to such tensions, but what the Commissioners heard went much further. Representatives from ethnic communities across Canada demanded that they be included in the public debate on any new vision of Canada. They had made the same sacrifices as other Canadians during the Great Depression and World War II, and had made just as much of a contribution to Canada's post-war recovery. They demanded to be considered just as Canadian as those of English or French heritage.



Ethnicity was now being seen as an integral part of Canadian identity, not as something that diminished it. Canada was not to be a “melting pot” in which former identities were lost, like the United States, but rather as a mosaic in which all the many varied pieces could fit together.

A street festival on Danforth Avenue in Toronto celebrates Canada's ethnic diversity.

As you look at the following timeline, what seem to be some of the effects of the changes in immigration policy and the official move towards multiculturalism?

talk about it

TIMELINE OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS

1972

Canada welcomes its ten millionth immigrant since Confederation, reportedly British psychiatrist Dr. Richard Swinson and his family.



June 1972

An administrative program is announced to reduce the Immigration Appeal Board backlog. By March 1973, 18,500 cases have been reviewed, and nearly 12,000 of them have received a positive response.



1979-80

60,000 refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are resettled in Canada. Media reports of the "Boat People" encourage thousands of Canadians to come forward to assist, using the new refugee private sponsorship program. Popular pressure forces the Government to increase its initial commitment to resettling the refugees.



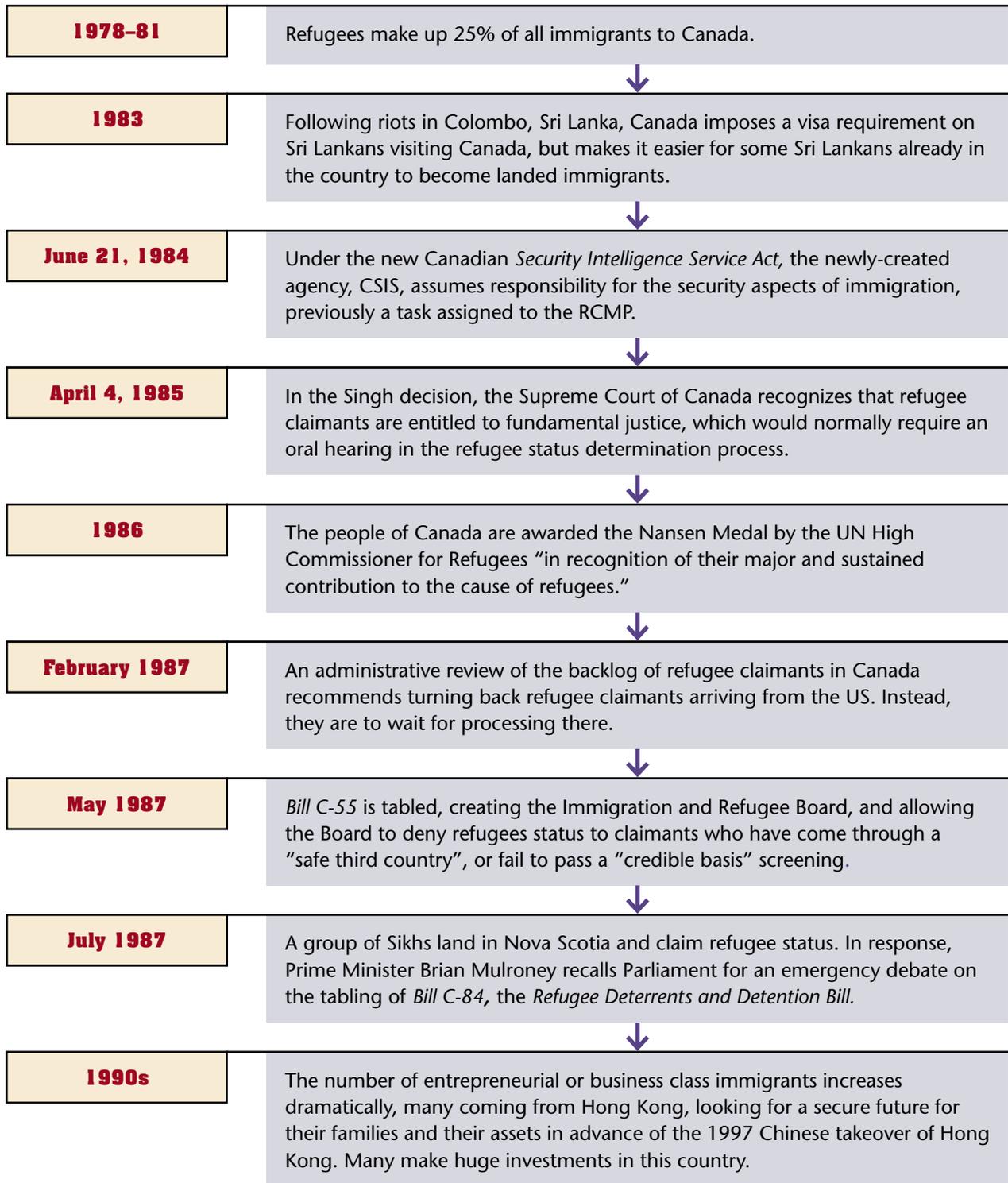
1981

The debate around what Canada should do about the "Boat People" is very public. Minister of Employment and Immigration Ron Atkey may have been influenced by the manuscript he was given of a new book, *None Is Too Many*, which describes the story of the *St. Louis*, when he made the decision to admit a record 50,000 Southeast Asian refugees to Canada.

continued on next page

Refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, known as the "Boat People", en route to Canada.





Adapted from Canadian Council for Refugees.

Many events in history are significant, not just because of the facts, but because they represent something much larger. For example, the Battle of Vimy Ridge in World War I was just one battle among many and did not by itself change the course of the conflict, but because Canada was in charge and victorious, it has become hugely symbolic of our place in the world.

The story of the *St. Louis* has also been called an event of “symbolic significance”, whose influence goes far beyond the actual voyage.



Two child refugees aboard the *St. Louis*.

How might that be so? Is the symbolism something that Canadians should be proud of, like the Battle of Vimy Ridge, or a blot of shame on our history?

talk about it

Canadian Diversity: Future Challenges

Although traditionally immigration policy has been the domain of the Federal Government, since World War II, Ontario has increasingly had more of a say. In recent years, more than half the total number of immigrants entering Canada have taken up residence in Ontario. In addition, since the mid-1960s, Quebec has been particularly involved in immigration matters. The Province’s immigration efforts have focused on recruiting as many French-speaking immigrants as possible, and integrating them into the francophone community.

The humanitarian side of immigration policy came later and more gradually than its pragmatic counterpart: economics. The horrors of the war and the Holocaust made racism and prejudice, at least the most obvious kinds, publicly unacceptable.

However, there was concern that multiculturalism would not be a unifying force. Some feared that it would diminish the British heritage of anglophone Canada. In Quebec, the concern was that multiculturalism would undermine Quebecois nationalism by simply equating it with other ethnic groups in Canada. This is a major reason why Quebec governments have exercised their powers in the area of immigration, including setting up offices in France and in other parts of *la francophonie* (French-speaking lands around the world).



A monument to multiculturalism is located outside Union Station, Toronto's central train station.

In the urban areas of English-speaking Canada, however, people were in favour of multiculturalism, and they recognized that cultural pluralism was here to stay. As the new policy began to take hold, there was a shift in emphasis from the European heritage that had been so central to the socio-cultural landscape to inclusion of new and emerging communities that had come to Canada from the developing world. These communities looked to multiculturalism policy more in terms of addressing their main concerns—prejudice and discrimination—than for recognition of their culture. Pragmatic concerns were uppermost in their minds: equal access to jobs, housing and education.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education brought in a new history course to replace the core course entitled “British History to 1900”. “Canada’s Multicultural Heritage” was an optional course offered for about a decade beginning in the mid-1970s. It was designed to teach students about the development and benefits of multiculturalism in Canada. In Toronto, it was popular in some, but not all, schools, while in other areas it was not adopted uniformly. Some schools added units to their traditional British history course, while others complained about a curriculum imposed on an unwilling province by bureaucrats in Toronto.

talk about it

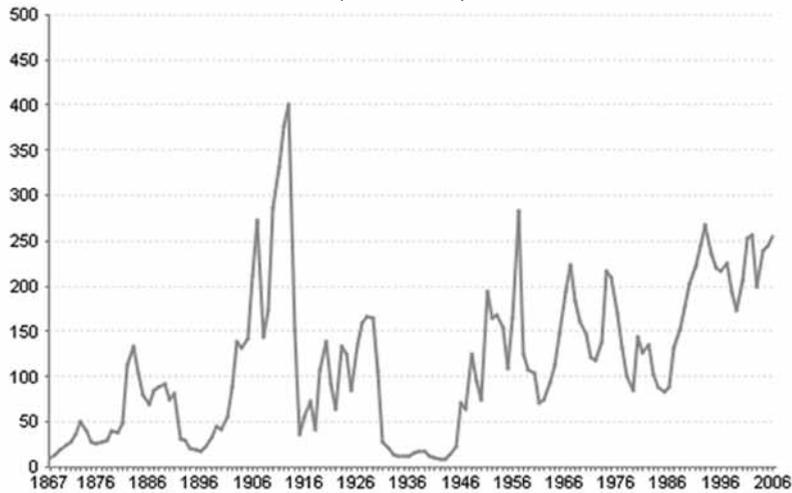
What do you think of the idea of a course on multiculturalism, using ideas discussed in this student resource? Is such a course needed for the 21st century? What topics would you include?



Street signs in Canada reflect our language and cultural diversity.

The multicultural nature of our society has enriched Canada in many ways. According to the 1996 Statistics Canada Census, more than 70 languages were spoken as mother tongues and more than 2.5 million people spoke a language at home other than English or French. These numbers included 500,000 who spoke Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese) and 250,000 who spoke Italian. By the mid-1990s, many jurisdictions were publishing their public documents, newsletters and official notices in a number of languages.

Annual number of immigrants since Confederation, 1867–2006
(thousands)



closerlook

Looking at the chart, can you predict what will happen in the next century—your century?

Note: The population of Newfoundland and Labrador is included beginning in 1949.

Economic upswings and downswings will continue to influence the demand for newcomers and their acceptance in Canada. Global humanitarian crises will continue to occur in dramatic and unpredictable ways, despite government planning for determining medium and long-range immigration goals. Refugee policy concerns, therefore, have to be considered in tandem with immigration policies. In addition, the Provinces, Territories and Municipalities must be consulted on refugee policy, since they will bear responsibility for supporting newcomers in education, employment, health and other social services once they arrive.

Globalization, marked by an increase in movement of people from country to country, continues to enhance Canada's cultural and ethnic diversity. With such a multiplicity of people in Canada comes a greater need for all Canadians to accept their neighbours as equals. Meanwhile, official policy must continue to be sensitive to the needs of both long-time residents and newcomers.

Issues that still cause tension include:

- ↗ **the backlog in processing immigration and refugee claims**
- ↗ concern about illegal immigrants, false refugee claims and human smuggling, as seen in the debate over the *MV Sun Sea*, which brought Tamil refugee claimants to Canada in 2010
- ↗ **the admission to Canada of highly-skilled individuals—a “reverse brain drain”**
- ↗ difficulty getting the credentials of immigrants with foreign qualifications recognized once they arrive in Canada
- ↗ **the concentration of visible minorities in Canada’s largest cities, despite encouragement to spread out across the country**
- ↗ the tendency of some minorities to live, work and go to school solely within their own communities, never really integrating into Canadian life

These concerns have, from time to time, been aired in public debates. Though there are still incidents of racism, we have generally been more civil in discussing these tensions and issues than in many other western countries. However, since newcomers of non-European origin now make up a significant majority of immigrants to Canada, some still view the changing face of urban Canada with concern, worried that in our attempt to emphasize the uniqueness of all the different parts of the Canadian mosaic, we may be moving further away from one unified understanding of what being a Canadian actually means. A balance needs to be found that emphasizes a shared vision of Canadian identity, while at the same time validating the uniqueness of all the various individual heritages that now make up this country.

In the next chapter, we will look at some issues for you to consider when thinking about Canada’s future.



Chapter 7

Past, Present and Future: Where do we go from here?

THE attacks of September 11, 2001 (often referred to as 9/11) were a series of coordinated suicide attacks by 19 residents of the United States, who belonged to the al-Qaeda terrorist organization. The morning of that fateful day, they hijacked four commercial airplanes. The hijackers flew two of the planes into the World Trade Center's Twin Towers in New York City. They crashed a third plane into the Pentagon—the US Department of Defense Headquarters—in Arlington County, Virginia. The passengers on the fourth plane tried to retake control of the plane, which the hijackers had diverted toward Washington DC. The plane crashed into a field in rural Pennsylvania, near the town of Shanksville. The story of this plane was immortalized by the Hollywood movie, *United 93*. Nobody aboard any of the four planes survived.

There were 2,976 victims of these attacks, including all the passengers and crew on the planes, people working in the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, and emergency workers who had responded to the disaster. Altogether, citizens from over 90 countries were among those killed, including many Canadians. In addition, thousands more were injured and many suffered ill effects from the dust caused by the collapse of the Twin Towers and destruction of other nearby buildings.



The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City burning on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001.



Emergency workers in the ruins of the Twin Towers.

The events of 9/11 have affected global politics to this day, especially in the United States and here in Canada. Among the changes we see is an increased concern about security, especially along our borders and in our airports. For example, *The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, passed before 9/11, was revised the January after the attacks to tighten refugee admission procedures in Canada. In December 2003, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) was created as part of a larger package of programs to deal with the security concerns raised by 9/11. The CBSA's mandate is to facilitate the legal movement of goods and people across Canada's borders, while intercepting shipments that are illegal or pose a threat. It is ironic that even though global transportation has made life so much easier than even just a few decades ago, we no longer feel safe from the tentacles of conflict elsewhere in the world that have the potential to wreak havoc. This has affected both attitudes and policies towards refugees and immigrants.

The Points System is still a mainstay of Canadian immigration policy. Applicants need 67 points, awarded in the following six categories:

CATEGORY	POINTS
Education	maximum 25 points
Languages	English and/or French maximum 24 points
Work Experience	maximum 21 points
Age	maximum 10 points between ages 21–49/ 0 points under 16 or over 54 years of age
Arranged Employment in Canada	maximum 10 points
Adaptability	maximum 10 points, including previous work or study in Canada, arranged employment, relatives in Canada and partner's education

In 2010, applicants were expected to have sufficient funds available for settlement in Canada. As of that date, Citizenship and Immigration Canada determined the amount of money needed by the number of family members:

NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS	FUNDS REQUIRED
1	\$11,086
2	\$13,801
3	\$16,967
4	\$20,599
5	\$23,364
6	\$26,350
7	\$29,337

Being Media Literate

The unease of many Canadians about the increasing diversity of the population that we saw in the previous chapter has increased since 9/11. This issue is reported in the media on almost a daily basis. In general, we are bombarded with an overwhelming amount of information, yet it lacks quality control, especially in the blogosphere. Separating fact from fiction, truth from rumour, and accuracy from exaggeration is a major challenge. This is especially true when reading about polls that sample Canadian attitudes about many issues. Such polling gets reported year round, especially at election time or when a dramatic event occurs in the news, such as the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Here are some points to consider when you encounter a poll:

- **Is the sample scientifically selected or self-selected? If self-selected, the poll is only good for entertainment. Only pay attention to polls that randomly select respondents. Consider how the poll selects the respondents. The soundest polling involves a computer selecting phone numbers at random.**
- **What is the poll's margin of error? A margin of error of 3% tells us that the true result of the poll has a 95% chance of being somewhere between 3% above or below the number reported by the survey**
- **Have other polls on this issue been done recently? If so, it is a good idea to compare them with the new poll. This process is like when members of the track team check their running times. Times may be consistent or vary greatly from one session to another. Use the same math when looking at frequent polling on an issue. You are looking for trends or patterns. One poll, however well designed, is only a single snapshot.**
- **How are the questions in a poll worded? Do they allow for open-ended answers or are they designed to "lead" you towards the answer the pollster wants to hear? **Is this an example of a leading question:** *Would you be in favour of increased immigration if it meant that the economy would improve?***
- **Remember that polls are always a **sample** of a population that may or may not match or represent who actually goes to the polls.**

The numbers can be overwhelming, but they are often used in public life. Be careful when you read polls and be wary of the media's interpretation of them. Learning to be numeracy-literate is a life skill for any citizen. In addition, public issues are so complex that they often defy answers.

And what do all the numbers and statistics mean anyway? We live in a sea of statistics. What can they tell us? What can they miss, or worse, distort? Do not forget that these tips apply to online polls in particular.

The introduction to *Welcome to Canada?* presented options for the situation in Haiti. Other such situations will arise from time to time. Throughout this Resource, you have looked at our historical record in welcoming newcomers, using the Nansen Medal as a possible standard. In addition, you have been introduced to terms relating to migration, and you have looked in some detail at a number of cases that have shown Canada at its most—and at its least—welcoming.

talk about it

If immigration policy is “colour blind”, then who you are or where you come from does not matter, as long as you meet other criteria not related to race or ethnicity.

If immigration policy is altered to meet changing needs or other circumstances, the flow is compared to a tap which can be turned on or off.

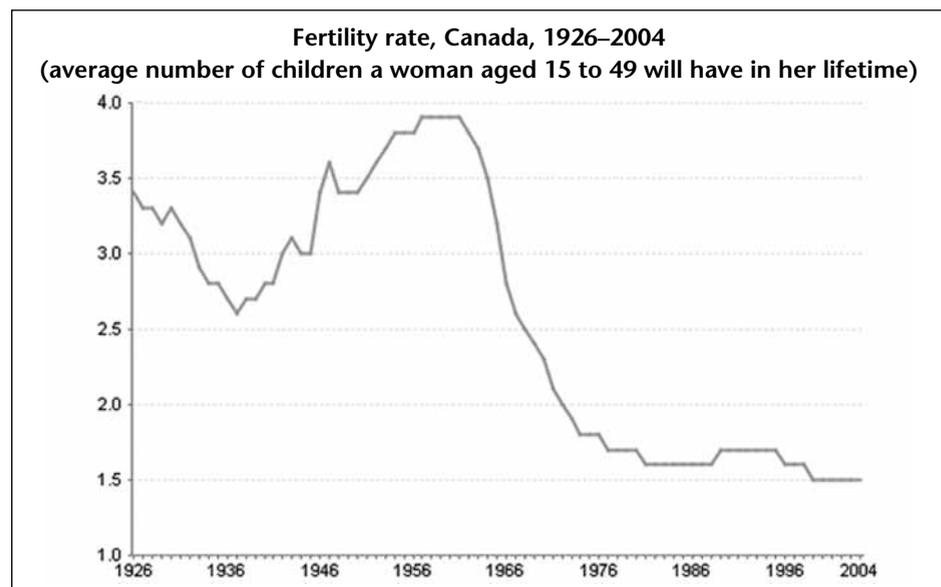
Which description best describes our immigration policy: “colour blind” or “tap on tap off”?

Population Trends

Here are two long-term trends that may also influence our decisions. These trends are interconnected.

Population Distribution and Increase

Currently, Canada’s natural population increase (birth rate) is not keeping up with the numbers needed to increase our population. Here is the historical pattern according to Statistics Canada data:



Note: The 1926–1959 rates exclude Newfoundland, Yukon and the Northwest Territories; the 1960–1990 rates exclude Newfoundland.

In addition, our population is getting older. With more people retiring, there will be a labour shortage.

Is this population pattern unique to Canada?

talk about it

Our population, as of 2010, is over 34,000,000. It is growing more due to immigration than to births, and as you look at the chart below, you can see that we are also becoming more diverse.

Population Diversity

According to information provided by Statistics Canada and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the top ten source countries for immigrants coming to Canada up until 1981 were:

RANKING	COUNTRY
1	United Kingdom
2	Italy
3	United States
4	Germany
5	Portugal
6	Netherlands
7	India
8	Poland
9	China
10	Countries of the former Yugoslavia

Many of these “traditional” countries for immigrants also have low birth rates and aging populations, so they are no longer major sources of immigration to Canada. Statistics Canada gives the top ten countries of origin for immigrants to Canada between 2001 and 2006:

RANKING	COUNTRY	NO. OF IMMIGRANTS
1	China	155,105
2	India	129,140
3	Philippines	77,880
4	Pakistan	57,630
5	United States	38,770
6	South Korea	35,450
7	Romania	28,080
8	Iran	27,600
9	United Kingdom	25,655
10	Colombia	25,310

Between 2001 and 2006, one million immigrants were admitted to Canada. For the first time in almost a century, 20% of the residents of Canada were foreign-born. As of 2010, the number of immigrants *per capita* is approximately double the comparable figure in the United States. Where do these immigrants end up once they arrive in Canada? The 2006 Census tells us that these new immigrants went to:

DESTINATION PROVINCE	BREAKDOWN
Ontario	52.3%
Quebec	17.5%
British Columbia	16.0%
Alberta	9.3%
Manitoba	2.8%
Other provinces and territories	2.1%

On March 9, 2010, Statistics Canada released a study looking at census data such as the above to predict the nature of diversity in Canada's population by 2031.

talk about it

Go to the Statistics Canada website and read the study, Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2005-2031. What trends are identified?

While immigration has been seen as a major source of economic growth in Canada, many newcomers also contribute to the economies of their former home countries by sending money (remittances) to relatives. Statistics Canada has noted that for the years 2001 to 2005:

- Roughly four in ten immigrants who arrived in Canada during 2000/2001 sent money to family or friends abroad at least once during their first four years in the country.
- Over the entire period, about 41% of immigrants sent money home at least once. Within six to 24 months of landing, 23% of immigrants had sent remittances to their home country; within two to four years after landing, about 29% had done the same.
- Among those who sent money home, the average amount was \$2,500 in the first period, and \$2,900 in the second period.
- The incidence of sending money varied considerably from country to country. The proportion was highest among immigrants from the Philippines and Haiti; the lowest proportion was among those from France, the United Kingdom and South Korea.
- The likelihood of immigrants remitting depended on three additional factors: their income, family obligations in Canada and abroad, and demographics.

According to World Bank figures for 2004, remittances represent an important source of revenue for people in developing countries. They accounted for about 20% to 30% of gross domestic product (GDP) in countries such as Haiti, Lesotho and Jordan, and for about 10% to 19% in several others, such as Jamaica, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic.

What do you think of the idea of remittances? Is helping home countries good for Canada? Why or why not?

talk about it

Reviewing the Past, Planning the Future

Immigration to Canada has been fraught with many challenges and difficult choices. It has also transformed the face of Canada.

In 1900, Canada was made up of seven provinces (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia) and had a population of 5,371,315. Residents of Canada were mostly of British and French origin, and there were many Aboriginal peoples. These three groups together constituted 90.1% of the total Canadian population. The remainder of the population was made up of small groups of African-Americans, Scandinavians, Central Europeans, Eastern Europeans, Southern Europeans and Asians, many of whom had arrived as immigrants in the nineteenth century. There were many developments in the twentieth century, as seen in the timeline in Appendix A, which have brought us to where we are today—a new and changed Canada. As you consult this timeline, consider what could be added to it.

What does the future hold? The following are a number of issues that our present global situation and our long-term population trends raise. Each question is complex, and answers will not be easy.

If we have a “tap on” policy, who should we let in? How do we attract immigrants who will make the greatest contribution to Canada?

talk about it

If we encourage skilled and professional candidates to come here, are we creating a “brain drain” in their home countries? What happens when a large number of engineers, doctors or other professionals leave a country like Haiti, where they are badly needed to rebuild that society and economy?

talk about it

If we have fewer restrictions on refugees, how do we separate those truly in fear of persecution from those seeking economic opportunities?

Since the late 1980s, there have been violent conflicts in many parts of the world, from the Balkans in Southeastern Europe to the Middle East, to West and Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South America and Asia. Some accused of war crimes, or crimes related to the drug trade, have fled to Europe and North America. They have sometimes claimed refugee status to escape prosecution.

talk about it

How do we deal with people suspected of these crimes and other forms of illegal activity, such as human smuggling?

How serious are these problems in Canada?

There are often media reports of a backlog in processing immigrant and refugee claims. The backlog for skilled workers is even worse. Skilled workers are selected as permanent residents based on their education, work experience, knowledge of English and/or French, and other criteria that could help them establish themselves in Canada. The average processing time for a visa from any Canadian visa office abroad is seven-and-a-half years. As of 2010, there are approximately 600,000 people waiting for skilled immigrant visas, but only 80,055 visas were slated to be granted during that year.

talk about it

How can we make the system more efficient while making sure that those we want to welcome can get in? How do we support newcomers and help them to adapt and prosper during economic times, good and bad?

Then there is the question of “reasonable accommodation” of customs and practices immigrants have brought from their country of origin, which require changes to accepted norms and practices in Canada. This debate became particularly contentious in Quebec in the first decade of the twenty-first century, culminating in 2007 with the establishment of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, which held hearings on the subject throughout Quebec. Submissions to the Commission’s hearings—many of which contained overt or covert racism—illustrated that many Canadians do not understand the legal meaning of reasonable accommodation, and still more oppose accommodating newcomers on principle. This issue is not confined solely to Quebec, but has struck a particular chord there.

Find some recent media coverage of the reasonable accommodation debate. What are some examples of the types of accommodation requested?

talk about it

Do you think these are reasonable requests? Why or why not?

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Canada's most important resource is its people. You, yes YOU, have a responsibility to help shape Canada's future. Soon, you will be eligible to vote and can play an active role in Canada's decision-making processes. While the future is unpredictable, the events, ideas and issues you have explored in *Welcome to Canada?* will prepare you to make a difference in Canadian society, by developing not just knowledge about your country's history and the diversity of your fellow citizens, but also sensitivity and insight into issues that affect Canadians on a daily basis.



Appendix A

TIMELINE OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN IMMIGRATION DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

1900-1913	The first major wave of immigration of the twentieth century occurs. Millions of newcomers arrive in Canada, mostly from Great Britain and the United States, as well as from continental Europe.
1901-1918	A total of \$18 million CDN is collected from Chinese immigrants through the <i>Head Tax</i> .
1905	The provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta become part of Canada.
1906	The <i>Immigration Act</i> passes. The <i>Act</i> names more categories of prohibited immigrants, allows the Government to deport those it deems undesirable, and introduces a head tax on new immigrants.
1906-07	Many immigrants arrive in British Columbia from the Punjab, Japan and China.
1907	The Asiatic Exclusion League sponsors an "Anti-Asiatic Parade", a riot in Chinatown and the Japanese quarter of Vancouver. An agreement is reached between Canada and Japan, limiting Japanese immigration to 400 individuals per year.
1908	The <i>Continuous Passage Act</i> is passed, making it necessary for a boat to sail continuously from India to Canada in order for its passengers to land legally. A "landing money" requirement is increased for immigrants from India, from \$50 to \$200.

continued on next page

TIMELINE OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN IMMIGRATION DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (CONTINUED)

1910

A second *Immigration Act* is passed, giving Cabinet the right to bar entry to “immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada”, and the right to deport people for political and “moral” reasons. The category of “Canadian citizen” is introduced for the first time.

Citizens of Edmonton protest against the immigration of African-Americans and, in response, the Edmonton Municipal Government passes a resolution asking the Federal Government to clamp down to prevent any influx of African-Americans. The Edmonton Board of Trade also lobbies the Federal government.



1913

Canada receives over 400,000 immigrants.



1914

The *Naturalization Act* is passed.

The *Komagata Maru* docks in British Columbia, but its passengers are refused entry.

The *War Measures Act* is passed, and “enemy aliens” must register with the Government. Many of them are interned during the war.



1915

Canada welcomes the lowest number of immigrants since 1898, with only 36,665 arriving, and only one-quarter from outside the United States.



1917

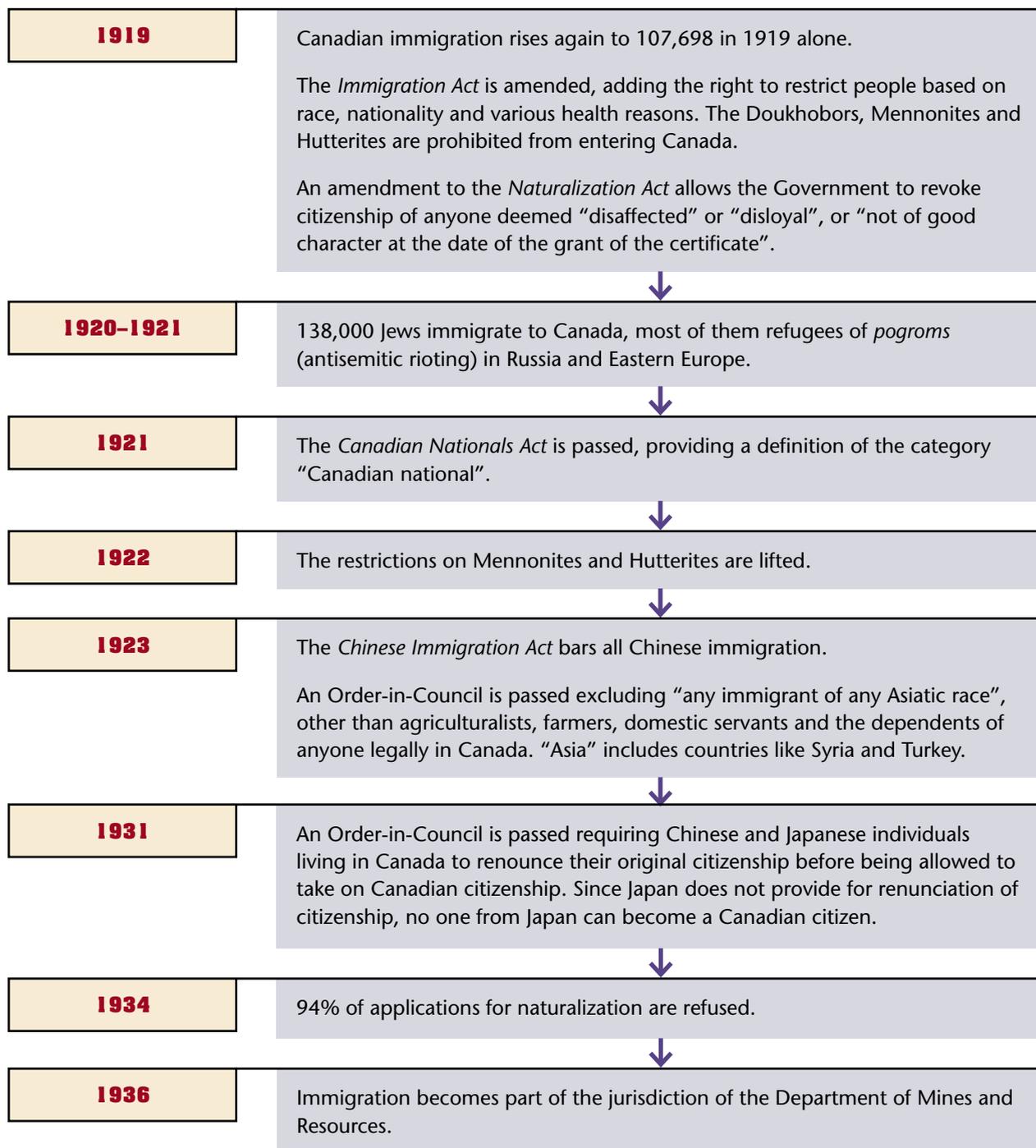
The *Office of Immigration and Colonization* is created.

About 4,000 Hutterites immigrate to Alberta from South Dakota, where they had been the victims of prejudice.



1918–1919

Many immigrants are dismissed from their jobs to create work for soldiers coming back from Europe.



continued on next page

TIMELINE OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN IMMIGRATION DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (CONTINUED)

1938

F.C. Blair, Director of the Immigration Branch, personally ensures that almost no Jews are admitted to Canada during his tenure.

Canada participates in the *Evian Conference on Refugees*. Prime Minister Mackenzie King instructs the Canadian delegation neither to support the establishment of any structures that would handle refugee matters, nor to agree to accept any refugee quotas.



1939

The *MS St. Louis* sets sail from Hamburg, Germany for Cuba, with Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany on board. It is turned away from Cuba and the United States. In spite of many pleas, Canada remains notably silent. The ship has to turn back to Europe, where many of its passengers are eventually killed by the Nazis.



1940

2,500 “potentially dangerous enemy aliens” are sent from England and held in internment camps. Many of them are Jews, who after the war were reclassified as “interned refugees (friendly aliens)”. About one-third become Canadian citizens.



1942

Immigration is at its lowest in the century. Only 7,576 arrive in Canada.



1946

Polish Free Army veterans are allowed to immigrate to Canada on the condition that they sign a contract to farm for at least one year.



1947

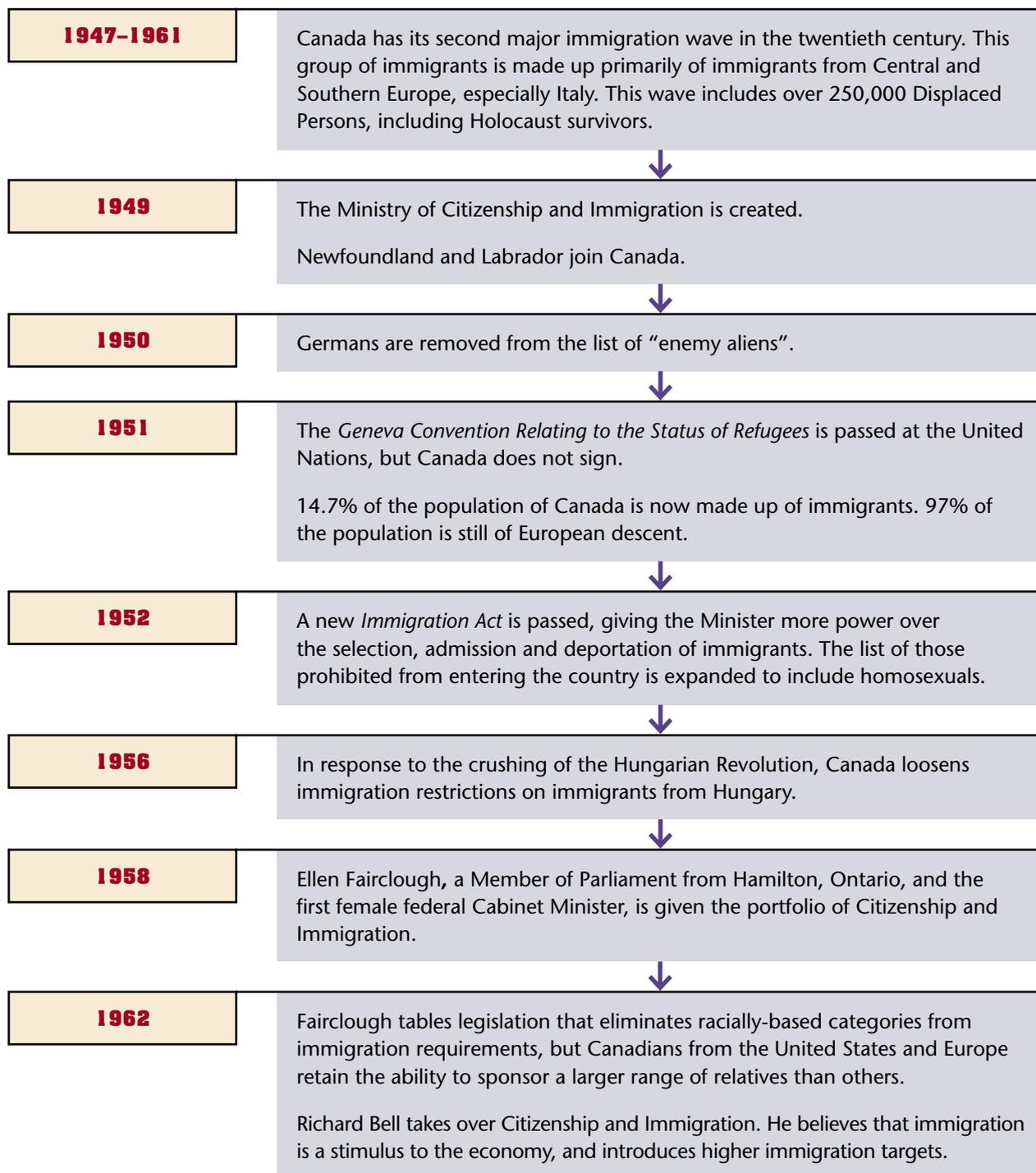
The *Canadian Citizenship Act* comes into force. Changes under this Act include:

- a five-year residency requirement to become a Canadian citizen
- married women gaining full control of their nationality status
- the ability to lose citizenship under certain circumstances
- citizenship education required to earn Canadian citizenship

Canada holds its first citizenship ceremony. Symbolically, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King is presented with a certificate of citizenship.

The *Chinese Immigration Act* is repealed.

Italians are removed from the list of “enemy aliens”.



continued on next page

TIMELINE OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN IMMIGRATION DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (CONTINUED)

1966

The *White Paper on Immigration* is tabled, setting policy so that less unskilled immigrants are allowed into the country in favour of skilled, independent immigrants.

The Department of Manpower and Immigration is created, replacing the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.



1967

Significant changes are made to immigration policy, including the introduction of the Points System. Canadians from the United States and Europe no longer have the right to sponsor a larger range of relatives than others, which removes the last racially-based immigration policy provision. The *Immigration Appeal Board Act* is passed, allowing anyone facing deportation to appeal.



1968

Czechoslovakia is invaded by communist Warsaw Pact troops. Canada responds by easing restrictions on immigrants from Czechoslovakia.



1969

Canada signs onto the 1951 *Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*.



1970

50% of immigrants come from regions other than Europe. Immigration from Asia and the Caribbean makes up over 23% of all immigration to Canada.

A wave of refugees from Chinese-controlled Tibet arrives in Canada.



1971-72

Draft dodgers and deserters trying to avoid deployment to Vietnam make the US the largest source of immigration to Canada.



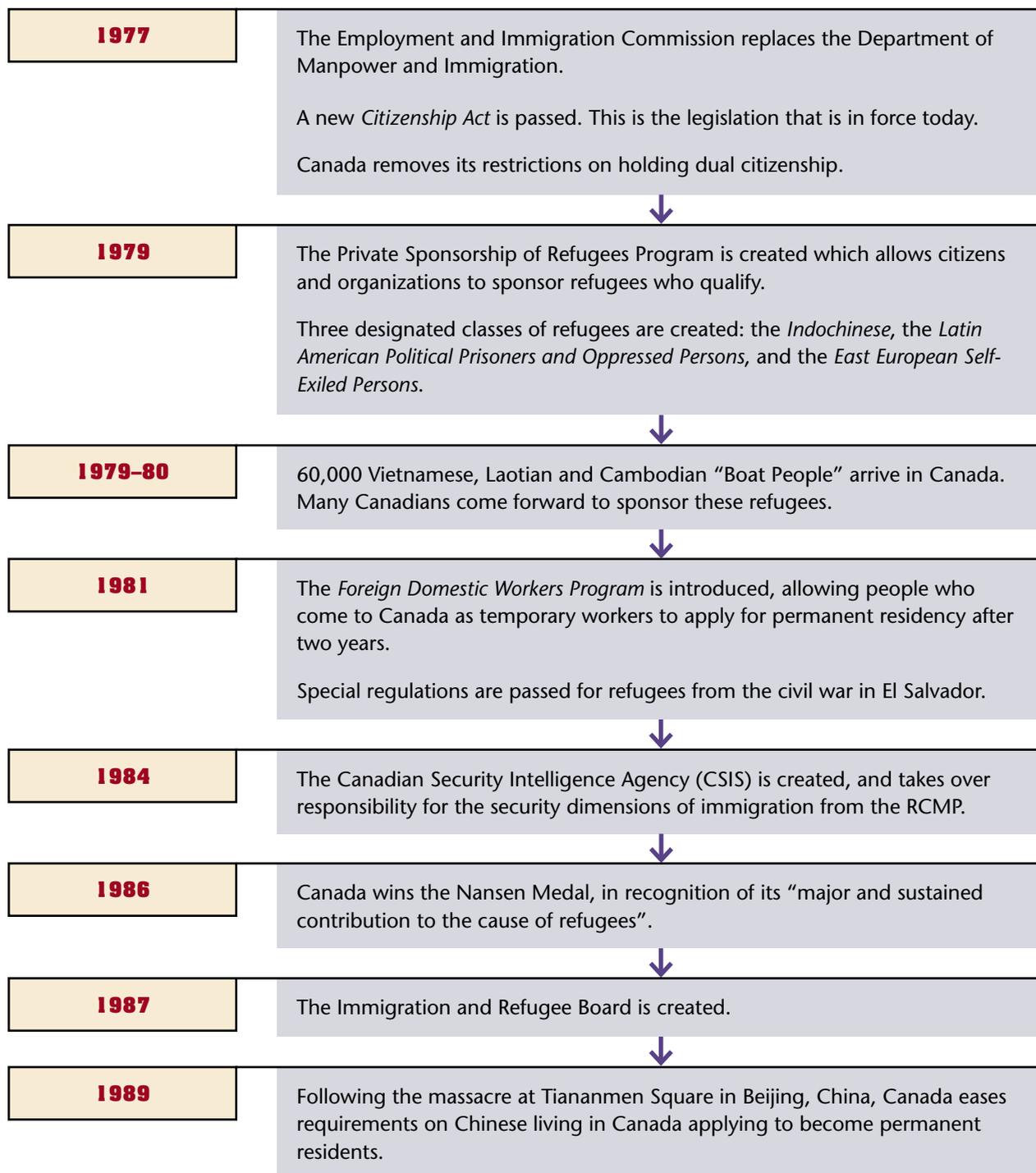
1972

Canada relaxes immigration requirements for Ugandan Asians, who had been expelled from Uganda by President Idi Amin.



1976

A new *Immigration Act* is passed. This *Act* is still the cornerstone of immigration policy. It spells out the principles and goals of Canadian immigration policy, as well as the requirement for the Government to set immigration targets and to consult with the Provinces on matters relating to immigration.



continued on next page

TIMELINE OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN IMMIGRATION DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

1993

Canada becomes the first country in the world to introduce guidelines for refugees that recognize persecution based on gender.

Prime Minister Kim Campbell moves immigration into the Department of Public Security.

Later that year, the newly-elected Government under Jean Chrétien moves immigration to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.



1995

The Government imposes a *Right of Landing Fee* on all immigrants and refugees who wish to become permanent residents.



1996

17.4% of Canadian residents are first-generation immigrants.



1997

The Government introduces a class of refugees for “undocumented persons”, which allows some refugees without adequate travel documents to land in Canada. The class is limited to refugees from Somalia and Afghanistan.

The Government introduces the “Humanitarian Designated Class”, which expands eligibility for refugee status. It introduces a second tier of refugees for people who are outside the *Geneva Convention* definition.



1999

Canada agrees to take in Kosovar refugees from Macedonia in response to the Kosovo War.

Amendments to the *Extradition Act* and other legislation are adopted to allow for the extradition of suspects who have managed to enter Canada, but are wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for their roles in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, which claimed 800,000 victims.

Adapted from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Canadian Council for Refugees.

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- p. 49 – LAC
- p. 50 – LAC, PA-034014
- p. 51 – Leonard Frank/Handout/Vancouver Public Library Special Collections
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Index

Note: A page number in *italic* indicates a picture or table.

9/11 terror attacks, 83–84, 83

A

Aboriginal people

border crossings, 42

Loyalists, 29

Riel Rebellion, 44

African Americans

breaking of colour barrier in sport, 71

discouraged from immigrating to Canada in early 1900s, 48

immigration to Canada as slaves, as settlers and as runaway slaves, 32–33

Loyalists, 29–30

Africans, discouraged from

immigrating to Canada in early 1900s, 47

American Civil War, 41

American Revolution, 28, 30, 44

Argentina, Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, 65

Asians

discouraged from immigrating to Canada in early 1900s, 47, 49–52

discouraged from immigrating to Canada post-war, 74

restrictions between the wars, 57

Asiatic riots, 48, 49

asylum seekers, 18

Atkey, Ron, 77

Australia

criminals sent to, 28

illegal immigration to, 18

impact of immigration, 15

Austria

immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57

immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47

immigration to Canada stopped during World War I, 56

B

backlog, in refugee and immigrant claims, 78, 82, 90

Bangladesh, immigrants to

Canada in early 1900s, 49

Bata, Thomas, 63

Battle of Little Big Horn, 42

Bedouin people, 13

Belgium

immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57

Jewish refugees, 9, 11

Berenson, Lawrence, 9

Bill of Rights (1958), 75

Blackburn, Lucie, 34

Blackburn, Ruth, 34

Blackburn, Thornton, 34

Black Loyalists, 29–30

Blair, F.C., 20, 65, 65, 67–68

Borden, Robert, 56

Brantford, Ontario, 30

Brant, Joseph, 29, 30, 30

Brazil, Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, 65

Britain

see also United Kingdom

early immigrants to Canada, 27–28, 30–31

immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57

immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 45, 47

immigrants to Canada post-war, 72

Jewish refugees, 9

Jewish refugees from Nazi

Europe, 65, 68

policies on extraditing

Americans, 41

slavery, 32, 32–33

British Columbia

becomes province, 41

fees charged to immigrants in early 1900s, 50

gold rush, 31

immigration in early 2000s, 88

immigration in late 1800s, 43 and voyage of *Komagata Maru*, 50–52

Bru, Laredo, 8

Brunelle, Hervé Edgar, 66

Bulgaria, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57

C

Calgary, Alberta, 16

Cambodia, refugees from, 77

Canada

changing policies in latter half of 1900s, 72–79

Canada, *continued*

Confederation, 25, 26

as cultural mosaic, 76

human rights improvements post-war, 75

illegal immigration to, 18

immigration in early 1900s, 44–48, 46–48, 54

immigration in late 1800s, 42–44

immigration policies, 20–21

impact of immigration, 15

Irish immigrants, 35

Jewish refugees from Nazi

Europe, 12, 61–68, 65

receives Nansen Medal, 19, 78

recent immigration, 15, 16, 24

tense relationship with United States in 1800s, 41

welcoming reputation, 3, 4, 19, 45, 68

Canada Border Services Agency, 84

Canadian Constitution Act (1982), 76

Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Persecution, 61–63

Canadian Security Intelligence Service, 78

caregivers, as temporary workers, 17

Champlain, Samuel de, 27

Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 76

China

immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 49, 50

immigrants to Canada in early 2000s, 87

immigrants to Canada pre-1981, 87

Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, 65

Chinese Immigration Act (1885), 49

cholera, 35

Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 20

citizenship ceremonies, 15, 22

citizenship, dual, 15

Colborne, Sir John, 34

Colombia

immigrants to Canada in early 2000s, 87

Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, 65

Confederation, 25, 26, 41

Constitutional Act (1791), 29

- Cuba, discrimination against refugees, 8
- Czechoslovakia, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57, 63
- D**
- Daly, Dominic J., 37
- decolonization, 74
- Denmark, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
- Detroit, Michigan, 34
- Diefenbaker, John, 75
- disease
- among early immigrants, 35, 36, 38–39
 - as reason for deportation, 48
- displaced persons, 72–73, 75
- Dominican Republic, immigrants sending money home to, 89
- Doukhobors, 47
- drug crimes, 90
- dysentery, 35
- E**
- earthquake, Haiti, 2, 3
- economy
- downturn and upturn in late 1950s, 75
 - immigrants sending money home, 88
 - post-war boom, 72–75
 - role in immigration policies, 79, 81
- Edmonton, Alberta, 16
- Elizabeth II, 76
- enemy aliens, 56, 57, 68
- Estonia, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
- Europe
- illegal immigration to, 18
 - immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 45, 46, 47, 53, 54
 - immigrants to Canada post-war, 72
- F**
- Fairclough, Ellen, 75
- fever, 35
- filles de roi*, 27
- Finland, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
- Ford, John, 36
- foreign credentials, 82
- France
- early immigrants to Canada, 27
 - immigrants sending money home to, 88
- France, *continued*
- immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
 - immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
 - Jewish refugees, 9, 11
- G**
- Germany
- discrimination against Jews and others, 6, 7
 - Hitler comes to power, 6
 - immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
 - immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
 - immigrants to Canada post-war, 72
 - immigrants to Canada pre-1981, 87
 - immigration to Canada stopped during World War I, 56
 - Jewish emigration from, 6, 8–9, 11, 12, 73, 75
- Gimli, Manitoba, 43
- globalization, 81
- Gold Rush, 31
- governments (federal and provincial) changing roles and responsibilities, 79–80
- land organization, 43
 - role in immigration, 20–21, 40, 42–43
- Governor General of Canada (Michaëlle Jean), 2, 2
- Graham, Gwethalyn, 62–63
- Grassett, George, 38
- Grau San Martin, Ramón, 8
- Great Depression, 57
- Greece, immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
- H**
- Haiti
- earthquake, 2, 3
 - immigrants sending money home to, 88, 89
- Hamilton, Ontario, Irish immigrants, 38
- head tax, 49
- Heydrich, Reinhard, 8
- Hitler, Adolph
- comes to power, 6
 - King's view on, 64
 - position on Jews, 60
- Holland, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
- Holocaust survivors, 72–73, 72, 73, 74, 75
- Hong Kong, immigrants from, 78
- Hudson's Bay Company, 31, 41, 43
- human rights
- improvements post-war, 74, 75
 - role in immigration policy changes, 79, 81
- human smuggling, 90
- Hungary
- immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
 - immigration to Canada stopped during World War I, 56
- Hutterites, 56
- I**
- Iceland, emigrants from, 43
- immigration
- after World War II, 72–75
 - to Canada, 15, 19, 20–21
 - discriminatory practices, 46–51, 54–61, 68
 - during World War I, 55–56
 - graph of annual numbers, 1867–2006, 81
 - illegal, 18, 19, 82
 - multiculturalism policy, 76
 - policies from 1867 to early 1900s, 41–52
 - policies in Canada in the 1960s, 75
 - policies in Canada's early history, 24, 30–31
 - policy timeline since 1970s, 77–78
 - qualifications for, today, 15, 84
 - restrictions between the wars, 57–59
 - temporary residents in Canada, 17, 17, 19
 - twentieth century timeline, 93–100
 - between the wars, 57–68
- Immigration Act* (1869), 42
- Immigration Act* (1908), 50
- Immigration Act* (1910), 48
- Immigration Act* (1919), 57
- Immigration Act* (1976), 20
- Immigration and Refugee Board, 78
- Immigration Appeal Board, 75, 77
- India
- immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 49, 50–51
 - immigrants to Canada in early 2000s, 87
 - immigrants to Canada pre-1981, 87

- India, *continued*
 industrialization, 30
 international trade, 74
 Iran, immigrants to Canada in early 2000s, 87
 Ireland
 emigration from, 31, 37–40
 potato famine, 35–36, 37
 Ireland Park, Toronto, 38
 Iroquois, in colonial Canada, 30, 30
 Italy
 immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
 immigrants to Canada post-war, 72
 immigrants to Canada pre-1981, 87
- J**
 Jamaica, immigrants sending money home to, 89
 Japan
 immigrants and offspring encouraged to return to, post-war, 68
 immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 49, 50
 Jean, Michaëlle, 2
 Jews
 attempts to emigrate from Germany, 6, 8, 11, 12
 discouraged from immigrating to Canada in early 1900s, 47
 discrimination against, 6, 55, 58–59, 60–61, 63
 refugees between the wars, 61–68
 refugees post-war, 73, 75
 refugees to Cuba, 8–9
 Jordan, immigrants sending money home to, 89
- K**
 Kenney, Jason, 20
 Kingston, Ontario, 31
 King, William Lyon Mackenzie
 immigration policies post-war, 73–74
 quotation on desirable immigrants, 55
 stance on Jewish immigrants and refugees, 63–64, 65–66, 67–68
Komagata Maru (ship), 50–52, 50, 51
Kristallnacht, 6, 7
- L**
 language, of immigrants to Canada, 15
 Laos, refugees from, 77
 Lapointe, Ernest, 68
 Latvia, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
 Laurier, Wilfrid, 44
 Lesotho, immigrants sending money home to, 89
 Lithuania, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
 Loyalists, 28–30, 32
 Luxembourg, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
- M**
 Macdonald, Sir John A.
 immigration policy, 42
 quotation on desirable immigrants, 54
 Manitoba
 immigrants in early 2000s, 88
 immigration in late 1800s, 43
 Marshall Plan, 72
 McElderry, Edward, 38
 media literacy, 85–86
 Mennonites, 44
 Métis people, 44
 Mexico, Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, 65
 migrant workers, 17, 17
 migration
 history, 13–15
 internal, 13
 push and pull factors, 14
 Miller, Scott, 10, 11
 Mohawk Six Nations, 30
 money
 required of immigrants in early 1900s, 48
 required of immigrants today, 15, 84
 Montreal, Quebec
 immigration to, 16
 labelled as hub of crime in 1800s, 41
 Montreal Royals baseball team, 71
 Mulroney, Brian, 78
 multiculturalism
 benefits, 80
 challenges, 79
 policy introduced, 76
 program moved to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 20
- N**
 Nansen, Fridtjof, 18, 18
 Nansen Refugee Award (Nansen Medal), 18–19, 24, 68, 78
 Nazis
 invasion of other countries, 11
 policies against Jews and other people, 6, 61
 Netherlands
 immigrants to Canada pre-1981, 87
 Jewish refugees, 9, 11
 New Brunswick, Black Loyalists, 29, 29–30
 Newfoundland, immigration to, 31
 Night of Broken Glass, 6, 7
 nomads, 13, 13
 Norway, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
 Nova Scotia, Sikh refugees in, 78
 Nuremberg Laws, 6
- O**
 O’Callaghan, Joan, 58–59
 oil rig, 13
 Oliver, Frank, 47, 47
 Ontario
 education on multiculturalism, 80
 immigration in early 1900s, 44
 immigration in early 2000s, 88
 immigration in late 1800s, 44
 immigration of refugees post-war, 72
 immigration policies in recent years, 79–80
 orphans, from Haiti, 2, 3
 Osgoode, William, 32
 Ottawa, Ontario
 immigration to, 16
 Rideau Canal, 31
- P**
 Pakistan
 immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 49
 immigrants to Canada in early 2000s, 87
 Pearson, Lester B., 75
 Philippines
 immigrants sending money home to, 88, 89
 immigrants to Canada in early 2000s, 87
 points system, 75, 84
 Poland
 immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57

- Poland, *continued*
immigrants to Canada post-war, 72
immigrants to Canada pre-1981, 87
- polls, 85–86
- population trends
aging population, 87
changing ethnicity patterns, 87–88
immigrants who send money home, 88–89
lower birth rate, 86
population as of 2010, 87
where immigrants come from, 87
where immigrants settle, 88
- Portugal
immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
immigrants to Canada pre-1981, 87
- Power, Michael, 37, 38
- provinces
Confederation Conference (1864), 25
role in immigration policy, 20–21, 40, 42–43, 79–80
- pull factors, 14, 19, 27
- push factors, 14, 19, 27
- Q**
- Quebec
discrimination against Jews, 61, 66–67
early emigrants from, 44
early settlers, 29
immigration in early 1900s, 44
immigration in early 2000s, 88
immigration policies in recent years, 20, 79
reasonable accommodation of customs and practices, 90
tensions with English Canada in 1960s, 76
- Quebec Confederation Conference (1864), 25
- R**
- railway, transcontinental, 42, 43, 45, 49
- reasonable accommodation (of customs and practices), 90
- Red River Settlement, 31
- refugees
as 25% of immigrants to Canada, 78
accurately identifying, 90
- refugees, *continued*
backlog in claims, 78, 82, 90
coming through United States, 78
from Darfur, 18
definition, 18
following World War II, 72, 75
German Jews, on *St. Louis*, 5, 8–12, 14
and Nansen Medal, 18–19, 24, 68, 78
policies tightened after 9/11, 84
policy changes in 1980s, 78
slaves, 33
Tamils, 82
from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, 77, 77
between the wars, 61, 61–63
relatives, sponsoring, 75
remittances to home countries, 88–89
Rickey, Branch, 71
Rideau Canal, 31
Riel Rebellion, 44
Riverton, Manitoba, 43
Robinson, Jackie, 71, 71
Romania
immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
immigrants to Canada in early 2000s, 87
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 59, 78
- Russia
immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
Mennonite emigrants from, 44
- Rwanda, 100
- Ryan, Thomas, 39
- S**
- Scandinavia, immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
- Schroeder, Gustav, 11, 11
- security concerns, post-9/11, 84
- Seven Years War, 28
- Shing Dok, Lee, 49
- Sierra Leone, 30
- Sifton, Sir Clifford, 20, 44–47, 53, 54
- Sikhs, 50, 78
- Simcoe, John Graves, 28, 28, 32
- Singh, Gurdit, 50
- Sioux people, 42
- Sitting Bull, 42, 42
- slaves, 32–33, 34
- smallpox, 35
- South Korea
immigrants sending money home to, 88
immigrants to Canada in early 2000s, 87
- Spain, immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
- sports players
breaking of colour barrier, 71
as temporary workers, 17
- Sri Lanka
immigrants to Canada in 1980s, 78
immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 49
- statistics
on population trends, 86–89
understanding, 85–86
- St. Louis* (ship)
Canadian response, 65, 67–68
map of voyage, 10
in port at Antwerp, 11
in port at Havana, 10
refugees on board, 5, 12, 14, 79
significance, 79
timeline of voyage, 8–9
- Sweden, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
- Swinson, Richard, 77
- Switzerland, immigrants to Canada between the wars, 57
- T**
- Tamil refugees, 82
- Tewell, Harold, 8
- Toronto, Ontario
Blackburn case, 34
Irish immigrants, 37–39
multiculturalism, 76, 80
recent immigration to, 16
waterfront, 37
- Townsend, John B., 39
- townships, 43
- Treaty of Paris*, 27, 28
- Trudeau, Pierre, 76, 76
- Tubman, Harriet, 32
- typhus, 36
- U**
- Ukraine
immigrants considered enemy aliens, 56, 56
immigrants to Canada in early 1900s, 47
immigration to Canada stopped during World War I, 56
- Underground Railroad, 32–33, 34

United Kingdom
 see also Britain
 immigrants sending money
 home to, 88
 immigrants to Canada in early
 2000s, 87
 immigrants to Canada pre-1981,
 87

United Nations
 Declaration of Human Rights, 74
 definition of refugees, 18
 *Geneva Convention Relating to the
 Status of Refugees*, 74
 refugee award, 18

United States
 9/11 terror attacks, 83–84
 border crossings, 42, 44
 breaking of colour barrier in
 sport, 71
 early immigrants to Canada, 28,
 30–31
 human rights improvements
 post-war, 74
 illegal immigration to, 18
 immigrants to Canada between
 the wars, 56, 57
 immigrants to Canada in early
 1900s, 45

United States, *continued*
 immigrants to Canada in early
 2000s, 87
 immigrants to Canada pre-1981,
 87
 immigration in early 1900s, 44
 immigration in late 1800s, 43, 44
 impact of immigration, 15
 Irish immigrants, 35, 35–36
 Jewish immigrants, 11
 Jewish refugees from Nazi
 Europe, 65, 67
 Marshall Plan, 72
 as melting pot, 76
 race riots, 34
 report on Jewish refugees in
 Cuba, 8
 slavery, 32–33
 tense relationship with Canada
 in 1800s, 41
 urban poverty, 46

V
Vancouver, British Columbia
 Asiatic riots, 48, 49
 recent immigration to, 16
 and voyage of *Komagata Maru*,
 51, 52

Van Horne, Sir William Cornelius, 53
Vietnam, refugees from, 77
visible minorities, 82
von Neurath, Konstantin, 64

W
Walsh, James M., 42
war crimes, 90
War Measures Act (1914), 56
War of 1812, 31, 32
Wartime Elections Act (1917), 56
Willis family, 36
Winnipeg, Manitoba
 immigration in late 1800s, 43
 recent immigration to, 16
 urban poverty, 46
Woodsworth, J.S., 55
workers, temporary, 17, 17
work permits, for temporary
 workers, 17
World War I, 55–56, 79
World War II, 65, 68

Y
Yugoslavia
 immigrants to Canada between
 the wars, 57
 immigrants to Canada pre-1981, 87

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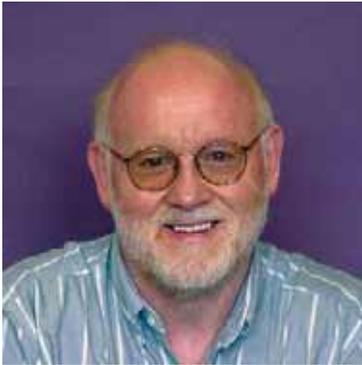
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