5 The Newcomers

In the four years after Confederation, Canada grew to nearly 10 times its original size. Rupert's Land, the North-West Territories, and British Columbia joined the original four provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec. By 1871, Canada was 40 times bigger than Great Britain.

Immigration has always been important to Canada. In the 19th century, the Irish came to Upper and Lower Canada to escape famine in Ireland. African-Americans came north on the **Underground Railway** to escape slavery in the United States. The Fraser Valley gold rush in 1858 brought Chinese and Americans to Canada.

Still, by 1871, Canada did not have a large population. There were fewer than four million people – less than were living in the city of London, England! Of those, thousands of people were **emigrating** from Canada to the United States every month. They were looking for better jobs or a warmer climate. In fact, more people left Canada in the 1880s than were born in the country.

For that reason, Canada's government began to promote **immigration**. It sent agents overseas to raise interest in Canada, especially the Prairies. Canada opened immigration offices in Britain and in Europe.

Canada's first Immigration Act passed in 1869. It set up an *open-door* policy. This meant that there were very few limits on who could immigrate to Canada.

AS YOU READ, THINK ABOUT

- how the Canadian government promoted settlement in Canada
- who the immigrants were, and why they wanted to come to Canada
- what immigrants found when they arrived here
- how immigrants built their homes and farmed the land

Figure 5.1 In Europe, thousands of posters and pamphlets promoted Canada. The poster on the right is in Dutch. It was one of many published in foreign languages to attract immigrants from northern Europe.

Meanwhile, the Homestead Act encouraged immigrants to settle in the West. It offered them land at very low prices. Sixty hectares of land cost only $10.

The first big wave of immigration to Canada began in the 1890s. Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier created a new cabinet position: **minister** of immigration. Clifford Sifton, a lawyer and businessman, was Canada's first minister of immigration. He used several methods to boost immigration. His department produced posters advertising Canada. In 1902, Sifton tried a new form of promotion. He hired Canada's first filmmaker, James Freer of Brandon, Manitoba, to make films promoting Canada for audiences in Britain.

The Canadian government's efforts came at a good time. Europe was changing, and millions of people were already thinking about immigrating to Canada. In all, more than 3.5 million immigrants came to Canada between Confederation and the start of the First World War in 1914. Most arrived after 1900.

While some immigrants left Canada for the United States, those who stayed greatly changed Canadian life. By 1914, nearly half of all Canadians were either immigrants or the children of immigrants. The number of people in Canada probably would have shrunk in the years after Confederation were it not for immigration. That was because so many Canadians moved to the United States.

DID YOU KNOW? You emigrate *from* a country, you immigrate *to* a country.

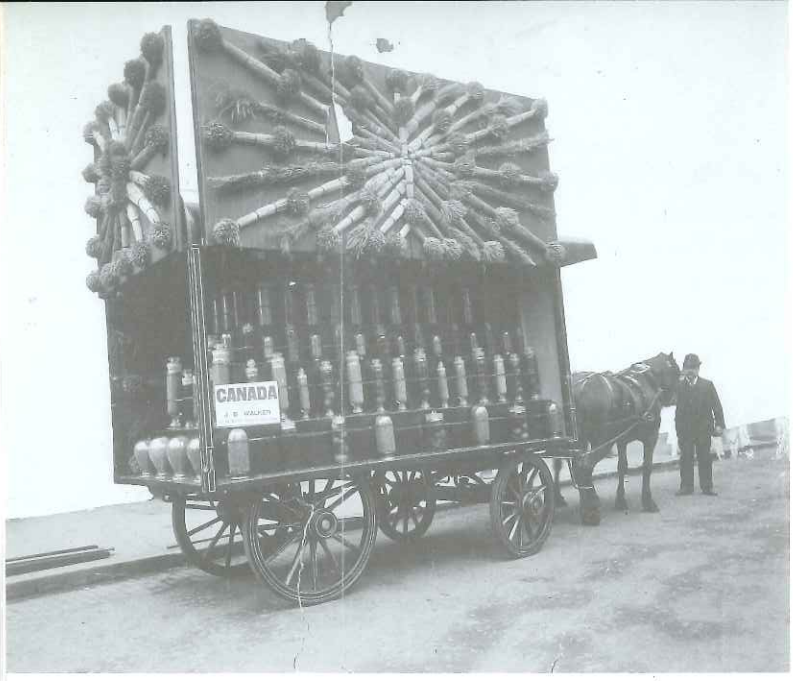


Figure 5.2 This wagon, full of corn, grain, and vegetables, was taken across Scotland in 1904. It advertised the rewards of immigrating to Canada. To Clifford Sifton, minister of immigration, the tough farmers of northern Scotland were the right kind of settlers for the Canadian West.

Most of Canada's new immigrants still came from Britain. However, more and more were arriving from other parts of the world. Germans, Ukrainians, Italians, Greeks, Scandinavians, Poles, Jews, and many others from across Europe immigrated to Canada. Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and others crossed the Pacific Ocean. Canada was a multicultural country long before people called it one.

All new immigrants hoped they would find a better life in Canada. Of course, that did not always happen. The Canadian government may have wanted immigrants, but few newcomers felt welcome.

Immigrants to Canada, 1896 to 1914

1896	16 835	*1906*	211 653
1897	21 716	*1907*	272 409
1898	31 900	*1908*	143 326
1899	44 543	*1909*	173 694
1900	41 681	*1910*	286 839
1901	55 747	*1911*	331 288
1902	89 102	*1912*	375 756
1903	138 660	*1913*	400 870
1904	131 252	*1914*	150 484
1905	141 465		

"The Last, Best West"[1]

Immigrants came to Canada from all over the world in the years after Confederation. In ports such as Montreal and Quebec City, people must have heard a dizzying number of languages every day: English, Gaelic, Dutch, German, Italian, Greek, Russian, Polish, Yiddish, and many others.

Some of the newcomers settled in the Maritimes or in eastern Canada. Others went south to the United States. Most travelled west on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Immigrants found all kinds of work. Some became doctors, teachers, lawyers, police officers, or even government officials. Many worked in mines, logging camps, factories, and on the railroads. Some became servants for the rich. Many became farmers on the Prairies.

The population of the Prairies soared as immigrants flooded in. The number of people in Manitoba grew nearly 20 times between 1871 and 1911. The number of people in Saskatchewan and Alberta grew four times between 1901 and 1911. Small towns such as Calgary, Regina, and Winnipeg grew rapidly into big cities. When Manitoba became a province in 1870, Winnipeg had just 3000 people. By 1911, it had 150 000 people. The city became known as the "gateway to the West."

The **influx** of immigrants created many problems for the Métis and First Nations peoples. Immigrants were promised land that Métis and First Nations people had lived on for generations.

Reasons for migrating

Why did immigrants come to Canada? Many left their homelands because conditions in their own countries made it hard to stay there.

Some groups of immigrants hoped to escape poverty in their own countries. Some of their countries were overpopulated. This meant there were few jobs and not enough land to farm. This was the case for most immigrants from Britain. It was also true for many of the Italians, Germans,

The *Empress of Ireland*

The *Empress of Ireland* was a ship that sailed between Canada and Liverpool, England. In all, the *Empress* made 96 voyages across the Atlantic Ocean. It carried more than 100 000 passengers to Canada. This included thousands of immigrants. On May 28, 1914, the *Empress* left Quebec with nearly 1500 passengers. Among them were several hundred immigrants going home to visit relatives. At 2:00 AM, in heavy fog, the *Empress* hit another ship. Heavily damaged, the *Empress* rolled over and sank, and 1012 people were drowned. It was a major disaster – just as the sinking of the *Titanic* had been in 1912.

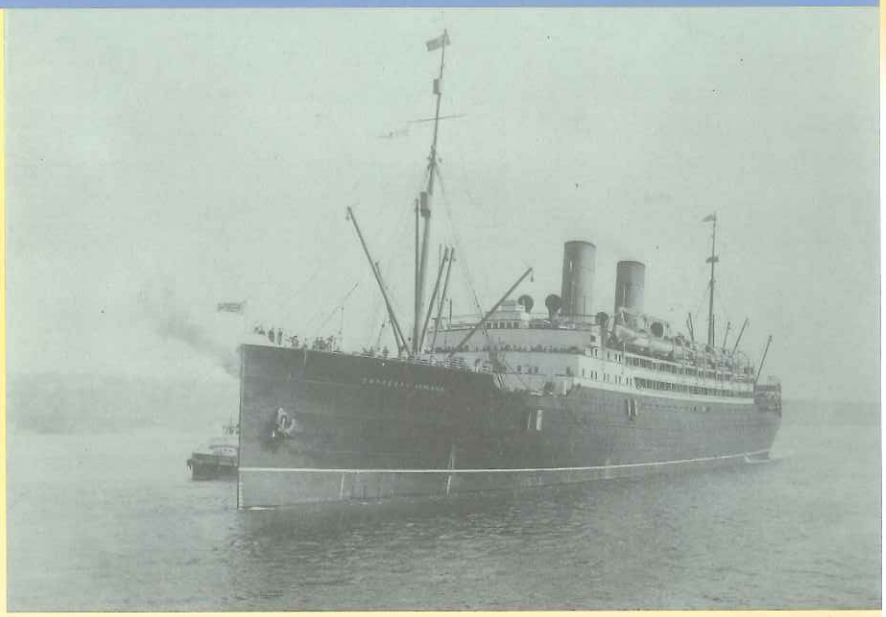


Figure 5.3 The *Empress of Ireland*

Ukrainians, and Poles who came to Canada before the First World War.

Some people hoped to escape religious **persecution.** These included Jews escaping the violence they faced in Russia. Doukhobors [*DOO-kuh-bores*] also left Russia. They built a community of 6000 in British Columbia. **Pacifist** Mennonites came to Canada from Russia, Germany, and even the United States so they would not have to serve in their national armies. They built **homestead**s in Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

Some people escaped natural disasters. Immigrants from Iceland left after ash from a volcano ruined their island.

Immigrants from China came to Canada's West Coast for one of two reasons. Some hoped to strike it rich in the gold rush. Others wanted jobs building the Canadian Pacific Railway.

When looking for new places to settle, these people found that Canada promised many of the things they were looking for.

For most immigrants, Canada's promise of cheap farmland was the main reason to leave their homelands. Those who settled in Canada's cities set up their own neighbourhoods. They started churches and newspapers and opened stores and restaurants.

DID YOU KNOW? More immigrants arrived in Canada in 1913 than in any other year in Canadian history. More than 400 000 people arrived that year. That is more than in the first 10 years after Confederation put together.

1 The phrase "The Last, Best West" was used to market Canada to immigrants in Europe. It refers to the fact that all the best land in the western United States was already taken, but that there was still lots of good farmland in the Canadian West.

Figure 5.4 Dutch immigrants to Manitoba, 1910.

Figure 5.5 A family of Russian Jews, around 1911, at Quebec City.

DID YOU KNOW? The United States was the second biggest source of immigrants arriving in Canada.

Figure 5.6 A family from Galicia (a region now part of Ukraine and Poland) at Quebec immigration sheds

Figure 5.7 Scottish crofters prepare to leave Britain for a new life in Canada, early 1900s.

Figure 5.8 This cartoon appeared in an unknown newspaper in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as settlers from foreign countries flooded the prairies. Many Canadians were concerned about how the newcomers would fit in.

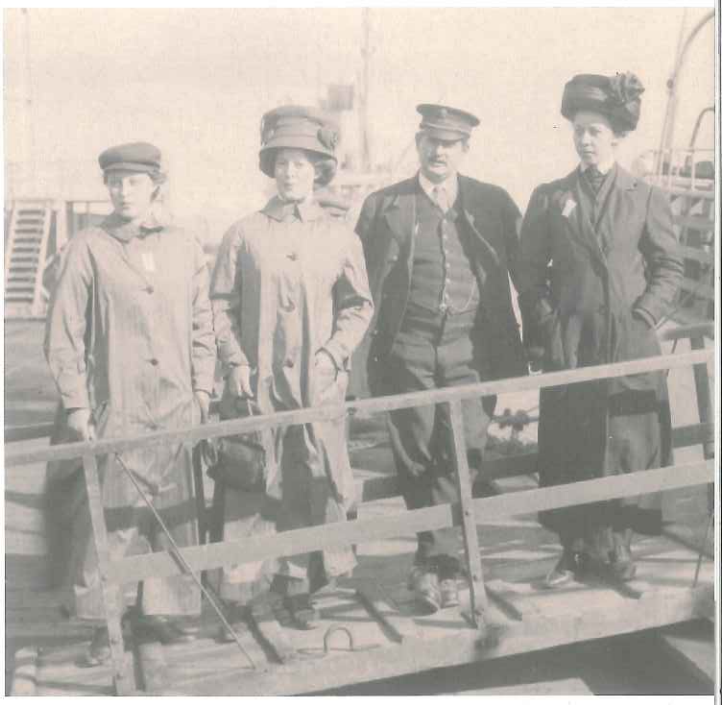


Figure 5.9 Norwegian immigrants, about 1911

The Republic of New Iceland

In 1875, the Canadian government made one of the most unusual reserves in Canadian history. It was called the Republic of New Iceland. It was created on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg for a group of about 1500 Icelanders. They had fled volcanoes and other disasters in their homeland. Their biggest settlement was the town of Gimli, named after a place in Norse mythology. In New Iceland, the settlers hoped to make a life like the one they had left behind. Unfortunately, disease and hunger nearly destroyed New Iceland. Many settlers moved to Winnipeg. In 1881, New Iceland became part of Manitoba. Today, more than 70 000 Canadians are descended from Icelanders.

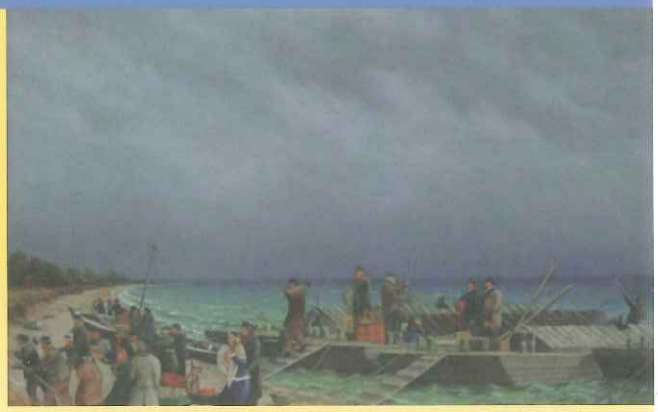


Figure 5.10 This painting, *The Landing*, by Arni Sigurdsson, shows Icelandic immigrants arriving at New Iceland on Lake Winnipeg.

Challenges in a New Land

In 1886, 28-year-old Conrad Anderson and his wife, Jacobine, settled near Calgary. Conrad found a job in a lumber mill. Later the family bought a homestead for $10. As farmers, the family lived through **drought** and heavy snow. They even lived through an outbreak of smallpox in nearby towns. In some difficult years, there was almost nothing to eat but wild rabbits. Conrad and Jacobine's son remembers a mealtime prayer that went like this:

> For rabbit roasted and rabbit fried,
> For rabbit cooked and rabbit dried,
> For rabbit young and rabbit old,
> For rabbit hot and rabbit cold,
> For rabbit tender and rabbit tough,
> We thank thee Lord, we've had enough.

Conrad and Jacobine were immigrants from Norway, a Scandinavian country 7000 kilometres away. The Andersons were like thousands of other immigrants. They found that life on Canada's Prairies was not everything that the government had promised in its posters, pamphlets, and movies. They struggled through many hard years on their prairie homestead. At home, they spoke Norwegian.

The Anderson children went to school with classmates from many different backgrounds. In school, they learned to speak English. They were taught Canadian history. They remained proud of their Norwegian heritage. However, they became more used to their new country than their parents did. In fact, Conrad and Jacobine's youngest son became a veterinarian at the Calgary Zoo.

The Andersons settled in a place where other Scandinavians lived. Some were their relatives. Immigrants from one region or background often settled near one another. This made the move to Canada, with its different languages, laws, and customs, much easier. By living together in communities, new immigrants could keep some of their own culture. They would worship together and shop in stores owned by people they knew.

Unfortunately, many immigrants faced **discrimination.** This was especially true for those who settled in cities. They had more day-to-day contact with other Canadians. Employers were sometimes unfair. They made immigrants work long hours for less pay than other workers – and fired them if they complained. Some groups were better treated than others. Settlers from the British Isles usually had an easier time fitting in. On the other hand, African-Americans and Asian immigrants were ill treated almost everywhere they went.

Many African-Americans had come to Canada to escape slavery before the American Civil War. After slavery was ended in the United

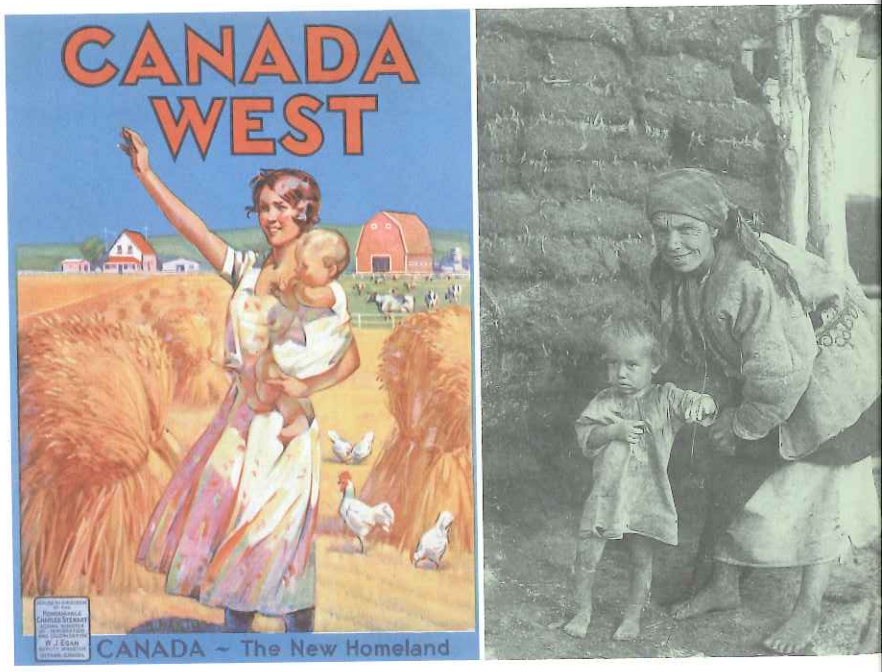


Figure 5.11 The poster on the left was made to show that Canada was a perfect place for immigrants. The photograph on the right shows a real immigrant woman with her baby near Yorkton, Saskatchewan, in 1903. How does the photo on the right differ from the poster? How is it the same?

KEEP THE NEGRO ACROSS THE LINE

THE WINNIPEG BOARD OF TRADE TAKES DECIDED ACTION

Not Good Settlers or Agreeable Neighbors Either

Winnipeg, Man., April 19.—The Winnipeg board of trade this evening passed a strongly worded resolution, which will be forwarded to Ottawa, condemning the admission of negroes into Canada as settlers.

It is set forth in the resolution that these new-comers are not successful farmers nor agreeable neighbors for white settlers. The board also passed a resolution similar to that of the Manufacturers' association on the proposal to amend the railway act to enable the railway commission to suspend railway tariffs or charges on appeals from patrons of the railways against which grievances are held.

Figure 5.12 Article in the *Albertan* newspaper, 1910

States in 1865, some freed slaves came north to start a new life. However, they were often treated badly in Canada.

Many thought African-Americans were not equal to other Canadians. Words such as *menace* and *troublesome* were used by politicians and newspaper editors to describe them. In 1911, an article in the *Manitoba Free Press* said that African-Americans could not survive long in Canada's cold climate because their ancestors had come from Africa. It was a strange thing to say. Just two years earlier, Matthew Henson, an African-American man, had become world famous for co-discovering the North Pole!

Asian settlers were also treated badly. Chinese immigrants often faced discrimination. Chinese people had been coming to Canada since the 18th century. However, large numbers did not begin to arrive until the era of the gold rush. Many Chinese prospectors came from San Francisco and eventually set up communities in British Columbia.

In the 1880s, nearly 15 000 Chinese people immigrated to Canada. Most were young men seeking work. Many found jobs building the western end of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). For this dangerous work, Chinese immigrants were paid half of what other workers earned. The CPR was finished in 1885. At that time, the Canadian government decided it no longer needed Chinese immigrants. It forced Chinese immigrants to pay a *head tax* (entry tax) when they arrived. This was to keep them from coming to Canada.

DID YOU KNOW? To fit in, many immigrants changed the spelling or pronunciation of their names to something easier for English or French Canadians to remember. The name Schmidt, for example, was often changed to Smith.

Figure 5.13 This family was unusual, because the government did not want Chinese men in Canada to bring their wives and families from China. They would have to pay an expensive head tax. The government wanted Chinese people as workers, but not as citizens.

The Home Children

In the 1860s, a visitor to London, England, wrote about the city's "swarms of children" who were "dirty and barefoot." These children were a common sight in the crowded slums of 19th-century England. **Social reformers** worried about the kind of future they would have. Would they turn to crime to make a living? Some thought they should send the orphans and poor children to Canada, Australia, and other parts of the British Empire. As a poem from the time went,

> Take them away! Take them away!
> Out of the gutter, the ooze, and slime...
> They'll prove a blessing to other lands –
> Here, if they linger, a curse.

The reformers thought these children would have a better life working in Canada or Australia than living in England's slums. As one woman remembered, years after being sent to Canada, "We were so very poor. My father was slowly dying from tuberculosis from working in the coal mines." Her parents were among the thousands of poor who sent their children across the sea, hoping they would find a better life. These children became known as *home children*.

Most of the children sent to Canada were between the ages of eight and fourteen. However, some were as young as four. Some of the children were orphans. Others had to leave behind their parents and friends. "I was so frightened of leaving the only home I'd ever had, leaving my school friends, my only sisters, and of leaving my best friend," one home child recalled. Usually the children had no say in the matter. Many young children did not even know what was happening. Most never saw their parents again.

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean by steamship was often frightening for these children. For most, their arrival in Halifax or Montreal was just the start of their trip. Once they were in Canada, the children were placed in special *receiving homes*. They stayed in these homes until they were chosen by a family.

Some children were adopted by loving parents. Others became servants or farm workers. If they were lucky, these children worked for families who cared for them. Good families made sure the children attended school, and even paid them wages. Many other children, however, were treated badly.

"I would get up at 4:00 AM and go to bed at six or seven in the evening," one home child recalled. "You would work all day: harness the horses, clean out the stables, plow, cultivate, and **harrow**. The farmer wouldn't feed me. I would steal food from the barn."

One girl, whose family was very cruel, often thought about running away. "Sometimes I would go upstairs and I would sit and cry and I would pack my bag," she remembered. "Then I would sit down and think *where* am I going to run away to? And I would unpack my bag." Supervisors were supposed to make sure that the children were well treated. Often this did not happen.

Once they were 18 years old, the children could do what they wanted. Some continued to work for the families who had chosen them. Others left and made lives for themselves in Canada. A few went back to England.

Nearly 100 000 British children immigrated to Canada without their parents. Most of them arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, children continued to arrive every year until the late 1920s.

DID YOU KNOW? When they grew up, many home children tried to find their families. Few were successful. It is estimated that close to four million Canadians are descended from the 100 000 home children who came to Canada.

Dr. Barnardo's Homes

Thomas John Barnardo was born in Dublin, Ireland. In the 1850s, he went to study medicine in England. There he came across homeless orphans in London's poor East End. He soon started a charity that sent poor children to homes in countries of the British Empire. More than 30 000 of these children were sent to Canada. Perhaps Dr. Barnardo wanted to help children because he had had sadness in his own life. Of his seven children, three died from sickness at a young age.

Barnardo and other child-welfare reformers of this time thought they were doing the right thing. However, some people think that sending children away created as much misery as it prevented.

Figure 5.14 A young boy plows a field at a farm in Russell, Manitoba. The farm was run by Dr. Barnardo's organization. It trained boys from Britain to be farm labourers.

Figure 5.15 These are some of the 30 000 "Barnardo Children" sent to Canada from Britain between Confederation and the First World War.

A Land of Plenty

Though life was often hard, most immigrants were glad they came to Canada. Many were still sure that Canada was a land of opportunity. Poverty and **prejudice** had been part of life in Europe and Asia, too. Often it had been much worse there. For instance:

- Throughout Europe and Asia, poor families worked for generations on farms owned by rich landowners. In Canada, they could buy a homestead of their own.
- Unlike in Canada, most poor people in Europe had no hope of sending their children to school.
- Young men in most European countries were made to serve for a time in the military. In Canada, only volunteers served in the army.
- In Europe, religious groups such as the Doukhobors, Mennonites, and Jews had often been attacked for their beliefs. Some had even been killed. In Canada, these groups found the freedom to practise their religions.
- Many immigrants had few political rights in their home countries. In Canada, many of them had the right to vote for the first time.

These are some of the reasons that many immigrants took great pride in their new country. Even today, people come to Canada

Famous Canadian immigrants

Canada's governor general, Michaëlle Jean, was born in Haiti in 1957. In 1968, her family fled the **dictatorship** there and came to Canada. After going to university in Montreal and in Europe, she became a journalist. For many years she worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. There she made documentary films and hosted radio and television programs. In 2005, she became Canada's governor general. Michaëlle Jean has a master's degree in literature and speaks five languages.

Figure 5.16 Michaëlle Jean, shown here around 1999, worked as a journalist before becoming governor general.

Immigrants to Canada have become actors and athletes, painters, poets, and even prime ministers. Here are just a few immigrants who became famous in Canada and around the world:

Figure 5.17 John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, born in Scotland

Figure 5.18 Yousuf Karsh, photographer, born in Turkey

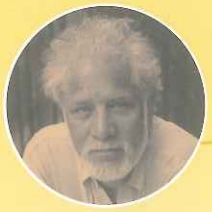


Figure 5.19 Michael Ondaatje, novelist and poet, born in Sri Lanka

Figure 5.20 Adrienne Clarkson, former governor general of Canada, born in Hong Kong

Figure 5.21 Donovan Bailey, Olympic sprinter and gold medallist, born in Jamaica

Figure 5.22 Singers perform at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival, which is held every year in Dauphin, Manitoba. The festival celebrates Ukrainian culture in Canada. Ukrainian people began settling in Canada around 1892.

from all over the world looking for freedom and a better life.

Hardly any region of Canada is untouched by immigrants. In cities, especially, immigrants have made Canada a place of great diversity. Every year, events such as Dragon Boat races in Vancouver, the Icelandic Festival in Gimli, Caribana in Toronto, and the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Montreal celebrate immigrant cultures.

Farming the Land

Imagine a family of settlers had arrived on the sweeping prairie in the middle of the summer. Perhaps the settlers were English or French-Canadians, attracted by the promise of a free homestead. Perhaps they were immigrants from Europe or elsewhere. They might be British, Dutch, Russians, Poles, Germans, Norwegians, or others. Suddenly they found themselves having to start a new life.

The first task was to dig a well for water. On their first nights, they would sleep in a tent or under their wagons. Then they would build a temporary place to live. Usually, these were small huts made of mud and straw. If the settlers were lucky, they already owned or could buy everything they needed to break the sod and plant a small crop for the first season. Many immigrants, however, had never tried farming. Plowing, planting, and harvesting crops were new to them. Even jobs such as yoking an ox or horse to a plow were very hard the first time they tried it.

Figure 5.23 This painting shows life on a settler's homestead near Carberry, Manitoba, at the end of the 19th century.

Figure 5.24 Many immigrant families lived in sod huts. The huts were made from thick prairie grass with strong matted roots known as *sod*. The sod would be cut into strips, then used as building blocks to make walls. Later, families would build more permanent homes.

One writer, E.B. Mitchell, wrote about some of the problems farmers had with livestock:

> The pig falls mysteriously ill and has to be nursed, or a calf is born in a great frost and has to be coaxed into life beside the kitchen stove, or a horse strays from the pasture ... or the poultry get up a vast excitement because they see a white pigeon and think it is a new kind of hawk ... day in day out, in fair or foul weather, in health or sickness, the cows must be driven from pasture and milked, the team-horses watered and fed ... no holiday or change is possible.

Another problem was the cost of farming. Land was cheap; however, farm equipment was not. Nor were the materials needed to build a house to replace their temporary huts. It cost hundreds of dollars to get a farm up and running. This was money that most immigrants did not have. Instead, families

A woman describes life on a prairie farm

In the 1920s, a woman named R.C. Phillips wrote about what life was like for women who lived on Prairie farms:

> *We find farm women getting up early in the morning, preparing breakfast for six, seven, and sometimes more people. Washing dishes, the cream separator and milk utensils, packing school lunches and speeding the children on their way; feeding and caring for the chickens ... hurrying back to the house to make beds, sweep and dust ... ironing, washing, baking, scrubbing, to say nothing of the family sewing ... somehow time must be found for planting and caring for the garden as well as the canning and preserving of the fruit and vegetables for winter.*

Mrs. Phillips also had to prepare a hearty lunch and dinner for her hard-working family. She had worked like that every day since marrying a farmer 15 years earlier. Her family's farm had succeeded, she wrote, only "by gruelling labour and sacrifice." Her story was like that of thousands of women on the Prairies.

Figure 5.25 A woman does the family laundry on an Alberta homestead, 1908.

often traded their crops for things they needed. These included livestock, farm tools, cloth for making clothes, and food (such as sugar, coffee, and tea) that they could not grow themselves. In many families, the father and older sons worked for part of the year in forestry, fishing, or on the railroad to earn extra money.

A boy's life on the Prairies

In 1903, a boy about 12 years old kept a diary. In it, he wrote about his life on a Manitoba farm. Here is what he wrote from March 16 to March 22. Notice how his daily life centred around activities such as chopping wood and visits with friends. Notice, too, that he did not go to school regularly and washed only once during the week!

Monday, March 16
Father took Bert to town. Washed. Ground [sharpened] *axe*

Went over to Bing Johnston's at night.

Tuesday
Bagged up potatoes. Cut wood down. Mrs. Jeffrey here in afternoon. Snowed.

Wednesday
Father, mother, Bruce and Earl took a load of potatoes to town and got $1.25 a bag. School supposed to start but teacher did not get in. Bought a rocking chair.

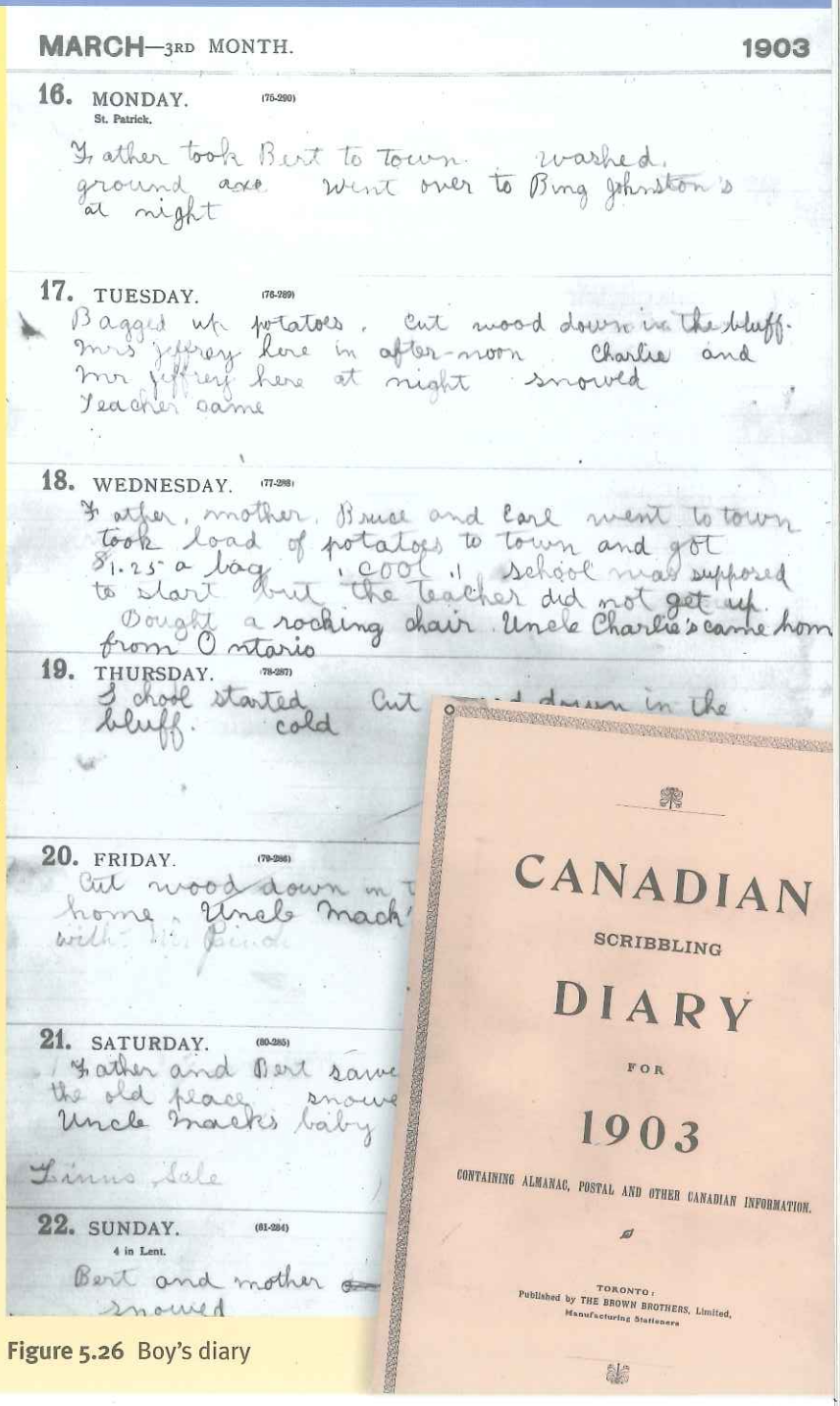
Thursday
School started. Cut wood down. Cold. 10 degrees below zero.

Friday
Cut wood down. Bert came home. Uncle Mack's baby died.

Saturday
Father and Bert sawed wood down. Snowed. Uncle Mack's baby buried.

Sunday
Bert and Mother and I went to church. Snowed.

Other notes in this boy's diary included "made fence posts" and "took five loads of wheat to town." This boy, like many who lived on prairie farms, seemed to have little time for things such as going to school or playing sports.


MARCH—3RD MONTH. 1903

16. MONDAY. (75-290)
St. Patrick.
Father took Bert to town. Washed. ground axe Went over to Bing Johnston's at night

17. TUESDAY. (76-289)
Bagged up potatoes. Cut wood down in the bluff. Mrs Jeffrey here in after-noon Charlie and Mr Jeffrey here at night snowed Teacher came

18. WEDNESDAY. (77-288)
Father, mother, Bruce and Earl went to town took load of potatoes to town and got $1.25 a bag. cool. School was supposed to start but the teacher did not get up. Bought a rocking chair. Uncle Charlie's came hom from Ontario

19. THURSDAY. (78-287)
School started Cut down in the bluff. cold

20. FRIDAY. (79-286)
Cut wood down in t home. Uncle Mack' with

21. SATURDAY. (80-285)
Father and Bert sawe the old place snowe Uncle Macks baby

Sims sale

22. SUNDAY. (81-284)
4 in Lent.
Bert and mother snowed

CANADIAN
SCRIBBLING
DIARY
FOR
1903
CONTAINING ALMANAC, POSTAL AND OTHER CANADIAN INFORMATION.
TORONTO:
Published by THE BROWN BROTHERS, Limited,
Manufacturing Stationers

Figure 5.26 Boy's diary

Farming Technology

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, new **technology** and scientific discoveries began to change farm life.

Two new machines changed farming the most. One was the mechanical thresher. Separating kernels of grain from wheat chaff took a lot of time. Then, in the mid-1800s, hand-cranked mechanical threshers started to appear. They were hard to run, but they increased by 10 times the number of **bushels** a farmer could produce. By the end of the century, the latest mechanical threshers increased output by *another* 10 times.

Figure 5.27 Peter Soli and his threshing team in Queenstown, Alberta, 1918. With mechanical threshers, threshermen like Soli went to many farms during the harvest to separate grain. It was cheaper for farmers to pay threshermen by the bushel than to spend a lot of money buying an expensive machine.

The second important invention was the steam-powered *traction engine*. (Soon, people started calling them *tractors*.) For hundreds of years, farmers had used horses to plow fields and haul carts. Farmers spent a lot of time feeding, stabling, and grooming their horses. And horses could not always be depended on. Cold and sickness killed many horses every year. Tractors needed to be cared for, too. However, a good one could last for many years. A tractor could also do more work than a

Figure 5.28 Tractors slowly replaced horses on prairie farms. Here, Doukhobor settlers break up soil with a steam tractor, 1912.

Prairie inventors

Sir Charles Saunders (1867–1937) was an important inventor. His "invention" was a new kind of wheat. The wheat most often grown on the Prairies was called *Red Fife*. Red Fife was not well suited to the Prairie climate, however. It took too long to grow and was sometimes damaged by frost before it could be harvested. In 1903, Saunders started developing a type of wheat he named *Marquis* [*mar-KEE*]. Unlike Red Fife, Marquis wheat ripened quickly enough to avoid frost damage. By the early 1920s, nearly every Prairie farmer was growing Marquis wheat.

Norman Criddle (1875–1933) was born in England. He moved to Manitoba with his family in 1882. The Criddles were well educated. Norman's father had studied music in Germany. His mother, Alice, had a degree from Cambridge University in England. Norman himself became an expert in entomology [*en-tuh-MAW-luh-jee*], the study of insects. In 1902, he invented a poison that killed grasshoppers. His invention, which became known as *Criddle mixture*, saved thousands of crops. Criddle was later hired by the government of Manitoba to help farmers fight insects.

horse. By the start of the 20th century, gasoline-powered tractors began to replace the original steam-powered models.

Tractors and mechanical threshers cost a lot of money. A tractor could cost as much as 10 pairs of horses. For a long time, tractors and mechanical threshers were found only on big, profitable farms. Horses were used for much of the work on small farms until the late 1940s.

Farming would never be easy. However, technology helped farmers add to their crop **yields**. This made the Prairies the "breadbasket to the Empire." By the end of the century, people around world were buying Canadian crops, especially Canadian grains.

Farming Cooperatives

Settlers on the prairies had many problems. Science and technology made some things easier. However, the new machines could not solve every problem. Another thing that made farming easier was old-fashioned neighbourliness. Pioneers often helped one another at planting and harvesting time. Often they worked together to raise barns and build houses.

In time, they started groups such as farmer's unions and cooperatives. As members of cooperatives, farmers shared costs of supplies and services. Cooperatives also helped farmers **market** their crops. Cooperative groups eventually ran their own grain elevators and stores.

The Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association was founded in 1906. The United Farmers of Alberta was founded in 1909. Both were run democratically. Every farmer who was a member had a vote in the way that the cooperative was run.

Canadian farming cooperatives also spoke out for Canadian farmers. They asked governments for such things as fair crop prices and fair transportation costs. They pushed for modern services, such as water and electricity, for rural communities.

Members of cooperatives shared their knowledge with one another. This helped new immigrants who did not know much about farming. Cooperatives also had an effect on the way large companies sold members' crops.

Conclusion

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, immigrants from Europe settled in the vast regions of Western Canada. Most came for the promise of farmland. They joined the Métis, First Nations, French, and Scottish farmers already in the West. By the early 20th century, there were more than 3000 new rural communities. Farmers grew more and better crops through technology and science. Soon, Canadian crops were feeding people the world over. The young country of Canada was taking its place among the nations of the world.

Figure 5.29 Members of the Grain Growers Grain Company, a farming cooperative, promoted its ideals at an exhibition.