

# An Overview of the History of Canadian Immigration Policy



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# Pre-Confederation

- Settling the Land
  - Military Grants
  - Land Companies (Talbot, Selkirk, etc.)
- British actions
  - Passengers Act 1803
  - Chief Agent for Emigration at Quebec 1827
- Provincial activities (1791-1867)
  - Aliens Acts
  - Quarantine Acts
    - Quarantine Stations
  - Immigration Acts

# Populating Canada



# Populating Canada - I

## Off to a slow start (1867-1896)

- Reasons for low immigration
  - Competition with USA
  - Climate
  - Transportation challenges
  - European governments
- Encouraging Exceptions
  - Icelanders
  - Mennonites
  - Jews

# Immigration Hall

Winnipeg c. 1890



# Former Immigration Hall

Edmonton  
2010



# Populating Canada - 2

## Off and Running (1896-1914)

- Geopolitical Factors – US & Europe
- Agricultural Factors
- Transportation – the railways
- Department of Interior Initiatives
  - In Europe
    - Railways
    - North Atlantic Trading Company
  - In the USA
  - In Canada
- Peaks at over 400,000 in 1913



# “A Stalwart Peasant in a Sheepskin Coat ...” – Sir Clifford Sifton



# War, Boom, Bust and War

- Immigration cut off except from US during First World War
- Immigration encouraged in 1920s but only for “agriculturalists” and domestics
  - Britain-Canada Land Settlement Agreements
  - Railways Agreements
- Then depression:
  - Order in Council PC 695 of March 21, 1931
- And war again ...

# Halifax - Pier 21



# The Heyday of Federally Led Immigration (1945-1985)

- 1947 – Prime Minister King’s statement on Immigration Policy
  - Three Pillars: Economic, Family, Refugee
- 1962 – Immigration Regulations
  - Largely non-discriminatory
- 1966 – The Immigration White Paper
  - 1967 – The Points System
- 1974 – Green Paper
  - 1975 – Special Joint Committee
  - 1976 – “New” Immigration Act

# The New Era of Shared Jurisdiction (1985-Present)

- **1976 Act: encourages FP agreements**
  - 1978: Agreements with QC, NS and SK
  - Cullen-Couture agreement gives QC selection power
- **1991: Canada-Québec Accord**
  - Transfers selection power permanently
  - Transfers settlement to Québec
- **1990s: Other provinces want their share**
  - Provincial Nominee Programs
  - Settlement Renewal
    - Agreements with BC and Manitoba
- **2002: Francophone Immigration outside QC**
  - CIC-Community Steering Committee

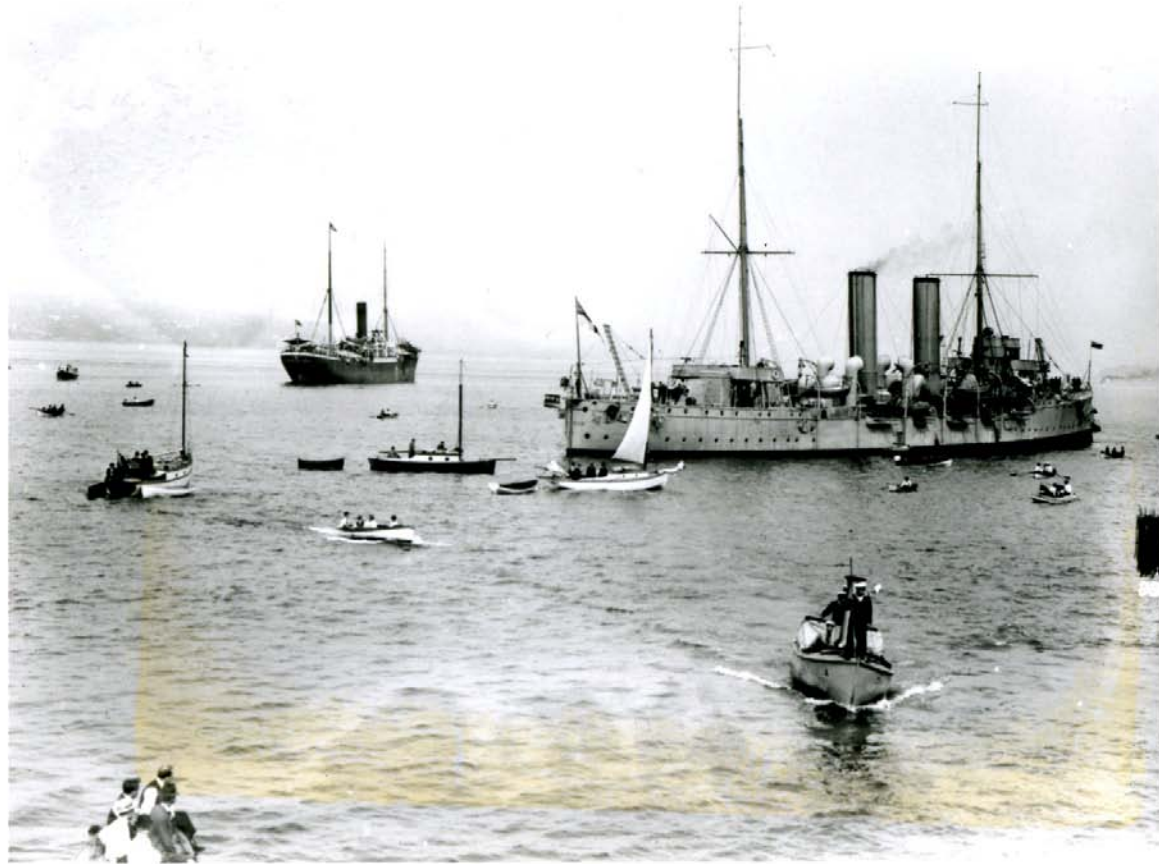
# Quarantine & Health



# Quarantine and Health

- Quarantine Acts
  - Treated seriously after Cholera outbreaks among immigrants in 1830s
- Immigration Acts
  - Ill-health major prohibition pre-1906
  - Pre-1976, specific illnesses prohibited
  - 1976 Act introduces of concepts of
    - Danger to public health or public safety
    - Excessive demands on health and certain social services

# Border Controls





# Border Controls

- Head tax: *Chinese Immigration Acts*, 1885-1903
- Continuous Journey Regulations
  - For good reasons (US border)
  - And questionable (against Asian immigrants)
- Settlement Money Requirement
  - For good reasons (Summer \$25 / Winter \$50)
  - And questionable (\$200 for South Asians)
- Negotiated limits: (e.g. Japan)
- Prohibition
  - 1919 Amendments — may “prohibit ... any nationality or race ... because such immigrants are deemed undesirable owing to their particular customs, habits, modes of life ... and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated ...”
  - *Chinese Immigration Act*, 1923

# Enforcement



# Enforcement - I

- Deportation authority originally in Aliens Acts
- Gradually enforcement provisions moved to Immigration Act
  - 1872 – authority to prohibit “criminal or other vicious class”
  - 1906 Immigration Act
    - First to immigration legislation to specify excluded groups

# Enforcement - 2

- Prohibited classes named until 1976
  - “Pimps, prostitutes and procurers”
  - “Idiots imbeciles and morons”
  - Crimes of “Moral turpitude”
- 1976 Act
  - Equivalency to Canadian crimes
  - Concept of rehabilitation
- Hearings and Appeals
  - Immigration Appeal Board
  - Immigrant and Refugee Board

# Refugees



# Refugee Policy

- Early “refugee groups”
- Closed doors
- Post War “DPs”
- Hungarians and Czechs
- UN Convention on the Status of Refugees
  - Canada accedes in 1969
- Indochinese Refugees
  - government and private sponsorship
- Singh Decision - 1985
  - New Legislation and creating the IRB

# Integration - I

- In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries:
  - Help for indigent - Immigrant Aid Societies
  - Health concerns – immigrant hospitals
  - Transitional housing – immigration halls
- Post WW II
  - Settlement Service established in 1949
  - Citizenship Branch co-funds language training with provincial education departments
  - 1966 creation of Manpower & Immigration
    - Settlement Service disbanded and programs transferred to Manpower division & Secretary of State
    - Language training only for workers

# Integration - 2

- 1974 – Cabinet creates “Settlement Program”
  - M&I assumes funding for settlement NGOs from Secretary of State
  - 1974 - ISAP program
  - 1984 - HOST program
  - 1986 - Settlement Language Training Program (SLTP) for adults not destined to labour market
- 1992 – Settlement “comes home”
  - Settlement moved to Immigration Division
  - Occupational language training merged with SLTP to create LINC



# Integration - 3

- 1991-1999 – Some provinces assume responsibility for settlement
  - 1991 Quebec
  - 1999 BC and Manitoba
- New Programming
  - Enhanced Language Training - 2004
  - Anti-Racism - 2005
  - Foreign Credential Referral Office - 2007
- 2005-08 – Vastly increased funding
  - Canada-Ontario Agreement
  - Other provinces - first denied but then provided
- 2008 – New Terms and Conditions
  - Unified Settlement program

# Conclusion

- Story of immigration is, largely, the story of building Canada
- Past policies often innovative
  - But reflected the biases of those eras
- Post WW II, policy based on “Three Pillars”:
  - Economic Immigration
  - Family Reunification
  - Refugee Protection
  - Remnants of discrimination eliminated
  - Improvement of Settlement Programs

**Thank You!**



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