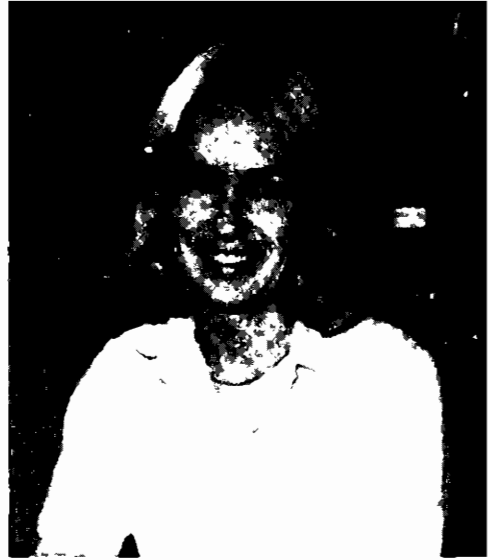


THE IMPACT OF CANADIAN IMMIGRATION POLICY ON FINNISH IMMIGRATION, 1890-1978.



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Ultimately the decision to emigrate is a lonely one. It is based on a multitude of factors which make each immigrant a unique case. Despite the many individual reasons, it is also possible to isolate general causes that affect the emigration-immigration phenomenon. The pattern of Finnish immigration to Canada is characterized by five distinct phases: the period before the First World War (1890-1914); the post World War I decade of prosperity (1920-1930); the depression (1931-1938); the Second World War (1939-1947); the post World War II period of selective immigration (1948-1978).

A combination of economic and political factors have shaped Canadian immigration policy. The government regulations on Finnish immigration to Canada have had a di-

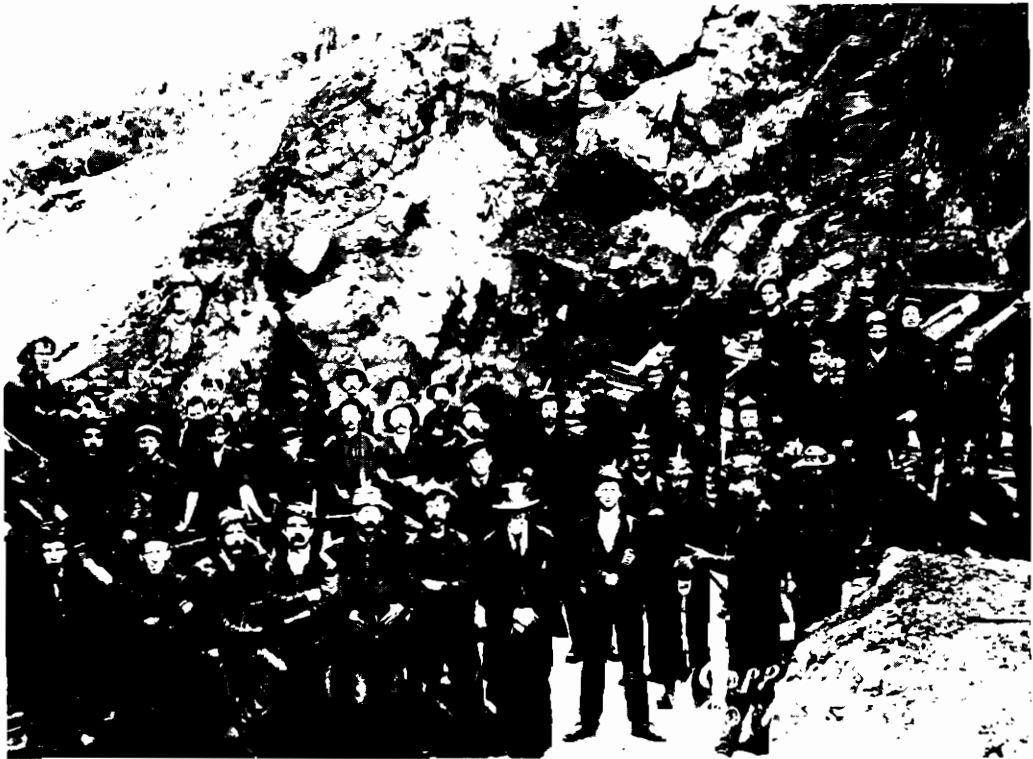
rect impact on the timing, size and composition of the immigration. This impact, the changing nature of Finnish immigration from 1890-1978, and the combination of 'push' and 'pull' factors in their historic context, are the subjects of this paper.

Many excellent, detailed quantitative analyses and economic and political interpretations of the Finnish emigration phenomena have been published.¹ They indicate that most Finns who prepared to sail to the New World before 1930 anticipated better economic opportunities. They were often single, young, healthy and filled with optimism. Although many planned to return to their homeland, only about twenty percent ever did so - most became 'permanent' settlers in North America.²

Others emigrated because, dissatisfied with the political situation in Finland, they looked for a freer political climate in North America. This was especially true during the turn-of-the-century period of Russification and conscription. To many young Finns, North America was far more enticing than service in Russia's backward military forces. Yet others fled during and immediately after the turmoil of the Finnish Civil War in 1918.

The economic and political uncertainty, the changing social system of Finland where the bonds that had tied peasants to their farms were loosening, combined with improved communications and transportation networks, made emigration an acceptable and attractive alternative to a life plagued with uncertainties.

Canadian immigration policy during the first phase of Finnish immigration was basically free until 1895, and strongly encouraged during the period 1896-1914. Officially the policy was designed to bring in farmers and farmworkers to populate the West. At first, the Finnish immigrants seemed to be ideal settlers. Propaganda about Canada was circulated in Finland as early as 1883-84 when folder maps and pamphlets printed in the Finnish language were distributed by the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.).⁴ In 1893 the Office of High Commissioner to Canada in London authorized the printing of 30 000 folders to advertise Canada in Finland.⁵ The C.P.R. continued its recruitment in Finland during the 1890's through the medium of agents such as the Finland Steamship Company and newspaper articles.



Mine workers at Copper Cliff, Ontario in 1893.

After 1896 the Government of Canada intensified its solicitation of Finnish immigrants in both the United States, which had been the recipient of the first flow of Finnish emigrants since 1860, and in Finland. The following newspaper article, published in 1899, reflects the initial enthusiasm for Finnish immigration in people-hungry Canada:

Whatever amount of money may be asked for such a purpose ought to be cheerfully granted. Ships should be sent and every facility afforded these intending settlers, who should be settled en masse wherever may be deemed desirable. The Grand Duchy of Finland, is, we read, no longer acknowledged by the Czar, who thereby violates his oath to observe the ancient constitution of the country. Let the Grand Duchy be transferred, as far as the people can do it, to Canada. We need settlers, and no better could be found than this remarkable people. The Canadian patriot's work is before him in this matter. Up and do it!⁶

In 1899, the Canadian government sponsored five Finnish delegates to come and choose the most appropriate place for this anticipated mass settlement. The delegation chose the Red Deer District of Alberta, which was reserved for them on the condition that "not less than 4 000 souls (be) placed...in each year beginning next year, 1900."⁷ In 1901, a group of Finns responding to the C.P.R. promotion in the Northern States, reserved four townships near "New Finland" in Saskatchewan for Minnesota Finns.⁸

Despite the encouragement and help from the Canadian government and the C.P.R., the Finns did not turn out to be eager agricultural settlers. Many lacked the initial financing necessary even with the prospect of free land. Other were unwilling to make the longterm investment of time necessary to turn the bush into a self-supporting farm.

It soon became evident that, once in Canada, the majority of Finnish immigrants became wage workers instead of farmers. The pattern of Finnish settlement in Canada by province as calculated from the 1901 Census of

Canada shows half the reported Finns residing in Ontario. They were settled near large construction projects (Sault Ste. Marie), mining towns (Sudbury, Timmins, Kirkland Lake, Cochrane), railroad and lumbering towns (Thunder Bay) and urban centers (Toronto). The second largest province of Finnish settlement was British Columbia where Finns could be found in the Vancouver Island coal mining towns, logging camps and the urban areas such as Vancouver.⁹

Considering the money invested for recruitment of Finnish farming settlers, the prairies did not attract many Finns. The plan to settle Finns in the Red Deer district attracted only a few hundred settlers. Most of the Finns found in Alberta were in the hard-rock mining areas. This trend continued until the First World War which effectively interrupted the movement of immigrants until 1919.

The first phase of the Finnish immigration to Canada was characterized by a steady increase in numbers indicating that the promotional activities of the government and the C.P.R. had not been in vain. Up to 1891, for example, Finnish emigrants to Canada constituted only about 1 per cent of the total overseas migration. By World War I, the relative importance of Canadian emigration had increased to such an extent that it made 17 per cent of the total emigration from Finland.¹⁰

The second phase of the Finnish immigration to Canada (1920-1930) witnessed a high increase in the annual arrivals from Finland. During this period the government of Canada, responding to public opinion which feared the increasing number of industrial workers, established new immigration regulations. In 1922, immigrants from Scandinavia and Finland were restricted to: bona fide agriculturalists; bona fide farm labourers; female domestic servants; and members of the immediate family.¹¹



Travelling across the Atlantic was a frightening but also exciting experience for the immigrants many of whom were single and looking their fortune.

On the surface, the Finnish immigrants satisfied these requirements. Calculations based on the intended occupation reported by those immigrants destined to the labour force (therefore, excluding dependent women and children), show that during the fiscal year ending in April 1929, 3331 workers arrived to Canada. Of these, 44 % were "farming class" and 39 % "female domestic servants"; thus, fully 83 % appeared to meet the government criteria.¹²

When these figures, however, are compared with those of the intended destination a different picture emerges. Finnish immigrants, unlike the other immigrants arriving at the same time, did not intend to settle in the prairie farm-lands. 60 % of them, compared with 26 % of the average immigration, were heading to Ontario, while only 4 % planning to settle in the prairies (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta) compared to 57 % of the average immigrants. Quebec and British Columbia were also over represented in Finnish intended destination figures.¹³

It appears that the Finns were, to some extent, distorting their information to meet the government regulations. Soon the immigration branch was inundated with complaints from concerned Canadians. For example: "As a Canadian I desire to see this country go ahead...but not at the expense of bringing in Finns, or any other settler marked for farming when the real intention is to make miners of them, or even lumbermen."¹⁴ While Canada needed agricultural settlers, its mines, railroads and lumber camps depended on cheap immigrant labour, and the government appeared at first to be willing to turn a blind eye to, or even encourage, the importation of migrant workers.¹⁵

The Finns concentrated in the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in Northern Ontario where they quickly gained a reputation for labour radicalism. In Finland, socialism, Social Democracy and trade unions were an accepted and recognized part of life well before

the First World War; but in Canada they were considered radical institutions. The insecure and unsafe working environment of the immigrants in Canada further convinced many Finns that "if you want justice in the country you must fight for it." Many Finns allied with Canadian socialist and communist parties while undertaking their own propaganda and educational programs at the Finnish halls.¹⁶

Eventually, the Canadian authorities expressed reservations about the desirability of the Finns because of their radicalism. The Finnish Social Democratic Party in Canada was among the first organizations to be banned by a Canadian government order-in-council. In 1919 an immigration officer commented, "We are not taking any steps to encourage Finnish immigration, especially of the labouring classes."¹⁸ Finland was removed from the preferred country list. The Department of Immigration and Colonization based their decision on the reports of their inspectors working in areas with a large Finnish population. The inspector from Fort William, for example, explained:

They are determined law breakers in some ways, have no regard for the game and fishery laws, or the Ontario Temperance Act, are professional bootleggers... They are keen on the use of knives mostly of their own make... From the best authority eighty-five percent are radical in their views and with numbers in a district would surely cause trouble unless harsh measures were used... I would recommend that their immigration to Canada be limited.¹⁹

The Finns had come a full circle in the Canadian official mind, from ideal settler to undesirable radical. Despite the expressed concerns and more restrictive categories, the Finns continued to immigrate; fully 37 274 arrived during the decade between 1920-1930, doubling the number of Finnish settlers from 21 494 to 43 885.²⁰ It appears, then, that during this decade, the government's immigration regulations were unable to control effectively the nature of the Finnish immigration to Canada. With the "closed door" policy of the United States, al-

most all of the overseas emigration from Finland after 1924 came to Canada.

During the Great Depression immigration to Canada was strictly and successfully curtailed. In 1931, only 136 Finns arrived after which the numbers dropped below one hundred until 1948.²¹ In fact, during this period the Finnish settlements in Canada experienced a migration loss. In examining a typical depression period year (fiscal) 1933-1934 it becomes evident how tightly the gates were shut. A total of 51 Finns were allowed into Canada via the Ocean Ports. Of these, 10 were reported to be joining their husbands, 32 were reuniting with their parents (31 of these were under the age of 18), 8 were destined to join other close relatives, and only one was going to an employer. Of this group of 51, only two were adult males.²² During the same period, 19 Finnish males were rejected at the Ocean Ports and one Finnish female was asked to return.²³ In addition, the government's statement of deportations reveals that 120 Finnish males, twenty females, and nine juveniles were deported under the vagrancy (public charge) laws and another 17 for criminal offences.²⁴ These figures exclude the persons accompanying those deported and, therefore, under represent the total number of persons ordered to leave the country.

The depression period also witnessed considerable out-migration. Finnish records indicate that the return migration reached its maximum during the depression with annual numbers rising to over 3 000 returning from North America.²⁵ Unfortunately, the Canadian authorities have not indicated the out-migration numbers, and the Finnish authorities have not differentiated between the U.S. and Canada. Since the Finnish immigration to Canada was newer, and since most return migrants had stayed less than five years in their country of immigration, it can be estimated that a large proportion of the annual 3 000 return emigrants were from Canada.

Another important out-migration phenomenon which helped to reduce the Finnish Canadian population was exodus of radical Finns to Soviet Karelia where they hoped to establish utopian socialist communities. The immigration records list over 600 Finns by name, most of whom originated from the Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Toronto areas and all of whom traveled in groups.²⁶ More in-depth research, however, has led scholars to estimate the number of Finnish-Canadians leaving for the Soviet Union to be from 2 000 to 4 000 between the years 1930-1935.²⁷ In 1936, another 186 Finnish males left to fight in the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War, many of whom perished in the bloody battles of the war.²⁸

The restrictive immigration legislation in Canada since 1931 effectively curbed Finnish immigration. In addition the government's harassment of radicals, the dissatisfaction of many immigrants with their economic, working or living conditions and official deportations combined to reduce the actual number of Finns living in Canada.

During the Second World War, the oceans were not safe for passenger travel and most countries restricted the out-migration of people. In the fall of 1939, Russia attacked Finland. Finland resisted bitterly, and soon the sympathies of the Canadian people were with the Finns, whose "valiant struggle" against the giant was reported at length in the Canadian press.²⁹ After the temporary peace treaty of 1940, which left Finland truncated, another grand scheme was launched to bring Finns from areas captured by the Russian to Canada. Premier Hepburn of Ontario sent a proposal to settle 100 000 Finns in the Northern Ontario clay belt. Their former radicalism now seemed less menacing to the immigration officials:

It is well-known to all those who have had anything to do with Finnish immigration that there are both 'white' and 'red' Finns. We got some of the latter and for awhile their colour spread like the measles. I am glad to say, however, that in recent years there has been a very noticeable change.³⁰

The Finns were no more eager to settle as farmers near Cochrane, Ontario, than they had been, fifty years earlier, to move en masse to Alberta -they politely declined the offer. International event intervened as well, and, by 1941, Order-in-Council PC1373 had deemed Finland an enemy nation fighting against Russia, Canada's new ally. The nationals of Finland became "inadmissible to Canada" until 1947, when the order was rescinded.³¹ Thus, for nearly 17 years after 1930, Finnish immigration to Canada was at a virtual standstill.

blacks and Asians remained. The Post World War II Finns did not come under any special legislation, prejudice, discrimination or preference.

The years immediately following the removal of enemy alien restrictions saw a sharp increase in the number of immigrants. This news wave brought 14 193 arrivals in the 1950's.³³ Many of these were people who had wished to immigrate earlier, who came to join families or who escaped from the battle-worn country and the threat of rene-



Finnish-Canadian pioneers clearing the bush in Northern Ontario, 1905.

When the doors to Canada were reopened in 1947, Canadian immigration policy had been redesigned to meet the modern requirements. In line with Prime Minister Mackenzie King's proposals, Canada remained committed to growth and recognized the new needs of an urbanized, industrialized and highly technical society.³² The classes of admissible immigrants were adjusted accordingly, while remnants of racial discrimination against the

wed attack during the period of Gold War. As the Finnish economy improved, unemployment declined and the standard of living rose, less people were inclined to leave their country. New patterns of emigration emerged. Finns began to move to nearby Sweden which was experiencing an unprecedented economic boom. Over 350 000 Finns have settled in Sweden since the Second World War.³⁴

A comparison of the nature of Finnish immigration to Canada before the depression (fiscal years 1928-29) and after the new immigration policies (fiscal year 1951-1952), demonstrates that in 1952 the pattern of Finnish settlement was very similar to the pattern of average immigrant settlement.

Table 1: Intended Destinations ³⁵

	1929		1952	
	All Finnish Immigrants	Immigrants	All Finnish Immigrants	Immigrants
Ontario	26 %	60 %	54 %	53 %
British Columbia	4 %	8 %	7 %	16 %
Quebec	11 %	28 %	25 %	13 %
Prairies	57 %	4 %	12 %	14 %
East	2 %	0 %	2 %	4 %

Finns were significantly under represented only in Quebec and over represented in British Columbia. The prairie provinces showed a sharp general decline in the numbers of destinations of immigrants and Ontario had become the recipient of over 50 % of the new arrivals. The occupational structure comparisons also reflect the new immigration policies.

Before the depression the skilled workers had made up only 3 % of the reported occupations, while in 1952 they made up the largest segment at 41 % of the total. Similarly, the farming class had declined from 44 % to 14 % and the number of female domestics from 39 % to a mere 6 %. These figures are an indication of the effect of Canadian immigration policy and of the general world-wide change in the occupational and residence structure of the people. Finnish Post World War II emigrants left behind a country far more industrialized and urbanized than the earlier emigrants who came overwhelmingly from the rural areas of Ostrobothnia or from the undeveloped North.

After the initial onrush of Finnish immigrants in the early 1950's their numbers have

been relatively small. New immigration regulations in 1962-1967 increased the emphasis on educational training and occupational skills and instituted a point system of evaluation.

Table 2: Intended Occupations of Finnish Immigrants ³⁶

	1929	1952	1963	1968	1978
Farmers	44 %	14 %	5 %	18 %	0 %
Domestics	39 %	6 %	13 %	11 %	6 %
Unskilled	8 %	32 %	15 %	16 %	20 %
Skilled	3 %	41 %	20 %	25 %	11 %
Professional	6 %	7 %	47 %	30 %	63 %

Discrimination was abolished and a universalistic immigration policy was instituted on October 1, 1967. Three classes of admissible immigrants were created: Independent immigrants, sponsored dependents and nominated relatives. On July 25, 1977 the House of Commons passed Bill C-24, embodying a new immigration policy for Canada. Since then immigration has been closely tied to a population policy, employment needs and family reunion. The immigration officials follow annual guidelines based on up-to-date information of Canada's requirements. The class of nominated relatives has been removed, and the stress is on independent immigrants.³⁷

A profile of the intended occupational categories of Finnish immigrants to Canada clearly demonstrates the effect of the increasing selectiveness of Canadian immigration policy. After each new policy, (1963, 1968 and 1978) the number of educated, skilled and professional Finnish immigrants increased. In 1978, the combination of skilled and professional categories, shown in Table 2, made up 74 % of the total, compared to 56 % in 1968, 67 % in 1963, 48 % in 1952 and 9 % in 1929. The number of Finns that meet the immigration categories is very small - less than 500 annually since 1970 have been able to arrive.

The pattern of Finnish settlement in Canada has shown remarkable consistency throughout the periods under examination. Ontario has continued to receive an increasingly large share of the Finnish immigrants; 65 % of the Finns living in Canada in 1971 were found in Ontario. The urban Finnish population in Canada grew from 35 % in 1901 to 76 % in 1971. The latest statistics of intended destinations of Finnish immigrants confirm the 1971 settlement pattern - in 1978, 65 % reported to be heading to Ontario, 14 % to British Columbia and 13 % to the Prairie provinces.³⁸ The only significant change has been the growth of Finnish immigration to Alberta since 1975. This reflects the economic opportunities that the oil-rich province is able to offer well educated immigrants. The effectiveness of the increasingly sophis-

ticated Canadian immigration policy is clearly reflected from the study of Finnish immigration to Canada. Before the Second World War, the policy was able to encourage the importation of immigrants, but was not successful in locating the Finns in farming areas. The restrictive legislation during the depression and the Second World War completely closed the doors for Finnish immigrants. The selectiveness of the post World War II immigration policies has limited the number of Finnish immigrants to Canada as well as changed the occupational profile of those admitted to the country. It can be concluded, then, that the government regulations on Finnish immigration to Canada have had a direct impact, if not always the desired one, on the timing, size and composition of the immigration.

Footnotes.

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Kanadan siirtolaisuuspolitiikan vaikutus suomalaisen siirtolaisuuteen

Suomalaisten siirtolaisuus Kanadaan voidaan jakaa viiteen eri ajanjaksoon: 1890-1914; 1920-1930; 1931-1938; 1939-1947 ja sotien jälkeinen aika 1948-1978.

Taloudelliset ja poliittiset tekijät ovat yhdessä muokanneet Kanadan siirtolaisuuspolitiikkaa. Harjoitettu politiikka oli vapaata vuoteen 1895 saakka ja vuosina 1896-1914 siirtolaisuutta jopa suosittiin. Tavoitteena oli saada maatalousväestöä uudisasukkaiksi lännen asuttamista varten. Suomalaiset eivät kuitenkaan olleet erityisen kiinnostuneita maanviljelyksestä, joka olisi vaatinut alkupääomia, vaan sijoittuivat yleisimmin kaivosseuduille. Vuosina 1920-1930 Suomesta suuntautui voimakas siirtolaisuus Kanadaan. Tärkein syy tähän oli Yhdysvaltain maahanpääsyn rajoitukset, jotka vuodesta 1924 lähtien ohjasivat melkein kaiken suomalaisen siirtolaisuuden Kanadaan. Pulakauden aikana aina vuoteen 1948 saakka suomalaisia saapui suhteellisen vähän Kanadaan. Tälle ajalle oli ominaista takaisinpaluu ja muutto Neuvosto-Karjalaan. Toisen

maailmansodan jälkeen 1950-luvulla siirtolaisuus Kanadaan osoitti jälleen lisääntymisen merkkejä, mutta hyvinvoinnin lisääntyessä Suomessa ja Ruotsin alettua vetää puoleensa muuttui tilanne jälleen. Siirtolaisten ammatillinen tausta poikkesi aikaisemmasta: nyt tultiin teollisuudesta kun aikaisemmin maataloustausta oli ollut vallitseva. Tämä selittyy osittain sillä, että 1960-luvulla Kanadan siirtolaismääräykset korostivat koulutuksen ja ammattitaidon merkitystä. Vuonna 1967 Kanada omaksui siirtolaispolitiikan, jossa tulijat ryhmiteltiin (1) vapaisiin, (2) avustettuihin (3) sukulaissiirtolaisiin. Vuodesta 1977 lähtien Kanadan siirtolaispolitiikka pyrki ottamaan huomioon väestöpoliittiset ja työllisyyspoliittiset tekijät sekä siirtolaisperheiden yhdistymisen.

Kanadan siirtolaispolitiikalla on ollut keskeinen sija suomalaisessa siirtolaisuudessa Kanadaan. Ennen toista maailmansotaa se houkutteli suomalaisia maahan, muttei onnistunut saamaan heitä maanviljelijöiksi toivotussa määrin. Kanadan sotien jälkeen omaksuma valikoiva siirtolaisuuspolitiikka rajoitti suomalaistenkin maahanpääsyä ja vaikutti heidän ammattirakenteeseensa.