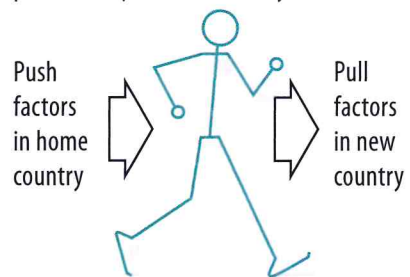


Figure 8-7 Push and Pull Factors

Potential immigrants are affected by push factors, which urge a person to leave a country, and pull factors, which attract a person to a particular country.



Voices

I think a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children, is [a] good quality [immigrant].

— Clifford Sifton, former minister in charge of immigration, in an interview, 1922

Check Back

You read about the classification of some immigrants as enemy aliens in Chapter 6.

Figure 8-8 Immigration to Canada, 1914–1934

At each point identified on the graph, decide whether push factors, pull factors, or other factors were at work. Explain your reasoning.

- A 1914–1918 World War I
- B 1917–1918 Russian Revolution
- C 1918–1919 Spanish influenza pandemic; 1919 Mussolini founds Fascist Party in Italy
- D 1925 The Railway Agreement allows the CPR to recruit immigrants directly from Europe
- E 1929 The Great Depression begins

## What were the impacts of immigration policies?

Before World War I, the Canadian government had actively recruited immigrants. About three-quarters of the more than 2.5 million immigrants to Canada between 1896 and 1914 had come from Britain and the United States. Most of the rest had come from European countries, including about 150 000 from Ukraine.

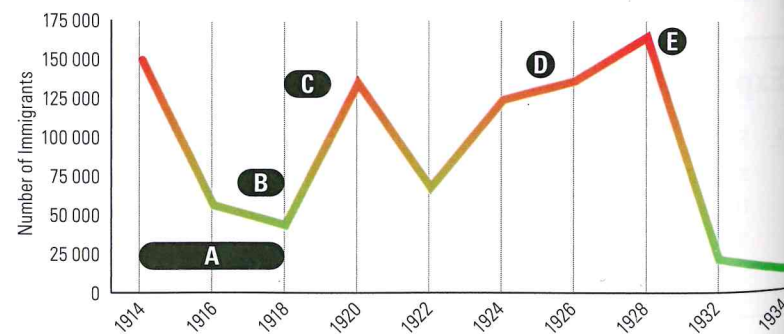
Immigration is affected by **push and pull factors**. Push factors are conditions, such as poverty, lack of political or religious freedom, and famine, that persuade people to leave their homeland. Pull factors are possibilities that exist in the place people are going to and may include the chance of a better life, as well as political and religious freedom.

In some European countries, for example, Jews and Armenians faced persecution. Meanwhile, advertising campaigns promised farmland for those who wanted to immigrate to Canada. Groups fleeing religious persecution, such as the Doukhobors and Mennonites of Russia, were attracted by the relative religious freedom in Canada.

### Government Policies

Many of the restrictive government policies that had led to the internment of “enemy aliens” during World War I continued afterward. As Canadian soldiers returned home and unemployment increased, new immigration policies denied entry to more people. Canada’s Immigration Act of 1919 barred people from countries that had sided with the Central Powers, those who were illiterate or who held socialist or communist beliefs, and people who had “peculiar customs, habits, modes of life, and methods of holding property.” This situation improved in the 1920s, when railway and steamship companies persuaded the government to loosen restrictions on immigration from Europe. At the time, no separate category existed for refugees. People seeking refuge from persecution were treated the same way as other immigrants.

**Cause and Consequence:** Today, Canada recognizes refugees as a specific class of immigrant entitled to special consideration. Depending on where the refugee has come from, what push factors might be at work?



Source: Statistics Canada

## Immigrants Who Were Welcomed

After World War I, the federal government created the Department of Immigration and Colonization and set out to attract British immigrants, especially farmers who had the skill and temperament to be successful on the Prairies. White Americans were also welcomed.

At the time, much of the available Prairie farmland was owned by the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways. Both companies launched advertising campaigns in Britain, often using materials that showed well-established communities with schools, churches, railway stations, and roads. British immigrants could borrow money from the railways to pay for their passage and to buy land. They could even buy houses and barns from the railway companies.

In 1923, the British and Canadian governments co-operated in the 1923 British Settlement Act, which promoted the immigration of British workers to Canada. The British government hoped that the scheme would relieve some of the social stresses that were affecting postwar Britain.

**Ethical Dimension:** Canada’s federal government ran its campaign to attract immigrants like a serious public relations operation. Potential immigrants in Britain and Europe were bombarded with pamphlets, posters, and speakers. Was it ethical for the government to exaggerate the benefits of coming to Canada when the government wanted to populate the country?

### Seeking Religious Freedom

For decades before World War I, Hutterites, Mennonites, and Doukhobors had immigrated to Canada to escape religious persecution. These communities, which trace their beginnings to 16th-century German-speaking countries and Russia, believed in **pacifism** — settling disputes by peaceful, rather than violent, means. They also believed in communal ownership of property.

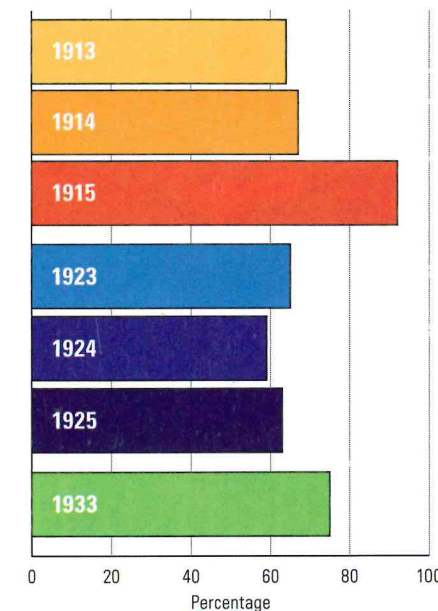
Through the centuries, these communities had been forced to move from country to country in search of a home where they could live and practise their religion in peace. Many Hutterites, Mennonites, and Doukhobors were prosperous farmers who had money to buy farmland in Canada, and the Canadian government welcomed them to settle in Ontario and on the Prairies.

Ironically, although Canada already had a large Francophone population, Canada did not advertise for French-speaking immigrants. The government preferred Eastern Europeans, who would be more likely to learn English.

**Figure 8-10** In 1924–1925, Canadian Pacific Railway used the Canadian pavilion at London’s British Empire Exhibition to campaign for immigrants. This poster was part of that campaign. What pull factors were designed to persuade British families to immigrate to Canada?

Figure 8-9 Percentage of Immigrant Arrivals in Canada from Britain and the United States

Compare the percentages in this figure with information from recent Canadian censuses (page 34). How does the new information reflect changes in Canadian immigration policies?



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Year Book, 1937



**Figure 8–11** Rebecca Frey, shown here at the Kitchener Farmers' Market in 1994, is a member of the Mennonite community that continues many traditions. How might maintaining traditions help — and hurt — people's attempts to deal with change in society?



### Fleeing Persecution

During World War I, about 4000 Hutterites, originally from Russia, immigrated to Alberta from South Dakota. In the United States, they had been persecuted because they spoke German and their pacifist beliefs had led them to refuse military service. When they asked American officials to direct their taxes to the Red Cross rather than to pay for the war, public opinion turned against them even more.

By 1919, public opinion in Canada was also turning against Hutterites, Mennonites, and Doukhobors. They were viewed by many as “foreign” and unpatriotic because of their pacifist beliefs. And some people were jealous of their success as farmers.

When the Conservative government restricted immigration after World War I, fewer members of these three groups were allowed into Canada. But in 1922, the Liberals returned to power and immigration became more open. Between 1923 and 1929, for example, more than 22 000 Mennonites fled the Soviet Union and settled on farms in Ontario and on the Prairies.

## Youth Making History

# A British Home Child

In the late 19th century and the first part of the 20th, as many as 100 000 British orphans and children of families who were poor were sent to Canada as part of a special immigration program. Called “home children,” they were sent to work, usually on farms, until they were adults. The following is part of Percy Brown's story of his experience as a home child.

I was fourteen, in 1927, when the opportunity arrived . . . I was asked if I would like to go to Canada . . .

In March 1927, I boarded the *Montrose*. I don't remember a lot of details about the journey . . .

After landing . . . I took a three-day train journey to Hamilton. There I stayed with Mr. Hill until he found me a place to stay . . .

The first place was a farm in Caledonia. There the owners viewed me and another young boy as workers only. I worked outside from about 5 a.m. to sometimes 10 p.m. I was allowed to stop only for a few minutes to eat my meals . . .

After six weeks of very hard work for which I was paid five dollars a month, I was returned to Mr. Hill . . .

My second place of work was in Drumbo. The farmer and his wife treated me as if I were their own child . . . I spent a wonderful six-year period with them.

Am I glad that I came to Canada? Indeed, yes! Canada has allowed me to follow many pathways; it has granted me a successful living and an opportunity to have a wonderful family. I have been very blessed.

### Explorations

1. Why do you think that both the British and Canadian governments supported the program for home children? List two criteria government officials might have used to justify their support.
2. Are there any circumstances today that might justify a program that involved sending orphans or children from families who are poor to another country to work?

## Not Welcome in Canada

While the Canadian government was trying to attract certain immigrants to Canada, it was discouraging others. Blacks from the United States, for example, and people from India, China, and Japan were unwelcome.

Canadian government statements said that Black people were “unsuited to the climate of Canada.” Black Canadians faced open discrimination. In Nova Scotia, for example, separate schools for Black students were set up in 1918, and in 1921, the Québec Superior Court ruled that racial segregation was acceptable in the province's theatres.

Chinese immigrants had been required to pay a head tax since 1885, and once in Canada, neither Chinese nor Japanese people were allowed to vote. Then, in 1923, Parliament passed the Chinese Immigration Act, which barred nearly all Chinese immigrants.

This law meant that male Chinese workers already in Canada could not bring their wives or children to this country. As a result, the Chinese community developed as a largely bachelor society in which fathers and husbands were separated from their families. Their wives in China were left to raise their children on their own, often in poverty. Fewer than 50 Chinese immigrants were allowed into Canada between 1923 and 1947.

In British Columbia, people from India had been barred from voting in 1907. They were not allowed to run for public office or become lawyers, accountants, or pharmacists. In a further effort to discourage immigration from India, Parliament passed the Continuous Passage Act in 1908. This act said that a ship carrying people from India could not stop in any port along the way — an impossibility on a two-month voyage.

### The Komagata Maru Incident

In 1914, a ship called the *Komagata Maru* was hired to carry Indian passengers to Vancouver from Asia. The ship took on passengers in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Yokohama. But when it entered Vancouver Harbour on May 23, Canadian officials refused to allow the passengers to get off the ship. The ship had violated the Continuous Passage Act.

For two months, the *Komagata Maru* sat in the harbour while the Indian community in Vancouver supplied the passengers with food and appealed to the courts for help. But public opinion was overwhelmingly against allowing entry, and on July 23, the ship was escorted out of the harbour and sent back to India.

When the ship arrived in Kolkata, India, it was met by British police, who treated the passengers as criminals. Some were killed and others were arrested and jailed.

## Voices

There are continual attempts by undesirables of alien and impoverished nationalities to enter Canada, but these attempts will be checked as much as possible at their source.

— Supervisor of European continental immigration for Canada, 1923

**Figure 8–12** When the *Komagata Maru* entered Vancouver Harbour, it carried 376 passengers, mostly Sikhs. This photograph shows the crowding the passengers endured on the voyage and while waiting to hear whether they would be allowed to disembark. As the months went by, what thoughts might the passengers have had about the country they had chosen to make their new home?





# Lessons of the Chinese Immigration Act

An old saying goes that we can learn from our mistakes. The same can be said for humanity. Our ancestors have not always made good decisions, but we can draw on that experience to help us see a larger picture about the problems that we face today.

One such episode from history was Canada's treatment of Chinese immigrants. In his 2006 apology, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has called it "a grave injustice, and one we are morally obligated to acknowledge."

In 1881, the federal government wanted to build a railway connecting the country from east to west. So it recruited thousands of Chinese labourers to help build it. But in 1885 when the railway was complete, Canada decided to curb immigration from China. All immigrants from China would have to pay a special head tax. This decision was the result of race-based discrimination. No other immigrants had to pay this fee.



**HENRY H. STEVENS** was a Conservative member of Parliament for Vancouver City Centre in the early 20th century.

I have no ill-feeling against people coming from Asia personally, but I reaffirm that the national life of Canada will not permit any large degree of immigration from Asia . . . I intend to stand up absolutely on all occasions on this one great principle — of a white country and a white British Columbia.

With the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, the federal government went one step further, barring all immigration from China. Between 1923 and 1947, fewer than 50 Chinese immigrants were allowed into the country. In protest, Canadian Chinese businesses closed their doors on July 1, called it Humiliation Day.

The head tax slowed Chinese immigration to a trickle, and the Act of 1923 ended it altogether. Together, these laws condemned most Chinese men already in Canada to a life without their wives and children. Not only their families suffered, but also Canada. These policies didn't just result and reflect racism. They legitimized and encouraged racism within Canadian society.



**KAREN CHO** is a documentary film director based in Montréal, Québec. Her documentary *The Shadow of Gold Mountain* tells the story of the Chinese head tax.

It was shocking. It was just grossly unfair. . . . Why were the Chinese the only ones who were asked to pay the head tax, while my family from Britain came with the promise of free farmland? I was born mixed-race. I'm not considered 100 per cent Caucasian; I'm not considered 100 per cent Chinese; I can only call myself 100 per cent Canadian. It is just terrible how my [Chinese] family was affected by that.

## Explorations

1. What lessons would you draw from the history of the Chinese Immigration Act?
2. Today, potential immigrants to Canada must show some ability to speak either English or French. Is the language rule an underhanded way to exclude people from certain countries? Or is the requirement a sensible way to ensure that there will be common languages of communication in Canada? Explain your answer.
3. Develop a "Read First" warning for officials developing immigration policies. Use the Chinese Immigration Act or another historical example of your choice to support your recommendations.

## Discrimination in Canada

During the 1920s and 1930s, few people complained about Canada's restrictive immigration policies or about the deportation of immigrants. Many people actively supported these policies or chose to remain silent. Immigrants were often viewed as alien and a threat to jobs. Some people believed that many immigrants were communists who wanted to overthrow the government.

No law prevented employers from using hiring practices that discriminated against people such as Jews and Ukrainians, and some immigrants resorted to hiding their origins by changing their names to sound more British. Black Canadians were restricted to a small number of occupations. They could, for example, work as porters on trains — and many did.

**Historical Perspective:** How important is your name to you? How might changing your name to fit into a dominant culture affect your sense of personal and social identity?

Universities and training programs routinely discriminated by setting higher standards for people whose names did not sound British.

Some groups were also denied social benefits. In Alberta during the Depression, for example, relief payments for people of Chinese heritage were 50 per cent lower than those for other Canadians. Relief payments for Aboriginal peoples were also lower because officials believed that they could live off the land. And some immigrants were deported because they applied for relief.

Many Canadians strongly believed that immigrants should try to assimilate as quickly as possible by abandoning their own culture, traditions, and language. The public education system was viewed as a tool that should be used to ensure that the children of immigrants assimilated into mainstream Canadian society.

## Recall . . . Reflect . . . Respond

1. When talking about immigration, people often use the analogy of a door: it can open to admit more immigrants, or it can close to keep them out. Identify situations in the 1920s when the immigration door opened and closed and explain the circumstances that caused these changes.
2. Discrimination against ethnic groups was open and widespread in the 1920s. Today, this is illegal, and most Canadians would find it unacceptable. Should Canadians of earlier periods be criticized for their attitudes toward minority groups? Explain your response.
3. Create a chart like the one shown to summarize the challenges and opportunities that faced many non-British immigrants to Canada during the 1920s. Conclude by placing yourself in the shoes of a potential immigrant and explain why you would — or would not — choose to immigrate to Canada.

Immigration to Canada: Challenge or Opportunity?	
Challenges	Opportunities

## Voices

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 . . . For the young Ukrainians and Poles, there was a possible solution if they could beat the accent handicap. They could change their names. So they changed their names . . . Caroline Czarnecki overnight became Connie Kingston, Mike Drazenovick became Martin Drake, and Steve Dziatkewich became Edward Dawson. But for the Jews, a name change was not enough.

— James H. Gray, journalist and historian, in *The Winter Years*, a memoir, 1966