Canada at the Turn of the 20th Century (1900-1914)

1.1 – Migration
CANADA: LAND OF OPPORTUNITY (p. 20)

• **Immigration** – coming into a country to live.

• View the visuals below.

  – What trends do you note about the number of immigrants to Canada and from where these people came?
The number of immigrants coming to Canada increased dramatically:

- 16,835 in 1896 to 375,756 in 1912
- Most immigrants before 1900 came from Great Britain, with a smaller number coming from the United States and Europe.
- After 1901, immigration from The United States and the Rest of Europe increased. People started to come from a wider variety of countries and cultural backgrounds. This changed the ethnic composition of Canada.
- This laid the foundation for Canada’s proud cultural mosaic - a society where ethnically/culturally different groups coexist, but remain distinct).

Between 1901 and 1914, Canada’s population increased from 5,370,000 to nearly 8,000,000. Why did these people want to move to Canada?
Push factors...
are conditions that make life difficult or uncomfortable in a country, so people feel “pushed” out. Can you think of examples?

- Violence/war
- Few jobs
- Little available land
- Crowded cities
- Poor housing
- Religious persecution

Pull factors...
are conditions that attract or “pull” people to a new country. What examples can you think of?

- Peace
- Jobs
- Available land
- Freedom
- Opportunities
- Good housing
- Religious freedom
Clifford Sifton (1861-1929)

- A Canadian politician under Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier.
- He was appointed Minister of the Interior in 1896 with the task of encouraging more people to immigrate to Canada.
- The Laurier government intended to increase settlement in Canada, particularly in the West.
- Sifton sought to attract farmers who could endure the hardships of life in the Prairies (long cold winters, little previous settlement, land clearing, etc.).
- Sifton adopted an “open door” immigration policy (rules and guidelines for deciding who may enter Canada), accepting people from Britain, US, and from northern, central, and eastern Europe. Immigration from other countries, however, was actively discouraged.
“The Last, Best West”...

- Sifton sent pamphlets, posters, and advertisements to these countries in hope of attracting “desirable” settlers.
- Free land was offered in the Prairies, which was marketed as “The Last, Best West”.
- Each family would receive 160 acres (about the size of 80 soccer pitches) of free land and the opportunity to buy more at low prices.
- Thousands of immigrants flooded Western Canada in the years that followed: British, Americans, Germans, Swedes, Ukrainians, Dutch, Icelanders, Norwegians, Russians, and many more.
- Nearly 1 million immigrant families settled Western Canada between 1896 and 1914.
- **The Homestead Acts** were revised to improve conditions for gaining ownership of land, while the Canadian Pacific Railway made travelling to “The Last, Best West” faster and easier.
Complete the following...

1. How are the terms emigrant and immigrant different? Use each term in a sentence that illustrates its meaning.

2. What are five push factors that might cause you to think about leaving Canada? Rank them in order of importance.

3. What are five pull factors you would look for in another country if you were going to leave Canada? Which of these are most important to you?

4. Was Clifford Sifton’s immigration policy really “open door”? Explain.
The Immigrant Experience

• Religious freedom was an important pull factor for many new immigrants to Canada. Religious persecution in their home countries made life difficult for many.

• German-speaking **Mennonites**, came from Russia and settled in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Ontario.

• **The Doukhobors**, a religious sect from Russia, came to Saskatchewan in 1898:
  • They settled on 161,880 hectares of land near Yorkton.
  • About 7,400 members of this religious settled the area.
  • Some later moved west to settle parts of British Columbia.

**FIG. 2.1.g**

Not all new settlers had machinery or even enough oxen or horses to help break the heavy soil. Here Doukhobor women prepare to pull a plough near Yorkton, Saskatchewan.
Isaac Barr, an English Clergyman, brought 2,000 English settlers to Saskatchewan in 1903. Because this group were city dwellers in England, they did not have the knowledge and experience of land clearing, hunting, and farming. Life was very difficult for them.

Ukrainian and Polish farmers settled Alberta.

Free land in the US was filled, so many Americans came north.

Some Asian immigrants (China, Japan, and India) came to work in the fishery, mining, and lumber industries in British Columbia.

The Home Children:

- 80,000 children (orphaned, unwanted, or unable to be cared for) came to Canada from Britain to work in peoples homes or on farms.
- To help them start their lives, when they became adults a small amount of money was provided to them.
- Though their situation was monitored by inspectors, some home children were over-worked and mistreated.
Emigration

- At the turn of the 20th century, not everyone was coming to Canada; some emigrated to other places.
- In some cases, more people moved out of Canada than there were those who moved in:
  - In the 1800s, French Canadians emigrated to New England to work in textile mills.
  - Maritimers emigrated to the “Boston states.”
  - Though Canada’s **net migration** (immigrants — emigrants) was negative, the natural increase (births — deaths) was positive and high enough to ensure a small rise in population at this time.
In Summary...

Complete questions 2, 3, and 6 on p. 24

And...

1. Look at Fig. 2.1.d on p. 21. What was the purpose of this postcard? Do you think it was successful?

2. Look at Fig. 2.1.h on p. 23. Read the three primary source accounts of immigrant life. Based on these selections and what we’ve covered thus far, would you say the immigrant experience was primarily positive or negative? Provide specific examples to explain your answer.