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Juvenile Migration to New Brunswick in the 1920s

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MARJORY HARPER

Cossar's Colonists: Juvenile Migration to New Brunswick in the 1920s

CONTROVERSY HAS ALWAYS been a concomitant of migration, and perhaps no aspect of the phenomenon has been so persistently controversial as the transfer of more than 100,000 children and adolescents from Britain to Canada between 1870 and 1930. Unlike the farmers, tradesmen, domestic servants and entrepreneurs who were lured across the Atlantic by promises of abundant land, high wages, congenial employment and lucrative investment opportunities, these unaccompanied, often destitute, juveniles came to Canada by compulsion rather than choice. They were, perhaps more than any other category of migrant, passive pawns in the hands of agents who aimed to relieve overpopulation, pauperism and unemployment in Britain, and also to satisfy incessant Canadian demands for cheap labour, while simultaneously strengthening the imperial bond. Despatched by an army of British philanthropists as an integral part of their high-profile moral and economic crusade for "God and Empire",[1] the young migrants not only introduced the new — and pejorative — term of "home child" to the Canadian vocabulary. Their successes and failures also sharpened the emigration debate on both sides of the Atlantic, as the objectives and achievements of the "child savers" were increasingly criticized by employers, politicians, psychologists and social workers. While most home children were sent to southern Ontario, significant numbers were also settled further east. This paper evaluates institutionalized juvenile migration to Maritime Canada. It does so primarily by considering the activities of one particular agency, the Cossar Farms, of Paisley, Scotland and Gagetown, New Brunswick.

The chronic poverty, overcrowding, destitution and vice that characterized late Victorian Britain's city slums spawned numerous charitable relief programmes, both national and provincial. In the absence of state welfare provision, churches and charities strove to rescue and rehabilitate needy men, women and children, sometimes through domestic assistance alone, often by linking home-based relief to assisted emigration schemes, and occasionally by concentrating exclusively on training and sending emigrants. While the main catalyst for overseas relocation was the practical argument that selective assisted emigration could address labour-supply problems in both Britain and Canada, there were also philosophical considerations. Many of the emigrationists of the 1870s and 1880s were inspired by an evangelical Christian

1 Gillian Wagner, *Children of the Empire* (London, 1982), pp. xi, xiii.

Marjory Harper, "Cossar's Colonists: Juvenile Migration to New Brunswick in the 1920s", *Acadiensis,* XXVIII, 1 (Autumn 1998), pp. 47-65.

commitment to offer spiritual as well as practical help to the flotsam and jetsam of urban-industrial Britain. Those involved in child care particularly welcomed overseas colonization as an ideal device to remove destitute or abused children from evil urban environments and corrupting domestic influences, and give them a fresh start — spiritually as well as economically — in what was alleged to be the morally unpolluted air of rural Canada.[2] The philosophy was summarized in popular verse:

Take them away! Take them away!
Out of the gutter, the ooze, the slime,
Where the little vermin paddle and crawl,
Till they grow and ripen into crime.

Take them away! Take them away!
The boys from the gallows, the girls from worse;
They'll prove a blessing to other lands —
Here, if they linger, they'll prove a curse.

Take them away! Away! Away!
The bountiful earth is wide and free,
The New shall repair the wrongs of the Old
Take them away o'er the rolling sea.[3]

By the turn of the century, the Christian commitment of the pioneer emigrationists was increasingly reinforced by an overt eugenic confidence that the future of Britain and its empire could best be secured by the judicious transplantation of young people from debilitating urban environments before their constitutions (rather than their morals) had been irreparably damaged. Neither the First World War, nor the faltering beginnings of state-funded welfare, fundamentally eroded any of these sentiments, although eugenic arguments steadily, if imperceptibly, superseded Christian priorities. Although most of the pioneers of juvenile emigration had died well before the war, their aims and achievements continued to be celebrated both in hagiographies and in the fund-raising journals and annual reports of the agencies they had founded.[4] Thus juvenile emigration societies whose roots lay in the late Victorian enthusiasm for evangelical philanthropy still combined domestic rescue work with assisted emigration throughout the 1920s, bolstered in their efforts by the unprecedented allocation of official funding under the Empire Settlement Act of 1922, and the

2 The emigrationists' idealized notions of rural Canada, and the late Victorian tendency to equate the city with temptation and depravity are discussed in Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (London and Montreal, 1980), pp. 45-58.

3 Selection of verses from "The Departure of the Innocents" (probably by Horsley) in *Our Waifs and Strays,* August 1887, quoted in Wagner, *Children of the Empire,* p. 100, and Philip Bean and Joy Melville, *Lost Children of the Empire: The untold story of Britain's Child Migrants* (London, 1990), pp. 59-60.

4 Hagiographical biographies included J. Urquhart, *The Life Story of William Quarrier. A Romance of Faith* (Glasgow, 1900) and J. H. Batt, *Dr Barnardo: The Foster Father of "Nobody's Children"* (London, 1904).

keenness of George Bogue Smart, Canada's Chief Inspector of British Immigrant Children, to counter Australian competition.[5]

But the child savers' work never met with universal acclaim, even at its zenith. Canadian attitudes to home children were always ambivalent. Although on the one hand they welcomed the supply of cheap labour, on the other hand they resented their country being used as a dumping ground for what they suspected were misfits and ne'er-do-wells who were not wanted in Britain. While Joseph John Kelso, the Toronto journalist who was appointed Inspector of Juvenile Immigration Agencies in 1897, remained firmly convinced of the efficacy of fostering and the power of the Ontario legislation to eliminate abuse and prejudice, many employers expressed disappointment at the immigrants' sullenness, rough manners and failure to adapt easily to their new environment, and complaints frequently "rang with claims of promises betrayed".[6] Disquiet both at the calibre of recruits and the difficulty of securing adult employment for juveniles who had outgrown their placements intensified after the war, when the Canadian Council on Child Welfare, under Charlotte Whitton, collected and publicized sensational statistics from asylums, jails, VD clinics and reformatories. Canadian social workers, condemning the unaccountability of Kelso's unregulated, voluntarist approach, campaigned for a complete cessation of the movement, on the grounds that the British agencies were deficient in their selection, placement and after-care of recruits. At the same time, according to labour representatives and middle-class commentators, home children "failed the test of desirable immigrants on every score. As the dregs of British society, their fares underwritten by charity and government subsidy, their placement in rural Canada a payment for their poverty and dependence, and without a commitment to the land, these children and youths had no redeeming qualities".[7]

Meanwhile, the ethics of exporting children to Canada were beginning to come under scrutiny on the other side of the Atlantic. The professionalization of social work, and new, child-centred attitudes to child care increasingly stressed the importance of maintaining the family unit and highlighted the damaging psychological effects of uprooting children from their natural environment, in order to bring them to a country which often cold-shouldered them. The policy also came under mounting political attack from socialists, who claimed that it was a nefarious device, designed to preserve social structures against the need to introduce state welfare provision. Public disquiet increased after the suicides of three home boys in Canada in 1923. The following year a British delegation, led by Margaret Bondfield, the first female holder of ministerial office in Britain, was sent to the Dominion by the Labour government to investigate the whole system of juvenile migration. After visiting 11 receiving homes during a seven-week tour, the delegation's report recommended that as the recruits were clearly sent to Canada to work, they should not

5 See below. Following the Act, the British and Canadian governments came to an agreement that each would pay the equivalent of $40 (Canadian) per capita toward the passage and relocation costs of children nominated for emigration by the voluntary agencies and accepted as medically fit by the Canadian immigration authorities. Wagner, *Children of the Empire,* p. 220.

6 Parr, *Labouring Children,* p. 105.

7 Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, "Imperial philanthropy and colonial response: British juvenile emigration to Canada, 1896-1930", *The Historian,* XLVI, 1 (November 1983), p. 71.

be permitted to leave Britain until they had reached the statutory school-leaving age of 14. Temporary legislation to that effect in 1925 helped to curb the movement. It was effectively killed by the Depression less than five years later, having never come anywhere near meeting the emigrationists' post-war goal of 5,000 children a year.

The controversy that surrounded institutional sponsorship of child migration in the era of its implementation has been revived and reinforced by a more recent historiography. This is due in part to the voluminous records of the voluntary societies, the willingness of many former home children to share their memories with writers and broadcasters, and a keen public interest in the settlers' stories. Phyllis Harrison's non-judgmental collection of Canadian migrants' reminiscences, published in 1979, was quickly followed by Kenneth Bagnell's much more critical evaluation of the home children movement.[8] It was then supplemented by the meticulously-researched scholarly surveys of Joy Parr and Gillian Wagner.[9] Migration policies have also come under the microscope in studies of specific institutions and individuals, and in more broadly-based thematic works such as Lynn Abrams' recent analysis of disadvantaged Scottish children since 1845.[10] The most polemical account of child migration remains *Lost Children of the Empire,* a book which was commissioned to accompany a 1989 television documentary, and which both reflected and stimulated public abhorrence of a phenomenon which ended, in its Australian manifestation, only in 1967.[11] Indeed, the conclusion of most modern commentators — expressed with varying degrees of vehemence — is that the emigrationists were "at best misguided and at worst inhumane and immoral",[12] orchestrating contradictory policies that purported to redeem children from destitution and debasement, but in practice often deprived them of their childhood in the interests of securing cheap labour for Canadian farms and bolstering the bonds of Empire. Only rarely is it suggested that the child migration societies should be judged in the context of the laissez-faire age in which they operated, when neither society nor the state accepted adequate responsibility for the poor, and when the welfare structure to support late-20th-century practices of child care simply did not exist.

The inter-war endeavours of George Cossar and his contemporaries were, therefore, planted in a well-worked and much-scrutinized soil, on both sides of the Atlantic. The pioneers of institutionalized child migration, Maria Rye and Annie

8 Phyllis Harrison, *The Home Children* (Winnipeg, 1979); Kenneth Bagnell, *The Little Immigrants. The Orphans Who Came to Canada* (Toronto, 1980).

9 Parr, *Labouring Children* (London, 1980); Gillian Wagner, *Children of the Empire* (London, 1982). See also T. E. Jordan, "'Stay and Starve or Go and Prosper!' Juvenile Emigration from Great Britain in the nineteenth century", *Social Science History,* 9 (1985), pp. 145-66, and Elaine Hadley, "Natives in a Strange Land: the philanthropic discourse of juvenile emigration from Great Britain in the nineteenth century", *Victorian Studies,* 33 (1990), pp. 411-39.

10 Patrick A. Dunae, "Waifs: the Fairbridge Society in British Columbia, 1931-1951", *Histoire sociale/Social History,* 42 (1988), pp. 224-50; Anna Magnusson, *The Village: A History of Quarriers* (Glasgow, 1984); Gillian Wagner, *Barnardo* (London, 1979); Lynn Abrams, *The Orphan Country. Children of Scotland's Broken Homes from 1845 to the Present Day* (Edinburgh, 1998).

11 See also "Lost Children of the Empire", *Observer,* 19, 20 July 1987; "The forgotten children they fed to the empire", *Guardian,* 6 May 1989. Between 1947 and 1967, 2,100 children were sent to Australia. Abrams, *The Orphan Country,* p. 157, n. 16.

12 Abrams, *The Orphan Country,* p. 125.

Macpherson, had begun taking children to Canada in 1869 and 1870 respectively, but they did not have the field to themselves for long. Throughout the 1870s several evangelical institutions gave their child inmates to Macpherson or her sister, Louisa Birt, for placement through their four Canadian receiving homes, and by 1889 more than 50 British agencies were involved in bringing juveniles to the Dominion.[13] Dr. Thomas Barnardo was by far the largest operator in this, sometimes collaborative, sometime competitive, network of evangelical philanthropy. One-third of the 60,000 children taken into Barnardo's Homes between 1882 and his death in 1905 went to Canada. His organization was also responsible for more than one-third of all children sent to Canada between 1870 and 1930, and was the first rescue agency to resume migration work after the First World War. Other significant agencies founded in the last quarter of the 19th century included the London-based National Children's Home and Orphanage, and the Fegan Homes of Southwark, John T. Middlemore's Children's Emigrants' Home in Birmingham, the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society, and the Salvation Army. About ten per cent of children placed in Canada, mainly after the mid-1890s, were Roman Catholics, but Protestant and Catholic agencies regarded each other with mutual hostility and suspicion.[14]

Although Barnardo operated a receiving home in Edinburgh, disadvantaged and destitute Scottish children were catered for primarily by Quarrier's Orphan Homes of Scotland. Founded in Glasgow in 1871, and moving to its substantial rural location at Bridge of Weir in Renfrewshire seven years later, Quarrier's had by 1933 taken in 20,219 children from all over Scotland and occasionally beyond. Of these, 6,897 were shipped overseas, almost all to Canada.[15] As in England, this was an adaptation of the well-established and persistent practice of boarding out young urban paupers in rural locations all over the country.[16] It also resembled the apprenticeship programmes Ontario used with its own orphaned and destitute children.[17] A few other institutions, such as the Aberlour Orphanage in Banffshire and the much smaller Whinwell Children's Home in Stirling, sent a smattering of children to Canada. Between 1854 and 1890 more than 600 children were also sent to Canada by Scottish reformatories and industrial schools.[18] Emma Stirling's efforts to move Edinburgh waifs to the Annapolis Valley in the 1880s and 1890s are relevant to the Maritime part of this story as well.[19]

Protestant home children were sent primarily to southern Ontario, while most of

13 Harrison, *The Home Children,* p. 16.

14 Ibid., p. 17; Joy Parr, "The British Child Migration Movement", *Canada's Visual History,* vol. 32 (Ottawa, n.d.), p. 4; Wagner, *Children of the Empire,* pp. 144-5.

15 Quarrier's Homes Annual Reports, *A Narrative of Facts relative to work done for Christ in connection with The Orphan and Destitute Children's Emigration Homes,* Glasgow, 1872-1933.

16 Abrams, *The Orphan Country,* pp. 35-77.

17 Parr, "The British Child Migration Movement", p. 3.

18 Abrams, *The Orphan Country,* pp. 134-5, 128; Marjory Harper, "The Juvenile Immigrant: Halfway to Heaven, or Hell on Earth?" in C. Kerrigan, ed., *The Immigrant Experience* (Guelph, 1992), p. 168. Of the 3,000 children who passed through the Aberlour Orphanage between 1875 and 1921, slightly more than 50 were sent overseas.

19 Philip Girard, "Victorian Philanthropy and Child Rescue: the career of Emma Stirling in Scotland and Nova Scotia, 1860-95", in Michael Vance and Marjory Harper, eds., *Myth, Migration and the Making of Memory: Scotia and Nova Scotia, 1700-1990* (forthcoming).

their Catholic counterparts were sent to Quebec. Maria Rye set up her original receiving home in the former jail and courthouse at Niagara on the Lake. The four receiving homes operated under Annie Macpherson's auspices were located at Belleville, Stratford and Guelph (Ontario) and Knowlton (Quebec). Barnardo's operated mainly in Peterborough and Toronto, although between 1887 and 1908 some boys were sent to a training farm at Russell, Manitoba. For 15 years William Quarrier placed his children through Macpherson's receiving home at Belleville, but in 1887, faced with rising numbers of recruits each year, he built his own reception and distribution centre, Fairknowe Home, at Brockville, a location carefully chosen for its tradition of Scottish settlement.

Approximately 6,000 home children appear to have been sent to the Maritimes. The vast majority of them (5,109) went to Sir J. T. Middlemore's receiving home, Fairview, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.[20] The home opened in 1897, after Middlemore took over placements in the Maritimes from Louisa Birt. During the 1870s, Birt had placed nearly 600 children from her Liverpool Sheltering Homes on farms in Nova Scotia. Elsewhere in Nova Scotia, Nottingham solicitor Oliver Hind operated a farm at Windsor from 1913 to 1928 to which he sent a total of 110 youths from his Dakeyne Street Boys' Club.[21] Emma Stirling brought a total of 200 Edinburgh children to her farm at Aylesford, Nova Scotia, before her enterprise collapsed in flames in April 1895.[22]

Most of the recollections of former home children sent out by Middlemore and Hind are negative in tone. Charles Devonport claimed that the Dakeyne Farm recruits were treated "like we were mere numbers", never given any advice or encouragement, and defrauded of any money they had by the farm manager.[23] An anonymous inmate of the Fairview Home recalled a three-month stay during which he/she experienced crushing homesickness and spartan surroundings, "hardly any furniture at all, nothing fancy, just bare boards and some benches that we sat around on and no tables. We ate our meals in the woodshed".[24] A more positive account was given by Ellen Keatly, who in 1905, aged nine, was sent by the Middlemore Home to a Scottish farm family in Loganville, Pictou County. After eight years of hard work but reasonable treatment she returned to Fairview, where she was given a much easier placement at Rockingham on the Bedford Basin.[25] Like Ellen Keatly (and in accordance with the practice of most receiving homes) Winnifred Jordan was separated from her siblings after being sent to Fairview in 1920, at the age of eight. She then endured five unsettling placements before settling down with an elderly couple in King's County, and marrying their nephew as soon as she turned 18. Fifty years later she recalled:

20 Wagner, *Children of the Empire,* p. 259.
21 Ibid. An unattributed comment by Bean and Melville, however, claims that about 200 boys had passed through the Dakeyne Street Boys' Farm by 1930. *Lost Children of the Empire,* p. 59.
22 Girard, "Victorian Philanthropy and Child Rescue".
23 Bean and Melville, *Lost Children of the Empire,* p. 16.
24 Ibid., p. 141.
25 Harrison, *The Home Children,* pp. 77-9. She did note, however, that when she and her brother were despatched from Halifax by train, they were sent out with "tags on the front of our coats like bags of potatoes".

> Now I wonder why, oh why, didn't the authorities take a more personal interest in the children they'd placed?...As long as we were being decently fed and clothed and sent to school for six months of the year and getting to church or Sunday school occasionally, that seemed to be all that mattered. Perhaps there were too many of us to take up much time with each. Perhaps they didn't want to get involved personally or — worse still — perhaps it was only a job to them. I remember saying to the first lady in Nova Scotia, "How I wish I had someone to love me." She said "Well we love you." "I never get any hugs or kisses." "Well we feed and clothe you. What more do you want?"[26]

One of the best-known promoters of child emigration to the Maritimes in the early 20th century was George Cossar, whose farm at Lower Gagetown in New Brunswick recruited Scottish trainees from 1910 to 1928. Like his contemporaries and predecessors, Cossar advocated juvenile migration as a means both of relieving stress in Britain and of addressing the Canadian clamour for agriculturists. His activities remained fairly low-key until funding from the Oversea Settlement Department under the Empire Settlement Act allowed him to purchase a selecting centre in Scotland in 1922.[27] For 16 years the Gagetown enterprise was wholly owned and run by Cossar himself. From 1926 to 1931 it was subsidized and directed by a Council of Management in Scotland, assisted by a Canadian committee, though Cossar himself continued to provide most of the funding. While he sent out only 711 migrants to New Brunswick,[28] and his name never became so well-known as that of Barnardo or his fellow-countryman — and probably his model — William Quarrier, Cossar's influence on youth training and employment, in both Central Scotland and the Maritimes, was not insignificant. His activities generated a substantial amount of Canadian Immigration Department correspondence, as well as press attention on both sides of the Atlantic, and in 1948 he was accorded a fulsome posthumous tribute in a radio broadcast. "In Eastern Canada", it was asserted, "no person has done more for immigrant boys, no name is held in such respect and regard as that of the late George Carter Cossar, C.B.E., M.C....To the Maritimer the name 'Cossar' has become synonymous with integrity, uprightness and Christian endeavour".[29]

Born into a wealthy Glasgow family in 1880, Cossar attended Rugby School and

26 Ibid., p. 185.

27 For more detailed discussion of juvenile migration schemes, see Marjory Harper, "Making Christian Colonists: an evaluation of the emigration policies and practices of the Scottish Churches and Christian organisations between the wars", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society,* 28 (1998), pp. 173-215.

28 Wagner, *Children of the Empire,* p. 259. There is a disparity between this figure (obtained from the Report of the Department of Immigration and Colonisation, 1929, p. 89), the figure of 800 G. Bogue Smith gave for the number of boys who had passed through Cossar's Gagetown Farm by 1922, and the 900 figure that the Canadian Immigration Department claimed represented the number of boys Cossar sent to Canada during the 1910s and 1920s. The disparity is probably due to the second figure including Canadian-born, as well as British, children processed by the Gagetown farm, and the third figure incorporating children sent, under Cossar's auspices, to other parts of Canada as well as New Brunswick.

Oxford, where he graduated in civil and mining engineering before taking up a temporary post in Peru. His charitable conscience had been aroused in his student days, when he saw the plight of homeless men sleeping on the Thames Embankment. But it was disadvantaged juveniles whom he sought to rehabilitate on his return to Glasgow, opening missions, soup kitchens and clubs in the city centre. He also purchased a training farm in Ayrshire, Todhill, to instruct and then place boys in farm service at home or abroad.[30] To facilitate Canadian placements, he purchased a 700-acre farm — which included a 18th-century colonial farmhouse — at Gagetown in 1910. Recruits were sent there for training, either directly or via Todhill, before being placed with individual farmers in the province. Cossar managed to persuade the Canadian immigration authorities to grant him the statutory commission of £1 per head, on the grounds that the boys were legitimate agricultural labourers required to work on his farm. In 1911 he escorted his first recruits to Gagetown, along with a man and wife from Stirlingshire, hired to superintend the venture. He subsequently purchased three adjacent farms to increase his holding to 1,000 acres. By 1913, when G. Bogue Smart submitted a report on the farm, 250 boys had passed through its doors, and by 1922 this had risen to 800. Although Smart suggested that Cossar was naive in expecting his recruits to repay their fares, he reported that each boy, when interviewed individually, had expressed enthusiasm for his work, and concluded that "Mr Cossar's plan of supplying a good class of young Scotch immigrants is not only commendable but advantageous to Canada and deserving of encouragement".[31]

Until 1922, Cossar — who during the First World War had retrained as a doctor and won the Military Cross in France — assisted emigration entirely at his own expense. Then, encouraged by the funding made available under the Empire Settlement Act, he purchased the 36-acre Craigielinn Estate near Paisley. Private donations helped to cover the £2,000 required to obtain this Scottish training farm.[32] As before the war, trainees were to be mainly "city boys of the poorer classes". Schools, labour exchanges, Presbyterian churches and individuals referred boys to Craigielinn, which received a grant in return for testing 100 boys per annum with a view to their permanent settlement as farm workers in either Canada or Australia. The farm's directors were to admit only those applicants who showed potential to be successful colonists. From such trainees they were subsequently to make an initial selection of candidates for presentation to the colonial selecting authority. Cossar was interested not only in impoverished youths; he acted as a Scottish agent for the British Immigration and Colonisation Association from its inception in 1924, welcoming the opportunity both to orchestrate the migration of self-financing boys from affluent families, and to extend his influence by arranging placements in provinces other than New Brunswick. From 1924 Canada replaced Australia as the primary destination of Craigielinn trainees, who were sent not only to the Association's receiving hostel in

29 Vera Ayling Records, MC 2402, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick [PANB], Fredericton.

30 Cossar to W. J. White, 3 November 1909, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 568, file 811910, part 1, National Archives of Canada [NAC], Ottawa.

31 Report by G. Bogue Smart on Gagetown Farm, 15 September 1913, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 568, file 811910, part 1, NAC.

32 *Glasgow Herald,* 3 August 1922. See also Agreement between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and Craigielinn Farm, 28 August 1922, RG 76, C-7831, vol. 282, file 234636, NAC.

Montreal, but also to Cossar's Lower Gagetown farm, which was used by the Association as its reception centre in New Brunswick.[33]

Eighteen months after Craigielinn's establishment on a subsidized basis, Cossar was in no doubt that it constituted a successful assault on poverty and unemployment, and was therefore worthy of supplementary public support. In making an appeal for £2,000 through the Scottish press, he pointed out that of the more than 250 lads tested at Craigielinn, 160 had gone overseas, while others had been passed as fit and were waiting their turn to go, many of them "after several years of idleness".[34] Cossar's canvassing did not fall on deaf ears, for Craigielinn was well supported by public subscriptions. By 31 October 1928 it had expanded its premises and trained a total of 1,076 boys, of whom 535 had been sent to Canada and 199 to Australia. The directors were well satisfied with their work, which had grown despite competition from more glamorous agencies which offered boys immediate transfer overseas without the apparent drudgery of preliminary testing. Although the directors were mostly Glasgow-based, Craigielinn's recruitment field was Scotland-wide:

> We have taken boys from every part of Scotland, ranging from the Shetland Isles to Berwickshire, and, while most of the boys were from the cities, we were glad to have a leavening from the country, who helped to make the others more contented by their outlook on life away from the crowd. From the advantage that has been taken of our extended accommodation, it is evident that there is an increasing desire among many boys to get overseas, and that the thoughtful parent values the opportunity of a preliminary testing. A satisfactory feature is the number of younger brothers coming, whose brothers were at Craigielinn before emigrating.[35]

Like most of his contemporaries and predecessors, Cossar attempted to generate public support by peppering his annual reports with letters of gratitude and recommendation from successful migrants. Included in the 1926 report, for example, was the following contented account of life at Irishtown, New Brunswick:

> Although Scotland is the land of my birth and childhood, I must say that the Canadian country life has got it beat all to pieces as far as weather, work, and opportunity goes. On the fine winter days we have snow shoeing, ski-ing, sleighing, also skating if there is any ice near. I like the autumn — there is hunting, big or little game, trapping, and lots of fun in the woods for the outdoor man or boy. I feel that Canada is the country for me. Mr M___, an Irish Protestant, heard through his sister, who lives in the Shadiac Road, that I was looking for work. Being quite clanish [sic] to the Old Country people, Mr M___ came and offered to teach me the most delightful business of breeding silver foxes for their fur, and help to install me in the fox business

33 *Montreal Star,* 15 August 1924.
34 *Press and Journal,* 15 April 1924.
35 Annual Report of the Cossar Boys' Training Farms Inc., 1927-28, RG 76, C-7831, vol. 282, file 234636, NAC.

> myself later. Mr and Mrs M. send a cordial invitation to you, through me, to visit their home next autumn, and I, most of all, would be delighted to see you.[36]

The following year's report included ten illustrated letters from Cossar boys in New Zealand, Australia and Canada. The three Australian letters included reservations as well as recommendations, but the New Zealand correspondent and six correspondents in Canada were unequivocal in their praise. One of three boys writing from the Maritimes passed on his mother's request that his brother be located in the same part of Nova Scotia when he came out to Canada, since "This is just what you said, a great country. I like the work, like the people, and in fact, I like everything". Another, who was placed on a farm in New Brunswick after only three days at Lower Gagetown, urged Cossar to "tell the boys at Craigielinn that they could not come to a better country"; and the third expressed delight with his domestic arrangements. "The people I am with think the world of me, they call me their son. They have a private car, and when they go out they take me with them. I am earning 12 dollars a month, they give me 6, and put the rest in the bank for me, and I think they are doing the right thing, for in later years I will need it, not just now".[37]

Not surprisingly, selected success stories and positive accounts of chain migration present only a partial picture of Cossar's activities. Even the propagandist annual reports contain some hints of bad conduct, the "abandoning" of colonial life and the damaging opposition raised against Cossar through negative press statements made by those who, he claimed, "were failures in the Colonies and, in many cases, misfits at home".[38] Canadian Immigration Department files contain more explicit complaints about the deficiencies of Cossar boys — and their sponsor. As early as 1913, 60 citizens of Gagetown petitioned the immigration authorities in Ottawa "with a view to stopping the frequent crimes which have been committed in our community, by the boys brought out here from the Old Country by Mr. Cossar and others", asking that checks should be made to ensure that no recruits had a criminal record or had been inmates of a reformatory. Cossar, the Presbyterian, dismissed the complaint as sectarianism on the part of the hostile Anglican majority in Gagetown, and pointed out that only two of his 200 recruits (neither of whom had a previous record) had turned out badly.[39] Boys were periodically deported for vagrancy, criminal convictions, illness, laziness, unadaptability or, in one case, because the recruit was "thoroughly unsatisfactory, and a bad influence on other boys". Others were criticized for absconding from the Gagetown farm. Its reputation suffered further in 1925 when the British Immigration and Colonisation Association decided to send all its delinquent

36 Annual Report of the Cossar Boys' Training Farms Inc., 1926-27; RG 76, C-10646, vol. 567, file 811910, part 2, NAC.

37 Annual Report of the Cossar Boys' Training Farms Inc., 1927-28, G.M., J. McI. and J. McC; RG76, C-7831, vol. 282, file 234636, NAC.

38 Annual Report of the Cossar Boys' Training Farms Inc., 1923, AF51/171, Scottish Record Office [SRO].

39 Rev. William Smith to Dept. of the Interior, 14 October 1913; Cossar to W. D. Scott, 6 December 1913, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 568, file 811910, part 1, NAC.

boys there instead of returning them to Scotland.[40] Employers sometimes complained that boys were undersized or spendthrift. One such derogatory — though not entirely damning — comment concerned the recruit John Weymss. It was made to G. Bogue Smart by a farmer from Andover, New Brunswick, and he passed it on to the superintendent at Gagetown:

> John has but recently arrived. He is all legs and arms, and with the ever present cigarette, he looks like a centipede. Like all or more of Cossar's Glasgow boys, he is an inverterate [sic] smoker. In fact Farquhar [the employer] tells me he has drawn the entire $6.00 for clothes and pocket money and spent it on cigarettes — leaving nothing to go towards clothes. He may pull through but it will take time. He is also very apt to tell lies. He is of good manners and attractive personality.[41]

In 1924 a former matron at Gagetown wrote to G. G. Melvin, the Chief Medical Officer in Fredericton, making a scathing attack on the management of the farm. The criticism was included in a report filed that November:

> Dr. Cossar, a medical doctor in active practice in Glasgow, and who goes about preaching at times as well, collects boys in Scotland for emigration to his farm in the county of Queens at Lower Gagetown.
>
> These boys are supposed to be fed and clad and to get $10 a month and supposed to remain one year on the farm, at the end of which time they are supposed to be free of debt and to be trained to hire out to farmers....These boys seem never to be out of debt. After hiring out so many months there is always something to be paid out to the Meiklejohns....Mr. and Mrs. Meiklejohn have been in charge of the farm for 14 or 15 years....There is nothing to work with nor to cook with and the boys do their own cooking and washing. There is no sanitary arrangement; one lavatory which is used only by Mr. and Mrs. Meiklejohn to which they hold the key. No patent water-closet. The only water laid on is in the kitchen, by tap. There is no bathroom; no means of bodily washing; no tanks, no boilers, no hot water system....The boys are neither well-fed nor properly clad....They get neither butter nor milk and no meat except once in a long while. Meal and water and bread, stewed apple cooked without sugar, constitute their food. A boy of about 16 [is] at present doing the cooking. They are obliged to carry water from the Meiklejohn kitchen and if it does not suit Mrs. Meiklejohn when they come for water or food to give it, they do not get either until she is ready to do so. Last week end, there was no bread and the boy doing the cooking was

40 Deportation order of 26 March 1929, RG 76, C-7831, vol. 282, file 234636; Cossar to Frederick C. Blair, Ottawa, 8 August 1931; John Jackson to Blair, 15 August 1931, RG 76, C-10646-7, vol. 567, file 811910, part 2; J. Obed Smith to W. D. Scott, 22 August 1917; Mr. Meiklejohn to G. Bogue Smart, 23 October 1925, RG 76, C-10646-7, vol. 567, file 811910, part 1, NAC.

41 G. Bogue Smart to John Jackson, 17 August 1928, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 568, file 811910, part 1, NAC.

> ordered to make scones. He did so and Mrs. Meiklejohn wishing the oven took the half baked scones out of the oven and put them on the boys' table to be eaten by them. Mrs. Meiklejohn is apparently suffering from asthma or consumption and is not careful respecting sanitary aspect of the matter. The boys appear to be much afraid of both Mr. and Mrs. Meiklejohn. No one will remain as matron in the home. The boys rise at 5 A.M., and have no light in the morning. At night a stable lamp is placed on the table. The house is cold. Mr. Meiklejohn made the statement to Mrs. Waugh that the boys were liars and thieves and had been taken out of reformatories and gutters.[42]

Although Margaret Waugh's claims contradicted Dr. Melvin's earlier impression that the boys were well nourished, and were challenged by Cossar on the grounds of the matron's unsuitability for the post of assistant to the sickly Mrs Meiklejohn, G. Bogue Smart found some of her complaints substantiated, and advised Cossar to renovate the buildings and improve procedure.[43]

Official opinion was divided about the calibre of the Meiklejohns' successor, John Jackson, a noted shorthorn breeder who arrived with his wife in 1927. M. J. Scobie, Manager of the British Immigration and Colonisation Association, spoke highly of the new superintendent, perhaps not surprisingly, given Cossar's close relationship with the Association. The Cossar Farm was "the finest conducted Boys' Farm which I have seen", his only criticism being "that great care must be taken else the boys will find that the surroundings while at the farm are so pleasant they will not be ready to put up with the conditions as found on the ordinary New Brunswick farm and will be constantly returning".[44] Jackson came in for criticism from the Canadian immigration authorities, however, for his lax attention to the selection of employers and their treatment of the boys, and for being more concerned with farm management and agricultural experimentation than with the welfare of his charges. He admitted that pressure of time sometimes prevented him from checking employers' references and that homes were not always visited in advance, and almost never thereafter, unless trouble arose. He acknowledged as well that there was no clear procedure for indenturing the boys, ensuring regular payment of their wages, answering their enquiries or even keeping track of the young men.[45] Although deficient inspection was addressed by the appointment of one Captain Clingo in 1930, his task was complicated by the fact that Cossar's recruits were mostly older boys who, having "knocked about Glasgow for two or three years after leaving school", resented regulations about compulsory saving of wages and tended to find their own situations.[46] The scathing observations of D. J. Murphy, the Canadian Immigration Department's representative in Saint John, suggest that matters had deteriorated rather

42 Waugh to Melvin, 14 November 1924, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 568, file 811910, part 1, NAC.
43 Memo by Smart, 20 January 1925; Cossar to W. J. Egan, 6 March 1925, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 568, file 811910, part 1, NAC.
44 Scobie to Blair, 13 January 1932, RG 76, C-10646-7, vol. 567, file 811910, part 3, NAC.
45 Report by G. Bogue Smart on Cossar Farm, 21 September 1929, RG 76, C-10646-7, vol. 567, file 811910, part 3, NAC.
46 Jackson to Bogue Smart, 6 April 1932, RG 76, C-10646-7, vol. 567, file 811910, part 3, NAC.

than improved by 1930. Writing to Bogue Smart, he claimed that his hard-hitting report simply reflected the opinions of many complainants.

> There is no doubt but the boys in many cases are being exploited by employers, and in others, Cossar throws them in without a semblance of investigation. I find boys all over the country working on roads for their employers who give the lads none of the earnings although these same boys do the chores at night and morning in addition to milking etc....In far the majority of cases I find Cossar's lads are farmed out without agreements, and seldom or ever do they get any real notice (outside of prayer circulars) and the loose check is not doing any good. Jackson lives in luxury and yet he can't keep boys about the place to give them some sort of idea of Canadian ways. I saw last year when there, grass growing out of his potato planter, that is not what boys should see on landing at the farm. Boys leave one job and find another on their own and it is all the same to Mr. J. As long as he is not worried, all is well. He is a farmer on the stock side, and has no real time for the most important of all work — the welfare of the boys. I also notice so often that I fear there is truth in my conviction, that after he gets the amount owing to Cossar for out fit, he is no longer vitally interested. It is only too self evident.
>
> Then this awful heavy outfit. The hobnailed boots are a constant irritant to the woman of the house and of no real use on Canadian farms where there are no paved roads or stone floors to barns. In they bring heaps of manure stuck to the soles and the woman starts to whine, the boy starts to talk back, she calls him saucy, he asks for his pay and the man of the house comes in and throws him out. All due to Cossar's boots....Now this is not imagination, and if the Dr. on his visits would talk to the family instead of the boy behind the barn, and tell the family he wanted their view point he would get some of the truths I am writing.[47]

Bogue Smart's annual inspection in 1931 confirmed some of Murphy's complaints, revealing a "quota of misfits and problem cases amongst the boys during the year, in spite of 'careful selection'". Twenty boys had been returned to Scotland, while 14 of the 188 remaining in New Brunswick had left their farm placements and were awaiting relocation. On the other hand, the ever-optimistic Bogue Smart felt that, despite the intractability of some of the recruits, "Dr. Cossar's efforts to provide the farmers of the Maritime Provinces, more particularly New Brunswick, with juvenile farm help, are generally appreciated by employers", and Jackson's record-keeping had improved considerably.[48]

Complaints were also made by a few dissatisfied boys and their parents. Glaswegian Hugh Paterson, 14, who went to the Cossar Farm with his 17-year-old

47 D. J. Murphy to Bogue Smart, 4 July 1930, RG 76, C-10646-7, vol. 567, file 811910, part 3, NAC.
48 Report by Smart on Cossar Farm, 13 October 1931, RG 76, C-10646-7, vol. 567, file 811910, part 2, NAC.

brother William in July 1924, resented being pressured to sign a contract which would prevent the brothers moving to Toronto where two sisters and another brother were already settled, and where his widowed mother was about to emigrate with two younger children. He also hinted that W. J. O'Brien of the British Immigration and Colonisation Association was the real power behind the Cossar enterprise:

> Dear Mother,
>
> I don't like starting this wrong but I've got to. The people from some Association here are trying to get us to sign a contract for a year, or rather to consent to the farmer signing it, to keep us for 1 year, the best pay being $10 a month with some given to us for pocket money and some put in a bank somewhere nobody around here has heard of. Willie and I refused to consent until we had heard from Alec or you. He led us to believe it was his scheme but its the Orangemen here with a guy called O'Brien at the head of it, that's bringing us Protestant boys out. Cossar's only an agent, darn him. He never told us about contract or anything else and he said he would come round and see us all, but he came and just visited one fellow as far as I've heard, and he was a chap that came from 28 Monteith Row do you see through it? [Cossar lived at 23 Monteith Row, Glasgow]. They're just twisting the contract business round so as the farmer could have us for a year and work us like — like — the dickens for $10 a month. I believe I could stick it for a year but I don't know about the boss sticking me. I'll sign the contract if you and Alec want me and so will Willie but if they come funny will show them how far a Scotsmans neck can shoot out. The man also mentioned that we might be deported if we didn't sign. I asked him what for and he couldn't say.[49]

Cossar and his staff not only defended themselves against allegations of neglect, lax policy and deception; they also attacked restrictive Dominion regulations which, in both Canada and Australia, led to the rejection of many applicants on the grounds of underdeveloped physique. Disputes with the Canadian immigration authorities increased after 1928, when — on Cossar's own suggestion — New Brunswick made the Gagetown Farm responsible for processing all the province's assisted juvenile immigrants. It became the Provincial Training Centre for the reception, distribution and placement in New Brunswick of all boys recruited in the United Kingdom for that purpose under assisted passage agreements. Cossar was henceforth required to bring out 100 boys per year under his own auspices, as well as receive those recruited by other organizations. His heightened role was a mixed blessing. On the one hand he seemed to have secured the future of his colonial training farm in an era of increasingly restricted operations. It was awarded an annual federal grant of $500, paid through the province, and the provincial and dominion governments also shouldered responsibility for placement and after-care.[50] On the other hand, Cossar

49 Hugh Paterson to his mother, "Sunday 6th" [September 1924], RG 76, C-10646-7, vol. 567, file 811910, part 2, NAC.

50 J. A. Murray to W. R. Little, 7 October 1927, RG 76, C-7831, vol. 282, file 234636, NAC. See also internal memorandum of the Department of Immigration and Colonisation, 3 January 1934, RG 76, C-10260, vol. 356, file 397430, NAC.

felt the new arrangements seriously reduced his independence and his control over the venture which bore his name. Because the farm at Gagetown had been turned into a provincial reception centre, Cossar was no longer able to require all recruits — particularly those from rural areas — to undergo preliminary training at Craigielinn, as both he and John Jackson wished. He suspected that his preference for "city boys of the poorer classes" was being eroded by the federal and provincial governments' tendency to select rural recruits or boys who had received a secondary education. Craigielinn trainees were then put at a further disadvantage, he claimed, by stringent new federal medical regulations, and after 1928 he complained frequently that enforcement of a minimum height requirement of five feet was resulting in two out of every three such trainees being rejected. Although he admitted that city-bred boys were often of below-average height before emigrating, he maintained that this did not impair their farming skills or their popularity with New Brunswick's farmers. He threatened to close down the Craigielinn centre and proposed taking responsibility for the repatriation of any undersized boy who failed to find employment. This cut no ice with the Dominion immigration authorities, who argued that since the farm at Gagetown had been designated a Provincial Training Centre, it should set an example in securing only "strong, robust boys".[51]

Federal immigration authorities not only refused to lower standards but they also responded to the deepening depression by encouraging juvenile migration societies to discontinue operations on the approach of winter. In 1929 Cossar had persuaded the New Brunswick authorities to allow his work to continue, but when he proposed to send out 60 boys between September 1930 and February 1931, federal authorities warned the provincial government that it would be financially accountable for any concessions it made, and stated vehemently:

> We killed the assisted farm labour movement by allowing unsuitable men to be included for assisted passage who were not farm labourers and never intended to be. This was on the pressure of transportation and other interests. The agricultural family movement was practically killed for the same reason. The trainee movement has come to an inglorious end because we allowed men to come who were not fit. Now pressure is concentrated on the juveniles and if we allow other interests than the interests of the boys themselves and the Province to which they are going, to govern the movement, we will put the juvenile movement where the others have gone.[52]

Increasing tension between Cossar and the Canadian immigration authorities was reflected in a long-running correspondence about the criteria on which boys were judged. James Malcolm, the Canadian Government Emigration Agent in Glasgow — whom Cossar accused both of inconsistency in selection and a "blasphemous and rough" attitude — complained that Cossar knowingly submitted delinquents and boys who were medically unfit. He cited two cases from Edinburgh; one was of an epileptic

51 Annual Report of the Cossar Boys' Training Farms Inc., 26 April 1929, RG 76, C-7831, vol. 282, file 234636, NAC.

52 Blair to Egan, 8 September 1930, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, NAC.

who had been referred to Cossar by the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children after having been rejected earlier by the Canadian medical officers; the other was of an illegitimate boy who, having been put on probation for theft, was one of 40 "problem cases" referred to Cossar by the Edinburgh Juvenile Organisations Committee between 1929 and 1931 with a view to emigration. According to the boy's mother, "he had the choice of going to Canada or going to gaol, and he chose to go to Canada under Dr. Cossar's scheme".[53] The Canadian immigration authorities, while sympathetic to Cossar's desire to befriend "unfortunate waifs", were, not unnaturally, anxious "that the material he helps from the gutter should be absorbed on the other side rather than sent to this country....if he is fishing in such muddy waters in Edinburgh, he is likely to be doing it elsewhere and the percentage of runts and failures that he sends out absolutely justifies us in applying all the tests that have been applied in the past and probably a few more".[54]

The Canadians also alleged that Cossar was guilty of double standards, pressing for relaxed entry regulations while at the same time abusing the government-subsidized charity rate by returning boys whom he deemed unsuitable on some trifling and precipitate excuse. In 1931, 20 boys were sent back to Scotland, including 11 failures and four returned on health grounds. As one Canadian civil servant commented crossly, "It is somewhat of an anomaly to find the Cossar people on the one hand asking us to help some more boys out this year and on the other hand having them send boys home whose only undesirability so far as I can see is requiring several placements".[55] Cossar was unmoved by senior immigration official Frederick C. Blair's advice to "declare a holiday until conditions improve", and remained determined to proceed despite the cessation of Empire Settlement funding in 1931.[56] In 1932, however, Craigielinn's increasing financial difficulties led to its free transfer to the Church of Scotland's Social Work Committee, and it was subsequently used as a training centre for youths on probation and potential delinquents until it was sold to Paisley Town Council in 1937.[57] At the same time the farm at Lower Gagetown — rebuilt after the original 18th-century building had been destroyed by fire in December 1929 — functioned independently as a training centre for unemployed boys from Eastern Canada, under Cossar's renewed personal control and John Jackson's superintendence. By 1938 Cossar was involved in what a New Brunswick newspaper called "a cloak and dagger drama", rescuing more than 200 Jewish children from Nazi Germany. He died in 1942 in Scotland, as a result of exposure and heart disease suffered two years earlier when the ship on which he was escorting evacuee children to Canada was torpedoed in the Atlantic. Much of his estate was bequeathed to the juvenile rescue work he had so long supported. In 1945 Jackson and two associates purchased the farm from Cossar's trustees. In the changed post-war

53 Immigration and Colonisation Department Memorandum, 10 April 1930; Malcolm to Little, 21 May 1931; Cossar to Little, 30 May 1931, RG76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, NAC.

54 Blair to Murray, 24 June 1931, RG76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, NAC.

55 Blair to Little, 25 August 1931, RG76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, part 2, NAC.

56 Blair to Cossar, 31 August 1931, Little to Blair, 7 September 1931, RG76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, part 2, NAC.

57 Church of Scotland, Minutes of the Committee on Social Work, 11 March 1931, 19 October 1932; Minutes of the Committee on Christian Life and Work, 7 April, 27 May 1937.

climate, however, they were unsuccessful in their intention of re-establishing assisted immigration from Scotland.[58]

Perhaps the most appropriate epitaph for Cossar was penned by the New Brunswick immigration agent Major D. J. Murphy, who, having observed his work in both Scotland and Canada, concluded in 1933 that "he means well but does not know how to go about it".[59] Cossar was naive both in expecting recruits to repay their fares and in his failure to see that local support for his programme came primarily from farmers who wanted a cheap pool of farm labour, often caring little for the welfare of their recruits. Nor did he realize that some boys who had families in Canada were simply making use of his facilities in order to rejoin their relatives, absconding from the Gagetown Farm and leaving him out of pocket for fares and outfit. More importantly, he remained largely oblivious to the fact that his rescue work was not supplying the type of recruits demanded by either Canada or Australia. By 1926 he had fallen out with the Australian agents over their reluctance to accept Craigielinn trainees, despite repeated efforts by the Oversea Settlement Committee to explain the reasons and work out a compromise, and he never achieved his intention of establishing a training and distribution farm in Australia.[60] Having operated the Canadian farm at his own expense and by his own rules from 1910 to 1928, he never really understood or accepted the principles of assisted migration under the Empire Settlement Act, and was irked at the restrictions placed on his activities after Gagetown became a provincial training centre. Large numbers of boys who probably left the province for more promising points further west represented a loss of investment, and the Scottish focus of the enterprise was diluted after 1928, when the Gagetown farm began to receive recruits from across the United Kingdom.

Cossar's problems raise the wider question of whether state involvement assisted or impeded migration and settlement, particularly when it impinged on enterprises which were established well before 1922. The Empire Settlement Act helped Cossar by providing financial assistance but it also took away his freedom of selection. In 1930 he complained to the Secretary of State for Scotland that Canada was dictating policy to the Oversea Settlement Committee, so that "it is much harder for me to get boys away than it was before the Government gave assistance in the way of fares".[61] George Whiskard of the Oversea Settlement Department summed up the whole problem of state-assisted migration when he responded — sympathetically but negatively — to a request by Cossar in 1930 that the Department should help him finance the passages of boys whom he regarded as suitable, but who had been rejected by the Canadian authorities:

> I am afraid that we must look at this question from a rather different point of view than you do. You, of course, are concerned with the individual boy and are anxious to give him a better chance. We are concerned rather with the

58 *Telegraph Journal* (Saint John), 18 December 1929, 13 October 1948; Vera Ayling Records, MC 2402, PANB; Cossar's will, registered in the Books of the Lords of Council and Session, Edinburgh, 26 August 1942, copy in PANB.

59 Murphy to Blair, 14 June 1933, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, part 1, NAC.

60 George F. Plant to Cossar, 16 February 1926, AF 51/174, SRO.

61 Cossar to Hon. William Adamson, 26 March 1930, AF 51/174, SRO.

> whole movement from the point of view of the economic advantage to the various parts of the Empire.[62]

But by that time the onset of worldwide depression had rendered assisted migration an economic burden rather than an asset to the Empire, and in 1932 Cossar estimated that expenditure at Gagetown exceeded income by about $6,000. His misfortune in being confronted with economic circumstances beyond his control is also illustrated by the plight of one of his recruits, Henry Allan from Glasgow, who, four years after being sent to New Brunswick, appealed to the secretary of the British Emigration Hostel in Montreal to arrange for his repatriation on the grounds that he was penniless and could not obtain work. Both he and his erstwhile employer had fallen victim to the Depression.

> I was forced to walk the road for a while this winter until Mr Dunn gave me shelter for the time being. Mr Dunn cannot keep me very long as he is an English settler himself and has a hard time to make ends meet himself at present. My mother is anxious for me to go back home to Glasgow and she wrote and asked me to apply to your department to repatriate me, as I have stated I have no money and cannot obtain work and had it not been for Mr Dunn kindnes [sic] in giving me shelter I would have to become a public charge.[63]

Cossar's success was impeded not only by his own naivety, the limitations of the Empire Settlement Act and the impact of international depression. Throughout the 1920s he had tried to implement his colonization scheme in a region beset by multifaceted economic, social and political problems, where internal initiatives such as the disparate Maritime Rights movement had fallen on stony ground. Arguably the survival of his enterprise rested — somewhat shakily — on New Brunswick's desperation to attract a share of immigrants from Britain rather than on inherent merits in the scheme, as the province struggled against mounting odds to promote itself in the face of more attractive opportunities in other parts of Canada. In view of the discouraging Maritime environment in which he operated, it was little wonder that his campaign failed to match his claims or expectations.

Yet although his vision was frustrated and his name does not rank in the history books alongside those of Barnardo or Quarrier, Cossar's achievements were not insignificant. For more than two decades his work, which saw around 900 boys sent to Canada and 200 to Australia, seems to have been relatively untainted by complaints from employers or accusations of exploitation from recruits. The evidence for this assertion, however, has limits. It was often generated by Cossar or his supporters and what we do not hear are the voices of recruits or families who may have been illiterate. The farm at Lower Gagetown was established both as a reception centre and also to set a fair wage level for the province. Some of Cossar's recruits apparently preferred

62 Whiskard to Cossar, 24 February 1930, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, part 1, NAC.
63 Allan to British Emigration Hostel Secretary, 24 January 1933, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, part 1, NAC.

to stay there to "have a good time" on ten dollars a month rather than seek independent employment elsewhere.[64] Not only were disadvantaged urban youths given opportunities which Scotland could not afford them, thanks to training in the farming skills that the Dominions required, but Cossar's relatively good reputation also enabled him to exercise exceptional influence over the wider juvenile migration policy of the province of New Brunswick. He did so even as the institutional sponsorship of child migration was coming under mounting attack and as other philanthropists began to retreat from that type of enterprise.

It is equally remarkable that Scottish youths continued to be absorbed into New Brunswick society despite the deep-seated and increasing economic malaise that afflicted Maritime Canada. At least one recruit who returned to Scotland in 1932-3, after five years in New Brunswick, subsequently re-emigrated when he discovered that the Depression was biting just as bitterly on the other side of the Atlantic. He admitted that Cossar boys were perhaps regarded as a source of cheap labour, and "maybe they were resented in some areas", but his considered judgement, half a century later, was that "a good many remained in Canada and fared quite well".[65] Some Cossar boys, according to their sponsor, became successful farmers in the Maritimes, while a few attained prominent positions in a variety of professions. One boy became a Beaverbrook Scholar at the University of New Brunswick; one became a leading fox rancher on Prince Edward Island; one held high office in the New York City Police Force; one returned to Scotland to serve on the staff of the Craigielinn Farm; and one became a Squadron Leader in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War.[66] But Cossar's influence went beyond the sphere of juvenile migration, for his long-running enterprise made a significant contribution to the partial rehabilitation of Maritime Canada as an acceptable destination for immigrants both before and after the Empire Settlement Act redrew the boundaries of public policy on both sides of the Atlantic. It was a remarkable achievement, wrested out of a background of chronic economic problems, labour unrest and out-migration.

64 Blair to Little, 27 March 1933, RG 76, C-10647, vol. 567, file 811910, part 2, NAC.

65 William Donaldson, Chipman, New Brunswick, in Harrison, *The Home Children,* p. 243. Donaldson had been trained at Craigielinn after seeing an advertisement for Cossar's Canadian farm while waiting to be interviewed at a Scottish unemployment exchange.

66 MC 2402, Vera Ayling Records, PANB.