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# CANADIAN IMMIGRATION POLICY AND THE "FOREIGN" NAVVY 1896-1914

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Two of the most important factors determining the rate and pattern of Canadian economic growth during the period from 1896 to 1914 were the expansion of the railway system and the massive influx of immigrants. Throughout both the Laurier and Borden era, the agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy required abundant new supplies of labour, both skilled and unskilled. As a result there was a strong commitment to the idea of an "open door" immigration policy, particularly on the part of the entrepreneur. But the question of labour supply was not simply economic; it had had consequential and, at times, explosive cultural and racial overtones. Indeed the debate over which groups should be admitted to the country constituted one of the most important aspects of the social history of this entire period. Whose influence would prove to be decisive in determining the character of the Canadian population — the big businessman, driven by the logic of economic growth and power, or the Canadian nationalist, determined to admit only those immigrants capable of easy assimilation into the existing population?

Nowhere was the clash of ideologies more pronounced than in the question of wholesale importation of immigrant railroad labourers, commonly referred to as "navvies". By exploring the social and economic conditions connected with the employment of navvies, the underlying attitudes of the Anglo Canadian, particularly those of the managerial class, towards the unskilled immigrant worker are revealed.

There is no doubt that the connection between the railroad construction and immigration was direct and immediate. The opening up of the prairies, and the resultant demand not only for feeder lines but additional transcontinentals to move the bountiful harvests, acted as a tremendous catalyst for railway building.<sup>1</sup> This was, of course, a process that worked both ways. As has so frequently been the case in Canadian history, railway construction preceded settlement.<sup>2</sup> During the period under review, the railway aspect of the railway-settlement symbiosis took precedence. Colonization railroads were clearly seen as a means of placing settlers in developing regions.<sup>3</sup>

In this process immigrants would satisfy several needs: they would serve as a source of labour in the construction of the roads; their crops would provide an additional revenue base; and ultimately their labour could be utilized in developing industries.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, from the point of view of immigration policy, work on railroad construction gangs would be a means of initiation whereby the newcomers could adapt to the Canadian environment.<sup>5</sup>

In their stated policies, both the Laurier and Borden governments clearly gave priority to the recruitment of agricultural settlers.<sup>6</sup> This meant that immigration officials tended to see the recruitment of foreign labourers to work on railway construction as an aspect of the settlement process. But while the federal policy may have given priority to agricultural immigrants of an "acceptable" ethnic group, the urgent demands of the railroads for cheap and readily available labour created a serious problem. If the immigrant settler was only interested in railway construction work until he became established, if he was, in consequence, only a temporary member of the industrial labour force until a better opportunity presented itself, then the unskilled labour market would be very unstable. Yet one of the vital ingredients of rapid industrialization is the existence of what Professor H.C. Pentland has called a capitalistic labour market:

By a capitalistic market is meant one in which the actions of workers and employers are governed and linked by impersonal considerations of immediate pecuniary advantage. In this market the employer is confident that workers will be available whenever he wants them; so he feels free to hire them on a short term basis, and to dismiss them whenever there is a monetary advantage in doing so. . . . labour to the employer is a variable cost. . . . From a broader point of viewpoint, the capitalistic labour market represents a pooling of the labour supplies and labour needs of many employers, so that all may benefit by economizing on labour reserves.<sup>7</sup>

To maintain such a market in Canada, it was necessary to do much more than import large numbers of unskilled immigrants. In addition, these immigrants had to be of a type prepared to seek employment in the low paying, exacting jobs associated with labour intensive industries. Implicit in this argument was the idea that a permanent proletariat might not be a bad thing.

The ethnic composition of the railroad proletariat was to change substantially during the 1896-1914 period. The Irish Catholic navvies, who had been so important in building the railroads of the 19th century, were no longer available in sufficient quantity. The great wave of Irish immigration had subsided. Indeed, during the period 1901-1911, the number of Irish immigrants coming to Canada numbered only 10% of those coming from England and 25% of those coming from

Scotland.<sup>8</sup> It is also worth noting that in occupational terms, during this period there were more farmers, farm labourers, and mechanics coming from Ireland than there were general labourers.

In terms of numbers, English and Scottish immigrants could have provided the necessary replacement for the Irish navvies.<sup>9</sup> This was particularly true between 1904 and 1914 when approximately 995,107 immigrants, or 41% of the total number of emigrants leaving Great Britain came to Canada.<sup>10</sup> This alteration of the pattern of British emigration flow away from the United States and towards Canada was greeted with considerable enthusiasm by immigration officials.<sup>11</sup> This favourable reaction was magnified by the belief that the quality of the British immigrants was improving.<sup>12</sup> But if these immigrants were attractive to government officials, large employers of unskilled labour were not so impressed. Few of these British immigrants were in the category of unskilled labour — only 15.6% as compared to 51.5% for the European immigrants who arrived in the same decade, 1901-1911.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, many of the British immigrants who came over as navvies proved to be very troublesome.

One of the most celebrated incidents of this nature occurred in 1897 when the Canadian Pacific Railway was preparing to expand its Crow's Nest Pass line, an endeavour for which it required a large supply of labour. On this occasion, an attempt was made by Immigration officials to find work on the Crow's Nest Railway for some one thousand Welsh farmers and farm labourers who wanted to settle in western Canada.<sup>14</sup> The project was very much in keeping with the settlement-railroad arrangement. The initial income of the immigrants would be supplemented, and the railway companies would be provided with a large pool of unskilled labour. The C.P.R. was immediately interested.<sup>15</sup>

But the arrangement was not a success, largely because the Welsh workers were not prepared to tolerate the low wages or the camp conditions. Their ability to focus public attention on their plight proved embarrassing to both the C.P.R. and the Canadian government.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the incident created such a stir in Britain that James A. Smart, Deputy Minister of the Interior, warned the C.P.R. President that unless the situation was rectified ". . . immigration to Canada could be very materially checked."<sup>17</sup> But Thomas Shaughnessy, the President of the C.P.R., was not a man easily cowed or intimidated. In a very blunt letter, he rejected the validity of the complaints and expressed his disdain for the British labourer:

Men who seek employment on railway construction are, as a rule, a class accustomed to roughing it. They know when they go to the work that they

must put up with the most primitive kind of camp accommodation. . . . I feel very strongly that it would be a huge mistake to send out any more of these men from Wales, Scotland or England. . . . it is only prejudicial to the cause of immigration to import men who come here expecting to get high wages, a feather bed and a bath tub.<sup>18</sup>

The sentiments that Shaughnessy expressed were shared by many Canadian entrepreneurs; they wanted hardy, malleable labourers whose salary requests would be "reasonable", who were not unionized, and who could not use the English-Canadian language press to focus public attention on their grievances.<sup>19</sup> Shaughnessy also articulated a certain bias held by many Canadian entrepreneurs, and many western Canadians, that the British labourer was not suited either physically or psychologically to the conditions on the frontier.<sup>20</sup>

Even many of the Immigration officials manifest distinct reservations about recruiting British labourers. In 1897, for instance, when the matter of bringing British navvies into the country to aid in the construction of the Crow's Nest Railway was first being discussed, W.F. McCreary, the Winnipeg Commissioner of Immigration, indicated his objection to the project: "The English are no use whatever on the railroad, or, in fact, for that matter, almost any place else."<sup>21</sup>

It is evident that many employers discriminated against British immigrants, a situation which disturbed many in the Old Country.<sup>22</sup> In 1907, the editor of the *East Anglian Daily Times*, complained to Sir Wilfrid Laurier that the Grand Trunk Railway had refused jobs to several immigrants "because they were Englishmen".<sup>23</sup> Although Laurier denied that such discrimination existed, studies of the employment practices of railroad construction companies have revealed that the charge had appreciable substance.<sup>24</sup>

The source of labour supply which would most perfectly accommodate the capitalistic labour market was to be found in the Orient. In this region the supply of unskilled labourers was unlimited. Asiatics, moreover, of all immigrant groups, could be cast more easily into the role of a permanent proletariat.<sup>25</sup> There had, of course, always been a direct connection between transcontinental railroads and the importation of Oriental labourers. Sir John A. Macdonald had been prepared to override the sustained and vociferous objections of British Columbia that no Chinese be employed on the road gangs building the C.P.R.<sup>26</sup> According to Macdonald, the shortage of white construction workers necessitated a choice for the people of British Columbia: "either you must have this labour or you cannot have a railway."<sup>27</sup> To make the decision more acceptable the Prime Minister emphasized that these Chinese navvies were only a temporary addition to the

labour force. Hence there need be “. . . no fear of a permanent degradation of the country by a mongrel race.”<sup>28</sup> Yet it is significant that, contrary to this prediction, most of the Chinese remained in British Columbia. By 1891 they constituted about one-tenth of the total population of the coast province.<sup>29</sup>

The Oriental worker was regarded by many businessmen associated with labour intensive industries as the ideal worker for an expanding economy.<sup>30</sup> But from the point of view of both Canadian workers and Canadian racial nationalists, the Chinese immigrant in particular was regarded as highly undesirable.<sup>31</sup> Both groups agreed that the social behaviour of the Chinese was deplorable, that they lived in over-crowded and filthy conditions, and that they were “a non-assimilating race.”<sup>32</sup> To organized labour, however, the matter was even more crucial; not only would the Chinese presence create a mongrelized nation, but it would also produce an autocratic economic and political system:

They [the Chinese] are thus fitted to become all too dangerous competitors in the labour market, while their docile servility, the natural outcome of centuries of grinding poverty and humble submission to a most oppressive system of government renders them doubly dangerous as the willing tools whereby grasping and tyrannical employers grind down all labour to the lowest living point.<sup>33</sup>

What is important about the involved subject of Chinese immigration is that even as the exclusionist forces were gaining in strength, the voice of the business groups was still heard loudly and clearly in Ottawa.<sup>34</sup>

The C.P.R. and other railroad companies continued to agitate for an “open door” arrangement allowing Asiatic labourers into the country, and strenuously opposed any increase in the head tax.<sup>35</sup> It is also apparent that the C.P.R. continued to employ a considerable number of orientals, and established arrangements with emigration organizations such as the Canadian Nippon Supply Company not only to import Japanese labourers, but also to control them while they were in the employ of the railway company.<sup>36</sup> But perhaps of even greater significance was the fact that the state-supported Grand Trunk Pacific was also seriously contemplating importing Oriental labour. In December, 1906, a tentative agreement was made between the representatives of the Canadian Nippon Company and E.G. Russell, Purchasing Agent of the Grand Trunk Pacific.<sup>37</sup> Public statements by prominent officials of the G.T.P. served to confirm the belief that the railway company intended to import Asiatic workers. In March, 1907, Frank Morse, Vice President and General Manager, was quoted

as saying that "no transcontinental had yet been constructed without the assistance of oriental labour."<sup>38</sup> In September, while the ashes of Vancouver's Chinatown smoldered, the General Manager of the Grand Trunk, Charles M. Hays, gave a provocative analysis of the labour requirements of the transcontinental:

We will employ the kind of immigrants on the line that the Government allows into the country. Am I opposed to the entrance of oriental labour, you ask? Well, you need cheap labour, don't you, and why should we reject the oriental if we cannot get the supply we require from any other source?<sup>39</sup>

Hays might also have added that the rising cost of labour was a major consideration for the Grand Trunk. Indeed, with the extensive industrial activity, particularly the appreciable railway construction, wages for unskilled labour had soared. Between 1903 and 1907, the daily wage of white navvies in British Columbia had increased from \$1.50 to as high as \$3.00. The advance was even more spectacular for oriental navvies; for this group the daily wage had advanced from \$1.00 to \$2.50.<sup>40</sup> According to the *Royal Commission Appointed to inquire into the methods by which Oriental Labourers have been induced to come to Canada* (1908), the impact of these high wages was to render ineffective the hitherto prohibitive head tax.<sup>41</sup> The situation had been, therefore, very conducive for Asiatic immigration.<sup>42</sup>

Naturally the railway companies welcomed this state of affairs; for the Laurier government, however, the situation was fraught with grave danger. This was dramatically shown by the Vancouver riots of September, 1907, and the subsequent growth of the Asiatic Exclusion League.<sup>43</sup> In 1908, the Dominion government responded to the protests emanating from British Columbia with two Orders-in-Council: the first excluded immigrants from coming to Canada other than by continuous journey from their country of birth, or citizenship; the second stipulated that immigrants from India had to have \$200.00 in their possession upon landing in Canada.<sup>44</sup> These Orders-in-Council complemented the celebrated Gentleman's Agreement between Canada and Japan of December, 1907. This arrangement had provided that control of Japanese immigration, especially from the labouring classes, would rest with the Japanese government.<sup>45</sup>

These developments, however, did not mean that railroad entrepreneurs such as Charles M. Hays had discarded the notion that Oriental labourers should be imported; nor did the arrangements of 1907-1908 mean that the Laurier Government would be unresponsive to future suggestions that the regulations be relaxed. This was illustrated in 1909 when Charles Hays once again proposed an "open door" immigration policy.<sup>46</sup> Laurier's rationale for rejecting this

overture was neither racial nor economic. He took his stand on purely political grounds:

The condition of things in British Columbia is now such that riots are to be feared if Oriental labour were to be brought in. You remember that in our last conversation upon this subject I told you that if the matter could be arranged so that you could have an absolute consensus of McBride, the dangers would probably be averted, but with the local government in active sympathy with the agitators the peace of the province would be really in danger and that consideration is paramount with me.<sup>47</sup>

The fact that in the 1908 federal election the Liberals had lost five out of the seven seats they had previously held in British Columbia clearly weighed heavily with Laurier.<sup>48</sup> He was also no doubt influenced by the mounting evidence that both the federal and provincial Conservatives would in the future make even greater use of the "yellow peril".<sup>49</sup>

By 1907, therefore, the Canadian railroad companies had reached an impasse with regard to a cheap labour supply. British workers were clearly unsuitable as an industrial proletariat, while oriental labourers could not be imported in sufficient quantities for ethnic and cultural reasons. The response of the Canadian "captains of industry" to the situation was to turn increasingly towards central and southern Europe for their "coolie labour". Yet, this approach also embarrassed the Dominion government; by 1907 the idea had become popular in Canada that southern Europeans were of "inferior stock", inclined towards crime and immorality.<sup>50</sup> A distinction was made, however, between southern Europeans and central Europeans; the latter group, it was widely believed, were superior in a racial sense, as well as having preferable cultural qualities which were derived from their agrarian way of life.<sup>51</sup>

This bias against southern Europeans had been evident in the immigration priorities established during Clifford Sifton's term as Minister of the Interior, 1896-1905.<sup>52</sup> In 1897, for example, W.F. McCreary, Commissioner of Immigration, had prevailed upon the Minister of Railways, Andrew Blair, to exert "mild" pressure on the C.P.R. to desist from importing Italian navvies from the United States.<sup>53</sup> According to McCreary, the Italians and many other southern Europeans were birds of passage, coming into the country with no intention of settling on the land or making any positive contribution.

In contrast, encouragement had been given to railway companies by the Dominion government to employ central European settlers. The railway companies had found this group appealing because "they ask no light-handed work . . . they have been obedient and



industrious."<sup>54</sup> This docility was perhaps not surprising, for in 1900 James A. Smart, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, had made it very clear to his subordinates that the central European settler-labourer should be discouraged from adopting collective bargaining tactics. "They should be told when they need work they had better take the wages they are offered."<sup>55</sup>

The 1901 strike of the maintenance-of-way employees, "the humble and unlettered trackmen," provided an example of how the foreign worker was regarded by the C.P.R.<sup>56</sup> The strike also revealed the extent to which the Dominion government was willing to accommodate the company.

The C.P.R. was bent on smashing the strike; it refused to cooperate with representatives of the strikers, and denounced the President of the Brotherhood of Railway Trackmen as a "foreign agitator".<sup>57</sup> It also set about recruiting strike breakers both in Canada and from the United States. These tactics placed the Laurier government in a very awkward position.

The attempt by the Canadian Pacific to use the Winnipeg immigration officers "not only to recruit scabs . . .," but to coerce the Galician and Doukhobor workers, threatened to destroy the credibility of the Immigration Branch with both the immigrants and organized labour.<sup>58</sup> But Commissioner J. Obed Smith of the office refused to accommodate the Company despite pressure from the C.P.R.<sup>59</sup> His predecessor, W.F. McCreary, however, held a different view. He informed Clifford Sifton that the consequences of strained relations with the C.P.R. "would be disastrous for Canadian immigration ventures."<sup>60</sup>

Ultimately it was the McCreary attitude which prevailed. The C.P.R. was allowed to import "four or five hundred pauperized Italians" from the United States in contravention of the Alien Labour Law.<sup>61</sup> This Act, passed in 1897, forbade companies from bringing contract labour into Canada, or in any way encouraging or assisting the importation of alien workers.<sup>62</sup> By the time of the strike, however, the Dominion government was not directly responsible for the enforcement of this legislation; rather enforcement depended upon individual action before the courts.<sup>63</sup> Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour, brought the Alien Labour Act to the attention of the C.P.R. President, but the Dominion government otherwise ignored the situation.<sup>64</sup> During the next three years, the Canadian Pacific not only continued to import Italian navvies from the United States, but actually developed a scheme whereby these men were supplied on a regular basis by an organization operating out of Montreal.<sup>65</sup>

By 1904 there were between six and eight thousand destitute Italian labourers in Montreal. Urged by Montreal civic officials, the Montreal Trades and Labour Council, the Montreal Italian Immigration Society and the Italian Consul in the city, the Laurier government was finally forced to act.<sup>66</sup> A Royal Commission was established under the chairmanship of Judge John Winchester, which ultimately indicted the C.P.R. in a scathing fashion.<sup>67</sup> Yet no attempt was subsequently made to strengthen the Alien Labour Law.<sup>68</sup> If anything, the trend was in the opposite direction.

Between 1906 and 1908 actual construction on the various sections of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the National Transcontinental was initiated; the "new" railway boom was about to begin.<sup>69</sup> In keeping with the optimism of the period, in 1907, Frank Morse, the Vice President and General Manager of the Grand Trunk Pacific, stated that his company needed 20,000 navvies, and suggested that the Laurier government consider advancing the fares of these men in order to expedite recruitment.<sup>70</sup> Given the attitude which had developed towards British and Oriental navvies it is not surprising that in this situation the contractors of the Grand Trunk Pacific and National Transcontinental now turned towards southern Europe for the fulfillment of their labour needs. Their recruitment programme, however, ran counter to the prejudices which had developed among Immigration officials, and in the country at large, against the admission of immigrants from this region. The Immigration Branch was primarily interested in agricultural immigrants who could be temporarily utilized in railroad construction work. They were prepared to adopt a tough line against the indiscriminate entry of "inferior" immigrants simply to meet the short-term needs of railway contractors. Hence, they attempted to enforce rigorously the continuous journey and money reserves regulations.<sup>71</sup>

From the point of view of railroad contractors, the Scandinavian and Galician settler-labourers favoured by the Immigration officials had several disadvantages.<sup>72</sup> In the first place, these settler-labourers would only be available during the late spring and summer, quitting in August in order to harvest their crops.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, these immigrants were sufficiently thrifty that they quickly established themselves full time on the land, and so moved out of the labour market. In contrast, the Italian labourers were not interested in settling on the land; in fact, many of them returned at the end of the construction season to the United States or to Italy. The Italians also preferred to remain aloof from other ethnic groups, "to form companies and board themselves, building little camps for that purpose, as they can do so for less than \$4.50 per week."<sup>74</sup> They also often followed the practice of

working with the contractor through headmen or *padrone*.<sup>75</sup> Both the *padrone* system and the isolation of the camps held advantages for the contractor. Their internal discipline made the Italian labourers a reliable group, while their lack of contact with Canadian workers, especially with Canadian trade unions, tended to minimize the danger of a strike occurring.<sup>76</sup>

In the clash between the Immigration Branch and the Railroad companies, the federal politicians were inclined more often than not to support the interests of the companies. When the need arose, the "open door" could usually be achieved by the large employers of labour through their political leverage. This was clearly indicated in the period 1910-1913 when Liberal and Conservative ministers acceded to the demands of the railway contractors for a relaxation of regulations pertaining to the immigration of navvies. During 1910, both the C.P.R. and the Grand Trunk Pacific exerted pressure on the government to admit "railroad labourers . . . irrespective of nationality. . . ." The Grand Trunk Pacific contractors further insisted that they had to have southern Europeans who were "peculiarly suited for the work. . . ." <sup>77</sup> After Laurier had been approached by Duncan Ross, a lobbyist for the construction firm of Foley, Welch & Stewart, during his "famous" 1910 tour of western Canada, the Dominion government capitulated on the issue.<sup>78</sup> By this time, of course, the prestige of the Laurier government was riding on the rapid completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific.<sup>79</sup> In this situation, neither the cause of Canadian racial purity, nor the opposition of organized labour, nor the objections of the Immigration Branch, nor the combined opposition of Frank Oliver, the Minister of the Interior, and William Lyon Mackenzie King, the Minister of Labour, could offset the influence of the railway contractors. Mackenzie King vividly described the mood of the Laurier cabinet:

Oliver is strong in his opposition to labour being brought into the country for work on railroads that ultimately is not going to be of service for settlement and favours making restrictions on virtually all save northern people of Europe. I agree with him, but we are about alone in this, others preferring to see railroad work hurried.<sup>80</sup>

The coming to power of the Conservatives in 1911 did not significantly disrupt the government-contractor relationship; indeed, the ability of the business lobby to influence immigration policy decisions was again clearly revealed in 1912. In that year the Immigration officials resumed their attempts to limit the number of southern Europeans entering Canada as railway navvies in response to increasing public complaints that those immigrants "constituted a serious menace to the community."<sup>81</sup> However, the Minister of the Interior,

Robert Rogers, was too good a politician to offend powerful vested interests. When it was brought to his attention by both Donald Mann of the Canadian Northern, and Timothy Foley, one of the leading contractors of the Grand Trunk Pacific, that the restrictions were unnecessary and indeed harmful, Rogers overruled his subordinates.<sup>82</sup> The result was the free entry of alien navvies.<sup>83</sup>

The admission of large numbers of southern Europeans, particularly Italian labourers, showed that the long standing goal of bringing into the country only the settler-labourer type of immigrant had been displaced by a policy of importing an industrial proletariat. Immigration statistics reveal that the percentage of unskilled labourers, as compared to the total male immigrants entering Canada, had increased from 31% in 1907 to 43% in 1913-1914.<sup>84</sup> In contrast, the percentage of agriculturalists decreased from 38% in 1907 to 28% in 1914.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, the ethnic aspects of immigration policy revealed that there was a steady advance in the percentages of central and southern European immigrants from 29% in 1907 to 48% in 1913-1914.<sup>86</sup>

Economic priorities were paramount in determining the attitude of the successive Dominion governments towards the industrial utilization of the immigrant navy. Completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern was of such crucial importance that the Ottawa authorities seemed prepared to allow railroad contractors a free hand in the operation of the construction camps. This *laissez-faire* stance was adopted despite abundant evidence that working conditions were not only unsanitary but also hazardous.<sup>87</sup> The *Annual Reports* of the Department of Labour showed that the number of fatal accidents associated with the operation and construction of railroads was unusually high. Between 1904-1911, for example, out of a total of 9,340 fatal industrial accidents in Canada, 23% were related to the railway industry.<sup>88</sup> Even these statistics do not tell the true story. It was not until 1912 that the Dominion government required contractors receiving public funds to register fatalities occurring in their camps.<sup>89</sup> Even with this provision there was some question as to whether the number of recorded deaths of foreign labourers were always accurate: " 'Oh, some Russian is buried there' was the passing remark that commonly designated an unkempt plot in the vicinity of an erstwhile camp."<sup>90</sup> The human and economic consequences of the high rate of accidents connected with railroad construction were also illustrated in a report written by J. Bruce Walker, Commissioner of Immigration, in 1910. Walker reported that one of the reasons for the shortage of labour in the National Transcontinental construction camps around Fort William was that many Galician and Polish labourers would not

accept construction jobs because "the majority of men now engaged in rock work are afraid of it on account of the numerous accidents. . . ."91

The contractors were also given a free hand with respect to the standards of accommodation provided in the construction camps. Although there was an obligation on the part of the head contractor, who accepted federal funds, to provide for the basic needs of the men, contractual arrangements and actual practice seemed often to have been at variance.<sup>92</sup> Controversy over unsanitary conditions in navy camps, of course, has had a long history in Canadian railway construction.<sup>93</sup> In 1897 the C.P.R. had been charged with mistreating a group of Welsh navvies, and complaints continued to reach the attention of the federal government throughout the period under review.<sup>94</sup> In October, 1910, the Edmonton Trades and Labor Council made representation to the Minister of Labour about the improper treatment of construction workers employed by the Grand Trunk Pacific.<sup>95</sup> The Council pointed out the disgraceful condition of the camps; the prevalence of typhoid fever within the camps; the inadequacy of the food and accommodation supplied to the men while on route to the job site; and the delays which were occurring in the payment of wages. Frank Plant, an official of the Department of Labour, was dispatched to Alberta to investigate the charges and submit a report. Plant noted some abuses, but, in general, he exonerated the Company and its leading contractors, especially Foley, Welch & Stewart, from the charges.<sup>96</sup> With respect to the living conditions within the camps, Plant noted that the accommodation was adequate, and the food generally wholesome. None of those interviewed, he optimistically reported, had had "any grievance as to treatment, food or accommodation."<sup>97</sup>

Critics of the contracting companies were not so easily satisfied. It was alleged in labour circles that the government inspectors visited the bush camps only infrequently, and spent most of their time "at the end of steel," close to civilization.<sup>98</sup> It was further alleged that the men were often intimidated by the power of the head contractor who ". . . along the grade . . . is supreme . . . not unlike a Tartar chieftain."<sup>99</sup> The prospect of being dismissed, miles from settlement, was enough to deter most men.<sup>100</sup> And for the foreign worker, who was often unable to communicate in English, who was manipulated by an "ethnic straw-boss," and who had a basic mistrust of state officials, the government inspector simply did not offer a viable channel of protest.<sup>101</sup>

Conditions in the railroad construction camps of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the National Transcontinental continued to be an issue

until the outbreak of war. In 1913, for example, another raft of complaints led to an investigation of the Foley, Welch & Stewart camps. Once again, however, the company was exonerated.<sup>102</sup> This conclusion brought an angry response from militant elements in the labour movement. According to the *Eastern Labor News* “. . . the false statements made as to living conditions . . . and given wide publicity in the capitalist press, will wisen up the workmen so that they will vote for a man to represent themselves, and not for the lying parasites who will always be against them.”<sup>103</sup>

The failure of government officials to redress their grievances turned many alien construction workers in the direction of radical labour. By 1912, the growing labour radicalism in the construction camps was a source of concern to many of those who had immediate contact with these foreign workers.<sup>104</sup> What made it appear even more ominous was the fact that neither the companies involved, nor the federal or provincial governments, nor the institutionalized churches, nor even the Trades and Labor Congress seemed prepared to assume responsibility for the physical and spiritual needs of the alien navyy.

The problem faced by the churches in relation to the foreign workers stemmed from insufficient resources and faulty organization.<sup>105</sup> The energies of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, in particular, were consumed by the thousands of immigrants who were located on homesteads, or in urban ghettos.<sup>106</sup> The failure of the established churches in coping with the foreign workers was responsible for the formation of the Reading Camp Association, in 1899, by a young Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Alfred Fitzpatrick.<sup>107</sup> Fitzpatrick's concern was not specifically religious; rather, he was interested in Canadianizing the men by teaching them the English language and introducing them to the native “ideals of citizenship, and . . . life.”<sup>108</sup> The Reading Camp Association attempted to elicit the support of the businessman-philanthropist, especially those associated with railways and mining operations. By 1912, the Association was supported financially by all three transcontinental railways, as well as by leading members of the Toronto business community.<sup>109</sup> Writing in 1919, one business contributor rationalized his support for the Association in these words:

I am not very strong on Religious matters but my business training tells me that the work you are doing will go a long way to educate foreigners and rough fellows out on our Frontier and after all that is where the trouble in the Industrial World is most ready to break out or I might say that is amongst men of this type that the I.W.W. and Bolsheviki find their ground for sewing [sic] their seed, therefore I am pleased to help support the work.<sup>110</sup>

While a segment of the business community out of enlightened self-interest were prepared to support at least some basic Canadianization work among the alien labourers, appeals by the Association to the federal government had failed. The Association was "slapped . . . over the back with the British North America Act, and referred . . . back to the provinces."<sup>111</sup> Most of the provinces were likewise indifferent to the appeals of the Association, assuming, perhaps, that responsibility for these workers rested with the Dominion government.<sup>112</sup> From Fitzpatrick's perspective, this rejection was all the more frustrating because neither level of government, federal or provincial, had implemented Canadianization programmes among the immigrant workers in the industrial camps.<sup>113</sup>

The Canadian Trades and Labor Congress also seemed quite unconcerned about the plight of the foreign navy during most of the period under study. The Congress seems to have concerned itself mainly with the introduction of restrictive immigration measures designed to safeguard the job security of Canadian workers.<sup>114</sup> But even in this effort the T.L.C. directed its efforts mainly against British-skilled mechanics and Orientals. In 1911, however, the Congress began to display a greater interest in the problems of the alien worker. A resolution was passed at the Annual Convention calling for the services of the T.L.C. solicitor to be extended to the unskilled labourers in the construction camps "so as to prevent these workers from being intimidated by contractors and local law enforcement agencies."<sup>115</sup>

One explanation for the greater interest shown by the T.L.C. at this stage was to be found in the growing influence of the Industrial Workers of the World among the unskilled workers.<sup>116</sup> The I.W.W. threat revealed itself in various strikes among the construction workers employed by contractors of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern.<sup>117</sup> One of the most serious strikes occurred in 1912 among the 7,000 navvies engaged in the construction of the Canadian Northern Railway.

Although the strike only directly affected one company, and did not extend beyond the borders of British Columbia, the incident had a number of wide-reaching implications. An article in the *British Columbia Federationist* of April 5, 1912, hailed the walkout as "an object lesson as to what a movement animated by an uncompromising spirit of revolt . . . can accomplish among the most heterogeneous army of slaves that any system of production ever assembled together."<sup>118</sup> In a later edition, the *Federationist* noted that the ethnic antagonisms which the railway contractors had utilized in dividing the men had been laid aside: "Canadians, Americans, Italians,

Austrians, Swedes, Norwegians, French and Old Countrymen all on strike . . . a hint to King Capital to look for some other country more healthy for him to exploit labourers in than this.”<sup>119</sup> Initially there seemed to be a reasonable chance for an I.W.W. victory, but increasingly the position of the employers improved as the power of both provincial and federal governments was brought to bear on the dispute. The high degree of class unity exhibited by the workers in the early stages of the strike was eroded by the ability of the contractor to hire “scab” labour from employment agencies in Vancouver and Seattle.<sup>120</sup>

The *British Columbia Federationist* alleged that the McBride government had rushed detachments of provincial police to the railway camps not only to protect the strike breakers, but also to arrest the strike leaders on trumped up charges.<sup>121</sup> There certainly appeared to be little evidence that the police had been dispatched to protect the strikers from the violence of professional thugs employed by the contractors.<sup>122</sup> The Borden government soon revealed its willingness to co-operate with management. Despite the objections of organized labour, few contractors had difficulties circumventing the Alien Labour Law in their efforts to import navvies from the United States. There is evidence that Donald Mann of the Canadian Northern and Timothy Foley, one of the principle contractors, had prevailed upon Robert Rogers, the Minister of the Interior, to issue instructions allowing certain regulations to be waived by officials of the Immigration Department.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, the Dominion government refused to consider a union request that a conciliation and arbitration board be established. The official reason given for this refusal was that railroad construction belonged to “a class of labour to which the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act could only be applied by the mutual consent of the employers and employees.”<sup>124</sup>

Time worked against the strikers. As the *Federationist* so succinctly stated, “the threat of hunger makes cowards of us all.”<sup>125</sup> That the strike had been broken was clearly indicated in September when the Canadian Northern announced that most of the men had returned to work, and “the places of the others had been filled.”<sup>126</sup>

In the peak years between 1911 and 1914, an estimated 50,000 workers were engaged annually in the construction of the various transcontinentals and provincially-chartered railways.<sup>127</sup> The abrupt cessation of most of these projects, due to the unsettled international situation of 1914, meant that a high percentage of these labourers became unemployed.<sup>128</sup> The foreign navy, whom the railroads had relied upon to supply the cyclical demands for construction labour, found the transition most difficult. Many navvies emigrated to the



United States but large numbers of destitute men, unfamiliar with Canadian society, drifted into the cities and towns. Hence they became a focal point of racial tension and labour radicalism. Under the banner of economic growth, the Laurier and Borden governments had given a high priority to railroad construction. The amount of new track laid was impressive but the social costs were high.<sup>129</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Morris Zaslow, *Canadian North*, pp. 199-223; O.D. Skelton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier* (Toronto, 1921), pp. 415-418; W.L. Morton, *Manitoba: A History* (Toronto, 1957), pp. 275-278, 298-300; James B. Hedges, *Building the Canadian West: the land and colonization policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (New York, 1939), pp. 34, 47, 129-130, 140-142, 390-391; G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways*, vol. II (Toronto, 1963), pp. 12-19, 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> H.G.J. Aitken, "Defensive Expansionism: The State and Economic Growth in Canada", in W.T. Easterbrook and M.H. Watkin, *Approaches to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto, 1967), pp. 203-210.

<sup>3</sup> Morris Zaslow, *Canadian North*, pp. 167-171, 180-181, 187-194, 215-222; James B. Hedges, *Building the Canadian West*, pp. 129-130, 140-141.

<sup>4</sup> This point has been developed by the authors cited in fn. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Immigration Branch, Public Archives of Canada (hereafter, I.B.), file 39145, W.F. McCreary, Commissioner of Immigration, Wpg. to Andrew G. Blair, Minister of Railways and Canals, June 21, 1897; *Sessional Papers*, 1900, no. 25, pt. 2, pp. 111, 147; *ibid.*, 1902, no. 25, pt. 2, pp. 122, 139; *ibid.*, 1903, no. 25, pt. 2, p. 111; *ibid.*, 1904, no. 25, pt. 2, pp. 98-100.

<sup>6</sup> *Canada—A Handbook of Information for Intending Emigrants* (Ottawa, 1874); *Sessional Papers*, 1896, no. 13, pt. 7, Annual Report of the High Commissioner, Sir Charles Tupper; House of Commons, *Debates*, 1897, p. 4067 (hereafter *Debates*); *Sessional Papers*, 1913, no. 25, pt. 2, p. 77; *ibid.*, 1914, no. 25, pt. 2, pp. 80, 106; *Debates*, 1914, p. 1612; Norman Macdonald, *Canada: Immigration and Colonization 1841-1903* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 148, 197; John W. Dafoe, *Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times* (Toronto, 1931), pp. 132-144; W.T.R. Preston, *My Generation of Politics and Politicians* (Toronto, 1972), pp. 216-217; O.D. Skelton, *Life of Laurier*, pp. 46-47; Karl Bicha, "The Plains Farmer . . .", pp. 414-435.

<sup>7</sup> H.C. Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXV (November, 1959), pp. 450, 460.

<sup>8</sup> Lloyd Reynolds, *The British Immigrant*, pp. 32-45; *Sessional Papers*, 1902-1915, Report of the Superintendent of Immigration.

<sup>9</sup> Immigration from France is not discussed in this paper for two reasons. In the first place, the total number of French immigrants between the years 1900 and 1914 was only 25,273. Moreover, in terms of occupation, only 15% of the male immigrants arriving in the period 1906-1914 were placed in the general labourer category. (*Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Book IV, pp. 238-239; *Sessional Papers*, 1907-1908 to 1915, Report of the Superintendent of Immigration).

<sup>10</sup> Rowland Berthoff, *British Immigration in Industrial America, 1790-1950* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 21; Lloyd Reynolds, *The British Immigrant*, p. 299.

<sup>11</sup> Lloyd Reynolds, *The British Immigrant*, p. 21; *Sessional Papers*, 1907-1908, no. 25, pt. 2, pp. 67, 85; *ibid.*, 1911, no. 25, pt. 2, pp. 75, 95; *ibid.*, 1912, no. 25, pt. 2, pp. 70, 94.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Lloyd Reynolds, *The British Immigrant*, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> I.B., file no. 39501, Memorandum, James A. Smart (Deputy Minister of the Interior), 1897, n.d.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, James A. Smart to Thomas Shaughnessy, October 26, 1897.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* In October, 1897, the Canadian Agent in Cardiff, Wales, W.L. Griffith, informed Smart that as a result of the statements appearing in the press "matters are very ugly here. The people are prepared to mob me. . . ." W.L. Griffith to J.A. Smart, October 25, 1897.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Thomas Shaughnessy to James A. Stewart, October 27, 1897.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Robin, "British Columbia: The Politics of Class Conflict", in Martin Robin (ed.), *Canadian Provincial Politics* (Scarborough, 1972), pp. 29-30. Similar American studies have revealed the same trend: Neil Betten, "The Origins of Ethnic Radicalism in Northern Minnesota, 1900-1920", *International Migration Review*, IV, no. 2 (Summer, 1970), pp. 51, 55; Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago, 1969), pp. 320-321. This trend has also been described from the ethnic perspective by Joseph Kirschbaum, *Slovacs in Canada* (Toronto, 1967), pp. 69-76.

<sup>20</sup> John W. Daffoe, *Clifford Sifton*, pp. 148-152, 322; Lloyd Reynolds, *The British Immigrant*, pp. 41-45, 72-73; Carl Berger, *A Sense of Power*, pp. 181, 260; Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, pp. 94, 211.

<sup>21</sup> Basil Stewart, 'No English Need Apply' or, *Canada as a Field for the Emigrant* (London, 1909), pp. 25-40; G.F. Plant, *Overseas Settlement: Migration from the United Kingdom to the Dominions* (London, 1951), pp. 59-60; *Special Report on Immigration, dealing mainly with co-operation between the Dominion and Provincial Governments and the movement of people from the United Kingdom to Canada*, Arthur Hawkes, Commissioner (Ottawa, 1913), pp. 10, 20-22.

<sup>22</sup> Sir Wilfrid Laurier Papers, Public Archives of Canada (hereafter, Laurier Papers), 125151, Editor, *East Anglian Daily Times*, Ipswich, to Laurier, May 8, 1907.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 125152, Laurier to Editor, *East Anglian Daily Times*, May 10, 1907; Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, pp. 94, 211; G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways*, vol. II, pp. 194-195; I.B., file 571672, no. 1, W.D. Scott to Lord Strathcona, January 11, 1907.

<sup>24</sup> I.B., file 39501, W.F. McCreary to James A. Smart, October 30, 1897.

<sup>25</sup> "Evidence", *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration*, 1885, pp. 55-57, 85, 95; Report (Gray's Section), p. lxix; Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power*, p. 231; Charles J. Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient*, pp. 35-38.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient*, p. 29; Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, p. 280.

<sup>27</sup> *Debates*, 1882, 1477; Andrew Onderdonk, the chief contractor of the British Columbia section had informed Macdonald in 1882 that unless he was allowed to import Chinese coolies, the C.P.R. would not be finished for another twelve years, *Macdonald Papers*, 144771. A. Onderdonk to John A. Macdonald, June 14, 1882. Eventually Onderdonk brought over 10,000 Chinese into British Columbia. Pierre Berton, *The Last Spike*, p. 204.

<sup>28</sup> *Debates*, 1883, 1905.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient*, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> See fn. 25.

<sup>31</sup> "Evidence", *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration*, 1885, pp. 48, 83, 125, 140; *Debates*, 1883, 904; *ibid.*, 1884, 975-976.

<sup>32</sup> "Evidence", *Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration*, 1885, p. 46.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pr. 156.

<sup>34</sup> The Laurier government received numerous letters from large employers of labour, both agricultural and industrial, particularly when in 1903 it was proposed to increase the head tax to \$500.00.

<sup>35</sup> Laurier Papers, 5749, Sir William Van Horne, President of C.P.R. to J.C.

McLagan, Editor of *Vancouver World*, July 17, 1896; *ibid.*, 41460, Thomas Shaughnessy to Laurier, January 26, 1900; *ibid.*, 71362, D. McNicoll, General Manager, to Laurier, March 31, 1903.

<sup>36</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Methods by which Oriental Labourers have been induced to Come to Canada* (Ottawa, 1908), pp. 5, 13, 18, 54. *Mackenzie King Papers* (King Papers, P.A.C.), C-29731, C-29478.

<sup>37</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission . . . Oriental Labourers*, pp. 15, 19; *Sessional Papers*, 1909, no. 36, Report of the Deputy Minister of Labour, pp. 111-112; *King Papers*, C-30258-30259.

<sup>38</sup> The *Bruce Times*, March 7, 1907; *I.B.*, file 594511, no. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Montreal Daily Herald*, September 28, 1907; *I.B.*, file 594511, no. 2. For an account of the anti-Asiatic riots see Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, pp. 350-351.

<sup>40</sup> *The Labour Gazette*, vol. VII, 1906-1907, p. 261; *Sessional Papers*, 1911, no. 36, Reports of the Deputy Minister of Labour, p. 95.

<sup>41</sup> *Sessional papers*, 1911, no. 36, p. 95.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, pp. 350-351. Extensive correspondence on the activities of the Asiatic Exclusion League are to be found in the correspondence between W.W.B. McInnes and Laurier during 1907 and 1908. *Laurier Papers*, 129162, 131593, 131596, 134026, 136303, 136615.

<sup>44</sup> John Duncan Cameron, "The Law Relating to Immigration to Canada, 1867-1942", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Law, University of Toronto, 1942, pp. 265-269; R. MacGregor Dawson, *William Lyon Mackenzie King, 1874-1923* (Toronto, 1958), p. 164; Charles Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient*, pp. 82-94, 103, 289; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, 1839-1964* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 160-175.

<sup>45</sup> The negotiations associated with the "Gentleman's Agreement" are fully documented in the Laurier Papers, the King Papers, and the Rodolphe Lemieux Papers (P.A.C.)

<sup>46</sup> Laurier Papers, 160620-160621, Charles Hays to Laurier, October 4, 1909; *ibid.*, Hays to Laurier, November 10, 1909; G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways*, vol. II, pp. 226-227.

<sup>47</sup> Laurier Papers, 161983, Laurier to Hays, November 12, 1909. There are indications that in 1912 the G.T.P. approached the British Columbia government requesting their assent to the importation of Chinese navvies. The McBride government refused. A.W. Currie, *The Grand Trunk Railway in Canada* (Toronto, 1957), p. 412.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient*, p. 94. Although Laurier's biographer, O.D. Skelton stressed the fact that "Laurier sacrificed British Columbia's seats rather than compete with Mr. Borden in concessions to the exclusionists. . . ." it was quite apparent that there were limits to this sacrifice. O.D. Skelton, *Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, p. 348.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient*, pp. 96-99; *Ottawa Free Press*, September 23, 1910; *Vancouver Province*, October 6, 1910; *Debates*, 1911, 286, 9815-9850.

<sup>50</sup> Allan Smith, "Metaphor and Nationality in North America", *Canadian Historical Review* (CHR), LI, no. 3, (September, 1970), p. 250. J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates*, p. 159. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1955) has provided an excellent study of American bias towards southern European immigrants.

<sup>51</sup> This point was made in countless letters from Immigration officials, especially in *I.B.*, file 594511, nos. 1-6.

<sup>52</sup> Sifton appears to have had a very low opinion of Italian immigration. Clifford Sifton Papers, Public Archives of Canada (hereafter, Sifton Papers), 89315, Sifton to Smart, November 16, 1901.

<sup>53</sup> *I.B.*, file 39145, no. 1, W.F. McCreary to A.G. Blair, June 21, 1897.

<sup>54</sup> I.B., file 60868, no. 1, C.W. Speers, Travelling Immigration Inspector to Frank Pedley, Superintendent of Immigration, January 24, 1900.

<sup>55</sup> I.B., file 39145, no. 1, James A. Smart to W.F. McCreary, June 5, 1900.

<sup>56</sup> John Wilson, *The Calcium Light: Turned on by a Railway Trackman* (St. Louis, 1902), introduction.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> I.B., file 39145, no. 1, J. Obed Smith, Commissioner, to Frank Pedley, June 24, 1901; *ibid.*, Smith to J.W. Leonard, General Superintendent Western Division, C.P.R., June 25, 1901; *Inland Sentinel*, cited John Wilson, *The Calcium Light*, p. 51; *The Voice*, cited *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>59</sup> I.B., file 39145, no. 1, J. Obed Smith to Frank Pedley, June 26, 1901.

<sup>60</sup> Sifton Papers, 83178, W.F. McCreary to Clifford Sifton, July 3, 1901. McCreary was a Winnipeg lawyer who had been very active in civic affairs during the 1880's and 1890's. After three years as Commissioner of Immigration (1897-1900) he was elected for the federal constituency of Selkirk. *The Canadian Guide*, 1903 (Ottawa, 1903), p. 111. It does appear from both his stand in 1901, and his previous attempts to work in a co-operative fashion with the C.P.R., that McCreary regarded the support of the C.P.R. as very important to the cause of the Liberal Party.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, J. Obed Smith to Frank Pedley, June 26.

<sup>62</sup> W.D. Atkinson, "Organized Labour and the Laurier Administration", pp. 20-35; Martin Robin, *Radical Labour*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>63</sup> Martin Robin, *Radical Labour*, p. 55; H.A. Logan, *Trade Unions in Canada*, pp. 483, 488.

<sup>64</sup> Mackenzie King to Thomas Shaughnessy, July 3, 1901, cited, John Wilson, *The Calcium Light*, p. 46.

<sup>65</sup> I.B., file 39145, no. 1, J. Obed Smith to W.D. Scott (the new Superintendent of Immigration), May 7, 1903; *Report, Royal Commission to Inquire into the Immigration of Italian labourers to Montreal, and alleged fraudulent practices employment agencies* (Ottawa, 1904), p. 19.

<sup>66</sup> I.B., file 28885, no. 2, Chevalier Honore Catelli, President, Montreal Italian Immigration Society to Dr. A.D. Stewart, April 15, 1904; Catelli to Stewart, April 29, 1904; Dr. Peter Bryce, Immigration Medical Inspector, to James A. Smart, April 23, 1904; *Sessional Papers*, 1906, no. 36, Report of the Deputy Minister, p. 88.

<sup>67</sup> *Royal Commission to Inquire into the Immigration of Italian Labourers*. . . ., p. 72.

<sup>68</sup> H.A. Logan, *Trade Unions in Canada*, pp. 483, 488.

<sup>69</sup> G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways*, vol. II, pp. 159-163, 172-183, 214-217.

<sup>70</sup> *The Bruce Times*, March 7, 1907; I.B., file 594511, no. 2, Frank Morse to Acting Superintendent of Immigration, L.M. Fortier, October 15, 1907. Morse had been hired as General Manager of the G.T.P. by Charles Hays, and apparently the choice was disastrous. G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways*, vol. II, p. 224. Peter Veregin, the Doukhobor Leader, publicly announced his intention to try and recruit 10,000 Russian railway labourers as an illustration of his good will towards The Canadian Government. James Mavor Papers, University of Toronto Archives (hereafter Mavor Papers), James Mavor to George Cox, Toronto, April 12, 1907. It is significant that by the period 1910-1914 some 50,000 navvies were also required annually. *Labour Gazette*, July, 1911 — June, 1912, XII, p. 721. See also Monthly Reports Pertaining to Railroad Construction, 1910-1914.

<sup>71</sup> Extensive correspondence by Immigration officials on this problem of restriction is located in I.B., file 594511, nos. 2-6; *Sessional Papers*, 1911, no. 25, pt. 2, p. 104; *ibid.*, 1914, no. 25, pt. 2, p. 144. What also troubled Canadian Immigration officials was the difficulty of deporting "undesirable" non-naturalized Slavic and Italian labourers who entered Canada from the United States. I.B., file 594511, no. 3, F.H. Larned, Acting Commissioner-General, Immigration and Naturalization, to W.D. Scott, June 16, 1906.

<sup>72</sup> In 1908, W.D. Scott had taken considerable exception to the ethnic groups which the Grand Trunk Pacific was attempting to import into Canada. I.B., file 594511, no. 2, W.D. Scott to J.T. Davis, May 4, 1908.

<sup>73</sup> I.B., file 571672, no. 1, Blake Robertson, Immigration Special Inspector, to Frank Oliver, October 10, 1907.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* The *padrone* system has been extensively discussed by American studies on the subject of Italian immigration. Maldwyn Jones, *American Immigration* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 190-192, provided a very succinct explanation of how the system worked. The *Royal Commission to Inquire into the Immigration of Italian Labourers*. . . ., p. 19, provides a vivid description of how the *padrone* Herocle Cordasco operated.

<sup>76</sup> Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, pp. 110-111; *Proceedings before the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, 1919* (Department of Labour, Library, Ottawa). Edmonton Hearings, pp. 12, 52; *ibid.*, Cobalt Hearings, pp. 1757, 1764.

<sup>77</sup> I.B., file 594511, no. 3, W.D. Scott to D. McNicoll, Vice President, July 6, 1910; *ibid.*, J.O. Reddie, G.T.P., to W.D. Scott, April 1, 1910.

<sup>78</sup> Laurier Papers, 182131, Duncan Ross to Laurier, February 27, 1911; I.B., file 594511, no. 3, W.W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to W.D. Scott, July 16, 1910.

<sup>79</sup> I.B., file 594511, no. 3, W.J. Bartlett, Secretary, Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council to Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, August 3, 1910. Attorney General, W.J. Bowser, of the British Columbia government, in September, 1911, charged the Immigration Branch with consciously violating the Alien Labour Law by allowing railway companies to import navvies from the United States (Montreal *Daily Star*, September 5, 1911; Vancouver *News Advertiser*, September 7, 1911).

<sup>80</sup> The King Diary, January 10, 1911, P.A.C.

<sup>81</sup> I.B., file 594511, no. 3, Report, J.M. Langley, Chief of Police, to Mayor Alderman, City of Victoria, B.C., August 28, 1911; *ibid.*, no. 5, J. Bruce Walker, Commissioner of Immigration, to W.D. Scott, March 12, 1912.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 5, Donald Mann to W.D. Scott, August 26, 1912; *ibid.*, Timothy Foley to Robert Rogers, March 27, 1912. Three quarters of the total construction mileage was awarded to Foley Brothers in their many different partnerships. They were an American contracting company which had had considerable experience with both the C.P.R. and the Canadian Northern. G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways*, vol. II, p. 176.

<sup>83</sup> I.B., file 594511, no. 5, Memorandum, Office of the Minister of the Interior to W.W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, April 2, 1912. John D. Cameron, *The Law Relating to Immigration*, p. 278.

<sup>84</sup> Statistics tabulated from *Sessional Papers, 1907-1908*, no. 25, pt. 2, Report of the Superintendent of Immigration; *ibid.*, 1915, no. 25, pt. 2, Report of the Superintendent of Immigration.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* For the railway contractors the outbreak of conflict in the Balkans meant that many of their Bulgarian navvies rapidly returned to Europe. *The Christian Guardian*, November 12, 1912, Ed.

<sup>87</sup> There was quite a difference of opinion between the account included in labour newspapers such as *The Voice* and the official reports of investigators sent out by the Department of Labour and the Immigration Branch.

<sup>88</sup> Statistics tabulated from *Sessional Papers, 1913*, no. 36, Report of the Deputy Minister of Labour, p. 72.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>90</sup> Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, pp. 153, 200, 212.

<sup>91</sup> I.B., file 594511, no. 3, J. Bruce Walker to W.D. Scott, February 16, 1910.

<sup>92</sup> Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, pp. 81, 144-153, 200, 206. The Department of Labour had the responsibility of enforcing the Fair Wages Regulation (1900) which established certain employment practices applicable to employers who were receiving either a federal subsidy or guarantee. MacGregor Dawson, *William Lyon Mackenzie King* pp. 70-71; *Sessional Papers, 1907*, no. 36, Report of the Deputy Minister of Labour, pp. 64-67.

<sup>93</sup> Partial accounts of camp conditions are included in Pierre Berton, *The Last Spike* pp. 110, 194-205, 275-279; Terry Coleman, *The Railway Navvies*, pp. 66, 80; A.W. Currie, *The Grand Trunk*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>94</sup> I.B., file 39501, no. 1, James A. Smart to Thomas Shaughnessy, October 26, 1897. Also see pages 9-10. In 1906 a series of complaints were submitted by a party of Scottish navvies concerning the construction camps of the Grand Trunk Pacific. I.B., file 751672, no. 1, Lord Strathcona, High Commissioner, to Frank Oliver, December 5, 1906.

<sup>95</sup> *Sessional Papers*, 1912, no. 36, pp. 88-100.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, pp. 206, 216.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 206-213.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Sessional Papers*, 1914, no. 36, p. 58.

<sup>103</sup> *Eastern Labour News*, May 24, 1913.

<sup>104</sup> Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, p. 234.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220. In this study the author has restricted his analysis to the Methodists and Presbyterians. Certainly the role of the Catholic Church in the bush camps among the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic navvies would be a study of considerable importance.

<sup>106</sup> Apparently the Methodist Church spent about a quarter of a million dollars on their missions among the foreigners between 1896 and 1914. George Emery, "Methodist on the Canadian Prairies, 1896-1914", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1970, p. 346. The Presbyterians were also very much committed. See Presbyterian Church in Canada, 'Report of the Board of Home Missions', *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly* (hereafter cited as Presbyterian Acts and Proceedings), 1900-1914, (United Church Archives). W.G. Smith, *Building the Nation: The Churches' Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto, 1920), pp. 65-77, 122-123, 176, 193.

<sup>107</sup> Frontier College Papers, 1919, P.A.C. (known as the Reading Camp Association until 1919), A. Fitzpatrick to H.H. Fudger, President, Robert Simpson Co., November, 1919; Alfred Fitzpatrick, *University in Overalls*, pp. x, 13; Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, pp. 14-17.

<sup>108</sup> Frontier College Papers, 1912, A. Fitzpatrick to Dr. M.E. Church, December 2, 1912; *Ibid.*, 1912, A. Fitzpatrick to H.H. Fudger, November 19, 1919.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 1912, A. Fitzpatrick to James Hales, July 31, 1912; *ibid.*, Fitzpatrick to J.B. Skeaff, Manager, Bank of Toronto, July 29, 1912.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 1919, Wallace Robb, President of the Cannuck Supply Co., Montreal, November 14, 1919.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, A. Fitzpatrick to R.H. Grant, Minister of Education, Government of Ontario, December 17, 1919.

<sup>112</sup> Ontario had been the first province to provide financial assistance, with amounts ranging from \$25.00 in 1900 to \$1,750,000 in 1912. *Ibid.*, A. Fitzpatrick to R.H. Grant, December 17, 1919. In 1919 both Saskatchewan and Alberta indicated that they would provide \$250.00 each; *ibid.*, August Ball, Deputy Minister of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, to Fitzpatrick, November 5, 1919; *ibid.*, John Ross, Deputy Minister of Education, Alberta, to Fitzpatrick, February 1, 1919.

<sup>113</sup> Numerous authors urged government to move in this direction, most notably, J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates*, J.T.M. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadian*, W.G. Smith, *Building the Nation: The Churches in Relation to the Immigrant*, Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, and of course Fitzpatrick, *University in Overalls*.

<sup>114</sup> Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, p. 134; *Proceedings of the Twenty-*

sixth Annual Session of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (1910), p. 41. I.B., file 594511, no. 3. L.M. Fortier, Acting Superintendent of Immigration to P.M. Draper, September 1, 1910.

<sup>115</sup> *Proceedings of the Twenty-seventh Annual Session of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (1911)*, p. 83.

<sup>116</sup> Edmund Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, p. 234; H.A. Logan, *Trade Unions in Canada*, p. 299. An excellent account of the success achieved by the I.W.W. among the unskilled labourers is by Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the International Workers of the World*, pp. 24, 26, 151.

<sup>117</sup> G.R. Stevens, *The Canadian National Railways*, vol. II, pp. 194-195.

<sup>118</sup> *British Columbia Federationist*, April 5, 1912, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, June 8, 1912, p. 1.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid. The Western Wage Earner*, April 1909, p. 4.

<sup>121</sup> *British Columbia Federationist*, June 29, 1912, p. 1., *ibid.*, June 22, 1912, p. 1.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> I.B., file 594511, no. 3. Donald Mann to W.D. Scott, August 26, 1912; *ibid.*, Timothy Foley to Robert Rogers, March 27, 1912. See discussion on page.

<sup>124</sup> *The Labour Gazette*, August, 1912, p. 191.

<sup>125</sup> *British Columbia Federationist*, May 6, 1912.

<sup>126</sup> *The Labour Gazette*, July, 1912, p. 79.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, February, 1912, p. 721. See monthly reports, *The Labour Gazette*, July, 1910 — July, 1914.

<sup>128</sup> In September, 1914, *The Labour Gazette* reported that railway construction had "somewhat halted upon the advent of war . . ." *Ibid.*, September, 1914, p. 332. Throughout the next twelve months continual reports were made on the number of unemployed navvies who had gravitated to cities such as Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Vancouver. *Ibid.*, October, 1914 — September, 1915. *Ibid.*, *Passim*.

<sup>129</sup> The amount of railway mileage in Canada more than doubled between 1896 and 1914. By 1921, only taking the Canadian Pacific system and the railways owned by the Dominion government, there were 35,452 miles of track. G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways*, vol. II, pp. 17, 519.