

Enacting clause.

BE it enacted by the Governor, the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, in Legislative Session convened, as follows:—

Respecting the landing of immigrants and of such as are undesirable.

1. (1) An immigrant shall not be landed in this Colony from an immigrant ship except at a port of entry, and shall not be landed at any such port without the leave of the Collector of Customs at that port, given after an inspection of the immigrants made by him on the ship, or elsewhere if the immigrants are conditionally disembarked, for the purpose, in company with a medical inspector; such inspection is to be made as soon as practicable, and the Collector shall withhold leave in the case of any immigrant who appears to him to be an undesirable immigrant within the meaning of this section.

(2) Where leave is granted to an immigrant to land at a port other than the port of entry...

Enacting clause.

BE it enacted by the Governor, the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, in Legislative Session convened, as follows:—

Persons of Chinese origin to pay a tax of \$300;

1. Every person of Chinese origin, irrespective of allegiance, shall on entering this Colony pay at the port or place of entry, a tax of three hundred dollars (\$300.00), except the following persons, who shall be exempt from such payment, that is to say:

Exemptions.

- (a) The members of the Diplomatic Corps, or other Government representatives, their suites and their servants, and Consuls and Consular Agents;
- (b) Clergymen, the wives and children of clergymen, tourists, men of science and students, who shall substantiate their status to the satisfaction of the Sub-Collector of Customs, subject to the approval of

4.82 Aliens Act and Chinese Immigration Act

TOPIC 4.6

Immigration

What are some of the challenges faced by immigrants?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of immigration?

Introduction

The majority of immigrants to Newfoundland and Labrador during the 1800s were of English, Irish, and Scottish descent. From the late 1800s to the 1920s, small numbers of peoples whose ethnicities were not associated with Britain or Ireland arrived in Newfoundland and Labrador. Most prominent among these groups were Chinese, Lebanese, and Jewish immigrants.

Although immigration statistics are incomplete, it is estimated that approximately 500 permanent settlers came to Newfoundland and Labrador from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and China during this period. The arrival of these “new immigrants” (those not from Britain or Ireland) was part of a larger movement of people to North America at this time. Approximately 15 million immigrants (largely from southern and eastern Europe) arrived in the United States and almost 3.4 million people

immigrated to Canada from 1900-1920. Many of these immigrants were ethnic, economic, or political refugees.

At first, most governments had an **open-door policy** towards immigrants. But as numbers of immigrants increased, and the economy began to get worse in the 1920s, immigration policies grew more exclusive in the United States, Canada, and Newfoundland. The Government of Newfoundland made its first move towards restricting new immigrants with the introduction of the *Chinese Immigration Act* and the *Aliens Act* in 1906. Prior to this legislation, restrictions on immigration applied only to paupers, the sickly, elderly, and infirm. These new acts subjected all non-British aliens to financial checks and medical tests, and Chinese immigrants were forced to pay a \$300 head tax. More restrictive immigration acts followed in 1924

and 1926, and in a proclamation in 1932. Government officials were given the power to exclude or deport “undesirable” foreigners who might become a “public charge” or who might use the colony as a stepping stone to the United States or Canada. In addition, the government reserved the right to prohibit “the landing of immigrants belonging to a race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of the colony, or immigrants

of any specified class, occupation, or character.”

Despite these restrictions, small numbers of new immigrants did manage to settle and prosper in Newfoundland and Labrador. Many of them opened their own businesses rather than compete with existing local trade and workers, and made a lasting impact on the communities in which they settled.

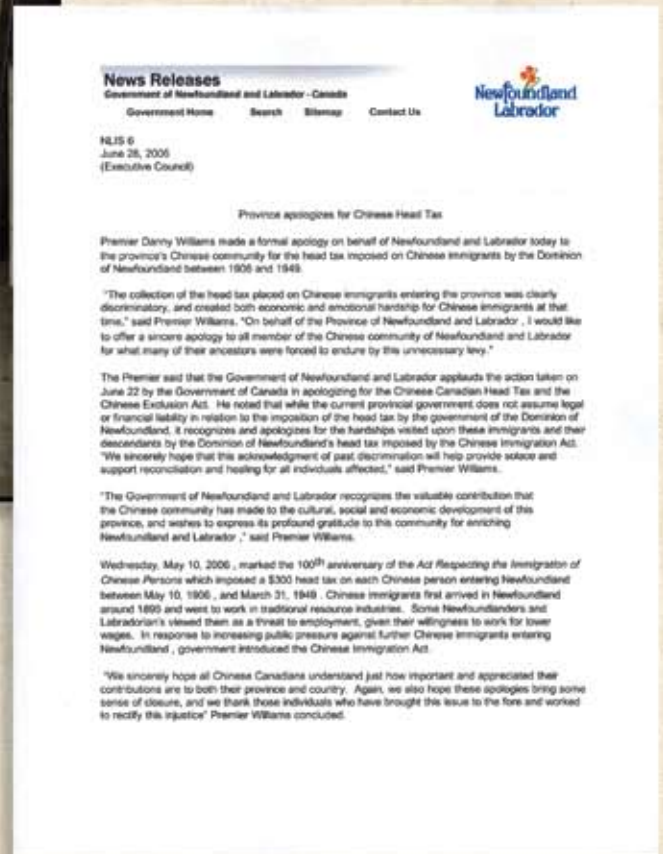
There was no Chinese immigration to the United States for almost a century after the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed there in 1882.



4.83 Interior of Chinese laundry, St. John's, c. 1922



4.84 Chinese community in St. John's, c. 1938



Province apologizes for Chinese Head Tax

Premier Danny Williams made a formal apology on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador today to the province's Chinese community for the head tax imposed on Chinese immigrants by the Dominion of Newfoundland between 1906 and 1949.

"The collection of the head tax placed on Chinese immigrants entering the province was clearly discriminatory, and created both economic and emotional hardship for Chinese immigrants at that time," said Premier Williams. "On behalf of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I would like to offer a sincere apology to all members of the Chinese community of Newfoundland and Labrador for what many of their ancestors were forced to endure by this unnecessary levy."

The Premier said that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador applauds the action taken on June 22 by the Government of Canada in apologizing for the Chinese Canadian Head Tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act. He noted that while the current provincial government does not assume legal or financial liability in relation to the imposition of the head tax by the government of the Dominion of Newfoundland, it recognizes and apologizes for the hardships visited upon these immigrants and their descendants by the Dominion of Newfoundland's head tax imposed by the Chinese Immigration Act. "We sincerely hope that this acknowledgment of past discrimination will help provide solace and support reconciliation and healing for all individuals affected," said Premier Williams.

"The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes the valuable contribution that the Chinese community has made to the cultural, social and economic development of this province, and wishes to express its profound gratitude to this community for enriching Newfoundland and Labrador," said Premier Williams.

Wednesday, May 10, 2006, marked the 100th anniversary of the Act Respecting the Immigration of Chinese Persons which imposed a \$300 head tax on each Chinese person entering Newfoundland between May 10, 1906, and March 31, 1949. Chinese immigrants first arrived in Newfoundland around 1899 and went to work in traditional resource industries. Some Newfoundlanders and Labradorians viewed them as a threat to employment, given their willingness to work for lower wages. In response to increasing public pressure against further Chinese immigrants entering Newfoundland, government introduced the Chinese Immigration Act.

"We sincerely hope all Chinese Canadians understand just how important and appreciated their contributions are to both their province and country. Again, we also hope these apologies bring some sense of closure, and we thank those individuals who have brought this issue to the fore and worked to rectify this injustice," Premier Williams concluded.

4.85 Press release from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador apologizing for head tax

Immigrants from China

Most Chinese immigrants to Newfoundland and Canada came from Guangdong Province in mountainous southern China, where farming was difficult and poverty widespread. Although most immigrants arrived in Canada through the port of Vancouver, some chose not to stay in Canada, especially after Canada began imposing a \$50 head tax on each Chinese immigrant in 1885 and increased this tax to \$500 in 1903. Until 1906, when Newfoundland adopted its own head tax, some Chinese immigrants migrated to Newfoundland rather than pay this fee. During this long journey, most immigrants were escorted by police to discourage them from stopping and settling in Canada.

These Chinese immigrants settled primarily in St. John's, Harbour Grace, and Carbonear. Many Chinese

established laundries; this type of work required little knowledge of English and, as it was done by hand, there were enough jobs for all newcomers. Other Chinese immigrants opened restaurants, or worked as shore workers in the fishery, gardeners, domestics, or miners on Bell Island.

Because few Chinese spoke English upon arrival and practiced Buddhism or Taoism, they sometimes experienced prejudice for being different. Sometimes mud and stones were thrown at them, their store windows were broken, and their traditions and appearances were ridiculed. Although there was little evidence, some people tried to make the case that new arrivals, like the Chinese, were taking away jobs from people who had been born in the colony.

Immigrants from Lebanon

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, religious persecution, poverty, and compulsory military service were common in the Turkish Empire. To escape these conditions, some Syrians, Assyrians, or Maronites from what is modern-day Lebanon migrated to Newfoundland and Labrador. A scarcity of existing research into the Newfoundland and Labrador Lebanese community makes it difficult to determine exactly how many immigrants arrived in the country, where they settled, and what they did. However, the 1911 Census enumerated 86 Syrians and 44 Turks.

Most Lebanese settlers were active in commerce and belonged to a prosperous merchant class. Many

opened shops, hotels, movie theatres, and a variety of other businesses, which prompted them to settle in commercial or industrial areas, including St. John's, Bell Island, and western portions of the island. Anthony Tooton, for example, founded a successful chain of photography stores shortly after arriving at St. John's in 1904, while successful businessman Michael Basha ran the Bay of Islands Light and Power Company and later served as a Canadian Senator representing Newfoundland's West Coast from 1951-1976.

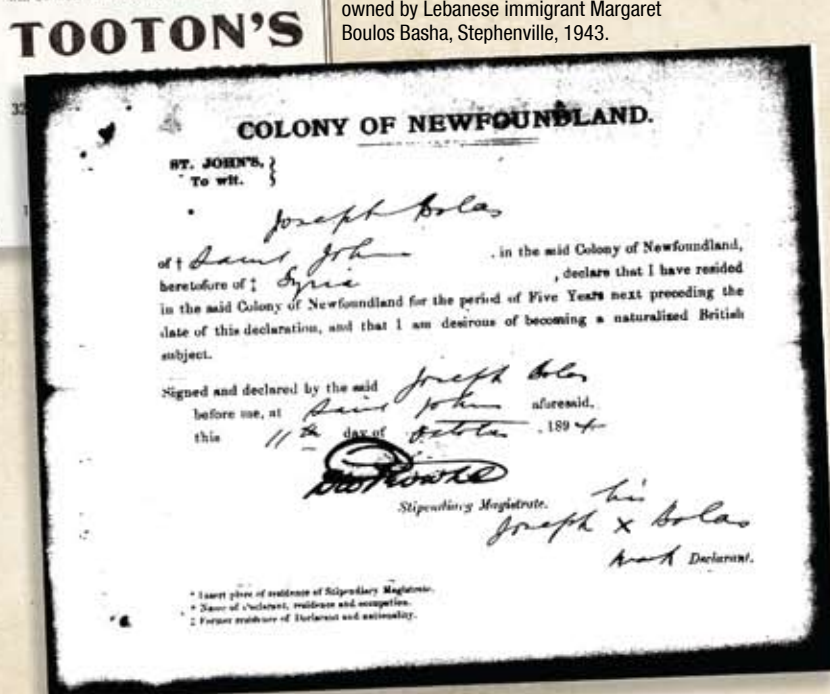


4.87 Tooton's advertisement, 1918
Lebanese immigrant Anthony Tooton founded a successful chain of photography stores shortly after arriving at St. John's in 1904.

4.88 An immigration document
from a Lebanese immigrant to the Colony of Newfoundland in 1894.



4.86 A restaurant/store
owned by Lebanese immigrant Margaret Boulos Basha, Stephenville, 1943.



Jewish Immigrants from Eastern Europe

Between 1881 and 1910, Jews in Eastern Europe were the victims of anti-Semitic violence. Many who escaped the region settled in New York City, but some came to Newfoundland and Labrador to open shops and work as travelling peddlers. One of the earliest known and most prosperous immigrants was Israel Perlin, who arrived in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1891 from Minsk, Russia by way of New York City. Initially a peddler of dry goods in Fortune and Placentia Bays, Perlin opened a wholesale shop, known as I.F. Perlin and Company, in downtown St. John's in 1893. In

the following years, Perlin employed many Jewish immigrants as peddlers, selling goods such as jewellery, stationery, pencils, combs, ties, tea, and pocket knives from his company in outports across the colony. Some of these workers eventually opened their own shops at St. John's, Twillingate, Wabana, Grand Falls, and elsewhere on the island.

Many Jewish immigrants may have found it difficult to settle in a predominantly English-speaking Christian society where few visible minorities existed and

It is estimated about 12 000 potential Jewish immigrants tried to settle in Newfoundland and Labrador from 1934 to 1941 to escape the rise of the Third Reich (Nazi Germany). However, restrictive immigration laws at the time meant only a small fraction of this number actually was able to settle here.



4.89 A community dinner
at the original synagogue in St. John's, which was built on Henry Street in the 1930s.

kosher foods were non-existent. In response, many families appear to have converted to the Christian faith and attended various churches available on the island. This changed during the early decades of the twentieth century, as more Jewish immigrants settled in Newfoundland and Labrador. After 1895, for instance, there were enough Jewish residents in St. John's to begin holding religious services in stores and rental spaces. In 1930, work began on a permanent synagogue in St. John's, and in the following decade small synagogues were also built in Corner Brook and Stephenville.



4.90 Israel Perlin, c. 1900
Jewish businessman Israel Perlin emigrated to St. John's from Russia via the United States in 1891. He established a wholesale business, I.F. Perlin and Company and was a leading figure in the Newfoundland Jewish community.

Questions:

1. Identify the push and pull factors that influenced the immigrants discussed in this section. What inference(s) can be drawn from this data?
2. Changes in policy during the 1920s limited immigration. Why did this happen? Was this justifiable?
3. What are some of the pull factors that may influence people to immigrate to Newfoundland and Labrador today?

MODERN IMMIGRATION TRENDS

In more recent decades, our province has begun receiving immigrants from all over the world, including Africa, Asia, and South America. On this increasing diversity, Premier Danny Williams has said: "Newfoundland and Labrador can offer safe, clean, welcoming communities and generous people who are willing to embrace newcomers and celebrate diversity. Immigrants can offer fresh perspectives, entrepreneurial spirit, specialized skill sets, creative and innovative ideas, as well as new food, music, art, and culture."

4.91 Recent immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador, 2006 Census

Place of Birth	
United States	1405
Central and South America	385
Caribbean and Bermuda	145
Europe	4040
United Kingdom	2335
Other Northern and Western Europe	940
Eastern Europe	415
Southern Europe	345
Africa	555
Asia	1780
West Central Asia and the Middle East	265
Eastern Asia	540
South-East Asia	245
Southern Asia	725
Oceania and other	65
Total Immigrant Population	8380

Note: figures may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada