Immigration and Nativism

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Bennett Ch. 13
The Boom and the Pull Factors

- Massive Immigration boom 1896-1921
- Population 5.4M 1900 → 10.4M 1920
- Closing of the American frontier
- Yukon Gold Rush
- Wheat Boom: Prairie → Last, Best West
- Government Promotion of Immigration
Please Come to Canada!

- American Pull factors → Canada nearly depopulated →
- Laurier’s Liberal government, Sifton promotes immigration
- $1M advertising Canada: pamphlets, tours, subsidies
- Sifton’s slogan: “only farmers need apply”
Cartoon #1

In which,
Canada was
 Fake Advertising!

Time to conform!

Why are they
staring at me?

You didn't read the
fine print either, did you?

Border
Immigrant

Immigrate
Here!

Border
Masses
Push Factors in Europe

● Canada versus Austro-Hungarian Empire/Ukraine
  ○ Lower land taxes
  ○ Less crowded
  ○ Less political harassment

● Religious minorities: Jew, Mennonite, Doukhobors
  ○ Lower proportion than in US
Integration and Nativism

- Anglo-Conformity expected
- Ralph Connor: Melting Pot + Anglo-Conformity
- Quebecois view mixed:
  - Most Quebecois support pro-immigration Liberals
  - Others fear French-Canadians being outnumbered
- Hierarchy: British, American, Western European, Other
Open versus Selective

- Open immigration supported by industrialists
  - Wheat Boom + Industrialization → Unskilled Labor needed
  - Eastern Europeans diligent, obedient, unskilled, cheap

- Frank Oliver: Greatness incompatible with openness
  - Stricter Immigration Act; Jews, blacks excluded
  - However, small impact on immigration overall
Arriving in

- Arrivals processed by Immigration Branch
  - Sifton, Minister of the Interior: “responsibility of the state ended when the new arrivals reached their destination”
  - Winnipeg = major immigration dispersion point
- Immigrants had to fend for themselves
  - Many U. S. immigrants “quit the Canadian West and return[ed] to their homeland”
Urban Immigrant Experience

- Most lived in ethnic ghettos
  - Overcrowded, poor, unsanitary
  - Viewed as “breeding grounds for disease and crime”
    - In U.S., blamed for urban crisis (Blum)
  - But, “for the urban immigrant, [...] eased the trauma of [...] a dramatically different way of life”
Immigrant Women

- 1870s-on: Need domestic services (solve the “servant problem”)
  - Exacerbated in 1900s: Canadian-born women to non-domestic work

- Immigrants usually British single women, some Asian
  - Unaccustomed to working in rural environment
  - Migrated N and W
Treatment of Ukrainians

- Subject to stereotypes
- Alarm over smallpox
- Resisted adopting Anglo-Canadian ways
Treatment of Doukhobors

- Doukhobors = Russian pacifist religious sect members
- Trouble w/ Doukhobors
  - Refused to give up communal land ownership
  - Refused to swear allegiance to the Crown
- >50% Saskatchewan lands confiscated
  - 1912 Peter Verigrin leads to Kootenay region (BC)
Anti-Asian Sentiment

- “Central and E. European immigrants aroused nativist anxiety largely because of their numbers, but Asians suffered blatant discrimination for other reasons”
  - e.g. they weren’t white
Anti-Asian Sentiment

● For Europeans
  ○ “How to assimilate?”

● For Asians
  ○ “Should they be allowed in?”
  ○ “Should they have same rights?”

● Similar hostility in U.S.
West Coast Immigration: Asians

- Settled mostly in British Columbia (BC)
- Women usually married to non-Asians or brought over by BC businessmen
  - Employed as domestics, waitresses, or prostitutes
- Mostly adult males
  - ~11% population, higher percent of workforce
  - Made “significant contribution” to BC economic development
West Coast Immigration: Asians

- Growing nativity against Asians
  - 1903 Head tax ($500) for every Chinese immigrant
  - Numbers continue to grow
  - Regarded as “economic and cultural threat”
    - Different skin color = harder integration
    - Were taking Canadian jobs
Anti-Asian Sentiment

- Restricted Chinese; Japanese and E. Indians came instead
  - Japanese disliked more b/c “more aggressive in pursuing skilled jobs”
- 1907 Asiatic Exclusion League led demonstrations
  - Result: Laurier gov’t “bowed to public pressure for immigration restrictions in 1908”
Komagata Maru, Japanese Immigrant Ship

- May 1914
  - Was refused admittance into Canada for 2 months
  - Nativist sentiment: H. H. Stevens says Canada must “keep [itself] pure and free from the taint of other peoples”
- Borden sends *Rainbow*, Navy ship, to lead *Komagata Maru* away
Wartime Nativism: “Enemy Aliens”

- Reactions “ranged from grudging acceptance to outright prejudice”
- Germans disliked
- Enemy Country = “Enemy Aliens”
- 500-1500 civilians and soldiers = rampage → 2 days in Feb. 1916
- New Rule! → register with magistrate, no firearms, report every month
- Wartime Elections Act of 1917
Restrictions on Pacifists

- Doukhobors, Mennonites, and Hutterites
- No military service = Doukhobors and Mennonites farmers
- Order-in-council, 1919 = no more in Dominion
Anti-Radical Sentiment

- Wartime inflation = problem with wages
- Post-war → anti-radical nativism
- Slavic immigrant = dangerous revolution
- **Labor Crisis of 1919**
  - Winnipeg General Strike of June 1919
- “Red Scare” caused by 1919 strikes
- Laws for no radicals and strengthening government’s of deportation
Canadianization in the 1920s

- Canada is different from U.S during early 1920s
  - “Between 1920 and 1924 there was an upsurge of nativist ferment across America, best exemplified by the rise of the Klu Klux Klan”
- “Melting pot” = failure
- more British immigration = more British civilization
  - “The test by which all other civilized nations are measured”
- assimilation of minorities
Responses to Assimilationist Pressures

- Canadianization = failure
- Mennonites and Doukhobors = old customs and traditions
- old vs. new generations
Boosterism and Renewed Immigration

- Promoting new immigration
- **Railways Agreement of 1925 = more immigrants**
  yay!
The Revival of Nativism

- new wave of European immigration in mid-1920s
- Nativist sentiment stronger in Saskatchewan
- KKK branched
  - into Toronto and Montreal in 1921
  - into Ontario, B.C, Manitoba
- Success with western Canadians
- Growth of KKK seems to express American cultural attitudes, but more anti-Catholic
The Challenge of Ethnic Diversity

- 1920s = ethnic and cultural differences
- “melting pot” = favored
- John W. Dafoe, editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press* and John S. Ewart
- 1880 to mid-1920s → major waves of European and Asian immigration
- pieced by different ethnicities
Cartoon #2

Canada attempts the melting pot.