

## Where's the Policy? Immigration to New Brunswick, 1945-1971

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Résumé de l'article

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# Where's the Policy?

## Immigration to New Brunswick, 1945-1971

HEATHER STEEL

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*Cet article examine le rôle de l'immigration dans les politiques publiques du Nouveau-Brunswick entre 1945 et 1971. Si le gouvernement du Nouveau-Brunswick consacra des efforts et des fonds considérables pour attirer des immigrants entre 1867 et 1930, ces efforts cessèrent lors de la crise économique des années 1930 pour ne reprendre que récemment. Préoccupés par les taux élevés d'émigration et de chômage, les politiciens et les planificateurs économiques sous trois premiers ministres provinciaux de l'après-guerre (John McNair, Hugh John Flemming et Louis J. Robichaud) firent la promotion d'une politique du « Nouveau-Brunswick d'abord », alléguant que les mesures incitatives à l'intention des immigrants procureraient à ceux-ci des avantages dont les citoyens de naissance ne jouissaient pas. Cette approche contrastait fortement avec la politique d'immigration d'autres provinces démunies telles que le Manitoba, où la politique fédérale d'immigration soulevait des inquiétudes selon lesquelles elle était impuissante à répondre aux besoins de la région. Comme le suggère cet article, les recherches sur les programmes provinciaux d'immigration fournissent de précieuses indications non seulement sur les dimensions régionales de la politique d'immigration du Canada, mais également sur les cultures politiques régionales.*

*This article examines the role of immigration in New Brunswick's public policy between 1945 and 1971. While the New Brunswick government put considerable energy and money into attracting immigrants between 1867 and 1930, these efforts ceased during the Depression and have only recently been revived. Concerned with high levels of out-migration and unemployment, politicians and economic planners under three premiers in the post-war period (John McNair, Hugh John Flemming and Louis J. Robichaud) promoted a "New Brunswick first" policy, arguing that incentives for immigrants would give them benefits that native-born citizens did not enjoy. This approach contrasts sharply with immigration policy in other have-not provinces such as Manitoba, where concerns were being raised that federal immigration policy was ineffective in addressing regional needs. As this article suggests, research on provincial immigration programmes offers valuable insights not only on the regional dimensions of Canada's immigration policy but also on regional political cultures.*

LARS WAS AMONG THE WAVE of Europeans who came to Canada when the government opened the doors to immigrants after the Second World War. In an interview conducted in 2004, he explained that he choose Canada because he knew

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that, unlike his Danish homeland, it was sparsely populated. He ended up in New Brunswick in 1952 after an encounter with a shipping clerk who suggested that he go to Saint John because it was a friendly city. Like over a million other immigrants, Lars arrived in Canada at Pier 21 in Halifax. He immediately boarded the train and travelled overnight to Saint John.<sup>1</sup> There Lars was met by two immigration officers who, in their black uniforms, reminded him of the Gestapo. With the help of a Danish Lutheran minister, it was decided that Lars should take a job as a farm labourer in Silver Falls. He spent six months on the farm before moving to the Saint John area, where he continues to live. Approximately 20 other Danish immigrants came to Canada on the same ship, but none of them stayed in the Atlantic Provinces.<sup>2</sup>

Of the more than 3,000,000 immigrants who entered Canada between 1946 and 1971, only 2.7 per cent settled in Atlantic Canada. Even the immigrants who initially chose the region as their preferred destination were often lured away by opportunities elsewhere. In the two-and-a-half decades following the Second World War, 28,888 immigrants stated that they planned to move to New Brunswick; only 14,150 were living in the province in 1971.<sup>3</sup> These trends – low levels of immigration and poor retention rates – were not new to post-war New Brunswick. Difficulty attracting and holding immigrants had long been a problem. What changed in the post-war period was the province's view of the benefits that immigrants had to offer. This article examines the approach of the New Brunswick government to immigration between 1945 and 1971, with a view to explaining why New Brunswick missed the immigration boat in this period.

Section 95 of the British North America Act (1867) named the federal and provincial governments jointly responsible for immigration and agriculture.<sup>4</sup> While Ottawa had traditionally taken the lead in developing immigration policy, recent research has shown that, between 1867 and 1930, the New Brunswick government put considerable energy and money into attracting immigrants to the province.<sup>5</sup> Such efforts ceased during the 1930s Depression and have only been revived in recent years, sparked by concern over an aging population, high levels of out-migration and a renewed sense that immigration has a positive role to play in encouraging economic

1 There were few accommodations for immigrants in Halifax and therefore the new arrivals quickly boarded the train to travel to their final destinations. See Milda Danys, *DP: Lithuanian Immigration to Canada after the Second World War* (Toronto, 1986), p. 95.

2 Lars (pseudonym), interview by author, tape recording, Saint John, NB, 2 March 2004.

3 Canada, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Immigration Statistics to Canada by Intended Occupation and by Province of Destination, 1946-1956* (Ottawa, 1956); Canada, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Immigration Statistics* (Ottawa, 1957-1971); Census of Canada, "Immigrant Population by Period of Immigration and Sex, for Provinces and Territories, Rural Farm, Rural Non-Farm and Urban Size Groups, 1971", Table 50, vol. 1, part 3, 1971. The number for 1971 includes post-war immigrants who settled elsewhere in Canada before moving to New Brunswick.

4 Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, 2nd ed. (Montreal, 1988), pp. 180-1.

5 Margaret Conrad and Heather Steel, "They Come and They Go: Four Centuries of Immigration to New Brunswick", in H       Destrempe and Joe Ruggeri, eds., *Rendez-vous Immigration 2004: Immigration in New Brunswick, Issues and Challenges* (Fredericton, 2005), pp. 43-78. This article can also be accessed through the Atlantic Canada Portal: <http://atlanticportal.hil.unb.ca>.

growth.<sup>6</sup> Freda Hawkins argues that the Atlantic provinces remained inactive in the post-war period largely because they lacked financial resources.<sup>7</sup> Without a doubt, historians must consider the economic context of post-war Atlantic Canada when addressing population issues. In the 1950s, the regional economy continued to lag behind much of the rest of Canada and 82,000 people moved away, most of them in search of better economic opportunities. Although the regional economy showed improvement during the decade of the 1960s, disparities in income levels, high rates of unemployment and out-migration persisted.<sup>8</sup> However, the Atlantic provinces were not the only ones dealing with the effects of slow economic growth in the post-war period. Manitoba, for example, shared with its eastern cousins a have-not status, but developed a much different approach to immigration. In the 1960s, the Manitoba government took up immigration as a tool for encouraging economic growth. Its submission to the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Immigration in 1967 argued that Ottawa had ignored the issue of immigrant distribution and therefore was contributing to regional inequality: "Distribution is attributable to the disparity in general economic growth among the various regions of Canada, a diversion of immigrants en route, a lack of knowledge of Canada and its constituent regions, different regional climates and the multiplier effect of the sponsorship programme. . . . A demand has existed and still exists for certain labour requirements which could be filled by immigration, but failure to use immigration as a device to meet these needs is impeding our growth, causing further regional imbalance".<sup>9</sup> Given the focus on regional economic development in Atlantic Canada in the post-war period, it might be expected that government officials there would have shared this view, but it was not the case. While tight budgets were certainly a serious problem in New Brunswick, the province made no appeals to Ottawa for financial assistance in attracting and settling immigrants. High levels of out-migration and unemployment weighed so heavily on the minds of politicians and economic planners that immigration was overshadowed by efforts to create employment opportunities for *New Brunswickers*. Repeatedly, politicians and civil servants promoted a "New Brunswick first" policy, arguing that incentive programmes for immigrants would

6 In 1999 New Brunswick signed a Canada/New Brunswick Provincial Nominee Agreement (Provincial Nominee Agreement) with the federal government, which allows the provincial government to expedite the applications of 200 immigrants annually who are deemed likely to contribute to the growth of the economy. In January 2003 government officials announced plans to devise programmes to help foreign students find employment in New Brunswick after graduation. These efforts have been met with enthusiastic approval in the local media. See, for example, Alan White, "Residents: Minister Says Plan to Keep Foreign Students in the Province in the Offing", *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal*, 22 January 2003, A1, A9. On the Provincial Nominee Agreement, see the following website: [http://www.gnb.ca/immigration/english/immigrate\\_NB.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/immigration/english/immigrate_NB.asp).

7 Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration*, p. 193.

8 Margaret Conrad, "The 1950s: The Decade of Development" and Della Stanley, "The 1960s: The Illusions and Realities of Progress", in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Toronto; Fredericton, 1993), pp. 384, 386, 458. For unemployment rates in Atlantic Canada see Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, *Employment Requirements in the Atlantic Province*, pamphlet no. 5 (Halifax, July 1963), p. 17; Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, *Fourth Annual Review: The Atlantic Economy* (Halifax, October 1970), p. 46; and T.N. Brewis, *Regional Economic Policies in Canada* (Toronto, 1969), p. 19.

9 Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration*, pp. 180-1.

entitle them to benefits that native-born citizens did not enjoy.

Scholars of Atlantic Canada in the post-Confederation period have tended to follow policy makers in ignoring immigration. While major studies have been conducted on out-migration,<sup>10</sup> very little research has been done on immigration policy in the region.<sup>11</sup> As this article suggests, research on immigration programmes offers valuable insights not only on the region's political policies but also on its political culture that has been forged over several generations of relative economic underdevelopment.

### **Public Policy under John B. McNair (1940-52)**

If Premier McNair had wanted to make immigration an issue and pressure the federal government to direct more immigrants to New Brunswick, the end of the Second World War would have provided the perfect opportunity. The war left millions of Europeans either without homes to return to or with a deep fear of political persecution if they returned to their homelands. In 1949, emigration, rather than resettlement, became the primary focus of the UN International Refugee Organization. In the years immediately following the war, the plight of the refugees caught the sympathy of Canadians and it soon became clear that the expanding economy needed agricultural and industrial labour, particularly in resource-based industries in isolated locations. Between 1947 and 1951, 100,000 immigrant workers and their families came to Canada either by family sponsorship or contract labour programmes.<sup>12</sup> According to the Department of Mines and Resources, 285 refugees, mostly domestic servants and farmers, intended to come to New Brunswick.<sup>13</sup>

A few New Brunswickers were eager to recruit people dislocated by the tragedy of war. In 1942, F. Maclure Sclanders, commissioner of the Saint John Board of Trade, wrote directly to the federal government's immigration director, F.C. Blair, inquiring if the federal government was planning to move Europeans to Canada when hostilities ended. Sclanders acknowledged the humanitarian reason of admitting refugees, but the

10 Studies on out-migration from the region include Alan A. Brookes, "Out-Migration from the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations", *Acadiensis*, V, 2 (Spring 1976), pp. 26-55; Patricia Thornton, "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921: A New Look", *Acadiensis*, XV, 1 (Autumn 1985), pp. 3-34; Betsy Beattie, *Obligation and Opportunity: Single Maritime Women in Boston, 1870-1930* (Montreal, 2000); Kari Levitt, *Population Movements in the Atlantic Provinces* (Fredericton, 1960); and Gary Burrill, *Away: Maritimers in Massachusetts, Ontario and Alberta: An Oral History of Leaving Home* (Montreal, 1992).

11 The only studies that focus on immigration and public policy in Atlantic Canada are Mary Jane Lipkin, "Reluctant Recruitment: Nova Scotian Immigration Policy, 1867-1914", M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1982 and Gerhard P. Bassler, "'Develop or Perish': Joseph R. Smallwood and Newfoundland's Quest for German Industry, 1949-1953", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 15, 3 (Spring 1986), pp. 93-119. Immigration policy in Ontario and Quebec is reasonably well-documented; see Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration*, pp. 177-236; R.A. Vineburg, "Federal-Provincial Relations in Immigration", *Canadian Public Administration*, 20, 2 (Summer 1987), pp. 304-17; and Martin Pâquet, *Towards a Quebec Ministry of Immigration* (Ottawa, 1997).

12 Gerald Dirks, *Canadian Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal, 1977), pp. 100-19, 130, 138-54.

13 Canada, Department of Mines and Resources, Annual Reports, 1948-1950. Under the section on the Immigration Branch, see the table entitled "Admissions of Displaced Persons to Canada by Occupational Groups, by Province of Destination".

real value of immigration, he argued, was economic. Immigrants would contribute to the agricultural economy by increasing farm production: "The more I study the agricultural situation of this province the more am I convinced of our really serious need for a strong dash of new blood on our lands; and if an influx of desirable people is a reasonable expectation, it might not be too soon to give the matter serious consideration; and, with your help, [we would like] to lay out some plan that would be attractive to such immigration and at the same time desirable from our standpoint".<sup>14</sup>

Blair responded cautiously, stating that the first priority of the federal government was to ensure a smooth transition to a peacetime economy. Post-war migration, Blair argued, would be slow to proceed for many reasons, including the fact that the Canadian government would have to finance transportation and settlement costs. He also predicted that there would not be a rush of immigrants from Great Britain, which was the preferred source of immigration, because Canada needed agricultural, not industrial, labour. Although he expressed interest in Sclanders' invitation to visit New Brunswick to see the opportunities for immigrants, he would not make a commitment to send more immigrants to the province.<sup>15</sup>

Sclanders may have bypassed the provincial government in his efforts to encourage immigration because the federal government took the lead in organizing the refugee movement and because McNair's vision of post-war reconstruction left little room for imaginative immigration programmes. According to the *Report of the New Brunswick Committee on Reconstruction*, post-war goals included creating employment opportunities and increasing wages, improving educational facilities and opportunities, and developing better social and welfare services. A brief reference to "a more enlightened land settlement and colonization policy" failed to specify whether it would be aimed at immigrants.<sup>16</sup> Although the appendix of the report, *The Regional Economy of New Brunswick* by Dr. J.R. Petrie, mentioned the lack of immigration as a problem, this warranted insufficient attention to be incorporated in the final recommendations for economic development.<sup>17</sup>

After the war, a few politicians raised the issue of immigration in the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick. Harry C. Greenlaw (York County), Ralph G. McNerney (Saint John City) and Hugh H. Balkam (Charlotte County) argued in 1946 that Canada needed a larger population to maintain economic growth. McNerney further stated: "I think the province should get busy, even if the Dominion lags behind. . . . [The Dutch] would make good inhabitants of the province".<sup>18</sup> Such views failed to move the provincial government, whose attention was directed elsewhere. When asked if literature existed that informed new immigrants about acquiring land and other property in New Brunswick, E.M. Taylor, acting superintendent of

14 F. Maclure Sclanders to F.C. Blair, 21 December 1942, RG 76 (Immigration), C-7814, vol. 266, file 220409, LAC (Library and Archives Canada).

15 F.C. Blair to F. Maclure Sclanders, 21 January 1943, RG 76, C-7814, vol. 266, file 220409, LAC.

16 *Report of the New Brunswick Committee on Reconstruction* (Fredericton, 23 June 1944), pp. 23-56, especially p. 47.

17 J.R. Petrie, *Report of the New Brunswick Committee on Reconstruction* – "Appendix A: The Regional Economy of New Brunswick" (1944), pp. 115-25.

18 *Synoptic Report of the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick* (Fredericton, 20 March 1946), pp. 10, 134, 139.



immigration, confirmed in 1946 that the province had no official policy on immigration. The government was willing to give information to immigrants who contacted provincial officials and to help place them on farms, but no promotional literature existed, or was to be produced, for recruitment purposes.<sup>19</sup>

Although the McNair government showed little interest in settling refugees, the civil servants in his administration cooperated with the federal government to place refugees as agricultural labourers on New Brunswick farms. In 1946, the Canadian government admitted 4,000 Polish veterans who had served with the British army in the Mediterranean and placed them on farms for a period of at least one year.<sup>20</sup> New Brunswick farmers, it seems, were eager to benefit from the labour of these experienced agricultural workers. According to the *Maritime Farmer*, the movement of Polish veterans “[is] an experiment that deserves success. . . . While conditions and farm methods in this country differ considerably from those of their homeland, the men coming here undoubtedly prefer farming as a way of life, which is a sufficiently good reason to believe they will be successful in adjusting themselves to their new surroundings.”<sup>21</sup>

The editor of the *Maritime Farmer* urged New Brunswickers to welcome these immigrants instead of exploiting them as cheap labour. If they received a warm reception, it was reasoned, they would write back to their family and friends with favourable impressions of New Brunswick, thereby encouraging more people to immigrate.<sup>22</sup> The Polish immigrants to New Brunswick, reported in 1947 to number 78 individuals,<sup>23</sup> were sent to farms that requested workers.<sup>24</sup> Since this group of immigrants tended not to renew their farm contracts anywhere in Canada or were let go when employers were unable to continue paying them, it is unlikely that many of them stayed in the province. Like the others, they probably moved to larger cities to find work.<sup>25</sup>

Some members of the New Brunswick agricultural community remained interested in extending immigrant settlement beyond select groups of refugees. In February 1947, an editorial in the *Maritime Farmer* criticized the provincial government for not taking action to increase immigration. The editorial specifically mentioned the skills of Dutch immigrants, who were eager to leave the Netherlands because the land had been devastated by war.<sup>26</sup> Later that year, the *Maritime Farmer* declared that in “many communities settlers from the Netherlands are among our most worthy and prosperous citizens. They have shown their adaptability and have been outstandingly successful as market gardeners and dairy farmers.”<sup>27</sup> The *Maritime Farmer* suggested

19 E.M. Taylor (acting superintendent of immigration, New Brunswick Department of Agriculture) to Carleton J. Ketchum, 28 October 1946, RS 414 (Records of the Office of Premier J.B. McNair), L/1, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (PANB) and E.M. Taylor to R.A. Tweedie (Office of the Premier), 28 October 1946, RS 414, L/1, PANB.

20 Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy*, pp. 141-2.

21 “Editorial Comment – Polish Farm Labour”, *Maritime Farmer*, 15 October 1946, p. 10 and “Items of General Interest to Maritime Farmers – Polish Veterans for Canadian Farms”, *Maritime Farmer*, 20 August 1946, p. 4.

22 “Editorial Comment – Our New Settlers”, *Maritime Farmer*, 3 December 1946, p. 8.

23 New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, *Annual Report*, 1947, p. 133.

24 “Items of General Interest to Maritime Farmers – Polish Veterans for Canadian Farms”, *Maritime Farmer*, 20 August 1946, p. 4.

25 Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy*, p.142.

26 “Editorial Comment – We Need Greater Population”, *Maritime Farmer*, 4 February 1947, p. 6.

27 “Editorial Comment – Dutch Farm Settlers”, *Maritime Farmer*, 4 November 1947, p. 8.

that the provincial government create a “Minister of Colonization” and have a “live immigration policy that will attract the right type of people to our province”.<sup>28</sup> The government ignored this suggestion and immigration remained part of a small branch within the Department of Agriculture.

In addition to requests for agricultural labour, the Saint John Board of Trade expressed interest in attracting refugees to their city. In 1948, New Brunswick-born Constance Hayward, Secretary of the Canadian National Committee on Refugees, suggested that the board of trade bring a group of 100 displaced persons from Germany and Austria to work in Saint John. A.F. Blake, president of the board of trade, wrote to H.L. Keenleyside, deputy minister of the Department of Mines and Resources, about this possibility. Blake stated that, while the city could not provide employment for a group as large as 100 people, he thought that this was a worthwhile endeavour: “[The] manager of the Atlantic Sugar Refinery . . . received a number of letters direct from displaced persons, most of whom have been previously employed in beet sugar refineries in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, etc., some of who[m] would seem to be men of considerable ability and character. They usually want a guarantee of a job if they can get here and information as to how to be admitted into Canada. Any information which would assist in replying to these letters would be appreciated. A few of them could undoubtedly be used to advantage”.<sup>29</sup> The response from the federal government was not encouraging. Keenleyside stated that processing individual applications was too time consuming for the department because employers who wanted only small groups of refugees would be unwilling to send representatives overseas to aid in the selection process.<sup>30</sup>

By the early 1950s, the numbers of immigrants entering Canada had increased but provincial officials in New Brunswick remained fixated on the benefits that immigrants could provide to agricultural development. In 1951, federal immigration officials conducted interviews with J.K. King (deputy minister of the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture), E.M. Taylor (chairman of the Farm Settlement Branch of the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture) and William A. Moore (deputy minister of the New Brunswick Department of Industry and Reconstruction) to assess the need for immigrants in New Brunswick. King argued that farm labour was needed because milk production was rapidly decreasing due to a shortage of workers. Farms in New Brunswick also needed workers who were experienced in growing potatoes. King estimated that New Brunswick required between 150 and 200 single men and 50 married couples. Due to the need for farm labour, King was “quite willing to take some Italian single workers” that year, indicating that the province preferred immigrants from Britain and Northern Europe and only recruited from Southern Europe when absolutely necessary.<sup>31</sup>

28 “Editorial Comment – We Need Greater Population”, *Maritime Farmer*, 4 February 1947, p. 6.

29 A.F. Blake (president, Saint John Board of Trade) to H.L. Keenleyside (deputy minister, Department of Mines and Resources), 14 January 1948, RG 76, C-7814, vol. 266, file 220409, LAC. The reference to Constance Hayward’s comments was contained in this letter.

30 H.L. Keenleyside to A.F. Blake, 22 January 1948, RG 76, C-7814, vol. 266, file 220409, LAC.

31 C.E.S. Smith (director of the Immigration Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration) to Laval Fortier (deputy minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration), memorandum, “Discussions with government officials, Fredericton, NB, re: immigration to Canada”, 10 May 1951, RG 26 (Citizenship), vol. 134, file 3-36-8, LAC. Federal officials made these statements based on meetings with provincial officials.



It seems that government officials focused so heavily on agricultural immigration because of a preoccupation with rural depopulation. Since at least the turn of the 20th century, the exodus of young people from rural areas had created problems for farmers seeking seasonal labour.<sup>32</sup> In a study for the Atlantic Development Board, J.F. Booth, G.C. Retson and V.A. Heighton attributed the decline in the farm labour force in the post-war period in part to low wages.<sup>33</sup> Because of poor working conditions in the New Brunswick farming communities, the province failed to attract the large numbers of agricultural immigrants that King desired. According to the 1951 census, only 18 per cent of post-war immigrants working in New Brunswick were employed in agriculture. This was only slightly higher than the 17 per cent of immigrants employed in professional occupations, the 14 per cent employed in service industries and the 12 per cent employed in manufacturing.<sup>34</sup>

Although a relatively large portion of immigrants were employed in manufacturing, William Moore of the Department of Industry and Reconstruction stated that industrial workers were not needed, unless the Department of National Defence decided to place defence contracts throughout the province. Any immigrants who came to work in industry were to play very specific roles. The province, for example, needed skilled fish processors because the government was considering expanding processing plants in northeastern New Brunswick. Interestingly, Moore argued that immigration should be encouraged if Ontario continued to draw labour out of the province.<sup>35</sup> Yet advocating the replacement of departing New Brunswickers with immigrants was not a popular option in this period. In the legislature, S. Roy Kelly (Saint John City) stated in March 1951 that he had no problem encouraging immigration, but he believed the priority of the provincial government should be to assist the several thousand unemployed men and women in the province.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, few people interviewed by federal immigration officials believed that immigration was a solution to slow economic growth and stagnating population figures. E.M. Taylor of the Farm Settlement Branch professed to be “thoroughly disgusted” with the single, male Dutch farm workers who came to New Brunswick because they often left their employers without notice and shopped around for the best wages. While King was prepared to promote immigration, Taylor felt that natural increase was the best long-term method of expanding New Brunswick’s population.

32 Colin Howell, “The 1900s: Industry, Urbanization and Reform”, in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muike, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, (Toronto, 1993), p. 177.

33 J.F. Booth, G.C. Retson and V.A. Heighton, *The Agriculture of the Atlantic Provinces* (Ottawa, 1970), pp. 2-3.

34 Census of Canada, “Labour Force, 14 Years of Age and Over, by Occupation Group and Sex, showing birthplace, period of immigration, and origin, for the provinces, 1951”, table 13, vol. 4, 1951; Census of Canada, “Labour Force, 14 Years of Age and Over, by Occupation Group and Sex, showing birthplace, period of immigration, and origin, for Canada, 1951”, table 12, vol. 4, 1951.

35 C.E.S. Smith to Laval Fortier, memorandum, “Discussions with government officials, Fredericton, NB, re: immigration to Canada”, 10 May 1951, RG 26 (Citizenship), vol. 134, file 3-36-8, LAC. Interviews with the Saint John Board of Trade yielded the same results — only trained auto mechanics were needed, unless defence contracts were placed in the city. See C.E.S. Smith to Laval Fortier, memorandum — “Discussion with members of the Saint John Board of Trade re: the question of immigration to Canada”, 9 May 1951, RG 26, vol. 134, file 3-36-8, LAC.

36 *Synoptic Report of the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick* (Fredericton, 9 March 1951), p. 34.

Taylor also believed that it was up to the federal government to ensure that immigrant farm labourers stayed on their assigned farms for the required period of one year; federal immigration officials, however, were not willing to co-operate in policing immigrants. C.E.S. Smith, director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, stated that conditions within the province caused immigrants to avoid New Brunswick or leave after a short stay and therefore it was the responsibility of the province to correct this situation: "It was pointed out to Mr. King that in order to get a larger number of farm workers, greater encouragement should be offered and working conditions improved. . . . [P]ossibly through his agricultural agents, the farmers might be induced to offer a bonus to the worker in addition to his wages, as by this method the worker would have a greater interest in his undertaking and also be in a position to establish himself more quickly. It is felt that when a greater number of these immigrants have become established on farms of their own, this will be an incentive to others". Smith suggested to King that Maritimers themselves were at fault because they were not welcoming to newcomers, arguing "the reason for the sudden changes of employment was due to the circumstances on the particular farm where he was originally placed, as it was felt that some of the farmers were loath to make the farm worker feel more at home".<sup>37</sup> Since the *Maritime Farmer* made a point of urging farmers not to exploit immigrant labour, it seems that, in some instances at least, such accusations were not completely unfounded.

In addition to the lack of recruitment efforts, the provincial government resisted taking responsibility for supporting immigrants after they arrived in the province. Only immigrants destined for work in agriculture were eligible to receive significant economic support in the form of farm loans from the Farm Settlement Board.<sup>38</sup> This programme was not designed specifically for immigrants, but applied to all potential farmers. To be eligible for assistance, immigrants were required to meet the following conditions: have one year of experience on a New Brunswick farm and demonstrate to the board that they could be successful, have a down payment of one-third of the purchase price of the farm (Canadian citizens had to pay 25 per cent), be in a position to obtain sufficient stock and equipment to begin farming, be able to repay the loan with 3 per cent annual interest, and be between 21 and 50 years of age.<sup>39</sup>

The attitudes toward immigration to New Brunswick that developed during the McNair administration survived largely intact for the next two decades. Although civil servants sometimes argued that increased immigration would be beneficial to the economy, particularly agriculture, the provincial government committed few resources to immigrant recruitment and settlement. Concerned with the development of infrastructure and secondary industry to keep New Brunswickers at home, J.B.

37 C.E.S. Smith to Laval Fortier, memorandum – "Discussions with government officials, Fredericton, NB, re: immigration to Canada", 10 May 1951, RG 26, vol. 134, file 3-36-8, LAC.

38 Larger Canadian cities had immigrant aid organizations, such as the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto, which offered modest relief and social programmes. See Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration*, pp. 415-18.

39 Province of New Brunswick, "New Brunswick Farm Settlement Board Regulations, 1950", RG 76, vol. 911, file 580-16-655 (Provincial Assistance to Agricultural Settlers, New Brunswick), LAC.

McNair ignored immigration as a potential stimulus to economic growth.<sup>40</sup> The federal government, meanwhile, was reluctant to intervene at the provincial level and refused to send more immigrants to the province on the few occasions when the provincial government actually asked for them.

### **Public Policy under Hugh John Flemming (1952-60)**

Immigration policy changed very little when Premier Hugh John Flemming was elected in 1952. Like the other Atlantic premiers in the 1950s, Flemming was preoccupied with seeking federal assistance for regional economic development. He was particularly eager to secure funding for the Beechwood power development on the Saint John River and for the provision of welfare services.<sup>41</sup> For Flemming and his colleagues, out-migration was perceived as a more pressing concern than lack of immigration.

This was also the position taken by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC), an organization established in 1954 to address regional underdevelopment. In a brief to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, chaired by Walter Gordon, in 1955, APEC expressed the hope that measures to improve the economy would stop out-migration and the decline of the labour force.<sup>42</sup> With respect to immigration, APEC argued "the region cannot presently accommodate even its population growth and therefore should not encourage immigration". At the same time the brief suggested that because other regions benefited from immigration, it would be useful for the members of the Gordon Commission to investigate the issue as it pertained to the Atlantic region.<sup>43</sup> In 1956, APEC released a set of proposals for the economic development of the region, noting that "immigration could be stimulated by special measures to give immigrants a start in the Atlantic Provinces according to an appropriate overall plan".<sup>44</sup> There is no documentary or anecdotal evidence to suggest that APEC committed resources to developing such a plan.<sup>45</sup>

The Gordon Commission conducted a study on the regional characteristics of the Canadian economy, but the lack of immigration to Atlantic Canada was not mentioned as a problem.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, in the commission's preliminary report, the

40 R.A. Young, "'... and the people will sink into despair': Reconstruction Policy in New Brunswick", *Canadian Historical Review*, 69, 2 (Autumn 1988), pp. 134-5, 164. Young argues that most post-war spending went into infrastructure.

41 Conrad, "The 1950s", p. 404 and James Lawrence Kenny, "Politics and Persistence: New Brunswick's Hugh John Flemming and the Atlantic Revolution of the 1950s", M.A. thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1988.

42 Hugh Whalen, *Brief Prepared by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects PC 1955-909* (Moncton, October 1955), p. 11. Out-migration was the consequence of the high unemployment rates and the attraction of better paying jobs outside of the region.

43 Whalen, *Brief Prepared by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council*, p. 19.

44 "Economic Proposals for the Atlantic Provinces", 25 May 1956, RS 415 (Records of the Office of Premier Hugh John Flemming), C/11/c, PANB.

45 In his inside look at efforts by business leaders, bureaucrats and politicians to stimulate the economy of the Atlantic Provinces in the 1950s and 1960s, H.A. Fredericks does not mention immigration as a major plank in the development platform. See H.A. Fredericks, *What Happened to the Blueprint for Atlantic Advance?* (Fredericton, 2004).

46 R.D. Howland, *Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects: Some Regional Aspects of Canada's Economic Development* (November 1957), pp.11-12, 73-9, 118-20, 139-44, 155-201.

suggestion was made that assistance should be provided to help move underemployed Atlantic Canadians to growth centres elsewhere. The outcry in the Atlantic region in response to this poorly conceived idea prompted the commission to drop the proposal in its final report, but such a recommendation underscored how peripheral the region was to national policy. What province in other regions of Canada would see population decline as a vehicle for economic development?<sup>47</sup>

The establishment of Atlantic Canada House in London, England in 1958 provided an opportunity to recruit immigrants overseas, but ultimately it was used primarily as a base for promoting industrial development.<sup>48</sup> Specifically, the functions of the office included publicizing the economic opportunities in the region, encouraging industrialists to establish operations in Atlantic Canada, promoting trade and tourism, and acting as an information centre for Atlantic Canadians in Great Britain on business. While the committee established to oversee these activities noted in 1957 that “some consideration should be given to immigration as a function of the bureau”, the operation was to be “guided by prevailing manpower requirements and general policy”.<sup>49</sup> R.J. Rankin, the president of APEC, was aware that many British citizens were looking to move to Canada to further their careers and that personal contact would allow officials to determine if they had the qualifications necessary to aid in the economic development of the region,<sup>50</sup> but members of the committee responsible for Atlantic Canada House did not want to become too heavily involved in immigration and suggested that the office simply forward potential immigrants to the federal immigration officials in London. There is no indication that J.A. Paterson, the New Brunswick representative at Atlantic Canada House, actively sought out immigrants in Britain or Europe or produced promotional literature to distribute to immigrants.

Like McNair, Premier Flemming left immigration issues to his civil servants, who continued to promote the benefits of immigration for agriculture. Deputy Minister of Agriculture J.K. King told federal officials in 1953 that immigrants might be employed in the project to reclaim the Tantramar marshland and convert it into farmland,<sup>51</sup> but he had little else to suggest. In 1957, H.F. Stairs, secretary of the Farm Settlement Board, travelled to Ottawa for a meeting with federal officials and took the opportunity to address eight groups of Dutch farmers in an effort to convince them to settle in New Brunswick. Stairs informed those in attendance at the meetings in Ottawa that his department was creating a booklet to inform immigrants about agricultural conditions in New Brunswick.<sup>52</sup> In addition to agricultural labour, Stairs also suggested that New Brunswick could use limited numbers of immigrants employed as auto mechanics, bricklayers, carpenters and stationary engineers as well

47 Conrad, “The 1950s”, p. 410.

48 Ralph G. Hay (Secretary) to Professor Richard H. Leach (Duke University), 11 June 1958, RS 415, C/9/b, file 3 of 3, PANB.

49 Exploratory Committee on Atlantic House, First Meeting, Moncton, NB, 15 July 1957, RS 415, C/9/b, file 1 of 3, PANB.

50 R.J. Rankin, “Atlantic House in London”, *Atlantic Advocate* (January 1957), p. 73.

51 “Meeting of Representatives of the Maritime Provinces with Departmental Advisory Committee on Immigration”, 10 June 1953, RG 76, vol. 134, file 3-36-1, LAC.

52 New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, *Annual Report*, 1957, p. 161. Even if this booklet was actually produced, there is no copy of it in the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick.

as those engaged in small business.<sup>53</sup> Despite such encouraging signs little, if any, immigrant recruitment seems to have been undertaken. The policy of the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture was to send requests for immigrant labour to the federal government and to help place immigrants on farms after they arrived in the province.<sup>54</sup> Immigrants with other skills to offer were left to their own devices.

For politicians and the general population in New Brunswick in the 1950s, immigration was seen primarily as a mechanism to sustain rural life, not as a means for jump-starting the economy. In 1953, for example, Mrs. Ronald Murray of Kent County wrote to Premier Flemming, proposing the settlement of a group of hardworking Protestant Dutch immigrants as the solution to the decline of her small rural community.<sup>55</sup> Although the desire for agricultural immigrants was often repeated, this goal was out of step both with economic realities in New Brunswick and with the goals of most newcomers to Canada. Following the Second World War, Atlantic Canada underwent a rapid transition to a tertiary economy in which the majority of new jobs were created in the trade and service sectors. The family farm increasingly became a relic of the past and employment in primary industries declined precipitously. Unemployed farmers, fishermen and miners were forced to leave the province because they lacked the skills to participate in the changing economy.<sup>56</sup> Even if the jobs had been available, most immigrants were unlikely to take up back-breaking primary occupations. According to the 1961 census, only 4 per cent of post-war immigrants in the labour force were employed in agriculture. This compares to the 21 per cent employed in service and recreation occupations, the 19 per cent employed in professional and technical occupations, and the 19 per cent employed in craft and production-process occupations.<sup>57</sup>

The federal government also continued to be hesitant about accepting responsibility for encouraging immigrants to settle in the province. Given the economic situation in New Brunswick, this is perhaps not surprising. An English immigrant who applied to work in a Moncton school, for example, claimed that immigration officers told him that salaries in New Brunswick were probably the lowest in the country. Although the immigration officers qualified this statement by stating that the lower cost of living could offset lower wages,<sup>58</sup> Flemming responded

53 H.F. Stairs (acting superintendent of Immigration) to E.M. Taylor (deputy minister of the Department of Agriculture), 21 March 1957, RS 415, D/1/d/6, PANB.

54 New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports: 1951, 1958 and 1959.

55 Mrs. Ronald Murray to Premier Hugh John Flemming, 2 March 1953, RS 124, B/14/b (Farms and Colonization, Correspondence, 1943-1970), PANB.

56 Margaret R. Conrad and James K. Hiller, *Atlantic Canada: A Region in the Making* (Don Mills, 2001), pp. 197-200.

57 Census of Canada, "Labour Force, 15 years and over, by occupation division and sex, showing birthplace, period of immigration, and ethnic group, for the provinces, 1961", table 22, vol. 3, part 1, 1961; Census of Canada, "Labour Force, 15 years and over, by occupation division and sex, showing birthplace, period of immigration, and ethnic group, for Canada, 1961", table 21, vol. 3, part 1, 1961.

58 H.H. Trimble (superintendent, board of school trustees, Moncton, NB) to Premier Flemming, 11 April 1957, RS 415, D/1/d/6, PANB. This was not an isolated case. According to a newspaper clipping, it was apparently common knowledge that Canada House considered the Atlantic Provinces a depressed area. See "Maritime Image Sullied in the UK", RS 416 (Records of Louis J. Robichaud), 1964, file 98, PANB. Gerald A. Regan (MP for Halifax) requested an inquiry in the House of Commons. See Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1964, p. 4817.

quickly when the case was brought to his attention. He requested that federal immigration officials investigate the type information that was given to potential immigrants and offered to provide the department with more accurate literature on the province.<sup>59</sup>

The policy relating to the settlement of immigrants in New Brunswick was potentially a more explosive issue than their recruitment. As had happened in recent years, the main form of settlement support offered to immigrants during Flemming's term of office continued to be farm loans.<sup>60</sup> There were relatively few changes in the regulations governing these loans. By 1955, the required year of experience could be on a farm anywhere in Canada, not just in the province, but immigrants now had to declare their intention to become a Canadian citizen.<sup>61</sup> The Junior Farmers Act also made it possible for the sons (not daughters) of immigrants to receive farm loans. A son could apply for a loan, provided that his father had lived in the province for five years and that he had at least five years of practical farm experience.<sup>62</sup> This programme was designed primarily to encourage young New Brunswickers to stay in the province rather than to encourage immigration.

The New Brunswick Department of Agriculture explicitly adopted the policy that immigrants should not be given special treatment due to a perceived feeling of resentment towards immigrants among the population. In 1957, the Minister of Agriculture, C.B. Sherwood, stated: "A number of years ago the Farm Settlement Board undertook to administer a British Family Settlement Scheme. . . . Out of this agreement there developed a sentiment on the part of our own people that immigrants were receiving more favourable consideration than our own people and over a period of years our Board has been charged accordingly". As a result of such sentiments, Sherwood was hesitant to adopt a policy that would allow Dutch immigrants to receive a farm without making a down payment.<sup>63</sup> Although the existing rules, particularly the one year of experience on a Canadian farm, were not always rigorously enforced, few immigrant families bought farms with provincial loans. Between 1952 and 1960, only about 45 immigrants, mostly of Dutch origin, bought farms or were approved for loans through the Farm Settlement Board.<sup>64</sup>

59 J.K. Pickersgill (minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration) to Premier Flemming, 16 April 1957, RS 415, D/1/d/6, PANB.

60 Premier Flemming to Lt. Col. Gaston Beaudry (Department of Labour), 27 October 1955, RS 415, D/1/d/6, PANB.

61 R.C. Bethune (regional settlement superintendent, Halifax) to director of Immigration Division, "re: Provincial Farm Loans, NB", 30 March 1955, RG 76, vol. 911, file 580-16-655, LAC and regional settlement supervisor to director of Settlement Division, memorandum, 12 September 1955, RG 76, vol. 911, file 580-16-655, LAC.

62 Province of New Brunswick Farm Settlement Board Regulations, Junior Farmers, 1956-1957, RG 76, vol. 911, file 580-16-655, LAC.

63 Horace Hanson (Carleton Chamber) from C.B. Sherwood (minister of New Brunswick Department of Agriculture), 16 January 1957, RS 124 (Records of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture), B/14/b, PANB.

64 H.M. Grant (district superintendent of immigration, Department of Citizenship and Immigration) to director of immigration, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, 11 February 1954, RG 76, vol. 911, file 580-16-655, LAC and New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports, 1950-1961. This is an approximate number because occasionally the report did not give an exact number, but rather stated that "some" immigrants received loans.



By 1952, citizenship classes, which included language training, were available to immigrants in Fredericton, Minto, Moncton and Saint John. Designed to facilitate assimilation into New Brunswick society, citizenship classes were conducted under the supervision of local school boards, which organized the classes and paid the salaries of the teachers. The provincial government contributed financially to this programme in the form of grants to the school boards.<sup>65</sup> In 1952-53, for example, all classes were 20 weeks long, with four periods per week of two hours each. Enrolment ranged from 17 in Minto to 63 in Saint John, and the total cost, including administration and salaries, ranged from \$160 in Minto to \$480 in Saint John.<sup>66</sup> When Ottawa approached the New Brunswick government with a cost-sharing proposal, Flemming's response was favourable because the discovery of mining deposits in northern New Brunswick meant that the province anticipated more immigrants moving to that area, which would necessitate the expansion of the classes. Since the province was already contributing funds to language training, the opportunity for any reimbursement was welcomed. An agreement was signed in 1954 in which the federal government agreed to pay half the teaching costs, whether the costs were paid directly by the provincial government or indirectly through local school boards.<sup>67</sup>

Negotiations between provincial and federal governments were not always so successful. In 1948 Ottawa began to negotiate agreements with the provinces in which both levels of government would equally share the medical and welfare costs of immigrants during their first year of settlement in Canada.<sup>68</sup> This initiative was prompted by two conditions: the economic hardship that existed in post-war Europe, which meant that many immigrants arrived with minimal financial resources, and the obligation to meet a residency requirement before becoming eligible for provincial medical and welfare assistance.<sup>69</sup> The position of the federal government was that immigrants should have access to social benefits immediately because, upon arrival, they began contributing to Canadian society as producers, consumers and taxpayers.<sup>70</sup> New Brunswick took a different view. When Walter Harris, the minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, proposed such a plan to the New Brunswick government in 1952, the deputy minister of Agriculture expressed reservations. The provincial Department of Agriculture, King argued, would have to sign the agreement and therefore be forced to take responsibility for non-agricultural immigrants. He was also concerned that Canadian citizens moving to New Brunswick

65 Walter Harris (minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration) to Premier Flemming, 18 February 1953, RG 26, vol. 66, file 2-3-1, LAC; M.H. Brewer (assistant to the chief superintendent of the New Brunswick Department of Education) to Laval Fortier (deputy minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration), 1 May 1953, RG 26, vol. 66, file 2-3-1, LAC; Walter Harris from Laval Fortier, memorandum, 2 December 1953, RG 26, vol. 65, file 2-3-1 LAC.

66 Table: "Citizenship Classes Province of New Brunswick Period Oct. 15, 1952 – Mar. 15, 1953", RG 26, vol. 66, file 2-3-1, LAC.

67 Premier Flemming to Walter Harris, 24 February 1953, RG 26, vol. 66, file 2-3-1, LAC; M.H. Brewer to Laval Fortier, 1 May 1953, RG 26, vol. 66, file 2-3-1, LAC.

68 Privy Council of Canada, PC 2414, approved 28 May 1948, RG 76, vol. 918, file 584-5-655, LAC.

69 Walter Harris (minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration) to Premier McNair, 10 March 1952, RG 76, vol. 918, file 584-5-655, LAC.

70 Walter Harris to Premier Flemming, 26 November 1952, RG 76, vol. 918, file 584-5-655, LAC.

under the Farm Settlement Act might demand similar aid.<sup>71</sup>

The provincial government refused to budge from its position that only agricultural immigrants could receive assistance, even when emergency situations arose. After the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, the Canadian government admitted 37,000 Hungarian refugees to Canada.<sup>72</sup> To organize the reception of such a large number of refugees, the federal government needed the support of the provinces. In a telegram to Premier Flemming, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent appealed for help, pointing out that some provinces had already agreed to provide reception and health centres: "This relaxation of our normal procedures will no doubt result in some persons being admitted who will not be able to work and others who on arrival or later will require medical care. The Ontario government has advised that they would establish a reception centre and provide medical and nursing facilities. The Government of Manitoba has offered similar facilities. Any assistance your government could offer along the same lines would be greatly appreciated".<sup>73</sup> Flemming responded that the New Brunswick government was "anxious" to help. He offered the use of the Department of Health and Welfare facilities in Saint John as a processing centre and committed to establishing a reception centre in Moncton to allocate refugees for settlement in New Brunswick.<sup>74</sup>

While the province was willing to take in refugees, disagreements arose over which level of government should pay for their medical care and daily settlement costs. J.W. Pickersgill, minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, proposed sharing medical costs with the provinces and hoped that New Brunswick would agree to pay the full medical costs after the first year.<sup>75</sup> Flemming, however, wanted the federal government to pay medical costs incurred by the refugees for the first year and, thereafter, refugees who stayed in New Brunswick would receive the same benefits as other citizens of the province. Flemming concluded his proposal to the federal government by stating a common concern with regard to immigration: "I feel that we cannot make additional concessions to Hungarian refugees which are not already enjoyed by our own residents. Social assistance will be provided to those unable to find immediate employment up to a period of three years at the expense of the federal government".<sup>76</sup> And Flemming was not the only politician who felt that the refugees should not receive special treatment; in the New Brunswick legislature, Lorne B. Groom (Charlotte County) commented: "I notice in the speech from the throne that our

71 J.K. King (minister of the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture) to P.T. Baldwin (Department of Citizenship and Immigration), 29 October 1953, RG 76, vol. 918, file 584-5-655, LAC.

72 Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 339-41; Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy*, pp. 190-213; Carmela Patrias, *The Hungarians in Canada* (Ottawa, 1999), pp. 23-7. The quick response of the Canadian government to the Hungarian refugees must be seen in light of Cold War politics. These politics, however, did not play a role, at least publicly, in New Brunswick's reception of the refugees.

73 Prime Minister St. Laurent to Premier Flemming, telegram, n.d., RS 415, D/1/d/6, PANB.

74 Premier Flemming to Prime Minister St. Laurent, telegram, 1 December 1956, RG 76, vol. 910, file 580-10-655, LAC; Premier Flemming to Walter Harris (acting minister of Citizenship and Immigration), telegram, 10 December 1956, RS 415, D/1/d/6, PANB; Premier Flemming to J.W. Pickersgill (minister of Citizenship and Immigration), 7 January 1957, RS 415, D/1/d/6, PANB.

75 J.K. Pickersgill to Premier Flemming, 24 December 1956, RG 76, vol. 910, file 580-10-655, LAC.

76 Premier Flemming to J.W. Pickersgill, 14 February 1957, RG 76, vol. 910, file 580-10-655, LAC.

government is helping to place some of the Hungarian refugees – very commendable, but I do think that we must take care that our New Brunswick refugees are placed first. No doubt there are those among the group that possess technical training that many of our people do not and they will prove an asset to our province. Nevertheless, I think we should place them with care, making certain that they are not displacing some of our own”.<sup>77</sup> As a result of such carefully calibrated notions of equity, the province declined to enter into a cost-sharing agreement with the federal government.

Disagreements over the provision of health and welfare benefits to immigrants illustrate important aspects of the Flemming government’s attitude toward immigration. Although it was felt that immigration could be advantageous to the agriculture industry, Flemming made it very clear that giving immigrants benefits that native-born New Brunswickers did not receive was an unacceptable policy. This position, informed by the poor economic conditions in New Brunswick, prevented the provincial government from taking more initiative in matters relating to immigration.

### **Public Policy under Louis J. Robichaud (1960-70)**

Like McNair and Flemming, Premier Louis J. Robichaud devoted very little personal attention to immigration.<sup>78</sup> Robichaud continued Flemming’s efforts with respect to regional economic development, promoting projects such as the PEI Causeway and the Chignecto Canal, establishing the New Brunswick Development Corporation, and advocating revisions to the federal equalization programme. In particular, Robichaud focussed on the plight of rural and francophone New Brunswickers. His Programme of Equal Opportunity was designed to guarantee minimum standards of social, economic and cultural opportunity, targeting education and health care. These measures proved particularly beneficial for the economically depressed francophone areas of north and southeast New Brunswick. Although these reforms were long overdue, they intensified the preoccupation with local matters and left little energy for new thinking on immigration.<sup>79</sup>

Meanwhile, reform of immigration policy was high on the agenda of governments in Ottawa in the 1960s. Revisions to the Immigration Act in 1962 and 1967 dropped many of the previous restrictions on immigrants from non-European countries, gave an advantage to people with the skills required to advance economic development and introduced a points system for deciding on immigrant eligibility.<sup>80</sup> While federal policy with respect to Atlantic Canada in this period focused on programmes to

77 *Synoptic Report of the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick* (Fredericton, 8 March 1957), p. 156.

78 The only evidence of Robichaud publicly tackling the issue of immigration was when he was the leader of the opposition. In 1960, Robichaud commented in the legislature that immigrants should be placed on abandoned farms to increase the population, create new domestic markets and assist in the development of natural resources. He suggested that the province become more involved by offering special inducements to Dutch farmers. See *Synoptic Report of the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick* (Fredericton, 6 April 1960), pp. 809-10.

79 Stanley, “The 1960s”, pp. 423-5, 448-9.

80 Blatant racial discrimination in federal immigration policy was officially eliminated in the 1960s for a variety of reasons, including the need for more skilled immigrants, the civil rights movement and the decline of immigration from traditional European source countries. In 1962, Ellen Fairclough, minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, introduced new immigration regulations

encourage economic development,<sup>81</sup> they were not informed by imaginative thinking on immigration policy.

Out-migration continued to be a central focus of governments and bureaucracies, both in Ottawa and in the Atlantic provinces. Taking a more nuanced approach, studies argued that out-migration was not only a symptom of a lagging economy, but that it also hindered economic growth because young, educated Atlantic Canadians were the most likely to leave, thereby depriving the region of the skills needed for economic development.<sup>82</sup> APEC publications consistently focused on the serious economic consequences of out-migration. With an aging population, there was a smaller tax base from which to pay for social services as well as a smaller employment base, lower productivity and a larger income gap. In addition, the region was spending educational resources on people who would simply leave. APEC remained tightly focused on creating industrial jobs to keep young, able, enterprising and educated Atlantic Canadians at home.<sup>83</sup>

Although still concerned with out-migration, APEC recognized the benefits that limited numbers of immigrants could bring to the region, particularly as federal immigration policy aimed to admit more people with high levels of education and skill. In the November 1968 APEC *Newsletter*, for example, the point was made that the region's educational institutions were unable to produce a sufficient number of skilled workers to maintain the desired rate of development. Federal government retraining programmes and immigration, it was argued, would solve this problem. Because immigrants had skills that could stimulate the economy and provide jobs for semi-skilled and unskilled workers, a new approach to immigration might yield

in which the only overtly discriminatory clause was that European immigrants could sponsor a wider class of distant relatives. Under the points system, which was introduced in 1967, three categories of immigrants (independent, sponsored dependents and nominated relatives) that were not based on nationality were created. Independent immigrants were judged on "objective" categories based on skills and education that were assigned a certain range of points. Scholars, however, have debated whether or not racism disappeared; the fact that most immigration offices were located in Europe and that non-Europeans were subject to more rigorous application and interview procedures indicates that in practice the liberalization of immigration policy was not fully realized. See Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, pp. 320-58; Vic Satzewich, "Racism and Canadian Immigration Policy: The Government's View of Caribbean Immigration, 1962-1966", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 21, 1 (1989), pp. 79, 85-90; and K.W. Taylor, "Racism in Canadian Immigration Policy", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 23, 1 (1991), pp. 1-20.

81 See, for example, the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act (1960), the Atlantic Development Board (1962) and the Fund for Rural Economic Development (1966). See also Stanley, "The 1960s", pp. 425-30 and Donald Savoie, *Regional Economic Development: Canada's Search for Solutions* (Toronto, 1992), pp. 21-9.

82 See D.J. MacDonald, *Population Migration and Economic Development in the Atlantic Provinces* (Fredericton, 1968), pp. 24-41; New Brunswick Department of Economic Growth, *Migration, New Brunswick, 1871-1966: A Statistical and Economic Analysis* (Fredericton, 1967), pp. 46-57; and Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, *First Annual Review: The Atlantic Economy* (Halifax, October 1967), pp. 47-60.

83 Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, *First Annual Review: The Atlantic Economy*, 1967, pp. 10, 52-3, 55-60; Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, *Fifth Annual Review: The Atlantic Economy* (Halifax, October 1971), p. 8; Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, *Towards a Strategy for the Economic Development of the Atlantic Provinces*; Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, *A Development Program for the Atlantic Provinces* (Halifax, 1965), pp. 10-16; Stanley, "The 1960s", pp. 430-6.

beneficial results. APEC proposed a “positive and direct” approach to immigration with co-operation among all levels of government, universities, cultural organizations, industry, labour and business. To attract immigrants, the government could stress the advantages of living in the region, such as the wide-open spaces, the recreational facilities and the relaxed style of life.<sup>84</sup>

For the first time in the post-war period, civil servants in the New Brunswick Department of Labour, prompted by federal initiatives, began seeking a limited number of professionally employed and skilled immigrants. In 1965, federal immigration officials worked with the department to conduct a survey of labour requirements in the province. According to Freda Hawkins, this was part of a federal government effort in the mid-1960s to encourage the provinces to become more active in immigrant recruitment by allowing the provinces to recruit immigrants for specific jobs or allowing the federal government to recruit on their behalf. In New Brunswick’s case, the positive response perhaps reflected growth and change in the provincial civil service, which enabled the government to respond more readily to federal initiatives.<sup>85</sup> Whatever the cause, federal officials, assisted by their provincial counterparts, canvassed employers, government departments, professional groups and economic organizations in New Brunswick to assess what sectors of the economy were in need of labour.<sup>86</sup>

According to the final report of the survey, labour was needed in Fredericton, Saint John, Woodstock, Moncton, St. Leonard, Edmundston and St. Stephen. The types of jobs that required the highest numbers of workers were general electricians (201), pipe fitters (170), mechanics (154), heavy equipment operators in construction (75), boilermakers (60) and general and specialized nurses (49). Yet out of a total of 152 employers, only 30 (20 per cent) agreed to take immigrants. The employers who were willing to let the federal government choose suitable workers included L.G. Wilson Motors (Woodstock), Hartland Chamber of Commerce, Northern Carleton Hospital, Bathurst De Vaal Motors and Saint John Tile and Terrazzo Co. while only three employers indicated a willingness to recruit abroad themselves: York Structural Steel Co. (Fredericton), McCain Foods (Woodstock) and St. Stephen Textiles Ltd.<sup>87</sup>

While G.G. Duclos, deputy minister of the New Brunswick Department of Labour, supported the survey and agreed that limited numbers of immigrants could be employed, he believed that the welfare of New Brunswickers should not be compromised in the process. Immigrants could aid in economic development by providing skills that were needed at that moment, but any future employment opportunities should be reserved for New Brunswickers currently undergoing retraining:

[It] is our belief that virtually all of the semi-skilled and skilled tradesmen categories . . . can be met through existing or contemplated

84 Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, “The Role of Immigration in the Atlantic Region”, *APEC Newsletter*, 12, 7 (November 1968).

85 Della M.M. Stanley, *Louis Robichaud: A Decade of Power* (Halifax, 1984), pp. 490-5.

86 Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration*, pp. 444-5, n.23.

87 *New Brunswick Skilled Labour Requirement Survey, 1965-66*, RG 76, vol. 916, file 583-11-655, LAC.

training programs of the Department of Education and Department of Labour. As a result, we would suggest that any immigration emphasis . . . be placed on technical and professional categories. In some instances employers are not fully aware of the services of their own provincial and federal governments in supply and training of local labour. This, we are attempting to remedy through our own programs. It is also recognized, however, by us and by industry that the period of time required for highly skilled and technical and professional help means that in the short run we are unlikely to meet these requirements for industry. As a result, an emphasis on immigration service in these areas is certainly warranted.<sup>88</sup>

For Ottawa the message was clear: New Brunswick “does not want to encourage immigration of people that would compete for employment with their own people who are now unemployed and those being trained or re-trained. In short, they do not need nor do they want unskilled immigrants”.<sup>89</sup>

During the Robichaud regime, New Brunswick’s representatives at Atlantic Canada House in London also promoted the immigration of skilled workers, but only half-heartedly. J.A. Paterson argued that New Brunswick was half a generation away from being able to rely solely on its own citizens for employment (the ultimate goal) and suggested that, in the interim, Great Britain would be a good place to look for skilled labour. He also understood that immigration could mean additional employment for those born in New Brunswick. Paterson suggested that the Canadian Immigration Service could locate skilled labour, with the employers having the final say in the screening process. He stated that some provinces felt it was necessary to provide “specialist staff to augment the services of the Federal Immigration People”, but he did not seem to think that New Brunswick should follow suit. The role of Atlantic Canada House in this process would be to provide information on the province to potential immigrants, a role that it already preformed by the end of the 1960s.<sup>90</sup> It does not appear, however, that the office possessed sufficient information on the province to be effective. In 1969, Paterson stated that he was only able to give “sketchy” information in a “haphazard method”,<sup>91</sup> and his office relied on government departments and employers in New Brunswick for specific information for interested immigrants.

88 G.G. Duclos (deputy minister of the New Brunswick Department of Labour) to A.A. Ewen (Canadian Service, Department of Citizenship and Immigration), 8 June 1965, RG 76, vol. 916, file 583-11-655, LAC and C.M. Isbister (deputy minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration) to John R. Nicholson (minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration), memorandum, 25 June 1965, RG 76, vol. 916, file 583-11-655, LAC.

89 A.A. Ewen to director of the Canadian Service, memorandum, “Subject: Manpower Survey”, 10 May 1965, RG 76, vol. 916, file 583-11-655, LAC.

90 New Brunswick Department of Economic Growth, *Annual Report*, 1970-71, p. 15 and J.A. Paterson (New Brunswick Development Office) to R.E. Tweeddale (deputy minister of the New Brunswick Department of Economic Growth), 4 February 1970, RS 186 (Records of the New Brunswick Development Office, London), A/3/b, PANB.

91 J.A. Paterson to W. H. MacKenzie (district superintendent of schools, Saint John), 16 April 1969, RS 186, C/14, PANB.



The 1960s witnessed a significant shift in immigration policy in New Brunswick in terms of the types of immigrants considered desirable. Civil servants in the province and government representatives overseas now sought immigrants employed in professional occupations and skilled trades instead of agricultural labourers. This change occurred at the same time as federal immigration policy began emphasizing skill and education as the criteria for selecting immigrants. The immigrants who managed to make their way to New Brunswick fit these criteria. According to the 1971 census, the majority of immigrants working in Atlantic Canada were employed in professional occupations (33 per cent). The other significant occupational groupings included manufacturing and construction related occupations (17 per cent), service occupations (15 per cent), and sales (9 per cent). Only a very small number of immigrants were employed in primary resource occupations.<sup>92</sup> With the exception of the activities at Atlantic Canada House, however, there is little evidence to indicate the provincial government acted on this rhetoric. Tellingly, the shift in policy did not mean that immigration matters were transferred out of the Department of Agriculture, where they remained until 1973. Ultimately, the main concern of politicians in the 1960s continued to be the welfare of New Brunswickers, whose jobs might be threatened by a liberal approach to immigration.

### Conclusion

Scholars such as Freda Hawkins, who argue that the Atlantic provinces did not become very active in publicly pressuring the federal government to increase immigration, are correct – at least as far as New Brunswick is concerned.<sup>93</sup> Although the federal government considered immigration to be an integral component of economic development, devoted considerable resources to immigrant recruitment and admitted over 3,000,000 immigrants in the post-war period, the province of New Brunswick placed immigration close to the bottom of its political agenda. Successive premiers, of whatever political stripe, ignored immigration as a major component of economic development and the issue never sparked intense public debate. Immigration-related matters remained the preserve of civil servants, most of them ensconced in the Department of Agriculture, who quietly dealt with federal officials. Few financial resources were committed to immigration either for recruitment or settlement. Between 1945 and 1967, the Department of Agriculture spent between 0.6 per cent and 1.1 per cent of its total expenditure on “immigration, industry, and farm settlement”. The majority of these expenses were for salaries and office supplies. The farm inspector was the only employee to spend a significant amount of money on official business, but he was not involved with immigrant recruitment and settlement.<sup>94</sup>

92 Census of Canada, “Labour Force, 15 years and over, by occupation minor groups and sex, showing birthplace, period of immigration, and ethnic group for regions, 1971”, table 5, vol. 3, part 3, 1971; Census of Canada, “Labour Force, 15 years and over, by occupation minor groups and sex, showing birthplace, period of immigration, and ethnic group for Canada, 1971”, table 4, vol. 3, part 3, 1971. The census for 1971 did not break the region down by province.

93 Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration*, p. 193.

94 Province of New Brunswick Public Accounts, 1945-1971. For departmental expenditures in this period, see Conrad and Steel, “They Come and They Go”, p. 64.

Even if the debates over immigration were not particularly intense, they give historians insight into the regional dimensions of Canadian immigration policy. In terms of the occupational and ethnic backgrounds of immigrants that were considered desirable, New Brunswick generally followed the lead of federal policy makers. In the 1950s the province declared a preference for agricultural workers while, in the 1960s, immigrants employed in professions or skilled trades were given priority. Administratively, though, immigration remained linked to agriculture, suggesting a sluggish response to changing conditions. While there are no surviving examples of blatant racism in policy pronouncements and political correspondence, provincial officials clearly preferred white British and northern European (particularly Dutch) immigrants and were less enthusiastic about recruiting immigrants from other areas of the world. The majority of immigrants who ultimately settled in New Brunswick in this period were from Britain and the United States and of British cultural background (66 per cent in 1951, 56 per cent in 1961 and 56 per cent in 1971).<sup>95</sup>

Unlike the federal government, officials in the New Brunswick government expressed serious reservations about providing resources to immigrant recruitment and settlement. Economics have to be taken into account, but it is too simplistic to argue that the province would have taken more action had there been more money. Provincial economic thinking in this period posited that immigrants would compete with New Brunswickers for the few jobs that were available, rather than promoting economic growth by bringing valuable skills and developing economic opportunities for natives and newcomers alike. It made sense politically to avoid developing an aggressive immigration policy as long as New Brunswickers continued to leave the province and those who remained saw immigrants as competing for a finite number of jobs. More than anything else, politicians and civil servants wanted to avoid accusations that the government was showing preferential treatment to immigrants over native-born citizens.

Caught in a vicious cycle of out-migration and underdevelopment, the province in this period failed to move beyond the blinkered view that immigrants had little to offer other than their physical labour. As a result, provincial policy makers missed opportunities to work with the federal government to develop an immigration policy that might have served New Brunswick more effectively. The province continued to look to Ottawa to take the lead, a role that Ottawa was hesitant to assume. Not surprisingly, then, New Brunswick attracted a small number of immigrants in this period, and many of them quickly left the province for better economic opportunities and more generous immigrant adjustment programmes elsewhere in Canada.

95 Census of Canada, "Immigrant population by period of immigration, specified origins and sex, for provinces and territories, rural farm and rural non-farm and urban, 1951", table 41, vol. 2, 1951; Census of Canada, "Immigrant population by period of immigration, specified origins and sex, for Canada, rural farm and rural non-farm and urban, 1951", table 40, vol. 2, 1951; Census of Canada, "Characteristics of the immigrant population by period of immigration and sex, for provinces and territories, 1961", table 126, vol. 1, part 3, 1961; Census of Canada, "Characteristics of the immigrant population by period of immigration and sex, for Canada, 1961", table 125, vol. 1, part 3, 1961; Census of Canada, "Characteristics of the immigrant population by period of immigration and sex, for Canada and provinces and territories, 1971", table 33, vol. 1, part 4, 1971. Ethnicity was determined through the father for all three census years.