



C.I.H.S. BULLETIN S.H.I.C

I.S.S.N. 0843-8242

ISSUE NO. 21 (SEPTEMBER 1995)

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- CIHS Directors meet:
Sept. 21, 1995
- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:
Oct. 21, 1995 9:30 a.m.
L.B. Pearson Bldg,
Ottawa, Ontario

FROM THE EDITOR

Hello there again! The CIHS Board members are busy getting ready for the upcoming Annual general meeting. If you're in the Ottawa area please come on out...we love to see as many people as possible participate in the elections and discussions. Please consider volunteering your time and energy to the Society. It really is a great deal of fun and the more people that get actively involved, the more things we're able to accomplish.

Also keep your eyes peeled on the bookshelves in November. Ellen Loucks Fairclough, who celebrated her 90th birthday this year, was former MP for Hamilton West for 13 years, was Canada's first Cabinet Minister (and former Immigration Minister), Companion of the Order of Canada, has recently written a biography called "Saturday's Child".

Also special thanks to Barbara Lee in Bangkok who forwarded us some photos of refugee camps she found when cleaning up an old office. We're pleased

she thought of the Society and sent them on to us!

As always, your ideas, comments and assistance in any way, shape or form are always welcome.

Carrie Hunter (953-0923)

SAD GOOD-BYES

Ruby Crosman

The CIHS executive and many of our members mourned the passing of a close friend of our Society. After a long illness, at her home in Unitarian House, Ottawa, on Wednesday, June 28, 1995, Ruby Belle Crosman, age 86, passed away. Ruby was the beloved wife of Fenton Crosman, and dear friend of Velda Crosman Beaman, Ottawa. Dear sister of Lorraine Reeves, Lismore of Australia, and Charles, Carl and George of Charlottetown, P.E.I. Our thoughts and prayers are with Fenton, who during his tenure on the CIHS Executive, furthered historical research and initiatives related to designations of sites and properties, relevant to immigration. Ruby's personal warmth and friendship towards all of us, as well as her ongoing support for our work will never be forgotten.

THE HOME CHILDREN

This article was originally written to mark the 125th anniversary of immigration services in Canada, and was published in the May 1994 edition of "Canada News".

Although it was nearly 70 years ago, Ernest Emmett of Arnprior, Ontario, still has fond memories of his first day in Canada.

It was a cold, foggy November day when he got off the boat in Montreal. But the welcome he received warmed his spirits. "A bunch of ladies were at the dock singing nice cheery songs", Mr. Emmett recalls.

"Then some people gave us candies and ice cream cones." Soon after, the 14 years old native of Chester, England, spent \$1.25 of his total \$5 on a set of long underwear to keep him warm.

No family member accompanied Ernest Emmett to Canada. He was one of 80,000 "home children" who travelled from England from 1870 to 1930. Many, like him, were orphans. Others were given by their parents to authorities and it was not uncommon for children as young as seven or eight to find themselves on crowded ocean liners headed for Canada. At 14, Ernest was an old "home child".

Nineteenth century social workers and others with a social conscience in Britain initially attempted to build shelters for them, but these were inadequate. The solution seemed to lie thousands of miles away in two commonwealth countries - Canada and Australia - where people and cheap labour were needed to develop the countries.

Authorities in the three countries devised a solution. Thousands of children on the streets of Britain would receive religious and moral training in English "refuge homes" before being sent to Canada or

Australia. Some also got vocational training.

The youngest children were adopted by Canadian families to help with farm chores and other hard, physical work and had to remain there until they were in their late teens or early twenties.

Mr. Emmett remembers getting an envelope from an immigration official. Inside was the name of the family for whom he would work. "That's when I got lucky", he said. "I worked for a lovely family in Vars, Ontario. From the time they met me at the station in a horse and buggy until I left five years later, I have only good things to say about them."

Other children were not as lucky. The families were supposed to ensure they went to school and church, but many ignored their commitments or saw the children solely as a source of cheap labour.

Abuse of children and ignorance of what this innovative immigration movement was supposed to accomplish were much more common in the early years. But gradually methods to monitor how the children were treated improved through the efforts of dedicated social workers and government officials.

Three Canadians who substantially improved the lot of the "home children" were James Kelso, founder of the Children's Aid Society of Canada; Charlotte Whitton, Ottawa's flamboyant mayor in the 1950s; and Bogue Smart, a senior immigration official.

The "home children" represented a 19th century solution to social and economic problems in England and Canada, but their contribution to Canada is still felt today. Many of them prospered and their presence prompted Canadian authorities to begin child welfare programmes and policies which protect the rights of children today.

"FROM MY BOOKSHELF"

by George Bonavia

Reprinted with permission from George Bonavia. George distributes a monthly newsletter to ethnic media, libraries and organizations interested in ethnocultural affairs.

The Political Economy of International Labour Migration by Hassan N. Gardezi - Black Rose Books, Montreal, Quebec. 1995, 191 pages, \$19.99 paperback.

While former studies on labour migration have concentrated on monetary factors, Hassan Gardezi's original work refocuses attention on the migrant workers themselves, their hopes and aspirations, family and community life, and working conditions both at home and abroad.

Taking a wide-range view of international labour migration, Gardezi gives us deeper insight into the transfers of labour by analyzing the political economy of the countries where labour groups originate and focuses on the conditions under which labour power is reproduced and used. Case studies further reveal that the myth of migrants returning home with savings, knowledge and a longing for material success are mere wishful thinking. Hassan N. Gardezi teaches at Algoma University College in Sault Ste. Marie and is one of Canada's foremost sociologists studying Asian life.

125th Anniversary Immigration 1869 - 1994

PART 3

by Herb Hill-Tout

(The following is final part 3 of a brief memoir prepared by Herb Tout, a retired, long service Immigration Officer. It was passed on to us by George Varnai, currently Manager of Citizenship and Settlement in the BC Region, following Herb's attendance at an Immigration 125 Celebration.)

Kamloops opened in 1952, population was under 10,000 then, standing joke was you could never count more than 8,000 because of the dust blowing in North Kamloops. Prior to '52 placement and investigations were done out of Vancouver. Main duties were placement, settlement, sponsorship, investigations, collecting A.P. loans and control of non-immigrants. Immigration Act of the day authorized the issuance of passes by the railroads and transportation companies. We had C.P., C.N., P.G.E. & Greyhound, but they were seldom used as one always required a vehicle at destination. Provision for these passes was removed from subsequent Immigration Acts.

Immigration officers were required to use their own vehicle on a mileage basis, there were no government vehicles except for a van used by Vancouver office to transport detainees to/from detention in the old Immigration building. Initially the rates were \$.06 mile for the first 5000 miles and \$.04 for the balance, business insurance was also compulsory. Most of the inland offices averaged 12 - 15,000 miles per year. A posting inland could lead a "visa officer" position overseas, two of my predecessors Bill Adams and Bill Burton went this route after a short stint in Kamloops. These were originally one person offices covering very large areas and the office was closed while away on investigations, Customs would take our messages.

We were located in the 1922 Federal Building until the early 60's when overall expansion by the Post Office and various other departments necessitated a larger building. Dave Fulton was our M.P., he was the Minister of Justice and also had the Public Works Portfolio. This together with plans for part of the basement to be used in conjunction with Civil Defense HQ to operate government services in case of nuclear attack assured a state of the art building, complete showers, showers, decontamination facilities, special clothing, gas masks, food supplies, usual row of clocks showing various time zones and latest

communication equipment. Fortunately for us all it was never put to use for this purpose. During construction we relocated to the old 1892 Federal Building in the Chinatown section which housed Indian Affairs but had adequate space for all departments other than the Post Office.

A major impact was the arrival of the Hungarian refugees in December 1956. We had no budget, no facilities and insufficient staff for this kind of intake. There was a very generous response from members of the local churches to whom I had made a request for assistance. I quite realize it is not appropriate to single out specific individuals but one of the ministers was "Flying Phil Gaglardi" of Calvary Temple who was B.C. Highways Minister during this era. The first arrivals came on the 6:30 a.m. C.P.R. train, the temperature was -20 degrees F, the media had given advance coverage and the mayor, local politicians, church members and reporters were out to meet the first group. George, this was when I ran into a similar name, a Mrs. Virani of Kamloops, one of several Hungarian Canadians who kindly helped with interpreting for the new arrivals.

Bank accounts had to be funded and provision for one signature cheques which rather upset the auditors of the day, government cheques always had two signatures at that time. A new book-keeping system was established so we could issue subsistence cheques, in this instance the Dept. really moved, it was Col. Fortier at NHQ who obtained approval for the McBee pegboard system rather than some cheaper ones that were under consideration. This vastly simplified both expenditures and revenue collection.

As mentioned in the brochure handouts sixty plus hour weeks were the norm during the first few months of 1957.

Alex Lockwood, I/C Settlement and Placement in Vancouver would phone and advise x number arriving on the 6:30 a.m. train where they had to be met, taken to lodging, then food, clothing and employment arranged. Jim Pasman did mention the itemized grocery accounts required which no big store would touch, fortunately there were bigger corner store groceries then. No luxury items were allowed, this included tailor made cigarettes which were cheap back in Hungary. These procedures were very time consuming for the store owner and ourselves to process for payment. Would you believe "Duplicate Originals" for bills which evolved during this time. I'm no accountant but could never fathom the rationale for this procedure. I do know that some merchants eventually got paid twice. Fortunately the system to issue subsistence cheques commenced before too many months.

Hotel rooms for singles were \$14.00 - \$20.00 week, a local cafe, the Commodore owned by an old time Greek immigrant gave us an almost cost price of \$2.50 day for three meals. Some of the single boys preferred to take a grocery allowance and cook on a hot plate in their room. Accommodation was scarce and we had families in the house overnight on a number of occasions. Another local merchant agreed to supply work clothes, gloves, boots and blankets then wait a few weeks for payment, these items were minimum requirements before placement. Majority of employment was with railroads, sawmills and ranches. Railroads would send the new employees on passes, most of the others were out of town and we took them by car, the employers in this case would provide accommodation and finance any other requirements.

Railroad pay on the extra gangs was \$1.25 hr. minus room and board, the work trains had dining cars but a sectionman would come back to a cold

sectionhouse and it took an hour to warm it up and cook a meal, they did get higher pay than the gangs. Before the improved roadbeds and the new maintenance equipment sectionhouses were closer and the crew did routine track maintenance and patrolled before trains in most areas. In spite of their very few possessions most sectionman had a railroad watch, usually a Waltham or Elgin and even with limited English could read train orders to the minute.

Remember the bamboo hoops with new train orders the engineer caught with his arm while going full speed through the station. Section crews timed repairs/travel between trains for the most part, but the trains were not always to the minute, on rare occasions they would gamble and have to jump from their hand car/speeder if they were wrong. It was very hard to judge the speed of trains in the mountainous areas and tunnels even with an ear to the rail. A train could suddenly come around a curve, no time to drag the speeder off, just jump for it to save your neck, the car was splinters. This meant brownie points/dismissal depending on ones record.

Portugal joined NATO in 1955 and Canada agreed to take 500 farm labourers under the provisions of the old P.C. 2856. I placed three on Douglas Lake Cattle Co. out of Merritt; this is remote area yet within a week a not too happy foreman phoned that they had departed. I traced them to Kitimat where they were quite happily working on the pot lines at Alcan, the 95 degrees F didn't bother them at all, especially the immigrants from the Azores. These men were reliable hard workers and many stayed throughout their work lives. Some of the more astute bought ocean front property on the Algarve coast in Portugal which later became a popular tourist area.

Bralorne and Pioneer Gold Mines in the Bridge River Valley were for many years one of our favoured employers. Any immigrant they took were on the proviso that they would have to pass another medical by the Co. doctor. Our medicals overseas were considered fairly strict, but from experience they found that not everybody was suited to working over a mile underground with temperatures on the stopes as high as 95 degrees F. Craigmont Mines, the first of the Highland Valley copper mines opened in Sept. 1961 took a number of immigrants but by this time employees required mine experience and better English.

There were many immigrant success stories George, in view of your ancestry I would like to mention one friend that Mildred and I have remained in contact with through the years. Steve, an architectural engineer arrived from Budapest in December 1956, he had acquired some knowledge of English by illegally listening to the BBC. He worked on Trans Mountain Pipeline as a labourer long enough to get a stake, then went east to the better opportunities. He was employed as a design engineer with Du Pont for many years, then as Building Supt. for McGill University until his recent retirement. During the depressed real estate market of the 70s he bought a large home in Westmount which makes him a neighbour of Brian and Mila, who also purchased a home there.

One major project of the 50s was the Trans Mountain Oil Pipeline which required considerable U.S. expertise, major pipeline construction was relatively new in Canada and the N.E.S. cleared many positions. It was rather a closed fraternity who tended to look after their own, periodically the RCMP and I would make a patrol up the North Thomson and find a few "experts" working as timekeepers or warehouseman, or the university sons of senior company personnel in the U.S. who entered as visitors and went to work (always at a higher rate than our

university students). We gave them a check-out letter and 48 hours to leave Canada. By the time Westcoast Transmission built the natural gas pipeline Canadians had the expertise and very few work permits were required.

Prior to the new Act Canada had Agreements with the governments of India, Pakistan and Ceylon for Quotas of 150/100/50 respectively, over and above the regular sponsored categories. These agreements provided for 50% independent and 50% relatives. Kamloops for many years had 15% of the Indian quota, the odd Pakistan case, but none from Ceylon. New legislation covered all the Quota categories but it was quite some time before all three governments formally cancelled the Agreements.

There were many programs through the years to adjust the status of illegals, one of the earliest was for seaman deserters who had married Canadians and become established in Canada, one of the last was the 60 day turn yourself in National Review Program which covered draft dodgers and anybody without a serious criminal record. At first these were called "amnesty" programs but this got to be a NoNo with immigration critics in the House berating our programs and policies and why did we need 1000s of Orders-in-Council for various waivers if we were running the operation properly. Every program was given a name and they were all purported to be the last one to adjust status from within Canada.

The most complex was the Chinese Adjustment of Status Program of the 60's which ran for many years and eventually processed over 20,000 cases. The program got off to a slow start, understandably the Chinese community was not too trusting of this government program. Narrative on Henry Peters outlines difficulties in Hong Kong processing. Program criteria was lenient because obviously we couldn't deport 1000's of well established persons, many with Canadian born families. Applicants were required to give full details of real

family, paper family and how payment was arranged to purchase the slot. This required a 4 page legal size statement in which the majority of information was also written in Chinese characters. Landings were amended to show real name after which replacement Citizenship Certificates/Passports could be reissued in real name. Kamloops processed about 70 cases.

There were a few illicit immigration agents in Hong Kong and Vancouver whom the RCMP and Hong Kong Police were able to convict but no individual was penalized for arranging family sponsorship. One ironic twist was the high price paid if the "paper" admission was as the son of a Canadian. They were given C.C. -1st entry and the program was only for persons granted Landed Immigrant status consequently OS8, full medical (including family o/s if applicable), Stage B and O-I-C request for waiver visa and passport was required, landing could take up to two years. Many applicants were business people who travelled overseas which was now impossible until landing granted and Canadian certificate of Identity issued or new Canadian Citizenship Certificate and Canadian Passport.

It was traditional in the earlier years, provided they could afford it for old time Chinese to be buried in Mainland China. During WWII there were several hundred sealed metal coffins stored in a Vancouver warehouse awaiting shipment, the prepaid funds held in a special account. Chinese sources advised that due to difficulties in arranging shipping after the war and tracing the families involved that eventually the bodies were buried at sea. (not verified)

As an aside Vancouver office originally had a large self-contained "Chinese section" with a very high security level, all files were locked overnight. Specific officers worked in this section resulting in a high level of expertise. When we went to "country neutral" it was considered discriminatory to have such signs, the term was now to be "Admissions" which

upset the Chinese who would continue to ask for their section. It was moved to the regular Admissions floor and all files were absorbed into the Central Registry.

In the 60s Sec. II positions were authorized for the inland ports and additional officers were assigned. In 1966 Dorothy Corrigan, a secretary who had emigrated from Australia via a short stay in Britain commenced employment with Immigration in Kamloops as a secretary, then served as a court reporter for a number of years in the days of the Special Inquiry Officers before being appointed as Immigration Services Assistant. Dorothy retired in 1994 making her twenty-eight years continuous service with Immigration one of the longest of any of the recently retired Pacific Region employees.

Those of us who worked in small inland ports and were often away for days at a time owe a debt of gratitude to our wives. Many is the family emergency, trip to clinic or hospital and driving the boys to extra-curricular activities that Mildred took care of when I was away.

After being with Mines & Resources, and Citizenship & Immigration for almost 20 years where we were together only at the very top level, it was quite an adjustment to be part of the new department of Manpower and Immigration, later to become Employment & Immigration Canada. For the first two years we were on a number of various training and think tank courses, sorry I cannot recall the official names, nor can I remember if I was Type A or Type B on one development course. In trying to update the old N.E.S. image the entry standards were raised and it was preferred that the new employees have a degree in the Humanities. We went out of the placement business and the Settlement Division dies with scarcely a whimper. We were called Managers instead of O-I-C's and the term Director General

appeared. Rumour has it that our senior personnel were quite happy with the Director title until a Quebec Director found his provincial counterpart was called a Director General, the rest is history. Through the years we did build up an excellent rapport with our colleagues and co-workers in dealing with cases that involved both Immigration and Employment participation.

I am writing this from memory so please forgive any possible errors. There are many other retired officers who could recall interesting events of the earlier post war years - working with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus trains, White Rock office in the Great Northern Station, detention facilities in the old Vancouver Immigration Building, the Shipping Office, and chasing seamen deserters, escort of detainees across Canada by train, pre-clearance of cruise ships from San-Francisco-Vancouver, pre-clearance of cruise ships and passenger aircraft from Hawaii (the latter was short lived as the airlines found costs too high), Vancouver Airport when passengers were called by name from a manifest starting with the diplomats, and the first seasonal officers stationed at Snag Creek on the Alaska Highway before we had any accommodation facilities.

NOTICE

Reminder from the Treasurer

Our 1995/96 membership year commenced on May 1, 1995 and I would be most grateful if those of our annual members who have not sent in their \$10.00 annual dues, would do so as soon as possible. Members can determine the expiry date of their membership by noting the number in brackets after their

name on the envelope, or they can check the expiry date on the membership card, which is sent out whenever we receive a dues payment. I would like to thank you for all your kind attention to this reminder and trust you survived the present hot dry summer without too much inconvenience.

35 Years of Misspent Life in Government Service

Part 5

by Al Troy

I can hear some of my many critics muttering part 5? Is there no stopping this guy. Anyway, I'm up to 1971 and I retired in 1984 so we only have Ottawa, Dallas, Belfast (for the third time), Stuttgart, Birmingham and the Hague to cover. Now isn't that a thrilling prospect?

I had been replaced in our Manchester office by Duncan Taylor and he had written to see if I would be interested in renting his house out in the West End of Ottawa. He quoted me what turned out to be a very fair rent and for once in my life I accepted his offer sight unseen. That proved to have been a smart move as he lived in a good area in a nice bungalow and I even inherited his place in an office car pool. Parking was at a premium at that time and space was allocated on the basis of seniority, rank, distance from home to office, health and other bits and pieces that I can't remember. I was entitled to a one-third space and along with Val Latour and Jim Hackett we qualified for a free government spot near the Rideau Street office. Jim liked to drive so he used his car and Val and I paid so much a month. A good deal all round.

Benoit Godbout was the Director General of the Foreign Branch and Maurice Mitchell was Director of Operations. The section that worked directly under Mitchell was the Selection & Processing Section headed up by Gilles Durocher who was served by four veteran schemers namely Gaston Beaupre, Bob Barr, Jack Lavoie and yours truly. We each had an area of expertise and naturally I got the one I knew the least about i.e. Stage B matters. You might be interested to know how the system worked at HQ in those days. We would get urgent telexes from posts abroad detailing a particularly knotty problem and seeking instructions as how to proceed. After checking a dozen or so files from Registry and failing to turn up a precedent and a thorough search of the manuals was also found to be of no use you would head for the Boss for an off-the-record chat. The usual outcome to this was the question "when does he need a reply?" I might then say something like, "by Wednesday noon" "O.k. let it sit 'til Thursday and see what happens." On Thursday a further telex might arrive advising that "failing to receive your instructions as to how to cope with my problem, I have therefore taken the following action, etc., etc." Back to the Boss for another chat and it would boil down to us agreeing that the action taken was most appropriate under the circumstances and to consider the matter solved. This information would be indexed and filed away to await the day you got a similar request from another post when you could reply, using the info you had preserved, along the lines "as a matter of policy it has been decided that...etc., etc." It was surprising how much "policy" was decided in this manner, proving that there is really no substitute for good common sense. There was no problem that cannot be solved but be sure you remember the Golden Rule: NEVER EMBARRASS YOUR MINISTER! This is something our friends in National Defense still haven't learned.

We were on the 2nd floor of the Bourque Building on Rideau Street and

we had continual problems with the heating and air-conditioning. The secretarial staff were always too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. I landed the job of calling Public Works and making official complaints. They would send a guy over to check out what was wrong. He would arrive with a gauge taped on to a long bamboo pole which he would hold up to the ventilation outlets to take the temperature which always showed 65 degrees (winter and summer). He would loudly advise that this was exactly what it should be and immediately take off. I suspected his gauge was permanently set at 65 degrees but had no way of proving my suspicions. In any case the girls would immediately feel warmer or cooler and the matter was settled for a couple of weeks or so.

John Zawisza was Chief of Personnel and Frank Sharpe was the officer-in-charge of doing the annual posting exercise. Frank had been stuck with this task for a couple of years and it was slowly driving him nuts. He had been told he could leave the job and get a posting abroad again if he could get a suitable replacement. He invited me in for a chat one afternoon and began to tell me how the system worked and sort of hinted that I might like to take over when his tour of duty ended. I was flattered and said I would think about it. Frank Sharpe was one of the most honest and forthcoming persons I had ever met and at this point he blurted out "Al, I can't kid you this is one of the worst jobs I've ever had and I have been told I can leave if I can get a replacement so here are the facts of how the system operates." You start with the list of officers in Ottawa due to be posted out and the list of those due to come home. Next you added officers who had health problems, either themselves or their dependents. Next we had working wives who had more or less been promised jobs. We also had schooling problems for children and even children with special health or learning problems. You threw people with allergies into the mix and finally you would manage to get some sort of a posting program worked out. This would go to the Chief of

Personnel who might have a change or two to make which usually entailed making a half dozen changes to your list. Next, the listing went to the Director-General who had his own private ideas as to who should be officer-in-charge of specific posts. This caused more changes to the original list. Finally the so-called final posting exercise listing went to the top floor for review by the D.M.'s office and more possible changes. By the time it got back to poor Frank it usually bore no resemblance to his original efforts which were entirely based on the operational needs of the Department...Once I heard Frank's confession I said thanks for the offer, but no thanks...

The summer passed but in early autumn all hell broke loose when the Ugandan Asian program was developed literally overnight. Roger St. Vincent was sent to Kampala and Ottawa scrambled to get him officer and support staff as well as funding and arranging for charter aircraft to move the 7000 persons. Can't remember the exact number so 7000 is a ballpark figure. Accommodation and employment programs were set up in Canada and it was remarkable how smoothly things went. Everyone involved pitched in and did their best but it was Roger's efforts on the ground in Uganda that stood out. Take a bow Roger...

In late November 1972 I was sent on one of those stupid Public Service Commission training courses out in Carleton Place. You know it was supposed to train you for higher management etc. You made suspension bridges out of old newspaper, paper clips and string. They played funny word games etc. This was supposed to show your hidden talents and help your advancement in the Public Service. Well the only thing I learned in the two weeks was that I was a better poker player than any of the other 22 people on the course and made \$95.00 playing Dealers Choice in the dining room each night. In '72 that was a lot of money. Two days before the course ended, I received a phonecall from Frank Sharpe advising I was being posted to Dallas, Texas as of

January 2, 1973 to be in charge of our operation covering Texas and Oklahoma. Due to a change in Regulations, U.S. citizens were no longer to be allowed forward on temporary status but had to complete all immigration requirements within the U.S.A. as did all immigrants from other parts of the world. This meant opening 7 or 8 new offices and staffing them with experienced officers who would be capable of dealing with migrants and making up operating procedures as they went along. Incidentally Franke Sharpe got out of his lousy job by posting himself to San Francisco.

December was a huge rush with arranging our household move. My son decided to get married to his English fiancée who had been living with us, and now needed to urgently find and furnish an apartment. Of course Christmas was taking some time and our daughter Barbara and her sister-in-law from Paris were arriving Dec. 20th. However all worked out well and the girls had their visit, Steve and Gillian married and moved into their apartment, our movers packed us up and we left Ottawa in the middle of a raging blizzard on January 2, 1973.

I have already written about our stay in Dallas from January 1973 until May 1975 and this was published in the November 1993 Bulletin so my next tale will be about our third posting to Belfast in 1975. Bye and take care.

IRISH IMMIGRANTS FACED HARSH LIFE

by Peter Black

Reprinted from August 11, 1995 Chatham Daily News. (Ed. Note: Gee I know a few Customs officers who'll smile..)

On an island a short distance down river from Quebec City - an island so small it isn't marked on most maps - preparations are under way for the anniversary of one of the grimmest events in Canadian history.

The island is Grosse Ile, also known as Quarantine Island, and for thousands of Irish immigrants it was their first and last glimpse of the promised land. For many, a grave on a desolate island in the St. Lawrence River was no worse a fate than had awaited them in Ireland.

In 1997, Grosse Ile will remember the Great Potato Famine of 1847. It was that calamity, visited on the Irish people through potato blight and worsened by government malice and incompetence, that brought these thousands to Canada's shores, the vast majority to Grosse Ile.

In 1847, with the famine at its peak, some 175,000 Irish who were able to raise the funds to book a ticket across the Atlantic - only about 10% got any government aid - embarked for North America. It should be noted that shipping companies in the United States, wary of the ravaged thousands seeking exit from Ireland, doubled their fares at about this time.

Piled like inanimate cargo into the fetid holds of mostly timber ships headed for Quebec, many of the passengers were soon dying in agony from typhus or ship fever. Although estimates vary, it's assumed some 6,000 Irish immigrants died on ships headed for Quebec.

That year, the swamped medical staff on Grosse Ile, at great risk to themselves, examined and treated over 70,000 Irish refugees. Of those, at least 5,400 were buried on Grosse Ile. A further 11,000 Irish and those infected by typhus as a result of the Irish influx, died later in Quebec towns and villages. Thousands

more died further upstream in Toronto and other Canadian Western towns.

The quarantine station on the island had been set up in 1832 to prepare the British colonies for the inevitable assault of the plague of cholera then sweeping Europe. Upwards of 4,000 immigrants were buried on Grosse Ile as a result of that epidemic.

Grosse Ile was closed as a quarantine station in 1937, having fallen into disuse as medicine advanced and shipboard travel became more civilized. It later served as a bacteriological weapons testing lab for the Americans during the Second World War and also as a cattle quarantine centre.

The work under way now on the island, an increasingly popular destination for roots-seeking people from all over, will restore the huge disinfection building not far from the wharf that greeted the hundreds of visitors to the island.

The Grosse Ile project is being developed by Heritage Canada, a \$10 million undertaking launched after a round of public consultations. Those hearings gave voice to Canadians of Irish descent who wanted a memorial to the suffering of immigrants, the majority of whom were Irish, not some kind of plague theme park, as had been suggested in preliminary Parks Canada plans.

Nowadays, it's hard to imagine the kind of suffering endured by many of our descendants only a few generations removed. For modern immigrants, the gateway to Canada is a tunnel from the jet door followed by miles of carpet to an unsmiling customs officer's desk. A far cry from Grosse Ile. (Many of the details contained in this column come from two fine works: Donald McKay's *Flight from Famine*, and Marianne O'Gallagher's *Grosse Ile: Gateway to Canada*.)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

(PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR MEMBERSHIP YEAR RUNS FROM MAY 1 TO APRIL 30 !!!)

Please enter/renew my membership in the Canadian Immigration Historical Society or note my new address:

NAME: _____ [PLEASE PRINT]

ADDRESS: _____

CHANGE OF ADDRESS ONLY []

FEE ENCLOSED: Life - 100.00 [] or Annual - 10.00 []

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHEQUE TO :

The Treasurer
The Canadian Immigration Historical Society
P.O. Box 9502, Station T
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3V2

C.I.H.S. **BULLETIN** S.H.I.C.

NUMBER 21

PAGE 8

THIS CONCLUDES THE
TWENTY-FIRST ISSUE OF THE
BULLETIN. WE CONTINUE TO
LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING
FROM YOU WITH YOUR
COMMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS
AND SUGGESTIONS. THE
EDITOR AND THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS ENCOURAGE
EVERYONE WHO HAS SOME
SPARE TIME AND ENERGY TO
PARTICIPATE IN ONE OR MORE
ACTIVITIES OR PROJECTS.
YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID.



ODE TO PIER 21, by J.P. Leblanc (13/3/95)

Unimpassioned, I am no longer the Pier 21
Of wooden ships and ocean liners,
Of barred windows, prison cells, of wire cages.
I gave way to the jet aircraft.
Hushed, abandoned, postponed,
I stand the husk of bygone days.

Ships of all descriptions conquered the ocean,
In Halifax Harbour, calm waters hugged their keels,
To soothe the spirit of their passengers.
Pouring from them they peopled the land.

Silent, I am the platform that processed
Kings, queens, princes and paupers,
Intrepid pioneers, immigrants,
The detainees, inadmissibles,
Lost souls, the penniless, the threadbare,
Those with USA destinations.

The torpedoed, refugees from tyranny,
Oppression and revolutions -
Displaced peoples - each
Sought land, hope, harmony, liberty.
War brides....I greeted them all.

I salute national heroes
Sailors, soldiers, airmen, seamen off to war,
Those at rest at sea,
Imperial War Graves, in Flander Fields.

I want to become the Pier 21
With walls that speak out.
I want to recall the hustle and bustle,
Of officials and volunteers,
Helpful hands...dockhands, the longshoremen,
Counselling words and smiling eyes -
The Sisters of Service, the Red Cross, Religious groups,
the nursery....the cafeteria,
Red Caps, Aid to the Traveller...and
Welcoming ambassadors and rail stop delegations.

My international landmark
Welcomed passenger boats, to-day cruise ships.
My plaque and interpretive panel,
Commemorate my history of national significance.

My guests gave Canada growth, nationality and diversity.
With generosity of spirit and kind
They contributed to devastated Europe.
heritage is my emblem of world understanding.
A visit is a pilgrimage,
To others a shrine.
My past is ennobled, the future bright.
To foster common ground is my vision.
