

C.I.H.S. BULLETIN

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN IMMIGRATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AGM 2004

The Annual General Meeting was held at the R.C.A.F. Officer's Mess in Ottawa, on the 27th October 2004

Mike Molloy, our new President, welcomed the members. He had been appointed by the Board of Directors under rules which delegated such an appointment to the Board, subject to approval by members attending the next AGM.

The first order of business, therefore, was a motion by David Bullock, the past President, seeking approval of the Board's action. Happily, approval was unanimous.

Presidents Address

Thank you all for your vote of confidence.

Let me begin by expressing the Society's thanks to David Bullock for his four and a half years of service to the Society as President. David, your contribution is all the more extraordinary for the fact that so much of your career was spent in other fields. Our profound thanks and I look forward to working with you over the next few years.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the Society's Secretary, Al Gunn. Certainly, since I came on board last spring, David and Al have been the pillars of the Society and I am deeply grateful for their hard work, support and energy. Al personifies the deep connection between the Immigration Department and the RCAF veterans who played such a large role in Canada's immigration affairs after World War II.

To Joe Bissett and Raph Girard: thanks for proving once more that there is no such thing as a free lunch. I thought I was going for a pizza and came away with this job.

I have always been interested in the CIHS's mission and potential as a vehicle for preserving the record of Canada's immigration history from the point of view of those who delivered the program at HQ, at the inland offices and ports of entry and at the missions abroad. The things that we have been involved in during our careers in Immigration have profoundly shaped this country. If we don't tell our part of the story, who will?

The historians of the future will tell of Canada's extraordinary transformation in the second half of the 20th century by sifting through documents, files, parliamentary records and census data. Well, those of us who created so many of those documents know that they tell only a portion of the story. It is the task of this Society to supplement what the paper sources have to say, by recording what we and our colleagues remember of the events and ideas, great and small, that shaped Canada.

In the past, we have published what has come our way. We have done well with that approach but I believe we need to be more active in pursuing particular themes.

Our membership has within it the capacity to capture for history the details of how the immigration program was delivered in the immediate post war era. We need to pull that together and leave those who follow with a coherent picture.

We have a story to tell about the spread of Canada's immigration network from Europe and the US out into the rest of the world.

Our program has been on the cutting edge of the computerization of government services and records right from the start. The work Al Gunn and his cohorts did in computerizing our basic systems, the work John Baker led in computerizing the operations abroad – these are just a few stories that deserve to be told.

We've done pretty well in recording the spectacular – the Hungarian Movement, the Ugandans, and Indochina for example. But there is still much to do. There has been little written on the refugee movements out of South America and yet in some ways they posed the most severe policy challenges and set a pattern of difficult Gov-NGO interaction that persists to this day.

It's 25 years since the start the great 1979-80 Indochina movement and we are gathering materials for a special bulletin to mark that operation. The Globe and Mail did a special on Indochina this summer and there are events going on across the country to mark both the arrival of the Indochinese and the refugee sponsorship program.

We are working on a collection of recollections of the 1968 Czech movement. I hope that within the year we will be able to publish a fascinating account of how the Kosovo

Movement was designed and delivered. We will also be publishing the occasional original document that can provide insights into how the Immigration program looked at different times.

Last Saturday night I was sitting in an Italian Restaurant in Amman, Jordan with a group of extraordinarily talented people who are working for various international organizations on some very difficult Iraq problems. Their origins were varied, none of them were born in Canada but the majority, as it turned out, were either Canadian citizens or landed immigrants. As the evening wore on they began to talk about Canada, what it meant to be Canadians and most extraordinarily, the special responsibilities they felt as Canadians working abroad.

I thought to myself: it's been messy... but it's worked.

I look forward to working with you as we continue to tell our story.

Treasurer's Report

(The president presented the Treasurer's report)

Our faithful treasurer, Peter Current, sends his greetings but is not able to be with us today.

He has asked me to deliver the Treasurer's report on his behalf.

The Society is in good shape.

Over the 2003-2004 fiscal year our inflow totaled \$1,120.45. This included \$1100 in membership fees, \$20.00 misc. income, and the princely sum of 45 cents in interest.

Outflows included \$230.00 for the web site, \$104.86 for the postal box rental and \$4.00 in bank fees for a total of \$338.86.

When you subtract that amount from the inflow of \$1120.45 we came out ahead by \$781.59.

Our overall financial situation is good.

At the end of the 2003-04 fiscal year we had \$1241.65 in our operating account, \$77.23 in petty cash and \$6,087.73 in our BMO investment account. Thus our equity amounted to \$7,406.61 and we had no liabilities.

Anyone wishing to examine the Treasurer's report is free to do so.

I would like to thank Peter for his attention to the Society's finances over the past year. Peter would prefer to pass responsibility for the Treasurer's office to another Board member if anyone is willing to take on that role. He lives a couple of hour's drive out of Ottawa and it is becoming increasingly difficult for him to attend meetings.

Thank you

Election of Officers

The Society has maintained its historical record of appointing Presidents and members of the Board of Directors by approving the slate of nominees presented by the nominating committee, thus avoiding the need for balloting, etc.

The members' approval of Mike Molloy as president has already been recorded.

Members of the Board elected by acclamation follow, in alphabetical order:
Joe Bissett - David Bullock - Rick Chappell - Jim Cross (British Columbia) - Peter Current - Raph Girard - Susan Gregson - Al Gunn - Gary Komar (Prairies) - Del McKay - Ian Rankin - Bill Sinclair (Maritimes)

Presentation

The Society had planned to present a certificate of appreciation to Roger St. Vincent, at the meeting. Unfortunately, Roger suffered an injury in a fall, shortly before the AGM, and was unable to attend the meeting.

Roger undertook an extensive project in 2003, reviewing all Bulletins published by the Society since it was incorporated, and compiling a compendium of the contents of each Bulletin. This lengthy and valuable record can be incorporated into the Society web site, and used both by members and visitors to the web site.

Our intention was to recognize this contribution at the AGM. Since Roger was unable to attend, the certificate will be sent to him, with our expression of grateful appreciation.

New Business

No formal motions were presented to the meeting.

However there was a lively discussion about future society activity. It was pointed out that there are a number of formal programs at various Canadian universities that deal with immigration and refugee matters and that it would be useful if the society could find a way to reach out to them. The public and the academic world believe that immigration policy in detail originates with politicians. The reality is that most immigration ministers arrive at the department with only a few general ideas. The society counts among its members a large number of men and women who have taken the lead in developing immigration policies and programs for the consideration of Ministers over the past fifty

or more years. It was suggested that over the next year we attempt to open a dialogue with Carleton University and that we use one of the upcoming bulletins as a vehicle to introduce the society to academic institutions studying the history and evolution of Canada's immigration policy.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approx. 8:00pm for refreshments and further informal discussion.

As usual there were some lively reminiscences.

Obituary

On October 3rd, 2004, the Society lost one of our charter members, Robert J. (Bud) Curry. He was a bomber pilot in WWII, and joined the Immigration Service shortly after the war. He served in many of the activities of the Immigration Branch, in Canada and overseas, and retired from the post of Director of Facilities in 1977. Bud was one of a dozen or so immigration veterans who recognized the necessity of an Historical Society devoted to the "inside" story of the Immigration Service. His "casual" but dedicated approach to the operation of the Immigration programme will long be remembered by his colleagues. A personal note, submitted by two of his close friends follows:

E.F. (Bud) Muise, our stalwart auditor, gives us a view of his "nick namesake" Bud was a frequent visitor to the Carlingwood Mall. My mother, who lived in the same apartment complex as Bud also frequented the Mall. On one occasion, I introduced my mother to Bud. They met occasionally at the Mall and Bud always took time to chat with my mother. She always spoke kindly of the "tall thin gentleman" who knew me. Back in 1955-56 Bud and my boss, (Len Lloyd, Chief of Records) selected me to go to the Montreal office to replace the District chief of records, who had retired. Bud, and subsequently, Lou Lefaive the Assistant District Superintendent, gave me the opportunity to work outside of records during the Hungarian Refugee movement. That experience certainly helped my career on my return to Ottawa.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Don Pelton (another Immigration "old timer") and Bud were close friends and ardent golfers over many years. They played at the Edgewoods course, outside of Ottawa.

Monday mornings were their favourite days, as the course had farmers' fields on both sides and a bush at the back. They were known as "ball hawks" and on Mondays they spent much of the time in the farmers' fields where they found dozens of balls lost by weekend hackers.

It quickly became an obsession with Bud and, because we found many balls in the fairway rough, Bud always hit his ball first off the tee, and immediately took off down the fairway without waiting for Don to play.

One morning, we were playing with another club member who finally asked why Bud was behaving as he did. After we explained what Bud was up to, the guest exclaimed "At least, he should wait until the ball stops rolling".

Many of us will remember Bud for his pragmatic approach to problems, and his dry sense of humour.

Looking Back

Starting with this month's CIHS bulletin we hope, as a regular feature, to publish old but interesting documents that shine the light on past Canadian immigration policies, programs, projects and attitudes.

We start this month with a document produced by the department of Manpower and Immigration's Information Division in January 1969 called CANADA'S REFUGEE PROGRAMMES – 1945 -1970. The document is not only a gold mine of information about long forgotten refugee programmes but it also provides insights about how the issue of refugee integration was approached.

There has, in the past been little publicity about the admission of refugees to Canada largely because it was felt that new residents who were refugees should not be labelled as such or set apart from other immigrants and thus made to feel that they were a strange or different group. They were recognized as individuals and offered every chance for successful integration in their new homeland.

The document provides a wealth of information about groups that have passed into history and out of our collective memory... Refugees from Shanghai!! Baltic Refugees by Boat!! Orphans from Europe!! Polish veterans!! The list goes on to mention a 1956 program for Palestinian refugees.

In 1977 the late Kirk Bell told me about a Palestinian refugee movement before the Suez War. I never could find any reference to it. Then, in the early 1990s I was asked to clear a file for access to information at the request of an author who was writing a history of Canadian Immigration or refugee policy. The dusty file from the early 1950s revealed a trove of beautifully written dispatches from a junior External Affairs Officer in Beirut by the name of Michael Shenstone. Written at a time when diplomats had the luxury of polishing their writing and when dispatches travelled by boat, they were a window into a long forgotten and exotic world. I recall that Shenstone had arranged for the security clearances to be done by none other than the legendary Glubb Pasha, founder of TransJordan's fabled Arab Legion.

Many years later in Jordan I had dinner with an elderly private banker, a Mr. Ptolomy, who told me he acted as Glubb's translator when Canada bound cases were interviewed and that the people had left for Canada from Beirut by ship just before the 1956 Suez war erupted.

I don't know where that file is now, but it sounds like the sort of thing we should be publishing for our members. Quick Watson, the game's afoot.

CANADA'S REFUGEE PROGRAMME - 1945 - 1970

World War II and its aftermath drove millions of people from their homes. Many of these unfortunate people were unable or unwilling to return. Canada was one of the first overseas countries to take positive action to help these homeless people. There has in the past been little publicity about the admission of refugees to Canada largely because it was felt that new residents who were refugees should not be labelled as such or set apart from other immigrants and thus made to feel that they were a strange or different group. They were recognized as individuals and offered every chance for successful integration in their new homeland. One excellent result has been that the many thousands of refugees received in Canada during this post-war period have been settled with remarkably little difficulty. There are no refugee camps or hostels in Canada - refugees, as other migrants, are located in private accommodation on arrival and free to take their places in the community as ordinary residents.

The flow of World War II refugees to Canada actually began during the war years. A number of persons sought temporary haven in Canada; upon cessation of hostilities these refugees totalled approximately 2,500 and were granted permanent admission.

Immediately after World War II, it was difficult for Canada to provide anything except financial assistance to refugees in Europe. Ocean transportation was extremely scarce; every priority had to be given to returning Canadian servicemen and their dependents from Europe; Canada faced the difficult transition from a wartime footing to a peacetime economy; in this country there was an extreme shortage of institutional space and there was simply no possibility of caring for refugees or other newcomers who would require medical or other institutional care. In addition, conditions in Europe were chaotic; it was necessary to register the refugees, determine which [would] return to their own countries, etc. As soon as circumstances permitted, Canada began taking refugees. The first Canadian refugee selection teams reached Germany in March, 1947, in less than one month, on April 4th, 1947, the first refugee ship, the "Aquitania" sailed for Canada. The Canadian Government granted special authority for the admission of 10,000 such refugees during 1947. A year later the authority was enlarged to 40,000 and the movements grew. In 1949, over 50,000 refugees entered Canada, the largest refugee movement to this country in one year.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine how many refugees Canada has received aside from certain identifiable movements and those refugees who, upon their admission to Canada, declared themselves to be "stateless". Refugees who indicated that they were still "citizens" of the country they had fled from were not included in these totals. Movements which can be distinguished in immigration statistics are as follows:

Displaced Persons 1947 – 1952	165,697	
Polish Veterans	4,527	
Hungarian refugees to 31 Dec 58	37,566	
Stateless refugees 1953 – 1959	25,603	
World Refugee Year (July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960)	3,508	
Refugees since World Refugee Year to end of 1964	<u>9,526</u>	
		TOTAL - 246,588

(See table at end of Paper for more detailed statistics on recent movements.)

Many more refugees were admitted to Canada as ordinary immigrants who cannot be distinguished in the more than three million immigrants who came to Canada since World War II.

It is a popular misconception in Canada and elsewhere that this country took none but the healthiest, strongest, and best qualified refugees. This is not the case. Many of the refugees admitted to Canada over this period required welfare assistance from the Government. However, in the early years after the war, Canada concentrated on admitting refugees who could be rehabilitated in the belief that we could do more to help solve the over-all refugee problem by taking the maximum number of refugees this country could absorb than by devoting the same amount of effort to a much smaller number of handicapped refugees who could not in any event have been accommodated in Canadian institutions. In more recent years, Canada has increasingly relaxed its requirements for admission of refugees.

WORLD REFUGEE YEAR

During World Refugee Year (July, 1959 to June 30, 1960) the Canadian Government reviewed its refugee policies and made a number of significant changes.

(a) Refugees as immigrants

First, to accept within the ordinary immigrant programmes as many refugees as can qualify in the normal way.

(b) Relaxed Selection Standards

During World Refugee Year and subsequently, the selection of refugees as ordinary immigrants was facilitated by a relaxation of the usual immigrant selection standard. In 1960 and 1961 occupational and age criteria were not applied to refugees – they were admitted if they were personally suitable, of good health and character, and likely to be able to establish themselves in Canada without undue difficulty. (See attached chart.)

(c) Refugee Sponsorship Schemes

Another phase of current policy, which has been in effect in a somewhat different form for several years, has been to facilitate the admission of refugees from Europe. This includes those who are ill or disabled, provided private individuals or agencies in Canada are willing to sponsor them and accept responsibility for them. Parallel arrangements exist for the admission of socially or medically handicapped refugees, provided there is a reasonable possibility that the family or individual will, with governmental assistance, become self-supporting within a reasonable time. Most of these refugees come from Austria, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland and Greece.

Normally, dossiers of refugee cases eligible for sponsorship are provided by Canadian Immigration offices in Europe which have found it impossible to accept the refugee under the unsponsored programme. This means that no refugee is rejected by a Canadian mission in Europe until all possibilities are exhausted. The Canadian Government assists sponsors of refugees by providing interest-free transportation loans from Europe to destination in Canada where required.

(d) Movement of Refugees with Tuberculosis

It has been the policy of the Canadian Government for a number of years that refugees with tuberculosis (or other physical handicaps) may be admitted to Canada upon the sponsorship of close relatives in this country provided that they can be taken care of by the sponsor and provided that the province of residence agrees to provide necessary medical care however, during World Refugee Year, the Canadian Government with the co-operation of several Provincial Governments undertook the admission of large groups of unsponsored refugees suffering from tuberculosis, together with their families. The complete movement included 325 tubercular patients and 501 family members for a total of 836 refugees.

(e) Admission of Orphan Refugees

As a result of World Refugee Year (although after it formally ended) the Prime Minister of Canada announced on July 12th, 1960 that the Canadian Government had adopted a policy concerning the admission of orphaned refugee children under which such children may be admitted to Canada for adoption, subject to the approval of the Provincial Child Welfare authorities. This policy subsequently was enlarged and now applies to non-refuge children.

(f) Other Forms of Aid for Refugees

Canada has also been generous with refugee assistance measures other than resettlement. Canada annually makes a cash grant of \$400,000 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In addition, Canada also makes food and flour contributions. Canada's annual support in aid of refugees places it amongst the leaders of donor countries.

STATUS OF REFUGEES IN CANADA

In 1969 Canada agreed to the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees. This agreement indicated official acceptance of the international standards for the protection of refugees. Regarding the legal status of refugees in Canada, Canadian law applies equally to all residents of Canada without regard to race, country of origin or citizenship.

By reason of the federal character of government, however, all residents are subject not only to federal law but also to the laws of the province in which they reside. The British North America Act (which is the Canadian constitution) conferred on the governments of the provinces autonomy in certain fields of government, provided any legislations enacted does not conflict with federal legislation. Such matters as education, welfare and the establishment of hospitals and asylums are within provincial jurisdiction. No law, whether federal or provincial, sets down any rule of conduct which must be pursued by the newly arrived resident because he is an immigrant, except that such person, during his first five years in Canada, is liable to deportation for serious causes mentioned in the Immigration Act: thereafter, until he becomes a Canadian citizen, he is only deportable for crimes against Canadian National Security and certain narcotics offences. In short, refugees in Canada have the same responsibility and enjoy the same privileges as other immigrants, and can acquire citizenship under the same conditions.

SPECIAL MOVEMENTS

Among the movements of refugees to Canada were a number of special interest which deserve to be mentioned here:

(1) REFUGEES FROM SHANGHAI

In 1949, conditions in Shanghai were becoming desperate and Canada accepted hundreds of European refugees without examination. Most stayed in Canada permanently although some moved to other countries.

(2) BLIND REFUGEES

About the same time, the Canadian Government approved the admission of ten blind refugees and their families who were brought to Canada under the auspices of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

(3) BALTIC REFUGEES BY BOAT

A unique refugee movement to Canada in 1948 and 1949, which was widely publicized, was the flight to Canada in small boats of 1,000 refugees from the Baltic states who upon arrival in Canada, were admitted as refugees. In order to forestall these dangerous trips in vessels which were often unseaworthy, Canada arranged to set up examination facilities for this type of refugee in Europe.

(4) REFUGEE ORPHANS FROM EUROPE

In 1947 and 1948 the Canadian Government authorized the admission of up to 2,000 refugee orphaned children from Europe. 1,200 children came to Canada under this authority.

(5) POLISH VETERANS

More than 4,000 of these soldiers were admitted to Canada temporarily but were finally granted permanent residence. Many have subsequently brought families and relatives to Canada.

REFUGEE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

In 1949 the International Student Service of Canada was authorized to sponsor the admission of 35 refugee students. Further movements were authorized in 1950 and 1951, although as the cases were dealt with individually, over-all statistics are not available.

(7) HUNGARIAN REFUGEE MOVEMENT

Almost 38,000 Hungarian refugees came to Canada in this special movement with virtually no screening. Although the problems were amazingly few, medical and institutional care of some kind was required for approximately 1,500 of these refugees. The movement included 1,000 university students who required assistance of a special nature. Expenditures by the Canadian Federal Government alone exceeded fifteen million dollars, while substantial amounts were expended by the provincial governments and private agencies in Canada.

(8) PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

In 1956, Canada in an effort to take leadership in solving the problem of Palestinian refugees took 100 young refugees who since have all become successfully established in Canada. Many of these subsequently sponsored relatives.

(9) CHINESE MOVEMENT

In 1962, with the influx of Mainland Chinese to Hong Kong, the Canadian Government, in addition to its normal immigration programme in Hong Kong, approved a special movement. The costs of this movement were absorbed by Canada.

Additionally, in November 1967, the department announced that arrangements had been made with 8 provincial governments to bring to Canada 50 handicapped refugees and their families each year. They are mainly tuberculosis cases but also may be handicapped, yet capable of eventually looking after themselves. Transportation and initial settlement and subsistence costs were borne by the Canadian Government.

(10) HANDICAPPED, BUT EMPLOYABLE REFUGEES

In recent years, Canada has been taking a number of "difficult to resettle" refugee cases. These are persons who while not requiring extended institutional care will present resettlement problems because of physical or social handicap: however, in time and with assistance from the welfare and employment counselors of the Canada Manpower Centres they become self-supporting.

(11) CZECHOSLOVAKIAN REFUGEES

In August 1968, following entry of the Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia thousands of refugees applied for admission to Canada. Special arrangements were made in Vienna and other European centres, relaxation of some procedures, and loans covering transportation and resettlement costs. Financial assistance was provided for students to continue post secondary education and other refugees were given language and occupational courses. Numerous Canadian organizations, universities, provincial and municipal agencies assisted in the settlement of the refugees.

PERSONS IN REFUGEE SITUATIONS

From time to time, Canada admits persons who, though not formally designated as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, are nevertheless in refugee circumstances. Movements number 9, 10, 12 and 14 listed in the table at the end of this paper involved persons in refugee situations.

Department of Manpower and Immigration,
Information Division,
January, 1969.

Special movement of refugees from Austria and Italy – extension to WRY – selection commenced March 1961.	-	-	337	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	337
Special movement of 200 – 300 units from Italy – selection commenced April, 1962.	-	-	-	339	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	339
Stateless Armenians from Greece and Middle East.	-	-	86	56	72	-	-	-	-	-	-	214
Hong Kong refugees	-	-	-	176	82	-	-	-	-	-	-	258
Handicapped refugees	-	-	-	-	33	16	-	-	-	-	-	49
Jewish refugees from Morocco and Tunisia	-	-	-	-	3	432	-	-	-	-	-	435
Other refugees	2,311	663	314	974	1,578	1,645	-	-	-	-	-	7,985
1968 Czech Refugees (to December 24)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,072	3,137	11,209
TOTALS	3,508	1,477	2,013	1,733	2,024	2,279	2,131	2,058	1,480	9,072	3,137	23,243