

THE PRAIRIES

Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior under Sir Wilfrid Laurier, was a positive man. He set up immigration agencies in Great Britain and the United States and, through the North Atlantic Trading Company, in Hamburg. Many families came from the German states—but the greatest rush was across the border. In 1897 11 per

cent of the newcomers were American and by 1910 over half of them were. Nineteen thousand immigrants came in 1900 and 139,000 in 1913. Among them were the Mormons who moved into southern Alberta from Utah and who were especially knowledgeable about dry land farming.

Sifton is best remembered, however, for his recruiting in central Europe. He described the ideal settler as “a

stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children,” and his efforts brought great waves of non-English speakers. Some 6,000 stalwarts came from eastern Europe—Poland and the Ukraine—in 1900 and 21,000 in 1913. The population of the Prairies grew from 250,000 in 1891 to 420,000 in 1901 and over 800,000 in 1906. By 1911 it was over 1,300,000.

Photo: Public Archives Canada C 6605



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CANADA
TODAY / D'AUJOURD'HUI

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Photo: Courtesy Department of the Secretary of State.