

WORK OF A CANADIAN IMMIGRATION OFFICE ABROAD

Week after week throughout 1951, the Canadian newspapers continued to announce the arrival of groups of immigrants by sea at Halifax, Quebec and Saint John and by air at Dorval and Malton. Early in the year it had become evident that this was to be a remarkable twelve months in the annals of Canadian immigration.

The full extent of the movement was revealed by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Mr. Walter Harris, when, addressing the National Advisory Committee on Manpower in February of the present year, he stated that more than 194,000 immigrants had entered Canada during 1951. The significance of this announcement for the Canadian economy was indicated by press treatment of the subsequent release of the year's immigration statistics.

During 1951, the United Kingdom contributed 31,370 immigrants to the total of 194,391. Germany, Italy and the Netherlands led the countries of the continent with 32,395, 24,351, and 19,130 respectively. Indeed, the 1951 figures for all countries for immigration to Canada showed an increase over those for 1950.

Not an Overnight Development

The sudden acceleration in the tempo of migration to Canada was not an overnight development. It was the culmination of extended negotiations with foreign governments concerning the relaxation of currency restrictions and emigration of their citizens and with transportation companies to arrange for additional shipping space. It capped a steady re-adjustment of the machinery of immigration away from restrictions made necessary by the depression of the Thirties and by the Second World War toward a more generous operation. It was intimately related to the formation in 1950 of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, which assumed the immigration activities of the former Department of Mines and Resources and linked these to the citizenship activities formerly handled by the Department of the Secretary of State, as well as the activities of the Indian Affairs Branch, another section of the old Mines and Resources Department.

But above all else, perhaps, it reflected the labour of more than 100 Canadians, permanently stationed at the 18 Canadian immigration offices abroad or with the immigration teams operating out of Canadian offices in Europe, who had actually grappled with the most important problem in the whole immigration scheme—the human factor. In common with the overseas representatives of the Department of External Affairs, these Canadian immigration officers carried out their duties far from the limelight of Ottawa. But it was they who actually came to grips with the problems of immigrants.

There are four immigration offices in the United Kingdom—at London, Liverpool, Glasgow and Belfast—and one at Dublin, Ireland. These five offices come under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent of Canadian Immigration Services, London. On the European continent, immigration facilities are provided at Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Paris, Brussels, The Hague, Berne, Rome, and Athens.

In addition, Canadian Government Immigration Missions are located at Linz, Austria, and at Karlsruhe and Hanover, Germany. During 1951, the Austrian office was located at Salzburg; the change to Linz was made several months ago. The examination of immigrants at other European points is carried out by members of Canadian diplomatic missions.