

The above proposition is aptly illustrated by the statistics of Table 20, which show that during the past 25 years, immigration was at its minimum in the year of deepest depression, 1897, that it steadily increased from that time forward until 1908, that a decline took place in the fiscal year ended March 31, 1909, on account of the short depression of 1908, that thereafter immigration steadily increased till 1913, while the fiscal year ended March 31, 1914, showed a decline due to the depression which occurred in the year preceding the war. In the fiscal years 1915 to 1919 political rather than economic conditions restricted immigration, but with the expansion of business at the end of the war our immigration was more than doubled, while the depression which characterized the calendar year 1921 is reflected in the declining immigration of the fiscal year ended March 31, 1922. The improvement already visible in business conditions will undoubtedly be shortly reflected in increasing immigration.

Immigration has throughout Canadian history played a great part in reinforcing Canadian population, especially the English-speaking population. While the great majority of French-Canadians can trace their genealogy back to ancestors who left the Old World 200 or 250 years ago, or even longer—the great bulk of English-speaking Canadians are comparative newcomers both to Canada and to this continent, though a considerable number of the United Empire Loyalist families had been resident in the old colonies for generations before they moved north to establish English-speaking settlements in Canada. During the middle third of the nineteenth century there was a great English-speaking immigration which settled the province of Ontario and made it for the first time more populous than the sister province of Quebec, thus bringing about the agitation for representation by population. Thereafter immigration slackened until the dawn of the twentieth century brought another flood of immigrants to the newly opened territories of the Great North West, resulting in an increase of population between the censuses of 1901 and 1911 greater than the combined increase of the three decades from 1871 to 1901.

Immigration during the second decade of the twentieth century promised at its commencement to be even greater than during the first. In its first three years no fewer than 1,141,547 immigrants are reported as having entered Canada for purposes of settlement. If this rate had been maintained, the population of Canada in 1921 would certainly have been in excess of ten millions instead of being less than nine millions. The war, which commenced on August 4, 1914, dried up the sources of our immigrants in Great Britain and Continental Europe, where every able-bodied man was needed for the defence of his country. Immigrants from the United Kingdom in 1918 only numbered some 3,000 as compared with 150,000 in 1913; from Continental Europe immigrants numbered only about 3,000 in 1916 as compared with approximately 135,000 in 1914. Since the war, immigration, though increasing, has never approached that of the pre-war period, which is probably a fortunate circumstance, since the capital necessary to set in employment such great bodies of labourers as came to Canada in 1912 and 1913 could hardly have been secured.