

Recipes for Failure: British Boys' Farm Training and Land
Settlement Schemes in Canada under the Empire
Settlement Act, 1922 - 31

by


William Lees Duke
B.Sc., University of Glasgow, 1959
B.A., University of Calgary, 1997


A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS


In the Department of History

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard


Dr. Patricia Roy, Supervisor (Department of History)


Dr. Peter Baskerville, Departmental Member (Department of History)


Dr. Eric Sager, Departmental Member (Department of History)


Dr. Patrick Dunae, External Examiner (Department of History, Malaspina University-
College)

© William Lees Duke, 2001

University of Victoria

All Rights Reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by
Photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.


Supervisor: Dr. Patricia Roy

Abstract

For various periods between 1924 and 1931, each Canadian province, except Prince Edward Island, participated in *British Boys' Farm Training Schemes* in an effort to attract a 'better type' of young immigrant onto the Canadian land. Just over 8,000 provincial boys came to work as farm helpers under the terms of agreements between the provinces and the dominion and imperial governments. Most were between the ages of fourteen and seventeen and, except for Alberta's boys, received free passage. All were placed with farmers chosen by the provinces and promised three years of provincial aftercare. To encourage the boys to stay on the land several provinces also participated in *British Boys' Land Settlement Schemes* which promised the boys government loans to buy their own farms.

All of the schemes failed. Even before the Depression provided the knockout blow, they were in various stages of collapse. Poor selection, careless placement, and negligent aftercare combined to produce failure rates of up to fifty percent, as boys returned home voluntarily or by expulsion, drifted into urban centres or simply disappeared. Of those who remained on the land, none received a penny of the promised loans. What had *seemed* like a good idea turned out, in the hands of the federal and provincial governments, to be a recipe for failure.

Examiners:


Dr. Patricia Roy, Supervisor (Department of History)


Dr. Peter Baskerville, Departmental Member (Department of History)


Dr. Eric Sager, Departmental Member (Department of History)


Dr. Patrick Dunae, External Examiner (Department of History, Malaspina University-College)

CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Contents	iii
Prologue	1
The Evolution of the British Boys' Farm Training Schemes	9
The British Immigration and Colonization Association	29
The Ontario Provincial Scheme	63
The Alberta Scheme	82
The Maritime Schemes	100
The Western Schemes	121
The British Boys' Land Settlement Scheme	139
Conclusion	156
Notes	161
Bibliography	181

Prologue

In March 1928, sixteen-year-old John William Upton boarded the S.S. *Montcalm* at Liverpool England, bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia.¹ From there, the young Englishman traveled by rail, first to Montreal then on to Brockville, Ontario. A further ten-hour journey by horse-and-buggy took him to a dairy farm, located on gently rolling countryside in Leeds County, about midway between Brockville and Smiths Falls. Here he was to begin his new life as a Canadian farm hand. His contract with the farmer was for one year, at a wage of twelve dollars a month and free board, lodgings, washing and mending. It also stipulated that he be allowed to regularly attend a suitable place of worship.

The week before he sailed, John had quit his job as an apprentice turner at an engineering plant in Birmingham. He had decided to emigrate after a visit to the Birmingham Exhibition in November 1927 where he picked up a brochure that convinced him to abandon city life for life on a Canadian farm. The brochure, published by the Canadian Government, explained the opportunities awaiting young Britons who were willing to work on the land. It described three schemes under which they would be guaranteed farm employment at competitive wages, and government-supervised aftercare to help ease their transition.²

John's age qualified him for all three schemes. One, which placed boys in the province of Alberta, required the immigrants attend a six-month farm training course at a provincial agricultural college. Although the province would pay tuition fees, the

students were required to pay thirty dollars a month for board and lodgings. This was beyond the means of John and his parents. Fortunately, neither of the other two schemes required attending college. Under these schemes, the boys were placed directly on farms and learned their new skills on the job. One such scheme was operated by the British Immigration and Colonization Association (BICA), a private organization that operated out of Montreal and placed youngsters on farms throughout eastern Ontario and the Eastern Townships of Quebec. The other was operated by the government of Ontario and placed young immigrant farm hands throughout that province. When John considered his options at the end of 1927 no other provinces offered such schemes.

The BICA and Ontario government schemes had additional features that particularly appealed to young John. Each operated a 'farm hostel,' where immigrants could receive some basic farm training, and to which they could return if they were between jobs. Participation in either scheme also included the promise of future government loans to purchase a farm. John would have to contribute some capital of his own but he was determined to work hard and spend little.

The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) agent who gave John the brochure told him that the BICA handled twice as many boy immigrants as the Ontario government. Consequently, to improve his chances of acceptance, John applied to the Montreal organization. When he was accepted, he determined to make good. He planned to work hard, learn all he could, save his money, take advantage of the promised loan, and become a successful Canadian farmer. His only disappointment was that his choice of location was restricted to central Canada. He would have preferred the west, but in the spring of 1927 his options were limited. Had he gone three years later, he would have

had a much wider choice. By then, schemes similar to the BICA and Ontario schemes were operating in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Only Prince Edward Island, which claimed that there was insufficient demand, and Quebec, which was uninterested in attracting British youngsters, were without provincially sponsored schemes to settle British boys on Canadian farms.

By 1931 things had changed dramatically for both John Upton and the British boys' immigration schemes. John had abandoned farm life and was earning his living pumping gas in Smiths Falls. Inexperience, isolation, and the discovery that he could make higher wages in town, all played a part in coaxing him off the land. So too did a constant yearning for the city life that he had left behind in Birmingham. Eventually, John bought the gas station in Smiths Falls. Later, he moved into the steel industry in Hamilton, Ontario, where he married and raised three children. Today (2001) he lives in Fernie, British Columbia, with his eldest daughter and two of his six grandchildren.

John Upton remains convinced that he made the right decision in coming to Canada. He believes that he had a good life in his adopted country, and that his is a story of successful immigration. Yet, measured against his original objective of becoming an independent farmer, he failed, and his personal failure mirrored the broader failure of the various provincial boys' farm schemes that operated during the 1920s. Despite the best of intentions, all were beset by a multitude of problems. By 1930 they had either disintegrated or were in the process of disintegration. Inexperience in dealing with the problems of adolescent boys living far from home, poor selection in the United Kingdom, inter-governmental squabbling, and inefficient and ineffective aftercare, all contributed to the schemes' failure. So, too, did the naïve belief, shared by politicians and government bureaucrats on both sides of the Atlantic,

that a British public or grammar school education was an essential qualification for successful settlement on the Canadian land. The imperial and dominion governments had hoped that the schemes would attract tens of thousands of young Britons onto Canadian farms each year but just over eight thousand ever came. Many of those returned home, either voluntarily or through deportation; some crossed the border into the United States; and most, like John Upton, drifted into Canada's towns and cities. Few remained on the land, and none of those ever received a penny of the promised government loans to help buy their own farms. The onset of the Great Depression was the final blow to the problem-plagued schemes. With almost a sigh of relief the dominion government advised the United Kingdom and provincial governments in September 1931 that it would no longer participate in assisted passages for British boys.³ The experiment was over.

While researching the British boys' immigration schemes it became clear that Canadian historians have paid scant attention to the topic of child immigration, and child history in general. Fortunately, there are some notable exceptions to this rule. Neil Sutherland, for example, has rescued child history from total neglect with recreations of Canadian childhood between the Great War and the 1940s. And Britain's immigrant 'home children' evoked considerable popular and scholarly interest in the late-1970s and early-1980s. Typically, however, the resulting historiography does not consider child immigration after the embargo on school-age children took effect in 1924.⁴ Patrick Dunae picks up the home children's story again in the 1930s when the embargo was lifted specifically to allow the Fairbridge Farm School to settle deprived British children on Vancouver Island.⁵ The provincial boys, however, came during the intervening years and have been effectively ignored. References to them are found in

general works on empire settlement or articles dealing with Canada's reaction to the Empire Settlement Act of 1922. None were found that devoted more than a paragraph or two to the provincial boys' schemes.⁶ R. L. Schnell gives more attention to some of the provincial schemes in a 1995 article on assisted immigration following the Empire Settlement Act. While its emphasis is on the class of boy the provinces were seeking, the article briefly discusses some of the problems that confronted the BICA, Ontario and Manitoba schemes.⁷

An abundance of archival material, however, more than compensates for the scarcity of secondary sources. The public records of the federal department of immigration are a particularly rich source. Together with private manuscripts related to the British boys' schemes and contemporary newspapers they constitute the primary source material for understanding how the schemes functioned. To fully appreciate the nature of the schemes, however, it was necessary to trace the origins of the two events that created them - the 1922 Empire Settlement Act and the 1924 embargo on young children. This was achieved using contemporary material and scholarship material by both Canadian and British historians.⁸

Using these sources the thesis seeks to recreate the schemes' origins, workings and consequences, in both immigration policy and human terms. In doing so it situates child immigration at the intersection of immigration and child history. In a broader context the thesis can be located with the historiography of 'back-to-the-land' movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Influenced by anti-modernism, they were reactions to concerns over rural depopulation and growing industrialization and urbanization. Back-to-the-land boosters saw the population imbalance as the cause of myriad social problems, including unemployment, poverty,

disease and moral decline. Re-establishing the equilibrium would provide a safety valve for urban social tensions and boost agricultural production, which was considered fundamental to the Canadian economy. To fill the land, promoters sought unemployed urbanites and recent or potential immigrants. Consequently, much of their propaganda was anti-urban. Compared to life in a city slum, farming was portrayed as the good life, offering self-respect, a self-supporting occupation, and varied and satisfying work in a healthy environment. Within this common framework, time, location and circumstance distinctively defined the various back-to-the-land movements. In an effort to recognize these differences, David DeMeritt groups the movements into *arcadian*, *agrarian* and *country life*. Adding *urban unemployment relief* to this list essentially covers the scope of current back-to-the-land historiography.⁹

Arcadianism, particularly prevalent before the First World War, emphasized the moral virtues of country living and the possibilities for personal and spiritual growth provided by proximity to nature. Promoted by land dealers, transportation companies, and the provincial and dominion governments, among others, it focussed more on leisure than livelihood and was primarily aimed at attracting British immigrants from the upper and middle classes. Many came and tried to live an idealistic country life, but farming in Canada meant hard work and few achieved the arcadian ideal.

Leisure had no place in *agrarianism*. Instead, the emphasis was on the sanctity and honour of agriculture and the family farm, the security provided by agriculture, and the evils of city life. Advocates argued that men's attraction to the soil was instinctive, urban life was unnatural, agriculture was the backbone of the economy, and positions of prominence and trust could be attained as easily in the countryside as in the city. The *country life* movement was more practical in its effort to re-populate the countryside. It

attempted to reverse 'urban drift' by reversing 'rural degeneration', which it defined in terms of home, schools, community, and the practice of agriculture. By instruction and modernization in each area the movement attempted to dispel the stereotype of country life as backward and dull.

Attracting urban unemployed onto the land was a key objective of back-to-the-land movements. During the Depression, however, it became especially significant as governments and local authorities saw land settlement as a reasonable response to the unemployment crisis and the high cost of direct relief. During 1931 and 1932, for example, several Saskatchewan cities, in conjunction with the provincial government, relocated unemployed families to farms in the north. Also in 1932, the federal government announced a land settlement scheme as part of its unemployment relief policy. The provinces and municipalities shared the cost of relocating selected families on direct relief.

The British boys' schemes shared many of the characteristics that defined the back-to-the-land movements. In Canada they were part of the rural re-population agenda. In the UK they were the direct result of efforts to relieve urban unemployment. To the disappointment of their sponsors, they contributed little to either goal.

After examining the circumstances that produced the British boys' schemes, the thesis considers each scheme in turn. The BICA, the earliest and largest of the farm training schemes, is discussed first, followed by the Ontario scheme which was next in size and the model for all the tripartite agreements that followed. Although Alberta's scheme predated Ontario's, it is considered next, allowing comparison of its unique features with the large central Canadian schemes. The later Maritime schemes are then discussed, followed by the tripartite schemes of the western provinces, which were last

to show interest and among the last to withdraw. The farm loan scheme is addressed last since it was meant to complement the training schemes by inducing the boys to remain on the land.

In discussing the schemes, the thesis emphasizes those aspects over which governments exercised control and for which they must be held accountable. These include planning, recruitment and selection, reception facilities and operation, and placement and aftercare. Attention is also given to failure rates and their causes, the impact of the Depression, the circumstances of the schemes' collapse, and the fate of the boys. Although the thesis also addresses inter-governmental dealings, it is not a study in federal-provincial relations. Nonetheless, it divulges a different aspect to these relationships than the financial wrangling that dominated the period. As such, it can contribute to research aimed at widening the scope of federal-provincial studies. The primary aim of the thesis, however, is to explain how and why the dominion and provincial governments failed to meet their objective of settling a 'better type' of British teenager on the Canadian land and turning him into a successful, productive farmer.

Throughout the thesis several provincial boys are mentioned by name. Where a boy's identity was published in the press his real name has been used. Otherwise, pseudonyms have been substituted.

1

The Evolution of the British Boys' Farm Training Schemes

Why should there not be an Emigration Service? And Secretary with adjuncts, With funds, idle Navy-ships, and ever increasing apparatus: in fine an *Effective system* of Emigration: so that at length, ... every honest willing workman who found England too straight ... might find likewise a bridge built to carry him into new Western Lands, there to organize with more elbow-room some labour for himself? There to be a real blessing, raising new corn for us, purchasing new webs and hatchets from us. ... A free bridge for Emigrants ... every willing worker that proved superfluous, finding a bridge ready for him. This verily will have to be done; the time is big with this.¹

The roots of the British boys' immigration schemes of the 1920s can be traced to campaigns to encourage and fund Empire settlement that surfaced in the United Kingdom during the nineteenth century. They gained momentum early in the twentieth century, intensified during World War I, and came to fruition in 1922 with passage by the British parliament of the Empire Settlement Act.² Throughout the nineteenth

century, successive British governments followed a policy of *natural emigration* that advocated free movement of people, showed no preference for destination, and provided no general state funding.³ Emigration was left essentially in the hands of the individual emigrant, trade unions or private emigration societies and agencies such as the Salvation Army. Government involvement was limited to providing information and advice to would-be emigrants and occasional relief of some pressing need, such as passage assistance for veterans of the Napoleonic wars, or administering the migration of pauper families and unaccompanied children under the Poor Law. The Imperial Government's rationale for its hands-off policy was that so many Britons were emigrating that state encouragement might deplete the nation's labour force and so jeopardize its wealth.⁴

Government policy, however, did not go unchallenged. As early as 1843, Thomas Carlyle, convinced that Britain was overpopulated, called for an effective system of emigration, including 'a free bridge for emigrants' to carry them 'into new Western Lands.' By the 1880s, recession and social unrest brought renewed demands from British imperialists for state assisted Empire settlement, but in 1891 a Commons Select Committee on Colonization rejected them. Motivated in part by imperialistic ideology that spoke in terms of a 'Greater Britain,' 'settlement under the flag,' 'replenishment of British stock' and 'racial solidarity,' imperialists continued to lobby. In the case of Canada, they argued that without state-assisted migration, foreigners would take up the best land, the proportion of foreign stock would increase, and, in the end, Canada might be lost to the Empire.⁵

Other champions of state-assisted Empire settlement preferred economic and demographic arguments. They pointed to a 'natural harmony' between the mother

country and its dominions which, if properly managed, could be exploited for mutual benefit. On the one hand, Britain provided its dominions with industrial products and financial services, but lacked sufficient domestic resources to feed its large population and its insatiable industries. On the other hand, so the argument went, the dominions had excess resources that could satisfy Britain's needs, while providing them with the income to import mainly British products. Peopling the dominions, therefore, would provide Britain with additional resources at lower cost, and increase the market for its exports. At the same time it would accelerate development in the dominions and so increase their standards of living. Besides, it simply made good sense to move people from the overcrowded British Isles to the empty expanses of the dominions. And if the migrants came from Britain's urban centres, where overcrowding was blamed for much of the country's social unrest, this would be an added bonus for the United Kingdom.⁶

By the beginning of the twentieth century, concern that Britain's industries were suffering at the hands of German and American competition finally forced Empire settlement onto the political agenda. The Imperial Conferences of 1907 and 1911 resolved that British emigrants should be encouraged to settle in the dominions rather than in 'foreign' lands. State assistance, however, was still deemed unnecessary, since the proportion of emigrants choosing the dominions had risen from less than a third in 1880 to more than two-thirds by the early 1900s.⁷ During World War I, the debate in Britain over state-assistance intensified. Supporters claimed that because the war had essentially stopped emigration and industrial development, the post-war economy would be unable to absorb the labour force, despite the enormity of war casualties. Opponents argued that no one really knew what the post-war labour demand would be,

and that there might even be an under-supply, particularly in agriculture. Anyway, who could be sure that post-war Britain could afford assisted emigration schemes?⁸

Despite their opposing views, supporters and opponents of assisted migration found two areas of common ground - emigration should be under the control of a central government authority, and, as a reward for their war service, financial assistance should be given to veterans who chose to emigrate to the colonies. Two government reports issued in 1917 reflected this consensus. First, the final report of the Dominions Royal Commission that had been formed in 1912 to study natural resources in the colonies concluded that successful post-war development of the Empire would depend on well-organized emigration. Recognizing that the existing practice of spreading emigration responsibilities between several government agencies was inefficient and ineffective, the report called for a single government body to take responsibility for all emigration matters. The commissioners particularly noted the need for government control over passage brokers and agents, whose interest in profits and commissions were not always compatible with the needs of the emigrants or the receiving colonies.⁹ The second report came from the Empire Settlement Committee, which had been formed as an arm of the Colonial Office specifically to consider the question of how to deal with returning veterans. The committee recommended free passage for veterans, war widows, and their dependents, who chose to migrate within the Empire. It further suggested that this assistance be extended to include all women and children. It argued that exporting women would help offset the gender imbalance caused by war losses and that offering children a new life abroad would help compensate the innocent young victims of a war brought on by adults. This concern was a significant departure from the traditional Whitehall view of exporting unwanted waifs and strays.¹⁰ Neither report

went as far as recommending what the post-war government's general emigration policy should be, claiming no special insight into what peace would bring in terms of labour supply and demand. Yet, by officially tabling the need for a central emigration authority, and recommending large-scale state funding, the reports paved the way for a complete reversal in government emigration policy in the early 1920s.

The British government quickly acted on both reports' recommendations, but its first attempt to create a central emigration authority, under the Emigration Bill of 1918, found little support at home or in the colonies because of its emphasis on bureaucratic regulation.¹¹ It was quickly abandoned. When the dedicated imperialist and emigrationist Lord Milner entered the cabinet as colonial secretary following the post-war election, he took a different, more indirect, approach to creating a central authority. In January 1919 he formed a non-statutory Oversea Settlement Committee (OSC) within the Colonial Office to oversee and co-ordinate all matters related to emigration. Leo Amery, another staunch emigrationist, was appointed colonial under-secretary and chairman of the new committee. In April 1919, urged by the OSC, the British parliament announced a scheme of free passages for war veterans emigrating to Empire destinations. Pointing to continued uncertainty about the post-war labour market and expressing concern that emigration might be 'inconveniently large,' the government limited the scheme to veterans and dismissed an OSC recommendation that reiterated the Empire Settlement Committee's call to extend assistance to women and children. It argued that private societies had successfully handled these groups before the war and could be expected to do so again.¹²

Only the threat of massive post-war unemployment persuaded the British government to reconsider its restrictive emigration policy. Between April and

November 1919, Britain's unemployment rate rose from 1% to more than 7%; by 1921 it was averaging 17%.¹³ Not surprisingly, advocates of state-assisted migration began to focus on its beneficial effect on national unemployment. This argument, of course, was not broadcast to the colonies who had post-war unemployment problems of their own. While Milner was downplaying British unemployment relief and emphasizing mutual development in his discussions with the dominions, Amery was telling British politicians that 'the key to the unemployment situation is the shifting of British population ... to the Dominions,' and that state-assisted emigration was 'the best cure ... for the serious overcrowding in this country.'¹⁴ The government began to accept this logic. Sir Alfred Mond, chairman of the newly created cabinet unemployment committee, and a former opponent of state-assistance, was won over when he became convinced that high unemployment was 'likely to go on for years rather than months.'¹⁵ Other opponents in the ministries of Labour and Health, and the Board of Trade, also converted when Amery suggested that state-assisted emigration would be cheaper than dole payments, cut the cost of government housing programmes, and reduce social unrest.¹⁶

The changing attitude in Whitehall resulted in a meeting of British and dominion representatives in London in early 1921 to formulate a recommendation on assisted Empire settlement for consideration at the upcoming Imperial Conference. The dominions were not particularly keen participants. Their fear of a return to 'pauper shoveling,' however, was assuaged by prospects of generous British funding for land settlement and rural development. They joined the OSC in recommending that Britain and the dominions cooperate in financially assisting Empire settlement. The

Conference of Prime Ministers endorsed the recommendation and in May 1922 the Empire Settlement Act received royal assent.¹⁷

Amery, the architect of the Act, claimed that it was notable for its 'elasticity.'¹⁸ It authorized the secretary of state to subsidize migration to the colonies for an initial period of 15 years. Avoiding the bureaucratic controls of the abandoned Emigration Bill, the Act simply empowered the secretary of state to conclude schemes with public or private bodies, in either the United Kingdom or the dominions, to assist 'suitable persons' to migrate within the Empire. Eligible schemes could be for land settlement, passage allowances, initial maintenance or agricultural training. The expense to the British government was not to exceed half of the total cost of any agreed-to scheme, nor was Britain's total expenditure to exceed three million pounds in any one year.¹⁹

The Act got an enthusiastic reception in the United Kingdom. Lord Long, a former colonial secretary, expressed prevailing opinion when he remarked,

I particularly rejoice that the Government have produced a scheme of this kind, because it is the first time that any government in this country has recognized the plain fact that stares us all in the face, that if you are going to deal with the growing population of this country, with its limitation of area, and consequently to a large extent limitation of employment, you can only do so by a wise, generous and well-thought-out scheme of migration.²⁰

There were immediate calls in the British parliament for negotiations with the dominions to expedite the export of Britain's unemployed. In the summer, Whitehall told the dominions that it would consider any scheme falling within the bounds of the Act and that the next step in promoting Empire settlement lay with them. It urged the colonies to make 'satisfactory arrangements for the reception, distribution and internal supervision of British settlers ... with the least possible delay.' The dominions were slow to respond. By the middle of 1923 the OSC was complaining about the disappointing progress. Albert Buckles, the committee chairman, reported that while

Australia was showing some degree of zeal, South Africa was not interested in participating, New Zealand was claiming that it had little scope for immigration, and Canada had 'shown small disposition to co-operate, and the schemes concluded with her are negligible.'²¹

The Canadian government was less than eager to participate. Despite British assurances that its concerns were the result of 'unfortunate misunderstandings,'²² Ottawa remained suspicious that Empire settlement had less to do with mutual development than with relieving Britain's unemployment. P.C. Larkin, Canada's high commissioner in London, spoke for many Canadian critics when he complained that immigrants who needed a handout were obviously failures in the old country. Condemning the Act, he advised Ottawa that while Canada 'ought to get the cream of British migrants,' free passages would only bring 'a poor class, as was shown by the vast majority of those who were brought out years ago ... by the Salvation Army.'²³ Canada's deputy minister of the interior echoed such sentiments when he suggested that assisted immigrants were 'not likely to make a success on the land and would give our country a black eye.'²⁴ Other critics of the Act wondered how government spending on immigrant land settlement schemes could possibly be explained to Canadian farmers who were having trouble making ends meet. Still others pointed to past census figures and argued that large scale immigration into Canada simply translated into higher emigration to the United States, with little, if any, net benefit to the dominion.²⁵ That the incomers would be mostly English bothered other opponents of the bill who looked back bitterly at the 'superior insolence' of pre-war 'remittance men.' The OSC's intent to use voluntary organizations in the United Kingdom to implement schemes under the

Act also upset many Canadians by raising old fears that undesirables and unemployables would be dumped on Canada.²⁶

The Act, of course, did have its supporters in Canada. Imperialists saw it as a golden opportunity to ensure the pre-dominance of British values in Canadian society. Lieutenant-Governor MacCallum Grant of Nova Scotia, for example, during a visit to England in the summer of 1922, offered an invitation to 'thousands of young men ready and willing to make a start in life.'²⁷ Many ordinary Canadians also favoured encouraging British immigration. Newspaper articles accusing the English of being 'inferior' immigrants, or 'unfit for life on the Canadian land,' were countered with claims that they 'made excellent citizens,' and that every Briton had the fundamental right to enter 'his own territory.'²⁸ The split in public opinion reflected a similar split among Canada's politicians. Speeches in the Commons ranged from demands for no immigration to calls for no restrictions, causing F.C. Blair, the assistant deputy minister of immigration, to complain that 'to construct a policy embodying the various opinions would result in a Mosaic.'²⁹ Lacking unanimous government support, the dominion immigration department dragged its feet, deciding that it 'has so far been the part of wisdom for the first year to exercise the greatest care in the grant of passage assistance.'³⁰ By February 1923 it was apologizing to the British minister of labour for the delay in getting started, claiming that it was not due to any lack of appreciation for the United Kingdom's offer, but because of 'unsettled conditions and lack of [administrative] machinery' in Canada.³¹ In April, however, continual prodding by the OSC, and a growing belief in Ottawa that Canada might be losing the right class of immigrant to Australia and New Zealand, finally convinced Ottawa to participate in Empire settlement.³²

Measured against the grand hopes and expectations in Britain, Canada's participation was meagre.³³ A handful of land settlement schemes were initiated between 1925 and 1928, but none was particularly successful. Under the terms of a '3,000 Families Scheme' Ottawa provided British families with land it had acquired, but not used, for settlement by Canadian war veterans and the British government advanced the cost of stock and equipment. A survey in the 1940s, however, revealed that only a third of those who had come were still farming. The rest had either returned to the United Kingdom or drifted into Canadian towns and cities. A similar '500 Families Scheme' in New Brunswick was initiated in 1928, but fared only slightly better, with about half of the original settlers still on the land by the early 1940s. Three smaller schemes aimed at settling families in western Canada also had mixed results. Operated in conjunction with the CPR, Canadian National Railway (CN) and Hudson's Bay Company, and involving a total of 338 families, these schemes kept a higher percentage of their settlers on the land, but eventually Ottawa had to write-off the bulk of the settlement loans.³⁴

Canada's initial ventures into providing passage assistance were also disappointing. In the spring of 1923, after lengthy negotiations, Ottawa agreed to give limited assistance to British children, domestic workers and agriculturists. Children under the age of seventeen who immigrated under the auspices of a recognized voluntary society were given an \$80 grant. The cost was shared equally by the imperial and dominion governments and the funds were paid directly to the participating societies. Assistance to household and farm workers, however, was restricted to a passage loan, to which the British and Canadian governments also contributed equally.³⁵ It was a stingy offer. By the end of 1923 less than a third of the \$600,000

budgeted for the schemes had been spent, and only \$38,000 had been loaned to would-be farm workers and their families.³⁶ In 1925, however, an upturn in the Canadian economy increased the demand for immigrants, and Ottawa sweetened its offer to domestics and agriculturists by matching British passage subsidies with spending on placement and aftercare. At the same time, the transportation companies agreed to reduce immigrants' rail fares within Canada. Thus, during 1926, while total immigration from the United Kingdom dropped, the number of assisted immigrants to Canada more than doubled.³⁷

The OSC had also urged Ottawa to increase its subsidy for child immigrants but the federal government would not budge. Canada had always got its immigrant children for free and believed that its \$40 share of the passage allowance was more than generous.³⁸ In any event, the question of child subsidies, at least for those under 14 years of age, became irrelevant in 1924 when, on the advice of an OSC delegation headed by British MP Margaret Bondfield, the Canadian government refused to accept any more unaccompanied children under the statutory British school leaving age.³⁹ By cutting off this supply of cheap farm labour, Ottawa paved the way for schemes under the Settlement Act designed to fill the shortfall with older British teenagers. The dominion government was determined that any new juvenile immigration schemes would not repeat the mistakes that had brought child immigration into disrepute and contributed to its termination.

Based on many years' experience, many Canadians were convinced that past difficulties with British child immigrants had been the result of poor selection in the old country by private immigration societies. Between 1869 and 1924 various British benevolent societies had transported to Canada approximately 80,000 children between

the ages of five and fifteen. Almost all were placed as labourers and domestics in farm homes, mostly in Ontario. The movement began on a small scale in the 1830s and gained momentum in 1869 when Miss Martha Rye accompanied a group of children to Ontario, where they were indentured or adopted. Soon a variety of religious and philanthropic groups joined the child rescue movement, motivated by a desire to give Britain's 'waifs and strays' a second chance in the dominions, and supported by British governments anxious to be rid of future generations of criminals and dole-collectors. By the end of the century seventeen such groups were operating reception and distribution centres in Canada, choosing their young wards from Britain's Poor Law schools and from abandoned and destitute children under the care of private orphanages.

By 1874, stories reaching Britain about the exploitation and ill treatment of some of the youngsters resulted in an on-site investigation by Andrew Doyle, Britain's Poor Law inspector. His report was highly critical of the children's strenuous and lonely living conditions, but instead of generating sympathy in Canada it created a widespread backlash against the children themselves. Critics of the report maintained that Canada was more sinned against than sinning. They held that any problems the children were experiencing were of their own making - the result of a 'hereditary taint.' Country doctors and sheriffs claimed that the youngsters suffered from urban degeneracy, immorality, criminality and 'syphilitic tendencies.' Trade unions accused them of stealing agricultural labour jobs and of contributing to urban unemployment through their tendency to drift into towns and cities. Hostility towards the children grew throughout the 1880s and 1890s. Letters to the press described them as 'little better than brutes,' a 'curse to the country,' 'a contaminating influence on native-born

Canadians,' or 'the scum of Europe.' By 1896 even the National Council of Women in Canada had joined the attack, resolving that the young Britons were 'productive of much evil in the communities where they were placed.'⁴⁰

By the turn of the century Canadians widely believed that their country was being used as a dumping ground for Britain's feeble-minded and diseased castoffs. Yet, amid all the negativity, demand for the children's labour outstripped supply by a margin of almost ten to one until the First World War essentially closed down all immigration. Given the magnitude of the demand, Ottawa and the provinces were reluctant to curb the flow of cheap labour. Their only concession was to stipulate pre- and post-embarkation medical examinations of the children and require that immigration societies maintain receiving centres and conduct regular supervision.⁴¹

Despite public hostility, the child migration societies renewed their activities after the war. More concerned with satisfying farmers' demands than placating public opinion, Ottawa advised the private organizations that it 'hoped that the stream of splendid young children may be continued in the future in large numbers.' The societies accepted the invitation, and, between 1919 and 1921, ten of the old established voluntary agencies transported almost 1500 children to Canada.⁴² The renewed influx revived criticism of the practice. Led by Charlotte Whitton and the Canadian Council on Child Welfare, opponents of child immigration began to argue that Canada lacked the resources to take care of its own dependent youngsters, let alone finance the import of foreign children.⁴³ In 1924, rising opposition in Canada, coupled with renewed stories in the United Kingdom of ill treatment, convinced Ottawa to invite the OSC to investigate the whole child migration system. The result was the Bondfield delegation and its recommendation that British children should complete their compulsory

education at home before making their own career choices. Consequently, the British government withdrew its financial assistance for immigrants to Canada under the age of fourteen. In April 1925 Ottawa banned the entry of these children unless parents or guardians accompanied them.⁴⁴

Although school-age children could no longer emigrate to Canada unaccompanied, the Colonial Office remained convinced that youngsters made the best immigrants, and began thinking in terms of filling the shortfall in farm workers with older boys.⁴⁵ While not specifically aimed at Canada, emigration literature in the United Kingdom, reflecting *arcadian* ideals and *agrarian* concepts, began to tout supposed teenage attributes that naturally lent themselves to successful migration within the dominions. British teenagers were told that they had a special ability to 'adapt themselves to fresh conditions of climate and work,' a 'natural love of the country and of animals [that] leads to a keen interest in farm life,' and an 'ability to make friends more quickly and soon become attached to the country in which they settle.'⁴⁶ Of course, persuading British youngsters that they were particularly suited to be dominion farmers also fitted well with London's concern over youth unemployment at home. The re-entry of ex-service men and women into the work force had pushed many British youngsters into the ranks of the unemployed and with over half a million school-leavers coming onto the labour market each year job opportunities for youths were particularly scarce. Before the war there had been unofficial calls for systematic child emigration to combat unemployment; by 1921 the British ministry of labour was advocating juvenile migration as a palliative for national unemployment.⁴⁷

Acknowledging Canadian's animosity towards young British immigrants, Ottawa was less enthusiastic in singing the praises of old country teenagers. Nevertheless,

Blair fully agreed with a British government observation that 'if a boy is to become a Canadian, he should go there as soon as he can, be trained on a farm that is staffed by Canadians, learning each day to use the slang and eat the food of the Country.' Blair was careful, however, to add that the boy in question must be 'the right type of British boy,' and be carefully selected by Canadian government immigration officers.⁴⁸ If Canada increased its intake of surplus British teenagers, Ottawa was determined to take more control of their selection, placement and supervision.

The Canadian government had been disappointed when the OSC had declared its intention to make extensive use of private institutions in devising and operating new youth immigration schemes under the Settlement Act. W.R. Little, the Canadian commissioner of immigration, expressed the feelings of many in Ottawa when he noted that the work of the private societies 'has not been very satisfactory in the past' and that Canadian immigration had too long been in the hands of British societies that were unfamiliar with Canada's needs.⁴⁹ Critics of the societies pointed to a natural conflict of interest between child savers, concerned with the welfare of their wards, and a dominion government whose first priority should be the welfare of the country.⁵⁰ The OSC disagreed. It argued that migration was a stressful experience that needed a human touch best provided by volunteers. It further maintained that it would be foolish to ignore the societies' decades of experience. Using them would increase the effectiveness of emigration publicity in the United Kingdom at the local level.⁵¹

Naturally, the societies were pleased with the OSC's attitude. Now their work would not only grow but would be subsidized pound for pound with government funds. They were especially pleased that this subsidy would include the cost of training schemes. The OSC was convinced that suitable training was the key to successful

migration, and that at least a part of that training should take place in Britain prior to migration. This would have several benefits. It would encourage applications from those who otherwise would consider themselves unqualified, increase the number of acceptable applicants, eliminate those who proved unsuitable, and ease the actual process of settlement overseas. It might also allow the youngsters to demand higher wages from their Canadian employees.⁵² The OSC's subsidy and dedication to training generated a rapid growth in juvenile training farms throughout the United Kingdom. By 1929 there were thirteen separate training facilities for unemployed juveniles throughout the country, six under voluntary societies and seven under municipal migration committees. At their peak they trained almost three thousand boys a year.⁵³

Ottawa was leery of British training schemes. Commissioner Little was convinced that while training in the UK sounded good, it was better to train in Canada with a Canadian farmer under Canadian conditions.⁵⁴ Other critics thought that the training gave the young men an exaggerated idea of their abilities, making them difficult to handle and encouraging them to demand unjustifiably high wages. The most cynical saw the schemes as mere camouflage for foisting Britain's unemployment problems onto Canada.⁵⁵ The OSC tried to talk Ottawa into sharing the cost of pre-immigration training, but the Canadian government saw too many potential problems with the practice. It argued that even if Canadian instructors and equipment were used, the different seasons, soils and agricultural methods and the necessary shortness of the courses precluded an adequate introduction to Canadian farming conditions. The dominion immigration department maintained that a personal interview with an experienced officer was sufficient to ensure getting the best boys.⁵⁶

By 1925 Ottawa was convinced that the remedy for past problems, and the best way to attract the right type of boy, was to create 'made in Canada' schemes devised, operated and administered by Canadians, in the best interests of Canada. If private institutions had to be involved, they should be Canadian institutions. Better still would be to involve the provincial governments. Canada's federal system gave responsibility for immigration to Ottawa but left the provinces responsible for the welfare of unsuccessful immigrants. This had long been a sore point with provinces that were often left to foot the bill for the societies' failures. Involving the provinces directly would alleviate this criticism, while increasing immigration efficiency by localizing more responsibility.⁵⁷ It would also allow Ottawa to share the cost of government-sponsored schemes with the provinces.

The OSC liked the idea. It believed that if the federal and provincial governments took official responsibility, recruitment could be expanded and migrant quality improved. The reputations of the private organizations suffered from their association with home children, and a better type of boy, and especially his parents, might be more receptive to government-sponsored schemes. London was quick to suggest that Ottawa consider modeling its schemes on government farm training projects already operating successfully in Australia where state governments became the legal guardians of teenage British farm helpers and oversaw their placement and aftercare for three years.⁵⁸ In February 1926, encouraged by the British government, Little met Ontario's minister of agriculture John Martin to discuss the possibility of a tri-government agreement for a boys' farm training project in Ontario. It was the first step in what was to become a network of government-sponsored British boys' training schemes across the country. Over the next three-and-a-half years the imperial and dominion

governments concluded tripartite agreements with Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. A seventh agreement was made with the BICA which essentially substituted for an uninterested Quebec provincial government. By 1930, these schemes had brought over eight thousand young Britons between the ages of fourteen and nineteen to Canada. Two hundred more, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, came to Alberta under a separate agreement negotiated directly between the province and the imperial government.

Under the British boys' farm training agreements, the provinces agreed to establish reception farms where the youngsters could receive some basic instruction and stay if they became temporarily unemployed. The province also took responsibility for the boys' training, placement and aftercare for a period of three years. To defray the provinces' expenses, the British government provided a one-time payment of \$20 per boy, to which Ottawa added \$10. These payments were conditional upon the provinces spending the equivalent of \$10 per boy to operate and administer the scheme. The Alberta project was different. It offered free tuition at a provincial agricultural college, followed by guaranteed farm placement and supervision. The Alberta and imperial governments shared the schooling costs, but the boys were responsible for their own transportation and their room and board while attending college.⁵⁹

The schemes were designed to get the boys onto the land - but keeping them there was another matter. Based on their experience with home children, both Ottawa and London realized that some incentive would be required to keep the youngsters from drifting into urban centres or leaving for the United States. In 1927, therefore, the dominion immigration department and the OSC negotiated a scheme that promised the youngsters the opportunity to become independent farmers. Under the British boys'

land settlement scheme young men between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five could borrow up to \$2,500 to purchase and stock their own farms. The loans would be available to those who had been between fourteen and twenty years old when they arrived in Canada, had received free or reduced passages, and had demonstrated their thriftiness by having saved \$500 towards the purchase of their farm. Preference would be given to those who had participated in one of the provincial training schemes. The British government would contribute \$1,250 towards the loan, with Ottawa adding \$1,000 and the provincial governments \$250. By 1929, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba had agreed to take part in the boys' land settlement scheme. The other provinces were not interested.⁶⁰

The farm training and land settlement schemes were meant to be a package. It was this package that persuaded young John Upton to leave home and start a new life on the Canadian land. The schemes exemplified the total reversal in British and Canadian immigration policies since the days of *natural emigration*. By the early twentieth century industrial competition abroad, and increased lobbying by imperialists at home, had finally forced empire settlement onto Britain's political agenda. But it had taken an obligation to help World War I veterans to finally unlock the door to state financial assistance, and an unemployment crisis to extend this assistance to the general public through the Empire Settlement Act of 1922. Canada had reacted to the Act with little enthusiasm. Its almost insatiable appetite for cheap farm labour, however, had been dealt a blow when school-age child immigration ended in 1924. Anxious to offset the loss by attracting more teenagers, and blaming much of its past problems with home children on old country voluntary societies, the dominion government opted for Canadian-made schemes to place British boys and young men on the land, and to keep

them there. The resulting British boys' farm training and land settlement schemes began with good intentions and high hopes, but even before the onset of the Great Depression finally brought them to an end, they were already collapsing.

2

The British Immigration and Colonization Association

For carelessness in placing, both in efforts to fit the right boy into the right home and adjusting wages to the circumstances and also in keeping the agreements up-to-date, the BICA are in a class by themselves.¹

Almost two-thirds of the young Britons who crossed the Atlantic to participate in the provincial boys' farm training schemes during the 1920s came under the auspices of the BICA, making it by far the largest of the eight government-assisted schemes dedicated to settling British youths on Canadian farms. The magnitude of the BICA's efforts, however, was matched by its inefficiency and ineffectiveness. By the fall of 1929, a frustrated M.J. Scobie, the dominion inspector for British juvenile immigration, was complaining to assistant deputy minister F.C. Blair that the Association was in a class by itself when it came to incompetence. He criticized how it placed the boys, arranged their wages and managed their work agreements. He might well have added financial irresponsibility to his list of its shortcomings. By the end of 1930, despite having received almost \$100,000 in government and railway company grants over the previous four years, the BICA was insolvent, its board of directors had resigned, and the work of winding up its activities had been jointly taken over by Ottawa's immigration

department and the CN and CPR colonization departments. It was an ignoble end to an organization that had been created just nine years before amid much hope and promise.

The Association was formed in November 1920 by a group of Montreal clergymen representing five different Protestant denominations.² Originally labeling itself the British Immigrant Aid Society (BIAS), it received a federal charter in 1921 and chose as its motto: *Put the Landless Man on the Manless Land*. Despite its motto, the new society initially busied itself by assisting British immigrants in general ways, such as meeting them at the dock, helping them find work and accommodation, and acting as an advisory agency. In May 1923 the society approached the federal immigration department for some financial assistance to help with office expenses and staff. The society's secretary stressed that the amount would be minimal, since the organization's intention was 'to throw ourselves into the arms of your Department to use us, not as hirelings, but as voluntary workers ... here we are, use us as a Welfare Organization for men, boys and families.' The department thanked the society for its interest but politely noted such grants were contrary to government practice.³

Early in 1924 the society narrowed its focus. The \$80 passage grant for children emigrating under the auspices of voluntary societies, introduced in April 1923, might have motivated the change. The grant exceeded the actual steamer fare to Montreal by about \$15 and the difference was intended to help offset costs incurred by societies for the likes of land transportation, placement and aftercare. Possibly as a result of this incentive the BIAS decided to concentrate on settling boys. Later, when it ran into financial problems, it claimed that it had made the change under the encouragement of the immigration minister - a claim the minister denied. Whatever its motivation, in the spring of 1924 the society applied to the Department for official recognition as an

accredited juvenile immigration agency. In promoting the application, its president stated that its intent was to 'supply the farmers of Ontario and the Eastern townships of the Province of Quebec (English speaking) with farm apprentices and workers.' The stated long-term plan was eventual extension of the work to the maritime and western provinces. In the short-term, however, Ontario and Quebec would suffice. The society had already arranged with the CN and CPR to have their agents select the boys, with the understanding that the recruits 'be of a type suitable for farm life and work in Canada.' The society promised to meet the boys on arrival, convey them to a receiving hostel in Montreal and, from there, dispatch them to farms owned by accredited farmers. Each boy would be placed out under a written agreement for a specified period and a defined, competitive wage. The society would also supervise and visit the boys at regular intervals, report their progress to Ottawa and London, and assume full responsibility for their care and treatment.⁴

In considering the society's application, the immigration department was particularly interested in the Montreal hostel. There was no tangible way of gauging how well the society would live up to its promises regarding selection, placement and aftercare, but at least the hostel was there to be inspected. In May 1924, Ottawa's supervisor of juvenile immigration, G. Bogue Smart, visited the hostel and judged it to be 'a safe and comfortable place in which the boys could be received and distributed,' and to which they could return if they were between jobs. Located at 87 Osborne Street, it sat on the north side of the CPR's Windsor Street station. Formerly a hotel, the three-storied building belonged to the railway company which charged a nominal annual rent of \$600. The Kiwanis Club of Montreal had furnished it for the society at a cost of \$6,900. It could accommodate up to fifty boys, and included quarters for a

superintendent and his wife. It also served as the society's headquarters, with an office for the organization's secretary, Mr. A.I. Morison.⁵

Based on the satisfactory inspection, and the society's assurances that it was dedicated to efficient operation, the immigration department decided that it was 'a responsible Organization, well equipped for carrying out the work that they propose to do.' Consequently, in May 1924 the deputy minister for immigration, W.J. Egan, authorized it to engage in juvenile immigration, on condition that it secure qualified selection officers in the UK dedicated to recruiting the right type of boy. As a result, the society appointed Dr. Cossar of Glasgow as its agent in Scotland and Major G. Montgomery of Tunbridge Wells, secretary of the Kent Colonization Association, as its agent for the rest of the United Kingdom.⁶ Both men became thorns in the society's side.

As a result of a favourable visit to the hostel by members of the Bondfield delegation, the BIAS also gained the approval of the OSC. It immediately set about its newly authorized task. Its first group of boys arrived in Montreal in June 1924. By the end of 1925 a total of 469 had passed through the hostel *en route* to farms in Ontario and Quebec. By then, however, the society had changed its name, its motto and its organization. The name British Immigration and Colonization Association of Canada was adopted 'to indicate more clearly the nature of [its] activities.' A new motto, *Keep Canada British*, reflected the Association's Anglo-Protestant roots and underscored its motive to assist British immigration at a time when many Canadians were concerned about the surge of central and eastern European immigrants into the prairies. The renamed organization also had a new management structure. The Reverend John Chisholm, a Presbyterian minister resident in Montreal, had replaced Mr. John

Macnaughton as president. Major J. O'Brien, with the title of 'dominion organizer' and working out of Ottawa, had responsibility for placing the boys with Ontario and Quebec farmers. Mr. Morison retained his title of secretary, but assumed the duties of operations manager, responsible for the reception, distribution, and aftercare of the boys, as well as the efficient operation of the hostel.⁷ It was a heavy load for one man, especially one advancing in years and lacking experience in handling teenage boys. The task proved to be too much for the old man whose sincere concern for the boys was soon overshadowed by his lack of practicality in dealing with their problems.

Complaints about the Association's operation appeared as early as the summer of 1925. They came from a multitude of sources on both sides of the Atlantic: from Cossar and Montgomery; from the boys and their parents; from the OSC and Canada House in London; from the railway companies; from federal immigration inspectors; and even from within the Association itself. The first indication that all was not well came after Cossar and Montgomery visited the Montreal hostel in July 1925. Dr. Cossar had been involved in settling Scottish children in Canada since 1911. By 1924, when he agreed to select boys for the BICA, he was operating his own 'Craigielinn' training farm near Paisley in Lanarkshire and a dairy farm at Lower Gagetown in New Brunswick, where his wards received further training before being settled on farms throughout the province. That he was already being subsidized by the OSC for his own work did not deter Ottawa from accepting him as a recruiting agent for the BICA. During 1924 and most of 1925 he was the organization's sole recruiter in Scotland, despite his having no formal agreement, or even any definite understanding, with the Association. After his visit to Montreal, Dr. Cossar advised Canada House that he 'had some disconcerting reports about the Hostel.' He claimed that eleven of the boys he

had sent to the Association had been 'dumped upon my Farm [in Gagetown] at a moment's notice,' and that two others had returned to Scotland as stowaways on cattle boats. He complained that the publicity given to the stowaways in Scottish newspapers had been disastrous to his recruitment efforts and that he would send no more boys to the BICA until 'something of a practical character is done' to sort out its operation.⁸

Montgomery's report of a failure rate among BICA boys of 10% was equally disconcerting. The immigration department considered it 'a larger percentage of failures than we are accustomed to or than we can hear without much disquietude.' The failures included boys who had been returned to the UK, sent to the Cossar farm in New Brunswick, left their farms and could not be traced, or who refused to work and were living at the hostel. Montgomery also reported that the hostel was not as clean as it might be, which he put down to a lack of discipline. Neither was he impressed by the quality of the farms selected by the BICA, noting that they 'did not seem of the sort suitable for the better class lad; practically all social and intellectual life being absent.' He strongly recommended sending public school boys to Canada only 'on condition that they are able to pay the fees at an Agricultural College, and after be placed on the larger and better class farms by the College Authorities.'⁹

At first the immigration department's London office was not overly concerned about the recruiting agents' negative reports. After all, Montgomery admitted that the problem boys were Cossar boys and, therefore, Scotch. Immigration department staff commonly perceived that Scottish teenage immigrants were particularly difficult to handle. Egan found them 'to be of a poor type, showing a marked lack of breeding, training and care, sometimes a lack of education along the right lines.' There was, he noted, too much 'bolshivism' among Scotland's youth. J. Bruce Walker, Canada's

director of European emigration in London, agreed - particularly if the youngsters were from Glasgow, as were most of the Cossar boys. He confided in Egan that it was 'harder to get a poorer type of boy anywhere in the UK than can be found in Glasgow.'¹⁰ As the number of complaints escalated the immigration department realized that there was more at fault than the Cossar boys' lack of breeding.

In July 1925, the BICA's Major O'Brien confessed to Blair that because the organization was 'having some difficulty owing to a number of boys leaving the farms and drifting back to the hostel,' he had advised its board to transfer the hostel to a farm and send the boys there directly from the dock. If this was not done in the near future O'Brien threatened to quit since he 'could see the danger of having boys remaining in the city for even a few days.' Blair quickly accepted that a farm hostel was a good idea since new arrivals, who usually stayed at the Montreal hostel for one or two days, had nothing to do but get into mischief, especially when they came into contact with returning 'misfits.' He agreed with O'Brien on the need for a farm centre in a small town served by both railway lines. The BICA board was not receptive to the idea. It had already decided, for the sake of efficiency, to discontinue placements from O'Brien's office in Ottawa. The boys would be placed, visited and cared for from one centre, but that would be 87 Osborne Street. The board would not agree to move the base of operations 'to some farm centre far removed from Montreal.'¹¹

Other complaints soon followed. Particularly disconcerting were those from some of the boys themselves that reached the ears of British government officials and received wide publicity in the United Kingdom press. A Member of Parliament drew the attention of the Earl of Clarendon, the OSC chairman, to the case of young Donald Thomas whose parents had complained about their son's treatment in Canada.

Clarendon's dismay at the letter's contents, and the fact that the boy's story had appeared in the widely circulated *News of the World*, was quickly relayed to Canada House and Ottawa.

Thomas was an English boy who, when he arrived in Quebec in May 1925, was still three months shy of his fifteenth birthday and small for his age. He reported that he was kept at the BICA hostel for six weeks, scrubbing floors for his food. During that time he was robbed of clothes and towels, badly treated by the superintendent, and lived off scraps of food left uneaten by transient workers who also used the hostel. He was also forced to clean these men's sleeping quarters and to sleep himself on filthy bed linen. When he was eventually placed on a farm at Lansdowne, near Toronto, he worked from four in the morning until nine at night, slept on straw covered by a few blankets, was given little to eat, and received no wages. After the harvest, the farmer told him that he had only taken him in for charity and that he would have to find work elsewhere. Reluctant to return to the hostel because of the poor food and the need to scrub for his keep, he went back to England, working his way on a steamer from Toronto to Montreal then stowing away to London.¹²

Morison denied each of young Thomas's accusations. The BICA secretary even sent a copy of the hostel's weekly menu to the immigration department in Ottawa, to prove that the boys were being well fed. The feeling in Ottawa and London, however, was that where there was smoke there must be fire, and soon the fire began to spread as two more damaging complaints against the BICA appeared in the British press.¹³

One seemed to verify at least part of Donald Thomas's story. It claimed that, because of the poor condition of the Montreal hostel, the boys referred to it as the 'Doss-house,' and whenever possible, ate somewhere else. The other attacked the

'disgracefully careless' manner in which the Association handled boys that it returned to the United Kingdom. A young Scottish emigrant, James M from Kirn, had shocked his parents by his sudden and unannounced reappearance on their doorstep. According to his father, the BICA had cast the boy out on the street, 'without a penny in his pocket, and within an hour's sailing of the ship, as if he was a vile criminal.' James, it was claimed, had not even been given time to collect his overcoat for the journey, although it was the dead of winter. He had gone out to Canada in the summer of 1924 'with a good supply of clothing, and came home, metaphorically, in rags.' Moreover, he was shipped to Southampton, where he had to borrow money to get home, despite the fact that a steamer to the Clyde had left the same port of Halifax a short time later. Again Morison denied the charges; but the damage had been done. From London, Bruce Walker reported to Ottawa that 'the result of adverse and hostile criticism in the Old Country newspapers ... had been almost disastrous' to the boy immigration movement.¹⁴

Worse was to follow. In December, Cossar wrote to Blair from Glasgow that the British papers were full of the death of Roy Kennedy. The young Scot's story had appeared in *The Kingston Standard* in Ontario, was reproduced in *The Daily Chronicle* in London and editorialized in several Scottish papers. Sixteen year old Roy had arrived in Canada in May 1925 and had been placed on a farm at Osgoode Station, Ontario. Within a few days he was back at the hostel feeling ill and remained there until the middle of July when he was declared fit enough for farm work. As he had relatives in Kingston, he asked to be placed near there, and was sent to Mr. John Ward at Kingston Hills. Within two weeks Roy was in a Kingston hospital where he died from complications following an operation for appendicitis. On reporting the death, *The*

Kingston Chronicle drew attention to the situation at the Ward farm. Mr. Ward, it turned out, was a bachelor whose 82-year-old almost blind mother kept house for him. According to the *Chronicle*, the farmhouse was in an almost indescribable state of 'dilapidation and filth.' Morison defended the placement on the grounds that the Wards had used a local bank manager and a Presbyterian minister as references, but he received little sympathy from either Ottawa or London.¹⁵

As a result of the outcry in the UK press, the federal immigration department was deluged with complaints, requests and suggestions. Three were of particular significance and called for action. First, the OSC expressed its doubts as to whether the BICA was 'competently organized to take care of the boys' and whether it was 'conducting its business and perfecting its organization to the satisfaction of the Immigration Department.' Without specifically requesting it, the British organization was obviously seeking an inquiry into the Association's operations. Next, W.J. Black, director of the CN colonization department, advised Blair that the railway company was reconsidering its whole involvement in boy immigration. He felt that the Association's placements in Canada had proven unsatisfactory, and was not confident that they would improve in the immediate future. Until they did, it was 'questionable how far any organization would be justified in going in assuring parents in the Old Land that their sons will be properly cared for.' Black was seeking assurances that required Ottawa to delve more deeply into the Association's affairs than it had previously felt necessary. The third call for an investigation was more overt. Canada House demanded an inquiry into the 'slack and almost criminal methods' of the BICA, 'either to improve them so that they may meet with Departmental approval, or arrive at a decision to prevent any business that we give going their way.'¹⁶

The department of immigration reacted quickly. Before Christmas Bogue Smart traveled to Montreal where he inspected the hostel, interviewed Morison, and looked through the files of all of the boys under the Association's supervision. His damning report confirmed many of the Department's worst fears. He was gratified to find only twelve boys at the hostel since, contrary to his glowing report of the previous year, he now considered that it was 'not a desirable centre for boys, situated as it is in a busy thoroughfare opposite the CPR Windsor terminal.' The former hotel 'was not laid out for its present occupation, and hardly adapted for such.' The bedding was soiled and untidy. Overall he judged the hostel acceptable for a stay of a day or a night but certainly no longer.¹⁷

Smart then queried Morison about the status of each of the BICA boys and learned that 77, almost 15%, had failed. These included the twelve boys at the hostel who were between jobs for a variety of reasons, ranging from chronic bed-wetting to an aversion to farm work. Twenty-eight more were missing and another 20 'incorrigibles' had been shipped off to Dr. Cossar's farm in New Brunswick. Since these were all Cossar recruits, Morison felt perfectly justified in transporting them to Lower Gagetown, although they had come to Canada under the auspices of the BICA. The remaining sixteen failures had returned to the UK. Some had gone at the request and expense of their parents, while the others had been shipped back for medical reasons, lawlessness, or because they absolutely refused to work. All of the deportees were English. Had they been Scots, they would probably have been exiled to New Brunswick.¹⁸

Morison defended the Association's failure rate by arguing that Cossar and Montgomery had not properly screened the boys. He also suggested that the Association could expect a better quality of boy now that the railway companies had

taken over recruiting from Cossar and Montgomery. Smart was not so sure, believing that the railways' business interests lay more in quantity than quality. He did have some sympathy, however, for Morison's contention that many should never have passed the mandatory medical examination in Britain. He admitted that 'some of the material that came forward to [the BICA] this year would certainly have been an embarrassment even to the disciples of old'.¹⁹

Smart's sympathy faded when he reviewed the files of the 516 boys under the Association's supervision. He discovered that, despite the BICA's assurances that each boy would be inspected every three months, many had not received a visit from an Association inspector in over a year. He also found that, although the farmers' application forms asked for references, there was nothing on file to indicate who, if anyone, had vouched for their suitability as placements. Equally disturbing was that in many cases no terms of indenture had been formalized, although some boys had been working for almost a year. Morison had excuses for each criticism - the Association was short of inspectors but on the verge of hiring two more; the farmers' applications were accepted by local representatives who often neglected to forward references to Montreal; and contracts had not been finalized because terms were still being negotiated. Smart was unimpressed. He recommended to Blair that 'this organization should not be allowed to bring any more boys to Canada until there is evidence that the boys under their supervision at present are receiving satisfactory care.' Following Blair's lead, he advised moving the Association's distribution centre from Montreal to a rural environment.²⁰

At the end of 1925, armed with Smart's report and a BICA file filled with complaints, the immigration department took stock of the Association's operation and,

not surprisingly, found it wanting. Blair concluded that the organization's difficulties were the result of the ineptitude of its management and the location of its hostel. He conceded that the Association had set out to do good work and that undoubtedly there were a number of good boys still on the land. This, however, was probably 'by virtue of their character rather than because of the handling they received from the Organization.' He saw no point in Ottawa wasting further passage money bringing out boys until the Association put some business management into effect. Reverend Chisholm was 'too old and too lacking in administrative ability to make anything of youths of 15 to 18 years of age.' Major O'Brien was the only one with 'youth, vigour and enthusiasm' but unfortunately he had carried through with his threat and severed his connection with the organization. The rest of the BICA workforce seemed to Blair to be composed largely of men who 'because of increasing years and infirmities should be running something other than a hostel and agency for handling vigorous, self-willed lads.' He was convinced that the first essential step in putting the organization on the right track was a complete reorganization of its management. The second step was to relocate the functions of the Montreal hostel to a farm, far away from the lure and temptations of city life.²¹

While Blair only wanted to reorganize the BICA, W.R. Little, the dominion commissioner of colonization, felt that the department should simply discontinue recognition of the Association, because of the many complaints against it, its high failure rate, and the adverse publicity it had caused, both in Canada and Great Britain. Deputy minister Egan, however, supported Blair and in January 1926 notified the BICA that no more boys would be allowed to come to Canada under its auspices until it

reorganized its management to Ottawa's satisfaction and acquired a farm for the boys' reception and distribution.²²

In response to Ottawa's embargo on its operations the BICA quickly re-organized. It appointed a new board of directors with the Reverend Dr. James Smyth as president, replacing Dr. Chisholm. Morison remained as secretary but Major O'Brien's former position of dominion organizer was dispensed with. Moreover, the new board advised Ottawa of plans to buy a farm at either Harrowsmith or Hawkesbury in eastern Ontario to receive, distribute and train Ontario boys. Quebec boys would still be handled at the Montreal hostel.²³

No sooner was the new management in place than it appealed to the minister of immigration for a \$12,000 grant because it had exhausted its resources and had a bank overdraft of \$3,000. The request shocked the immigration department, which had recognized the Association in 1924 based on the understanding that its work would be voluntary. Besides, it was already getting a grant in the form of the margin between the \$80 passage allowance and the actual steamship fare. Ottawa's initial inclination was to deny a grant to an organization that was not under its direct supervision or control. Possibly eager to give the new management a chance to turn the Association's fortunes around, the immigration minister decided on a compromise. If the Association could raise \$2,500, the federal government would contribute \$3,500, remove the embargo, and try to get the OSC to provide a further \$6,000. Ottawa also agreed to an additional grant of \$1,500 to help the Association with its current indebtedness. The minister stressed that these grants were for one year only and any further grants would depend on the success of the Association's work.²⁴

Dr. Smyth and his board members were so pleased that they decided to increase their request - if they could raise \$5,000 would the immigration department contribute \$5,000 and the OSC \$10,000? Their pleasure was short-lived. The OSC wanted nothing to do with grants to the BICA. Remembering the problems of the previous year, the British committee advised Ottawa that it did not feel justified in funding an entirely overseas operation, and needed 'assurance from experience that such a society is suitable and [its] operation efficient.' The Association's reaction to this rebuff was confrontational. It advised Ottawa that it was closing its doors at the end of the week and turning over all its work to the immigration department, including records, reports, bank accounts and the boys presently at the hostel. Whether or not the Association's new board was merely bluffing, it brought a nervous Blair scurrying to the negotiating table, determined 'not to get into running an institution of our own.'²⁵

With the minister's blessing, Blair offered to match whatever the Association could raise, up to a maximum of \$5,000, in addition to the \$1,500 already promised to help pay off the overdraft. He argued that this would allow it to continue for a year, at which time, if their new organization proved to be effective, the department would try again to get a grant from the OSC. Dr. Smyth countered Blair's offer with an ultimatum. The Association would continue its work 'in a very modest manner' on two conditions. First, the department had to provide the grant before the BICA raised its share. Secondly, Ottawa had to take over the duties of inspecting and maintaining boys who became ill, or, for whatever reason, had to leave their jobs. Blair agreed to provide the dominion grant in advance. Reluctantly, he also agreed that the department would take over responsibility for inspecting the boys. He drew the line, however, at Ottawa bearing the cost of aftercare. After reminding Smyth that the Association's

incompetence had forced the government to put an embargo on free passage for BICA boys, the assistant deputy minister made a threat of his own. Unless the Association assumed responsibility for aftercare, the immigration department would be compelled to take over its operation. Blair noted that while the department would be sorry to lose the Association's co-operation, there were 'limits within which [it] can give financial support and outside of which such support is impossible.'²⁶

The BICA board accepted Blair's terms and at the end of March 1926 the delineation of responsibilities was formalized. The government would give the grants and undertake inspections and the Association would continue to operate the hostel, place the boys, arrange contract terms, and handle the boys' savings. It would also keep in touch with the boys through regular visitations, adjust any difficulties reported by the government inspectors, and promptly report any changes of address to the immigration department. There is no evidence that Ottawa required the Association to provide a budget, or a stewardship report, to account for the spending of the grant. Nor does Blair appear to have queried the board on how it intended to raise its own \$5,000 (which it did simply by getting the railway companies to donate \$10 for each boy they shipped) or how it planned to fund itself after the grant money was gone. After the Association disintegrated at the end of 1930, Blair accused its board of having no long-term financial plan. In early 1926, however, as yet unaware of its fiscal irresponsibility, and naively assuming it would balance income and expenditure, Blair squandered the opportunity to impose a long-range financial plan on the free-spending BICA.²⁷

Within six months the BICA was back looking for more money. Although Blair's suggested waiting period of a year was not yet up, Smyth appealed directly to the OSC.

In September 1926 he explained to G.F. Plant, the committee's secretary, that the Association had brought 536 boys in 1925 and 300 so far in 1926. He praised the dominion immigration department for providing financial aid, but stressed that, even when added to supporters' contributions, the amount did not cover the organization's annual expenses. Referring to the previous year's bank overdraft, Smyth promised Plant that 'our directors are resolved not to incur [financial] responsibilities beyond the resources actually in sight.' Smyth concluded his plea by boasting that the Association's failure rate had dropped to 4%, and reiterating the organization's 'intense interest in keeping Canada British.'²⁸

The OSC was sufficiently impressed with Smyth's appeal that, this time, it offered conditional financial assistance. It would grant the BICA not the \$10,000 it asked for, but \$5,000, since the committee could 'not see its way to make a contribution exceeding that which has been offered by the Dominion Government.' The conditions were that the BICA acquire a farm hostel outside the city, pay a third of the boys' wages directly to them, and offer no financial incentive to shipping agents for recruiting. Smyth quickly accepted these conditions, but asked Ottawa to help him convince the OSC to reconsider the size of its grant. Consequently, the immigration department advised the OSC of the 'excellent work' the Association was doing and that it was 'worthy of every encouragement we can legitimately offer.' Ottawa also pointed out that the OSC's \$5,000 offer was inconsistent with a recently negotiated agreement with the Ontario government whereby London gave \$20 per boy and Ottawa \$10 per boy, up to a maximum of 500 boys. The Committee accepted the rationale and doubled its offer to \$10,000. But if Ottawa wanted consistency with the provincial scheme, the OSC felt that the agreement with the BICA must be consistent in every respect. It would be

based on the number of boys shipped, to a maximum of 500 each year; it would be for a period of five years; it would be limited to boys of fourteen to seventeen years of age; and it would require the Association to provide three years of aftercare.²⁹

In September 1927, a tripartite agreement encompassing these terms and conditions was finalized. Later, in December 1928, the upper age limit for all British boys entering farm training schemes in the dominion was raised to nineteen. The agreement was well received by the press. The *Montreal Star*, for example, hailed it as a 'positive step' in an otherwise lacklustre immigration policy; particularly as it was aimed at teenagers who 'learn while learning is easy, and as members of society, have much less to unlearn.'³⁰

At the end of 1927, despite a less than auspicious start, the BICA appeared to be in good shape. It had brought more than a thousand boys to Canada, its failure rate had dropped to a level that Ottawa and London deemed acceptable, it had seemingly won back the confidence of both governments, and it had a guaranteed income for the next five years. The boys, too, seemed to be contented and doing well. Morison had sent a Christmas letter to each of them and to several of their parents, and the responses had been heartwarming, filled with appreciation for what the BICA, and Morison in particular, had done for the boys.³¹ Although probably only the contented replied, the responses at least showed that not all the boys were unhappy with their situations.

To top things off, the Association had finally acquired a farm. Because of poor railway connections, Harrowsmith and Hawkesbury had proved to be unsuitable sites. Instead, a one hundred-acre farm had been purchased on Montreal Island, one mile from Baie D'Urfe and about two miles from St. Anne de Bellevue. It cost the Association \$6,900, half of which it financed with a five-year mortgage. The property

had a barn and farmhouse that Morison claimed could be converted into dormitory accommodation for twenty-five to thirty boys. The Association planned to work the farm and keep in close touch with instructors at the nearby MacDonald Agricultural College. The immigration department thought that the purchase price was relatively expensive, but defended it to the OSC on the grounds that the organization needed a location close to its board of managers in Montreal and served by the two railways.³² The BICA's future appeared rosy but complaints re-emerged on both sides of the Atlantic, and the organization's money problems refused to go away.

Hardly had the Association convinced the immigration department to take over responsibility for the boys' inspections when Ottawa complained that Morison was not informing it of the boys' movements. Chief inspector Scobie was upset that his staff was spending too much time traveling to farms, only to discover that the boy being visited had left, or been replaced. In a single day, one inspector visited seven farms from which boys had been gone for weeks, in some cases for months. On one occasion an inspector traveled almost two hundred miles only to discover that the young farmhand had been dead for over a month. For Scobie this was 'another illustration of wasted time and money' caused by the Association's incompetence. To Morison, who claimed that the farmer had never told him of the boy's death, Scobie's criticism was just one more example of the 'continual friction and volley of pin pricks such as we receive from your department.'³³ He viewed the government inspectors as more of a hindrance than a help because they spoke unfavourably to the boys about the BICA and confused them over whether they should take their problems to the Association or to Ottawa. Ever sensitive to criticism, Morison confessed to Blair that he 'would be glad if the Department would discontinue all visitations of the boys.' If he was looking for

sympathy, he was looking in the wrong direction. Blair was no admirer of the BICA secretary, believing that his personality was 'a great obstacle to the proper conduct of the work.' The department was committed to inspecting the boys and the assistant deputy minister simply wrote-off Morison's remark as typical of his 'childish attitude of being hurt when any suggestion is offered.'³⁴

Complaints about its failure to notify Ottawa promptly about changes in the boys' circumstances were the least of the many 'pin pricks' the immigration department inflicted on the Association during 1928 and 1929. Scobie's inspectors lambasted almost every aspect of the BICA operation. They criticized its placement procedure as so chaotic that 'one would think the [farmers'] applications and the boys were put through a mill without the slightest regard to age, qualifications, wages, or anything else.' One farmer who complained that he had asked for a young boy and received a young man, was reportedly told by one of the Association's staff that he had no cause to grumble, because he had got more than he asked for. Besides, the price was the same. This 'stupid position' of placing every boy at the minimum wage of \$10 a month, regardless of age, was another sore point with the immigration department, which reported that both older boys and farmers who employed younger boys felt they were being cheated.³⁵

Government inspectors also discovered that the boys commonly complained of the BICA's slowness in finalizing indentures, leaving them for months without a contract. Blair chastised the Association secretary, stressing that no boy should be left without an agreement for longer than a month. When youngsters complained that they had not been paid for over a year, an angry Blair warned the Association that farmers who made boys wait so long 'should be required to get their help from some other source.'

Particularly annoying to the immigration department was the discovery that BICA staff encouraged farmers to trade youngsters among themselves, without even requiring that it be kept advised of the boys' new locations. Scobie was especially upset because no other society had such shortcomings. During October 1929, over a three-week period, he inspected 150 boys in Leeds and Grenville counties who had been brought to Canada by such organizations as the United Church, Quarrier Homes, Keeley Home and the Catholic Emigration Society. None, according to the chief inspector, was as loose as the BICA, which was 'in a class by themselves' for inefficiency.³⁶

Two other revelations added to Ottawa's disillusionment. First, Morison confessed that, on any given day, as many as 40 boys were boarding at the Montreal hostel or the Baie D'Urfe farm, and that more and more were drifting away. Next, when asked to account for the boys who had arrived in the nine months since March 1929, the secretary admitted that 20% had already failed. Of the 1,485 who had arrived, 1,038 had been inspected, and of these 78 were missing, 65 had been returned to the UK, and 59 had left farm work.³⁷

While the immigration department digested these disappointing statistics, more bad news was on the way. First, in January 1930, a federal immigration agent in Inverness reported that the directors of The Aberdeen Lads' Club were 'more than dissatisfied with the method of placement and with the lack of Aftercare under the auspices of the BICA.' This view of the Association was being widely accepted around the Scottish city since the club's president was 'a well-known, successful business man whose word carries considerable weight.' The club had sent many boys to Canada over the past few years, mainly under the auspices of BICA. Its directors claimed that they had been trying to trace many of their youngsters but received little feedback from the

Association. What they did get was often clearly false. On several occasions the Association had provided a boy's supposed Canadian address months after he had returned to Aberdeen. What annoyed the immigration department was not so much that the club directors were determined to send no more boys to the BICA, but that they publicly placed much of the blame on Ottawa. James Munro, the club's president, complained that, since the boys were going under the Empire Settlement Act, the Canadian Government must accept responsibility for the mishandling of those who emigrated with the Association.³⁸ Once again Canada's juvenile immigration program was receiving adverse publicity in the UK, and once again the cause was the BICA.

Adding to Ottawa's growing concerns with the Association's declining performance was its insatiable need for government funding. In April 1928, only six months after signing the tripartite Agreement, the BICA was asking Ottawa for more financial help. Since the government grants were given on a per capita basis, up to a maximum of 500 boys, the Association now sought funding for its 'excess' boys. A total of eight hundred had been brought over during 1927 and Morison claimed that the immigration department had promised him \$5 for each of the extra boys. He needed the money to 'pay all our hospital and doctor bills which amount to just about \$1500.00.'³⁹ Ottawa denied having made any such promise, but agreed to approach the OSC about the possibility of amending the Agreement to cover the extra boys. It suggested that the British Government provide \$5 for each boy, to which the Canadian Government and the BICA would each add \$2.50. Morison was disappointed. He wanted more, arguing that the extra boys cost the Association just as much as the first 500. Complaining to Blair that 'the expenses of all our boys are eating up what we have already earned,' he

confessed that after he paid the railway companies for the boys' transportation, 'it just about cleans out every cent we have in the bank.'⁴⁰

At first the OSC refused to provide any more money. The Empire Settlement Act limited the UK's contribution to any scheme to half of the total cost. The Association's latest spending numbers were for the fiscal year 1927-1928, and the OSC argued that between its grant and passage subsidies, it was already contributing more than half the Association's total expenditures. It could not legally give more. Morison was distraught. He admitted to Blair that he 'hate[d] to keep bothering you about money, but recently things are coming to a pitch. I have to have money or I will be driven crazy.' Fortunately for the BICA secretary's state of mind, the OSC reversed its decision, based on the Association's spending report for the fiscal year 1928-1929. The tripartite agreement was amended accordingly and retroactively to the beginning of April 1928. This meant that for the 1,871 boys that the Association brought to Canada during 1929 it received \$79,992 in the form of government and railway grants. It was a huge contribution to a voluntary organization that in 1923 had promised that 'all we expect from the Government is to assist us in our office expenses and office staff.'⁴¹

By the beginning of 1930 Ottawa had decided that radical action was needed to deal with the Association's operating and financial problems. In January, at a special meeting of the BICA board to which he was invited, Blair laid the immigration department's views on the table. First he addressed the money issue. Emphasizing the need for the board members 'to sit down and work out carefully their income, their expenditures and their liabilities,' he warned them that, if they did not do some immediate stock taking, 'they were heading for the rocks financially.' Next, Blair argued that the growing criticism of the Association's work was so serious and the

evidence so strong that steps had to be taken to remedy the weaknesses. The government could not stand by and 'see the work drift onto the rocks for the want of a few simple safeguards.' At Blair's suggestion the board appointed a special committee to consider and recommend the necessary remedies.⁴²

The committee, which comprised four of the Association's directors, a representative from each of the railway companies and the assistant deputy minister, recommended that again the organization be thoroughly restructured. Totally disillusioned with Morison, whom he believed to be 'pretty much in a hopeless tangle out of which he cannot extricate himself,' Blair convinced the special committee that no employees should sit on the board. This at least would remove the manager from the highest level of decision making. The Association's directors accepted the recommendation, admitting that they had delegated so much authority to the old man that his incompetence had gone unnoticed. The directors also agreed to add the two railway representatives to the board, and to invite Blair to attend future board meetings as a consultant. The field staff would be rejuvenated by replacing older men with 'men not past middle life who have a practical knowledge of farming in Canada.' The office staff would also be revamped. Blair thought it inappropriate that Morison had hired his son and son-in-law to work alongside him in the office and the board agreed to remove both men and replace one of them with an accountant capable of keeping track of income and expenditures.⁴³

None of the changes saved the BICA from collapsing. By October 1930 its failure rate had reached 25%, it had less than \$1,000 in the bank, its expenses were running about \$4,500 a month, including \$1,500 for feeding boys at the hostel and farm, and the bank was refusing to cash its checks.⁴⁴ Smyth was sure that the OSC still owed the

Association \$10,000, but at its current spending rate that would be gone by Christmas, and there would be no more income until next year's boys began to arrive in the spring. The situation was desperate. Blair was convinced that 'the Board of Directors [were] not going to put their hands in their pockets and pay for the heavy running expenses.' Instead they would 'throw up [their] hands and ask us to take over the obligations.'⁴⁵ His prophecy was accurate, but before they threw up their hands, the board tried one last time to extract more money from the governments.

In a plea to both the dominion and British governments, Smyth asked that the grants for boys in excess of five hundred be quadrupled to match the grants for the first five hundred. He blamed the BICA's economic problems on the cost of the farm and the worsening economic conditions that were gripping the whole country. The BICA president claimed that it had cost \$26,000 to buy, stock, and equip the farm which had proven to be a 'white elephant' and a heavy drain on the organization's resources. In addition, the onset of a national economic Depression meant that more boys than usual had been laid off, with 'the consequence that we are obliged to support them at a very high cost.' These heavy expenditures meant that the BICA would 'require substantial assistance from the governments or some arrangement will have to be made for carrying out the work under some other agency.'⁴⁶ Neither Ottawa nor London was willing to bail out the Association once again. Little liked the idea of handing the work over to another agency, and suggested to Blair that 'the situation has now become so serious that further repairs would simply mean courting disaster.' He was convinced that the immigration department had to face the fact that 'the hour of the BICA [had] struck,' and what was required was 'not only a new bell, but new works, frame, and dial.'⁴⁷ Blair agreed. He saw no justification 'for keeping an organization like that

feeding out of public funds when the results are not specially advantageous to Canada.⁴⁸

The OSC was equally unsympathetic. Not only did it refuse additional funding but it determined it owed the Association only \$370, not the \$10,000 that Smyth expected. It was the last straw. On November 21, 1930 Smyth advised Blair that the organization's only option was to close its doors and dismiss its staff. He asked the government to assume the BICA's obligations and take over its assets and liabilities. The Association's obligations, of course, were to its boys, over 3000 of whom were still entitled to aftercare. Its liabilities amounted to almost \$12,000, mostly for a bank overdraft and unpaid salaries to its employees. The farm and its stock and equipment, the organization's only assets, were certainly worth considerably less than had been paid for them.⁴⁹

Blair, of course, had seen this coming, and had already formed a contingency plan with the railway companies. He told Senator Gideon Robertson, the acting minister of immigration, that the department and railways recognized an obligation to the boys, their parents and the British Government. Moreover, in the interests of British immigration, the boys could not be left to fend for themselves. The immigration department and the railways, of course, had their own interests to protect. The boys' parents knew little of the BICA. They knew, however, that the CN and CPR had recruited most of the boys, and that the governments were involved. If the boys were suddenly turned loose, the outcry in Britain would probably be aimed at the railway companies and the governments rather than the BICA. The assistant deputy minister recommended that the department and the railways immediately take over the Association's work. The new organization would operate under a three-man board of

directors, with himself as president and chairman, and W.J. Black and J.N.K. Macalister, the heads of the CN and CPR colonization departments, as vice presidents. Blair also recommended that no more boys be brought over and that all BICA employees be laid off at the end of the year, to be replaced with staff loaned by the railways and the immigration department. Robertson accepted all of Blair's recommendations. In addition, he asked the OSC to consider extending its \$20 per capita grant to all boys who had arrived since April 1, 1929, rather than limiting it to the first 500 boys each year. The Department calculated that this would cost the OSC \$22,000, which would help defray expenditures on the boys' aftercare as the work was wound down over the next two to three years.⁵⁰

The new board took office on January 6, 1931. W.A. Gordon, the minister of immigration in the newly-elected R.B. Bennett Conservative Government, immediately gained parliamentary approval for a grant of \$22,000 from the dominion's Empire Settlement budget, 'to enable the new Board of Directors to carry on the work.'⁵¹ The Department believed that equating the Dominion grant to the amount that it had requested from the OSC would expedite the British committee's approval, since it preserved the fifty-fifty sharing principle of the Empire Settlement Act. The OSC, however, was not so easily persuaded. It advised Ottawa that it would not extend the \$20 grant to cover every boy because,

in view of the history of the case, the responsibility of the railway companies in taking the boys out and the responsibility of the Department in Ottawa for supervising the work of the Society, we see no justification at present for our contributing more than a third of the approved further expenditures required.⁵²

Moreover, the OSC believed that the cost of the loaned staff should be netted out before its one-third share was calculated. Blair was furious. He promised himself that he was 'no longer going to urge or plead for the financial co-operation of the OSC,' and

prophesized that the day was fast approaching 'when we can well afford to stop free passages for juveniles.' It was another of Blair's prophecies that would quickly be fulfilled.⁵³

Despite Blair's reluctance, Ottawa spent much of the spring and summer of 1931 trying to convince the OSC to reconsider its stance. The British committee, however, stood firm by its offer to pay only a third of the total costs, which it considered 'very generous.'⁵⁴ A frustrated Gordon finally ran out of patience at the beginning of September. Deciding 'to be no longer a suppliant,' he advised Sir William Clark, Britain's high commissioner to Canada, that the dominion government, with the help of the railways, would 'clean up the business without asking or expecting any further financial help from the British Government.'⁵⁵ Before the month was over Gordon took the final step. In view of severe unemployment, he announced the government would no longer provide passage assistance for unaccompanied juvenile boys.

While Ottawa and London haggled over money, the new board was busy winding up the Association's affairs. In January it appointed Scobie to take over Morison's old position as operations manager. He quickly got down to the task. First, thirteen boys who had drifted back to the farm and hostel were returned to the UK as being unfit for farm work. Scobie's reasons for sending them home typified those that had caused the deportation of more than four hundred BICA boys before them – they refused to do farm work, had run into difficulties with the law, were prone to laziness, or possessed some perceived physical or mental weakness.⁵⁶ Having purged the hostel and farm of undesirables, the new manager now looked at the feasibility of vacating the Montreal centre and transferring all the work to the Baie D'Urfe farm. He decided that it was impracticable, mainly because the road to the farm was unpaved, making access

extremely difficult during most of the year. The new board agreed with his recommendations to retain the Montreal hostel, sell the livestock and equipment at the farm, and try to rent out the farm property.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, the deepening economic depression was taking its toll on the boys. In early summer 1931, J. C. Farthing, the Anglican Bishop of Montreal, informed Ottawa that unemployed BICA boys were 'sinking down to the depths of the ordinary tramp,' and were showing up in the church's breadlines in large numbers. Scobie confirmed the boys' deteriorating conditions. Many farmers were unable to pay them, and those who could pay were offering as little as \$5 a month. At Blair's suggestion Scobie advised boys who were contemplating leaving farm work to seek employment on government road construction schemes in northern Ontario. Many of those who took this advice, however, eventually made their way back to Montreal, where Scobie was unable to place them on farms.⁵⁸ The BICA boys, of course, were not the only victims of the Depression. Their difficulties were accentuated, however, by the fact that they had so recently left family and friends behind in Britain in search of a better life in Canada.

In December 1931, unable to rent out the farm, the new board sold it to one of the instructors at Macdonald College for just over half what the Association had originally paid for it, and less than 30% of the total capital invested in it.⁵⁹ This final loss symbolized the failed efforts of the organization that, in 1924, had entered the field of British boys immigration with such lofty ambitions.

By what criteria should the BICA be judged? Certainly the failure rate among the boys is one valid yardstick, since the Association's whole objective was to settle the youngsters on the Canadian land. It had also committed to placing the boys carefully and looking after their welfare and interests for three years. How well it fulfilled these

commitments is another fair measure of its work. The organization's ability, or in this case its inability, to continue this work – to remain financially solvent – is the third, and perhaps the most obvious means of gauging its performance. In all three of these aspects of its operation the BICA fell short of the mark. The fault, however, did not always lie solely with the Association.

Between 1924 and 1930, the BICA brought 5,358 British boys to Canada. By January 1931, 445 had been sent home as unsuitable, 273 had returned voluntarily, 236 were missing, and countless others had left the land to try their luck in towns and cities from the Maritimes to British Columbia.⁶⁰ There is no knowing how many stayed on the land and eventually succeeded. Certainly none ever got the promised government loans to buy his own farm.

The Depression certainly aggravated the failure statistics, but other factors contributed. Poor selection in the UK was one, but the BICA had little control over it. Morison often complained about the recruiters' inability to find the right type of boy. He pleaded for better screening in the UK, accusing Cossar, Montgomery, and then the railway companies' agents, of sending youngsters who had no interest in farming, were unsuited for the work, or whose ill-health should have precluded them as immigrants.⁶¹ Blair, too, was disappointed in the quality of the boys. It was one of the few areas of the Association's work in which he sympathized with its secretary, admitting that:

With regard to getting the right type of boy, even the best we can do sometimes fails to get the right ones. I have often thought ... it would be a great thing if we could have our immigrants ready made to order, or if we could concoct some medicine which we could give them on the way over which would put into them a love for the land and more industry than some seem to possess naturally.⁶²

The assistant deputy minister had been particularly surprised at the large number of runts recruited for the BICA, noting that it would have been better to have sent fewer

boys than take undersized and underdeveloped ones, some of whom 'would have to wear stilts to harness a horse.'⁶³

The fitness of the BICA boys certainly seemed to drop considerably in the later years, as the Association faced increasingly stiff recruiting competition from the newer provincial schemes. During 1930, for example, the reported death toll among the BICA boys rose from one to an astounding twenty-nine. When the railway companies took over responsibility for recruitment at the end of 1928, Blair had been apprehensive about their priorities. The very next year he had to intercede on the Association's behalf to stop them from shipping boys against Morison's wishes. When the BICA Secretary asked that no more boys be sent out until the following spring, the transportation companies told him that the boys were coming 'like it or not.' The companies' emphasis on quantity rather than quality undoubtedly affected failure rates.⁶⁴

The BICA's laxity in placement and aftercare must also have encouraged many boys to leave their posts. Here the Association had no one to blame but itself. Misplacements, lack of formal agreements, unpaid wages, irregular visitations, poor record-keeping and tardy reporting, were all evidence that the organization was not meeting its obligations to the boys or the governments that were funding its work. Much of the organization's ineffectiveness can simply be attributed to the work growing beyond the staff's ability to handle it properly. Certainly the Association had problems in its early years when the boys were arriving at a relatively slow rate. Start-up problems, however, are to be expected in any new, inexperienced organization, and might have righted themselves with time, had the numbers not grown so dramatically. Between the end of 1925 and 1930 the number of BICA boys increased more than ten-

fold, while the size of Morison's staff remained essentially static. At the time of its demise, for example, the Association had a mere four staff members responsible for visiting over five thousand boys.⁶⁵ Consequently, there were never enough people, nor enough time, to do an efficient and effective job, and so corners were cut and tasks left undone.

There is no evidence that the BICA board took any interest in the practical side of the operation. This was left entirely in Morison's hands, and, ever conscious of financial limitations, he tried to do the best he could with the resources he had. It was not that he did not care about the boy's welfare. The sincerity of his annual Christmas messages was obvious to many youngsters, and generated affectionate responses of how the Association was 'made of Kindness and Charity' or thanking Morison for 'the kindness you have extended.'⁶⁶ But caring about the boys' wellbeing, and doing something about it, are different matters. The enormous growth of the work meant that the practicalities suffered, and in the final analysis, Morison and the BICA failed the young immigrants badly.

More money, of course, might have alleviated many of the Association's difficulties, by allowing it, for example, to hire more staff. It is far from certain, however, that further injections of government funds would have kept the organization solvent, for it seemed incapable of financial responsibility. It was not so much that it spent frivolously, for there is no evidence that it did. Rather, its irresponsibility lay in its refusal to adopt even the most basic concepts of financial planning to its operation. There was no annual budget, no long-range forecast of income and expenses, and no ongoing financial stewardship to track and control expenditures. The organization did not even have a certified accountant on staff, much less a financial planner. The

Association's sole financial strategy was to spend until it had no more, then plead with Ottawa or London for additional funding.

In 1926, for example, it received its first government grants on the basis that its yearly operating costs would be \$20,000. By 1929 its annual income was almost \$80,000, yet it was still not enough. Obviously, more boys meant higher expenditures, and the need to purchase the farm drained away much revenue. But none of this should have come as a surprise. Responsible budgeting, forecasting and stewardship would have flagged potential cashflow problems, and allowed sufficient time to plan and implement possible remedies. Governments could have been approached for more funding on the basis of well thought-out financial plans, and may well have been more receptive. Or the movement of boys could have been controlled to balance forecasted income and spending. Good financial planning, of course, would not have guaranteed the BICA's survival, but its total absence almost guaranteed its eventual bankruptcy. Blair had warned the Association in January 1930 that it desperately needed some financial planning. Smyth, however, did not take him seriously, and the assistant deputy minister waited until the following October, when the organization was in its death throes, to raise the subject again, and only then by way of recrimination. Ottawa, of course, should have insisted on proper budgeting and stewardship when the first grants were given in 1926. Its funding of the organization certainly gave it the right to do so. But it trusted the BICA's fiscal management, and, by doing so, it must shoulder some of the blame for the Association's financial collapse.

The combination of its high failure rate, delinquent aftercare and fiscal irresponsibility classifies the BICA as a failure. Yet, it did bring thousands of young Britons to Canada who otherwise may not have had the opportunity. Like young John

Upton from Birmingham, countless thousands of these boys stayed. By doing so, they helped build a young country, and became the fathers and grandfathers of future proud Canadians. Perhaps it is for this that the ill-fated British Immigration and Colonization Association should be best remembered.

3

The Ontario Provincial Scheme

If the boys get the idea into their heads that all they have to do is refuse farm work and they will be released to go into the industrial fields, it will not take very long to wreck the whole scheme. It is far better to return a percentage of the boys who are causing trouble.¹

When John Upton crossed the Atlantic in 1928 to become a Canadian farm hand, he came under the auspices of the BICA. Had he ignored the CPR agent's advice in 1927 and applied instead to immigrate under the auspices of the Ontario government, his chance of being accepted would indeed have been smaller. Between 1926 and 1930, the provincial scheme brought 1742 British boys to Canada - less than one-third the number of boys brought by the Montreal Association. Although there were fewer Ontario 'provincial boys,' they were just as likely to have quit farming by the time the scheme was abandoned in 1931. During its five years of operation the Ontario scheme's failure rate averaged 14% a year, and was particularly noteworthy for the large number of boys who were sent home at the provincial government's request.²

A high failure rate was not the only problem that the Ontario scheme shared with its voluntary counterpart. Poor selection and bad publicity in the UK, and complaints from Ottawa and London about insufficient or tardy reporting, touched the Ontario scheme just as they did the beleaguered BICA. In addition, the provincial scheme

experienced some of its own particular problems. While it never faced the financial disasters that befell the voluntary Association, it did tangle, albeit temporarily, with both the OSC and the dominion department of immigration over the amount of passage assistance given to its young immigrants.

Not all aspects of the Ontario scheme were disappointing or confrontational. There is no evidence, for example, of the inefficient placement and aftercare that characterized the BICA operation. Nor was there the same antagonism between Ottawa and Toronto that often defined the dominion government's relationship with the Montreal Association. Rather, the department of immigration took pains to accommodate the administrators of what it hoped would be the forerunner of many more provincial schemes. Yet, its disappointingly high failure rate, coupled with the decision to discontinue its operation even before Ottawa ended assisted juvenile passages, place the Ontario scheme alongside the BICA project as another failed attempt to settle the right type of British boys on the Canadian land.

Unlike the BICA boys' farm training scheme, the Ontario project was the brainchild of the dominion department of immigration. In January 1926, while the department was putting an embargo on BICA boys, Blair became convinced that the best way of attracting and keeping the right type of British boy was to involve the provinces directly. This of course was impossible in Quebec, where the provincial government had no interest in British immigration. Ontario, on the other hand, had been the primary destination of British home children for over fifty years, and was eager to fill the shortfall in cheap farm labour that followed the Bondfield delegation's report. Consequently, when commissioner Little traveled to Toronto in early February with a proposal for federal assistance for an Ontario farm training scheme, he

discovered that he was preaching to the converted. All that was needed was to negotiate mutually acceptable terms. This proved to be surprisingly difficult and time-consuming.³

Little used the terms being negotiated with the BICA as the basis for Ottawa's proposal. He suggested an annual federal grant of \$5,000 for the first five hundred boys, for an initial period of five years. In a show of generosity that it withheld from the BICA, the immigration department also proposed a further grant of \$1,000 for each hundred boys over 500. In addition, recognizing that the province might have some difficulty handling 500 boys early in its operation, Ottawa was willing to drop the minimum for the first year to 300 boys. Since Ontario expressed a preference for older boys, Little even suggested including boys up to the age of nineteen, as opposed to the seventeen year age limit for BICA boys, and that at least 200 of the boys be between 17 and 19 years old. If the province would inspect the eighteen and nineteen year-olds, the department promised to take responsibility for inspecting the younger boys. Little also committed the department to asking the BICA to help Ontario get started, by providing samples of its application forms, restricting its own operation to east of Belleville, and passing on to Toronto any requests for boys from farmers in other parts of Ontario.⁴

John Martin, Ontario's minister of agriculture, was so pleased with these preliminary terms that Little cabled Canada House about the provinces' 'splendid co-operation,' which included commitments to purchase and equip a two hundred-acre farm close-by the provincial agricultural college at Guelph, at a cost of \$40,000, for the reception and distribution of the boys, and to provide some basic farm training if it were deemed necessary.⁵ The farm, to be named Vimy Ridge in memory of the great Canadian victory in France during the First World War, would include 'an up-to-date

hostel and dormitory equipped with all the latest appliances to make it pleasant and home-like.⁶ The provincial government also agreed to equate Ottawa's grant with its own spending on the farm operation and to provide three full-time inspectors and a farm superintendent. Martin, however, added two provisos. To ensure that only the right kind of boys were brought over, he insisted that W.C. Noxon, the Ontario Agent General in London, select them. Secondly, the OSC must match the combined contributions of the dominion and provincial governments. Ottawa agreed to the first condition and promised to pursue the second. Deputy minister Egan, who was in London on other business, was advised of the preliminary terms and authorized to negotiate a three party agreement with the OSC 'as quickly as possible so that Noxon can commence selection.'⁷

Before returning to Ottawa, Egan advised the immigration department that the OSC was drafting an agreement based on the preliminary terms. He told Little that the British government was prepared to contribute \$20 per boy up to a maximum of \$10,000 a year. Bringing 500 boys each year, therefore, would qualify Ontario for the maximum grant. The OSC, however, refused to fund any boys in excess of 500 a year and insisted that the age limit be held to seventeen. Although the British offer was not as generous as they had hoped, both Ottawa and Toronto were satisfied with the terms, and an official agreement seemed imminent. Yet, a year of 'many delays, errors and misunderstandings' passed before the terms were formalized.⁸

When he returned to Ottawa, Egan left the task of finalizing the agreement in the hands of J. Bruce Walker, director of European Emigration in London. When the draft arrived in Ottawa early in April 1926, Egan was dismayed and angry to discover that it bore little resemblance to the preliminary terms. The OSC still offered a maximum of

\$10,000 a year, but rather than a straight \$20 for each arrival, it introduced a somewhat complex formulae that gave \$25 for each new arrival and \$8 for each boy receiving aftercare in subsequent years. When Egan did the arithmetic he was not surprised that Ontario had already endorsed the new draft. Under its terms, the province would earn the maximum OSC grant by taking significantly fewer than 500 boys a year. During the last four years of the scheme, for example, the OSC would pay Ontario the maximum \$40,000 for bringing only 1,022 boys, instead of the 2,000 boys that Ottawa wanted.⁹

Egan immediately scolded Walker for failing to 'communicate the important change which was made in the financial arrangements.' Ottawa had already given \$5,000 to the provincial government on the understanding that the final agreement would reflect the preliminary terms. It was convinced that the original proposal to pay on the basis of arrivals was sufficient, and that there was no need to make special provision for aftercare funding. Egan was also upset that under the revised terms the OSC contribution was on a per capita basis, whereas the dominion was called upon to contribute its \$5,000 a year regardless of the number of boys who came. He instructed Walker to have the draft revised 'so that the Province of Ontario may be able to handle 2000 boys instead of 1022 during the last four years' and to ensure that Ottawa's contribution would be on the same per capita basis as the OSC.¹⁰ Little had already won Martin's support for these revisions to the draft. He had reminded the Ontario minister of agriculture the intent was to bring 500 boys a year, and assured him that since the BICA had brought out and 'successfully placed' that many during the previous year, 'your Agent General and our organization should have no difficulty whatever in securing a similar number annually during the last four years of the Agreement.'¹¹ As it

turned out, the province's annual intake of boys between 1926 and 1931 would average only 348.¹²

After much revision, Robert Forke, the dominion minister of immigration, finally signed the agreement, dated 25 March 1926. To Ottawa's credit, it recaptured most of the terms and conditions of the preliminary agreement. It specified that the OSC would pay \$20 for each boy who had not reached his seventeenth birthday before the first day of April in the year he sailed. Britain's payment, however, was not to exceed \$10,000 a year or half the annual operating cost of the training farm, whichever was less. During the first year only, still recognizing the probability of a slow start, the per capita grant would be \$50 rather than \$20. The dominion government agreed to contribute \$10 a boy, to a maximum of \$5,000. The province would match Ottawa's contribution and 'make adequate arrangements for the selection, preparation, transportation, reception, care, and placing of all boys sent to Ontario.'¹³ The agreement was a milestone in the Canadian boys' farm training programme. It not only set the rules for the Ontario scheme, but served as a model for the BICA agreement that was signed the following September, and for five other provincial schemes that were initiated between 1927 and 1929.

While Ontario and the two senior governments were revising the draft agreement, the first party of 28 provincial boys left Liverpool on May 20, 1926 and disembarked at Quebec nine days later.¹⁴ Almost immediately, like the BICA, Ontario discovered that not all of its young immigrants were quite what it had expected. Within two months, H.A. Macdonell, Ontario's director of colonization, was seeking Little's advice on how to act 'in regard to boys whom we have placed several times, and finally become convinced that they will prove an utter failure at farm work. Can we have them

deported?'¹⁵ Lacking the BICA's option of shipping undesirables to the Cossar Farm in New Brunswick, the province began sending them home.

By April 1927, 31 of the 171 boys who had been brought to Ontario had been returned. Technically, none of them was actually deported. Through an arrangement between the provincial government, Ottawa and the shipping companies, they were sent home at a 'charity' rate of eleven pounds ten shillings, allowing them to avoid the stigma of being classified as deportees. The repatriations, for which Ontario footed the bill, began in September 1926, when the *SS Doric* left Montreal with 6 British boys who had 'failed to give a satisfactory account of themselves.' One had arrived with the first group on May 29, four more with the second group on July 4 and the sixth had come with the third group as recently as August 8.¹⁶

The reasons for their dismissals were little different from those given by the BICA for repatriating its undesirables, or from those that would be used to send many more Ontario rejects home over the next five years. Three had simply refused to do farm work. Donald S, a sixteen-year-old from Glasgow, had been placed three times, and each time had returned to the Vimy Ridge farm the very next day. When he refused a fourth placement, W. Sarel, the farm superintendent, decided that he was incorrigible and had him sent home. Similarly, sixteen-year-old John D from London and seventeen-year-old Stanley E from Wales had been placed with several farmers but would not work. Over the next five years, this reluctance to work on the land was by far the primary reason for returning boys to Britain. There were, of course, others. Frank B, for instance, the fourth of the six early returnees, was sent home because he became inconsolably homesick. Sarel considered him to be 'a bright and willing boy, [who] has put his best into all that he does,' and tried to talk him into staying a while

longer. The young Englishman, however, pleaded to be sent home, and the sympathetic Sarel complied. The farm superintendent had less sympathy for Norman S, the fifth reject on the *Doric*. According to Sarel, Norman had 'peculiar habits such as never undressing when going to bed, nor ever having a bath unless I take him.' He also had 'the filthy habit of abusing himself,' and was 'of doubtful mentality.' Sarel made no attempt to talk young Norman into staying. Another Glaswegian, sixteen-year-old William M, was the sixth discard on the *Doric*. He was asthmatic, and the dusty farm environment aggravated his condition. It was impossible for him to enter stables or barns without having an attack, rendering him useless for farm work. Not for the last time, the province criticized the selection process in the UK for accepting boys who were clearly medically unfit.¹⁷

As lawlessness, laziness and all manner of physical and mental illnesses were added to the list of reasons for deportation, the ships bringing the boys to Canada routinely made the return trip with their cargo of rejects. It became so customary that in January 1927, when Toronto wanted to send back yet another batch of boys, G.A. Elliot, the Ontario director of colonization, simply asked Little to make 'the usual arrangements.' Naturally, the rate at which the young Britons were being shipped home did not go unnoticed by the OSC. By December 1926 it was asking Canada House 'for information as to the necessity of returning so many.' When the immigration department relayed this query to Ontario, it added a question of its own – did the problem lie 'in the handling of the boys' at Vimy Ridge, or was 'the weakness in the selection on the other side?'¹⁸

Not surprisingly, Noxon, who was responsible for the boys' selection, rejected the idea that there was anything faulty in the recruitment method. He stressed that the boys

were being chosen from among the best public and secondary schools in the country – like Berkhamsted School in Hertfordshire, Reading School in Berkshire and Highgate School in Middlesex. Moreover, the Agent General was confident that some of the boys who had been deported could have been retained.¹⁹ In Toronto, Elliot believed otherwise. He maintained that too many were from Britain's cities and had neither the experience nor aptitude to make a success of farm work. The recruiting agents should do more selecting from among the UK's rural population, where boys at least had some experience in farming. As to the suggestion that some rejects might have been retained, Elliot responded that the province 'had exhausted all means and persuasive powers in trying to induce the boys to stay on the farm.' Minister Martin and deputy minister Roadhouse had 'explained the advisability of their trying to make good' to several boys and warned them about the humiliation of being branded as failures and of the financial burden their return might place on their parents. It was to no avail. The youngsters simply did not like farming.²⁰

Elliot did acknowledge that some might have stayed if they had been allowed to take up other work. The province had given this 'careful consideration,' but had decided that:

it would be a mistake to allow them to depart from the principal [*sic.*] involved – placing boys on Ontario farms – believing immediately we allowed a few to do this, we would have a great many others only too anxious to give this as their reason for leaving the farm.²¹

Egan fully agreed. He told Walker that if the boys got it into their heads that all they had to do was refuse farm work to be 'released into the industrial fields,' it would 'not take very long to wreck the whole scheme.' In the deputy minister's opinion, it was better to return the troublemakers. The provincial government interpreted this as a green light to continue repatriation at whatever pace it deemed proper. Despite a plea

in the summer of 1927 from Canada House to slow down repatriations because of adverse publicity in the UK, Ontario continued to return boys at a high rate. In January 1930, return trips were so routine that Elliot nonchalantly referred to Vimy Ridge's 'general clean up for the year' as he provided Ottawa with his latest list of undesirables.²²

It was not only the high rate at which the boys were sent home that brought adverse publicity in the old country. Like the BICA, the Ontario scheme could not avoid having some of its boys' complaints find their way into the British press. In December 1929, an Isle of Man newspaper published a letter that Edward Hughes had written to his mother while he was between jobs and staying at The British Welcome and Welfare League hostel in Toronto. The hostel provided temporary accommodation for needy British immigrants, and Ontario used it as an overflow for Vimy Ridge when the training farm was filled. Edward complained about the poor quality of the food and the 'verminous' condition of the beds. Remembering that in 1925 similar complaints by David Thomas against the BICA's Montreal hostel had been 'almost disastrous' to the boy immigration movement, the OSC demanded an immediate inquiry. In its defense, the Welfare League, just as the BICA had done before it, sent Blair a copy of a typical menu. Noting that the food was wholesome without being sumptuous, Albert Plenty, the League's president, suggested that perhaps the problem was that many boys might 'have been used to having beef-steak etc. on the farm.' Blair doubted that explanation, noting that it was not uncommon for boys to complain of getting very little meat on the farms. Ignoring the possibility that the menu might have little to do with the quality of the food, Blair told Plenty that 'any boy who gets three meals such as you described in your letter should not suffer much from lack of nourishment.' He commended the

league on its menu, and accepted its contention that Hughes' complaints about the food were unfounded.²³

As to the vermin, Plenty advised Ottawa that as recently as the previous week, Toronto's inspector of medical health had judged the hostel the cleanest institution in the City of Toronto. The problem, the league's president contended, lay not with the hostel but with young Hughes, who was 'very disagreeable, and very antagonistic towards anything.' Elliot agreed. He told Blair that although Hughes could 'work well when in the humour,' he had proven himself to be 'a decided agitator...[who] delights in writing letters home exaggerating conditions over here.'²⁴ The immigration department accepted the province's explanation, particularly when it learned that in less than a year Hughes had quit, or been fired from, seven separate farm jobs, and had been charged with assaulting one of his employers. Blair advised London that no blame could be attributed to the Welfare League, or the provincial scheme, and that he had advised Elliot that if Hughes lost or quit one more job, he should be sent home 'by process of deportation rather than paying for him at the Charity rate.'²⁵

Although the province was exonerated in the Edward Hughes case, it fared less well when another criticism of its scheme surfaced in the *South Wales Echo* early in 1930. This time the complaint was that the boys were not receiving their wages. Again the OSC demanded an explanation, and again Toronto successfully refuted the accusation. In defending itself to the dominion immigration department, however, the province let slip that while it had approximately \$30,000 of the boys' wages on account, the money was deposited with the provincial treasurer and drawing no interest. Little was flabbergasted. He suggested to Elliot that:

If any of these boys should write to the Old Country and give information to the effect that

they are not receiving interest on their deposits, I am quite sure that both the Province and ourselves would be severely criticized.²⁶

The commissioner explained to Elliot that the BICA deposited its boys' wages into individual interest-bearing bank accounts and asked that Ontario take immediate action to do likewise. He also suggested that the province 'go a step further' and credit each of the new accounts with one year's back interest. Toronto accepted the criticism, and moved the money and equivalent interest into savings accounts in the Provincial Savings Bank.²⁷

The incident was one of only three instances when the provincial scheme fell afoul of the dominion immigration department. The second occurred when the OSC complained to Ottawa that it was not receiving the province's annual report of arrivals and operating costs 'in a timely manner.' Little was annoyed when he had to advise Elliot at the end of September 1929 that the OSC was still waiting for Ontario's report for the fiscal year ending March 31. Elliot's response that the province had forgotten to file the reports because it had lost its copy of the agreement did little to placate Ottawa's annoyance, and left Blair wondering about the province's commitment to the scheme.²⁸

The third confrontation was more significant. Its resolution required a ministerial decision that changed how Ontario, as well as the BICA, could spend their government grants. In January 1929 a surprised immigration department discovered that the Ontario government and the BICA had made separate arrangements with the OSC to share the cost of their boys' rail fares from their homes to their nearest port of embarkation. When Egan queried Martin, the minister of agriculture agreed 'that this Province should bear its share of payments that may be necessary in this regard.' The dominion deputy minister disagreed emphatically. First, he scolded the province for making a separate

agreement with the British government without consulting, or even advising, Ottawa. Then he explained why such an arrangement was totally unacceptable. Defraying rail fares within Britain was understandable for destitute Barnardo or Salvation Army boys but the provincial schemes were supposed to appeal to a better type of boy. Toronto's separate agreement effectively defeated this objective by making 'a direct appeal for the movement of the same type of boy as has hitherto been moved only by these charitable societies.' Egan suggested that if Ontario really wanted to compete with the societies it should also provide clothing and pocket money. If the province disagreed, Ottawa would have to make 'necessary financial adjustments ... in other directions.' Martin explained that the OSC had initiated the arrangement and Noxon had not considered that Ottawa might object. Toronto would immediately advise him to have the matter 'satisfactorily adjusted.'²⁹

Adjusting the matter was not so simple. There was still the question of the BICA's rail fare agreement with the OSC, which would give the Association a competitive edge in recruiting. Believing that 'a uniform practice' was needed, and that it should entail no subsidies for transportation within the UK for either provincial or BICA boys, Egan presented his argument to immigration minister Stewart. The minister agreed, and in February 1930 he advised the BICA that 'no Provincial Government or Society will any longer be free to utilize any part of the Government grant for the payment of rail fare overseas.' When the BICA pointed out that CPR recruitment literature was offering boys 'a free passage from home to farm with no repayment of any kind whatsoever,' the immigration department showed little sympathy. Its only concession was to extend the compliance deadline until the boys who had already been recruited had sailed for Canada.³⁰

and CPR had a significant financial incentive to recruit provincial rather than Association boys.³²

The problem lay in how the governments funded transportation costs. Under the terms of a 1923 passage agreement, London and Ottawa co-funded an \$80 assisted passage grant for each migrant shipped under the auspices of a recognized juvenile immigration society. In the case of the BICA, which was recognized as performing the dual role of a provincial scheme and a charitable organization, the grant was paid directly to its agents in Britain. After paying the steamship companies for the boys' fares to Canada, the agents then remitted the balance of the grant to the Association, to help defray its administrative costs. In addition, in recognition of the philanthropic nature of the work, the shipping companies allowed their boys to travel at the established special 'charity' rate. The net result of the grant and low fare was that, despite having to pay the train fare to Montreal for boys who landed at Halifax or Quebec City, the BICA was still left with a surplus of \$15 to \$20 per boy out of the original \$80 grant.³³

Provincial boys were handled differently. The British and dominion governments jointly covered their actual transportation cost to the Vimy Ridge farm. As the province of Ontario was not recognized as a philanthropic organization, the steamship companies charged the full immigrant adult fare of fourteen pounds and fifteen shillings for its boys. When Ottawa did the arithmetic, it realized that it paid more to bring 'the same type of boy' to Vimy Ridge than to Montreal. It also realized that, since Ontario did not receive the \$80 grant, it was not benefiting from any 'surplus.' The immigration department immediately advocated an end to 'discrimination in monetary

contributions or assistance to migrants who come to Canada under the auspices either of a juvenile society or of a Provincial Government.¹³⁴

The OSC, however, thought otherwise. It argued that since the Association obtained part of its income from private subscriptions, it was truly 'philanthropic in character,' and so deserved more generous government funding than Ontario. It also pointed out that the charity fare was a special concession of the shipping companies and it was unlikely they would extend it to 'Provincial Government Schemes, which take upon themselves the name of Juvenile Emigration Societies in order to obtain the charity rate.' There was a possibility that the companies would discontinue the charity fare altogether if they were pressured to extend it to provincial boys. Consequently, at the end of December 1927, OSC secretary Plant advised the dominion immigration department that 'my committee trust that the Department will not wish to proceed further with the proposal.'¹³⁵

The department, however, was resolute. It reminded the OSC that it hoped to develop provincial schemes from coast-to-coast and that equal treatment with charitable organizations was essential 'if we are to retain the co-operation of Provincial Governments.' It also questioned the logic in paying higher fares for Vimy Ridge boys 'when the only difference ... is that the increase goes into the pockets of the Transportation companies.'¹³⁶ The Department's tenacity prevailed when the OSC agreed to reconsider the uniformity of the \$80 grant and took no exception to Ottawa's approaching the steamship companies about extending the charity rate to include provincial boys. In the fall of 1928, when Whitehall proposed a new ten pound adult immigrant fare, and offered to absorb the balance of the normal eighteen pound fifteen shilling fare, Ottawa agreed on condition that the charity fare was extended to

provincial boys. Recognizing that the lower adult fare would increase business, the shipping companies agreed.³⁷ Consequently, a new assisted passage agreement, signed at the end of 1928 by Ottawa, London and the shipping companies, specified that all juvenile migrants, including those destined for provincial training farms, were eligible for both the joint government grant and the special charity transportation rate.³⁸

Despite Ottawa's determination to see the provincial scheme succeed, Ontario withdrew at the end of 1930. In October the writing appeared on the wall when Elliot confessed that he was having 'more than the usual amount of difficulty in placing all of our Vimy Ridge boys,' and had requested Noxon to ease off recruiting for 1931. The Depression was taking its toll on the provincial boys, just as it was on the BICA boys. With a glut of juvenile farm labourers, more and more unemployed young immigrants were returning to Vimy Ridge, or to the Welfare League hostel in Toronto, looking for help. In October there were forty; by December, over a hundred, and Elliot was complaining of the 'considerable' cost of taking care of 'not only our own unemployed but the ones who come to us from other sources.'³⁹ Before the end of the year, Elliot's directive to Noxon to 'ease up' was revised to 'send no more boys.' The provincial government had had enough. When the five-year term of the tripartite agreement expired in March 1931 it was renewed for one year. It was, however, a token gesture. No more provincial boys would be brought to Vimy Ridge. Even before minister Gordon ended assisted passages for juveniles in September 1931, the Ontario government advised Ottawa that it was abandoning its scheme and turning the Vimy Ridge operation over to The United Church of Canada. The province of Ontario's boys' farm training scheme had come to an end.⁴⁰

During the fifty-seven years before the Ontario government's venture into the farm training scheme, charitable organizations had brought over 80,000 young Britons to Canada. Certainly these private schemes had their problems, especially in terms of the exploitation and personal damage suffered by many of their children. In one respect, however, they were undeniably successful – they helped satisfy Canada's almost insatiable demand for cheap farm labour. When Ottawa and Ontario conceived the first provincial boys' scheme in 1926, they believed that the administrative machinery of government could do at least as good a job as voluntary societies in finding, placing and retaining British juvenile farmworkers. They were also convinced that they could improve the quality of the newcomers by attracting a 'better class' of boy than the philanthropic child savers. Consequently, the high failure rate and particularly the high expulsion rate of the Vimy Ridge boys greatly disappointed the governments, especially during a period when the old established voluntary organizations could claim deportation rates for British farm-boys of only 4%.⁴¹

The province's inability to hold onto its boys reflected two basic weaknesses in its scheme compared to those of the philanthropic societies. First, the Vimy Ridge project, like its BICA counterpart, failed to recognize that the 'best type' of British boy did not inevitably make the best type of Canadian farm-labourer. The home children's backgrounds of deprivation and lack of secondary schooling undoubtedly lowered their expectations, though not necessarily their hopes, for a prosperous future in Canada. By contrast, the better-educated provincial boys came, not for a second chance to make good, but for the opportunity to at least match the lifestyle they had enjoyed back home. Their expectations were greater, and, therefore, so too were their disappointment and disillusionment at the rigour, isolation, repetitive manual labour, and low wages that

defined the lives of Canadian farm workers. It is hardly surprising that their failure rate was higher than that of the charity boys.

The second basic flaw in the provincial scheme was the governments' inability to recognize that bureaucratic prowess was no substitute for experience. The philanthropic societies had a long history of dealing with the particular problems of adolescent immigrants. The province of Ontario, like the BICA, had none. As long as their boys settled in well the provincial scheme functioned reasonably smoothly. Apart from being scolded for tardy reporting, there is no evidence of the administrative shortcomings that hounded the Montreal Association. On the other hand, when the boys rebelled, as teenagers often do, the provincial bureaucrats, inexperienced in the ways of wayward teenagers, could come up with no better solution than to send them home. This inexperience, coupled with the naïve conviction that public school boys would slide smoothly onto the Canadian land, almost guaranteed the Ontario scheme's high failure and expulsion rates.

Would young John Upton have stayed on the land had he come to Canada as an Ontario provincial boy? Probably not. Although it seems unlikely that a lad of John's character and determination would have been deported, his background would have been enough of a handicap to drive him away from farming, even if the disruptions of the Depression did not. He was exactly the kind of boy that the dominion and Ontario governments were seeking – well schooled, intelligent and ambitious. Yet it was these very attributes that convinced John that the greater prosperity he sought in his adopted country did not lie in Canada's farmland, but in its industrialized urban centres.

4

The Alberta Scheme

There is a rising tide of discontent amongst the relatives of these boys, based on the belief that their after-care is of a rather primitive, indefinite, and spasmodic character. ... Many of the boys have been writing home stating that the after-care subsequent to training is really non est, and that they are left at the mercy of the individual farmer who has a very human desire to get the most out of them for the least cost.¹

In theory, when John Upton immigrated to Canada in 1928 to become a farm hand, he could have gone to Alberta under a provincial/imperial agreement that was substantially different from the BICA or Vimy Ridge schemes in central Canada. In practice, however, neither John nor his working-class parents could afford it. The Alberta scheme required its young would-be farmers to make a substantial investment in their future on the land by paying their own transportation from the UK and sharing in the cost of formal agricultural instruction in the province, before being placed with farmers. For many British lads, the scheme was a bad investment. Long on training and short on aftercare, the scheme never managed to attract as many recruits as hoped for, and its failure rate was even higher, and rose even more quickly, than that of its eastern counterparts. Initiated in 1924, and continued until 1929, the scheme was particularly noteworthy for the friction it created between the dominion immigration department

and Edmonton that eventually caused Ottawa to withdraw from it. After modifications to the scheme's format failed to improve its effectiveness, Alberta abandoned it even before the Great Depression began to make its presence felt.

The Alberta boys' farm training scheme was the brainchild of its minister of agriculture, George Hoadley. In June 1924, while visiting the UK, Hoadley negotiated directly with the OSC what the British and dominion governments thereafter referred to as *The Hoadley Scheme*. The Alberta minister claimed that the idea came to him during his visit when he:

came into contact with a number of young men who are anxious to settle on farms in Canada, provided they can secure some training in the methods and practice of Canadian Agriculture before actually taking up farms for themselves.²

Despite his claim of sudden inspiration, Hoadley had done his homework before leaving Edmonton. The province's agricultural colleges were not filled and, with some redistribution of Alberta's own students, one school and its buildings, equipment and staff could be dedicated to the instruction of young Britons. If the OSC would share the cost of tuition with the province, young British men could be trained in prairie farm methods for jobs in Alberta. The province would even guarantee finding them work on local farms when they completed the course. The OSC enthusiastically offered 'hearty cooperation' and pointed out that the students would qualify for joint British-Dominion passage loans. Both governments hoped, of course, that the graduates would remain in Canada and settle permanently on the land.³

The bipartite Agreement was signed in July 1924, three months after the BICA first applied for government recognition as a child immigration society, and eighteen months before Ottawa and Toronto began negotiating the Vimy Ridge scheme. The Hoadley Scheme, however, was unlike those of the Montreal voluntary organization or

the province of Ontario. It offered up to 150 young British men, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, an exclusive training course at the province's agricultural college at Vermilion, located about 130 miles east of Edmonton. In addition to its classrooms and laboratories, the college operated a 320-acre farm stocked with cattle, sheep, heavy workhorses, hogs and poultry. The six-month course would run from October 1924 through March 1925 and include instruction on field husbandry, livestock management, poultry and dairy farming, horticulture, pest control, farm management and veterinary science. The young pupils would also learn to harness and drive the farm teams and to care for farm animals. The two governments would equally share the cost up to a maximum British government contribution of four thousand pounds. The students, however, were required to make their own way to Vermilion and pay \$30 a month for board and lodgings while attending school. To meet this liability and the cost of incidentals and pocket money, each trainee had to have fifty pounds in his possession when he arrived at Vermilion, or arrange in advance to have it deposited with the school principal.⁴

At the completion of the course, the Alberta government undertook to find each pupil work on a farm, at competitive wages. If any young man wanted to take a more advanced course at one of the other provincial colleges during the following winter, he could do so, but would have to pay his own tuition fees. This requirement was later removed when Alberta realized that after their first year the young men would be *bona fide* Alberta residents and entitled to free tuition.⁵ Hoadley assured the OSC that if the young men chose not to continue their formal training 'they would have no difficulty in finding continuous employment during the following winter and eventually establishing themselves upon a farm.'⁶ Under the agreement Alberta committed to keep the

newcomers under 'regular and continuous supervision.' Without consulting Ottawa, however, the British and Alberta governments placed responsibility for the young men's selection upon the dominion superintendent of emigration in London. An overriding proviso was that the agreement would not apply unless at least 100 boys sailed for Alberta before the end of the year.⁷

Apart from Ottawa's pique at not being consulted, the announcement of the proposed scheme was well received on both sides of the Atlantic. Edmonton's Gyro Club, for example, fully endorsed the plans, and Leonard Wide of the British YMCA migration department, following a visit to Vermilion, wrote enthusiastically of its 'up-to-date and magnificently equipped Agricultural College.' He found the planned training scheme to be so fundamentally sound that he thoroughly recommended it 'to British boys of culture, education and ability.'⁸ These were certainly the kinds of boys that Alberta and the OSC wished to attract and, in the interests of co-operation, the dominion immigration department in the UK laid aside its irritation and began the task of recruiting.

W.R. Little, director of European immigration in London, promoted the scheme in a letter to the headmasters of the top schools in Britain, and advertised it in *The Sunday Times*, under the heading 'Farm Life for Town Boys -- Alberta's Scheme.' The response was disappointing. By the time Little's letter arrived, the schools were breaking up for the summer holidays, and when they re-opened in September the recruiters noticed 'a considerable disinclination on the part of parents to encourage their sons to start for Canada at this season of the year.'⁹ Nevertheless, Hoadley was determined to proceed, even if only to a limited extent. He called for renewed efforts by the dominion recruiters, since:

from every source of this country, as well as in the old country, [the Alberta scheme] is looked on as a very valuable move in connection with the future of settlement here and elsewhere within the empire.¹⁰

Despite the recruiters' best efforts, only 51 boys had arrived at Vermilion by the middle of November, and by mid-December only 64 were enrolled in the course, with no more on their way. As the minimum of 100 students specified in the agreement would obviously not be reached, the OSC, anxious to preserve the scheme, consented to reduce the minimum to 60. Far from being disappointed, OSC chairman T.C. Macnaghten wrote Hoadley that 'in view of the class of boys who have gone out under the scheme...we have cause for congratulating ourselves.'¹¹ Principal Elliott of Vermilion College agreed. He was confident that the scheme was 'introducing the right kind and quality of citizens to the West.'¹² Yet, less than two years later, Alberta's deputy minister of agriculture confessed to Ottawa that only 32 of the 64 British pupils who took the first course at Vermilion were employed in some form of agricultural work in the province. The rest had either returned to the UK or drifted into other work.¹³ The Alberta government merely referred to these boys as 'disappointments' but they represented an astonishing 50% failure rate.

Ottawa received its first indication that all was not well within months of the boys completing their course. In March 1925, the last month of classes, immigration department accountants asked Blair how they might recover the passage loans that Ottawa and the OSC had given to some students. Since only the Alberta government knew where the boys had been placed, Blair sent Edmonton a list of debtors, and asked if the province would collect the debts. Hoadley refused. Instead, he provided Blair with the boys' last known addresses, reminding him that the money was owed to the senior governments, not to Alberta.¹⁴ This response underscored reluctance by the

province to co-operate with Ottawa that increasingly strained the relationship between them during the life of the Hoadley Scheme. More important, in the fall of 1925 Ottawa discovered that the addresses provided by Alberta included several in the UK, the USA, and Canadian urban centres from Winnipeg to Vancouver.¹⁵

Alberta's indirect disclosure that the Vermilion graduates were 'drifting' was soon confirmed by concrete examples. In August 1925, for example, Ottawa received an unsettling report from a dominion emigration agent in the UK. He had been contacted by the mother of 18 year-old Alexander Gordon, a graduate of St. Francis Xavier College in Liverpool, who had gone out to Vermilion the previous October. The agent described Alexander as a boy 'of excellent connection and influence ... [who] was considered a splendid and promising youth,' and who was 'naturally at home among livestock and should, if encouraged, [have] easily made good in Alberta.' Apparently, Alexander had enjoyed the course at Vermilion, but, on graduating, he was sent first to a farmer near Calgary who did not need or want him, then to a second farmer who hired him for board and lodgings, but no wages. Finally, on his own initiative, he had secured paid work with a third farmer, who Alexander described as 'a man for whom it [was] impossible for any man to work.' Disillusioned, the young Englishman had gone to Calgary in search of more rewarding and satisfying employment. Because of Alexander's bad experience, the Liverpool agent claimed to 'have lost what I hoped would develop into a large party of Catholic boys, recruited from the three or four best colleges in the country.'¹⁶

An even more damning indictment, which attracted special attention in Ottawa because it came from a personal friend of Little, accused the Hoadley Scheme of being 'a complete failure.' Major J.F. Chapman's son Edward had also entered the course in

October 1924, and he too had enjoyed the college. Like Alexander Gordon, young Edward was upset at the subsequent treatment he received from the farmers. When he wrote his father that farmers 'belittled the school work ... [and] paid only \$10 a month,' with no guarantee of employment during the winter, the major contacted several of Edward's classmates and their parents. He told Little that the boys had confirmed that the scheme was 'nothing more nor less than exploitation,' and that few of them were 'willing to proceed with their intention of becoming settlers on the land.' As for the parents, the major advised Ottawa that 'the large majority ... consider that they have been done and their main anxiety is therefore to get [their sons] out of the country.' Major Chapman was particularly upset that Ottawa had already contacted his son regarding repayment of his passage loan. The Hoadley Scheme literature called for the boys to discharge their debts 'when settled,' and Edward's father questioned how his son could 'fairly or in any sense of imagination be regarded as settled.'¹⁷

The Gordon and Chapman cases were only two examples of what, by the fall of 1925, Bruce Walker was referring to as 'a rising tide of discontent' among the boys' relatives. Many of the young Britons had been writing home complaining about the 'primitive, indefinite, and spasmodic character' of their aftercare and of being 'left at the mercy of the individual farmer who [had] a very human desire to get the most out of them for the least cost.'¹⁸ Although the nature and quantity of the complaints disturbed the immigration department, it did not discover the magnitude of the problem until the following spring. In April 1926, a dominion immigration officer in Vancouver reported that only five of the original 64 students were still on Alberta farms. His information came from two former pupils whom he had tracked down for repayment of their passage loans. Commissioner Little immediately demanded that the province provide a

status report 'as to what progress has been made by each of the boys who proceeded to Vermilion during 1924 and who were placed in the spring of 1925.'¹⁹ Ottawa was relieved that the reported failure rate of over 90% had been an exaggeration, but dismayed that the actual failure rate was still an astonishing 50%. Equally disturbing to the immigration department staff was Edmonton's apparent disinterest in the fate of the 'disappointments.' While noting that four students had returned to the UK, the balance of the failures were discounted in the provincial report with such phrases as: 'did not go on a farm,' 'left for Chicago,' 'think he is in a beer room in Calgary,' 'idling in Edmonton,' 'think he is running a dance hall in Calgary,' 'gone to the coast,' or 'last heard of selling insurance in Saskatoon.'²⁰

In London, Ottawa and Edmonton, reactions to the Hoadley scheme's problems were predictable. As soon as it learned of the 'rising tide of discontent,' the OSC, ever fearful of bad publicity in the UK, called for the dominion immigration department to make an 'independent and thorough enquiry' before the British press got hold of the story. Ottawa reminded Hoadley that the agreement called for his government to provide the youths with 'regular and continuous supervision' and accused the province of inappropriate placements and negligent aftercare. Alberta decided that the best form of defense was attack. Principal Elliott claimed that every precaution had been taken to place the boys with farmers personally known to one of the staff members. He was adamant that 'in the great majority of instances where boys did not do well it was the fault of the boy and not the farmer.' Hoadley blamed the failure rate on poor selection in the UK. He pointed to the case of young Captain Moffat, who was then being deported. The Alberta minister alleged that the dominion agent in Liverpool had known of the 'undesirable nature of [Moffat's] character,' but had nevertheless recruited

him 'in view of giving him a last chance to make good in life and cease being a nuisance and drag on his father.' Hoadley maintained that the dominion agents' acceptance of this type of youth was now giving the province a 'black eye.' H.A. Craig, Alberta's deputy minister of agriculture, agreed. He claimed that the first time he saw the boys he recognized that many had no chance of making good and begged Ottawa to ensure future students would be chosen more carefully.²¹

That there would be future students had been decided in April 1925, the month after the first class of Hoadley Boys graduated from Vermilion College. By the time Ottawa and London fully realized the extent to which the first class had failed, the second class had completed its course. Its fortunes were little better. In November 1924 the OSC had asked the Alberta government if it wanted to renew the agreement for another year. Still enthusiastic about the quality of the first year's recruits, Macnaghten 'unhesitatingly' promised Hoadley that 'if the Government of Alberta is disposed to continue the experiment next year, the Overseas Settlement Committee and the Home Government will be most ready to co-operate.' In April 1925 Edmonton replied that it was willing to continue the scheme for another year but, in light of the previous year's experience, it wanted two changes. First, instead of concentrating the boys in one specially reserved school, it preferred to distribute them among its agricultural schools at Vermilion, Olds and Claresholm, where they would take the same classes as provincial boys, as well as special classes in which they would 'acquire such local knowledge as the Canadian boys already possess.' Alberta claimed that this arrangement would 'best suit the organization of our schools,' reduce the cost of the boys' board by 25%, and have the added benefit of allowing the immigrants to mix with

young Albertans. Both the OSC and the dominion government were happy to comply.²²

Alberta's second desired change, however, met with quite a different response. Still smarting from bad publicity that the province had received at the hands of the UK press over Moffat's deportation, and the cost of his return fare, Hoadley wanted the parents of future students to guarantee the cost of their sons' transportation home, should the boys prove unsuitable. The province had already drafted a revised application form to this effect but Ottawa and London balked at the idea, claiming that it would impair the whole movement. The province did not insist and the only change in the new agreement, signed in June 1925 and covering a second intake of 'approximately one hundred youths,' was that they would be distributed among the three provincial colleges.²³

Despite getting the signal in April 1925 to begin recruiting for October classes, the dominion immigration agents only secured 67 pupils, just three more than they had recruited the previous year. In 1924 Canada House had blamed the first year's disappointing recruitment on the lateness of Alberta's decision to proceed with the scheme, now it blamed adverse publicity in the British press. Bruce Walker believed that a September article in the *Daily Record* had caused many British youths who had already completed their applications to change their minds. Under the heading 'Prince To Train Boys – Chance For British Lads On His Ranch,' the article stated that the Prince of Wales would expand the facilities at his Alberta cattle ranch to accommodate young Britons interested in learning about Canadian ranching. It also included a suggestion from Mr. Carlyle, the ranch manager, that young Britons wait until they were at least twenty years old before heading for Canadian farms. He advised them

that after leaving public school they should farm in England for a year to see if the life suited them. Walker maintained that his agents failed to recruit the desired 100 students in 1925 because several applicants had decided to follow Carlyle's advice. Many of the 67 Hoadley Boys recruited for the second course soon wished that they too had heeded Carlyle. Within three months of starting classes the newcomers were disgruntled enough to catalyze a new feud between Ottawa and Edmonton over passage loans. Within six months of completing the course, their failure rate had reached 38%.²⁴

The fracas over the boys' fares began in January 1926, when the second group of youths learned that a new agreement signed that month between the British and dominion governments replaced the old passage loan scheme with new government-funded cheap fares. The Hoadley boys who had arrived in 1924 and 1925 had either paid their own way or received imperial/dominion loans of between \$98 and \$112, depending on their point of origin in the UK. Under the terms of the new passage agreement, future migrants over seventeen years of age could travel to Edmonton from their nearest British port for only \$22. This more generous funding received wide publicity in the British and Canadian press. As soon as the students at the Alberta agricultural colleges heard of it they petitioned Hoadley, 'respectfully requesting that, if possible, the concessions in fares for emigrants of 1926 be extended to us.' Hoadley considered that the request for a fare rebate or loan reduction was reasonable and passed it on to London and Ottawa for consideration.²⁵

Edmonton and the young petitioners were disappointed by the senior governments' responses. First, the OSC refused to make the terms of the new agreement retroactive. Then Ottawa explained that the Hoadley boys did not qualify since a condition of the cheap fare was provincial commitment to provide five years of aftercare. Little pointed

out that while Alberta's agreement with the OSC required it to provide regular and continuous supervision, there was no specified duration. Hoping to interest the provincial government in securing the cheap fare for future Hoadley boys, Little provided the Alberta minister of agriculture with a draft aftercare agreement and definition of what it entailed, including securing employment, regular visitations, dealing with complaints, and resolving grievances. Ottawa explained that the governments of Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had signed such agreements and were 'operating without difficulty,' and that Hoadley 'need have no fear because our experience shows reasonable service amply covers aftercare.' Besides, as Blair explained to deputy minister Craig, the only alternative was for future Hoadley boys to pay the full fare of about \$100, with the probable result that there would be fewer applicants.²⁶

Hoadley was completely unimpressed. By September 1926 the OSC was urging Ottawa to take responsibility for the aftercare of future Hoadley Boys. Anticipating that Alberta would sign an aftercare agreement, the OSC was already advertising the cheap fare for the third group of students and asked the dominion immigration department to 'make a special concession' to look after the new recruits. Reluctantly, the department consented. When Hoadley thanked Ottawa for its consideration and offered his co-operation, Little angrily responded that there was 'no need for your co-operation ... our Land Settlement Branch will look after it' - including placing the boys. When Edmonton later asked the dominion immigration department to provide aftercare for all of its Hoadley boys, the request was summarily denied, with a terse reminder that those who had come before 1926 were 'wards of the Provincial Government.'²⁷

While governments feuded over reduced fares and aftercare agreements, the student petitioners completed their classes and followed the example of the first year's graduates by returning home or drifting off the land. By September 1926, twelve of the twenty-two who had completed their course at Olds College the previous March were classed as disappointments. The principal admitted that three youths had returned to Britain, while eight others had drifted into cities from Calgary to Vancouver. Another, who had openly boasted of coming to Canada merely as a means of getting to the United States, had gone to a brother in Chicago. Of the 67 who graduated from the three schools in March 1926, 26 had failed by the following September.²⁸

The continuing high failure rate, and the ill feeling generated by the aftercare dispute, did not deter Alberta or the OSC from renewing the Agreement for a third year. For the Hoadley scheme, however, the writing was on the wall. To Ottawa and London's annoyance, Alberta's minister of agriculture did not decide to host the third course until the end of July 1926, blaming the delay on the recent provincial election which had kept him 'exceedingly busy for the last month or so.'²⁹ Complaining of 'the lateness of the season, and the short time left to obtain even a fair number of students,' Canada House recruited only 22 pupils for the October 1926 class. In January 1927, in an effort to bolster the dwindling supply of farm help to Alberta, the dominion immigration department attempted to interest the provincial government in the British boys' farm training scheme. Describing the scheme to Alberta Premier J.E. Brownlee, Minister Robert Forke explained that it was already operating in Ontario, and that Ottawa was trying to establish similar training farms in each province. Brownlee was uninterested. Waiting until March to respond, he said that Alberta would defer its decision until it was sure it could properly handle the boys. Ever reluctant to accept the

responsibilities and cost of providing aftercare, Alberta remained a non-participant in the tripartite schemes.³⁰

By the spring of 1927, Ottawa was ready to wash its hands of the Hoadley scheme. Alberta had advised the OSC that it planned to continue the scheme for a fourth year, but insisted that the dominion immigration department hand over the task of selecting the boys to H. Greenfield, the province's commissioner of colonization in London. Alberta had long been critical of the quality of boys that were being sent. It often pleaded for more diligent selection and even complained that several students had admitted that no OSC or dominion government official had ever interviewed them. H.A. Craig, the province's deputy minister of agriculture, advised Egan that the best solution was 'that all the boys should come through the hands of one official who would be expected to see that they are the right type of boy and that there is some possibility of making good on a farm.' In April 1927, Hoadley told Egan that the appropriate official was a representative of the Alberta government and Greenfield would now assume that responsibility. Ottawa was livid and bitterly suggested to the OSC that if the province assumed responsibility for selection, then it must do the same for advertising, placement and aftercare. Hoadley politely refused the invitation, but when a fifth agreement was signed in 1928 the dominion government divorced itself completely from the whole scheme.³¹

This fifth and final agreement, signed in October 1928, was significantly different. It offered two separate 'short courses,' each of one-month duration, to be given in the spring of 1929.³² The students would still be distributed among the three provincial colleges but needed only to bring fifteen pounds for incidentals and board, at a rate of \$1 a day. Significantly, the agreement called for the province to provide at least one

year of supervision after the boys' arrival in Alberta. Although no definition of 'supervision' was provided, Ottawa interpreted it to include placement and aftercare, and withdrew its services. It was Alberta's last attempt to coax the 'right type' of British youngsters onto its farms. Surprisingly, considering the ill will it had generated between the provincial and dominion governments, the department of immigration soon had trouble remembering the Hoadley Scheme. In a September 1931 report to a new minister, W.A. Gordon, Blair recalled that 'for a couple of years Alberta got a number of British boys to come out to their Provincial agricultural schools.' He thought that 'the first movement was in 1926 and the second one a year later.' Given the disastrous history of the scheme, Blair's memory was generously selective.³³

Like the founders of the BICA and Vimy Ridge schemes, the Alberta ministry of agriculture naively believed that a British secondary school education, preferably at a public school, was a necessary prerequisite for successfully settling on the Canadian land. The Hoadley boys certainly had the appropriate credentials, with resumes that included attendance at such prestigious British schools as Banff Academy, George Watson's College, and the Sandhurst Royal Military College.³⁴ Like their counterparts in central Canada, however, the promoters of the Hoadley project quickly learned that educational qualifications did not relate directly to an ability, or desire, to earn a living in the poorly paid, physically demanding, and isolated world of Canadian farm labouring. If anything, there was an inverse relationship. Unlike the Quebec and Ontario schemes, the Alberta scheme had other strategies that it believed would guarantee its success. It required that future farmhands be mature young men rather than unpredictable adolescents; it provided formal training in local farm methods rather than placing the youngsters directly with farmers; and it made immigrants show their

commitment by paying for their transportation and keep while attending college. Not only did these strategies not work but, in all probability, they contributed to the scheme's faster and higher failure rate.

Child psychiatrists have long contended that the younger an individual emigrates, the less difficulty he or she will experience in the new country.³⁵ The decision to limit the Hoadley Scheme to youths of sixteen and over, therefore, may well have aggravated its failure rate. Most of the Hoadley boys were in their twenties. They were more set in British ways than the BICA and Vimy Ridge teenagers and their stronger old country social, cultural and personal ties made it more difficult for them to adjust to a totally unknown country and way of life.³⁶ Having been higher in the UK wage scale than their younger compatriots, the Alberta students were less likely to be content with relatively low wages. The months spent in the agricultural colleges might well have eased the adjustment for some, by acting as a halfway period between home and farm, especially when it allowed mixing with young Albertans. For others, however, it probably had the opposite effect. Walker felt that, considering the boys had entered the scheme 'with a view to being accomplished or experienced in farm work, it is surprising the portion of them that bluntly decline to consider an agricultural life.'³⁷ Yet, the manager of the Prince of Wales' cattle ranch would not have been so surprised. He had advised British public school boys to determine their suitability for farm life before leaving for Canada, but the Hoadley Boys had not followed his advice. Consequently, the Alberta colleges were their first exposure to farming, and it was enough to send many of them scurrying home or heading for the familiarity of town life and jobs as bank clerks and insurance agents. Of course, the younger BICA and Vimy Ridge boys were also newcomers and first-time farm workers, and subject to the same stresses and

disillusionment as the Hoadley boys. But the conclusion of their formal training provided the Alberta students with a unique decision point that may well have contributed to their faster failure rate, if not necessarily to the total number of 'disappointments.' Moreover, by requiring immigrants to bear the cost of their own transportation and keep, the Alberta government essentially guaranteed that their young men came from a higher socio-economic background than the BICA and Ontario boys. Few working class youths, or their parents, could have afforded the expense. As a result, the Hoadley boys' lifestyle expectations in their new country were probably more quickly dashed than those of the BICA and Vimy Ridge boys. Equally important, they had more occupational options than their younger compatriots and having moneyed parents put them in a better position to escape.

Edmonton's refusal to provide aftercare, and the growing animosity between the dominion and Alberta governments, aggravated the scheme's failure. While the BICA and Vimy Ridge schemes at least tried, albeit often unsuccessfully, to buffer the acculturation difficulties of their wards, Alberta had a distinct aversion to aftercare and follow-up. Its attitude was one of 'train, place, and ignore,' with the result that the British youngsters had no refuge when they were between jobs, and, at least until 1926 when Ottawa assumed a brief responsibility, no one to help resolve their grievances. These shortcomings were certainly not conducive to the boys' permanent settlement on the land. In addition, as Ottawa became more and more unhappy with the province's lack of co-operation, it may well have become less diligent in selecting applicants. Hoadley had accused the dominion immigration department of such negligence, which had eventually convinced him to have Greenfield do the recruiting. Not surprisingly, the department officially denied the accusation. Privately, however, by October 1926

Bruce Walker admitted to Egan that, in selecting Hoadley Boys, he often felt 'obliged to consider material that in other circumstances we should be inclined to reject.'³⁸ Such an attitude made Ottawa a possible accessory to the large number of Alberta's 'disappointments.'

Looking back, John Upton wishes that his parents could have afforded to send him to Alberta as a Hoadley Boy. Photographs of the Alberta foothills in the brochure he had picked up at the Birmingham Exhibition had sparked his decision to emigrate, and John still believes that he would have had more success on a western cattle ranch than he had on the Ontario dairy farm. Perhaps he would have. But for many of the Hoadley boys, the Alberta government's recipe of maturity, higher education, formal Canadian agricultural training, and financial self-sufficiency, proved to be a recipe for failure - particularly when an added ingredient was provincial indifference to their ongoing welfare.

5

The Maritime Schemes

In a separate memorandum recently I suggested the wisdom of exploring the field represented by the output of the Grammar Schools of Great Britain situated in country towns. Boys from such institutions often have reasonable knowledge of country life, they come from a much higher class of the community than the Free School boys in the cities, are generally better by far from a physical standpoint and because of their early environment amongst the middle class people of England they are in all respects much more desirable young citizens of this Dominion than their less fortunate city brethren.¹

In November 1927, when John Upton decided to immigrate to Canada, there were no provincial boys' farm training schemes east of Quebec. Provincial boys began to arrive in the Maritimes in 1929 but they came in significantly smaller numbers than those bound for Alberta or central Canada. Between 1929 and 1931, 184 came to train and work in the orchards of the Annapolis and St. John River valleys. Despite handling fewer boys, the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick schemes had much in common with their larger counterparts to the west. Both provinces, for example, were obsessed with getting the 'right class' of boy, which for them meant one with a public or grammar school education. In addition, the Nova Scotia project was especially remarkable for its low retention rates. The Maritime schemes, however, had some particular

characteristics. Nowhere was provincial government involvement more haphazard or dedication so low. The overall result was two more failed attempts to settle the 'right type' of young Britons on the Canadian land.

Nova Scotia's first attempt to bring over what it considered to be the best type of British boy proved to be an embarrassing failure. OSC secretary G.F. Plant first broached the subject with Premier Ernest H. Armstrong in February 1925, less than a year after the arrival of the first BICA and Alberta boys and fourteen months before the first group of Vimy Ridge boys sailed from Liverpool. Plant asked the premier if the province was interested in accepting 'educated [British] boys of the right type to take up farming in Nova Scotia.' Whether or not Plant had English public school boys in mind, H. Cunningham, the provincial secretary of industries and immigration, took that to be the implication. He immediately canvassed several of the province's most prominent farmers about their willingness to take 'Eton and Harrow' boys.²

Cunningham soon confessed to commissioner Little that he had made a mistake in mentioning the two great English public schools. The farmers were indeed interested - but at a price. Recognizing that such boys came from the wealthiest old country families, the farmers saw them as a potential source of income. One told Cunningham that it would not be 'unfair to ask the parents to bear some of the expense of training.' Others were more specific, demanding that the boys' parents make 'a nominal contribution' of as much as \$50 a month in return for their sons' board and training. Armed with these responses, Cunningham advised the dominion immigration department that he could 'place fifty [public school boys] with our farmers without any difficulty whatever.' He added, however, that it would be 'an utter impossibility to establish these boys in the sort of homes they would be accustomed to, unless a

premium is paid.³ Ottawa would have none of it. An angry Little told Cunningham that:

the object is not to have these boys make a cash contribution to the revenue of the farm but rather a labour contribution, from which they may derive some remuneration and thereby be of some practical use as producers.⁴

An embarrassed Cunningham decided not to pursue the issue. No English public school boys would pay for the privilege of becoming Nova Scotia farm labourers.

Nova Scotia's next effort at bringing over young British farm workers came in 1927. This time the province did import and distribute twenty-five youngsters, supposedly under the same terms and conditions as Ontario's recently established Vimy Ridge scheme. How it accomplished the feat, however, alienated the dominion immigration department, the OSC, and the boys themselves, and precluded Nova Scotia from receiving the federal and imperial grants that it expected. When, in May 1926, commissioner Little approached Nova Scotia's deputy minister of natural resources, Colonel R. Innes, about the province's interest in a Vimy Ridge type agreement, he received a positive response. Still smarting from the 'Eton and Harrow' experience the provincial government lowered the educational requirements and sought grammar school boys.⁵ In the hierarchy of the English education system the grammar schools fell between the public and free schools. Demanding lower fees than the public schools, yet usually also located in country towns, they catered to the sons of less prosperous professionals and merchants. The provincial government was convinced that:

Boys from such institutions often have reasonable knowledge of country life, they come from a much higher class of the community than the Free School boys in the cities ... and are in all respects much more desirable young citizens of this Dominion than their less fortunate city brethren.⁶

If these boys could be persuaded to take up farm work in Nova Scotia, then the province would willingly participate in a farm training scheme.

After receiving Ottawa's assurance that recruitment would indeed be aimed at the grammar schools, Colonel Innes advised deputy minister Egan in December 1926 that the Nova Scotia government was ready to sign a tripartite agreement. It was finalizing an arrangement with Colonel Oliver Hind of Nottingham, England, to rent his Dakeyne Farm near Falmouth, Nova Scotia, for five years, with an option to purchase. The four hundred-acre mixed cattle and fruit farm would be used to receive, train and distribute the provincial boys. Since 1910, Hind had been instructing and placing about fifteen young English boys a year, but was willing to put aside his work with these 'Dakeyne boys' and lease the farm to the province for a quarter of its annual revenue of about \$4,000. The farmhouse could accommodate twenty boys and the province planned to build a bunkhouse for additional accommodation. Innes told Egan that the provincial government hoped 'to handle 250 boys during the coming year,' and asked the deputy minister to initiate negotiations with the OSC 'on the definite assurance that a Training Farm will be established in this Province.' Recognizing that negotiations took time, the provincial deputy minister urged Ottawa to begin recruiting immediately. The province wanted the first twenty-five boys to arrive in Halifax by April 1, 1927. The dominion agents, with the help of the Hind organization in England, began recruiting 'with a great deal of care and selectiveness.' By early March, fourteen suitable boys had been selected and securing the remaining eleven was 'coming along.' The Nova Scotia scheme seemed to be getting off to a promising start.⁷

Soon things began to go terribly wrong. Less than a month before the boys were scheduled to sail, the lease negotiations with Hind collapsed. Blaming the difficulty on opposition from a local Member of Parliament, Innes assured Little that the mishap should not interfere with the boys' scheduled arrival. The province had a back-up plan.

It would use part of the provincial agricultural college farm at Truro for reception and distribution and still wanted the 25 boys as soon as possible. The Hind organization, however, had other ideas. Piqued at the sudden turn in events, it convinced the boys and their parents that, rather than divert to Truro, the group should proceed to Falmouth as originally planned. There they would be handled as Dakeyne boys rather than provincial boys.⁸

When Little relayed the news to Bruce Walker in London, the director of European Emigration's first reaction was to consider it 'a knockout blow' to the scheme. His next reaction was more productive. He began 'a somewhat hectic and intensive' recruiting campaign in an attempt to find another twenty-five boys. Assigning the task to the Cunard Line's emigration agency, Walker gave instructions to recruit boys between the ages of fourteen and seventeen who were 'of good health and good character.' He stressed that the youngsters would be going under the auspices of the Nova Scotia government, that they were bound for the provincial experimental farm at Truro, and should sail 'as soon as possible - not later than the 1st of April.' The shipping company agents were up to the challenge. Although some boys only received word of their selection two days before the embarkation date, twenty-five 'Truro boys' sailed for Halifax aboard the *SS Lancastria* on March 30, 1927.⁹

Any satisfaction that the dominion immigration department felt was short-lived. While the boys were still at sea, the province decided the agricultural college at Truro had insufficient accommodation. Moreover, Innes indicated that 'no Training Farm is being established in this Province in the immediate future.' As for the boys who were only a few days away from landing at Halifax, the provincial government would place

them with farmers directly from the dock. While the immigration department fumed over what it considered to be a broken promise, more bad news was on the way.¹⁰

When the boys arrived, complete with travel warrants to Truro, they insisted that they had been promised two-year's training at the agricultural college, including room, board and a living allowance. As the youngsters were dispatched directly to their respective farms, questions, accusations and counter-accusations crisscrossed the Atlantic as quickly as cablegrams would allow, in a vain attempt to discover who made such promises. As usual, the OSC's main concern was bad publicity in the United Kingdom that might damage the whole movement. The youngsters' complaining letters to their parents found their way into the British press, and there was mumbling about questions being raised in parliament. One disgruntled boy wrote directly to OSC Secretary G.F. Plant, documenting a host of broken promises and stating his intention to warn his friends back home not to 'trust themselves to the tender mercies of Emigration Officials.' The whole affair, the boy concluded, had been 'conducted in a way which throws nothing but discredit upon the methods of Government Emigration.'¹¹ Plant totally agreed with the boy and complained to Little that:

Presumably it would not now be practical politics to collect these boys and redeem the promise made to them by providing a period of training at Truro, but it is unhappily clear that they have a grievance and that an unfavourable impression has been created on this side.¹²

The whole debacle did not prevent the Nova Scotia government from trying to get the \$20 and \$10-a-head grants from London and Ottawa that the draft agreement called for. J. Walker, the provincial minister of natural resources, argued that since 'strictly speaking a Training Farm is more of a reception and distributing centre,' Halifax's Pier 2, with its sleeping and eating facilities, fitted the bill. With all the diplomacy he could muster, an incredulous commissioner Little responded that, unfortunately, there could

be no grants unless there was a designated training farm. The Nova Scotia government did not like this response and advised Ottawa that it had decided not to participate in the scheme. Consequently, it would not sign the tripartite agreement. As for the boys, a survey conducted in October 1929 by M. J. Scobie, the dominion supervisor of juvenile immigration, found that only seven of them were still involved in farm work in Nova Scotia. Of the eighteen others, three had been deported, five had left the province, one had made his way home as a stowaway, one had joined the Canadian army, and the whereabouts of eight were unknown. Overall, 1927 had not been a very auspicious year for settling provincial boys in Nova Scotia.¹³

The Nova Scotia government did not reconsider participating in a provincial scheme until 1929. During 1928 it did bring over another small group of young British farm workers and placed them directly from the Halifax docks. These young men, however, were seventeen years of age and older, and, in the eyes of the dominion and imperial governments, were adult immigrants who did not require a reception and distribution centre. Commissioner Little had suggested this option to Colonel Innes in December 1927 as a way of bypassing the need for a training farm. He even offered to have the dominion immigration department's London office do the recruiting, but warned that older boys would demand more than the \$8 a month the province was currently asking the farmers to pay. Little also stressed that, unlike the farm training schemes, there would be no government grants for these older boys.¹⁴ When Innes finally replied in the middle of the following April, he asked for twenty-five young men, to arrive no later than the middle of May. Despite complaining of being given 'entirely insufficient time to make the necessary choice,' and advising that Nova Scotia's new wage offer of \$10 to \$20 a month 'had no appeal to the young men of this country

today,' Bruce Walker met the quota on time. Twenty-eight young men actually came, but like the previous year's younger boys, few stayed on the land for long. By October 1929 only twelve were still doing farm work in the province. The fate of the other sixteen essentially paralleled that of their younger predecessors as they moved to other provinces, returned home, or simply disappeared.¹⁵

After its three false starts, the Nova Scotia government reassessed its involvement in British boy immigration at the beginning of 1929. Over the past two years it had brought over and placed fifty-three young Britons with provincial farmers, but they were turning their backs on the land in extraordinary numbers. Perhaps more care was needed in handling the young immigrants, so that 'before the glamour of farming and enthusiasm for the land grips a boy he may [not] get so discouraged and disgusted that he will throw up the whole idea.' A farm hostel where the boys could receive some basic training, and be recycled if they ran into difficulties, might pay dividends in higher retention rates. Besides, the demand for the boys' labour was still high, and if the province continued to import them it might as well receive some income in the form of imperial and dominion grants.¹⁶

As a result of its reappraisal, the Nova Scotia government advised Ottawa in January 1929 that it would participate in the scheme, 'providing a grant of thirty dollars per boy [is] assured.' The province planned to renovate the top floor of the horticultural building at the Truro agricultural college to accommodate twenty-five to thirty boys and make R.S. Hubley, the province's superintendent of boy immigration, responsible for operating the scheme. The dominion immigration department and the OSC were delighted and in October 1929 the three levels of government finally signed a tripartite farm training agreement. Its terms and conditions were identical to those of the Vimy

Ridge agreement that had been completed three-and-a-half years before, and to the draft agreement that Nova Scotia had rejected in December 1927.¹⁷

Despite its apparent enthusiasm, the province displayed little commitment to the project. Although the first group of twenty-five boys arrived in April, no attention was given to formulating an aftercare programme until September. Even then it was only done at the insistence of the dominion immigration department, and under the direction of the department's M.J. Scobie, who was specifically sent to Truro to ensure that the task was completed. Complaining that 'Mr. Hubley did not care to take upon himself the responsibility of deciding upon the best policy to adopt in the aftercare of the boys,' Scobie developed a programme himself, based on his experience with the BICA and Ontario schemes. His comprehensive programme covered such issues as farm selection, wage negotiation, visitation, reporting, and collection and banking the boys' wages. On completing the project, Scobie reported to deputy minister Blair that he felt 'justified in reporting the whole situation as now being in a healthy condition.' His appraisal, however, proved to be overly optimistic as the boys continued to vacate the land in droves.¹⁸

Between 1929 and 1931, 159 boys arrived in the province under the terms of the tripartite agreement. By September 1930, even with Scobie's aftercare programme having been in operation for a year, the failure rate was 28% and climbing. The arrival of the Depression certainly played a role. Of the fifty boys who came during 1931, for example, one in four did not even last till the end of the year. No doubt the increased job competition from the growing ranks of the unemployed was partly responsible. By May 1931, superintendent Hubley was advising Ottawa that the farmers could get all the help they needed without 'taking a green boy and breaking him in at \$10 a month.'

The province was having difficulty not only in placing new arrivals but also in convincing the farmers to keep the boys they already had. Moreover, in response to a query from Blair, Hublely admitted that the boys' employment prospects for the coming winter months 'does not look too promising.' Before May was over, the province advised Ottawa to stop recruiting. The following September the dominion minister of immigration announced the cancellation of assisted passages for unaccompanied juvenile boys. Nova Scotia's brief involvement in the British boys' farm training scheme was officially over.¹⁹

Although the federal and provincial governments agreed that the failure rates could not be blamed solely on the worsening economic conditions, there was no consensus on the other contributing factors. The dominion immigration department laid much blame on slipshod provincial management, which it claimed reflected a general indifference by the province to the boys' welfare. To support its accusation, Ottawa referred to two reports condemning the boys' treatment at the Truro college. While he was developing the aftercare programme, Scobie concluded that 'the present practice of having boys returned to the Truro farm to await replacement has not proved very satisfactory.' He claimed that the boys' quarters were 'not kept clean and much untidiness was apparent. Also the blankets were very scarce and not at all what I would have liked to have seen.' Moreover, the young immigrants were freely roaming the college facilities, coming and going as they pleased, and there were town boys prowling around the sleeping quarters. Scobie's explanation for the poor situation was that there was 'no one there directly responsible for these lads ... no one was in charge.'²⁰

The second report critical of the province's halfhearted approach was by a dominion immigration officer who, in April 1931, accompanied a newly arrived group of eight

boys from Quebec City to Truro. Agent W.L. Anderson was shocked at the boys' reception at the college. The youngsters had traveled all day by train and did not arrive at the Truro station until almost eight o'clock at night. Despite its being pitch dark, they had to make a twenty-five minute walk to the college because the province would 'not spend the few cents necessary to take the boys up to the hostel by taxi.' Next, the man who had brought them from the station said there would be no evening meal because the boarding house was a mile away, it was too dark to go, and the lady who ran the house would be in bed or wouldn't want to be disturbed. Anderson confessed that, had he been one of the boys, 'I would have had my first dose of homesickness right there.' He thought that 'it would be a vast improvement if there was a little more friendliness put into the welcome these boys receive.' Ottawa agreed. It believed that the lackadaisical conditions at the training farm, and the lack of sympathy shown to the boys by the staff, typified the province's attitude towards the scheme, disgruntled the boys, and made them more susceptible to quitting.

Ottawa believed that Nova Scotia's indifference was also typified by its disregard for the boys' religious backgrounds. In March 1929, Forke received a complaint from the United Church of Canada that Protestant boys had been placed with Catholic farmers. The boys' families were furious and felt 'betrayed' by the Canadian government. Blair deflected the Church's threat to publicize the affair with an apology and promise that the situation would be corrected and not repeated.²¹

Not surprisingly, the Nova Scotia government rejected the criticism. It claimed the incidents with the Protestant boys had simply been oversights and blamed the high failure rates on poor selection in the United Kingdom. It complained that too many boys were 'under-sized, ill-formed and undeveloped' and obviously unfit for farm

labour. Hubley had told assistant deputy minister Blair that the province would rather not accept any more boys than have its quota filled with undersized boys. The runts, however, continued to arrive. Ottawa was apologetic. Unfortunately, its recruiting officers had shown 'a lack of good judgement' in failing to properly cull out the weaklings. Little asked the province to appreciate how difficult it was to get strapping British boys. He believed the problem was that 'most of these boys were born during the War years and undoubtedly their generation shows a great deal of privation.' Federal sympathy and excuses, however, did little to appease a Nova Scotia government that believed it had received shoddy service. The province also blamed the recruiting agents for not choosing enough boys with farming experience. This time the immigration department was less sympathetic. Little responded that few British boys with previous farm training were available for emigration and, in any event, he 'doubt[ed] very much if at such an early age great importance can be attached to the question of experience.' Besides, Little argued, 'the boy who has had his wits sharpened by contact with other lads in town or city is well developed and of the right type, [and] can be absorbed readily enough.'²²

Although disappointed with its boys' physiques and inexperience, Nova Scotia's chief objection to the selection process was the 'poor class' of boy it had received. Ottawa had promised to recruit grammar school boys, but had sent 'a large number of Free School boys drawn from the purlieus of East London and Glasgow,' whose employment records listed them as 'errand boy, van boy, or something equally undesirable.' Of the fifty boys who came in 1931, thirty-five were from free schools. It was no surprise to the province that this class of boy was not making good.²³ This time the immigration department accepted the reproach. It, too, strongly believed that

boys from the free schools had the least potential to succeed on the Canadian land.

While reminding Bruce Walker of Ottawa's promise to target grammar school boys for Nova Scotia, Blair noted that:

[although] we do not suggest that boys coming from the poorer quarters of cities like Glasgow and Liverpool ... will not furnish, at times, excellent types of boys who will make good on Canadian farms, a boy who has been brought up in a thickly populated area, and who since leaving school has had odd jobs as a messenger boy or plumber's helper, would, under ordinary circumstances, require to be an outstanding lad to make good at farm work here.²⁴

Despite the dominion and provincial governments' notion of a direct connection between Nova Scotia's low retention rate and the number of free school boys that it received, no evidence supports that belief. There is nothing to suggest that the 'poorer class' boys abandoned the land at a higher or faster rate than their grammar school counterparts. Both types of youngster were equally susceptible to the various factors that undermined the Nova Scotia project. If anything, the 'better class' boys were more vulnerable to many of these factors. The broken promises of 1927, for example, when boys expecting to receive two years free instruction at Truro were instead placed directly from the Halifax dock, must have unsettled the youngsters and eroded their chances of settling smoothly. The privileged grammar school graduates might well have been especially offended at such shoddy treatment. The disorderly, unkempt conditions at the Truro hostel, together with the uncaring attitude of the staff, could well have created an especially dismal first impression among boys who were used to the better things in life. Their potential for failure probably received a significant boost before they even set foot on a farmer's field. Similarly, the lack of a proper aftercare programme until September 1929 must have taken its toll on all of the boys who ran into difficulties, regardless of their backgrounds.

The province's refusal to raise the youngsters' minimum wage from \$8 to \$10 a month, until Ottawa forced the issue in April 1928, probably irked the boys from wealthier backgrounds more than those who were used to having little. But possibly the biggest factor that might have coaxed grammar school boys to abandon the scheme more readily than free school boys was the province's proximity to Britain. Almost half of the recorded failures went to 'unknown' destinations.²⁵ Disillusioned with broken promises, poor aftercare and low wages, many boys must have longed to return home, and it is reasonable to assume that some of the missing boys did. In theory it was easy - a short ride to Halifax and a steamer to Liverpool or Glasgow. In practice it was more difficult. Few boys could have afforded the fare themselves. It was an option really available only to those whose parents were able to foot the bill, and the grammar school boys best fitted that category. While it is impossible to quantify the impact of disillusionment, low wages and geography, these factors would have induced grammar school boys to leave the land at least as much as free school boys.

Nova Scotia was not the only Maritime province fascinated with grammar school boys. In 1931 New Brunswick entered the scheme specifically to recruit such boys. This time, however, there was no government tripartite agreement or dedicated provincial training farm for reception, training and distribution. Instead, the boys came under a combination of agreements and understandings among the three governments and the Cossar organization. It was a hybrid arrangement by which the dominion immigration department took responsibility for recruitment, placement and aftercare and the provincial boys shared the use of Dr. Cossar's Lower Gagetown farm with the doctor's own Scottish boys. Devised to improve the quality of the 'Cossar boys' by importing better-educated, rural boys, the New Brunswick scheme lasted only one year,

brought only 25 boys, and was as noteworthy for its lack of provincial commitment as for its elitism. Criticized by Ottawa as being 'provincial only in name,'²⁶ the scheme was abandoned when, upset at the province's uninvolved involvement, the dominion government withdrew its services.

Ottawa had first offered to negotiate a Vimy Ridge type agreement for New Brunswick in January 1926, four months before it made the same offer to Nova Scotia. Lewis Smith, New Brunswick's minister of agriculture, turned the offer down because the province's commitment to the 500 families scheme meant it was not in a position to consider additional responsibilities for British immigration.²⁷ When Ottawa next broached the subject of young British farm workers with the province in the fall of 1927, it took a different approach. It asked if New Brunswick would join the dominion government in providing a one-time grant to the Cossar organization. Ottawa claimed the grant would be a way of showing the governments' appreciation for the good work that the organization was doing in the province.²⁸

Dr. Cossar certainly was doing good work. Since 1910 he had been successfully placing Scottish boys with New Brunswick farmers. The boys were referred to the Cossar organization in Glasgow by the Church of Scotland, and by the mid-1920s over 100 were arriving each year at the doctor's Lower Gagetown farm for training and placement. The 550-acre farm was situated on the banks of the St. John River, midway between St. John and Fredericton, and could accommodate about 30 boys at a time in its two farmhouses. Famous throughout the province for the quality of its apples, the farm also bred horses, sheep and cattle, grew its own hay, and was self-sufficient in firewood and lumber. In 1922, the doctor also acquired the Craigiellinn Farm near Paisley, where his boys could receive some farm training before they left Scotland.

The organization had a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic for its efficiency. In 1924, under the terms of the Empire Settlement Act, the OSC agreed to pay Dr. Cossar \$50 for every boy he transplanted.²⁹ The British grant was meant to defray operating costs, but during a visit to the Lower Gagetown farm in October 1927, Little noticed its need for some major capital investment. The dormitories were in 'a dilapidated condition' and one house had no indoor plumbing. Ottawa wanted to share the cost of refurbishing the bedrooms and installing up-to-date plumbing with the New Brunswick government. The provincial government agreed and in June 1928 signed an agreement with Cossar to pay \$1,000 towards the renovations. Ottawa, which was not a direct party to this bipartite agreement, paid its \$500 share directly to the provincial government, on proof that Cossar had been given the full grant.³⁰

The sudden windfall of capital went to Dr. Cossar's head. In January 1929 he bypassed the provincial and dominion governments and appealed directly to his major benefactor, the OSC, for more capital. While acknowledging the Canadian governments' financial contribution, Cossar explained to OSC secretary Plant that it was not enough to complete the necessary renovations. The estimated cost was \$3,000 and the doctor wondered if the British government would make up the difference. Plant was unimpressed. Choosing to direct his response to Little, with a copy to Cossar, he reminded the dominion commissioner that the OSC was already generously funding the Cossar operation. Under a November 1927 agreement, it had made a capital contribution towards building extensions at Craigiellin. It was also paying \$50 a boy to help offset the operating costs at Lower Gagetown. The provincial and dominion governments, on the other hand, were 'apparently not contemplating any contribution towards the maintenance of the [New Brunswick] farm, the cost of which falls entirely

upon Dr. Cossar and ourselves.' Plant suggested that Ottawa and Fredericton 'might between them agree to provide the whole of the capital expenditure which is necessary.'³¹

Plant's response surprised the immigration department, which had not even been aware of Cossar's request to the OSC. It received an even bigger surprise when the Cossar organization interpreted Plant's response as a directive to the dominion and provincial governments to pay the full capital cost and upped that cost to \$8,600. Little addressed the OSC and Cossar responses separately. First, to set Cossar straight, he asked J.A. Murray, New Brunswick's superintendent of immigration and industries, to advise Cossar that his organization had obviously misinterpreted the terms of its agreement with the province. It was a one-time grant to help offset the renovation costs, not a commitment to pay the full cost. Next, the commissioner explained to the OSC that the Canadian governments had not been contributing to the operation of the Cossar farm because they 'understood that Dr. Cossar... desire[d] to retain a fairly large measure of control of the farm.' He explained that Ottawa would soon contact Superintendent Murray to discuss the question of further financial help.³²

The incident forced the Canadian governments to re-examine their relationship with the Cossar organization since they were not totally happy with its services. Certainly Cossar had brought and placed 124 boys during 1928 and he had an impressive retention rate. Only three or four of the hundreds of boys he had brought since 1910 had been sent home. His boys, however, did not fit the governments' definition of the 'right type.' Cossar's Craigielinn agreement with the OSC clearly stated that the farm had been instituted mainly to afford 'city boys of the poorer classes' the opportunity to migrate. The organization was fulfilling that mandate well, but the

Canadian governments believed that it was time to look beyond the elementary schools and 'the City of Glasgow and other large industrial centres,' and bring boys from the grammar schools, especially those from 'better class families' in rural districts. Ottawa knew that Dr. Cossar would never be persuaded to abandon his underprivileged city boys in favour of advantaged grammar school boys. It also agreed with New Brunswick that, because of the relatively small demand for boys in the province, it was impractical for the provincial government to purchase and operate an independent training farm in competition with the Cossar farm. Some compromise was needed that would satisfy all parties, including the piqued OSC.³³

As a result of the governments' reappraisal, a new agreement between the Cossar organization and the provincial government was signed in November 1929. Under its terms the province agreed to pay \$20 for each boy brought during the next three years, up to a maximum of 50 boys a year. At the rate the Cossar boys were arriving, this essentially translated into extending the province's 1928 contribution of \$1,000 into an annual grant. Again the dominion government reimbursed half this amount directly to the province. In return, Cossar agreed to have his New Brunswick farm designated a 'provincial training farm,' and to accept, in addition to his own boys, up to 50 'provincial boys' a year. These boys would be recruited and selected by the dominion immigration department and would not have to pass through the Craigiellinn Farm. When the boys arrived at Lower Gagetown, the Cossar organization would give them the same care and service as its own boys. Ottawa's land settlement branch would be responsible for the boys' placement, visitation and aftercare, including banking a portion of their wages and resolving any difficulties. If for any reason the boys became

unemployed, they could return to the Cossar farm until the land settlement branch placed them with another farmer.³⁴

Outside the agreement it was resolved that the New Brunswick government would receive the balance of the \$80 passage grant for the provincial boys. Cossar had wanted this bonus in return for paying the boys' transportation from Lower Gagetown to their places of employment. Little adamantly opposed the suggestion since the transportation would be significantly less than the balance of the passage grant. Murray agreed. The province got the passage bonus, while the remarkably generous immigration department agreed to cover the boys' transportation costs. It was a hodge-podge arrangement that, for the moment, seemed to satisfy all the parties concerned. The immigration department in Ottawa immediately requested its London branch to 'specially select' 25 provincial boys 'of the very best calibre.' They were to be between the ages of 14 and 17 and arrive between April 1 and May 15.³⁵

Although the agreement was signed, and the boys requisitioned, commissioner Little was afraid that the OSC might balk at paying Cossar \$50 a head for the provincial boys. He suggested to Murray that, if the OSC did object, the immigration department could negotiate a separate Vimy Ridge type tripartite agreement to cover the 'special' boys. His fears, however, proved to be unfounded when OSC secretary Plant advised him in February 1930 that 'so far as we are concerned, we should not insist' on Craigielinn training as a prerequisite to receiving the British grant. Dr. Cossar would continue to receive \$50 a head, regardless of how the boy was selected or labeled.³⁶

When the provincial boys began to arrive, Ottawa suddenly realized that it was responsible for placement, visitation, funding of wages and 'pretty much everything else that has to do with the boys' welfare.' New Brunswick, on the other hand, had no

obligations apart from the \$1,000 a year that it gave to Dr. Cossar, half of which was reimbursed by Ottawa. Belatedly, Blair tried to rectify the inequality. First, he convinced the OSC that, as Ottawa was paying the boys' Canadian rail fares, it was more appropriate to pass the balance of the \$80 passage allowance to the dominion than the provincial government. The OSC agreed. Next Blair tackled New Brunswick. Noting that its provincial scheme was 'provincial only in name,' he asked that it 'share to a greater extent than you do at present in looking after the boys in some way.' Ottawa was open to any suggestion of how the work and responsibility might be better divided. The provincial government, however, showed no interest in such a division. It was happy with the current arrangements. Ottawa, of course, was not. It met its obligations to the 25 provincial boys who came in 1930 but took no further part in the scheme. In 1931, as a result of growing provincial unemployment, fewer than 30 boys passed through the Cossar farm at Lower Gagetown. None of them came under the auspices of the New Brunswick government. The province's British boys' farm training scheme was dead. It had lasted only one year and brought merely 25 boys.³⁷

The failure of the Maritime schemes was a particularly hard blow to the dominion immigration department. It had taken the initiative in creating them, and had strongly supported their operations. During 1927 and 1928, while Nova Scotia was clumsily trying to initiate its programme, the department had successfully recruited its quotas, despite extremely short notice. Then it had overlooked the province's dismal start and negotiated a tripartite agreement with a British government that was far from satisfied with the province's performance. In New Brunswick the department had accepted far more responsibility for the boys' welfare than for any other provincial scheme. Only later did it realize that it had bitten off more of an obligation than it was willing to

chew. Ottawa had willingly performed these services because it understood that the provinces shared its vision of settling a 'better class' of British boy on Canadian land. Unfortunately for the ill-fated Maritime schemes, vision was not enough to ensure success when provincial dedication and involvement were missing.

6

The Western Schemes

We certainly did not undertake boy immigration in order to recruit people for Government service or the Hudson's Bay Service, but for land settlement and in this respect the movement seems to have totally failed.¹

The first provincially sponsored British boys to migrate to western Canada as would-be farm hands were the Hoadley boys. Ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-five, they began arriving in 1924 under an Alberta/United Kingdom agreement that provided free tuition at a provincial agricultural college and guaranteed farm work after graduation. Not until 1928 did the first provincial boys arrive in the west under tripartite agreements similar to those in the central and eastern provinces. Between 1928 and 1931 a total of 522 came to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. The provinces joined the scheme somewhat reluctantly and, unfortunately, just as the dominion faced the worst economic depression in its history, and the prairies their worst series of crop failures. Consequently, before the western schemes had a chance to become established, their failure rates exceeded anything in the central and eastern provinces.

Ottawa had to coax all three provinces to participate. Immigration Minister Robert Forke first queried Manitoba Premier John Bracken about his province's interest in a

Vimy Ridge type boys' scheme in December 1926. He explained that Ontario and the BICA were already operating schemes and negotiations were underway with the Maritime Provinces. Bracken was not enthusiastic. Promising 'sympathetic co-operation' with any federal plan to encourage the immigration of suitable farm labour, he balked at accepting any financial responsibility. He reminded Ottawa that since one of its chief arguments for retaining control of Manitoba's natural resources was that it allowed the federal government to properly look after immigration and land settlement, Ottawa must accept full responsibility for immigration costs.² He further claimed that the proposed boys' scheme was inequitable. Why should the dominion government financially encourage British boys to take to the Canadian land while neglecting to offer opportunities 'for our own boys of the cities, towns and rural villages to have their attention directed towards agriculture'?'³

The immigration department addressed Bracken's first objection and ignored his second. Agreeing that immigration was a federal matter, Forke explained that the proposed scheme had less to do with immigration than with 'colonization.' The semantics had the desired effect; particularly when Ottawa explained that it was negotiating with the OSC to extend the \$80 per boy passage allowance enjoyed by charitable organizations to provincial schemes. If Manitoba would reconsider its participation, Ottawa was sure it could convince the OSC to increase the allowance for boys going to Winnipeg to \$100. After paying transportation costs, the province would have a net income of about \$40 per boy. On hearing the news, Manitoba decided that the British boys' farm training scheme was a worthwhile endeavour. The province did not raise the issue of inequity again until October 1927 when Bracken used it to excuse Manitoba's non-participation in a proposed British boys' land settlement scheme. In

March 1927, Manitoba committed itself to the farm training scheme but delayed implementation until the following year to allow time 'to organize the system of training at the Agricultural College ... [and] to have some time to receive applications and approve of the farms from which these applications come.' The tripartite agreement was signed in January 1928, with terms and conditions identical to the Vimy Ridge agreement of March 1926. The first Manitoba provincial boys came to Winnipeg at the end of April 1928. Two-hundred-and-ninety-nine arrived before the Depression forced the scheme's abandonment in 1930.⁴

Saskatchewan was equally hesitant to participate; and just as easily persuaded to change its mind. When Ottawa first approached Premier Bracken of Manitoba at the end of 1926, it also queried Premier James Gardiner of Saskatchewan about his province's interest in the scheme. Gardiner was uninterested. Like Bracken, he reminded Ottawa of its responsibility for immigration. Mimicking Manitoba's argument, Gardiner maintained that when Saskatchewan was created, Ottawa's rationale for retaining natural resource ownership was that the federal government 'was absolutely responsible financially and otherwise, for the placing of immigrants within Saskatchewan.' The premier was adamant that the province would not accept any financial responsibility until it was given ownership of its natural resources. Moreover, he was convinced Ottawa's proposal to place boys on specially equipped training farms for extended periods was an illogical way to train for prairie farm work. They should be placed directly with farmers where they could learn on the job.⁵

Ottawa, of course, agreed. It advised Regina that the plan was for a 'farm training' scheme, not a 'training farm' scheme. The province need only provide a suitable distribution hostel, which could also serve as a sanctuary during periods of

unemployment. Whether or not this convinced Regina to reconsider, or whether, like Manitoba, it was the prospect of passage assistance income, Saskatchewan advised Ottawa in November 1928 that it was ready to participate. The same month it ordered 50 British boys between the ages of 15 and 17 to be delivered the following spring. The Saskatchewan Boys' Farm Training Agreement was signed in December 1928. It, too, duplicated the 1926 Ontario agreement. The boys began arriving at the end of March 1929. All together, 173 came before the province abandoned the scheme in 1931.⁶

British Columbia also had to be cajoled into participating. After Premier John Oliver rejected Ottawa's first offer to negotiate a tripartite agreement with the OSC in January 1927, Robert Forke tried again in September 1927 with J. D. MacLean, who had succeeded to the premiership after Oliver's death. Again the province declined. MacLean blamed his decision on experience. He claimed that would-be farm helpers occasionally arrived from the United Kingdom with letters of recommendation from British Columbia's Agent General in London, and that 'great difficulty has been experienced to find places where such help is desired.' Undaunted by its two rejections, Ottawa persisted. In the fall of 1928 it tried to persuade its third British Columbia premier, Dr. S. F. Tolmie, who had recently been elected as head of a Conservative government. On 17 September, under the heading 'B. C. Eager for British-Born,' the *Montreal Gazette* reported extracts from a Tolmie speech in Vancouver calling for more British land settlers. British Columbia wanted them 'because they [are] our own kith and kin and because the old country [has] produced the best agriculturists in the world.' Ottawa seized the moment. The same day it asked the premier if he would cooperate in the British boys' scheme.⁷

Despite Tolmie's public support for British immigration, and his desire 'to keep British Columbia British and nothing else,' he was undecided about the merits of the scheme. His Lands Department, on the other hand, was enthusiastic. While acknowledging that dealing with young immigrants was always risky, the department saw the scheme as a workable proposition that might 'ultimately develop into quite a beneficial movement.' It recommended that Victoria turn 'a Nelsonian eye' to the risks and focus instead on the scheme's potential. The department suggested that the south end of Vancouver Island would be an excellent location to start the work. Boys could be placed initially on dairy and poultry farms around Cowichan, Comox and Courtney. Later, if the scheme succeeded on the Island, additional training farms could be established in the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan, the Kootenays, the Thompson Valleys, Prince George and possibly Telkwa and Terrace. Still unconvinced, Tolmie procrastinated. In November 1928, he advised Ottawa that the province's executive council felt that an appropriate organization could not be formed in time to handle any boys in 1929, but did not rule out the possibility of participating sometime in the future.⁸

The following summer Ottawa knocked on the door again. In June 1929 Forke reminded British Columbia's minister of agriculture, William Atkinson, that the province had not totally rejected the scheme. The immigration department was updating and expanding its boy settlement pamphlet for distribution in Britain and wondered what it should include about British Columbia. The draft of the pamphlet sent to Victoria showed that only British Columbia and Prince Edward Island were not funding such immigration schemes. This may have influenced the province's response; or possibly the land department's optimism finally overcame Tolmie's doubts. In any

Although the western provinces allowed considerable latitude for recruiting, Bruce Walker, director of European emigration in London, was pessimistic about his ability to meet their quotas. He cited several reasons. First, he had received very little notice of the initial requirements. In February 1928, for example, Manitoba asked for 50 boys to arrive in Winnipeg by the last week in March. Then, in response to a higher than expected demand by farmers who were 'clamouring' for boys, the province increased its order to 100, but retained its tight schedule. Saskatchewan and British Columbia gave more notice - but not much. In December 1928, Ottawa instructed Walker to find 50 boys for Saskatchewan, to begin arriving in the latter part of March. At the end of November 1929 he was ordered to find 50 boys for British Columbia. The province wanted to see the first group by the middle of March. Each time Walker protested that there was insufficient time for proper recruitment and selection. He complained that the BICA, Ontario, and charitable organizations such as the Salvation Army had already combed the country for months. The field had been so thoroughly covered 'as to reduce the possible number to very diminutive proportions.' Moreover, the pool of available boys was shrinking. Few parents in Britain were willing to let their young sons emigrate. Most who were willing, had already allowed their sons to leave. Walker maintained that most British parents looked on their children's wages as compensation for the expense of raising them. If the children migrated, this benefit was lost. Also, as teenage boys in Britain were expected to do men's work for boys' wages, their labour was in high demand. Walker argued that the combination of these factors hampered his ability to find even the relatively small numbers that the western provinces were seeking.¹¹

Despite his pessimism, Walker found more than enough boys. Although he accused the CPR and CN of poaching some of his western prospects for the BICA, he had to turn some applicants away. In March 1928, for example, in response to his gloomy outlook for securing 100 boys for Manitoba, Ottawa approved an additional \$500 in advertising funds, and the province extended its deadline for receiving boys until the beginning of June. In April, praising the Cunard and White Star Lines' 'vigour and keen desire to help,' Walker asked if the province would increase its order. Manitoba declined. For the first year it preferred to 'give the scheme a trial with the one hundred boys already ordered.' If things went well it might increase the number for 1929. In December 1928 when the boys' age limit was raised to 19, Walker's task became easier. During 1929 and 1930, he occasionally had to balance supply and demand by reallocating boys among the three provinces. By 1931, only Saskatchewan was still accepting British boys and Walker had no difficulty meeting its meagre quota of 38.¹²

When the boys arrived, they found the western provinces prepared to receive them. Manitoba used its provincial agricultural college for their reception and distribution. The college stood on 500 acres of land near Winnipeg and had dormitory accommodation for 200 boys. The province planned to use it for at least the first year, then possibly relocate to one of its provincial demonstration farms at Britle or Killarney. The relocation option was soon forgotten, however, and the province continued to use the college throughout the scheme's three years of operation. Initially believing that managing the scheme would not be arduous, Manitoba assigned the task, on a part-time basis, to Clarke Hopper, the college's English literature professor. Later, it changed its mind. By April 1929, Hopper was spending two-thirds of his time on the scheme and the province appointed him full-time director of British boy immigration.

The following November he resigned and The Reverend J. A. Bowman assumed his title and responsibilities.¹³

In 1929, Saskatchewan handled its first quota of boys at the University of Saskatchewan's agricultural college near Saskatoon. Originally it proposed using 'comfortable quarters in Regina,' but Ottawa dismissed the idea because it would be unacceptable to the OSC. The British committee had always believed that it was best to keep the boys as far as possible from cities, 'where there are many attractions to divert them from the land.' The province complied. It received and distributed the boys at the agricultural college, under the supervision of Professor J. C. Rayner of the agricultural extension department, but still preferring a dedicated hostel, it rented a farm 5 miles north of Regina in time to receive its 1930 quota. The hostel was managed by a superintendent and his wife, under the supervision of G. E. Tomsett of the provincial department of labour.¹⁴

British Columbia took a different approach. Unwilling to establish a special receiving and distributing farm for the small number of boys it planned to handle, the province and immigration department arranged to use the dominion experimental farm at Agassiz. Under the arrangement, the dominion farm provided the boys' board for \$1.00 day and the province supplied lodgings in the form of 'tents with flooring and necessary furniture.' British Columbia delegated overall responsibility for the scheme to colonization commissioner W. A. Gaddes and placed its provincial district agronomist, R. G. Sutton, in charge of reception and distribution.¹⁵

Despite the provinces' preparations, all three schemes quickly fell prey to the Depression. Of the 102 boys who came to Manitoba in 1928, only 68 were still on the land in August 1930 - a failure rate of 33%. By March 1931, 25% of the 299 Manitoba

boys who came between 1928 and 1930 had voluntarily left the scheme, gone missing, or been deported. By the end of 1931, the failure rate reached 45%, and at the end of 1932 only half of the boys were still on the land. The Saskatchewan and British Columbia boys fared little better. Fifty-eight of the 173 youngsters who went to Saskatchewan between 1929 and 1931 had left the scheme by March 1932. Of the 50 who arrived in British Columbia in 1930, eleven were off the land before the year was over. By the end of 1931, another 16 were gone, increasing the province's failure rate to 55%. By the end of 1932, less than half of the 522 western provincial boys were still in the scheme.¹⁶

During 1930 it became obvious that the Depression was the major contributor to the failure rates. Nevertheless, all three provinces claimed to be disappointed in the quality of their boys, even though they had not been particularly demanding about the youngsters' backgrounds or education. Manitoba had stated a preference for boys from rural districts but received too many from 'areas totally given over to industry.' Hopper claimed that such boys quickly became disheartened as a result of their inexperience, especially when farmers often 'regard lack of skill in farm practices as a serious reflection upon mental endowment.' Even boys who claimed farm experience were often found wanting. The training farm where one youngster allegedly gained his experience turned out to be an English reformatory.¹⁷

Manitoba insisted that this was not an isolated case of careless recruiting. It had a long list of boys it believed should not have passed the selection process. Leonard B., for example, who arrived in April 1928, had to be committed to Winnipeg's psychopathic hospital after being certified as insane and suffering from delusions of persecution. Robert S., who arrived in April 1929, became a patient in the Brandon

instances of missed wages, the farmers had provided promissory notes and the boys seemed satisfied that they would be paid eventually. Having had its specific charges spurned, the immigration department turned to generalities. If the provinces were properly managing their end of the scheme, why were 'volumes of adverse publicity' appearing in the British newspapers almost daily? Little claimed that, with the exception of Ontario, bad press had made the provincial boys' schemes unpopular in the United Kingdom. He believed that there was 'a not altogether unjustified' feeling in the old country that 'boys do not get the same attention from the Provincial Governments that they do, for instance, from the YMCA'²¹

Saskatchewan and British Columbia ignored the backhanded attack. Manitoba defended itself, boasting that its boys were exceptionally well cared for. During their stay at the agricultural college, the youngsters enjoyed the use of the gymnasium, swimming pool and playing fields and even had their clothes laundered before setting off for their farms. The selected farmers were thoroughly investigated as to their good character and ability to provide a good home, an opportunity to learn farming, and a chance to enjoy some recreation and social intercourse. The boys were visited regularly and their contracts were negotiated, signed and renewed in a timely manner. Each placement was routinely reviewed, and if there was any doubt about his wellbeing, 'arrangements were made to place the boy more suitably.' If Ottawa found fault with these procedures, the province promised it would seriously consider modifying them.²²

The bickering stopped in 1930 when it became evident that the greatest impediment to the boys' success was the deepening Depression. Manitoba was the first to react. It had ordered 100 boys for 1930 and by the end of March ninety-one had either arrived

instances of missed wages, the farmers had provided promissory notes and the boys seemed satisfied that they would be paid eventually. Having had its specific charges spurned, the immigration department turned to generalities. If the provinces were properly managing their end of the scheme, why were 'volumes of adverse publicity' appearing in the British newspapers almost daily? Little claimed that, with the exception of Ontario, bad press had made the provincial boys' schemes unpopular in the United Kingdom. He believed that there was 'a not altogether unjustified' feeling in the old country that 'boys do not get the same attention from the Provincial Governments that they do, for instance, from the YMCA'²¹

Saskatchewan and British Columbia ignored the backhanded attack. Manitoba defended itself, boasting that its boys were exceptionally well cared for. During their stay at the agricultural college, the youngsters enjoyed the use of the gymnasium, swimming pool and playing fields and even had their clothes laundered before setting off for their farms. The selected farmers were thoroughly investigated as to their good character and ability to provide a good home, an opportunity to learn farming, and a chance to enjoy some recreation and social intercourse. The boys were visited regularly and their contracts were negotiated, signed and renewed in a timely manner. Each placement was routinely reviewed, and if there was any doubt about his wellbeing, 'arrangements were made to place the boy more suitably.' If Ottawa found fault with these procedures, the province promised it would seriously consider modifying them.²²

The bickering stopped in 1930 when it became evident that the greatest impediment to the boys' success was the deepening Depression. Manitoba was the first to react. It had ordered 100 boys for 1930 and by the end of March ninety-one had either arrived

or were on their way. Early in April, Bowman asked Ottawa if it was possible to prevent the remaining nine from coming. Many farmers had canceled their applications and the province was having trouble placing even the 91. The immigration department complied and stopped shipping provincial boys to Manitoba. No more would ever come. In October, British Columbia also withdrew. It was only seven months since its first boys had arrived but the province had had enough. Blaming 'economic conditions and particularly the state of the labour market,' Gaddes explained that several boys had lost their jobs and he was having great difficulty finding places for them. The provincial government had decided that it would be unwise to continue the immigration of British boys 'until the general condition improves.' Only Saskatchewan brought provincial boys in 1931. Originally it asked for 60. Later it reduced its order to 40. Only 38 eventually came. In September 1931, Saskatchewan also decided that, as a result of the economic situation, it had taken its last British boy.²³

While the Depression put a halt to new arrivals, it also dramatically affected the boys already in Canada. As the farmers began to suffer, so too did the boys. By the end of 1930, more and more were complaining about unpaid wages and many were withdrawing their savings. By 1933, as poor and failed crops impoverished many farmers and drove many others off their farms, the bill for back-wages in Manitoba alone reached almost \$6,000. Most of it was unrecoverable. At least one farmer fled to the United States after successive bad harvests, leaving his young helper homeless and holding a handful of worthless promissory notes. Bowman claimed that the boys were not distressed; they were 'facing things with a good grace and determination,' patiently waiting for things to improve. Many, of course, had passed distress and were already despondent. Some were forced to move from farm to farm, often working solely for

Canada.' It prophesied that neither boy would last long on the land. Both were gone by the end of the year and the province cited them as examples of negligent selection.¹⁹

Not surprisingly, the dominion immigration department refuted the criticism. Commissioner Little argued that selection could not be reduced to an exact science. Opinions on individuals differed, and he had every confidence in the judgement of his interviewing agents. Taking issue with first impressions based on appearance, demeanor or speech, he also defended the selection of those who proved to be troublemakers, claiming that:

It is the experience of everyone who knows anything about boys ... that we can never quite tell what they will do when they get away from home, and be the selection ever so keen, we shall always have some who present problems.

Besides, the selections had been 'about as good as can be expected' under circumstances that included short notice given by the western provinces and competition from the BICA, the eastern provinces and the Salvation Army. In the case of Manitoba they also included the request for a large number of Scots. The department had filled that request mostly with Glasgow boys, and it was common knowledge that Scotch boys, and particularly Glaswegians, were troublesome.²⁰

Having denied the allegation of careless selection, the immigration department suggested that perhaps the provinces' houses should be put in order. It had some evidence on which to base its charge. Some parents had complained that their sons were not receiving their wages. Others grumbled about layoffs in the prairie provinces after the harvest. The provinces shrugged off the accusations. They held that, in almost every case, boys had received a \$1 to \$3 a day bonus during the two harvesting months and been kept on afterwards. Only three or four farmers had 'shamed this record' by dismissing their boys. While the provinces agreed that there had been a few

their keep. Others fled back to Britain or tried their luck in the cities. Several who went home soon wished they had stayed to brave things out. Bowman received letters from boys who were 'longing to get back to Canada.' The Depression was also deepening in the United Kingdom and few returnees could find employment. Rediscovering how 'abominable' and 'vile' life was in the old country, they wanted to take their chances again in the new, if somehow they could scrape together the fare. One distraught lad confessed that he would willingly give up 10 years of his life if only he could go back to Canada.²⁴

Those who tried their luck in Canadian towns and cities also found jobs hard to find. Many became part of the growing number of Canada's transient unemployed. In May 1933, when the OSC asked Ottawa what steps it was taking to trace missing boys, Blair confessed that it was an almost impossible task. Since 'thousands of young men have been drifting about the country riding on freight trains and hitch-hiking from one end of Canada to another. Not a few of the juveniles have been drawn into that bad habit.' As the boys were not criminals, it was not possible to ask the police to help locate them. The only hope of finding them was if they eventually reported their whereabouts to provincial authorities.²⁵

Possibly the boys' plight was best exemplified by the surge in their deportations as a result of becoming public charges. In 1928, two boys were deported from Manitoba. The following year another two were deported, one each from Manitoba and Saskatchewan. By the end of 1930, the number had escalated to thirty-eight - 17 from Manitoba, 13 from Saskatchewan, and 8 from British Columbia. Eric G. and Thomas C. typified the deportees. Young Eric arrived in Manitoba in April 1930. After a poor harvest he lost his job and tried, unsuccessfully, to find work in the Sudbury mines. By

July 1931 he had made his way to Prince Rupert, British Columbia. He left in April 1932, after becoming a public charge. The following August he was back in Prince Rupert looking for work but again became a public charge. He was deported in November 1932. Thomas had arrived in Manitoba in April 1929. He worked for one farmer for eleven months and another for five months before losing his job. He made his way to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, then on to Alberta, working the harvest fields, before returning to Winnipeg. Unable to find work there, he became a public charge and was deported in January 1931. By then, western provincial boys were being deported at such a rate that Ottawa agreed to share with the provinces the cost of processing them. At the provinces' request, the dominion immigration department began footing the bill for the deportees' maintenance from the time their deportation was ordered until it was effected.²⁶

The provinces made special efforts to help those boys who tried to stay on the land. British Columbia paid the bill when its unemployed youngsters were forced to spend prolonged periods at the Agassiz farm. In 1931, for example, one boy was at the farm for 170 days; another for 180 days. Manitoba tirelessly tried to find farm work for its boys, placing them as many as 16 times in an effort to keep them employed. Saskatchewan went even further. Possibly to keep its boys off the welfare lists, it made up many of their wages when farmers were unable to pay. The boys and their parents appreciated these efforts. While the provinces received some criticism, usually because of non-collection of wages, letters of praise for the 'care and kindness' showed the boys were more typical. Doling out care and kindness, however, was not the western provinces' objective when they agreed to participate in the British boys' farm training

scheme. In July 1933, when Ottawa asked if they were interested in keeping the scheme alive, the three western provinces unanimously declined.²⁷

The boys' schemes failed badly in western Canada primarily because their timing could not have been worse. In May 1932 Blair commiserated with The Reverend Bowman of Manitoba that the Depression had 'knocked the bottom out of things.' That was undoubtedly true. Yet even with the Depression upon them, the provinces continued to bring boys. Manitoba and British Columbia might be excused on the grounds that they had committed to a quota for 1930 but stopped the flow when they realized conditions were worsening. Saskatchewan is more difficult to excuse. Its decision to continue bringing youngsters in 1931, after the previous year's crop failure, and amid badly deteriorating economic conditions, bordered on irresponsibility. As the Depression deepened, Blair took consolation in the belief that 'the boy who can make good under present conditions will be a wonderful asset to the country when the tide turns.' Some western boys did make good, but there is no evidence that they did so on the land. In 1935, while admitting that most of the Manitoba boys had gone home, either voluntarily or by deportation, Bowman boasted about some successes. Six boys had secured positions with the Hudson's Bay Company's fur department. Others had won scholarships to the Manitoba Agricultural College and gone on to 'good situations' in government service. While Blair was happy for the boys, they were not the 'wonderful asset' he had been hoping for. In July 1935, he admitted to Canada's High Commissioner to London that:

We certainly did not undertake boy immigration in order to recruit people for Government service or the Hudson's Bay Service, but for land settlement and in this respect the movement seems to have totally failed.

It was a fitting epitaph for all the provincial British boys' farm training schemes that operated across Canada during the 1920s and early 1930s.²⁸

7

The British Boys' Land Settlement Scheme

We have now to consider the scheme in light of prevailing conditions and personally I think we should stay as far away from granting these loans as it is possible for us to do.¹

When young John Upton left Birmingham for Ontario in the spring of 1928, he planned to become an independent Canadian farmer. The recruiting agent told him that if he saved \$500, the British and Canadian governments would jointly lend him \$2,500 to buy his own farm, equipment and livestock. The loan would be available when he became 21 years old and remain available until he turned 25. The agent's promise was based on an agreement between Ottawa and Whitehall that had been finalized in July 1927, just 8 months before John sailed.

The British Boys' Land Settlement Agreement committed the governments to lending up to \$5,000,000 over a period of ten years 'to assist suitable British youths to take up farming in Canada on their own account.'² The agreement stipulated that preference would be given to applicants who came through a provincial boys' farm training scheme. When John made his decision at the end of 1927, only Alberta, Ontario and the BICA were operating such schemes, and Alberta had already decided not to participate in the boys' land settlement programme. Determined to get the loan, and on the agent's advice that his chance of acceptance would be better, John applied to

migrate under the auspices of the BICA. Before he became 21, he left the land for the city and so never received the loan. Neither, however, did any other of the more than 8,000 provincial boys who came to Canada during the 1920s and early 1930s. Not a penny of the promised \$5,000,000 was ever loaned, as a reluctant dominion immigration department rejected every attempt to implement the scheme for fear of criticism in Canada, the risk of failure by the boys and government fiscal restraint. As early as 1931, with the Depression deepening, and under pressure from the OSC, the provinces and the boys to meet the dominion's obligations, assistant deputy minister Blair confessed that he 'could happily wish that the British Boy Land Settlement Scheme had died at birth.'³ Yet, at the end of 1936, as the agreement was running out, Blair refused to admit that Ottawa had repudiated it and continued to argue that the time was still not right for its implementation.⁴

The boys' land settlement scheme was devised to complement the provincial boys' farm training schemes. The 1926 Imperial Conference recommended that the dominions provide inducements to settlers to keep them on the land and 'counteract the drift to the cities.' It suggested some mechanism that would allow the settlers to acquire their own farms, provided they had gained some local farming experience and could make a deposit towards the purchase of the land. Ottawa and the OSC began immediate negotiations on a boy settlement scheme that would 'establish a sound and progressive method of colonization of the best class of British manhood.' Both governments recognized that few of the British boys who came to Canada had any money and that establishing themselves on their own farms would take many years of hard work and saving. The object of their negotiations, therefore, was to design a loan scheme that would let the boys buy their farms as soon as they had the necessary

training and experience. The boys would have to have reached their majority in order to be legal party to the terms of the loan. They would also be required to put some of their own money towards the purchase. Having the money would show that they were industrious and thrifty enough to make good. Investing it in the farm would ensure their commitment to succeed.⁵

With these ground rules, the OSC and dominion immigration department spent much of 1926 and the first half of 1927 exchanging proposals on what the boys should be offered and how the loans should be shared. By May 1927, W.R. Little, the dominion commissioner of colonization, complained to the OSC that despite the lengthy negotiations, the two sides were 'wide apart on the main features of the scheme.' Ottawa, for example, wanted it restricted to boys who passed through the provincial training farms while the OSC insisted that it be open to all boys who arrived after 31 May, 1922, the date of the Empire Settlement Act. The OSC had also suggested that applicants should have worked continuously on a farm from their time of arrival in Canada but Ottawa thought that this was overly restrictive. Other areas of disagreement included the term of the scheme and the total amounts to be committed.⁶

Under pressure from Britain's Secretary of State, Lord Lovat, the two governments resolved all but one of the contentious terms within a month. The dominion land settlement branch estimated that administration and aftercare, including land appraisal and selection, legal work, livestock and equipment selection and farm supervision, would cost at least \$350 per settler. While Ottawa was prepared to administer the scheme, it wanted the British government to share these unrecoverable costs. When the OSC refused, Ottawa considered asking the provinces to provide settlement services but decided that they had neither the experience nor manpower to do so. Minister

Forke, however, wanted the provinces to play some part in the scheme. After all, the boys' training farms, which formed the first step of the two-step settlement plan, were under their auspices. Without consulting the provinces, Forke instructed his department to word the agreement such that the provincial governments shared in the loan.⁷

The dominion government and the secretary of state for dominion affairs signed the British Boys' Land Settlement Agreement on July 1, 1927. Touted in a joint press release as 'one of the most constructive of modern land settlement schemes,' it reflected the compromises reached during the final month of negotiations. It applied to settlers from the United Kingdom who had migrated since the Empire Settlement Act but gave preference to those trained at provincial training farms. Applicants had to be between 15 and 19 years old when they arrived in Canada, have come unaccompanied and under an assisted passage, and not have come to join their parents. They also had to be at least 21 but not more than 25 years old, have saved \$500 towards the land purchase, and 'acquired the necessary experience in Canada by working as agricultural labourers ... or in such other manner as the Dominion Government may consider sufficient.' Mere experience, however, was not enough. The Dominion government had to be satisfied that the applicant was 'industrious, economical and capable of managing a farm.'⁸

If he met the criteria, the settler could borrow up to \$2,500 towards the purchase of a farm, equipment and livestock. If the maximum loan was required, the British government would contribute \$1,250, the dominion \$1,000 and the participating province \$250. If less than \$2,500 would suffice, the government contributions would be proportioned accordingly. An applicant could qualify only if he were buying a farm in a participating province. In effect, it gave each provincial government the power to

veto the scheme in its province. The loans were to be repaid over 20 years at an interest rate of 5%. The dominion government would provide settlement services at its own expense and hold title on the property on behalf of the Crown until the settler repaid the loan and any outstanding debt associated with his passage assistance. The \$5,000,000 pledged by the governments was enough to settle up to 2,000 boys over the scheme's 10-year life. Although the agreement called for provincial involvement, the provinces were not signatories to it. Forke's plan was to sign separate agreements with whichever provinces agreed to participate.⁹

The reaction to the agreement was mixed. Not surprisingly, the provincial boys already in Canada welcomed the news. Several BICA boys, for example, who learned of the scheme through Secretary Morison's 1927 Christmas letter, responded enthusiastically. One thought Morison must have 'made some mistake' because the scheme 'seems too good to be true.' Others 'looked forward with anticipation ... to this generous offer,' or promised to 'work and save hard' to qualify for the scheme. The press was less unanimous in its praise. In England, the London *Morning Post* criticized the scheme as being 'too limited in its scope' to make any impression on Britain's unemployment problem. It presumed that 'powerful influences in the Dominions are being exerted to prevent British immigration.' Canadian press coverage ranged from damning criticism to exuberant praise. On the one hand, the Toronto *Farmer's Sun*, the official paper of the United Farmers of Ontario, held that 'after so much coddling the boys will not have the energy and self-reliance necessary to succeed.' The editor added that, as the boys were bound to fail and drift into cities and the United States, Forke would have done better to reduce taxes and public debt. On the other hand, the Ottawa *Citizen* thought that the new scheme 'could not be bettered as a means to settle the

Canadian rural area with the right type of settler and future citizen.' Between these extremes, press coverage was generally favourable, while pointing out the need for careful government control and supervision and lamenting the absence of a similar scheme for Canadian boys.¹⁰

The most scathing attack on the agreement came from the *Action Catholique* of Quebec. The French-Canadian paper criticized the 'disagreeable' scheme, reiterating the *Farmer's Sun's* certainty that the newcomers would fail and 'never become real farmers [but] ... drift to the Cities or to the United States.' It took particular exception to the expense to the Canadian taxpayer, Ottawa's willingness to take England's 'refugees,' and 'the meagre assistance tendered to Canadians and sons of Canadians wishing to settle on land in their own country.' The lack of provision for homebred Canadians would be a recurring theme for the next ten years and the major reason for Ottawa's refusal to implement the scheme. In what probably represented its major complaint against the agreement, the *Action Catholique* described it as a clear indication that 'Imperial Conferences are mainly held for England's benefit.'¹¹

Ottawa had not expected Quebec to endorse the scheme. Minister Forke was more concerned about the reaction of the other provinces. He had made them an essential part of the scheme without consulting them and now he had to win their support. It proved a difficult task and the results were disappointing. Even before he invited the provinces to participate, the Church of England gave Blair a prophetic warning. Responding to the press release of the agreement, its Council for Social Service congratulated Ottawa on making 'a good beginning' to British boy settlement but 'fear[ed] the requirements of a contribution from the Provincial governments may in some cases present a difficulty.' The immigration department quickly discovered that

the fear was well founded. In January 1928, deputy minister Egan confessed to the department's London office that only Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were showing any interest. Even they were reluctant to share in the loans 'for fear of being accused of doing for British migrants what they cannot do for their own citizens.' Manitoba's Premier John Bracken would reconsider his rejection of the scheme if Ottawa provided 'similar opportunities for assisted settlement to Canadian boys.' British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan had definitely chosen not to take part, and although Prince Edward Island had not yet responded, its participation seemed unlikely 'owing to its limited resources.'¹²

Ottawa made two proposals in an attempt to salvage the scheme. First, it addressed the concerns of Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Setting aside its previously expressed fear of provincial capabilities, the immigration department suggested that Ottawa provide the provinces' \$250 share of the loan in return for their assuming responsibility for administration and settlement services. Feeling more comfortable with this arrangement, the three provinces decided to cooperate. Consequently, in November 1928 Ottawa and Whitehall signed a supplementary agreement, giving the provinces the option of sharing in the loan or providing the services.¹³

Having satisfied one concern, the immigration department turned to Manitoba's objection to the lack of a settlement scheme for Canadians. Premier Bracken was not alone in promoting such a scheme. The Church of England in Canada had raised the same issue, wishing that 'something similar could be done for young Canadian boys ... [to] help develop a movement from the cities to rural districts.' Blair, too, felt uneasy about using Canadian taxpayers' money to subsidize British boys while withholding it

from Canadians. The Canadian Farm Loan Board reported that many Canadians were inquiring about 'assistance similar in character to that furnished to immigrants from Great Britain.'¹⁴ The dominion government responded with a proposal for a parallel Canadian boys' land settlement scheme.¹⁵

The proposed scheme, announced in January 1929, was identical to the British boys' scheme except that Ottawa and the provinces would equally share the \$2,500 government loan since the United Kingdom could play no role in the settlement of Canadians. The loan offer would only be available in provinces participating in the British boys' land settlement scheme. Ottawa hoped this would draw more provinces into the British scheme but none of the provinces showed any interest. George Hoadley of Alberta particularly opposed the idea. He told Forke that if a British boy needed \$2,500 to get started, a Canadian could do it for \$1,250. As that was the amount Ottawa was prepared to contribute, Hoadley rationalized there was no need for any provincial contribution. Even Premier Bracken, who had seemed the most upset by the lack of a Canadian boys' scheme, was unwilling to cooperate when the solution came with a \$1,250 per boy price tag. In any event, Manitoba's anxiety about equality for Canadian boys had waned somewhat since its rejection of the British boys' land settlement scheme in October 1927. By October 1928, it had decided to take part, but only for boys who arrived after January 1, 1928.¹⁶

Having the cooperation of only four of the nine provinces created problems for Ottawa on both sides of the Atlantic. In Britain it had to defend itself against accusations of broken promises. The Church of England's Council of Empire Settlement, for example, which ran British boys' hostels in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, complained to the OSC that its boys going to Alberta and Saskatchewan

were not eligible for the land settlement scheme. This caused the Council 'serious concern,' as it had told its boys that they would qualify, and had 'broadcast this information throughout the country.' It referred the OSC to an October 1927 *Manitoba Free Press* article that reported Forke's assurance to a Church delegation in Winnipeg that the scheme would apply to boys placed through the Church of England Hostels at Winnipeg, Melfort and Edmonton. When the OSC inquired, the immigration department chose to be offended rather than embarrassed. Little assured the OSC that no immigration department official would ever have suggested that boys in non-participating provinces would qualify. He claimed that Forke's statement in Winnipeg was perfectly correct. The minister had simply failed to add that the boys' eligibility was contingent on the western provinces agreeing to participate. As the Council of Empire Settlement had not bothered to ask the department which provinces were participating, Little did not believe that Ottawa was in any way responsible for 'the mistake which has evidently been made on the part of the Church.'¹⁷

In Canada, explaining to boys in the non-participating provinces why they did not qualify was also more of a nuisance than an embarrassment. During the agreement's ten-year life, the immigration department continually received inquiries from British boys in the three westernmost provinces about their eligibility. Of all the inquiries about the scheme, these were the easiest to answer. Ottawa simply informed the boys that they were 'out of reach of help.'¹⁸

By the end of 1929 the parameters of the scheme were defined. All that remained was to screen applicants, award loans and administer the programme. No government expected a flood of early applications. Most boys were still well under 21 years old. Besides, with a wage of only \$10 a month, or a little more if they were lucky, it would

take them many years to save the mandatory \$500. By the end of 1930, however, the OSC was surprised that it had not had single application. It realized that it was probably too soon for boys who had arrived since the signing of the agreement in 1927. The agreement, however, had been made retroactive to 1922 and the OSC wondered if Ottawa had given the scheme enough publicity. It was especially interested in the Vimy Ridge boys, some of whom had come as early as May 1926.¹⁹

After assuring the OSC that every provincial boy in the participating provinces had been made aware of the scheme, Ottawa admitted that there had been two applications but that both had been turned down. The first was in February 1930 when John B. had applied for the loan to buy a farm in Ontario. Unfortunately, the asking price for the land, equipment and livestock was \$4,000. As the joint loan and John's savings only amounted to \$3,000, the Crown would be unable to obtain clear title and the loan would be unprotected. Consequently, it was denied. George Elliot, the provincial director of colonization, warned Blair that this might be a recurring 'practical problem' since, with the \$3,000 limit, the only farms available were 'either too far away from markets, or ... not of any great productive value.' Under these circumstances the settlement scheme was 'not a very feasible proposition.'²⁰

The problem in the second case was that when William S. applied in June 1930, he had already bought his farm in Manitoba. The agreement between Ottawa and the participating provinces called for the dominion government to approve the land purchase. An exception, of course, could have been made, especially as the scheme was new and the boys were not sure of the ground rules. Again, however, Ottawa did not like the price. This time the land was not too expensive. It was too cheap. William had bought a half-section of unbroken land, with no buildings on it, for only \$960. The

immigration department felt that if he used the balance of the loan for buildings, stock and equipment, the land security on the loan would be too low.²¹

Rejecting the first two applicants was an omen. In 1931 the rate of applications and inquiries picked up. By April there were 30 to 40 from Ontario and a few from Manitoba and the Maritimes. Ottawa had included money in its budget estimates for the scheme and hoped that several young men would be settled by the end of the summer. By August, however, no loans had been approved and Egan was advising new immigration minister W.A. Gordon of the need 'to review the British boy land settlement situation to determine whether the scheme is to be continued.' Things had changed and the department was facing a dilemma. The OSC and provinces were pressuring it to implement the programme but worsening economic conditions made it hesitant to do so. Blair told Gordon that the time had come when the department 'must either go with the scheme or disregard the general promises made.'²²

At first Ottawa hoped that the deepening Depression would convince the OSC to abandon the scheme, or at least suspend it, as it had the New Brunswick family scheme. While the British committee agreed to make no new commitments, it stressed its determination to 'make full provision' for those already in Canada. The immigration department had to make its own decision and it was not an easy one. On the one hand it had obligations. Not only had it signed the agreements, it had advertised the scheme widely. Its 1929 booklet describing the scheme had been distributed to each provincial boy in the participating provinces. It promised the boys 'the prospect of becoming a farm owner in your own right.' If the boys met the qualifications, how could Ottawa renege on such a promise? On the other hand, times had changed dramatically since the agreements had been signed. The Depression had arrived and was deepening.

Deputy Minister Egan was convinced that 'under present conditions' Ottawa would never have agreed to the scheme. Was it really in the boys' best interests to begin farming on borrowed money at a time when even experienced farmers were going under? Certainly land and equipment prices were dropping but so were returns. Moreover, under Ottawa's new policy of fiscal restraint, every government department was under pressure to cut spending. It would be difficult in the House to justify risky loans to British immigrants. Then there was the recurring problem of helping immigrants and not Canadians, especially when Canadian farmers were in so much difficulty.²³

The immigration department considered how it could best resolve this 'awkward situation.' Egan argued that while the department could hardly refuse those who met the qualifications, 'the number we may ultimately settle ... can be pretty well controlled.' A boy's acceptability was at the discretion of the department and 'a close check-up [would] no doubt keep numbers within reasonable limits.' He suggested approving a few token boys and patiently waiting until the scheme ran out in 1937. The slump in farm wages would make it difficult for many boys to save the necessary \$500 and in a few years they would begin to slip past their 25th birthdays and no longer qualify. Gordon was unconvinced that a few token settlers were a good idea. He argued that if it became known that loans were actually being made, there was no way of knowing how many might want to take advantage of the scheme and controlling the number of approvals might prove more difficult than Egan envisioned. Possibly to avoid antagonizing the OSC, the minister rejected the temptation to renounce the scheme as an ill-conceived Liberal blunder and quietly suspended it, blaming the

economy and concern for the boys, and denying any suggestion that the government was repudiating the agreements.²⁴

Ottawa made no announcement of the scheme's suspension. Instead, it simply stopped including funds in the budget estimates and fended off inquiries as they arose. Occasionally over the next five years, especially when responding to provincial government inquiries, the immigration department confessed the real reasons. First, and most important, it was just too difficult politically to 'do something for the British immigrant boy which is not done for the Canadian.' There would be tremendous public criticism. Even admitting that this was the reason for the scheme's deferral would bring accusations of having entered into a poorly devised agreement. Secondly, the financial risk to the government was too great. If the boys failed, as the immigration department believed they would 'in 99 cases out of 100,' Ottawa would be left trying to sell land in a depressed market. More often, Ottawa stuck to its strategy of blaming its decision on the economic downturn and worry about the boys' welfare. In this version, the scheme's deferral was the result of 'far reaching reductions' in Ottawa's budget, necessitated by the Depression. It was also in the boys' best interests, because they risked losing their savings and being 'driven off the land ... [by] unsettled and unsatisfactory farming conditions.' The government hoped to re-open the scheme 'when general conditions are more favourable.'²⁵

As the term of the agreement ran its course, Ottawa continued to deny publicly that it had abandoned the scheme, but put no money for it in the estimates and rejected every appeal for loans. In 1932, for example, two brothers in Nova Scotia who had saved their \$500 were advised to pool their resources and start in a small way without the encumbrance of a government loan. Two years later, in response to an inquiry from

the Catholic Immigration Association, the immigration department denied 'a rumour ... that Canada had repudiated a Land Settlement agreement which would have helped a number of British boys to enter upon land settlement.' Blair told the Association that although the scheme had merely been suspended, he doubted it would be brought into operation before farming conditions improved. As late as 1937 Ottawa claimed that its failure to make any of the promised loans 'was not due to any unwillingness on the part of the Minister to assist individual boys.' Rather, government retrenchment had put the immigration department 'in about the same position as the Israelites who were called upon to make bricks without straw.' After July 1937 Ottawa gave up the pretence. The scheme was dead and no financial assistance had been given. Blair could openly confess that the major problem all along had been 'the difficulty of embarking on an enterprise which involves a special vote of money by parliament for helping British boys at a time when no similar provision has been made for helping Canadian boys.'²⁶

The British Boys' Land Settlement Scheme failed because it was ill-conceived. Despite almost a year of negotiations, Ottawa and the OSC created an agreement so riddled with potential problems that it was essentially impractical. The blame lay with the dominion immigration department. Only it could judge for Canada what could go wrong with the scheme and the likelihood that it would go wrong. By failing to recognize and mitigate inherent risks, the department sealed the scheme's fate at its conception.

Forke's decision, for example, to include the provinces in the principal agreement without their knowledge or consent was at best imprudent. Had Ottawa weighed the consequences it might have done things differently. Pre-agreement consultations might have attracted more provinces or convinced Ottawa that a truly nationwide scheme

required the dominion government to go it alone. As it was, the provincial veto undermined the scheme by reducing its scope to merely four provinces. Moreover, Ottawa did not think through the extent of the provinces' participation. The principal agreement called for the provinces to share the loan because the immigration department doubted their ability to give proper settlement service. The supplementary agreement giving the provinces the option of lending or providing services seemed to indicate a change of mind in Ottawa during the ensuing 16 months. Yet, in 1933, Egan confessed that this option had been a mistake because the provinces probably lacked 'the field services and experience to handle this.' If the scheme was ever to be implemented, the deputy minister believed that there had to be 'a return to the terms of the original agreement.'²⁷ Whether the provinces had the capability to provide services was never tested but Ottawa's waffling exemplified how uncertain the immigration department was about the scheme's practicality.

Similarly, setting the maximum loan at \$2,500 over a period of ten years carelessly ignored regional variations in land prices and the risks of inflation and deflation. In good times, as Ottawa quickly discovered, rising farm prices could make the loan insufficient, create problems with land title, and render the scheme impractical. With some forethought, the loans might have been tied to market values or an economic indicator, such as the cost of living index, that would have given the governments some easy mechanism for increasing the amount of the advance. In bad times, on the other hand, lower farm returns would probably increase foreclosures and Ottawa would be left holding title to depreciated properties. There is no evidence that this risk was considered during the negotiations. Had it been, there is no way of knowing if Ottawa would have considered it a significant enough risk to reject the agreement. Once the

agreement was signed, of course, Ottawa could do little to protect against this scenario. When the Depression turned the possibility of undervalued farm property into a reality it soon influenced the department's decision to suspend the programme. The failure to even consider the risk in 1927 contributed to the scheme's impracticality.

The greatest potential problem ignored by Ottawa's negotiators, of course, was the lack of a corresponding scheme for Canadians. They had not even considered it. Not until 1929, spurred by criticism and inquiries, did the dominion government propose such a scheme. Even then it did not recognize the significance. When the provinces refused to cooperate, Ottawa could have gone it alone. It could have loaned all \$2,500 or followed George Hoadley's advice and loaned \$1,250 on the basis that Canadians, with help from family and friends, could manage on half the amount immigrants needed. It did neither. Within two years the issue was the immigration department's principal reason for refusing to implement the British boys' scheme. It blamed the provinces but the fault was its own. Before signing the principal agreement it should have identified the risk and taken the appropriate action to minimize it. It could have rejected the agreement altogether, or created a Canadian boys' scheme with or without the provinces' cooperation. Again, the lack of proper potential problem analysis left Ottawa with the task of trying to implement an essentially impractical scheme.

The Depression certainly did not play a neutral role in the settlement scheme's failure. In good times there is less need for scrutiny and the negotiators' risk taking might have gone unnoticed. The level of loans might have been happily increased or the lack of a Canadian boys' scheme overlooked. The Depression, however, brought high unemployment and government retrenchment. These in turn spawned sympathy for suffering Canadians and the need to justify every dollar of public spending. This

environment was hardly conducive to making government loans to British immigrants. Attempts to implement the scheme would have opened it to close inspection and exposed its intrinsic weaknesses. That was exactly what Ottawa wanted to avoid. In 1931 Blair admitted to Egan that he wished the scheme had died at birth. By failing to recognize the scheme's potential problems, and to mitigate their possible impact, the dominion negotiators of the 1927 British Boys' Land Settlement Scheme essentially pre-granted Blair's wish. They killed the scheme at the moment of its conception.

8

Conclusion

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley,
And leave us nought but grief an pain
For promised joy.¹

The provincial boys' immigration schemes were an integral part of the 'back-to-the-land' movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While they cannot be conveniently slotted into one of David DeMeritt's classifications, they exhibited several of the characteristics that typified the movements. *Arcadian* emphasis on a healthy lifestyle offering the possibility of personal success and *agrarian* concepts of man's natural affinity to the land permeated the dominion government's recruitment literature. On the British side, *urban unemployment relief* was the principal motive for passing the Empire Settlement Act on which the schemes were founded. As with all the back-to-the-land movements of the period, the boys' schemes significantly affected the lives of their participants, but the migration of 8,000 boys from British towns and cities to the Canadian countryside had little influence on the course of urban or rural life on either side of the Atlantic.

The Depression provided the knockout blow to the provincial boys' schemes. As it deepened, it became the scapegoat for the schemes' failures, relieving the governments of any responsibility.² In reality, most of the farm training schemes were

collapsing before the Depression came and the settlement scheme would have been difficult to implement even in the best of times. It is impossible to know if the schemes would have survived had there been no Depression. Perhaps the dominion and provincial governments would have learned from their mistakes and turned things around. Certainly the concept *seemed* sound. Ottawa wanted farm labourers with the potential to become farmers in their own right and expand the dominion's agricultural base. It preferred young immigrants because they could be re-socialized and integrated into rural populations more easily than their adult compatriots. The provinces knew local needs and together with Ottawa they had the bureaucracy to administer new schemes. It might have worked. The schemes, however, must be judged on achievement rather than concept or conjecture and by that measure they failed. They did so because essentially every aspect of their operation was flawed.

The selection process in the UK was inadequate. Immigration branch records are filled with lists of provincial boys who turned out to be unsuitable, undesirable or simply not interested in farm work. The immigration department should have weeded them out before they sailed, but pressure to meet quotas prevented it. More rigorous selection would have meant fewer boys, but choosing those with real aptitude and desire for farming would have meant fewer failures. To meet quotas and tight schedules, Ottawa and the provinces trusted personal interviews and ended up with a motley group of teenagers whose principal attraction to the recruiting agents was either the dubious advantage of a 'superior' education or the ability to sail on short notice. By contrast, organizations like the Salvation Army, the Church Army, and Cossar's Homes selected from boys attending training farms in the UK. This allowed these organizations to assess the boy's chances, and the boy to confirm his competence

and will, before the steamers left Britain. In this way, most of the potential failures were left behind and retention rates in Canada far exceeded those of the provincial schemes.³

The OSC tried to interest Ottawa in old country training farms, but the provinces preferred that the boys learn under Canadian conditions. The OSC interpreted this to mean Canadian training farms where the youngsters would get some basic instruction before being placed. That was why it insisted on farm hostels. The provinces, with the exception of Alberta, meant on-the-job training, and in its eagerness for provincial participation, Ottawa assured them that the farm hostels need only be reception and distribution centres and sanctuaries when the boys ran into difficulties. Although many boys were led to believe that they would receive training, they got only a day or two of room and board in often unfriendly, poorly equipped lodgings.⁴ Ill prepared, the youngsters were thrown in at the deep-end. Not surprisingly, some swam and others sank. Having received no old country training, the boys should have been taught some rudimentary skills at the farm hostels. The Cossar organization trained their boys on both sides of the Atlantic before placement and the results were evident in high retention rates. The provincial boys deserved at least half as much attention. The Hoadley boys, of course, were the exception. But Alberta's careless placements, negligent aftercare, and indifference to the boys' welfare nullified the benefit of their instruction. At the other provincial farm hostels, some practical training would not have transformed city boys into experienced farm hands, but it would have eased their transition and reduced the possibility of their and their employers' instant disillusionment.

The boys' placement was equally negligent and reflected the conflicting objectives of government and farmers. While the senior governments were looking for prospective agriculturists, most Canadian farmers were simply looking for cheap help. The two aims were not necessarily incompatible had the boys been placed where they would receive good, caring instruction. Despite denials and excuses, however, there were enough examples of careless placements to suggest that the provinces' primary goal was to satisfy their farmers. All too often the result was exploitation that drove provincial boys home or into urban centres.

For the most part, the boys' aftercare was as inadequate as what preceded it. Alberta's indifference, the BICA's incompetence, and Ontario's obsession with repatriation were just some of the consequences of placing the welfare of teenage immigrants in the hands of bureaucrats, academics and inexperienced, aging volunteers. While the voluntary organizations were experienced in dealing with the particular problems of adolescent boys, the provincial scheme managers were often baffled by their boys' behaviour. Consequently, when the youngsters ran into difficulties, whether or not of their own making, the response was often no reaction or overreaction. This meant that all too often the boys were either left to fend for themselves or shipped home.

Other factors certainly contributed to the schemes' disappointing results. Some boys failed because they became homesick or developed health problems. Others, like John Upton, came with the best of intentions, settled reasonably well, then simply changed their minds about farming. These circumstances, however, like the coming of the Depression, were outside the schemes' control and accountability. Selection, reception, placement and aftercare, however, were not. Neither in the case of the land

settlement scheme was comprehensive planning. These were the main ingredients of the British boys' immigration schemes of the 1920s and early 1930s. Properly applied, they could have formed a blueprint for success. Instead, in the hands of the dominion and provincial governments, they proved to be a recipe for failure.

NOTES

All Public Archives of Canada references are to microfilm copies in the British Columbia Archives (BCA) and all microfilm reel numbers referenced are BCA reel numbers.

Prologue

¹ John Upton's experiences were related to the author during an interview in Fernie, British Columbia in July 1999. Historians have long debated the legitimacy of oral history as a method of recapturing the past. The late English historian, A.J.P. Taylor, for example, was particularly opposed to historians accepting the reminiscences of 'old men drooling about their youth' as a reliable historical source. (See Russell Hann's 'Oral History' in *Clio's Craft*, ed. Terry Crowley, (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988), p. 42). The opposition to the oral methodology is typically based on the notion of the degenerative effects of age on memory. Modern research on memory, however, suggests that, barring severe organic impairment, it is one of the most unshakable features of the human mind, preserving experiences with remarkable accuracy well into old age. (See Gwyn Prins' 'Oral History' in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 116-118).

² The brochure was issued by the Canadian Ministry of Immigration and Colonization. In 1929 it was updated, expanded and reissued under the title *Boy Settlement in Canada*, which described additional provincial boys' farm schemes that were not available in 1927. To John Upton's recollection, the descriptions of the schemes available to him in 1927 were the same in both brochures.

³ Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch records, RG 76, vol. 103, file 16120, part 8, microfilm, reel B-811, dominion assistant deputy minister F.C. Blair to Sir William Clark, Canadian High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, 22 September 1931.

⁴ Neil Sutherland's works include *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976) and *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). Popular studies on the Home Children include, Kenneth Bagnell, *The Little Immigrants: The Orphans who Came to Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1980); Phyllis Harrison, *The Home Children: Their Personal Stories* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1979). Scholarly studies that discuss the movement include Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (London: McGill-Queens University Press, 1980) and Alex Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement: A Study of Juvenile Migration* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1932).

⁵ Patrick Dunae, 'Waifs: The Fairbridge Society in British Columbia, 1931-1951' in *Histoire social-Social History*, vol. XXI, no. 42 (novembre-November, 1988).

⁶ For example, G.F. Plant, *Oversea Settlement: Migration from the United Kingdom to the Dominions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951); John Schultz, 'Leaven for the lump' in *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*, ed. Stephen Constantine (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

⁷ R. L. Schnell, 'The right class of boy: youth training schemes and assisted emigration to Canada under the Empire Settlement Act, 1922-39' in *History of Education*, vol. 24, no.1, 1995.

⁸ The most informative material on the Empire Settlement Act is listed in note 2 of Chapter 1. Joy Parr's *Labouring Children* remains the definitive work on what led to the embargo on school-age children in 1924.

⁹ David DeMeritt, 'Visions of Agriculture in British Columbia' in *BC Studies*, no. 108, Winter 1995-96, pp. 29-59. The extensive literature relating to back-to-the-land movements includes: Richard White, 'Poor Men on Poor Lands: The Back-to the Land Movement of the Early Twentieth Century - A Case Study' in *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. XLIX, 1980, pp. 105-131; Peter Sinclair, 'Agricultural Colonization in Ontario and Quebec: Some Evidence from the Clay Belt, 1900-45' in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, 1986, pp.104-19; James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Dawn Bowen, 'Forward to a Farm: Land Settlement as Unemployment Relief in the 1930s' in *Prairie Forum*, vol.20, no.2, Fall 1995, pp. 207-29; R. Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays in Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).

Chapter 1

¹ Cited from Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1843), in John Marriot, *Empire Settlement* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 7.

² Detailed studies of changing British Government policy on state-assisted emigration during the 19th and early 20th centuries include W.A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles* (London: P.S. King and Sons Ltd., 1929); I.M. Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire, 1919-1936* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972), and *Imperial Economic Policy, 1917-1939: Studies in Expansion and Protection* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.), 1974; G.F. Plant, *Oversea Settlement: Migration from the United Kingdom to the Dominions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951); Stephen Constantine, 'Empire migration and imperial harmony,' in *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*, , pp. 1-19; Keith Williams, 'A way out of our troubles: the politics of Empire settlement, 1900-1922,' in *Emigrants and Empire*, pp. 22-44.

³ Constantine, 'Empire migration and imperial harmony,' p. 3; Williams, 'A way out of our troubles,' p. 24.

⁴ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, p. 65; Alex Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement: A Study of Juvenile Migration* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1932), p. 71; Constantine, 'Empire migration and imperial harmony,' pp. 2, 3.

⁵ Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, p. 244; Williams, 'A way out of our troubles,' pp. 22, 25; Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p. 13.

⁶ Constantine, 'Empire migration and imperial harmony,' p. 7; Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, p. 72; Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire*, p. 167.

⁷ Constantine, 'Empire migration and imperial harmony,' p. 2; Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, p. 133.

⁸ Drummond, , *Imperial Economic Policy*, p. 44.

⁹ Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, p. 257; Williams, 'A way out of our troubles,' p. 24; Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, pp. 50-51; Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire*, p.72; Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p. 64.

¹⁰ Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, p. 259; Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p. 63; Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire*, p.72.

¹¹ Williams, 'A way out of our troubles,' p. 34; Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, pp. 52-53; Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire*, p. 73

-
- ¹² Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p. 72; Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, pp. 54-55, 57; Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire*, pp. 73-74.
- ¹³ Williams, 'A way out of our troubles,' pp. 37, 41.
- ¹⁴ Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, pp. 260-261; Williams, 'A way out of our troubles,' p. 40.
- ¹⁵ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, p. 80; ; Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire*, p. 79.
- ¹⁶ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, pp. 78-80.
- ¹⁷ Williams, 'A way out of our troubles,' pp. 38, 41; Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, pp. 71, 75.
- ¹⁸ Williams, 'A way out of our troubles,' p. 40.
- ¹⁹ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, p. 82.
- ²⁰ Quoted in Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, p. 262.
- ²¹ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, pp. 88-91.
- ²² *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for 1924*, p. 14.
- ²³ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, pp. 93-94.
- ²⁴ John Schultz, 'Leaven for the lump,' in *Emigrants and Empire*, p. 51.
- ²⁵ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, pp. 87, 93; Schultz, 'Leaven for the lump,' p. 152-153; National Archives of Canada [NAC], Ottawa, Immigration Branch Records, RG 76, vol. 132, file 30477, part 1, Commissioner to Cory, 3 June 1921. A detailed study of Canada's 'remittance men' can be found in Patrick Dunae's *Gentlemen Emigrants* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981).
- ²⁶ R.L. Schnell, 'The right class of boy: youth training schemes and assisted emigration to Canada under the Empire Settlement Act, 1922-39,' in *History of Education*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1995, p. 76.
- ²⁷ Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch records, RG 76, vol. 203, file 88324, part 1, microfilm, reel B-907, UK Government Press Notice headlined 'Room for the Right Sort,' 22 July 1922.
- ²⁸ PAC, RG 76, vol. 203, file 88324, part 1, microfilm, reel B-907, *Evening Standard*, 21 and 23 July 1922.
- ²⁹ PAC, RG 76, vol. 203, file 88324, part 1, microfilm, reel B-907, F.C. Blair to W.J. Black, 27 March 1923.
- ³⁰ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy*, p. 93.
- ³¹ PAC, RG 76, vol. 133, file 30477, part 2, microfilm, reel B-840, Blair to Windham, 10 February 1923.
- ³² Schultz, 'Leaven for the lump,' p. 157.
- ³³ The results of the Empire Settlement Act as a whole were disappointing to those who envisioned millions of Britons emigrating to the white colonies. Between 1922 and 1929 only 302,000 Britons

took advantage of assisted emigration under the Act. 100,000 went to Canada, 160,000 to Australia, 41,000 to New Zealand and just over 700 to South Africa (See Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, p. 310).

³⁴ Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, pp. 106-110.

³⁵ *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for 1924*, p. 32.

³⁶ Schultz, 'Leaven for the lump,' p. 156.

³⁷ Schultz, 'Leaven for the lump,' p. 156.

³⁸ Drummond, *Imperial Economic Policy, 1917-1939: Studies in Expansion and Protection*, p. 89.

³⁹ Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, p. 281.

⁴⁰ P. Rooke and R. Schnell, 'Imperial Philanthropy and Colonial Response: British Juvenile Emigration to Canada, 1896-1930,' in *The Historian*, 46, 1983, pp. 58-70.

⁴¹ Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, pp. 56, 92-93, 95.

⁴² Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, p. 95. The demand for farm labourers grew steadily during the early 20th century until the onset of the Depression. Between 1911 and 1921, the waged workforce in agriculture grew by almost 41%, and by another 30% during the 1920s. See Cecelia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and Development of Prairie Agriculture* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995).

⁴³ Patrick Dunae, 'Waifs: The Fairbridge Society in British Columbia,' p. 228.

⁴⁴ Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p. 133; Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, p. 104.

⁴⁵ The reduction in the number of girls available to take up domestic service in Canada also concerned Whitehall and Ottawa, as demand had always exceeded supply. Consequently, under a 1926 house-worker agreement, the British government paid 75% of the cost of establishing and operating training hostels in the UK for would-be migrants willing to take up domestic service. The dominion government provided the girls' aftercare and shared the balance of their training cost in the UK with participating provinces. Of the 18,790 who went to Canada under the agreement 1,517 eventually married but a similar number, 1,716 returned to the UK by choice or were deported. The others were trapped by the onset of the Depression in the 1930s and remained on the rolls of the Immigration Department's Women's Branch which was responsible for their welfare. (See Schultz, 'Leaven for the lump,' p. 161).

⁴⁶ Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, p. 283.

⁴⁷ Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, pp. 66-67, 73; Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles*, p. 282.

⁴⁸ PAC, RG 76, vol. 132, file 30477, part 1, microfilm, reel B-840, W.R. Little to Secretary, Department of Immigration, Ottawa, 13 April 1922.

⁴⁹ PAC, RG 76, vol. 132, file 30477, part 1, microfilm, reel B-840, Little to deputy minister Cory, 4 June 1921.

⁵⁰ Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, p. 107.

⁵¹ Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p. 136; Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, p. 120.

⁵² Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, pp. 76-77.

⁵³ Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, p. 82.

⁵⁴ PAC, RG 76, vol. 132, file 30477, part 1, microfilm, reel B-840, W.R. Little to Secretary, Department of Immigration, Ottawa, 13 April 1922; superintendent of immigration, London, to secretary of immigration, Ottawa, 13 April 1922.

⁵⁵ Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p. 141.

⁵⁶ Plant, *Oversea Settlement*, p. 146.

⁵⁷ Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire*, p. 102.

⁵⁸ A detailed description of the Australian schemes is found in Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, pp. 138-152. South Australia was the first state to initiate government guardianship. Under its Immigration Act of 1923, immigrant boys between 15 and 18 years of age came under government control for a period of three years. The boys were distributed from a government hostel in Adelaide and farmers either chose their own apprentices or left selection up to government officials. By the end of 1928, over 1,500 farm-apprentices entered South Australia and according to Scholes the scheme was still 'working satisfactorily' in 1932. In many respects the Canadian schemes were designed on the Australian model. One significant difference was that the Australian boys contributed to a health and accident insurance fund.

⁵⁹ See brochure *Boy Settlement in Canada*, published by the Canadian Ministry of Immigration and Colonization, Ottawa, Canada, 1929.

⁶⁰ Schultz, 'Leaven for the lump,' p. 163.

Chapter 2

¹ Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch records, RG 76, vol. 103, file 16120, part 5, microfilm, reels B-809-11, F.C. Blair to file, 12 October 1929. (Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this chapter are found in RG 76, file 16120, microfilm reels B-809-11).

² The represented denominations were Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational. The Rev. John Chisholm, the driving force behind the Association's move into boy immigration, and referred to in the press as the Association's organizer, was a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. See RG 76, vol. 102, part 1, Major G. Montgomery's Report in the attachment to the Assistant Director's memorandum to Deputy Minister, 7 August 1925, and *Montreal Gazette* article 'Plans to Aid Immigration,' 28 July 1923.

³ Vol. 103, part 5, Blair to file, 18 October 1929; vol. 102, part 1, Rev. John Chisholm to The Hon. Charles Stewart, 14 May 1923; Blair to file, 15 August 1925.

⁴ Vol. 103, part 5, Blair to W.J. Egan, 19 Oct 1929; 76, vol. 102, part 2, Blair to file, 3 March 1926; vol. 103, part 6, Blair to file, 26 November 1930; vol. 102, part 1, Supervisor Juvenile Immigration to Egan, 8 May 1924. The boys' minimum wage was set at \$10/month in each province, although Nova Scotia only raised it from \$8/month at the department of immigration's insistence. Between 1925 and 1930, the average monthly wage for hired hands across Canada was \$32, excluding board and lodgings. The provincial boys' low wages, based on their age and lack of experience, must have encouraged many, like John Upton, to abandon the land in search of better paying urban jobs. A detailed description of the life of Canada's farm labourers in the early 1900s, including the average wages quoted, can be found in Cecelia Danysk, *Hired Hands*.

-
- ⁵ Vol. 102, part 1, Supervisor Juvenile Immigration to Egan, 8 May 1924.
- ⁶ Vol. 102, part 1, Supervisor Juvenile Immigration to Egan, 8 May 1924; Deputy Minister to John Macnaghten, 9 May 1924.
- ⁷ Vol. 103, part 7, Blair to McPhail, Immigration Department Accounts Branch, , 7 January 1931; vol. 103, part 8, G. Bogue Smart to file, 20 June 1931; vol. 102, part 4, BICA publication 'Free Passage to Canada' vol. 102, part 1, Blair to file, 15 August 1925. The Association's name change coincided with the dominion government's 1925 'Railways Agreement' with the CPR and CN which opened the door to more central and eastern Europeans. The agreement, which extended over a period of 2 years and was renewed for a further 3 years, brought 185,000 'agriculturists, agricultural workers and domestic servants' to Canada from 'non-preferred' countries. See Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Smith Ltd., 1982).
- ⁸ Vol. 102, part 1, Blair to file, 21 August 1925; Assistant Director to Deputy Minister, 7 August 1925.
- ⁹ Vol. 102, part 1, Assistant Director to Deputy Minister, 7 August 1925. (Major G. Montgomery's report is an attachment to the Assistant Director's memorandum).
- ¹⁰ Vol. 102, part 1, Assistant Director to Deputy Minister, 7 August 1925; vol. 102, part 4, Deputy Minister to J. Bruce Walker, 28 March 1928; vol. 102, part 4, Walker to Egan, 14 April 1928.
- ¹¹ Vol. 102, part 1, M.J. O'Brien to Blair, 10 July 1925; Blair to W.R. Little, 21 Aug 1925, Blair to file, 21 Aug 1925.
- ¹² Vol. 102, part 1, Walker to Egan, 28 December 1925.
- ¹³ Vol. 102, part 1, Morison to Col. Dennis, 18 January 1926.
- ¹⁴ Vol. 102, part 1, W.T. Cranfield to Walker, 7 December 1925; John MacPhee to Cossar, 20 Dec 1925; vol. 102, part 2, quoted in: Commissioner of Colonization to Blair, 29 January 1926.
- ¹⁵ Vol. 102, part 1, Cossar to Blair 18 December 1925; Blair to Cullen, 14 December 1925; Walker to Egan, 28 December 1925; Included in Morison's undated response to Little's query on the cause of Kennedy's death, in Blair to Morison, 4 January 1926.
- ¹⁶ Vol. 102, part 1, cable from *Torosus* to Department of Immigration, Ottawa, 4 December 1925; W.J. Black to Blair, December 7, 1925; Walker to Egan, 28 December 1925.
- ¹⁷ Vol. 102, part 1, Smart to Blair, 11 January 1926.
- ¹⁸ Vol. 102, part 1, Walker to Egan, 31 December 1925.
- ¹⁹ Vol. 102, part 1, Smart to Blair, 16 December 1925.
- ²⁰ Vol. 102, part 1, Smart to Blair, 16 and 31 December 1925.
- ²¹ Vol. 102, part 1, Blair to Smart, 4 December 1925; Blair to Walker, 10 December 1925.
- ²² Vol. 102, part 2, Little to Blair, 29 January 1926; vol. 102, part 1, Blair to Morison, 4 January 1926.
- ²³ Vol. 102, part 2, J. Smyth to Blair, 8 February 1926.
- ²⁴ Vol. 102, part 2, J. Smyth to Blair, 8 February 1926; Little to Blair, 29 January 1926; Blair to file, 30 January 1926.

²⁵ Vol. 102, part 2, Smyth to Blair, 8 February 1926; cable from *Torosus* to Department of Immigration, Ottawa, 19 Feb 1926; Blair to file, 2 and 3 March 1926.

²⁶ Vol. 102, part 2, Blair to file, 30 January 1926; Smyth to Blair, 2 March 1926; Blair to Smyth, 4 March 1926.

²⁷ Vol. 102, part 2, Blair to Morison, 9 June 1926; vol. 103, part 6, Blair to file, 26 November 1930.

²⁸ Vol. 102, part 2, Smyth to G.F. Plant, 9 September 1926.

²⁹ Vol. 102, part 3, Egan to MacNaghten, 9 November 1927; vol. 102, part 2, Plant to Smyth, 21 October, 1926; Plant to Egan, 31 May 1926; Blair to Egan, 16 November 1926; vol. 102, part 3, Assistant Deputy Minister to Egan, 7 May 1927; vol. 102, part 3: Agreement was signed September 30, 1927; vol. 102, part 4, Blair to Morison, 16 November 1928.

³⁰ *Montreal Star*, 29 September 1927. All of the provincial boys' farm training schemes were generally well received when first announced. In January 1927 when Ottawa announced that Ontario was about to sign a tripartite agreement and that Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had indicated their intentions to do the same, the *Toronto Globe* saw it as a sign that Canada was to get 'a real immigration policy at last.' It saw no reason why the schemes should not succeed. (30 January 1927). Similarly, The *Winnipeg Free Press* greeted Manitoba's declaration in January 1928 that it would also be participating as 'an exciting announcement.' (19 January 1928), and the *Ottawa Journal* welcomed Saskatchewan's entry in December 1928 as 'continuing good news.' (December 16 1928). The Salvation Army, however, vehemently opposed the schemes, claiming that Ottawa was 'stealing its thunder.' Its opposition was influenced by Ottawa's decision to discontinue a \$15,000 per year grant to the Army for boy settlement work as it would have 'duplicated expenditures.' (*The Canadian Annual Review*, 1926 - 27, p. 180).

Public opinion remained supportive of assisting British boys to settle on the land until the Depression forced them to compete with Canadians in the overcrowded labour market. Possibly because of their age, the boys remained relatively immune to criticism that assisted passages promoted the immigration of Britain's failures (Shultz, 'Leaven for the lump,' p. 162). A *Winnipeg Free Press* editorial on 31 August 1929 reflected this criticism when it said that Canadians were 'rapidly getting ... fed up with assisted immigration.' Six months later, the 'pressure of public opinion' caused Ottawa to announce that assisted passages were at an end. The only exception was British boys coming to settle on farms. Ottawa made the exception because it 'seemed to reflect accurately the prevailing public opinion throughout the country.' (*The Canadian Annual Review*, 1929 -30, p. 187).

Even during the Depression the boys seemed to generate more sympathy than hostility. In 1932, for example, when Ottawa announced that voluntary societies, at their own expense, would bring 500 British boys for placement on Ontario farms, the Anglican Church in Canada and the Canadian Daughters League were less concerned that they would take jobs from Canadians than that they would end up like the 'defenceless laçs' of the BICA. (*Morning Citizen*, 7 March 1932; RG 76, vol. 68, file 3115, part 19, microfilm, reel B-780).

³¹ Vol. 102, parts 2/3. Many of the boys sent letters of gratitude to Morison during January and February 1928.

³² Vol. 102, part 3, Morison to Blair, 4 October 1927; Little to Blair, 9 November 1927; Egan to MacNaghten, 9 November 1927.

³³ Vol. 102, part 4, Walker to Morison, 5 September 1928; vol. 103, part 5, Blair to Smyth, 25 October 1929; vol. 102, part 2, Morison to Smart, 20 May 1926; Morison to Blair, 10 August 1926.

³⁴ Vol. 103, part 5, Blair to file, 17 January 1930; vol. 102, part 2, Morison to Blair, 10 August 1926; vol. 103, part 5, 16 October 1929; RG 76, vol. 103, part 5. Blair to file, 11 January 1930.

³⁵ Vol. 103, part 5, Blair to file, 12 October 1929; Blair to Smyth, 25 October 1929.

-
- ³⁶ Vol. 103, part 5, Blair to file, 12 October 1929; Blair to Smyth, 25 October 1929.
- ³⁷ Vol. 103, part 5, Blair to file, 10 December 1929; Scobie to Blair, 15 January 1930.
- ³⁸ Vol. 103, part 5: report of agent's interview with J.M. Munro, President of the Aberdeen Lads, Club, 8 October 1929.
- ³⁹ Vol. 102, part 4, Morison to Blair, 12 April 1929; Blair to file, 18 May 1929.
- ⁴⁰ Vol. 102, part 4, Blair to file, 18 May 1929; part 4, Deputy Minister to MacNaghten, 22 February 1929; Morison to Blair, 4 April 1929.
- ⁴¹ Vol. 102, part 4, Plant to Egan, 2 May 1928; vol. 103, part 5, Morison to Blair, 24 June 1929; vol. 103, part 5, Plant to Egan 31 July 1929; Blair to file, 17 January 1930; vol. 102, part 1, Chisholm to Stewart.
- ⁴² Vol. 103, part 6, Blair to file, 17 October 1930.
- ⁴³ Vol. 103, part 5, Blair to file, 11 and 25 January 1930; Smyth to Blair, 3 February, 1930; Blair to file, 25 January 1930.
- ⁴⁴ Vol. 103, part 6, Blair to file, 17 October 1930.
- ⁴⁵ Vol. 103, part 6, Blair to file, 17 October 1930; Blair to Black, 7 November 1930.
- ⁴⁶ Vol. 103, part 6, Smyth to British and Canadian Governments, 10 November 1930; Assistant Deputy Minister to Worden, 28 November 1930.
- ⁴⁷ Vol. 103, part 6, Little to Blair, 20 November 1930.
- ⁴⁸ Vol. 103, part 6, Little to Blair, 20 November 1930; Blair to file, 17 October 1930.
- ⁴⁹ Vol. 103, part 6, Blair to file, 21 November 1930; Minutes of Special Meeting of the BICA board, 24 November 1930; Blair to file 26 November 1930; Blair to Gordon 11 December 1930.
- ⁵⁰ Vol. 103, part 6, Blair to file, 26 and 28 November 1930; Blair to Gordon, 11 December 1930.
- ⁵¹ Robert Forke was appointed to the Senate in December 1929 and Charles Stewart became Acting Minister of Immigration. In March 1930, Stewart announced that all assisted immigration would stop at the end of May. The only exception would be British boys coming to settle on Canadian farms. In August 1930, when Wesley A. Gordon became Minister of Immigration in the newly elected R.B. Bennett Conservative Government, he announced tighter immigration regulations, which the Liberals deemed 'necessary by reason of the unemployment in Canada.' Although the new government's policy included an end to soliciting immigrants from the UK, boys coming under the auspices of provincial governments or approved Societies were the exceptions to the rule. It was not until September 1931 that Gordon stopped assisted passages for the British boys (See *The Canadian Annual Review*, 1929 pp. 180 -181 and 1930 - 31, p. 573); vol. 103, part 7, Gordon to Governor General in Council, 9 January 1931.
- ⁵² Vol. 103, part 6, OSC memorandum: 'British Immigration and Colonization Association of Montreal,' January 1931.
- ⁵³ Vol. 103, part 6. Blair to file, 9 December 1930; part 7. Blair to Little, 24 April 1931.
- ⁵⁴ Vol. 103, part 8. Plant to Black, 20 August 1931.

⁵⁵ Vol. 103, part 8, Blair to Black, 12 September 1931.

⁵⁶ Vol. 103, part 7, Blair to McPhail, 7 January 1931; Scobie to Blair, 10 January 1931.

⁵⁷ Vol. 103, part 7, Blair to file, 6 February 1931. The onset of the Depression brought a dramatic increase in the total number of immigrants deported from Canada, despite an equally dramatic decline in the number of immigrants arriving, as Canada rid itself of its undesirable unemployed. Between 1930 and 1932, for example, total immigration fell from 163,288 to 25,752, while deportations rose from 3,963 to 7,025. This represented an increase in deportations as a % of immigrants from 2.4% to 27.3% in only 2 years. Not surprisingly, given the change in economic conditions, the official cause of deportation also changed dramatically. In 1929, being a 'public charge' ranked behind 'medical causes' and alongside 'criminality' as the reason for deportation. By 1933, 'public charge' dwarfed all other causes as Canada 'shovelled out' its redundant. A detailed description and analyses of the changing levels and causes of deportation during the early decades of the 20th century can be found in: Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came - Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935* (Ottawa: Ottawa University Press, 1988).

⁵⁸ Vol. 103, part 7, J.C. Farthing to Gordon, 1 May 1931; part 8, J.C. Farthing to Gordon, 3 June 1931; part 7, Blair to file, 6 February 1931; part 8, Scobie to Blair, 15 September 1931.

⁵⁹ Vol. 103, part 8, Blair to file, 15 December 1931.

⁶⁰ Vol. 103, part 8, Blair to file, 15 December 1931; Smart to Blair, 27 June 1931; Smart to file, 30 June 1931.

⁶¹ See, for example, vol. 102, part 1, Blair to Walker 10 December 1925; Morison to Blair, 11 January 1926.

⁶² Vol. 102, part 3, Blair to Morison, 4 January 1928.

⁶³ Vol. 103, part 6, Blair to Little, 20 May 1930.

⁶⁴ Vol. 103, part 7, Scobie to Blair, 10 January 1931; RG 76, vol. 103, part 6, Morison to Blair, 8 August 1930; vol. 103, part 8, Smart to Blair, 27 June 1931; RG 76, vol. 103, part 5, Blair to file, 10 December 1929.

⁶⁵ *Canadian Annual Review*, 1927 - 28, p. 178; vol. 103, part 6, Plant to Little, 18 November 1930.

⁶⁶ Vol. 102, part 3, Peter L. Smith to Morison, 27 January 1928; Harry McMullen to Morison, 10 February 1928.

Chapter 3

¹ Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch records, RG 76, vol.272, file 229575, part 2, microfilm, reels B-969-70, Assistant Deputy Minister to Bruce Walker, 14 April 1927. (Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this chapter are found in RG 76, file 229575, microfilm reels B-969-70).

² Vol. 272, part 3: report of the OSC for the period from 1st January 1930 to 31st March 1931, p. 11.

³ Vol. 271, part 1, Little to Blair, 2 February 1926.

-
- ⁴ Vol. 271, part 1, Assistant Deputy Minister to The Hon. John S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture, 5 Feb 1926; cable from Ottawa Immigration to Egan, London, 5 February, 1926; Little to Blair, 2 February 1926.
- ⁵ Vol. 271, part 1, cable from Ottawa Immigration to Egan, London, 5 February 1926.
- ⁶ Vol. 271, part 1, cable from Ottawa Immigration to Egan, London, 5 February 1926; vol. 271, part 3, G.A. Elliot, Director of Colonization, to Blair, 4 Jun2 1930.
- ⁷ Vol. 271, part 1, Assistant Deputy Minister to Martin, 5 Feb 1926; cable from Ottawa Immigration to Egan, London, 5 February, 1926; *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 March 1926.
- ⁸ Vol. 271, part 1, Assistant Deputy Minister to Martin, 12 February 1926; Little to Walker, 21 February 1926.
- ⁹ Vol. 271, part 1, Little to Egan, 20 April 1926. When the Agreement reached Ottawa for signature, it had already been signed by the OSC and by Noxon on behalf of the Ontario Government.
- ¹⁰ Vol. 271, part 1, Egan to Walker, 14 June 1926.
- ¹¹ Vol. 271, part 1, Little to Martin, 17 June 1926.
- ¹² Vol. 272, part 3, report of the OSC for the period from 1st January 1930 to 31st March 1931, p. 11.
- ¹³ Vol. 271, part 1, Agreement dated 25 March 1926, signed by Robert Forke on behalf of the Dominion Government.
- ¹⁴ Vol. 271, part 1. See 1st Party listings on *Minnedosa*, 20 May 1926.
- ¹⁵ Vol. 271, part 1, Macdonell to Little, 11 August 1926.
- ¹⁶ Vol. 271, part 1; Department of Immigration memo to Mr. Jolliffe, 2 May 1927 (list of boys deported is an attachment to the memo).
- ¹⁷ Vol. 271, part 1; Department of Immigration memo to Mr. Jolliffe, 2 May 1927; Macdonell to Little, 25 August 1926; Sarel to Macdonnell, 2 September 1926; Macdonell to Little, 21 October 1926.
- ¹⁸ Vol. 271, part 1, Elliot to Little, 7 January 1927; Commissioner of Colonization to Elliot, 11 March 1927.
- ¹⁹ Vol. 271, part 1, Walker to Egan, 16 February 1927 and 7 April 1927; vol. 272, part 2, Walker to Egan, 28 January 1928. See also RG 76, vol. 271, part 1, 'Ontario Government' list of Vimy Ridge boys.
- ²⁰ Vol. 271, part 1, Elliot to Joliffe, 24 March 1927.
- ²¹ Vol. 271, part 1, Elliot to Joliffe, 24 March 1927.
- ²² Vol. 271, part 1, Commissioner of Colonization to Blair, 3 May 1927; vol. 272, part 3, Elliot to Little, 10 January 1930.
- ²³ Vol. 272, part 3, cable: *Torosus* to Blair, 23 December 1930; vol. 272, part 3, Plenty to Blair, 29 December 1930; Blair to Plenty, 12 January 1931.
- ²⁴ Vol. 272, part 3. Plenty to Blair, 29 December 1930.

²⁵ Vol. 272, part 3, Ontario Department of Agriculture to Blair, 8 January 1931; Blair to Elliot, 14 January 1931; Blair to Little, 14 January 1931.

²⁶ Vol. 272, part 3, Little to Elliot, 30 January 1930.

²⁷ Vol. 272, part 3, Little to Elliot, 30 January 1930; Little to Blair, 4 March 1930; Blair to file, 22 March 1930.

²⁸ Vol. 272, part 2, Commissioner of Colonization to Elliot, 27 April 1929; vol. 272, part 3, Little to Elliot, 25 September 1929; Elliot to Blair, 29 March 1930; Plant to Little, 30 April 1930.

²⁹ Vol. 272, part 2, Deputy Minister to Martin, 18 January 1929; Martin to Egan, 11 January 1929; Martin to Egan, 24 January 1929.

³⁰ Vol. 272, part 3, Assistant Deputy Minister to Morison, 18 February 1930; Assistant Deputy Minister to Stewart, 13 March 1930.

³¹ Vol. 272, part 2, Morisset to Little, 5 October 1928; Blair to Morisset, 8 October 1928; Roadhouse to Blair, 30 October 1928.

³² Vol. 272, part 2, Blair to Egan, 10 November 1927.

³³ Vol. 272, part 2, O'Kelly to Egan, 29 September 1927; Blair to Egan, 10 November 1927.

³⁴ Vol. 272, part 2, O'Kelly to Egan, 29 September 1927; Blair to Egan, 18 November 1927; Deputy Minister to Martin, 18 January 1929; Blair to Egan, 10 November 1927; Egan to Walker, 25 November 1927; Deputy Minister to Macnaghten, 2 March 1928.

³⁵ Vol. 272, part 2, Plant to Walker, 23 December 1927; Walker to Egan, 28 January 1928; Plant to Egan, 4 May 1928; Plant to Director of European Emigration, 23 December 1927.

³⁶ Vol. 272, part 2, Blair to Walker, 9 January 1928; Deputy Minister to Macnaghten, 2 March 1928.

³⁷ *The Canadian Annual Review, 1928 - 29*, pp. 159-159.

³⁸ Vol. 272, part 2, Macnaghten to Egan, 4 May 1928; Commissioner of Colonization to Elliot, 10 January 1929.

³⁹ Vol. 272, part 3, Elliot to Blair, 22 October 1930; Blair to file, November 1930; Elliot to Blair, 22 October 1930; cable: Little to Blair, 23 December 1930; Elliot to Blair, 17 January 1931.

⁴⁰ Vol. 272, part 3, Blair to file, 12 November 1930; Blair to Egan, 21 February, 1931; vol. 68, file 3115, part 19, microfilm, reel B-780, Superintendent of the Board of Home Missions of the United Church of Canada to Blair, 1 October 1931.

⁴¹ Vol. 68, file 3115, part 19, microfilm, reel B-780, Superintendent of the Board of Home Missions of the United Church of Canada to Blair, 1 October 1931, Superintendent of the Board of Home Missions of the United Church of Canada to Blair, 1 October 1931. The Board of Home Missions Branch of the United Church had brought and placed 1160 British boys through its Norval, Ontario, hostel since May 1928. Although it asked Ottawa to reconsider its stance on assisted passages, it was willing to continue, and expand, its work, using 'other resources.' Taking over the Vimy Ridge operation allowed it a 'much larger field for placement than we have ever had,' and supported its request for a quota of 300 boys for 1932.

Chapter 4

- ¹ Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch records, RG 76, vol. 231, file 130761, part 2, microfilm, reels B-931-2, Walker to Blair, 28 October 1925. (Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this chapter are found in RG 76, vol. 231, file 130761, microfilm, reels B-931-2).
- ² Part 1: see 'Announcement by the Minister of Agriculture' in the Alberta Government booklet: *A Canadian College for British Boys*.
- ³ Part 1, *The Sunday Times* article, 17 August 1924; 'Announcement by the Minister of Agriculture' in the Alberta Government booklet: *A Canadian College for British Boys*.
- ⁴ Part 1, see Agreement signed 18 July 1924; Blair to file, 17 September 1924.
- ⁵ Part 1, *A Canadian College for British Boys*; W.B. Amery to Little, 15 December 1924.
- ⁶ Part 1, undated internal OSC memorandum announcing Hoadley's attendance at the next committee meeting to discuss the proposed boys' scheme.
- ⁷ Part 1, see Agreement signed 18 July 1924. Blair to file, 17 September 1924.
- ⁸ Part 1, Wide's testimonial in : *A Canadian College for British Boys*; Gyro Club to Deputy Minister, August 22 1924.
- ⁹ Part 1, Little to Egan, July 1924; *The Sunday Times* article, 17 August 1924; RG 76, vol. 231, part 1, Macnaghten to Hoadley, 24 November 1924.
- ¹⁰ Part 1, Hoadley to Egan, 18 September 1924.
- ¹¹ Part 1, Macnaghten to Hoadley, 24 November 1924; Amery to Little, 5 December 1924.
- ¹² Part 1, Blair to Little, 26 May 1925.
- ¹³ Part 2, Craig to Egan, 2 September 1926; part 1, 'Report of 1924 British Boys who did not go on to farms and who are not doing so well'.
- ¹⁴ Part 1, Blair to Morisset, 26 March 1925; Deputy Minister to Hoadley, 25 July 1925; part 2, Alberta Assistant Deputy Minister to Egan, 12 September 1925; part 2, Deputy Minister to Hoadley, 20 May 1926; Little to Craig, 22 June 1926.
- ¹⁵ Part 2, Morisset to Blair, 9 October 1925.
- ¹⁶ Part 2, Morisset to Blair, 9 October 1925; Deputy Minister to Hoadley, 1 September 1925.
- ¹⁷ Part 2, Morisset to Blair, 9 October 1925; J.F. Chapman to the Accountant, Department of Immigration, 22 October 1925.
- ¹⁸ Part 2, Morisset to Blair, 9 October 1925; Walker to Blair, 28 October 1925.
- ¹⁹ Part 2, Morisset to Blair, 9 October 1925; Walker to Blair, 28 October 1925; Morisset to Blair, 9 October 1925; A.E. Skinner to Jolliffe, 24 April 1926; Little to Craig, 22 June 1926.
- ²⁰ Part 2, Morisset to Blair, 9 October 1925; Craig to Egan, 2 September 1926.

-
- ²¹ Part 2, Walker to Blair, 28 October 1925; Walker to Egan, 30 December 1925; Elliott to Craig, 14 May 1926; part 1, Hoadley to Egan, 14 July 1925; part 2, Craig to Egan, 22 July 1926.
- ²² Part 1, Macnaghten to Hoadley, 24 November 1924; cable: Hoadley to Egan, 8 August 1925; Assistant Deputy Minister to Egan, 9 December 1925.
- ²³ Part 2, Little to Egan, 7 September 1925; see also the Agreement signed 14 July 1925.
- ²⁴ Part 2, *Daily Record*, 1 September 1925; W.A. Barton to The Canadian Emigration Agent, 2 September 1925; part 2: the figure of 67 and the percentage are based on reports from the three Alberta Colleges in: Craig to Egan, 2 September 1926, and principal of Olds College to Craig, 6 September 1926.
- ²⁵ Part 2, Little to Walker, 5 August 1926; Department of Immigration to Craig, 31 July 1926. The boys' loans are based on undated statement of outstanding loans for '1st Party boys (1924)'; part 2, The British Boys at Claresholm to Hoadley, undated petition.
- ²⁶ Part 2, Acting Deputy Minister to Hoadley, 25 January 1926; Immigration Department to Craig, 31 July 1926; Immigration Department to Craig, 5 August 1926; cable from Egan to Hoadley, 23 August 1926; Egan to Hoadley, 25 August 1926.
- ²⁷ Part 2, Immigration Department to Craig, 31 July 1926; Immigration Department to Walker, 14 September 1926; Hoadley to Egan, 18 September 1926; cable: *Torosus* to Immigration, Ottawa, 9 September, 1926; Little to Bruce Walker, 14 September 1926; Immigration Department to Hoadley, 14 September 1926; Little to J. Barnett, Superintendent, Land Settlement 16 September 1926; part 3, Barnett to Little, 19 November 1926; Commissioner of Colonization to Land Settlement Branch, 1 December, 1926.
- ²⁸ Part 2, principal of Olds College to Craig, 30 July 1926.
- ²⁹ Part 2, principal of Olds College to Craig, 30 July 1926; Craig to Egan, 30 July 1936.
- ³⁰ Part 2, Walker to Egan, 5 August 1926; Macnaghten to Little, reference 2748/1927; part 3, Forke to Brownlee, 17 January 1927; part 3, Brownlee to Forke, 1 March 1927.
- ³¹ Part 3, Hoadley to Forke, 13 April 1927; Hoadley to Egan, 14 April 1927; Hoadley to Macnaghten, 27 April 1927; Assistant Deputy Minister to Egan, 2 May 1927; part 2, Craig to Egan, 22 July 1926; part 3, Little to Macnaghten, 7 May, 1927; Assistant Deputy Minister to Director of Emigration, London, 25 July 1927.
- ³² Alberta's new Agreement with the OSC included providing a month's free domestic training to women from Britain between 23 and 33 years of age. (See *Canadian Annual Review*, 1928 -29, p. 161).
- ³³ Part 3: see Agreement signed 6 December 1928, reference 8282/1928; Deputy Minister to Col. Rattray, Land Settlement Branch, 1 April 1929; Blair to Gordon, 16 September 1931.
- ³⁴ Part 2: see nominal list of Hoadley Boys on the *SS Montclare*, 9 October 1925.
- ³⁵ See S. Bayrakal, 'Immigration: A Severe Form of Social Trauma in Youth, in *The Canadian Child Psychiatry Review*, Volume 7, Number 4, November 1998, pp. 89-95.
- ³⁶ Part 2. The average age of the 22 Hoadley boys who attended Olds College through the winter of 1925/26, for example, was 21 years, as shown on the nominal list of Hoadley Boys on the *SS Montclare*, 9 October 1925.
- ³⁷ Part 2, Walker to Egan, 12 October 1926.

³⁸ Part 2, Walker to Egan, 12 October 1926.

Chapter 5

¹ Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch Records, RG 76, vol. 271, file 229574, part 2, microfilm, reel B-969: internal Department of Immigration and Colonization memo 'Re: Nova Scotia Boys' Scheme,' from LGC to file, 10 October 1929. (Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this chapter, up to and including note 25, are found in RG 76, vol. 271, file 229574, microfilm, reel B-969).

² Part 1, Plant to Little, 11 February 1926, including attachment: OSC to Premier Ernest Armstrong; Cunningham to Little, 1 February 1926.

³ Part 1, J.B. Leefe to The Secretary, Industries and Immigration, 29 December 1925; Cunningham to Little, 1 February 1926; C.T. Ferguson to The Secretary, Industries and Immigration, undated; C.T. Ferguson to Department of Industries and Immigration, 8 February 1926; Cunningham to Little, 4 March 1926.

⁴ Part 1, Commissioner of Colonization to Cunningham, 6 February 1926.

⁵ Part 1, Commissioner of Colonization to Innes, 27 May 1926; Innes to Egan, 21 December 1926; part 3, internal Immigration Department memo to Little, 7 October 1929.

⁶ Part 2, internal Immigration Department memo to file, 10 October 1929.

⁷ Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, p. 129; RG 76, vol. 271, part 1, Innes to Egan, 21 December 1926; Little to Bruce Walker, 28 January 1927; Little to Innes, 14 February 1927; Walker to Little, 18 July 1927.

⁸ Part 1, Innes to Little, 4 March 1927; Walker to Deputy Minister, 11 March 1927; Innes to Little, undated; Walker to Blair, 12 August 1927.

⁹ Part 1, Walker to Shepard, 9 March 1927; Innes to Egan, 13 April 1927; James Wright to Plant, 3 July 1927; Walker to Little, 18 July 1927.

¹⁰ Part 1, Innes to Egan, 13 April 1927; J. Walker to Egan, 6 January 1928.

¹¹ Part 1, James Wright to Plant, 3 July 1927; cable, *Torosus* to Immigration Department, Ottawa, 21 July 1927; Plant to Egan 15 September 1927.

¹² Part 1, Plant to Egan, 21 October 1927.

¹³ Part 1: see 'Nova Scotia Boys' Scheme - Notes on Boys who have left the supervision of the N. S. Government,' undated; J. Walker, Nova Scotia Minister of Natural Resources to Egan, 29 November 1927; Deputy Minister to Walker, 20 December 1927; J. Walker to Egan, 6 January 1928; Deputy Minister to J. Walker, 11 January 1928.

¹⁴ Part 1, Little to J. Walker, 20 December 1927.

¹⁵ Part 1, Bruce Walker to Egan, 13 April 1928; part 2, internal Immigration Department memo: 'Nova Scotia Boys' Scheme,' 10 October 1929.

¹⁶ Part 1, C.T. Ferguson to Department of Industries and Immigration, Halifax, 8 February 1926.

¹⁷ Part 2, Innes to Egan, 26 January 1929; see also Agreement signed 21 October 1929.

-
- ¹⁸ Part 2, Scobie to Blair, 5 September 1929.
- ¹⁹ Part 3, Scobie to Little, 8 September 1930; vol. 271, part 4, Innes to Blair, 22 January 1932; Hubley to Blair, 14 May 1931; Hubley to Blair, 21 May 1931.
- ²⁰ Part 3, Scobie to Little, 8 September 1930.
- ²¹ Part 2, Blair to Egan, 8 April 1929. Each of the other schemes assured Ottawa that they always placed their boys with families of the same faith. Although the vast majority of provincial boys were Protestant, there were Catholics in several, and possibly all, of the schemes. Apart from the Nova Scotia experience, however, there is no evidence that religion was an issue, even with the Protestant Church based BICA.
- ²² Part 2, Acting Deputy Minister to A. N. O'Kelly, Dominion Assistant Director of Immigration in London, 14 November 1929; vol. 271, part 4, W.L. Anderson to Blair, 22 April 1931; Hubley to Blair, 12 May 1931; Little to Blair, 12 May 1931; Little to Blair, 12 June 1931.
- ²³ Part 2, internal Immigration Department memo to Little, 7 October 1929; part 4, Little to Blair, 19 May 1931.
- ²⁴ Part 2, Blair to Bruce Walker, 5 September 1929.
- ²⁵ Part 1: based on recorded 'Present Situation' of boys who arrived during 1927 and 1928, in 'Nova Scotia Boys' Scheme: Notes on Boys who have left the supervision of the N. S. Government,' undated. The list records the whereabouts of 18 of the 37 boys who had left the scheme as "unknown."
- ²⁶ RG 76, vol. 282, file 234636, microfilm, reel B-981, Blair to file, 25 April 1930. (Unless otherwise indicated, all references in the rest of this chapter are found in RG 76, vol. 282, file 234636, microfilm, reel B-981).
- ²⁷ Extract from letter dated January 27, 1926, from the Commissioner of Colonization, Ottawa to The Hon. Lewis Smith; Smith to Little, 11 February 1926; Commissioner of Colonization to Plant, 6 March 1929.
- ²⁸ Little to J.A. Murray, New Brunswick Superintendent of Immigration and Industry, 20 October 1927.
- ²⁹ Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement*, p. 129; Superintendent of Emigration for Canada to The Secretary, Dept. of Immigration, Ottawa, 12 April 1922; Cossar to Murray, 3 September 1927; Murray to Cossar, undated; Little to Egan, 18 October 1927.
- ³⁰ Little to Egan, 18 October 1927; see Agreement dated June 11, 1928; Blair to file, 15 April 1930.
- ³¹ Plant to Little, 1 February 1929; see Agreement dated 23 November, 1927, between the UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and Cossar Boys' Training Farms.
- ³² Chas. Leigh Brown, Treasurer of Cossar Boys' Training Farms to Murray, 1 March 1929; Commissioner of Colonization to Plant, 6 March 1929; Commissioner of Colonization to Murray, 7 March 1929; Little to Egan, 7 March 1929.
- ³³ Leigh Brown, to Murray, 1 March 1929; Cossar to Little, 4 January 1929; Dominion Land Settlement Branch to Little, 14 November 1929.
- ³⁴ See Agreement signed November 1, 1929; Land Settlement Branch to Little, 14 November 1929.

³⁵ Land Settlement Branch to Little, 14 November 1929; Blair to file, 15 April 1930; cable Blair to Little, 24 April 1930; Assistant Deputy Minister to Murray, 5 May 1930.

³⁶ Commissioner of Colonization to Murray, 2 December 1929; Commissioner of Colonization to Murray, 18 December 1929; Blair to file, 15 April 1930.

³⁷ Blair to file, 25 April 1930; Assistant Deputy Minister to O.C. White, 1 May, 1930; vol. 68, file 3115, part 19, microfilm, reel B-780, Assistant Deputy Minister to Gordon, 18 September 1931.

Chapter 6

¹ Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch Records, RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 3, microfilm, reel B-995, Blair to The High Commissioner for Canada, 30 July 1935.

² When the new provinces were formed, land was the key to their relationship with Canada. They provided the agricultural base for the coming generation of new Canadians. To facilitate agricultural settlement, the new provinces' crown lands, unlike those of the original provinces, were retained by the dominion government. Every head of family could acquire title to crown land in the new provinces after three years' settlement. Ottawa believed that having the distribution of this land under the control of the federal government would give potential settlers a greater sense of security (See J. L. Granatstein et al., *Nation: Canada Since Confederation*, third edition, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1990). Under a December 1929 Agreement, Ottawa eventually transferred ownership of natural resources to Manitoba and Alberta. Transfer of Saskatchewan's resources followed in March 1930.

³ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994: Little to Bracken, 29 December 1926; Bracken to Forke, 3 January 1927; Little to Bracken, 15 January 1927.

⁴ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994, Little to Bracken, 15 January 1927; Bracken to Forke, 5 March 1927; Bruce Walker to Egan, 10 April 1928.

⁵ RG 76, vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995: Gardiner to Stewart, 22 November 1922; Saskatchewan Minister of Labour and Industries to Egan, 5 January 1927.

⁶ RG 76, vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, Little to T.C. Davis, 21 January 1927; Little to T.C. Molloy, 7 November 1928; Little to Bruce Walker, 29 November 1928.

⁷ RG 76, vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-995: Little to MacLean, 3 September 1927; MacLean to Forke, 5 December 1927; Deputy Minister to Tolmie, 17 September 1928; *Montreal Gazette* article 'B.C. Eager for British-Born,' 17 September 1928.

⁸ RG 76, vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-995: *Montreal Gazette* article 'B.C. Eager for British-Born,' 17 September 1928; B.C. Department of Lands to Tolmie, 31 October 1928: cable, Wm. Atkinson to Forke, 23 November 1928.

⁹ RG 76, vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-995, Atkinson to Egan, 9 July 1929; Little to Atkinson, 19 December 1929.

¹⁰ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994: Commissioner of Colonization to Egan, 11 February 1927; A. Prefontaine to Forke, 5 February 1928; Deputy Minister to Prefontaine, 14 February 1928; Bruce Walker to Egan, 10 April 1928; *Winnipeg Free Press* article 'Out to Make Their Fortunes,' 28 November 1928; Prefontaine to Egan, 5 November 1928; RG 76, vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, Commissioner of Colonization to Bruce Walker, 29 November 1928; RG 76, vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-995, Blair to Grinsdale, 31 December 1929.

¹¹ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994, Deputy Minister to Prefontaine, 14 February 1928; cable, Prefontaine to Egan, 2 March 1928; Bruce Walker to Egan, 20 February 1928, 10 March 1928, 17 March 1928, 11 April 1928; RG 76, vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-995: Atkinson to Egan, 9 July 1929; Commissioner of Colonization to Bruce Walker, 31 August 1929; Atkinson to Blair, 21 November 1929; RG 76, vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, Commissioner of Colonization to Bruce Walker, 29 November 1928.

¹² RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994: Bruce Walker to Egan, 17 March 1928, 10 April 1928, 11 April 1928, 21 March 1929; Prefontaine to Egan, 2 May 1928; Garnett to Egan, 1 January 1929.

¹³ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994: Commissioner of Colonization to Egan, 11 February 1927; *Winnipeg Free Press* article 'Out to Make Their Fortunes,' 28 November 1928; part 2, Hopper to Little, May, 1929; part 2, Commissioner of Colonization to Hopper 29 April 1929; part 2, Assistant Deputy Minister to Bowman, 14 November 1929; part 2, reel B-995, Bowman to Blair, 14 June 1930.

¹⁴ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994, Commissioner of Colonization to Bruce Walker, 29 November 1928; Molloy to Little, 20 December, 1929; Commissioner of Colonization to Molloy, 1 January 1930; Tomsett to Little, July 30 1930; Tomsett to Morisset, 12 August 1932.

¹⁵ RG 76, vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-995: Assistant Deputy Minister to Grisdale, 31 December 1929; Atkinson to Little, 8 January 1930; reel B-996, 'British Boy Farm Settlement - Report for year ended December 31 1930,' Gaddes to Blair, 31 December 1930.

¹⁶ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 2, microfilm, reel B-995, Bowman to The Rev. Canon Owen, 18 August 1930; part 3: Bowman to Blair, 3 March 1931, 9 February 1932, 9 January 1933; vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, 'Summary of British Boys Destined for Saskatchewan - 1929, 1930, 1931,' signed by G.E. Tomsett, 31 March 1932; vol. 296, file 272173, reel B-996, 'British Boy Farm Settlement' - reports for years ending December 31 1930 and 1931, signed by W.H. Gaddes.

¹⁷ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994, *Winnipeg Free Press* article 'Out to Make Their Fortunes,' 28 November 1928; part 2, O'Kelly to Egan, 15 November 1929.

¹⁸ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 2, microfilm, reel B-995, Blair to file, 26 June 1933.

¹⁹ RG 76, vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, Little to Blair, 1 May 1931.

²⁰ RG 76, vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, Little to Blair, 1 May 1931.

²¹ RG 76, vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, Little to Blair, 1 May 1931; RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 1, microfilm, reel B-994, *Winnipeg Free Press* article 'Out to Make Their Fortunes,' 28 November 1928; part 2, reel B-995, Little to Blair, 10 November 1930; part 3, Bowman to Blair, 9 February 1932.

²² RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 3, microfilm, reel B-995, Bowman to Blair, 3 March 1931.

²³ RG 76, vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-995, Gaddes to Little, 17 October 1930; reel B-996, 'British Boy Farm Settlement - Report for year ended December 31 1931,' signed by G.E. Gaddes, 31 December 1931; vol. 295, file 270653, part 2, microfilm, reel B-995, Bowman to Little, 5 April 1930; vol. 68, file 3115, part 19, microfilm, reel B-780, Assistant Deputy Minister to Gordon, 18 September 1931.

²⁴ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 2, microfilm, reel B-995, Little to Blair, 10 November 1930; part 3, Bowman to Blair, 9 February 1932, 9 January 1933, 24 April 1933, 10 February 1934; Plant to Little, 24 May 1933; vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-996, 'British Boy Farm Settlement - Report for

year ended December 31 1931,' signed by G.E. Gaddes, 31 December 1931; vol. 68, file 3115, part 19, microfilm, reel B-780, Assistant Deputy Minister to Gordon, 18 September 1931.

²⁵ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 3, microfilm, reel B-995, Assistant Deputy Minister to High Commissioner for Canada, London, 28 June 1933.

²⁶ RG 76, vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, Tomsett to Little, 30 July 1930; 'Summary of British Boys Destined for Saskatchewan - 1929, 1930, 1931,' signed by Tomsett, 31 March 1932; vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-996, 'British Boy Farm Settlement - Report for year ended December 31 1931,' signed by G.E. Gaddes, 31 December 1931; RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 2, microfilm, reel B-995, Blair to Egan, 8 November 1930; cable, Little to Bowman, 12 November 1930; Division Commissioner to Bowman, 14 November 1930; part 3, Blair to file, 26 June 1933.

²⁷ RG 76, vol. 296, file 272173, microfilm, reel B-996, 'British Boy Farm Settlement - Report for year ended December 31 1931,' signed by G.E. Gaddes, 31 December 1931; vol. 296, file 271918, microfilm, reel B-995, Malloy to Blair, 16 November 1933; vol. 295, file 270653, part 3, microfilm, reel B-995: Bowman to Blair, 9 February 1932; Blair to file, 26 June 1933; Manitoba Deputy Minister to Blair, 29 August 1933. vol. 68, file 3115, part 19, microfilm, reel B-780, Assistant Deputy Minister to Gordon, 18 September 1931.

²⁸ RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 3, microfilm, reel B-995: Blair to Bowman, 10 May 1932; Bowman to Blair, 18 June 1934; Bowman to Little, 7 June 1935; Assistant Deputy Minister to High Commissioner for Canada, 30 July 1935.

Chapter 7

¹ Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch Records, RG 76, vol. 315, file 305044, part 3, microfilm, reel B-1015: Blair to Dr. Camsell, 12 December 1936. (Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this chapter are found in RG 76, vol. 315, file 305044, microfilm, reel B-1015).

² Part 1, undated press release: *Farming Careers for British Boys in Canada*.

³ Part 1, Blair to Egan, 26 May 1931.

⁴ Part 1, Blair to Cumming, 24 December 1936.

⁵ Part 1, undated press release: *Farming careers for British Boys in Canada*; vol. 315, part 1, Blair to Egan, 26 May 1931.

⁶ Part 1, OSC to Little, 19 May 1927; Canada House, London memorandum, 27 May 1927.

⁷ Part 1, OSC to Little, 19 May 1927; Canada House, London memorandum, 27 May 1927.

⁸ Part 1, undated press release: *Farming careers for British Boys in Canada*.

⁹ Part 1, see bi-government Agreement dated 1 July 1927.

¹⁰ RG 76, vol. 102, file 16120, part 4, microfilm, reels B-809-811, John G. to Morison, 10 January 1928; Joseph G. to Morison, undated; Herbert B. to Morison, 4 February 1928; RG 76, vol. 315, part 1, *Farmer's Sun*, 28 July 1927; *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 July 1927; See, for example, the *Montreal Gazette*, 7 July 1927, and the *Ottawa Citizen*, 6 July 1927.

¹¹ Part 1, O.A. Boulanger to Forke, 11 July 1927. Although *Action Catholique* did not specifically say so, it must also have been concerned about making the French even more of a minority, and the fact that most of the boys were Protestant.

¹² Part 1, Rev. C.W. Vernon to Blair, 3 August 1927; Bracken to Forke, 30 October 1927; Albert Prefontaine, to Forke, 11 January 1928; Deputy Minister to Bruce Walker, 28 January 1928; Blair to Premier Saunders of PEI, 12 May 1928.

¹³ Part 2, F. Skevington to T.C. Macnaghten, 27 August 1928; see also Supplementary Agreement dated 5 November 1928.

¹⁴ Part 1, Rev. C.W. Vernon to Blair, 13 July 1927; RG 76, vol. 315, part 2, C.H. Brown to W.R. Little, 28 February 1929; RG 76, vol. 315, part 3, Blair to Dr. Camsell, 12 December 1936.

¹⁵ In January at Winnipeg, Forke had announced that Canadian boys would be given the same settlement opportunity as boys from the UK (See *The Canadian Annual Review*, 1928-29, p. 153).

¹⁶ Part 1, minutes of Edmonton conference between Forke, Little, Brownlee and Hoadley, 28 October 1927; RG 76, vol. 315, part 2, unsigned memo to Blair from Edmonton, Alberta, 16 October 1928; Little to C.H. Brown, 2 March 1929; Blair to Gordon, 13 August 1931.

¹⁷ Part 1, J.D. McDougall to E.T. Crutchley, 7 March 1928; Commissioner of Colonization to Crutchley, 27 March 1928.

¹⁸ RG 76, vol. 231, file 130761, part 3, microfilm, reel B-932: see, for example, Plant to Little, October 1927, and Elliot to Immigration Department, December 1927; RG 76, vol. 315, file 305044, part 3, unsigned Immigration Department memo to file, 4 December 1933.

¹⁹ Part 2, W. Bankes Amery to Little, 20 November 1930.

²⁰ Part 2, Assistant Deputy Minister to G.A. Elliot, 28 February 1930; Assistant Deputy Minister to Little, 14 January 1931.

²¹ Part 2, Deputy Minister to Col. Rattray, 18 June 1930.

²² Part 2, Assistant Deputy Minister to Dr. W.J. Black, 20 April 1931; Elliot to Plant, 21 July 1931; Egan to Gordon, 13 August 1931.

²³ Part 2, Deputy Minister to Gordon, August 13 1931; Blair to Egan, December 5 1931; RG 76, vol. 315, part 3, Egan to file, December 4 1933.

²⁴ Part 2, Deputy Minister to Gordon, 13 August 1931; RG 76, vol. 315, part 3, undated memo: 'Memorandum for the Information of Dr. Camsell,' 1936; Blair to Camsell, 12 December 1936.

²⁵ Part 2, Blair to Egan, 5 December 1931; Assistant Deputy Minister to J.A. Murray, 17 February 1932; Assistant Deputy Minister to Congdon, 22 March 1932; RG 76, vol. 315, part 3, Blair to file, December 5 1933; Blair to Burham, 14 November 1934.

²⁶ Part 2, Blair to H.H. Congdon, 22 March 1932; RG 76, vol. 315, part 3, Blair to Burham, 14 November 1934; Blair to Dr. M. Cumming, 14 June 1939.

²⁷ Part 3, Egan to file, 5 December 1933.

Chapter 8

¹ From 'To a Mouse, on Turning her up in her Nest with a Plough, November, 1785,' by Robert Burns.

² RG 76, vol. 295, file 270653, part 3, microfilm, reel B-995, Bowman to Blair, 9 February 1932.

³ The Salvation Army, for example, brought 523 boys to Canada in 1926. After eighteen months only 6 had been sent home and over 90% were still employed as farm labourers. (*The Gazette*, Montreal, 10 December 1927).

⁴ *The Times* of 10 March 1927, for example, reported Bruce Walker as saying that Vimy Ridge boys would receive 2 years training. Even in Canada, Forke announced that provincial boys would remain on the training farms for 2 weeks to a year, depending on their 'aptness' for farm work. (*The Gazette*, Montreal, 27 January 1927). The immigration department's 1929 booklet *Boy Settlement in Canada*, promised that the boys would be placed after they had 'gained a reasonable knowledge of farm work.'

Bibliography

Archival Collections

British Columbia, Premiers' Papers (GR 441 and GR 1222),
British Columbia Archives (BCA)

Canada, Immigration Branch Records (RG 76),
on Public Archives of Canada microfilm in BCA.

Books

Avery, Donald. *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979.

Bagnell, Kenneth. *The Little Immigrants*. Toronto: Mcmillan of Canada, 1980.

Carrothers, W.A. *Emigration from the British Isles*. London: P.S. King and Sons Ltd., 1929.

Constantine, Stephen. *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990.

Danysk, Cecelia. *Hired Hands: Labour and Development of Prairie Agriculture*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995.

Drummond, I.M. *British Economic Policy and the Empire, 1919 -1936*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972.

------. *Imperial Economic Policy, 1917-1939: Studies in Expansion and Protection*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1974.

Dunae, Patrick. *Gentlemen Immigrants*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981.

Harris, R. Cole. *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays in Colonialism and Geographical Change*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997.

Harrison, Phyllis. *The Home Children*. Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1979.

Hopkins, J. Castell, comp. *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs*. Toronto: The Canadian Review Company Limited, 1926-1931.

Marriot, John. *Empire Settlement*. London: Oxford University Press, 1927.

Palmer, Howard. *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta*. Toronto: McClelland and Smith, 1982.

- Parr, Joy. *Labouring Children*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1980.
- Plant, G.F. *Oversea Settlement: Migration from the United Kingdom to the Dominions*. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- Roberts, Barbara. *Whence They Came - Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935*. Ottawa: Ottawa University Press, 1988.
- Scholes, Alex G. *Education for Empire Settlement: A Study of Juvenile Migration*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1932.
- Struthers, James. *No Fault of their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983.
- Sutherland, Neil. *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1976.
- . *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Articles

- Bayrakal, S. 'Immigration: A Severe Form of Trauma in Youth' in *The Canadian Child Psychiatry Review*, Volume 7, Number 4, 1998, pp. 89-95.
- Bowen, Dawn. 'Forward to a Farm: Land Settlement as Unemployment Relief in the 1930s' in *Prairie Forum*, vol. 20, no. 2, Fall 1995, pp. 207-29.
- Constantine, Stephen. 'Empire migration and imperial harmony' in *Emigrants and Empire*, pp. 1-19.
- DeMeritt, David. 'Visions of Agriculture in British Columbia' in *BC Studies*, no. 108, Winter 1995-96, pp. 29-59.
- Dunae, Patrick A. 'Waifs: The Fairbridge Society in British Columbia, 1931-1951' in *Histoire Sociale - Social History*, vol. XXI, no. 25, novembre-November 1988, pp. 224-50.
- Hann, Russell. 'Oral History' in *Clio's Craft*, ed. Terry Crowley, Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988, pp. 42-64.
- Prins, Gwyn. 'Oral History' in *New Perspectives in Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, pp. 114-39.
- Rooke, P and R. Schnell. 'Imperial Philanthropy and Colonial Response: British Juvenile Emigration to Canada, 1896-1930' in *The Historian*, 46, 1983, pp. 56-75.
- Sinclair, Peter. 'Agricultural Colonization in Ontario and Quebec: Some Evidence from the

Grey Clay Belt. 1900-45' in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, 1986, pp. 104-20.

Schnell, R.L. 'The right class of boy: youth training schemes and assisted emigration to Canada under the Empire Settlement Act, 1922-39' in *History of Education*, vol. 24, no.1, 1995, pp. 73-90.

Schultz, John A. 'Leven for the Lump: Canada and Empire settlement, 1918-1939' in *Emigrants and Empire*, pp. 150-73.

White, Richard. 'Poor man on Poor Lands: The Back-to-the-Land Movement in the Early Twentieth Century - A Cases Study' in *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. XLIX, 1980, pp. 105-31.

Williams, Keith. 'A way out of our troubles: the politics of Empire settlement, 1900-1922' in *Emigrants and Empire*, pp. 22-44.

VITA

Surname: Duke

Given Names: William Lees

Place of Birth: Glasgow, Scotland

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1998 to 2001
University of Calgary	1994 to 1997
University of Glasgow	1955 to 1959

Degrees Awarded:

B.Sc.	University of Glasgow	1959
B.A.	University of Calgary	1997

Honours and Awards:

University of Victoria History Department Fellowship	1998/99 and 2000/01
University of Victoria 1990 Learned Societies Scholarship	2000

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant the right to lend my thesis to users of the University of Victoria Library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the Library of any other university or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the University designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis:

Recipes for Failure: British Boys' Farm Training and Land Settlement Schemes in Canada under the Empire Settlement Act, 1922 - 31

Author



William Lees Duke

April 17, 2001