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# Racism and Canadian Immigration Policy: The Government's View of Caribbean Migration, 1962-1966

#### ABSTRACT/RESUME

This paper questions the view that there was a deracialization of immigration control in Canada in 1962. Based on an empirical examination the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's background preparation for the Canada-West Indies conference held in Ottawa in 1966, its position on the opening of immigration offices in the Caribbean between 1962 and 1966, and the recruitment and control of domestic labourers from the Caribbean, the paper demonstrates that the process of immigration control in Canada continued to be structured by the idea of 'race' and racist stereotypes. It suggests, therefore, the judgements about the deracialization of immigration control should be based on the examination of the actual practices of state agents and not solely on publically articulated policies.

Cette communication met en doute l'opinion qu'il existait une déracialisation du contrôle de l'immigration au Canada en 1962. Selon une étude empirique de la préparation de la documentation du ministère de la Citoyenneté et de l'Immigration en vue du congrès du Canada et des Antilles tenu à Ottawa en 1966, sa position sur l'ouverture de bureaux d'immigration dans les Caraïbes entre 1962 et 1966 et le recrutement et le contrôle des travailleurs domestiques des Caraïbes, cette communication démontre que le processus de contrôle de l'immigration au Canada continue d'être structuré par l'idée de "race" et de clichés racistes. Elle suggère, cependant, que les jugements concernant la déracialisation du contrôle de l'immigration devraient être fondés sur l'etude des méthodes utilisées couramment par les agents de l'Etat et non seulement sur les principes énconcés publiquement.

#### Introduction

In 1958, the Director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, one of the two branches of the Canadian state which exercised control over international migration to the country, stated that

it is not by accident that coloured British subjects other than negligible numbers from the United Kingdom are excluded from Canada... They do not assimilate readily and pretty much vegetate to a low standard of living. Despite what has been said to the contrary, many cannot adapt themselves to our climatic conditions <sup>2</sup>

In 1962, Section 31(2) of the Immigration Regulations provided that the following persons were eligible for entry to Canada as permanent settlers:

A person why by reason of his education, training, skills or other

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special qualifications is likely to be able to establish himself successfully in Canada, and who has sufficient means of support to maintain himself in Canada until he can establish himself...[or] has come to Canada, under arrangements made or approved by the Director [of immigration] for establishment in a business, trade or profession, or in agriculture.<sup>3</sup>

When juxtaposed, these two statements represent, within the space of four years, an apparently radical shift in the Canadian state's position regarding the entry of black people to the country as permanent settlers. The first suggests quite clearly that 'race' and colour, among other ascribed criteria, structured who was deemed suitable for selection as a permanent settler in Canada, whereas the second, with the notable absence of the language of 'race' or colour, suggests that immigrant recruitment and selection was based on universalistic, achieved criteria. In other words, there appears to have been a deracialization of immigration control in Canada in 1962.5

This paper suggests that the shift in 1962 in the Canadian government's position regarding the entry to the country of black people was more apparent than real: the 1962 immigration regulations did not in fact usher in an era of deracialized immigration control. It examines the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's background preparation for the Canada-West Indies Conference held in Ottawa in 1966, the Department's position regarding the opening of an immigration office in the Caribbean and its position on the admittance of black female domestic servants in the mid-1960s. The paper demonstrates that the process of immigration control continued to be structured by racist stereotypes. Those who exercised control over international migration to the country continued to define black people, in a racist manner consistent with earlier periods, as a potential source of social and 'racial' problems in Canada.6

## Racialization Before the 1962 Regulations

It is no secret that until 1962 the process of immigration control in Canada was explicitly racist. Academic commentators, regardless of their theoretical assumptions, have readily acknowledged that the Canadian state discriminated against black people in terms of their recruitment and entry to the country. Since the end of the war, this policy was guided by Mackenzie King who, in a now well-known statement made in the House of Commons in 1947, claimed that 'the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. This, and other features of King's speech, was codified in law in the Immigration Act of 1952. Among other things, the Act empowered the Minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to prohibit the entry of people to the country for any of the following reasons:

- (i) nationality, citizenship, ethnic group, occupation, class or geographical area of origin;
- (ii) peculiar customs, habits, modes of life or methods of holding property;
- (iii) unsuitability having regard to the climatic, economic, social, industrial, educational, labour, health, or other conditions, or requirements existing, temporarily or otherwise;

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(iv) probable inability to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time after their admission.<sup>9</sup>

The effectiveness of the policy of restricting entry to white people is reflected in the fact that, between 1947 and 1962, only 9.6% of the people admitted to Canada as permanent settlers were from outside of Western Europe, the United States and Australasia. <sup>10</sup> Between 1946 and 1961, a total of 12,841 people from the Caribbean migrated to Canada, most of whom were either female domestic servants, close relatives of people already settled in Canada, or 'cases of exceptional merit such as graduate nurses and qualified stenographers.' <sup>11</sup> They constituted less than one per cent of the total flow of permanent settlers to the country.

As suggested in the quote which began this paper, there were three cornerstones upon which this racialized policy was built; each of which contains racist assumptions concerning black people. First, it was believed that black people, or people from tropical climates, were biologically incapable of adjusting to the Canadian climate. For the Canadian state, the most important implication of this belief appears to have been that if black people were more prone to break down in health than white people, then the former would be poorer workers, and would be a drain on the resources of the state in terms of the provision of unemployment insurance, social welfare, health care and other state-funded social services. Second, it was believed that black people were unassimilable. In addition to being biologically incapable of change, it was also believed that because of their biology, they were unable to change culturally and unable to adjust to a capitalist and competitive Canadian society.<sup>12</sup> And finally, as a corollary to the above, it was also believed that they would cause the emergence of a 'race relations' problem in the country. The state wanted to preclude the emergence of a 'race relations' problem which the United States and Britain were experiencing. The emergence of such a problem was to be avoided because it would constitute a threat to the social order within which capitalist production took place. This reflects the view that the 'imagined community' which constituted the Canadian nation was defined in terms of the 'white race.'13

Each of these sets of beliefs, both singly and taken together, contain elements of a racist ideology. <sup>14</sup> First, there was a deterministic association of biology and culture. The biological characteristics of some people made them unable to adjust to climates and cultures different from the ones in which they were born and raised. Second, the biological and cultural characteristics of 'races' of people were arranged in a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority. That is to say, negative and positive evaluations were attached to patterns of biological and cultural variation.

With certain important exceptions, 15 most commentators on post-war migration to Canada suggest that immigration policy changed significantly in 1962. For example, Freda Hawkins, one of Canada's most respected analysts of immigration-related matters, has stated in a rather definitive manner that 'Canada officially abandoned racial discrimination in immigration in 1962...'16 Explanations for the apparent shift away from racist selection criteria vary. Again, Hawkins' has summarized the main reasons in the following terms:

Racial discrimination...had become distasteful and impractical to the ruling groups in both major political parties, and to the

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largely Liberal elite group which had managed Canada's foreign relations and foreign service since 1945. A racially discriminatory immigration policy did not accord with the role which Canada wished to play in the international community and in the Commonwealth, nor with her role as a trading nation, nor her future relationships with the West Indies and Asia. It also severely restricted the sources of skilled immigrants at a time when the Canadian labour market had a very definite need for them.<sup>17</sup>

In this light, the implication of her analysis is that in 1962 the state agents who controlled immigration ceased to define black people as unsuitable as permanent settlers: they no longer viewed black people as unable to adjust to the Canadian climate, as unassimilable, and as sources of future 'race relations' problems in the country. In the remainder of this paper, I question whether there was a de facto deracialization of immigration control in the country after the introduction of the 1962 Immigration Regulations.

## The Deracialization of Immigration Control

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Since the 1700s, the uneven development associated with European colonialism and imperialism created a reserve army of labour within the Caribbean. Coupled with a demand for labour in the more developed capitalist countries, this has in turn resulted in some Caribbean nations having long traditions of emigration. Warious Caribbean governments have, at varying points in their history, actively encouraged the out-migration of their citizens in order to ease the social and economic conditions which result from uneven development. Accordingly, they have attempted to persuade other countries to accept their nationals as either migrant workers or permanent settlers. Emigration has traditionally been seen as a method to reduce the relative surplus population, to stimulate economic growth through the acquisition of foreign currency by those who work abroad, and to transfer skills and technology to the region. 20

With independence in the early 1960s, various Caribbean states became interested in the development of economic links with Canada. They hoped that with decolonization, Canada would contribute materially to the process of development. In this light, various Caribbean states were also interested in the promotion of the emigration of their nationals to Canada. Thus, from the Caribbean states' point of view, the Canada-West Indies Conference held in Ottawa in June, 1966 constituted a forum where matters of 'mutual interest' could be discussed with representatives of the Canadian government. Issues discussed among the various representatives included tourism, foreign aid, the development of closer transportation and communications links, finance, trade, and immigration. The promotion of emigration to Canada became a prominent item on the political agenda between Canada and the Caribbean, in part because the latter had interpreted the 1962 Immigration Regulations as a sign that Canada had opened its doors to black immigration.

The formal discussions which were held between the various governments are not of my immediate concern here because they only recorded the public statements of representatives of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Rather, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's background preparations for the meetings will be examined, as they provide us with considerable

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insight into its non-publicly articulated position on migration from the Caribbean.

The proposal for holding a conference between members of the Canadian government and various Caribbean governments was first articulated in 1964, apparently after a tour of the region by the Canadian Prime Minister, Lester Pearson. From Canada's point of view, it appears that the Conference was intended to help pave the way for an increased penetration of Canadian based capital and exports into the newly independent Caribbean states.<sup>21</sup> According to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, one of the more important 'special interests' which the government was hoping to pursue at this Conference was to 'solidify the trade and financial ties between Canada and the West Indies, which already are significant and appear likely to continue growing.'<sup>22</sup>

In October, 1964, an inter-departmental meeting was held to discuss the necessity and/or desirability of a conference. At this meeting it was agreed that a conference should take place, and an agenda which was to be submitted to Pearson's Cabinet was to be prepared. During the course of the meeting, the representatives of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration were staunchly against the idea of having the issue of immigration placed on the agenda.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the Department initially did not want to participate in the conference at all. However, representatives of other departments suggested that because immigration to Canada would be a topic which the Caribbean governments would inevitably want to raise, it would be better to confront directly matters pertaining to immigration rather than remain silent on or skirt around them.

It was expected that the Caribbean governments would want to address a range of issues relating to immigration. These included: differential standards of admission of individuals from the Caribbean; the promotion of immigration and the opening of immigration offices in the region; Canadian assistance in training and education so that individuals could acquire the skills that would allow them to qualify for entry to Canada under the new immigration regulations; the extension of the program for the admittance of female domestic workers to the country; the possibility of the admission of migrant agricultural workers for the southern Ontario fruit and vegetable harvest;<sup>24</sup> and discrimination in Canada's immigration policy and its recruitment procedures.<sup>25</sup>

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration was most concerned about the last item, and three strategies for dealing with it were mapped-out in case it arose during the meetings. First, it was suggested that it could set Caribbean migration to Canada against the background of Canada's relationship with other Commonwealth countries, namely India and Pakistan. The point of this was to suggest that the Caribbean was already treated more than generously, and indeed occupied a favoured position in Canada's immigration program because of the arrangement which brought female domestic workers to Canada. Canada had no such arrangement with India, Ceylon or Pakistan, and Canadian officials attempted to construct this as an instance of the Caribbean's 'preferred' position in Canada's immigration program.<sup>26</sup>

Second, it was suggested that the Department place Canada's immigration policy in the context of various Caribbean states' domestic policies. That is, it claimed that with independence, some Caribbean countries in a somewhat subtle

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way are making a concerted effort to ease out white workers.<sup>27</sup> In a manner which indicated they were prepared to give up the high moral ground on anti-discrimination, it was suggested that Canada could use this 'fact' to point fingers and suggest that if its immigration policies were discriminatory, it was only exercising a natural right to discriminate on the grounds of 'race' or colour.<sup>28</sup>

And third, in the event that these two arguments failed to convince, it was suggested that the Department be prepared to be offer as a concession the expansion of the female domestic labour program. Since 1955 females from the Caribbean had been admitted to Canada on a quota basis to fill job vacancies as domestic servants.<sup>29</sup> Many of the women admitted were secretaries, clerks, teachers and nurses in the Caribbean who took advantage of this opportunity to migrate to the country. To be eligible, applicants had to be between the ages of 18 and 35, in good health, and in possession of at least a grade eight education. They were formally tied to domestic labour positions for a period of one year after their entry to the country, and were subject to deportation if they quit their jobs without the sanction of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. After completion of the one year contract they were granted landed immigrant status and could then circulate freely in the Canadian labour market. After five years of continuous residence in the country, they could apply for Canadian citizenship. If it was granted, they could sponsor certain classes of close relatives to come and settle permanently.30

The quota system remained in place until the early 1970s. During the first year of this migration, the quota was set at 100 females. In subsequent years the quotas increased to 280 per year. After 1962, a certain number of women from the Caribbean also migrated as domestic servants, but independently of the quota arrangement: they came through the regular immigration procedures.

With regard to the concession on the female domestic servant program, officials of other government departments suggested that

they might accept as a tolerable minimum the continuation of the special program for domestics, especially if some hope could be offered of a probable gradual increase in coming years in the numbers of those admitted as household servants.<sup>31</sup>

Shortly after this meeting a draft agenda was drawn up. But before it was submitted to Cabinet for approval, the Canadian High Commissioner in Georgetown, British Guiana suggested that instead of organizing a conference it might be better to organize a tour of several islands by a delegation of Canadian officials led by a Minister of a government department. The High Commissioner suggested that a tour would be preferable to a conference because it would take less planning and would be perceived as a 'genuine expression of Canadian interest' in the Caribbean. The Under-Secretary for External Affairs asked the relevant departments concerned to state their preference.

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration's reply was formulated by the Deputy Minister, C.M. Isbister. On the question of whether the Department wanted a conference or a tour, Isbister favoured the latter, but only 'if the leader of the delegation is not a minister responsible for any of the departments having the more thorny items [like immigration] on the agenda.'32 He also favoured a

tour because in his view the prospects for a successful outcome of a conference were not substantial. It would only raise the Caribbean states' expectations and result in disappointments. He claimed that none of the Departments which were to participate in the conference or tour had anything to offer and if this did not change, the delegation would be received as 'a travelling circus, including the laughter.' The Department itself was not prepared to concede much in the way of immigration:

The area of immigration is the most expensive field of public policy in which to seek appropriate concessions and for this reason I am not recommending it. In brief, we should recommend either that the government make a decision to provide the delegation with something in hand, my own mind turns to a few million dollars in the field of aid or else a decision should be able to call off the project which cannot very well lead to credible results.<sup>33</sup>

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration's position was clear. Instead of a real change in immigration procedures which would entail the active recruitment of people in the Caribbean as permanent settlers, it would be less costly for the Canadian government to buy off the Caribbean delegation by offering them monetary rewards in the form of foreign aid.

These proposals for a conference/tour never got off the ground, probably because of the election held in the fall of 1965. After Pearson and the Liberals were re-elected, and during a subsequent tour of the West Indies, he again agreed to a suggestion put forward by the Caribbean governments for holding a Canada-West Indies Conference sometime in 1966.<sup>34</sup>

Upon his return to Canada, Pearson instructed the Department of External Affairs to cooperate with the West Indian governments in the organization of a conference. He stressed that he took this conference 'very seriously,' that he considered the 'long range effect of increasing contact should be great' and that in the future Canada would have to take an 'increasing responsibility' in the area. However, like the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's previous position, it appears that he only wanted to develop certain kinds of contact: ones that promoted Canadian capitalist penetration in the Caribbean and not Caribbean migration to Canada. In this light, he suggested that

... the delegation [to plan to conference] should include fairly senior officials from the Departments of Finance, Trade and Commerce and External Affairs. ... [Pearson] has further agreed that, although the question of immigration may well be discussed, it would be unwise to attract special attention to this matter by including a representative of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the hesitation on the part of the officials of External Affairs and the Prime Minister, it was agreed once again that it would be better to confront immigration issues directly rather than try to avoid them altogether. The Department decided to send one of its more junior officials, Jack Manion, to a series of preparatory meetings held in Kingston, Jamaica. The Assistant Deputy Minister prepared a detailed position paper which was to be used by Manion in his public presentation of Canada's immigration program. The position paper

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began with what was to become a familiar public denial concerning the presence of racialized selection criteria in Canadian immigration regulations

... our policy is not racially discriminatory and we are prepared to accept immigrants of all races and from all parts of the world. However, our policy is selective in the sense that we recruit only those with enough education and training to establish themselves in Canada.<sup>36</sup>

This claim was, however, contradicted when the position paper went on to suggest that

... although our policy is not racially biased we do concentrate our main operations in those countries (Europe and the United States) which have traditionally given us most of our immigrants. While our immigration intake has since 1962 been becoming less European and more racially varied, we have proceeded with some caution in order to avoid a too-rapid rate of change which might result in adverse reaction by the Canadian public which in turn could weaken the whole concept of a universal and non-discriminatory policy.<sup>37</sup>

This suggests then, that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was concerned about the 'races' of people who were being admitted to the country, and that this concern played an active part in their decisions about whom to recruit as permanent settlers. That 'race,' or the phenotypical characteristics people possessed, continued to structure the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's recruitment of permanent settlers to the country, even after the formal elimination of racialized selection criteria in 1962, is further confirmed in a confidential summary of Canada's position on Caribbean migration to Canada prepared for the use of Lester Pearson at the Prime Ministers' Conference held in London in 1965. At the conference it was expected that Britain would try

to persuade countries like Canada and possibly Australia to ease the pressure on Britain by taking more immigrants from the problem countries of the West Indies, India and Pakistan.<sup>38</sup>

Despite a decided sympathy for Britain's 'problem,' which seemed to have been defined by some officials of the Canadian Department of Citizenship and Immigration as too much 'black' immigration, the Department was unwilling to help with any solution which involved an increase in black immigration to Canada. Thus, it suggested that

. . . although Canada may not discriminate racially in its immigration policies we cannot deny the right of a state to decide its own social and racial composition and refuse to accept immigrants whose presence would cause severe disruptions or drastic change.<sup>39</sup>

What is interesting about the department's position on this matter is that it appeared to contradict the Declaration of Racial Equality which Canada took an active part in formulating at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in 1964. The Declaration, which was intended to condemn 'racial discrimination' in South Africa, became, according to Pearson, a 'virtual charter for members of the Commonwealth.'40

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Furthermore, it was at best ironic for the Canadians to argue that 'racial problems' in the country could only be avoided if it exercised close control over the 'racial' groups being admitted to the country. The position taken by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, and which Pearson appeared to have agreed with, suggests not only that the MacKenzie King philosophy of immigration control still structured the question of which groups were allowed to cross the Canadian national boundary, but also that the presence of 'racially' distinct groups of people in the country would be the cause of 'social and racial problems.' In defining the simple presence of 'black' people as the 'problem,' and in not defining the 'problem' in terms of the racist reaction to their presence, there are important parallels with the state's pre-1962 racist immigration controls.

## Immigration Offices in the Caribbean

The continued racialization of immigration control is also evident in the decision not to open an immigration office in the Caribbean during the mid-1960s. Before 1962, applications for permanent settlement which were received from the Caribbean were screened by the Immigration Branch, and a judgement made about the ability of the applicant to 'assimilate.' Signs of the ability to assimilate involved assessments of whether the applicant had in his or her possession any special training or talent that could be made use of in the country. Above all, though, it was linked to the phenotypical and genotypical characteristics of the applicant. Thus, the screening process also involved officials' examination of photographs of applicants in an attempt to determine their colour and lineage. This decision-making procedure is evident in the following minute from a meeting of the Departmental Advisory Committee on Immigration held in 1951:

After discussion, the Committee noted that while from her photograph...[she] has characteristics of the negroid group, available evidence indicates her negro origin stems solely from her great grandmother. The Committee approved the admission of the above named.<sup>41</sup>

The introduction of the new Immigration Regulations in 1962 led to changes in the procedure whereby applicants from the Caribbean were processed and selected for permanent settlement. Between 1962 and 1967, applications for permanent settlement from the region were processed through the use of travelling interview teams. People in the Caribbean who applied for landed immigrant status had their applications forwarded to Ottawa for initial screening by a 'Central Selection Unit.' In theory, the Unit had three options in regard to the outcome of the application: it could accept the applicant, refuse the applicant, or defer the decision. In practice, none of the applicants from the Caribbean appear to have been accepted on the basis of a 'paper screening' only. The Department generally rejected outright the applications for settlement coming from those who were unskilled, and deferred decisions for those who appeared to be skilled until an interview could be conducted in the Caribbean. For the latter, a team of immigration officers proceeded to the Caribbean to interview the applicants.<sup>42</sup>

The first such immigration team went to the Caribbean in early 1962. It accepted for settlement 168, or 53%, of the 311 deferred applications. The team, with more or less the same opinion in mind of the West Indian that we have held

over the years . . . thought if 40% of the candidates were accepted we would do quite well' was surprised at the 'high calibre' of persons applying.<sup>43</sup>

What is interesting about the teams were the character assumptions some of the interviewing officers held about certain groups in the Caribbean. According to one of the officers who conducted interviews in the Caribbean in the spring of 1963

One characteristic of the West Indian Negro, which is of interest and value when considering him for immigration is, that in order to get continued good results in his work output he has to be continually humoured, encouraged, and complimented on his work. If he is reprimanded, or told to perform his work in a manner different from what he is accustomed to, he becomes sulky and unco-operative and a poor worker. He finds it very difficult to re-adjust and adapt himself to new and different approaches to a job.<sup>44</sup>

The official's description of 'Negro' males from the Caribbean as childlike, indolent, lazy and stupid was not substantially different from the assumptions held by state officials before the introduction of the 1962 Immigration Regulations. Moreover, it was not dissimilar to the eighteenth and nineteenth century racist stereotypes which were used as outright justifications of slavery and colonialism.<sup>45</sup> For example, one early commentator on slavery wrote

The dull stupidity of the Negro leaves him without any desire for instruction. Whether the Creator originally formed these black people a little lower than other men, or that they have lost their intellectual powers through disuse, I will not assume the Province of determining. . . . The stupid obstinance of the Negroes may indeed make it always necessary to subject them to severe discipline from their masters.<sup>46</sup>

In both cases, there was an attribution of social significance to patterns of phenotypical variation, and the negative evaluation of that variation.

On the question of opening an immigration office in the Caribbean the same interview officer suggested

I personally believe from what I observed during my visit to these islands, that we would, by opening of such an office, be encouraging more people from these areas to apply for admission to Canada.<sup>47</sup>

He was thus clearly against encouraging more black people from the Caribbean applying for permanent settlement in Canada.

Between the time of the first immigration team's return from the Caribbean and the end of the year (1963), the Department received another 957 applications for permanent settlement. In a memorandum to Cabinet which sought to gain approval for the establishment of an immigration office in the Caribbean (which was prepared by the Immigration Branch), the cost of servicing the applications under the then current arrangements was estimated to amount to about \$40,000 per year. The Minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration argued in the memorandum that it would be cheaper to establish a permanent immigra-

tion office in the Caribbean than to continue with present practices.<sup>48</sup> In the memo, there was no suggestion that the reason the Department wanted to open an office in the region was for increased recruitment. It was simply seen as an administrative mechanism which would make the control of Caribbean migration to the country less costly.

Before the Cabinet could make a decision on the matter, there was a change of government. The Conservatives lost the 1962 election and were replaced by the Liberals under Lester Pearson. Because of the change of government, the Department had to resubmit the memorandum to the new Cabinet and have it approved before an office could be established.<sup>49</sup> The Department did not, however, submit another request to Cabinet. In April, 1964, when the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration was being pressed on the matter of opening an immigration office in the Caribbean by the Department of External Affairs, the Immigration Branch stated that it was a 'dead issue' because the 'branch has second thoughts about the necessity of an office in the West Indies.'<sup>50</sup>

Why did the Immigration Branch have second thoughts on this issue? First, it appeared to the Branch that too many of the immigrants admitted since 1962 had chosen to settle in inner city areas in Toronto and Montreal. They perceived in this situation the potential for the development of a serious 'race relations' problem, a problem which they felt existed in Britain because of the presence of Caribbean migrants. The Department was

... afraid areas of Montreal and Toronto would become inhabited by these people ... eventually producing a situation similar to that existing in London, England.<sup>51</sup>

In light of this fear about apparent over-concentration in Toronto and Montreal, two members of the Immigration Branch arranged to interview Citizenship Liaison Officers, National Employment Service Officials and University Placement Officers in Toronto and Montreal in order to determine the scope of the 'problems' they experienced with recent black immigrants. The main finding of this exercise was that

While the Caribbean movement has not presented any problem as yet, the officers interviewed expressed some apprehension over the increased volume. Some employers who have given jobs to male Negroes and who have had to fire them because of their attitude towards their work are subsequently very reluctant to employ any more Negroes. In the circumstances there is some concern that if the trend to increase is allowed to continue without more attention being paid to personal suitability it may very well prove increasingly difficult to place these people [in employment].<sup>52</sup>

It is evident that the officials' discovery that there were few, if any, 'problems' did not soothe their worries. It appears, rather, that their reaction to racist hiring practices was to maintain strict control over the recruitment of black immigrants to ensure that only those with proper personalities were selected. The implication of this for the opening of an immigration office in the Caribbean was that 'all or almost all Negroes should be personally interviewed before admission.'53 The Branch felt, then, that the existing system would be suitable.

Further insight into the nature of the Immigration Branch's second thoughts is gained from the previously cited position paper prepared for the Canada-West Indies Conference. In the paper, the Deputy Minister claimed that there were both operational and policy grounds for not opening an immigration office in the Caribbean. In terms of the operational grounds, he argued that the department feared too much publicity and interest in immigration would be generated and that the office would then be 'inundated with applications largely from unqualified people' whom they would have to turn down because of their lack of qualifications. He felt this would led to a situation where the department would have to lower its selection standards, which would open it to both official and public criticism in Canada.<sup>54</sup>

On policy grounds, he echoed this same theme except in the context of the reaction of Caribbean governments. Thus,

We feared that an office in the Caribbean would be a focal point for West Indian resentment at the selective aspects of our policy. Moreover, once an office were opened in the West Indies it would be virtually impossible for political reasons to close it even though the number of qualified persons might drop to where the flow is negligible.<sup>55</sup>

But, and more importantly, he also argued that

it should also be mentioned here that one of the policy factors was a concern over the long range wisdom of a substantial increase in Negro immigration to Canada. The racial problems of Britain and the United States undoubtedly influenced this concern which of course still exists today.<sup>56</sup>

He then went on to suggest, and Tom Kent, the Deputy Minister of the Department, agreed, that it would be 'unwise' for Canada to consider opening an immigration office as a concession to the Caribbean states at the conference. He also suggested that Canada's representative at the preparatory meetings in Kingston only explain the 'operational' grounds for its unwillingness to open an office in the region. This was because of what, in a different context, the Department felt was the 'West Indians'... natural sensitivity towards real or imagined discrimination.'57

The concern over the reproduction in Canada of the 'racial problems' found in Britain and the United States was also echoed in a background paper which was initially intended for public distribution at the Canada-West Indies Conference but which in the end was not distributed. It is possible that it was rejected for distribution because of the following view of the nature of 'race relations' in the country,

In recent years some Canadians who in normal [?] circumstances would not have any prejudice in respect to race, colour or creed, have shown concern that through rapid increases in the intake of under-educated and un-skilled immigrants, especially if multiracial, we could end up with situations (race riots) similar to those in the United Kingdom.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, the view that if an Immigration Office were established in the Caribbean by the Canadian government, it would be more for the purpose of

control over immigration—given a formal commitment to non-racist selection criteria rather than in the promotion of immigration from the region—was confirmed in a briefing paper prepared by the Immigration Branch for the use of Prime Minister Pearson on the occasion of the Jamaican Prime Minister, Alexander Bustamante's visit to Canada in 1963. The Branch argued that

Opening an office in Jamaica would, to Jamaica and others in the area, create the impression that Canada was wanting to stimulate immigration, and when they realized that the function of the office were more for the purpose of control than promotion, then there is little doubt that such an office would be subject to considerable adverse publicity, and be accused openly and possibly violently of applying coloured discrimination.<sup>59</sup>

Despite these concerns, on April 28, 1967 and June 6, 1967 respectively, Canada did establish immigration visa offices in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Kingston, Jamaica. It appears that there were two reasons why this was done. First, the number of applications for permanent settlement from the Caribbean had increased dramatically since 1962. For example, between September 1 and December 21, 1966, the Department of Manpower and Immigration received 4,559 applications from the Caribbean. Because of a policy of refusing to accept any applicants as permanent settlers on the basis of a paper screening only, those processing applications had a choice of either denying outright the applicant or deferring the decision until the applicant could be interviewed in the Caribbean. Even though the officials refused outright some 1,108 of the 4,559 applications for settlement during that time, this left well over 3,000 applicants to be interviewed. In practical terms, this meant that three immigration officers would have to be hired on a year round basis to interview applicants from the Caribbean alone. 60 This confirms the earlier logical arguments which were rejected for racist reasons.

Second, according to the Director of the Home Branch of the Department of Manpower and Immigration

there is a great deal of illegal immigration from the Caribbean area, mainly from Jamaica. Jamaicans comprise by far the bulk of our non-immigrant problem at the present time. The opening of an office in Jamaica would tend to eliminate the motive for seeking to immigrate in the guise of tourists. This would be particularly so in the case of the better qualified Jamaicans, who give us much of our trouble.

The veracity of the claim that Jamaica gave Canada the biggest problem is difficult to assess. According to Anderson and Higgs, it was people from Italy, Greece and Portugal who constituted the biggest problem groups in this regard.<sup>62</sup> What is important, though, is that the Director saw the opening of an immigration office as a method to better control the migration, and indeed, to curtail the illegal migration of individuals from the Caribbean. Thus, like earlier concerns, the department was interested in the control of immigration from the Caribbean, not promotion.<sup>63</sup>

The Department's emphasis on control and not recruitment from the Caribbean contrasts sharply with its response to a proposal to import 'guestworkers' from Germany to Canada which was developed around the same time. In early

1965, the Attache of the Canadian Embassy Visa Office in Cologne, West Germany, reported to immigration officials in Canada that he had held discussions with the German Central Labour Office regarding an exchange of temporary workers between the two countries. Basically, German workers were to be granted non-immigrant visas and allowed to work in the country for between one and two years, and Canadians were to be allowed to do the same in Germany. While the proposal was actively considered over a period of months by senior immigration department officials in Canada, it was eventually rejected. Among other reasons, it was rejected on the grounds that 'the emphasis in . . . [this agreement] seemed to be for a strictly temporary exchange of workers, whereas we are primarily interested in permanent acquisitions to our labour force.'64 Thus, in the context of traditional source countries which supplied Canada with white labour, departmental officials were actively interested in recruitment of permanent settlers.

#### Female Domestic Workers

A similar process of racialization, but structured in addition by gender, was evident in the department's strategy in dealing with the flow of female domestic labourers from the Caribbean to Canada. It was seeking to reduce the flow of black permanent settlers to the country, while at the same time attempting to make it appear that it was not making decisions based on 'race.'

As noted above in the context of the Canada-West Indies Conference, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Immigration suggested that 'in order to avoid pressure for major concessions we should be prepared to adopt a more flexible attitude' with respect to the domestic servant question. Their strategy for dealing with the issue was outlined in the following terms.:

At present we admit about 400 West Indian domestics each year, 150 over the quota and the movement outside the quota is developing rapidly. Our employment officials are pleased with these girls and advise us that there is an almost unlimited demand. I would like to suggest the possibility that we might agree to double the quota on the understanding that the quota will cover all domestics and not just those referred to us by the West Indians and with the additional proviso that selection be done by us and not by the West Indian authorities. Thus, although the quota would be increased by 100% our actual intake of domestics would only be increased by 25%, its future growth controlled and we would be able to develop a much more orderly programme. In Jamaica it will be enough to say that we have the quotas under study and discretely explore the acceptability of our suggested provisos. 65

The position taken here highlights a dialectic of economic rationality and ideological determination. Despite an almost 'unlimited demand' for female domestic labour in the country, the department was keen to maintain control over this migration and ensure that it did not get too large. In fact, it was willing to go against the interests of middle-class Canadians who wanted a source of cheap domestic labour by allowing the entry of only 100 more black female domestics each year.

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Why did the Department not want to see the migration increased in order that this 'unlimited demand' be filled by women from the Caribbean? Officially, the Department claimed that the quota system was anathema given that immigration was to be tied more closely than ever to labour market criteria, and that entry was no longer structed by 'race.' However, the reason why they admitted domestics from the Caribbean to Canada in the first place was, according to the Deputy Minister of Immigration 'mainly to meet the pressure by influential persons seeking domestics for their own employ.'66 At one point these 'influential persons' included the conservative Minister of Citizenship and Immigration during the early 1960s and Lester Pearson. The Deputy Minister suggested that 'similar requests for other kinds of workers have not been met with so generously.'67

Privately, the Department's dissatisfaction with Caribbean domestic workers appears to have been based on the fact that the migration constituted only a temporary solution to a permanent labour problem. Above all, it was felt that the migration contributed to the creation of a long-term 'race relations' problem. The Director of Immigration in 1960 suggested in this context that '... the admission of such workers meets only a short-term need and may be creating future problems.'68 He elaborated on the nature of this contradiction in the following terms:

. . . the admission of such workers from countries like the West Indies . . . as is done presently does provide a short-term remedy to the problem. Once in Canada, however, these girls, as soon as they are established, are free to apply for the admission of their relatives and fiances. Girls chosen as domestic servants are either from the lower classes in their own countries, in which case the relatives they sponsor are likely to be unskilled workers, or if they are superior types they are unlikely to remain in domestic service. 69

Thus, the concern was primarily over the fact that domestic workers possessed the right to sponsor their relatives once they arrived in Canada, a concern which was also articulated in the context of southern European immigration to the country.<sup>70</sup>

One single female domestic servant may take a year or two to become established but she may then begin to sponsor brothers, sisters, fiance, parents, at a fairly rapid rate. The one unsponsored worker may meet someone's need for a domestic servant for a year or two, but the result may be ten or twenty sponsored immigrants of dubious value to Canada and who may well cause insoluble social problems . . . I am greatly concerned that we may be facing a West Indian sponsorship explosion.<sup>71</sup>

Earlier, the department had attempted to deal with this 'explosion' by obstructing the entry to Canada of male fiances of domestic servants. If a male fiance was admitted, the couple had to be married within thirty days; otherwise, the fiance was to be deported to the Caribbean. Similarly, females had to prove to Immigration officials that the man they sponsored really was their fiance by surrendering personal letters to substantiate the relationship. Neither of these practices was applied to the white fiance of white immigrants.<sup>72</sup>

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The concern over domestic servant migration was also linked to beliefs about the alleged immorality and sexual mores of women from the Caribbean. According to the Canadian High Commissioner in Trinidad

promiscuity is wide-spread here and it is quite usual, especially in the lower end of the social scale, to find (a) that people who describe themselves as 'married' are not, in fact, legally married; (b) that parents have children of diverse paternity or maternity, and (c) that single, unmarried women have one or more (sometimes several) children, more often than not entrusted to the care of relatives.<sup>73</sup>

This view was also shared by the Director of the Immigration Branch, who appears additionally to have been something of an amateur anthropologist.

West Indian mores are quite different from ours. Illegitimacy is pretty well accepted as a fact of life. It is not uncommon for a single girl to have children by 2, 3 or 4 different men.<sup>74</sup>

This view of black female immorality appears to have underlied the institution of compulsory medical examinations for those Caribbean women who arrived in Canada as domestic labourers. According to Mackenzie

Women arriving under the scheme were not only subjected to extensive medical tests in their home countries—including x-rays and tests for tropical diseases—but were subjected to extensive gynecological examinations (testing for syphillis) when they arrived in Canada. The governments of Jamaica and Barbados were expressly not informed of the tests.<sup>75</sup>

As with the description of black males from Caribbean, this construction of black female sexuality parallels eighteenth century ideology developed in the context of slavery. One West Indian planter who wrote about such matters in the 1790s claimed that

The Negroes in the West Indies, both men and women, would consider it as a great exertion of tyranny, and the most cruel of all hardships, to be compelled to confine themselves to a single connection with the other sex. Their passion... is mere animal desire, implanted by the great author of all things for the preservation of the species. This the Negroes, without doubt, possess in common with the rest of animal creation, and they indulge it, as inclination prompts, in an almost promiscuous intercourse with the other sex.<sup>76</sup>

Clearly, officials of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration were concerned about the uncontrolled growth of a resident black population in Canada. Such a growth would cause insoluble social problems. This suggests that the representatives of the state, in a racist manner, defined females from the Caribbean as a fixed biological group which possessed certain negatively evaluated fixed cultural traits which would lead to the creation of social and 'racial' problems in the country. This growth was sparked by the ability of females to sponsor close relatives who were of poor quality, and by beliefs about their supposedly libidinous natures.

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At the Canada-West Indies Conference, the Department was granted its wish to increase the quota by 100% but to only increase the total flow of domestic workers by 25%. The representatives of the various Caribbean states did not catch on to the department's sleight of hand. For the Immigration Branch, this was a major achievement. The representative of the Department who managed to convince the Caribbean governments that they received a major concession when they in fact did not, was roundly congratulated by the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, who stated that he was 'most convincing and persuasive.' His superiors responded by saying that he was just doing his job.<sup>77</sup>

## Conclusion

The evidence presented in this paper contradicts Hawkins' explanation of the state's delay in establishing an immigration office in the Caribbean. She argues, rather economistically, that the 'delay' was the result of the 'fluctuating economic depression' and the 'austerity in the fiscal policies of the Conservative government' of the time. This, she argues, made it impractical to establish and enlarge immigration offices in non-traditional source countries. More generally, the evidence presented also contradicts her claim that

changes in the composition of the flow of immigrants reflect not only the new immigration regulations and selection system and what appears to be a changing pattern of demand, but also a serious departmental effort which began before 1967 to improve overseas immigration operations. This included the opening of new visa offices and the strengthening of existing offices in Asia and the Caribbean.<sup>79</sup>

It is evident that even after 1962 there was a continued racialization of immigration control in the country whereby social significance was attached to phenotypical signifiers. But, this was also a racist process in that the opening of an immigration office and the entry of female domestic workers to the country was structured by a concern over 'race relations.' The problem was not that there might be a racist reaction on the part of white Canadians to the presence of black people, nor the presence of racist hiring practices on the part of Canadian employers. Rather, the 'problem' was defined as the simple presence of black people who, because of the biological and cultural traits they possessed and their inability to assimilate, would disrupt an otherwise peaceful and harmonious 'host' society. Thus, uncontrolled black immigration was defined as the cause of insoluble 'race relations' problems in the country. Post-1962 migration did not, therefore, take place in an ideological climate denuded of the negative evaluations of certain 'races.'

What, then are we to make of the 1962 Immigration Regulations? In light of the evidence presented in this paper, it is the case that publicly at least, the state wanted to make it appear that it had eliminated racist immigration selection criteria and practices. On this count Hawkins is probably correct: the government was obviously concerned about the negative international reputation that Canada had in the field of immigrant recruitment. 80 But this does not mean that the state actively engaged in immigrant recruitment in the Caribbean. Any increase in the flow of people to Canada from the Caribbean was simply the price that Canada would have to pay for improving this aspect of its international reputation.

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## **NOTES**

1. The other was the Department of Labour.

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- 2. Memo from the Director of Immigration to the Deputy Minister of Immigration, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, January 14, 1958, Public Archives of Canada (PAC), R.G. 26, Vol. 124, File 3-33-6, Part 1.
- 3. Cited in D. Corbett, 'Canada's Immigration Policy, 1957-62,' *International Journal*, 1963, Number 18, p. 167.
- 4. The category of 'race' appears in quotation marks to formally signify that it is not a real feature of the human species but rather a socially defined label. See R. Miles, Racism and Migrant Labour (London: Routledge, 1982).
- 5. See F. Reeves, *British Racial Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), and R. Miles, *Racism*, (London: Tavistock, forthcoming), for more details on the concept of racialization.
- 6. It should be noted that the Green Paper of 1974 acknowledged that a complete deracialization of immigration control did not occur until 1967. However, this claim is based solely on an examination of the explicitly stated policies of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. It refers to the elimination of the quota system for immigrants from India, Ceylon and Pakistan which was in effect until 1967, and discrimination with respect to the ability of immigrants from non-traditional source countries to sponsor a narrower range of relatives than immigrants from traditional source countries. This paper is unique because it suggests that the actual racist practices of the Department differed from its apparently non-racist publicly articulated policy. See Department of Manpower and Immigration, The Immigration Program, Green Paper Series, Vol. 2, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974).
- 7. See for example, S. Bolaria and P. Li, Racial Oppression in Canada, Second Edition (Toronto: Gramond Press, 1988) and F. Hawkins, Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972).
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- 13. See B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) for a general discussion of the concept of an imagined community.
- 14. See R. Miles, 1982, pp. 72-92 for a review and critique of sociological definitions of racism.
- 15. Li and Bolaria, 1979; P. Cappon, 'The Green Paper: Immigration as a tool of Profit,' Canadian Ethnic Studies, 1975, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 50-54; D. Stasiulis, 'Racism and the Canadian State,' Explorations in Ethnic Studies, 1985, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 13-32.
- 16. Hawkins, 1974, p. 144.

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- 20. A. Segal, Politics and Population in the Caribbean, Special Study #7 (Rio Pedras: Institute of Caribbean Studies, n.d.).
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- 22. Memo from the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Prime Minister, May 6, 1966, PAC, R.G., 26, Vol. 145, File 3-33-6, Canada-West Indies Conference.
- 23. See Letter from the USSEA to C. Isbister, Deputy Minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Jan. 5, 19675, PAC, R.G. 26, Vol. 145, File 3-33-6, Part 4.
- 24. See V. Satzewich, 'The Canadian State and the Racialization of Caribbean Migrant Farm Labour, 1947-1966, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 1988, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 282-301.
- 25. Letter, Jan. 5, 1965, note 20.
- 26. Ibid.
- See Memo from the Director of Immigration to the Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, April 15, 1961, PAC, R.G. 76, Vol. 842, File 553-67, Part 1.
- 28. See Letter, Jan. 5, 1965, note 20; see also 'Confidential Information for the Prime Minister: Canada and Commonwealth Immigration,' Department of Citizenship and Immigration, 1965, PAC, R.G. 26, Vol. 145, File 3-33-6, Canada-West Indies Conference.
- 29. F. Henry, The West Indian Domestic Scheme in Canada, Social and Economic Studies, 1968, Vol. 17, No. 1; Bolaria and Li, 1988, p. 178; R. Winks, The Blacks in Canada (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971), p. 440.
- 30. See also J. St. G. Walker, *The West Indians in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1984), p. 10.
- 31. See Letter, Jan. 5, 1966, note 20.
- 32. Letter from C. Isbister, Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration to USSEA, Feb. 2, 1965, PAC, R.G. 26, Vol. 145, File 3-33-6, Canada-West Indies Conference.
- 33. Ibid.
- 34. Letter, Jan. 5, 1965.
- 35. Ibid.
- 36. Memo from R. Curry, Assistant Deputy Minister to T. Kent, Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Jan. 21, 1966, PAC, R.G. 26, Vol. 145, File 3-33-6, Canada-West Indies Conference.
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- 78. Hawkins, 1972, p. 150; Hawkins, 1974, p. 147.
- 79. Hawkins, 1972, p. 53.
- 80. Hawkins, 1974, p. 144.

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