

THE WEST INDIANS



IN CANADA

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Canada's Ethnic Groups

Canadian Historical Association

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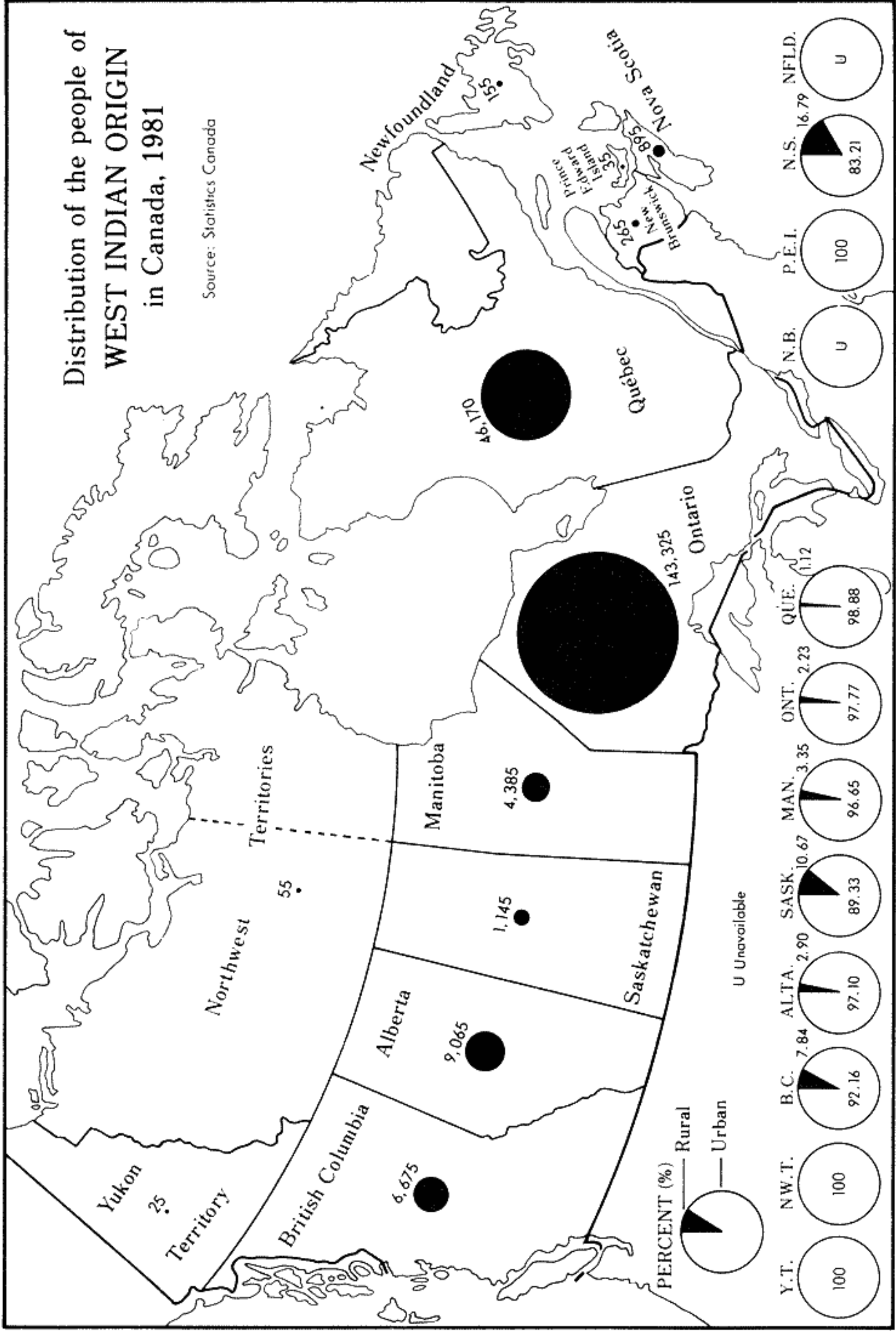
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Distribution of the people of WEST INDIAN ORIGIN in Canada, 1981

Source: Statistics Canada



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I — The Caribbean Background

The travel poster image of the West Indies disguises the immense human and physical diversity which exists beyond the calypso dancer and the beachfront resort. The Caribbean region contains over 40 island and coastal territories, stretching in a 1,500 mile arc from the tip of Florida to the Venezuela coast, with extensions in the Bahama Islands to the north and in the South American mainland. The physical characteristics of the territories vary, and their geographical insularity has encouraged cultural characteristics unique to each society. Even within any specific West Indian territory there exists a medley of ethnic types and heritages, reflecting the different groups of invaders and settlers who have contributed to the population and who often have retained cultural links to their various homelands. To these ethnic differences must be added distinctions of class and occupation, education, urban and rural background, and historical experience. But even if the term "West Indian" is imprecise, and each territory has its own distinct flavour, it is still possible to identify a set of common features. All the territories experienced European conquest, the sugar plantation, and the institution of slavery. All were ruled as colonial satellites with economic structures created for external exploitation. They gained a social order from the pattern of slavery and colonial rule which tends to persist along with the legacy of imbalanced economic development, and they face the world today with many shared problems and aspirations. These are the historical conditions which lend significance to the concept of a West Indian culture.

The Caribbean region contains a microcosm of the world's major population groups. From the time of Columbus the islands served as the staging-post for the conquest of mainland America, and their command of the sea routes made the islands valued prizes in European colonial rivalries. Since the original Arawak and Carib peoples were largely eliminated, following an attempt to enslave them, the defensive and supply posts established there depended upon imported people and goods. In an effort to make the islands economically productive European settlers were brought in, often as indentured servants, and early in the seventeenth century tobacco was introduced as a cash crop. But Caribbean tobacco could not compete with the Virginia product, and by the eighteenth century most of the Caribbean territories had been converted to the production of sugar for sale in the European market. Sugar is an expensive crop, demanding large landholdings, heavy capital investment and a regular supply of labour. Since small-scale European settler agriculture was unsuitable for this kind of enterprise, wealthy investors purchased blocs of land for plantation agriculture and built the industrial component required to convert the cane into sugar prior to export. European labour was utilized at first, but it quickly became apparent that slave labour from Africa was cheaper, more efficient, and in more stable supply. The fact that Africans were black was at this point incidental; the notion that blacks were natural slaves was a result, not a cause, of the widespread enslavement of Africans in the New World. The expanding contact between Europe and Africa came at a time when Europe's traditional supply of Eastern

slaves was interrupted by the Ottoman capture of Constantinople. As Europeans re-established hegemony over the Mediterranean and began to extend into the Atlantic, Africa remained by default and by geography the chief reservoir of unpaid labour, while improved maritime technology made it feasible to transport Africans to the New World quickly and cheaply. The reliance upon Africans as slaves on Caribbean sugar plantations was thus the product of a series of historical events and experiments.

More than in any other New World region, slaves dominated the West Indian population numerically. Although they came from a variety of African backgrounds, languages and cultures, slavery imposed a new social order. Uprooted from the conditions and institutional forms which made them relevant, African traditions were modified by attitudes and behaviour developed to cope with slavery. Beyond the plantation, as well as within it, slavery produced a highly stratified society with divisions based on colour and occupation. White skin was associated with the power of the masters, black skin with servitude. The absence of sufficient white women encouraged mating between white men and female slaves, whose mixed offspring became a caste situated hierarchically between free white and slave black. Even when freed this class did not share in white privileges, but it did represent an intermediate status and contributed to the creation of a colour continuum paralleling the social and power system. It was a pattern into which later arrivals could fit.

Sugar production justified the plantation, and the plantation justified slavery, but as Europe's economic horizons expanded globally in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, sugar's relative importance declined and slavery became vulnerable to attack. In the French colony of St. Domingue a slave rebellion in 1791 overthrew European control and established the black republic of Haiti, which won recognition in 1803. Elsewhere in the Caribbean the combined forces of European abolitionism and slave resistance succeeded in abolishing slavery, first in the British Empire, in 1834, and subsequently by the French and Danish in 1848, the Dutch in 1863, and the Spanish in 1873. In the British territories the former slaves were tied through an apprenticeship system to work as wage labour on the plantations. When this system was in turn terminated in 1838 many freedmen left the plantations to establish small holdings, usually in the less fertile areas unsuitable for plantation agriculture. Unfortunately, emancipation did not imply equality for blacks. They continued to suffer restrictions and to be regarded as inferior, and the social and economic structures created during slavery were largely retained.

Deprived of much of their labour, the plantation owners looked elsewhere for workers. Free Africans, Portuguese and Chinese were brought in as indentured labourers, but by far the greatest source was India. In the second half of the nineteenth century over 400,000 Indians arrived to serve on the plantations. Though limited to a specific term, the indentured labourers worked under conditions similar to slavery. Their numbers reduced the availability of occasional employment for the free blacks, thus creating resentment, and the slave-like nature of their work fed a negative image of East Indians among blacks in the Caribbean. Many indentured workers brought their families with them, and were able to maintain social structures quite distinct from those evolved under slavery. Most stayed in the Caribbean following their term of indenture, but

they followed separate occupations from both blacks and whites. In British Guiana East Indians predominated numerically, and they were a large minority in Trinidad. In Jamaica and Barbados, as in most other islands, blacks constituted the overwhelming majority, but there was a sizeable "coloured" or mixed element in the population and a smaller East Indian, European and Chinese presence. The consequences of emancipation therefore included not only a new, if still limited, life for blacks, but a heterogeneous population expressed in ethnic, social and economic terms. A further condition contributing to diversity was physical insularity: each territory related directly to its European ruling power, and there were limited communications among the islands. West Indians tended to identify with their own territory and with their own group within that territory. There was no sense of belonging to a broader Caribbean community despite the obvious similarities of their experience.

In the years following emancipation the colonial economies continued to serve external interests. Politically, settler-dominated local assemblies gave way to direct imperial control, so that effective decision-making power was in the hands of appointed white officials. This system of political control reinforced the pattern of white domination locally, and at the same time strengthened the European orientation of the colonial population. The colour continuum which associated blackness with disadvantage and whiteness with power and privilege was maintained, and European standards were the ideal. To rise in the social scale implied the adoption of European behaviour patterns, and the ambitious individual sought not to replace the ruling elite but to join it. Correspondingly, black features and behaviour were considered undesirable. Status, colour and culture were highly co-related during the colonial period, and were the direct legacy of slavery. To determine a person's place in society it was necessary only to look at the colour of his skin.

The colour-class interconnection influenced almost every aspect of colonial life. Occupation, education, income, diet, accent and religious affiliation were determined according to one's position in the hierarchy. The black lower classes spoke a local dialect, usually composed of European and African terms mixed according to local tradition. They tended to retain certain African concepts, particularly in the spiritual realm, which they expressed through Christian cults rather than the major denominations. With minimal education and restricted opportunity they occupied the lowest employment stratum, thus suffering from economic deprivation which was reflected in standards of dress, food and housing. The upper white and middle "brown" classes shared most cultural values. They spoke standard English or French, with varying degrees of local accent, received secondary or university educations, belonged to the established churches, and sought careers in the professions or civil service. One significant example of class distinction was the structure of the family. The middle and upper classes followed the European pattern, with the male breadwinner and the monogamous nuclear unit. The African slaves had lost the extended kinship relations of their homeland, but they and their West Indian descendants reconstructed them after a fashion shaped by the demands of the plantation and the requirements of economic survival following emancipation. In freedom as in slavery the black family required the support of both parents, an economic reality which gave a high degree of self-reliance to women. Since formal, legal

marriage was disallowed under slavery and remained outside the free black tradition, a series of common-law unions became usual and, as the male partner moved into a new relationship, the children would stay with their mother. Few West Indian children would spend their entire childhood with the same adult partners, or share paternity with all their siblings. A distinction had to be made between the biological and the functioning family, the latter assuming primary importance and including a variety of blood relatives. Given their economic circumstances children were expected to begin contributing to the family income at an early age. They were also expected to provide security for their parents, especially their mother, in old age.

The chief avenue for class mobility was education, though opportunities were restricted because schooling was costly. Moreover, educational institutions were based on European models and instilled European values, supporting the class system based on colour and the acquisition of European culture. But while darker-skinned children had limited access to education, it remained a priority and families would sacrifice other amenities to send a child to school for as long as possible. The curriculum was directed towards the professions rather than technical skills, and teaching techniques emphasized formal discipline and the diligent learning of correct answers. The West Indian student was not trained to be innovative and practical, and upon graduation he sought employment in the civil service or pursued higher professional education. Even when educated, the young West Indian could not be guaranteed an appropriate career. Colour preferences applied to many jobs, and local economies could not absorb all the individuals with similar training. For many of them, migration was the only available option.

A migratory tradition was established early in the Caribbean. Immediately after emancipation, former slaves had moved to those territories where good land was still available for peasant agriculture or where labour shortages produced high wages. Rising population and economic depression later in the nineteenth century encouraged this movement. Emigration became a feature of West Indian society; some of the smaller islands had as many countrymen living abroad as there were at home. Conscious of limited local opportunities, West Indian officials encouraged migration as a means of reducing unemployment, and they appreciated the remittances sent home by the emigrants. By the time of independence, remittance money constituted more than one-quarter of the total income of some islands. There was also a negative impact. Since the typical migrant was young, ambitious and male, a demographic imbalance was created at home where women, the old and the very young were left behind.

Emigration did not, of course, solve all the economic and social pressures of the Caribbean. High unemployment and the consciousness of racial disadvantage stirred protest movements, particularly during the hard times of the 1930s, which encouraged the development of labour unions and political parties. The metropolitan governments responded with economic aid and constitutional reform. Following World War II the French and Dutch territories were incorporated as overseas departments of the European polity. Since then, the six islands of the Netherlands Antilles have achieved internal autonomy and the mainland Dutch colony of Surinam moved the final step to full independence in 1975. In Guadeloupe and Martinique a majority of voters continues to support

the existing links with France, though a determined minority, primarily among the young, agitates for independence. In the British West Indies increased participation in local government was allowed in the post-War period, and as adult suffrage was extended voters tended to elect nationalist representatives demanding further reforms. By the late 1950s there was a clearly articulated movement for independence. After a brief experiment with an island federation between 1956 and 1962, Britain acceded to sequential individual requests for territorial independence as separate nation states. Jamaica and Trinidad-Tobago gained independence in 1962, Barbados and Guyana in 1966, and by the end of the next decade most of the British West Indies had ended their colonial status.

As emerging Third World nations the West Indian states faced a barrage of problems as well as new opportunities. The islands are tiny territories with limited domestic markets. Local food production and the manufacture of consumer goods continue to be displaced in favour of primary production for export, but their export earnings do not match the costs of essential imports. Though agricultural diversification has occurred, sugar still dominates as a cash crop and it depends on subsidies or preferential markets in friendly consuming countries. Regionally, agriculture employs approximately 80 per cent of the work force, and as it mechanizes and becomes more efficient the effect is to create unemployment. Most West Indian territories suffer official unemployment rates of around 25 per cent, and even this figure disguises seasonal patterns and underemployment. The tourist industry, like agriculture, provides only seasonal employment opportunities and, although tourism now ranks as a major source of income, many of the resorts are foreign-owned and much of the profit is expatriated, just as much tourist spending goes on imported foods and goods. Inflation as high as 30 per cent and meagre government funds for social services compound the difficulties of the poorer classes, who suffer from inadequate standards of diet and housing. Rapid population growth and the limitations on rural economic activity have caused urban migration and the frightening spread of city slums. In the 1980s the West Indies are among the most densely populated regions in the world, creating strains on all resources. These urgencies are thrown upon largely inexperienced governments, who inevitably fail to meet all the expectations of the electorate. Political and labour unrest has led to strikes and violence, and often to the imposition of emergency measures and government restrictions on personal freedom.

Although the problems of the externally-oriented colonial economy have not been overcome, independence has created opportunities to re-direct West Indian society. The departure of colonial officials has meant their replacement by West Indians at all levels, and the class and colour lines are breaking down. Particularly during the 1970s, the old stratifications were being reversed, at least conceptually if not yet in economic terms, as politicians sought the favour of the black electorate. Access to education has increased through the provision of free schooling over much of the region, and radical curricular changes are occurring as metropolitan standards are abandoned. The educational system no longer reinforces a colonial mentality, and a sense of West Indian identity and pride is emerging. Black culture has ceased to be a source of embarrassment. Local dialects, once denigrated as patois, are dignified as vehicles for literary expression, and West Indian music, visual art and dance are celebrated internationally.

The economic forces which have inspired many decades of migration are still present, but the migrants of recent years have been leaving with a very different set of attitudes.

II — Early Migrants In Canada

Slaves from the West Indies were imported into New France and Nova Scotia, individually and in small numbers, but the first large group of Caribbean blacks to migrate to British North America were the Maroons who arrived in Halifax in 1796. The term "Maroon" was applied in slavery days to runaways who established free communities apart from the European settlements. In 1795 a dispute erupted into a war between the Maroons of Jamaica and the British, and although they were not actually conquered, the Maroons were tricked into surrendering their arms and were carried to exile in Nova Scotia. Governor John Wentworth settled his new charges, numbering over 500 people, on the outskirts of Halifax, and offered the men employment in improving the fortifications of the Citadel. Proud, independent, and nursing a memory of betrayal, the Maroons refused to become compliant Nova Scotian settlers, and their repeated appeals to London finally resulted in their re-migration in 1800 to Sierra Leone in West Africa. Their legacy in Nova Scotia was the "Maroon Bastion" on Citadel Hill, and the sense of pride they contributed to the emerging community of free blacks who remained in the province.

Over the next century only a small number of West Indians followed the Maroons to Canada. There were a few dozen in Victoria in the 1850s, where their status as British subjects earned them the vote and other privileges denied to the larger number of black American fugitives living there. At the same time a few individuals and families came to Nova Scotia, most notably Peter McKerrow from Antigua who became a leader among Nova Scotia blacks. There were some in Ontario as well, including one who attended the University of Toronto. Only at the end of the nineteenth century did numbers gradually increase, when black workers were brought from Barbados to the coal mines of Sydney, Nova Scotia. During World War I several hundred more West Indians were recruited as labourers, primarily for the Cape Breton mines. Following the War, when returning veterans resumed their jobs, many of these people moved to Toronto and Montreal in search of employment. Montreal was the centre for hiring railway porters, a traditional black occupation in North America. In Toronto too West Indians became porters, bellhops and maids, restricted by prevailing stereotypes to service positions. They shared the neighbourhoods and the general conditions of the existing black communities in those cities, though they did maintain some separate cultural activities. In both Montreal and Toronto, branches of the Universal Negro Improvement Association were founded and sustained largely by West Indian members, with picnics and dances supplementing the political and educational activity. In Sydney, Canada's only African Orthodox Church was established by West Indian immigrants in 1921. These earliest migrants were joined soon after the War by people coming directly from the West Indies, so that by 1921 there were over 1,200 West Indians in Toronto and about 400 in Montreal.

After 1920 migration from the West Indies almost ceased; until after World War II never more than a few dozen came annually to Canada, and in 1941 the

West Indian population was actually smaller than it had been in 1921. Pressures for migration in the West Indies continued, but Canadians did not welcome non-white immigrants. The global racism of the early twentieth century, exhibited in American segregation and European colonial rule over most of the world's non-white peoples, infected Canadian attitudes. Blacks were stereotyped as lazy, sexually over-active, criminally inclined, and genetically programmed for inferior status. This was reflected in Canadian immigration policy, which deliberately excluded non-European people. Opposition Leader Robert Borden declared in 1908 that "the Conservative Party stands for a white Canada"; not to be outdone, the Liberal government introduced more restrictive immigration regulations aimed at preserving Canada for the Northern races. Except when they were specifically wanted to fill a Canadian need, as in the case of the West Indian miners, very few individuals of non-European origin were admitted. It was acknowledged that Canada was underpopulated, and a vigorous campaign was conducted in Europe and the United States to attract thousands of immigrants, but the overcrowded West Indies were not included.

Britain and the United States were more feasible alternatives for West Indians seeking to escape Caribbean conditions. Especially after World War II Britain had a huge demand for unskilled workers, and the Nationality Act of 1948 was designed to attract cheap labour from the overseas colonies. Between 1948 and 1962, when a new Commonwealth Immigration Act was introduced to stem the flow, over 300,000 West Indians migrated to Britain. In the late 1940s thousands went to the United States each year, until the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 imposed a severely restricted annual quota. Canada's participation in the early post-War movement of Caribbean people was more limited, though the five-year period following the War, when the Canadian economy favoured immigration, did see a significant increase in West Indian numbers over previous decades. After the American door was shut in 1952, about 1,000 West Indians began arriving in Canada each year. This increase, though proportionally significant, did not involve large absolute numbers and it did not imply a reversal of Canada's restrictive policies. Despite the post-War

TABLE I: WEST INDIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA, 1900-1979

Year	West Indians	% of Total Canadian Immigration
1900-1909	374	.03
1910-1919	1,133	.06
1920-1929	315	.02
1930-1939	673	.27
1940-1949	2,936	.68
1950-1959	10,682	.69
1960-1969	46,030	3.34
1970-1979	159,216	11.02

TABLE II
PEOPLE OF WEST INDIAN ORIGIN IN CANADA*

	Male	Female	West Indians Total	% of Canadian Population
1911	-	-	1,878	.03
1921	2,444	1,826	4,270	.05
1931	2,450	2,087	4,537	.04
1941	2,219	1,915	4,134	.04
1951	2,090	1,798	3,888	.03
1961	5,815	6,548	12,363	.07
1971	31,255	36,835	68,090	.36
1981	96,615	115,590	212,205	.88

*NOTE: Most observers conclude that official census figures seriously under-represent the number of West Indians in Canada.

demand for labour, Prime Minister Mackenzie King stated in 1947 that immigration policy should exclude those people who would "make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population", and immigration Minister Walter Harris interpreted this undesirable group to include "persons from tropical or sub-tropical countries". A new Immigration Act, passed in 1952 for implementation in 1953, allowed the prohibition of immigrants for reasons of nationality, citizenship, ethnic group and geographical area of origin.

The tradition that immigrants were always admissible to fill a Canadian need allowed small numbers of domestic servants to enter Canada, even during the most restrictive years. This was formally recognized in 1955 with the introduction of the West Indian Domestic Scheme. To be eligible the applicant had to be a single female aged between 18 and 35, in good health, and with a minimum grade eight education. After working as a domestic servant for at least one year, the woman would be granted landed immigrant status and could apply for citizenship after five years in Canada. At first limited to one hundred women annually from Jamaica and Barbados, the scheme expanded both in numbers and in the islands of recruitment. By 1965 a total of 2,690 West Indian women had been admitted under the scheme, more than all the West Indian immigrants who had come to Canada before 1945. Until the immigration policy changes of the 1960s, domestic service was almost the only route for Caribbean immigrants, especially for the unskilled. Most of them, in fact, were not servants before applying; secretaries and clerks, teachers and nurses, as well as the unskilled, took advantage of this opportunity to gain a foothold in Canada.

The life of the West Indian domestics is touchingly described in Austin Clarke's trilogy of novels, *The Meeting Point* (1967), *Storm of Fortune* (1973), and *The Bigger Light* (1975). In Clarke's prose, as in several sociological studies, the domestics are portrayed as isolated and lonely, having limited contacts with white Canadians and relying on a small circle of fellow-servants for social activity during the weekly day off. One survey showed that 93 per cent felt rejected by Canadians and over two-thirds had personally experienced racial

discrimination. Even other West Indians, raised in the status-conscious colonial Caribbean, declined to associate with them. They were surprised to find that they were expected to perform all the domestic chores, including cooking, cleaning and caring for children, since wealthy homes in the West Indies had employed different servants for each category of work. Almost all of them, therefore, left domestic service after the initial one year requirement, and either enrolled in courses to prepare for better jobs or utilized the skills brought from home. With landed immigrant status, they were free to move around Canada and to sponsor their Caribbean relatives for immigration to Canada.

Numerically, the only comparable group of West Indians in Canada consisted of students at Canadian universities. Caribbean students had been coming to Canada on temporary visas at least since the 1920s, and their numbers increased dramatically after World War II. By the 1960s there were several thousand in Canada at any one time, in sufficient concentrations to establish their own student clubs and social circles. Like the domestics, they remained in general unassimilated to the Canadian community, but many applied for landed immigrant status upon graduation. Though at the opposite end of the Caribbean status scale from domestic servants, the students also reported feelings of rejection and experiences of racism.

The attitudes which influenced immigration policy also had an effect on black people living in Canada. Discrimination in employment and housing was common, and until World War II many public facilities in different parts of Canada were off-limits to blacks. There were few blacks in visible positions such as teachers, nurses, policemen or politicians. The West Indian immigrants were not numerous enough to produce a high profile and they tended to blend into the local black population. After the War, black individuals and organizations launched a series of challenges to existing racial distinctions. Canadian immigration policy was attacked for its implicit acknowledgement that there were "superior and inferior races", and written briefs and personal delegations were sent to the federal cabinet. Campaigns were conducted to achieve fair employment practices legislation in several provincial legislatures, while private pressure sought greater employment opportunities in businesses, hospitals and government agencies. This kind of activity began in Canada before the black American movement received headlines for its bus boycotts and freedom rides; the Canadian campaigns were a response to local conditions, and were conducted in a typically Canadian fashion. By 1961 there was a black community awakened to its own rights and articulating a demand for equality, and an increasing awareness among whites that unfavourable circumstances did exist and had to be corrected. But immigration regulations retained their restrictive nature. The overwhelming majority of blacks at that time were Canadian-born, the descendants of American fugitives or of previous West Indian immigrants. There did not seem to be much prospect for any substantial increase in Canada's black population.

III — Recent Immigration

Although little discussion had taken place in public or parliament, there were considerable pressures for immigration reforms by 1962. Employers were de-

manding more skilled workers, and politicians were sensitive to the large "ethnic vote" for whom immigration policy was a concern. Newly independent Third World governments criticized racial restriction in all its forms, and Canada openly associated with them on this issue at Commonwealth meetings. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker was devoted to the concept of a colour-blind Commonwealth and he made a Bill of Rights a cornerstone of his domestic policy. The preamble to that Bill, passed in 1960, declared that Canada rejected discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex. Since discriminatory immigration laws were clearly incompatible with the Bill of Rights and the Prime Minister's declared policies, change was inevitable, and revised immigration regulations were issued in 1962. Section 31 of the new regulations made training, education and skills the main conditions of admissibility, which meant that any suitably qualified person would be considered on his or her own merit without regard to country of origin. Uncertain economic conditions in Canada after 1962 discouraged any immediate increase in immigrant numbers, but there was a profound change in the sources of the immigrants who did arrive. Skilled and professional people from India, Hong Kong and the West Indies were now eligible for entry, and they edged out less-skilled applicants from traditional European sources. In addition, the new rules permitted the deliberate recruitment of specific skills wherever they might be found. Ontario was at the time suffering a shortage of English-speaking teachers and nurses, and it was natural to look to the West Indies to fill those demands. Between 1961 and 1966 over 12,000 West Indians migrated to Canada, a number greater than the entire West Indian population recorded in the 1961 Canadian census.

Greater changes were yet to come. In 1966 a government White Paper recommended expanded immigration within the non-discriminatory principles of 1962. The regulations were amended in 1967 and introduced a "points system" which rationalized the skill-orientation of Canadian immigration policies by assigning specific value to various characteristics such as education, employment prospects, age, health and language. Young, educated West Indians were primed to benefit from these changes, particularly after Canadian immigration offices were opened in Jamaica and Trinidad in 1967 and later in Barbados, Guyana and Haiti. Until that time there were no offices located in the Caribbean to process applications on the spot, a factor which had severely handicapped potential immigrants. West Indian immigrant numbers, gradually increasing annually after 1962, more than doubled from 1966 to 1967 and were to triple again by the mid-1970s. In rank order, the West Indies jumped from fourteenth place to third as a source of Canadian immigration, eventually representing over ten per cent of our total annual intake. The 1971 census showed 68,000 West Indian-born residents in Canada, and the decade of the 1970s saw the arrival of about 140,000 more. In addition, there was the "second stage" migration of West Indians from Britain and elsewhere, who appear in the official statistics as non-West Indian applicants and whose numbers are estimated in the many thousands. By the later 1970s, when renewed restrictions caused immigrant numbers generally to decrease, the Caribbean element was a well established fact in Canadian society.

Several surveys have been conducted to define the primary motivation for Caribbean migration to Canada, and it is apparent that economic and social

mobility is a goal shared by most West Indians who arrive with the expectation that they will enjoy certain benefits in reasonably short order. Many aspire to accumulate sufficient wealth to enable them to return to the Caribbean with their savings and establish a better life at home. Indeed, only a minority are committed at the time of their arrival to remain permanently in Canada. These high expectations are not unreasonable in terms of the qualifications with which most Caribbean immigrants arrive. They have, for example, a younger average age than other immigrants, and their educational and skill background is the highest for any immigrant group. Their percentage of university graduates is double the immigrant average, and they have the lowest percentage of unskilled labourers. Under the terms of the 1967 provisions, West Indians as a group come closest to the desired immigrant to Canada.

Within this generalized profile there is, of course, a great deal of diversity. They come from a variety of territories, each of which has certain unique cultural characteristics. The largest group comes from Jamaica, followed by Trinidad-Tobago, Guyana, Haiti and Barbados. More than twenty other islands and territories are represented, and from any single territory there is a range of class and ethnic backgrounds. Immigration statistics do not specify the colour of an immigrant, only the country of residence when application was made, but surveys and interviews suggest that over 80 per cent of Caribbean immigrants are of African or partially African descent, and most of the remainder are of East Indian ancestry. West Indian Chinese and whites make up a relatively small percentage of the total. The African-descended component is itself a mosaic, with a much higher percentage of fair-skinned or "brown" people than their proportion of the West Indian population at home, since fairer-skinned persons in the West Indies have had greater educational opportunities and are better able to meet Canadian immigration criteria. Especially during the 1970s it was the "brown" middle classes, particularly in Jamaica, who perceived restricted mobility and even political disadvantage and sought a new life in Canada. The point to be emphasized is that West Indians do not constitute a uniform group, nor do they accurately reflect the class and ethnic make-up of their home territories.

The Canada that received these energetic and highly qualified West Indians was much more welcoming than in previous generations. The achievement of political independence in Africa and the Caribbean had discredited the notion that blacks required white supervision or were naturally inferior, and the highly publicized American Civil Rights movement had sensitized white Canadians to the disadvantages suffered by blacks and the absence of any justification for unequal status. In the later 1960s, the Canadian economy was booming and it was acknowledged that Canada needed immigrants with the very qualities possessed by the West Indians. Yet, despite these advantages, West Indians have not always found the land of opportunity they expected. Almost all immigrants suffer a period of downward status dislocation, caused by language difficulties, non-recognition of qualifications, and the general strains of re-establishing themselves in a new society. For West Indians this downward movement has tended to be more pronounced and of longer duration than for other immigrants. Most of them accept jobs which do not exercise their skills fully, and even after seven years in Canada, according to one survey, fewer than half re-

TABLE III: MAJOR SOURCES OF CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS, 1965-1979

	Jamaica	Trinidad & Tobago	Guyana	Haiti	Barbados	St. Vincent	Grenada
Home Population (1980 or 1981 est.)	2,184,000	1,059,825	850,000	5,104,000	246,082	124,000	109,200
1965	1,214	780	609	98	560	117	48
1966	1,407	1,127	628	126	699	185	82
1967	3,459	2,340	736	378	1,181	250	139
1968	2,886	2,419	823	444	821	220	120
1969	3,889	5,631	1,865	550	1,242	361	281
1970	4,659	4,790	2,090	840	853	281	203
1971	3,903	4,149	2,384	989	677	234	187
1972	3,092	2,739	1,976	936	534	178	153
1973	9,363	5,138	4,808	2,178	800	387	352
1974	11,286	4,802	4,030	4,857	790	487	399
1975	8,211	3,817	4,394	3,431	782	350	340
1976	7,282	2,359	3,430	3,061	544	322	314
1977	6,291	1,552	2,472	2,026	634	266	197
1978	3,858	1,190	2,253	1,702	455	194	184
1979	3,213	786	2,473	1,268	293	161	136
TOTAL 1965-1979	74,013	43,619	34,971	22,884	10,865	3,993	3,135

garded themselves as having improved upon their initial entry status. Their divergent educational and skill levels would lead to the expectation that they should be represented across all occupational categories, whereas they are, in fact, concentrated in relatively few employment areas, usually those with a personal service orientation. The qualities and qualifications brought by West Indian immigrants have, up to now, been underutilized by the host society.

Toronto offers most opportunity for skilled and professional workers, and various estimates suggest that over half of Canada's West Indian population is to be found in that city. Reinforcing this tendency is the existence historically of a West Indian core community in Toronto with developed cultural associations and opportunities for small service-oriented businesses. French-speaking Caribbean immigrants, almost all of whom come from Haiti, tend to head for Montreal. Until the late 1960s a small number of highly educated and professional Haitians came to Canada each year, but from 1970 their numbers have increased dramatically and have included a large element of semi- or unskilled workers who have taken employment in the service sector. New community associations for francophone blacks arose in the 1970s, paralleling those which have served anglophone blacks for over half a century. Vancouver, Winnipeg and Halifax attract substantial numbers of Caribbean immigrants, including a high proportion of professionals, though almost every industrial city in Canada has a West Indian population, with the corresponding establishment of social and cultural organizations. Sporting clubs, particularly for soccer and cricket, sustain Caribbean allegiances and maintain regular contact among their members. Their urban situation and physical proximity have encouraged the provision of economic services by West Indian entrepreneurs wherever numbers warrant. West Indian groceries, barbers, hairdressers, real estate agents and health professionals are a part of the urban scene in many large Canadian centres in the 1980s.

Servicing the West Indian community more broadly are several newspapers and magazines, television and radio shows. Toronto's weekly *Contrast* is the largest black newspaper, and with its counterparts in Montreal, Halifax and Ottawa it carries Caribbean news and issues of local concern which are not always reported in the mainstream press. A regular radio program in Toronto and a television program in Montreal reach broad audiences. These media foster a West Indian cultural identity, as do theatre, dance and musical groups which cater to Caribbean tastes and regularly host visiting West Indian performers. Perhaps the chief focus of cultural activity is the Caribana festival, held each August in Toronto. Begun as a centennial project in 1967, in recent years the festival has attracted crowds of over 200,000 to its street parade, picnic and performances. Caribana is a celebration of the West Indian presence in Canada, conducted in the heart of Canada's largest city. No annual ethnic festival is so visible, or has engaged the participation of so many members of the general public. Several other Canadian cities have West Indian components in their annual multicultural festivals. West Indians have been able to transpose many cultural institutions to Canada and have gained widespread recognition from other Canadians. A 1981 survey reported that only 3 per cent of West Indians, the lowest of all ethnic groups included, perceived any problems in maintaining their traditions and customs, and they registered the highest score for the significance

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE OF WEST INDIAN ORIGIN IN CANADA

	Total Number (and %)						Territories
	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia		
1911	417 (22.3)	203 (10.8)	804 (42.8)	236 (12.6)	215 (11.5)	3 (-)	
1921	862 (20.2)	997 (23.4)	1,778 (41.6)	372 (8.8)	257 (6.0)	2 (-)	
1931	673 (15.3)	1,362 (30.0)	1,906 (42.0)	313 (6.9)	279 (6.2)	4 (-)	
1941	590 (14.3)	1,199 (29.0)	1,833 (44.3)	210 (5.1)	293 (7.1)	5 (0.1)	
1951	542 (13.9)	815 (21.0)	1,870 (48.1)	273 (7.0)	384 (9.9)	4 (-)	
1961	537 (4.2)	3,695 (29.9)	6,520 (52.7)	849 (6.8)	749 (6.1)	13 (-)	
1971	810 (1.1)	15,215 (22.4)	44,610 (65.5)	4,810 (7.0)	2,605 (3.8)	50 (-)	
1981	1,350 (0.6)	46,170 (21.8)	143,325 (67.5)	14,595 (6.9)	6,675 (3.2)	80 (-)	

they gave to the survival of their ethnic identity. While it would be inaccurate to define the West Indian population as a unified community, there are numerous characteristics and activities which they share in common, and collectively they represent a vibrant contribution to our modern urban mosaic.

IV — Adaptation To Canada

Canada officially adheres to a policy of cultural pluralism rather than assimilation, implying mutual toleration for a multiplicity of identities coexisting within our society. The roots of Canadian pluralism can be traced to the French-English duality, which established a context for later groups to maintain degrees of cultural autonomy. Patterns of European immigration contributed to this characteristic: immigrants arrived in very large numbers compared to the domestic population, and they often settled in self-contained communities where a distinctive life-style could be fostered. When the federal government articulated its commitment to "multiculturalism" in 1971, it was merely granting official recognition to an historically established fact in Canadian life. But just as the government statement was being made, the migratory patterns were changing. Immigrants from our traditional northern European sources were declining, to be replaced by increasing numbers from southern Europe and the Third World. The physical composition of the Canadian population is changing, and the cultures towards which toleration is extended have multiplied and diversified dramatically beyond the minor variations of northern Europe. Canada's commitment to pluralism is being tested as never before. Visible minorities are more likely to retain distinct cultural characteristics — their visibility reinforces ethnic consciousness and there is less diffusion through intermarriage — and those characteristics appear more alien to the mainstream population. Multiculturalism rejects a demand that immigrants relinquish their specific traits and community identities, but it does not deny that a considerable degree of adaptation must take place on the part both of the immigrant and the host society. Immigrants must be integrated into the political and economic institutions of our free society, and they must be encouraged to participate fully in the advantages our country offers.

There is evidence to suggest that in the case of the West Indians the transition is not proceeding smoothly. A series of studies conducted over the last decade shows that they are among the least likely immigrants to identify with Canada and that they retain primary loyalties to their country of origin for a longer period. Their "sense of belonging", as a 1974 federal document put it, was the lowest for any Third World group. This is reflected in an extremely low rate of citizenship applications from those who are eligible, and negligible participation in politics. To some extent this phenomenon can be explained in terms of the West Indians themselves. The colonial Caribbean did not permit the development of a tradition of democratic participation, and Canadian political issues such as French-English relations or constitutional patriation may seem irrelevant. Furthermore most West Indians arrive with high economic expectations and are ambivalent about the permanence of their commitment to Canada, preferring to test the realities of Canadian life before cutting their ties with home. Their original expectations will affect their own measurement of success in Canada, and their attachment to home will influence the extent of their

identification with this country. Inexpensive charter flights allow regular return visits, even for the non-affluent, permitting a reinforcement of home identity that is not available, for example, to immigrants from India, Hong Kong or eastern Europe. This is, however, merely a partial explanation; the West Indian experience in Canada itself provides further clues to the apparent sense that Canada is not yet "home". More than a dozen surveys held in recent years confirm that the chief factor inhibiting West Indian adaptation to Canada is racial discrimination. Every survey shows a majority, often as high as 90 per cent, who feel that they have personally been discriminated against or know of someone who has, usually in the areas of employment and housing. This perception is reflected in the reports of provincial Human Rights Commissions, where more than half of all cases of discrimination are brought on grounds of race.

One of the first things any immigrant requires on arrival in Canada is shelter, and rejection or difficulty in this area will set the tone for the entire transitional experience. A survey in the early 1970s showed that over 75 per cent of West Indians felt there was housing discrimination in Toronto. That this discrimination is racially motivated is suggested by the fact that darker-skinned "black" West Indians reported almost three times the number of cases as fairer-skinned "brown" West Indians, and over ten times the number reported by white immigrants. The survey also claimed that 80 per cent of West Indians, compared to 35 per cent of other immigrants, perceived discrimination in finding a job or in gaining a promotion. Another survey conducted ten years later showed very little change: 72 per cent of West Indians found employment discrimination "very serious", the highest of the eight immigrant groups included in the study (the next highest was the Chinese, registering a distant 24 per cent). Toronto is not unique in this respect. Similar impressions were presented in a series of "situation reports" on race relations in eleven Canadian cities, compiled in 1982 by the federal Multiculturalism Directorate. Relations with the police form an additional area of concern in many parts of Canada. Surveys indicate that as many as 75 per cent of West Indians feel that the police are less than effective in protecting them from racist abuse, and that the police themselves exhibit discriminatory tendencies. There is the perception that police stereotype all blacks as criminals and are therefore inclined to be more zealous in investigating and charging blacks even for minor offences. Without acknowledging the accuracy of these reports, police forces in several large cities have established ethnic relations squads to improve police effectiveness in minority communities and are developing educational schemes to help the individual policeman understand the backgrounds and the current situations of immigrant Canadians. Of significance here is the fact that the symbols of Canadian law and order are frequently seen, not as supporters, but as further hindrances to successful adaptation.

Less measurable, but still important, are vague feelings of alienation from white Canadians, and the perception that West Indians are not accepted equally. Insults, name-calling, even physical attacks, are claimed to be a frequent experience. Parents report that their children are harassed in the playground, and that teachers "stream" black children into vocational courses on the assumption that they must be intellectually incapable of university preparation. Darker-skinned West Indians report many more such incidents than the lighter-skinned, thus lending credibility to the charge that the absence of acceptability is related

to colour and not just to accent or simple immigrant status. The validity of these perceptions is not the issue: the feeling of rejection contradicts the immigrants' expectations and discourages a sense of belonging in Canada.

Surveys of black opinion are only one means of assessing the existence of discrimination in Canada. Statistical data collected in Toronto in 1979 revealed that West Indian men and women, with median incomes 21 per cent and 35 per cent beneath the majority Canadian median, respectively, were the lowest paid of any ethnic group, and when years of education and experience are taken into account this divergence becomes even more anomalous. The fact that non-West Indians with similar qualifications enjoy higher incomes and job status than West Indians, suggests that the West Indian perception of employment discrimination is not merely the result of a "persecution complex". When white Canadians in 1981 were asked which group suffers most from discrimination, 79 per cent named West Indians, a figure almost identical to the West Indians' own perceptions. A 1977 study attempted to define an "acceptability scale" by testing the willingness of whites to accept certain groups into the family by marriage. Blacks emerged as the least acceptable. A separate study that same year asked a sample of Canadian adults to rank 36 ethnic and religious groups according to their social standing. In both English and French Canada, blacks appeared near the bottom of the list. Awareness of this general situation, combined frequently with personal experience of discrimination, damages the fulfilment of West Indian expectations and their integration into Canadian society. They will tend to date and marry within their own group, and rely on social networks composed of fellow-West Indians. As with all immigrants, West Indians experience insecurity and disorientation on first arriving in Canada, and they require understanding and support. The pace and size of the Canadian urban centre is overwhelming, apartment living is confining, even the climate offers a rude shock. For West Indians there is the additional shock of finding themselves, for the first time, relegated to minority status in a white world that appears unwelcoming. The obvious place to turn for reassurance is the circle of friends and relatives from home.

Patterns of West Indian migration have complicated the adjustment to Canada. It was quite common, until recently at least, for one adult to come first, sending for spouse and children once a home and a job had been acquired. Immigration restrictions which granted easier access for domestic servants, the deliberate recruitment of nurses and teachers, and a general Canadian inclination to categorize certain lower-paid employment opportunities by sex, have meant that this initial immigrant was often a woman. Between 1955 and the later 1970s female immigrants consistently outnumbered males from the Caribbean region. The period required to save enough money to bring the family could extend into many years for the West Indian woman. Meanwhile her children might be in the care of their grandmother, and by the time they came to Canada their mother would be a stranger. Sometimes a new step-parent would have been added to the family, and new siblings. Although economic circumstances continue to require the mother to work outside the home, Caribbean men tend not to share in household chores and the mother is left with double duty to perform. The resulting family frustrations produce personal anxieties which add immeasurably to the usual stresses of the migratory experience. In

the last few years it has become more typical for a complete nuclear family to immigrate together; yet even these people are leaving behind the extended family upon which they relied in the Caribbean for shared labour and mutual support.

The children, already confused, are thrust into a school environment which is very different from home. Accustomed to strict discipline and the provision of "correct" answers, they hesitate to enter classroom discussions or to interpret issues for themselves. Many teachers conclude that the children are "backward", and they may be held back from promotion or otherwise receive negative school reports. Ironically, because they are English-speaking they are expected to understand, and teachers may be less patient than with non-English speaking students. There are, however, sufficient differences in accent and dialect to cause difficulties for West Indian children which are mistakenly attributed to a low ability level. Parents, whose Caribbean background has engendered great respect for teachers, will tend to blame their own children for their allegedly poor performance and will not confront the teacher or seek a correct evaluation of their ability. The most recent arrivals, who have experienced the reformed Caribbean school systems, avoid some of these problems, but for many West Indian families the Canadian school has not allayed a sense of alienation.

Circumstances in Canada encourage West Indians not only to retain their Caribbean cultural traits but to maintain loyalty and identity links to their island of origin. In the Caribbean identity has been very localized, by territory, class and ethnicity, and this insularity and stratification continue in Canada. In larger cities there is a multiplicity of West Indian organizations whose membership is determined by island, and even in smaller Canadian cities there will tend to be separate associations by ethnic origin. Often these organizations regard themselves as being in competition with one another. Although city-wide festivals such as Toronto's Caribana bring them together once a year, for the first generation immigrant — still the majority among West Indians — there is little sense of belonging to a broader West Indian community in Canada. But if there are forces operating for the continuation of island identity, there are increasingly powerful pressures for West Indian unity. That same white Canadian attitude which fails to recognize differences among Caribbean cultures leads to the assumption of uniformity among West Indian immigrants, and being assumed the same means being treated the same. Thus there is created in Canada a common experience which all West Indians share, giving them more cause for a common identity than ever they had back home. White Canadian stereotypes make this general experience into one which includes disadvantage. As one West Indian professional in Montreal remarked, at home he identified himself as middle class and Barbadian, whereas in Canada he was relegated to "Negro" status with all its North American implications. When white Canadians express discriminatory tendencies they do so on the basis of colour, making colour a unifying characteristic for West Indians of African descent and giving them a community of experience with other black Canadians. Even the Haitians, who are distinguishable by language, report strikingly similar experiences to those of their anglophone counterparts.

A realization that disunity reduces group effectiveness has led to the establishment of several broadly-based organizations, most significantly the National

Black Coalition of Canada. Its structure as an umbrella association of athletic, cultural, church and political activist organizations has hindered the NBCC's efforts to speak on behalf of all Canada's blacks, though it constitutes a recognition of common problems and a commitment to mutual action. Moving in a different direction is a Toronto organization known as Caribbean Initiatives, which seeks to establish West Indian-Canadian identity on the basis of culture rather than colour. Even if, as its critics charge, Caribbean Initiatives denies the fundamental importance of skin colour to the kind of experience West Indians share in Canada, it is further evidence that Caribbean immigrants are beginning to acknowledge a mutuality of interest which goes beyond island of origin and which cannot be served adequately by island-based organizations.

Exclusively black or exclusively Caribbean organizations do not imply a rejection of adaptation to Canada; on the contrary, they are seen by their members as a means of ensuring successful integration through group strength. There is every indication that West Indians are desirous of making the adjustment to Canada, and that racial discrimination, which can only be eliminated with white Canadian cooperation, has been the chief barrier until now. While they condemn those Canadian attitudes and practices which perpetuate feelings of alienation, West Indians exhibit a basic faith that Canada will ultimately fulfil its promise. Asked if they would encourage relatives and friends to move to Canada, 70 per cent of a 1981 West Indian sample responded positively, compared to 66 per cent of South Asians and only 50 per cent of European immigrants. In the same sample, two-thirds of the young people felt that their colour would not affect the attainment of their personal goals, for they expected discrimination to decline in the near future. Because so many West Indians in Canada are themselves immigrants, no surveys have yet been able to trace changes in adaptation over the generations, but personal interviews with youths born or educated in this country clearly show that their identification is with Canada. Indeed, a recurrent resentment is expressed against white Canadians who assume that because they are black they must be immigrants, and they are constantly annoyed at being asked which island they are from.

Even for their immigrant parents, there has been a gradual change over time. Surveys have revealed that satisfaction with the migratory experience increases with the length of stay. Perception of discrimination declines, similarly, with longer residence in Canada. These phenomena may in part be explained by the possibility that the most dissatisfied have returned to the West Indies or moved elsewhere (Canada keeps no emigration statistics to test this possibility), and that those who stayed have amended their expectations and/or grown used to discriminatory treatment. But whatever the causes, the perceptible improvement in West Indian feelings has significance for eventual identification with Canada. An exile mentality has not been overcome entirely — most adult West Indians interviewed in 1982-83 held to the dream of returning home one day — but each successive holiday visit to the Caribbean is acknowledged as a lesson on how Canadian they are becoming. The simple passage of time, then, can be seen as one factor in the eventual adaptation of West Indians to Canada. There remains, however, a more important factor, and that is the adjustment of the Canadian host society to the new realities presented by large-scale Third World immigration.

V — Comparative Perspective

West Indians share characteristics and circumstances with many immigrant groups, but prior to the 1960s the most meaningful comparisons were with the indigenous black community in Canada. Not all West Indians in Canada are black, though until the major influx of the 1960s almost all of them were; even since then, over 80 per cent are of African or partially African descent. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries West Indians arrived in very small numbers, and when faced with inhospitable attitudes from whites it was natural for them to gravitate towards Canadians of their own colour. Apart from the Maroons, and to some extent the university students here temporarily, West Indians tended to affiliate with the black Canadian population, sharing most of their experiences.

Canada's community of free blacks dates from the American Revolution, when over 3,500 black Loyalists were settled in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. They were joined during the War of 1812 by more than 2,000 others, usually known as the black Refugees. Both groups established communities on the fringes of larger white settlements, where they existed in a condition of economic marginality but where circumstances encouraged the development of an independent life and culture. Denied access to white institutions by the discriminatory practices of the times, the blacks created their own churches, schools and social organizations. A similar development occurred in nineteenth-century Ontario, where Underground Railroad fugitives tended to congregate in concentrated settlements and to form separate institutions to serve the needs of a community numbering over forty thousand persons. British Columbia, too, had a significant number of black American fugitives by the 1850s, though it was not until about 1910 that the Prairies received their first large group of blacks from the United States.

It usually shocks modern Canadians to know that legally-segregated schools existed in Nova Scotia and Ontario, that white Christian churches discouraged black membership, that certain beaches, parks, restaurants, hotels, theatres and even cemeteries refused admission to blacks. White Canadians shared, in fact, most of the attitudes and practices of their northern United States neighbours, though in Canada, except for the schools, segregation was not given the sanction of law. Ironically this apparent advantage had its negative consequences. In the strictly segregated United States there was, for example, a full range of black educational institutions, right up to the university level, and there were black lawyers and physicians and teachers trained to service the black population. In Canada blacks were relegated to the margins of society, theoretically equal but fixed in a syndrome of poverty and inferior education which could not produce a strong middle-class element. Blacks were out of sight and out of mind for most white Canadians, an "invisible" minority despite their physical distinction, occupying the unskilled and service employment ranks and living a separate existence.

The earliest West Indians fitted into this society in many ways. Most were working-class — miners, railway porters, domestic servants — and by background as well as by prevailing stereotypes they found themselves in the same employment patterns as black Canadians. In urban centres such as Toronto and

Montreal they sought accommodation in existing black districts, attended black churches, and joined local black organizations. Some specifically West Indian associations were formed, but numerically West Indians were a minority within the black population and the distinctions they maintained were minor compared to the experiences they shared with other blacks. Because of immigration restrictions between the wars, few new West Indians arrived to inject a continuous stream of Caribbean influence; the original immigrants were growing older, and their children identified as black Canadians. All this changed with the immigration reforms of the 1960s. Although a few exceptionally-qualified West Indians had come before 1962, thereafter the highly educated, upwardly mobile black immigrant became the rule. A divergence occurred between West Indians and other blacks, including previous generations of Caribbean immigrants. Numerically West Indians began to dominate the Canadian-born, eventually up to ten-fold. Their recent migration meant the retention of Caribbean culture, they are almost exclusively urban, and despite a degree of occupational concentration they are employed at all economic levels. They can see very little in common between themselves and indigenous blacks, at least not on first acquaintance, beyond the coincidence of colour. Professional middle-class West Indians, indeed, have expressed impatience at being categorized with the disadvantaged class of black Canadians. The latter, for their part, have uttered resentments against the West Indians' alleged airs of superiority, and they have occasionally felt distressed by their submergence in a flood of black immigrants. Only in the Maritimes do the Canadian-born still outnumber immigrant blacks. By their numbers West Indians now gain most of the attention, including government and multicultural funding, so that the Canadians find it more difficult to make their own problems known. Just as they were beginning to mobilize themselves and to confront white society in the 1950s and 60s, their impact was diluted by a mass of new blacks whose concerns were quite different.

In terms of their education and ambitions, residential and occupational patterns, adjustment to new employment and educational standards, the West Indian immigrants of the past fifteen or twenty years share most of their characteristics with other Third World immigrants who have arrived during the same period. Yet even within this spectrum of colour the darker West Indians face more discrimination, are less likely to achieve economic rewards commensurate with their qualifications, and consequently feel less commitment to Canada. Their destiny is more closely linked with black Canadians after all, as centuries-old stereotypes are imposed on them; a community of interest exists, and this realization is slowly becoming apparent in both groups. At the same time, West Indians are doing a great deal to destroy the old stereotypes and to break the barriers which have restricted black Canadians. Coming from a black-majority society, West Indians are more sensitive to discriminatory treatment and readier to challenge it under human rights legislation. They bring the existence of discrimination forcefully into the public view, and white Canadians, for the most part, are responding positively. By their very numbers and their urban visibility West Indians have established the black presence firmly in the minds of all Canadians. Blacks are no longer "out of sight".

Qualitatively, as well as quantitatively, the West Indians are having an impact. There are now black policemen in most larger cities, black teachers and

professors in predominantly white schools and universities, black nurses and doctors in our hospitals, blacks in our television commercials and department store catalogues. The image that a black is suitable only for menial and service positions has been undermined. And while these developments are influencing white attitudes, they are having an effect on black Canadians that is inspirational. The black youngster now has black role models in every field of endeavour. Where the railway porter was once the height of ambition, it is now feasible to aspire to become a business, professional or political leader. The indigenous black "movement" of the 1950s and 60s was admittedly disrupted by the West Indian arrival, as attention was deflected to specifically immigrant issues, but today there is a numerically powerful and articulate black population able to confront the remaining vestiges of racial disadvantage. White Canadians have rarely been ideological racists: discrimination has been allowed to persist because of ignorance and comfortable habit. It is no longer comfortable, and the ignorance is being overcome. West Indians cannot be given the entire credit for this development, but their presence and their activities have injected an urgency into the agenda. The final result will depend on the efforts of all Canadians.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Convenient introductions to Caribbean history are provided by Philip Sherlock, *West Indian Nations: A New History* (Kingston, 1973) and Franklin Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (New York, 1978). More detail can be found in Gordon K. Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* (London, 1968); J.H. Parry and P.M. Sherlock, *A Short History of the West Indies* (London, 3rd ed., 1971); David Lowenthal, *West Indian Societies* (London, 1972); and Irene Hawkins, *The Changing Face of the Caribbean* (Bridgetown, 1976). An excellent impression of life in the pre-independence Caribbean is given in Austin Clarke's autobiography, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* (Toronto, 1980).

Introductions to West Indian history in Canada, set in the context of studies of the broader black Canadian community, are given in Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (Montreal, 1971), and more briefly in James Walker, *A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students* (Ottawa, 1980). J.M. Christiansen *et al.*, *West Indians in Toronto: Implications for Helping Professionals* (Toronto, [1980]), is a valuable and sensitive account of the background, adjustment and problems of the Caribbean immigrant. James Walker and Pat Thorvaldson, *Identity: The Black Experience in Canada* (Toronto, 1979), has a large selection of interviews with West Indians who describe their own experiences and reactions to Canada. Similarly personal and anecdotal are William Doyle-Marshall, ed., *Cultural Crisis: a look at cultural impacts in Canada, the Caribbean and England* (Toronto, 1981), and Joyce C. Fraser's autobiography, *Cry of the Illegal Immigrant* (Toronto, 1980). The novels of Barbados-born Austin Clarke give intimate and entirely realistic portraits of West Indian life in Canada. Especially to be recommended is his trilogy on a domestic servant and her circle of friends, *The Meeting Point* (Toronto, 1967), *Storm of Fortune* (Boston, 1973), and *The Bigger Light* (Boston, 1975). Two graduate theses deserve consultation: Hilary Lawson, "Black Immigration to Canada, 1783-1975" (MA, University of Waterloo, 1979) and Subhas Ramcharan, "The Adaptation of West Indians in Canada" (PhD, York University, 1974). Paul Dejean, *Les Haitiens au Québec* (Montreal, 1978) is the most readily available account of the Haitian immigrants. It demonstrates that despite the obvious differences in historical and linguistic background, the Haitian migratory experiences, adjustment patterns and developments in Canada closely parallel those for anglophone West Indians.

A variety of surveys and sociological studies give a wealth of information relating to the age, sex, education, employment, income, residential accommodation, cultural activities and attitudes of West Indian immigrants. The most current published material is to be found in the University of Toronto Centre for Urban and Community Studies, "Ethnic Pluralism in an Urban Setting" (Toronto, 1981), which consists of an introductory volume and four separate studies by Raymond Breton, Jeffrey Reitz *et al.*, Warren E. Kalbach and Wsevolod Isajiw. Information on racial discrimination is included, though the most complete explorations of this topic are provided by Wilson Head in *The Black Presence in the Canadian Mosaic: A Study of Perception and the Practice*

of Discrimination against Blacks in metropolitan Toronto (Toronto, 1975), and *Adaptation of Immigrants: Perceptions of Ethnic and Racial Discrimination* (Toronto, 1981). The eleven “situation reports” on race relations across Canada, commissioned by the federal Multiculturalism Directorate in 1982, may be consulted in local offices of the Secretary of State.



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