



Immigration

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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We aren't having enough babies in Canada!

Our birth rate has decreased over the years and we have realized that in order to sustain this country we will need to increase immigration numbers.

I find it interesting that some people are upset about this and feel threatened that society will be changed significantly. They seem to forget that if we go back two or three generations, almost every family in Canada was of immigrant status.

My paternal grandfather is one of my heroes. He was placed in Dr. Barnardo's Home for Boys in England when he was six years of age. For the next four years he was "prepared" for Canada through academic studies and work in an orchard. At the age of ten years, he bid farewell to his mother and travelled in the bottom of a ship to Montreal

Grandpa stated that his name and age were written on a sign that hung by string around his neck. When the Immigration officer asked the boy ahead of him about his plans, the boy said "I'm going to be a farmer". When it was grandpa's turn to answer the same questions he said "I guess I'll be a farmer too".

The next leg of the journey was by train to Wolseley, Saskatchewan. In a style similar to *Anne of Green Gables* vintage, a man met grandpa at the train station and took him home. He was allowed to rest that day and then, without having ever seen a cow in his life, was sent out to look after the herd

Grandpa never saw his family again. He stated that he never had a home until he married my grandmother. He lived until he was 95 years of age

After grandpa died, we found a scribbler with his history written by hand in the safety deposit box. One of my favourite quotes was "When you plant a sapling in a bluff, it is protected but when you plant the same sapling alone in the middle of the prairie, it is buffeted by the winds and grows strong".

In one way or another, most of us are immigrants in Canada. Our families have been planted in the prairies and have grown strong because of the elements

Life can be very difficult. I wonder how we would have reacted if we had to face not only the trials of life but also rejection from those who had come before us? Perhaps we could re-examine our attitudes and instead of being threatened by the changes associated with immigration, instead be mentors to those who face the challenges of transition.

Grandpa was a wonderful example for our family because of his persistence and strong faith. Who might make the same type of comments about you?