

TOPIC: Results of the Great Irish Famine

AIM: Should Canada and the United States have restricted Irish immigration during the famine years?

Standards: United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Language Arts (3).

Do Now Activity: Read the excerpt from the letter from the Canadian Parliament to Great Britain and answer the question.

Motivational Activity: The Statue of Liberty in New York harbor holds up a symbolic lamp to welcome new immigrants to the United States. But today, many people call for restrictions on immigration. There were tighter restrictions in the past, especially from 1924-1965. Do you think new immigrants should be welcomed or barred from entry? Why?

Activity: During the Great Irish Famine large numbers of Irish immigrants entered the United States and Canada. Read and discuss the letter from the Canadian Parliament to Great Britain.

Key Questions:

Why is Canadian Parliament concerned about the large number of new immigrants from Ireland and Great Britain?

In your opinion, is their primary concern for the new immigrants? Explain.

Activity: Read and discuss the reports by the staff at the Gross Isle, Quebec quarantine station .

Key Questions:

According to the report by Dr. Douglas, what percentage of the passengers on the ships from Ireland either died or are severely ill?

According to Mr. Buchanan, why do people on board fall ill so quickly?

Why is Mr. Buchanan concerned about what will happen in the future?

Summary Question: Did the United States and Canada have a responsibility to open their doors to Irish immigrants during the Great Irish Famine? Explain.

Application: Does the United States have a responsibility to open its doors to refugees from war and natural disasters today?

Homework: Write a letter to your local Congressman. In the letter, explain your view on the question: Does the United States have a responsibility to open its doors to refugees from war and natural disasters today?

ACTIVITY SHEET: Should Irish immigration be restricted?

A) In 1847, the Canadian Parliament appealed to Great Britain to restrict immigration from Ireland and Great Britain.

The arrangements for the reception of the sick at Grosse Isle, the quarantine station, have proved wholly inadequate to the unexpected emergency; the entire range of buildings intended for the use of emigrants generally, at the station, have been converted into hospitals, and are still insufficient for the numerous and increasing sick. While the people of the province are most desirous to welcome to the colony all those of their fellow-subjects who may think it proper to emigrate from the parent country, we are convinced that a continued emigration of a similar character to that which is now taking place, is calculated to produce a most injurious effect upon our prosperity. We beseech (beg) your Majesty not to permit the helpless, the starving, the sick and diseased, unequal and unfit as they are to face the hardships of a settler's life, to embark for these shores, which if they reach, in too many instances only to find a grave.

Question Why is Canadian Parliament concerned about the large number of new immigrants from Ireland and Great Britain?

B) Reports from the staff at Grosse Isle, Quebec quarantine station in 1847.

Dr. Douglas: Every vessel bringing Irish passengers has lost many by fever and dysentery on the voyage, and has arrived here with numbers of sick. Seventeen vessels have recently arrived. The number of passengers with which these vessels left port was 5,607; out of these 260 died on the passage, and upwards of 700 have been admitted to hospital, or are being treated on board their vessels, waiting vacancies to be landed.

Mr. Buchanan: Out of the 4,000 or 5,000 emigrants that have left Grosse Isle since Sunday, at least 2,000 will fall sick somewhere before three weeks are over. They ought to have accommodation for 2,000 sick at least in Montreal or Quebec, as all the passengers are half dead from starvation and want before embarking; and the least bowel complaint, which is sure to come with change of food, finishes them without a struggle. Hot weather will increase the evil.

Questions

- 1- According to the report by Dr. Douglas, what percentage of the passengers on the ships from Ireland either died or are severely ill?
- 2- According to Mr. Buchanan, why do people on board fall ill so quickly?
- 3- Why is Mr. Buchanan concerned about what will happen in the future?