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Happy Easter!



British Home Child Group International

Mrs. Joyce by Sandra Joyce

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The Hon. Mrs. Ellen Joyce - Photo courtesy
Edwardian Ladies & Imperial Power

One of the lesser known groups that emigrated women and children from Great Britain to the colonies was the British Women's Emigration Association (BWEA) run by the Hon. Ellen Joyce. The majority of emigrants coming to Canada through this organization were single or widowed women, some with children, who had decided to better their situations. Some Home Children and workhouse children were also placed through this organization.

In her philanthropic career, Mrs. Joyce was with a variety of organizations including the Girl's Friendly Society and the United Englishwomen's Emigration Association before co-founding the BWEA. She was with the BWEA from 1909 to 1919.

The wife of Anglican Reverend James Gerald Joyce, Mrs. Joyce believed that there was a surplus of women in the UK while the colonies had a large surplus of eligible men. This was one of the reasons why she thought the women who emigrated had a chance of bettering their lives. Also, she was a strong advocate of strengthening the British Empire by adding British women to the colonies' populace. The women on the executive of BWEA agreed.

Miss Grace Lefroy, Honorary Secretary of the organization and niece of Sir John Henry Lefroy, was enthusiastic that Canada was the best country for female emigrants, especially for those of the

lower middle class who possessed 'grit' and the necessary work ethic for success. In an article from 1908, she said, "People who emigrated to Canada ought to have a cheerful, contented spirit and not think they knew better than the natives of the land. That spirit only provoked the Canadians who were otherwise kind and hospitable and made them not willing to help such newcomers. No-one who would work in Canada was despised but the man who would not work was always despised."

Once selected by the BWEA for emigration, the money for their overseas passage was loaned to the emigrants after signing a contract stipulating that they would remain in their placements until the loan was repaid. Once approved, the women and girls' passage was booked, their accommodation arranged and their placements found for them.

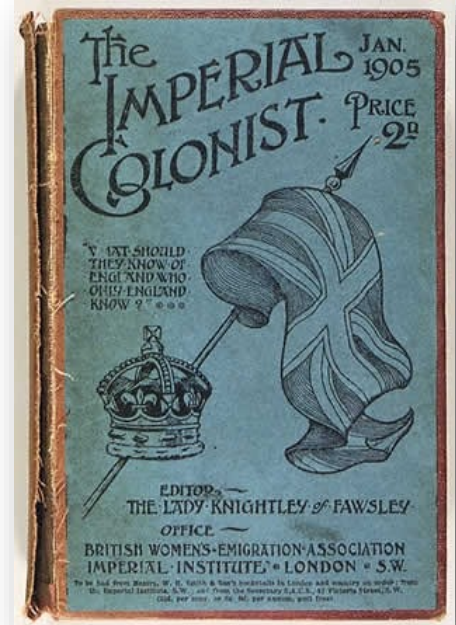
The safety of those going to Canada and Australia was of importance to the BWEA. There were two hostels, one in Liverpool and one in London that the young women could temporarily stay in while they awaited their departure. A matron accompanied them on their voyage to their Canadian Receiving Homes run by the YMCA and the Girl's Friendly Society, among others. The women and girls were allowed to stay for a free 24-hour period after which they were expected to begin work.

Mrs. Joyce *continued*

The BWEA emigrants were encouraged to go to more remote communities, especially in the west, where they could overcome the more class distinct areas such as the larger established cities. However, it seems like the majority were placed in Ontario especially as the Canadian Manufacturers Society were willing to employ the women and girls sent by the BWEA.

A Colonial Training Home was also opened in Shropshire where women could learn the domestic duties expected in Canada such a milking, dairy work, kitchen and household duties over a three-month period for a small sum.

The emigrants were encouraged to return to the Receiving Homes to get help in changing their situations once they had fulfilled their loan obligation. All in all, hundreds of emigrants were helped by the BWEA to come to Canada as 'protected emigrants' and the vast majority stayed in their adopted country.



The Female Middle-Class Emigration Society (FEMCS) by Sandra Joyce



Another Emigration Society that focussed on helping women and girls leave the UK, was founded by Maria Rye in 1861 before she turned her attention to emigrating Home. Industrial School and Workhouse children.

By 1883, the Earl of Shaftesbury was President of FEMCS and his main purpose was promoting the emigration of educated middle class women. Whether single, widowed or daughters of poor gentlemen or professional men who needed to support themselves, it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to earn a livelihood in Britain. According to an article in an 1883 Leeds newspaper, Great Britain was unable to provide enough employment for female workers in this category whereas the opportunities of being employed in the colonies were much greater.

The Society regularly called on the public to provide donations to help with their initial passage and accommodations. As with the British Women's Emigration Association, they loaned the money for the ship's voyage to the women and girls, requiring it to be paid back within two years and four months. Before approving the loan, the FEMCS required a testimonial letter proving their education, character and ability to adapt to new situations and securities had to be provided for the money borrowed.

After approving the loan, arrangements were made for the passage, a letter of introduction was provided and connections made. According to the FEMCS, this method of emigrating was very adept at securing positions for the women and girls shortly after their arrival in the colony. Some were hired as governesses or housekeepers as they were educated and practical.

The success that this program had was largely due to the higher wages the women and girls received, as well as living a freer, more varied life. Their employers were also deemed to be kinder and more hospitable than in the Mother Country, according the Society's Honourable Secretaries Jane E. Lewin and Emma Brooke .

Quarrier Boys Head for Canada by Sandra Joyce



1928 BOYS' CANADIAN PARTY AT FAIRKNOWE.

The spring season at William Quarrier's Orphan Homes of Scotland (OHS) was always marked with excitement as a group of child migrants was getting ready to emigrate to Canada. As they left the children's village to embark upon the adventure of their lifetimes, the children were sent off with cheers and song.

In 1928, the official newsletter of the OHS, called the Narratives of Facts, notes that for the first time children were interviewed and examined at the Bridge-of-Weir home by a Canadian Government Emigration Agent, a chief female officer and a medical officer. This was a big change from the previous method, where the medical examinations were made upon reaching a Canadian port.

The OHS lauded this action initiated by the Dominion of Canada as it avoided any little emigrants from being rejected at the port of entry and having to face the long voyage back to Scotland. This, they continued, had scarcely ever happened to children sent by the Orphan Homes of Scotland.

The 30 boys emigrating in 1928 were accompanied by the Supervisor of the OHS' Receiving Home in Canada, Mr. Winters, like many others before them. They arrived safely on the 4th of April.

The vacancies opened up by the boys leaving, were quickly filled and included two young children in Canada born of a bigamous marriage, children saved from the poorhouse and a 'bright wee coloured boy, whose mother struggled to maintain'.

The children at the Village certainly attended Easter services at the Mount Zion church on the grounds of the village and there were Easter school holidays. However, there was no mention of the trappings of modern day Easter: an egg hunt, chocolate bunnies and candy. Spring weather was the best Easter gift they could receive.



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