



White Women's Labour Law Historical Document Collection

Note to Students

Working with primary documents is one of the most challenging tasks that historians undertake. As you read through these documents it is important for you to remember the type of text you are working with. In most cases, these documents were not written to provide you with information. As such, these documents need to be interpreted. You will need to read them carefully and to ask yourself questions about who wrote them, when, and why. You will also need to consider whether the author is a reliable or credible source of information. In order to help you with this task, each document is prefaced with a very brief background statement as well as some guiding questions.

DOCUMENT 1

This article, which was published in a Regina newspaper after the passage of the White Women's Labour Law, gives insight into the "moral" justifications given for the law and other anti-Chinese legislation in this period. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *How are Chinese-Canadians described in this article? What does this tell historians about the Reverend's view of Chinese people? What are the solutions proposed by the Reverend, who sent the letter to be published? Based on that, what can we infer are his primary concerns?*
2. *Who was this appeal written for? What does this document tell us about the Reverend and his audience's views of women?*

"Shocking Fate of White Girls." *The Morning Leader*, September 9, 1912.

SHOCKING FATE OF WHITE GIRLS

EMPLOYMENT OF WHITE WOMEN BY ORIENTALS IS CASE FOR SOCIAL REFORMERS

MONTREAL, Sept. 4. – The employment of white female labor by Chinese is a matter dealt with in a communication received by Rev. T. E. Bourke, Secretary of the United Methodist Social and Moral Reform Committees of this city from Rev. T. Albert Moore, general secretary of the Social and Moral Reform Department throughout Canada. Dr. Moore

forwarded a copy of a letter written by a prominent citizen of Saskatoon in which the writer refers to this matter of female labor in Chinese establishments as constituting a grave moral peril.

Meet Sad Fate

“Through the three prairie provinces and British Columbia,” he says, “these Oriental almond-eyed anthropoids own a large proportion of our eating houses, and are found working side by side with white women in almost all out hotels and restaurants. In Western Canada our sisters, even our mothers, are working under these harpies and with them for sixteen and sometimes as many as 18 hours a day. To my certain knowledge many of them afterwards go down into the underworld to suffer a fate worse than death. You who make a business of combatting social evils must take this one into consideration speedily. Each day’s delay means scores of Canadian women lost to decency, and shames our country in the eyes of all moral nations.”

Rev. T. E. Bourke is of the opinion that social reformers should face the question of encouraging Chinamen to bring their wives by lowering the tax or barring them altogether. He told a story of having a Chinaman come to him some months ago with a fine looking English-speaking girl to be married. He did not perform the marriage and both parties left in great disappointment.

So far as the Province of Saskatchewan is concerned legislation has already been enacted by the government prohibiting employment of white women by Orientals.

DOCUMENT 2

This is another Regina newspaper article published around the time of the passage of the first White Women’s Labour Law. The first iteration of the law targeted Japanese people as well as Chinese. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *Japanese immigrants were removed from the act the following year. Why might this have been?*
2. *What is the response of the Chinese restaurant owner to the law, and how does he think that the Chinese population will need to respond?*

“Japanese Consul General in Regina.” *The Morning Leader*, May 14, 1912.

JAPANESE CONSUL GENERAL IN REGINA

INTERVIEWS ATTORNEY-GENERAL WITH REGARD TO NEW LABOR LAW

Cr. Yade, the Japanese Consul-General at Vancouver, was a visitor to the city over Saturday and Sunday. The object of his visit was to interview the Attorney-General in respect to the employment of white labor by Orientals put through at the last session of the legislature.

At present Regina has no Japanese. The Consul-General, however, pointed out that under the act it would not be possible for a Japanese merchant to open an office in the city and employ a white girl as a stenographer.

The Attorney-General promised to take the matter into careful consideration.

Don't know of Sun's Coming.

No official notification has been received by any of the local Chinese in respect to the proposed visit of Dr. Sun Yat Sen¹, which is announced in a dispatch from Moose Jaw.

One of the Chinese here expects that something will come soon from official headquarters at Canton, China, re the new provincial act forbidding the employment of white girls in Chinese places of business.

Mah Po, who has the King George restaurant in the city, said yesterday:

“I have been put to many inconveniences through the workings of the new act, and although it may seem unruly to fight the act as the Chinese will have to do, I am thoroughly in sympathy with their movement for there is no reason why we should be deprived of the right to employ white girls when we cannot have our own women here to act as waitresses. What Regina is likely to get in the near future is a Chinese Consul who will look after the interests of his countrymen in Saskatchewan.”

DOCUMENT 3

This article was published in a Regina newspaper during the time of Yee Clun's application for a license to hire white women. It concerns the response of various women's groups in Regina to his application. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *What is the threat posed by the hiring of white women by Chinese men, according to the majority of women in these organizations? What language is used to describe them?*
2. *Why did some women disagree with the view of the majority?*

“Women object to Yee Clun's application.” The Morning Leader, August 13, 1924.

WOMEN OBJECT TO YEE CLUN'S APPLICATION

Delegations of Woman's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) and Women's Labour League to Interview Council

Resolutions expressing disapproval of the recent request of Yee Clun, proprietor of the Exchange Grill Café, to be allowed to employ white girls, were passed at meetings held yesterday by the Women's Labor League and the executive of the three Regina W.C.T.U. branches. Both will send delegates to the city council meeting next Tuesday, to express their views.

According to views expressed at the meeting of the executives of the Northside, Central and West End W.C.T.U., held last night at the home of Mrs. Robert Sinton, it would not be in the best interests of the young womanhood of the city to grant the request of the restaurateur. It was stated that experience in other cities, notably Montreal and New York, strongly indicated that undesirable conditions were apt to arise.

¹ Sun Yat-sen was the founding father of the Republic of China.

Cases had been known, it was stated, where girls employed in Chinese restaurants had been murdered. One member had been approached by a man who refused to give his name, but said that experience in Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, where white girls were employed in Chinese establishments, turned out to be a warning. Instances were also cited of girls marrying their Chinese employers, but the feeling of the meeting was that intermarriage of the races should not be encouraged. "Though I'd much rather marry some chinaman than some white men," one lady protested.

Sympathy for Chinese

There were a few expressions of sympathy with the Chinese, the feeling being that they were virtually prevented from having wives and home life in this country, it was unjust to frown on their marriage with white girls. None the less, there was no desire to see the practice common, or make it easier by allowing white girls to come into close contact with Chinese. It was not considered that in opposing their employment in restaurants, they were in any way injuring the chances of the girls to gain employment. There was other work to be had which was honest and less fraught with danger. The council will be urged to safeguard the girls of the city by turning down the petition when it comes up for discussion. Members of the W.C.T.U. will be present to give statistics and specific reasons why this course of action is advisable. In case the application is granted they urge that an age limit be specified.

DOCUMENT 4

In addition to provincial and federal laws, Chinese Canadians were faced with legal discrimination at the municipal level too. This article from a Moose Jaw paper discusses a newly proposed tax placed on the city's laundries. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *What were the accusations raised against the Chinese laundrymen, and justifications given for the new law?*
2. *How do the justifications and reasons of the business owners compare with those of the moralists (Documents 1 and 3)?*
3. *How did the Chinese laundrymen respond?*

"Chinese Think Laundry Tax is Too High." *The Moose Jaw Evening Times*, February 21, 1914.

CHINESE THINK LAUNDRY TAX IS TOO HIGH

Regina, Feb. 21. – On behalf of the owners and employees of the many local Chinese laundries, J. A. Cross, with the Chinese interpreter Alex Heytee, appeared before the Health and Public Safety Committee of the City Council on Thursday afternoon to ask what the committee's intentions are in imposing new regulations on the Chinese laundries.

It will be remembered that about three weeks ago the managers of both the stream laundries in the city, in interviews with a reporter, stated that they thought the competition of the Chinese laundries unfair. Inasmuch as the steam laundries were required to live up to a number of stringent laws and regulations while the Chinese were

practically allowed to do as they pleased. At that time, both men told the reporter that the steam laundries would make representation to the City Council in the near future to have the matter adjusted.

Basis of Complaint

In their interviews the managers of the steam laundries said that the Chinese laundries were very unsanitary, as the inmates used them for working, eating, and sleeping in; that many of the Chinese laundries were operated 365 days in each year and about 18 hours a day; that they did not have to pay a large enough business tax, and that they were taking away employment from about 300 white people who would work in the steam laundries if it were not for the Chinese competition. Since these interviews were given and printed the manager of the Regina Steam Laundry has written a letter to the city officials, and this was read at yesterday's meeting of the committee. The writer asked the city to impose a business tax of say \$500 per year on all laundries operating in the city, whether small or large, to make them comply with the same rules and regulations as the steam laundries.

Thinks Fee Too high

Mr. Cross, speaking for his client, Mr. Heytee, said he thought that \$500 would be rather extreme, and also unfair ... He did not think there should be any discrimination between men in the same business.

After Mr. Cross had been heard the committee discussed the matter briefly and referred it back to the Civic Health Department for investigation. All seemed to be of the opinion that the question should be gone into thoroughly and more power be given the Health Department to inspect the Chinese laundries.

Dr. Bow stated that he expected to have a clause in his new by-law which would cover the situation, and the matter was accordingly left with him.

DOCUMENT 5

In 1924, a year following the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, debate continued as to its desirability and whether it should be continued or repealed. This document is from the debate on the merits of the law. It is an excerpt from the argument of MP A. W. Neil against allowing Chinese immigration. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *Why does Neil believe that Chinese immigration needs to be barred, and Chinese people denied the right to vote?*
2. *What are the stereotypes and racist narratives used to justify this?*

MP Neil's argument against allowing Chinese immigration, July 11, 1924, House of Commons

Dominion of Canada. *Official report of Debates of Parliament: Third Session-Fourteenth Parliament.* Vol. 5. Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1924.

In this matter, as in other matters in the light of diplomacy and of history, we will either be going forward or going back. If we desire to go forward now is the proper time to do it.

If we go back the time will come when the North American continent will be dominated by the yellow race...

At present these races are not allowed to vote, but it was only last year that an hon. Member of this House – not a crank, not a theorist, but a man of repute and standing in his profession – urged when speaking on this question that Orientals should be allowed votes in this country. Once you concede that and you are opening the door, and opening it widely, to a great many other things, because the Orientals will use their votes in one settled direction to increase immigration of their people. It will not be next year, it will not be five years – but suppose you found Orientals voting, then it will not be seventy-five or a hundred years before they will be in control on this continent which is so eminently suited to accommodate their enormous population... a peaceful penetration perhaps by a more virile nation, certainly by a more numerous and more prolific one, one accustomed to a lower standard of living.- the dominance of that race once accomplished will be forever.

...Once let in the white nations of this world be dominated by the yellow and the black and the brown races, inevitably, as night follows day it follows that our white civilization will pass away and be replaced by an oriental civilization with all that it implies. We will go back thousands of years to the time when you will find tyrants ruling over peoples who lived in a state of semi-slavery, degradation and misery. That is oriental civilization and that is what we may be heading for if we do not take the right steps... the preservation of our civilization depends upon the domination of the white races over the coloured races of the world.

DOCUMENT 6

This newspaper cartoon was printed in the February 8th 1910 issue of the Vancouver Daily province, two days before Chinese New Year. Vancouver was both home to the largest Chinese Canadian population in Canada, and a hotbed for anti-Chinese sentiment from wider Canadian society. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. How is the Chinese population presented? What stereotypes are on display?
2. What was the effect of images like this? What was the intention of their publication?

Political Cartoon In Vancouver Daily Province, Feb 8 1910

“Chinese New Year Begins Tonight,” Vancouver Daily Province, February 8, 1910.



DOCUMENT 7

This newspaper article was published in a Regina paper before the passage of the White Women's Labour Law. It concerns efforts by a white neighborhood to have a Chinese laundry removed. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *Based on this text, what can we infer about the attitudes of the "citizens," and the author of the article, towards Chinese-Canadians?*
2. *How does the city government respond? What effect would it have on the laundry and the people who owned it?*

"Bylaws like Piecrust Made to be Broken." *The Morning Leader*, October 12, 1911.

BYLAWS LIKE PIECRUST MADE TO BE BROKEN

BUT MAYOR MCARA THINKS THEY SHOULD BE ENFORCED – CITIZENS OBJECT TO LAUNDRY

A number of citizens have complained of the establishment of a Chinese laundry at 1939 Cornwall Street, right in the heart of a good residential section, and the Fire, Light and Power Committee took up the matter at their meeting yesterday.

A report was read from the City Solicitor, stating that the city bylaws contained no clauses which would effect the removal of this laundry. His suggestion was that the Council substitute for the business tax which the proprietor is at present required to pay, a license arrangement, to which special conditions might be attached.

This seemed to be the most satisfactory way out of the difficulty, and the solicitor was instructed to draw up the necessary papers for the council's approval.

DOCUMENT 8

In this excerpt MP J. S. Woodsworth demonstrates a somewhat less prejudiced view than other members of Parliament (see Document 5 for example) in regards to Chinese immigration, and the Chinese population of Canada, arguing against both a blanket ban on immigration and the withholding of citizen rights from Chinese Canadians. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *What are Woodsworth's objections to Neil's arguments (from Document 5) against Chinese immigration and Chinese rights?*
2. *What arguments does he continue to make against Chinese and other Asian immigration into Canada? What Chinese stereotypes remain, or are hinted at, in his argument?*

Dominion of Canada. *Official report of Debates of Parliament: Third Session-Fourteenth Parliament*. Vol. 5. Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1924.

Independent Labor Party MP Woodsworth's response to MP Neil, July 11, 1924, House of Commons

I agree with the member for Comox-Alberni that we ought not to permit the incoming Orientals, or, for that matter, of any other group to lower our standard of living. I think

the hon. Member contributed a great service the other evening when he so well called attention to the fact that by the bringing in of a certain number of Chinese in bond on the British Empire Steel Company's boats the immigration law had been practically evaded. There is a danger that in this way we may establish a very vicious form of peonage in Canada, at the same time lowering our own standards and degrading the unfortunate immigrants who are thus brought in without proper safeguards.

...However, I protest as emphatically as I can against the attitude taken by the member for Comox-Alberni when he used words something like this: That the preservation of our civilization depends on the dominance of white races over the other races of the world. If that be the case, then the sooner this civilization perishes from the face of the earth the better. Does the hon. Member mean to say that we of the white race must eternally bestride this earth and keep other races in subordination? It seems to me that this is the very doctrine which some people accused the Germans of preaching, and for the defeat of which the world war was supposed to have been fought. It is this use of the word "dominance," this idea of some superior Nordic race, that is responsible for a great deal of the trouble which we have at the present time, and I do not think that such a statement should go unchallenged. The hon. Member recognized that this was indeed a world problem, but I submit that when he advocated exclusion and expressed a great deal of prejudice against other races he did not offer anything like a world solution of the problem... the modern world is becoming a unit. We cannot any longer hide ourselves behind stone walls and thus hope to solve our greater problems.

So far as this country is concerned, if Japanese or other Asiatics are permitted to come in – and I am not asking that there should be an influx of them, although as a matter of fact I think that the danger of such an influx is very greatly exaggerated – but if we allow a certain number of them to make their homes in the Dominion, then in all fairness we should advance a step further and allow them to take part in our citizenship.

DOCUMENT 9

Censuses are often the only source of quantitative data available, but the data must be evaluated carefully as numerous factors can influence their results. Census takers were often on a tight schedule, made arbitrary decisions on how to record non-standard responses, and were influenced by their own biases. For instance, census takers may have found it difficult to decide how to classify someone of mixed Chinese-British ancestry, particularly if the individual did not appear Chinese. Comparing data between censuses also has pitfalls, such as the interval between them obscuring smaller scale trends between censuses (if a population goes from 19,000 in 1901 to 29,000 in 1906 and 24,000 in 1911, and you only see the first and last numbers, you may believe there is a slow rise rather than a quick rise and fall.). Further, many citizens resented what they perceived as government meddling in their affairs, and attempted to avoid participation.

The full version of this table, taken from the 1921 census, lists the employed total, male, and female population for Canada and Saskatchewan by birthplace. The sections copied here give the numbers for Saskatchewan's aggregate and Asian populations for several relevant fields. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. Look at the employment data for the non-Asian population. What fields are predominately male? Which are predominately female?
2. Now look at the employment data for the male Asian population. How does their employment pattern compare with non-Asian males and non-Asian females?
3. What does this tell us about society's notions on who should do what types of work?
4. Notice that the 1921 census takers lumped together all people of Asian heritage under the category "Asian" instead of noting their more specific national heritage (e.g., Chinese, Japanese). What does this tell us about the attitudes of those who designed the census?

Census Data: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Sixth Census of Canada, 1921. Vol. 4. Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1929. T6.

TABLE 6. Occupations of the population 10 years of age and over, classified by birthplace, for provinces, 1921.

SASKATCHEWAN					
Occupation	Aggregate			Asia	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Population 10 years of age or over	537,885	302,423	235,462	2,847	149
All occupations	266,975	242,116	24,859	2,653	19
Agriculture	174,486	172,245	2,241	184	3
Domestic and Personal Service	15,062	5,581	9,481	2,197	15
>Cooks	964	710	254	506	4
>Hotel and Restaurant Keepers	1,177	1,102	75	577	1
>Laundry Owners and	426	409	17	393	1

Managers					
>Laundry Workers	283	188	95	155	1
>Servants	5,712	271	5,441	137	2
>Waiters and waitresses	936	450	486	284	4

DOCUMENT 10

The following is an excerpt from legislation passed by the Saskatchewan government in 1908 concerning who can vote. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *Who is not allowed to vote according to this legislation?*
2. *What does this tell us about how the Chinese population was viewed, and who they were associated with by mainstream Canadian society?*

An Act Respecting Elections of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 1908, The revised Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1909, c.3, s.11.

QUALIFICATION OF VOTERS

Who Shall not vote.

11. The Following persons shall be disqualified and incompetent to be registered as voters and to vote:

1 The Judges of the supreme court and of the district courts;

2 Persons of the Chinese race;

3 Indians;

4 Persons disqualified from voting under the provisions of this or any other Act relating to corrupt practices;

5 Any person who at any time during the period fixed by the proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council for the preparation or revision of the list of voters or on the polling day at any given election is a prisoner in gaol or prison undergoing punishment for a criminal offence or is a patient in a lunatic asylum.

DOCUMENT 11

The following are two versions of the White Women’s Labour Law passed by the government of Saskatchewan. Three versions of the law were passed, the first in 1912, the second in 1913, and the last in 1919, with the first and last presented here. As you read these excerpts, consider the following questions:

1. *What are the differences between the earlier and later versions of the law?*
2. *Why do you think these changes were made? What impact might they have had?*
3. *What do the authors of this law mean by “white women?”*

The White Women’s Labor Law

An Act to Prevent the Employment of Female Labour in Certain Capacities, 1912, Statutes of Saskatchewan, c. 17.

1. No person shall employ in any capacity any white woman or girl or permit any white woman or girl to reside or lodge in or to work in or, save as a bona fide customer in a public apartment thereof only, to frequent any restaurant, laundry or other place of business or amusement owned, kept or managed by any Japanese, Chinaman or other Oriental person.
2. Any employer guilty of any contravention or violation of this Act shall upon summary conviction be liable to a penalty not exceeding \$100 and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two months.
3. This Act shall come into force on the first day of May, 1912.

An Act to prevent the Employment of Female Labour in Certain Capacities (1919)

An Act to Prevent the Employment of Female Labour in Certain Capacities, 1920, The Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan, c. 185.

1. This Act may be cited as The Female Employment Act.
2. No person shall employ a white woman or girl in any capacity requiring her to reside or lodge in or to work in any restaurant or laundry, without obtaining a special license for the purpose from the municipality in which such restaurant or laundry is situated, which license the council of every municipality is hereby authorized to grant.
3. Any employer guilty of any violation of this Act shall upon summary conviction be liable to a penalty not exceeding \$100 and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two months.

DOCUMENT 12

In this document, journalist and diplomat Charles Woodworth gives a somewhat positive account of Chinese and Japanese Canadians. His work on the subject contains several quotes from Chinese and Japanese Canadians. This account by a Chinese university student discusses what he believes to be the effects of discrimination by mainstream Canadian society. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *Who was Charles Woodworth writing for?*

2. *Why do you think he selected this particular quote?*
3. *What are the responses to discrimination expressed in the quote? What other responses might there be?*

Young, C. H., H. R. Reid, and W. A. Carrothers. *The Japanese Canadians*. Toronto, 1939: 211-222. Quoted in Charles J. Woodsworth. *Canada and the Orient: A Study in International Relations*. Toronto: MacMillan, 1941.

Chinese Graduate on results of discrimination.

Confronted by social and economic discrimination at every turn, many of the young Chinese and Japanese Canadians in British Columbia and especially the more highly educated among them, are reduced to hopelessness and despair. As one young Chinese University graduate observes:

“There is no choice for the young people here as to what they will do, it’s just a matter of taking whatever turns up or remaining idle.... After many repeated setbacks they feel disgusted and give up hope. The situation as it stands, where young people live in a state of shattered hopes and ambitions, is deplorable because instead of an aggressive, quick-thinking bunch of Chinese Canadian youths, one finds a submissive, fatalistic group of young people. A few do save and go to China in search of better things. The opportunity for university students is no greater. Because they expect more than the average person, they all see a time when they will be in China, using the best of their ability to help both themselves and China. If they remain too long after graduation in this country, they also begin to resign themselves to their fate and lose their ambition.”

DOCUMENT 13

Census Data: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*. Vol. 4. Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, 1934. T44.

Censuses are often the only source of quantitative data available, but the data must be evaluated carefully as numerous factors can influence their results. Census takers were often on a tight schedule, made arbitrary decisions on how to record non-standard responses, and were influenced by their own biases. For instance, census takers may have found it difficult to decide how to classify someone of mixed Chinese-British ancestry, particularly if the individual did not appear Chinese. Comparing data between censuses also has pitfalls, such as the interval between them obscuring smaller scale trends between censuses (if a population goes from 19,000 in 1901 to 29,000 in 1906 and 24,000 in 1911, and you only see the first and last numbers, you may believe there is a slow rise rather than a quick rise and fall.). Further, many citizens resented what they perceived as government meddling in their affairs, and attempted to avoid participation.

The full version of this table, taken from the 1931 census, provides information on the rural and urban populations of Canadians. Copied here are the total population and Chinese and Japanese population of Canada and Saskatchewan. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *What percentages of the total population of Saskatchewan lived in rural areas, versus urban? How does this compare to the rural/urban percentages of the population of Japanese and Chinese people?*
2. *How might this influence the relations between the Chinese and white population?*
3. *What effect does combining Japanese and Chinese data have on the overall quality of this information? What might the decision to combine data lead us to infer about the attitudes of Census authors regarding the Asian community?*

Table 44. Racial Origin of the Rural and Urban Population, over and under 10 years of age, classified according to nativity of parents, for provinces, 1931.

Racial origin	Total
<i>Canada (total)</i>	<i>10,376,786</i>
Canada (rural)	4,802,988
Chinese and Japanese (Canadian rural)	20,382
Canada (Urban)	5,573,798
Chinese and Japanese (Canadian urban)	49,479
<i>Saskatchewan (total)</i>	<i>921,785</i>
Saskatchewan (rural)	630,880
Chinese and Japanese (Saskatchewanian, rural)	294
Saskatchewan (urban)	290,905
Chinese and Japanese (Saskatchewanian, Urban)	3,321

(Parenthesis added for clarification. Not in original)

DOCUMENT 14

The following are excerpts of several pieces of federal legislation placing restrictions on Chinese immigration to Canada. Restrictions of this type were in effect from 1885 to 1947. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *What is the purpose, as described in the header, for the first Chinese immigration act?*
2. *How are Chinese immigrants defined? How does this change in each iteration? What were the reasons for this change?*

Chinese Immigration Legislation**An Act to restrict and regulate Chinese immigration into Canada, *Chinese Immigration Act, 1885***

An Act to restrict and regulate Chinese immigration into Canada, 1885, Statutes of Canada, S.C. 48-49, c. 71.

Assented to 20th July, 1885

WHEREAS it is expedient to make provision for restricting the number of Chinese immigrants coming into the Dominion and to regulate such immigration; and whereas it is further expedient to provide a system of registration and control over Chinese immigrants residing in Canada: Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

1. In this Act, unless the context other requires, --

The expression "Chinese Immigrant" means any person of Chinese origin entering Canada and not entitled to the privilege of exemption provided for by section four of this Act.

4. Subject to the provisions of section thirteen of this Act, every person of Chinese origin shall pay into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada, on entering Canada, the sum of fifty dollars...

An Act respecting and restricting Chinese immigration, *Chinese Immigration Act, 1900*

An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration, 1900, Statutes of Canada, S.C. 63-64, c. 32.

- 4.(d) The expression "Chinese immigrant" means any person of Chinese origin (including any person whose father was of Chinese origin) entering Canada and not entitled to the privilege of exemption provided for by section six of this Act;

6. Every person of Chinese origin, irrespective of allegiance, shall pay into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada, on entering Canada, at the port or place of entry, a tax of one hundred dollars...

An Act respecting and restricting Chinese immigration, *Chinese Immigration Act, 1903*

An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration, 1903, Statutes of Canada, S.C. 3 Edward VII, c. 8.

Every person of Chinese origin, irrespective of allegiance, shall pay into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada, on entering Canada, at the port or place of entry, a tax of five hundred dollars, except the following persons who shall be exempt from such payment, that is to say:--

- (a) The members of the diplomatic corps, or other government representatives, their suites and servants, and consuls and consular agents;
- (b) The children born in Canada of parents of Chinese origin and who have left Canada for educational or other purposes, on substantiating their identity to the satisfaction of the controller at the port or place where they seek to enter on their return;
- (c) Merchants, their wives and children, the wives and children of clergymen, tourists, men of science and students...
- (d) In the case of a person of Chinese origin who is the personal attendant or servant of a British subject visiting Canada, the tax payable under the first subsection of this section may be refunded to the person paying the same, upon his furnishing satisfactory evidence that such Chinese attendant or servant is leaving the port of entry with his employer or master

An Act respecting Chinese immigration *The Chinese Immigration Act, 1923*

An Act Respecting Chinese Immigration, 1923, Statutes of Canada, S.C. 13-14 George V, c.38.

2. In this Act and in any order, proclamation or regulation made thereunder, unless the context otherwise requires,

(e) "Chinese immigrant" means any person of Chinese origin or descent entering Canada for the purpose of acquiring Canadian domicile...; a person shall not be deemed to be of Chinese origin or descent merely because his mother or his female ancestors or any of them are or were of Chinese origin or descent;

5. The entry to or landing in Canada of persons of Chinese origin or descent irrespective of allegiance or citizenship, is confined to the following classes, that is to say:

- (a) The members of the diplomatic corps, or other government representatives, their suites and their servants, and consuls and consular agents;
- (b) The children born in Canada of parents of Chinese race or descent, who have left Canada for educational or other purposes, on substantiating their identity to the satisfaction of the controller...;
- (c) Merchants as defined...

DOCUMENT 15

The following series of tables are taken from censuses from 1921 to 1961. The full version of this table provides sexual demographic information for several “racial origins” in 1921. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. What percentage Saskatchewanians are male and female?
2. What percentage of Chinese Canadians in Saskatchewan are male and female?
3. What effects might this have on the Chinese population?

Census Data: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*. Vol. 1. Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1924. T25.

Table 25. Population, male and female, classified according to racial origin by province (1921).

	Canada	Saskatchewan
Population Total	8,788,483	757,510
(Total) Male	4,529,945	413,700
(Total) Female	4,258,538	343,810
Chinese Male	37,163	2,593
Chinese Female	2,424	74

DOCUMENT 16

The full version of this table, taken from the 1961 census and containing data from the 6 censuses prior, shows the population of different ethnic groups in Canada over time. The sections copied list the population of the total Canadian and Chinese population over ten-year intervals. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. How does the Chinese population change over time in comparison with the Canadian population as a whole?
2. What might the causes of these changes be, based on the other documents?

Census Data: Dominion Bureau of Statistics. *Census of Canada, 1961*. Vol. 1.2. Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1962. T34.

Table 34. Population by ethnic groups, for Canada, 1901-1961.

Ethnic Group	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Canada	5,371,315	7,206,643	8,787,949	10,376,786	11,506,655	14,009,429	18,238,247
Chinese	17,312	27,831	39,587	46,519	34,627	32,528	58,197

DOCUMENT 17

In September of 1913, the Moose Jaw Evening Times published a multi-page article on the Chinese community in the city. This article's position was positive, though it was infused with stereotypes. This section concerns the labour done by the Chinese population of the city. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *Who was the author of this article writing for? What was he or she trying to achieve?*
2. *What does this tell us about stereotypes around Chinese Canadians at this time?*
3. *What does the article say about conflicts between Chinese and other Canadian businessmen?*

“Celestials Who are Now Citizens of Earthly Moose Jaw.” *The Moose Jaw Evening Times*, September 6, 1913.

Celestials Who Are Now Citizens of Earthly Moose Jaw**NO CHINATOWN HERE, BUT LARGE NUMBER OF CHINESE LIVE AND WORK IN CITY**

...

And Their Work

The Chinamen of this city are engaged, as we have said, in the laundry or restaurant business. The Chinaman is industrious, there can be no doubt of that fact, for the most bitter enemies which he has cannot accuse him of laziness. He is not a law-breaker as a rule, and in proportion to the number of Chinamen in the city, there are remarkably few brought up in the Police Court for breaking the law. Above all he is not a public nuisance. He carries on his work in a quiet unobtrusive manner, which interferes with no one, and the only enemies who oppose him with any degree of reason are firms which are in daily opposition to him in his particular line of business. It is a remarkable fact that in any city where there are a number of Chinese restaurants, the price of “raw material” be what it may, meals are procurable at a very reasonable figure. The Chinaman is essentially an economist, and seems able to supply food for less money than can any other countryman. The European argues – and the very contention has been raised in Moose Jaw – that this is because he is satisfied with less gain, and should therefore be barred from competition. This is a point open to discussion, and opinion on the question is very much divided.

DOCUMENT 18

The Chinese language newspaper called 大漢公報 (Dàhàn gōngbào), which translates to “Chinese Times,” was published in Vancouver starting in 1907. The paper was printed by and for the large pre-1923 Chinese immigrant population in the city, covering local, national, and international news. However, after the reopening of immigration following the Second World War, the paper came to be viewed by newcomers as out of touch, and readership fell off, until it went under in 1982. This excerpt is taken from the July 2nd issue of the magazine concerning the “Day of Humiliation,” held on July 1st, Dominion day, in protest of the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed on July 1, 1923. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *How did the Chinese population display its displeasure regarding the immigration freeze?*

2. *Who organized it? What were these actions meant to show?*
3. *How were these efforts at protesting the law enforced within the Chinese Canadian community?*

“Details of Overseas Chinese July 1 commemoration On July 1, 1923,” *Chinese Daily Times*, July 2, 1924.

Details of Overseas Chinese July 1 commemoration On July 1, 1923

The Committee for July 1 Humiliation to Overseas Chinese held a meeting in which speeches were made by community leaders. On the same day, investigators went out to check if any Chinese did not follow the plans by the Chinese Benevolent Association. If anybody was found violating the plans, their names would be printed in newspapers and made public.

All Chinese were advised to do the following:

1. To wear the July 1 Humiliation to Overseas Chinese Commemoration badges,
2. All merchants to post the July 1 Humiliation to Overseas Chinese Commemoration banner on the windows of their stores,
3. No display of Canada flag in residences and stores,
4. No visits to playgrounds and participation in parades, and
5. No music in the area where Chinese lived.

More than 10 investigators were out to check on the situation. It was reported that all Chinese followed the plans. No Chinese were found taking part in the parade. At the meeting, several community leaders spoke about the severe humiliation Chinese people had suffered from the restrictive immigration policy. They further advocated to organize activities every year to commemorate July 1 as the Humiliation Day in the Chinese community.

DOCUMENT 19

The first tests of the White Women’s Labour Law came from the dual cases of Quong Wing and Quong Sing, two Chinese restaurant owners in Moose Jaw charged under the law just twenty days after it went into effect in 1912. Quong Wing, with the support of funds from the greater Chinese community, took the case to the Supreme Court, but ultimately failed to have the law overturned. This excerpt is taken from the examination of Nellie Lang, one of the women employed by Quong Wing. As you read this, consider the following question:

What can we infer about Nellie Lang’s position on the White Women’s Labour Law given her testimony?

Witness testimony by Nellie Lane, Employee of Quong-Wing, tried under the White Women’s Labour Law in Quong-Wing v. The King.

Walker, James W. *'Race,' Rights, and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997.

Grayson's next witness, the employee Nellie Lane, was decidedly reluctant to implicate her employer. Grayson asked:

Q. What Nationality are you.

A. I am English.

Q. No Chinese about you?

A. Cheshire.

Q. I thought so.

A. You bet. . .

Confirming that she had worked in the CER Restaurant for the past twelve months, Mrs. Lane was asked:

Q. Who paid your wages?

A. Charlie – Quong Wing, and he always paid me to the day too.

Mr. Grayson: I am not disputing that, I know he is a very fine gentleman who pays his way....

Q. What Nationality is Quong Wing?

A. Well I treat him as myself.

Q. I know, but what is he?

A. I don't know what he was only what people have told me.

Q. What is he Mrs. Lane.

A. I could not tell you.

Q. What language does he speak?

A. He can speak two, he can speak English and he can speak Chinese.

Q. Is he English?

A. No, he is not English, but I could not tell you where he came from, it would be hard for me to say, but he is as good as me and all.

Under cross-examination by Netson Craig, Nellie Lane admitted that she could not distinguish the Chinese language from German "or any foreign language," and she continued to insert positive comments about her working life with Quong Wing.

DOCUMENT 20

"They Came Through" was a pamphlet printed by the United Church of Canada about Christian Chinese Canadians, presented in the form of several short biographies. It presented its subject in a positive light, and argued against their exclusion, both legal and social, from the rest of Canadian society. The foreword provides a short transcript of a Chinese Christian youth meeting, from which these excerpts were taken. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. What are the barriers that these Chinese youth encounter in everyday life living in

Canada?

2. *How do they feel they differ from their parents? How do they feel about the treatment they have received?*
3. *How are their challenges similar to, or different from, challenges that have been noted in other documents?*

They Came Through: Stories of Chinese-Canadians. Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1930.

They Came Through: Stories of Chinese-Canadians

“We are youth without a country. Our parents were peasants. They came to this country [Canada] to make money. Most of them have done well. They have invested to the point of sacrifice in our education. Now that we’re educated they don’t understand us. Their roots are still in China. We are Canadian. In thoughts, ideals, feelings, attitudes we are a part of this country.” The speaker was one of a group of educated Chinese young people in Vancouver...

“But we’re not quite Canadians,” broke in one of the other boys. “No matter how well educated, how cultured, how Christian (a little tinge of bitterness here) we are, we can’t vote. We can own property and pay taxes, but we can’t exercise the full rights of citizenship”

“Yes,” said a third student. “We can own property if we can get a job. [But] even the professions are closed... Lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, teachers and others are barred, just because their parents were Chinese. There are university graduates working in restaurants ... and vegetable shops.”

“It’s worse for the girls,” remarked one of them. “A girl can get a job if she is willing to dress up in Chinese clothes and sell candy at a theatre or Chinese goods at a special counter in one of those big stores, but she is not wanted anywhere else.”

“You should talk,” replied one of the older boys. “There are twice as many boys as girls in the 15 to 25 age group in Canada. Even if you overcome your parents’ prejudices and are free to marry the girl of your choice, what chance have you got of finding her?”

“I can convince my family,” said a quiet lad in the corner of the room, “but I can’t overcome the influence of the community. It’s wrong to have our people herded together in Chinatown, where tradition dictates action—tradition which belongs to the South China peasant village from which my grandfather came...”

“Most of my problems arise through money,” said the youth who was presiding. “My parents expect me, with my Canadian education and training, to make money faster than they have done. They feel that I am not delivering the goods.” There are many other things said that night, concerning the Chinese Exclusion Bill, the difficulty of finding one-family homes in decent neighborhoods because of community objections, the problem of making lasting friendships with other young Canadians.

DOCUMENT 21

This excerpt comes from an interview with Jean Lumb, who grew up in the 1930s. She became a major figure in the fight against anti-Chinese immigration as well as efforts to preserve Chinatowns. The full interview gives a short account of her youth.

As you read this excerpt, consider what it tells us about the Chinese community, and Chinese Canadian families, in the period?

Jean Lumb's account of childhood in the 1930s.

Guo Jin. *Voices of Chinese Canadian Women*. Toronto: Women's Press, 1992.

“When we were teenagers, we used to have a steady stream of Chinese visitors because there were four girls and four boys in our family. Any Chinese from Nova Scotia to Vancouver who happened to be looking for husbands or wives would come to our house every summer... I remember almost being ill because some older man came up to me and he said he was going to ask my father if he could marry me. I ran to my mother and said, “Don't you dare!” (laugh). In those days, a lot of that sort of thing was done, but my dad would never force us to marry anyone. He felt that we should have freedom of choice.”

DOCUMENT 22

Chatelaine Magazine released its first issue in the spring of 1928, becoming Canada's first major woman's magazine. While much of its content revolved around style, cooking, and home making, it also provided a platform for women writers to publish fiction and editorials on the political issues of the day. The third issue of the magazine, released in December of 1928, dedicated two pages to an article on the White Women's Labour Law passed in Ontario, from which these excerpts were taken. As you read this, consider the following questions:

1. *What is the position of the author of the article regarding the White Women's Labour Law? Why does she hold this position?*
2. *What arguments do the employees and owners of these establishments give in support of the repeal of the law?*

A Pound of Prevention – or an Ounce of Cure: The White Women's Labor Law of Ontario

Wilson, Anne Elizabeth. “A Pound of Prevention – or an Ounce of Cure,” *Chatelaine*, December 1928, 12-13....

Some time ago, the Committee on Trades and Professions for Women of the National Council of Women, made a survey of conditions existing in Chinese establishments employing women. Their findings were, if anything, rather more favourable than otherwise to the Oriental employer. It reads as follows:

...

“In consulting some of the officials who came in touch with the employers and employees we find that they are not willing to say that the employment of white girls by Orientals is harmful either through the conduct of their employer or by patrons.

...

“Investigation revealed no evidence of girls receiving harmful treatment from their employers.

“Investigation revealed that girls so employed are more likely to meet with wrongful treatment from the white patrons of restaurants kept by Orientals.

“Employees are generally well paid.

This brings up several questions. In the Ontario statutes, you will note, there is no mention of the employment of white women in hotels, an omission which renders the other prohibitions of the act, if justified, wholly inadequate. If it is improper for the Chinese owner of a laundry or a restaurant having shifts of waitresses through the day or night, to employ white women, how much more undesirable the situation when employees must sleep on the premises.

There is absolutely no evidence that any Chinese employer has behaved improperly toward any white woman in his employ, though it has been found that women so employed have sometimes suffered disrespect from white customers of the Chinese establishments.

...

The Rev W. D. Noyes, pastor of the Eastern Canada Chinese Mission in Toronto, who has been active in combatting the enforcement of the Ontario legislation, believes Chinamen rather more watchful against untoward situations on their premises than other proprietors of the same class. Dr. Noyes has lived in South China for twenty-seven years, [and] speaks Cantonese.... He appeared some time since before the Minimum Wage Board of Ontario, which, at that time seemed to feel satisfied with the wages and treatment of white women by Chinese employers. In discussing the subject with the *Chatelaine* recently, he has written:

“A Chinese café man told me that Chinese are more that careful to prevent scandal in their places of business, because they know well that every move of theirs is watched by their opponents. Does this not indicate that such places are safer to work in than many others?

“In Toronto we are told by representative women who work in Chinese cafes, that the hours are short, the work is light, the pay is good and their employers are courteous and kind. They feel no need of protection and resent interference with their liberty of action.

“Because Chinese are of a different race, civilization, culture, it does not make them more criminally inclined. In fact, Confucian ethics have been so instilled into the minds of these people that their respect for law and order is often superior to that of other nations. The record the Chinese have throughout Canada, any people living in the Dominion might envy. For law abiding lives few can surpass them.”

Certainly, if one hesitates to drape the Chinese employer with garlands of extraordinary virtue, one must admit: that he is perforce on good behavior. He is a business man. Successful laundries throughout the country are already arranging for the installation of

machines, which will mean the employment of more women to operate them. With no grounds save race prejudice to bar them, there seem no reason why women should not be allowed to profit by this increase in industry, provided no personal distaste, danger, or untoward environment holds them back. Proper regulation and inspection of all such establishments could at least ensure safety.