

The Mobile Nova Scotian*

By M. C. MacLEAN

THE mobility of the Scotsman is a commonplace to most people—so much so indeed that the writer of this article made an effort to study the phenomenon so far as Canada was concerned. By every test that could be applied to the census material, it was found that the reputation of the Scot in this respect is fully justified both as regards the people directly from Scotland and those of Scottish descent. An index of segregation was devised and constructed to measure the relative tendencies of different races to “bloc” or hang together. The opposite tendency is, of course, ubiquity and, therefore, the lower the index, the higher the measure of ubiquity. These indices, therefore, in the order given, measure segregation in localities, which corresponds with ubiquity. A broken list of the order in which the races stand is as follows:

1. Scottish	100.0
4. Irish	105.2
8. Dutch	188.7
12. Czech and Slovak	292.1
16. Ukrainian	540.0
20. Hebrew	895.7

The English and French showed slightly lower indices than the Irish; the Welsh, Scandinavian and German than the Dutch; Miscellaneous Austrian, Belgian and Russian than the Czech and Slovak, and the Polish, Roumanian and Hungarian than the Ukrainian. The Finnish, Italian, Indian and Hebrew showed higher indices than the Ukrainian.

Next, their segregation by occupation was studied and the order of these indices was:

1. Scottish	8. Eastern European
4. Irish	12. Chinese

Editor's Note: M. C. MacLean, a native of Cape Breton, is one of Canada's most distinguished statisticians. He has given special attention to problems of population statistics.

* See the chart on the cover of this issue.

The significance of these two sets of figures is, of course, that Scots are apt to be found in more localities and to turn their hands to a wider assortment of occupations than the representatives of any other race in Canada.

It should be interesting to know how far “New Scotland”, as distinguished from Canada as a whole, has tended to this characteristic of her parent. It may be said at once (and facts are mustered below in support of the statement) that although less than half of Nova Scotia's present population is Scottish, she is, in respect of this propensity of her people, rightly called New Scotland.

In 1931, Nova Scotian born were found in all but 9 of the 221 counties and census divisions of Canada, the 9 exceptions being in Quebec. They were found in all of the cities and towns of Canada with more than 10,000 population, a lone male Nova Scotian in a population of 10,320 being found in Sorel, Quebec. There were in all, 52,291 living in other provinces of Canada in 1931. The matter of chief interest is whether these 50,000-odd were forming Nova Scotian communities in a few places, as most of the immigrants of European origin do, or spreading everywhere. For the purpose of answering this, an examination was made of the 4,641 sub-districts outside Nova Scotia (municipalities, polling divisions, etc.) There were 5,152 of these, if Nova Scotian polling divisions are included. The number of these sub-districts in each province which had Nova Scotian-born residents may be seen in Statement 1 below. The same sort of data for 1881 is shown in Statement 2, but the comparison is very rough as “sub-district” did not mean quite the same thing in 1881 as in 1931. Indeed, it did not mean the same thing in each province in 1931.

Statement 1.—Number of sub-districts of Canada with representatives of Nova Scotian born, 1931.

Province	Sub-districts		
	Total Number	With Nova Scotian born	Percentage with Nova Scotian born
Prince Edward Island.....	78	75	96.2
New Brunswick.....	197	176	89.3
Quebec.....	1,540	324	21.0
Ontario.....	1,043	598	57.3
Manitoba.....	200	158	79.0
Saskatchewan.....	841	577	68.6
Alberta.....	558	443	79.4
British Columbia.....	143	134	93.7
Yukon.....	11	10	90.9
Northwest Territories.....	30	13	43.3
Total Outside Nova Scotia.....	4,641	2,508	54.0
Nova Scotia.....	511	511	
Canada.....	5,152	3,019	

Statement 2.—Number of sub-districts of Canada with representatives of Nova Scotian born, 1881.

Province	Sub-districts		
	Total Number	With Nova Scotian born	Percentage with Nova Scotian born
Prince Edward Island.....	70	70	100.0
New Brunswick.....	158	152	96.2
Quebec.....	810	139	17.2
Ontario.....	718	480	66.9
Manitoba.....	32	24	75.0
British Columbia.....	26	22	84.6
Saskatchewan	18	5	27.8
Alberta			
Northwest Territories			
Yukon			
Total Outside Nova Scotia.....	1,832	892	48.7
Nova Scotia.....	297	297	
Canada.....	2,129	1,189	

In 1931, then, there was an average of about 21 Nova Scotians in 2,508 out of 4,641 of the sub-districts of Canada outside Nova Scotia. There was an average of 21,000 total population in these sub-districts. It will be readily seen that it was practically impossible, or at any rate extremely improbable that Nova Scotian communities existed. The Nova Scotian was really buried in the population. The 1881 data show that

they had penetrated to all distant parts of Canada; the 1931 data, that they had spread still more widely as time went on. To find a Nova Scotian in 23 out of the 41 sub-districts of Yukon and the Northwest Territories (in 1931 there were 85 in Yukon and 22 in the Northwest Territories) is simply astounding. Had the 107 Nova Scotians in these places all been found in Dawson City, our surprise would not have been so great. To find

them in 46 out of the 58 sub-districts of Manitoba and British Columbia in 1881 is probably still more astounding. How did they get there?

Unfortunately, we do not know the number of Nova Scotians in the United States at the latest census, but if what we are describing indicates a propensity, it is probable that data from an earlier census will suffice. Furthermore, the fact that it is an early census—as far back as 60 years—gives added significance to their spread in the United States. The U. S. Census of 1880 gave the place of birth of the population of every state and territory and the 50 principal cities. Now, we have just seen (Statement 2) that a year later, Nova Scotian born were found in 892 sub-districts of Canada outside Nova Scotia. In the year 1880, there were 51,160 in the United States, and they were found in every state and territory (see map). Nova Scotians were found in every one of the 50 principal cities of the United States except Nashville, Tennessee. Mention has already been made of one Nova Scotian found in Sorel, Quebec, at the latest census. In 1880 one was found in Dayton, Ohio (total population 38,678) and Reading, Pennsylvania (total population 43,278).

To find a lone person 2,000 miles from home in a wilderness of 40,000 people appeals strongly to the imagination. In wandering over the western prairies thirty years ago, the author found a lone Scottish homesteader in a district comprised entirely of Russians, Austrians and Ukrainians and a lone Nova Scotian homesteader in a district with representatives from several of the countries of Europe as well as England and Ontario. It has been said that the Nova Scotian makes a success only in the professions, in politics and in business, but this man's case, and many others in the writer's experience, stand as evidence that the Nova Scotian is also a successful pioneer. In this particular case he had progressed from a lonely homesteader to a good farmer and a moderately wealthy landowner. The English speaking part of the community had voluntarily combined their six or seven different de-

nominations and sects to make up a church and our shy, reticent Pictonian—a staid Presbyterian—was forced, sorely against his will, to hold all the important offices, including Sunday School Superintendent. As a Methodist, he must not dance; as a Presbyterian, he must avoid something else, and, before he ran the whole gamut of the denominations he represented he had to abjure the world, the flesh and the devil with a vengeance. This was particularly hard on a stalwart, healthy bachelor of forty with plenty of *joie de vivre*, especially as the rest of the congregation could take advantage of the fact that each section of the church looked leniently on some sin that another section condemned. He often wished that he had never heard of the devil and his ways.

The ubiquity of the Nova Scotian in 1880-81, so far as Canada and the United States were concerned, will probably be best visualized by the aid of the accompanying map where the number of Nova Scotians in each State and province is shown by discs drawn to scale. When it is remembered that railroad systems were not so extensive then as they are now, one wonders how Nova Scotians found their way to places like Utah (68 Nova Scotians). Of course, anyone familiar with the history of the Rev. Norman MacLeod will not be surprised to find them in New Orleans, Washington Territory or British Columbia after knowing that they found their way to Australia and New Zealand. It is probably well known that this remarkable gentleman built "The Ark" in Pictou County to transport his congregation to Ohio via New Orleans and the Mississippi; but contrary winds drove them to St. Ann's, on Cape Breton Island, from which in later years they moved, to end up in New Zealand.

There is still another point which must be considered. The wandering Scotsman, with his capacity for mixing and getting along with all sorts of people, permits himself the indulgence of longing for home. If one can go by cases the same is true of the Nova Scotian. This is also shown by a study of the data of the Census of 1931—indirectly, it is true, but anyone

can read between the lines. In 1931, either the father or mother or both parents of 5,319 out of the total 7,222 United States-born in Nova Scotia were Canadian born; furthermore, there were others who by birth represented 16 different countries of Europe, Asia and South America and "At Sea" but who had one or both parents Canadian born—mainly Nova Scotian born. No one can doubt that these are the Nova Scotian emigrants, missionaries, etc., coming back after spending many years abroad, or sending their children back. Dalhousie University, for its size, is probably more representative of different parts of Canada and the United States than any other university in Canada, and it is easy to read between the lines as to what this means. When we add the number who have, since the Census of 1931, come back to Nova Scotia from the United States and other parts of Canada during the depression to say nothing of those who spend part of every summer at their old homes, it becomes evident that the tie between the exiles and their native country is very strong. Indeed, we expect that if our prairie friend is alive today—a hale old man of 70—he is back in Pictou County. He deserves it!

That all parts of Nova Scotia are not equally represented in this spread over Canada and the United States is evident and, judging from the counties showing the greatest exodus, the Scottish and Irish elements are probably much more widely represented. It seems quite fitting, then, to quote the following sentiment of a great part of the returning or visiting exiles in their native language, without apology or translation—

"Beanntaichean arda is aillidh leacainnean
Sluagh ann a comhnuidh is coire cleachdain
nean

'S aotrom mo cheum a leum g'am faicinn
'us fanaidh mi tacan le deoin."

Now, perhaps all this would not be so important if it were not for the moral behind it. There is an idea that the

reason why people leave their country of birth is because the country cannot support them. This is a very dangerous assumption. There are reasons and reasons. We have in Canada blocs of peoples and races from abroad and they have in the United States blocs of Canadian born. When people leave their native country *en masse* and settle in their new homes *en masse* this may be taken as evidence that the country is the attraction and the motive is not primarily the love of travel and the adventurous spirit of the people. When, on the other hand, we find them scattered over and mingling with other people, this may be taken as evidence that it is the latter, not the country. Although the population of Nova Scotia decreased by almost 11,000 between 1921 and 1931, the population other than English, Scottish and Irish increased by more than 5,000. These latter must find it better than other countries. It is the people that are thus moving—at any rate, a good part of the movement is a phenomenon of type of people. Now, mobility is a tremendously important quality, especially in post-war days of shortage of employment. Furthermore, the person that can leave his home and settle among thousands of strangers is *ipso facto* virile and self-reliant and the type of people who, through being found everywhere, must engage in all sorts of occupations is *ipso facto* versatile. Imagine what it would mean to have these people of proven virility, self-reliance and versatility back again—they or their children! Canada has had its fling at nomadism and it may be that the future will see an attempt at staying at home. Who knows? The depression may serve a useful purpose in this connection. It is interesting to see that the number of births in Nova Scotia, which decreased from an average of 12,119 in 1921-25 to 10,688 in 1929, took a turn and increased to 11,617 in 1935. Perhaps this is the turning point.