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The Last Best West

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- “More money & more people” – phrase used to describe the Laurier era. These two trends worked together – the booming economy attracted immigrants, who in turn stimulated the economy, which then attracted more immigrants.
- The end of free homestead lands in the American West and the rising demand for wheat made the Canadian West very appealing to immigrants.
- **Clifford Sifton**, the Canadian Minister of the Interior, launched a recruitment program to get new immigrants to settle prairies. He attracted immigrants from Europe & the USA by offering free land to immigrants.
- Some Canadians were uncomfortable when Sifton welcomed immigrants from Eastern Europe – with their different language & culture.
- Eastern European farmers were used to the climate & the dryland farming techniques needed. The prairies saw a much more diverse group of settlers – Ukrainians, Russians & Czechs among the British & American immigrants.

Push-Pull Factors in Immigration

- From 1891-1921 Canada’s population almost doubled. Many looked to Canada as a place where they could improve their quality of life.
- Push factors are reasons why immigrants would need to leave their country.
- Pull factors are the opportunities a country has to attract immigrants.

Life on the Prairies

- New prairie settlers first had to raise money to outfit their farms.
- Living conditions were primitive with long cold winters, a boring diet, mosquitoes & grasshoppers.
- Early homes, known as “soddies” were made of prairie soil & grasses until permanent homes were built.

Railways to Everywhere

- As more people settled in the West demand for more railways & faster travel increased.
- New rail companies used government subsidies to build lines to compete with the CPR.
- Many cities like Saskatoon, Edmonton, Prince George & Prince Rupert exist because of the railways.

