

In all the colonies, the elite had the most say in the government, owned the largest businesses, and set the social standards for the communities. And the elite wasn't at all interested in sharing its power with others!

Newer Immigrants

Between 1815 and 1850, about 800 000 English, Scottish, and Irish immigrants came to British North America. These were hard economic times in their homelands, and thousands of families lived with great poverty. They hoped for a better life in BNA.

It wasn't easy for new immigrants—finding work or clearing land were very difficult challenges. But compared with other immigrants, the English and Scottish found it fairly easy to fit in with life in the colonies. If they worked hard and stayed healthy, in time they could advance into positions of power and wealth.

The situation was quite different for the Irish. Many of the English were *prejudiced* against the Irish because of problems between these peoples in Great Britain and Ireland. Another reason for the conflict between these two groups was that the Irish tended to be Roman Catholic and the English tended to be Protestant. Although many Irish had worked in the fishing industry in Newfoundland for several generations, they were kept out of the better-paying jobs. In the other colonies, the Irish often faced *discrimination* if they tried to get employment in English-owned businesses.

Prejudice is a dislike or distrust of a person or group based on biased ideas or information.

Discrimination is unfair treatment based on prejudice.

Voices



Wilson Benson immigrated to Canada from Ireland in 1841. Here Benson describes trying to find work in Brockville, Canada West.

Times were so bad I could not find a stroke of work to do, neither in the town nor the country round about. My money was exhausted, and the first night in Brockville I took lodging in a tolerably respectable looking tavern; but after getting to bed, the fleas and the bed-bugs appeared to be at war which of them should take possession of me. This was my first experience of bed-bugs, and the torture was so great that I arose, dressed myself, and went out into the street. I wandered on the hurving-ground,

and laid down under a pine tree, where I slept soundly. Such was my first night's experience in Brockville, which I continued nine nights in succession.

I went out to the Tin Cap, some miles from Brockville, but not finding employment, and being too proud to beg, I slept at night in the fence corner. I returned to town dispirited and gloomy, as the times were not only bad, but the prospect ahead was far from reassuring.