

6. 1952: The year it all started

Emigration to certain countries, the Junta da Emigração begins to contact directly with the governments of the countries that could allow Portuguese immigrants. After several negotiations, in which the role of chargé d'affaires Gonçalo Caldeira Coelho, as well as the inspector of the Emigration Board José Rui São Romão, and on the Canadian side, the Canadian deputy minister of Immigration and Citizenship, Laval Fortier, were important, the Canadian authorities are willing to receive a small number of Portuguese immigrants, in order to “experience” Portuguese immigration in Canada.

Despite this situation, the fact is that there had already been cases of Portuguese people emigrating to Canada in previous years:

Year	Number of Portuguese people who entered Canada
1946	38
1947	25
1948	51
1949	66
1950	87
1951	157
1952	256
Total	680

Table: Portuguese who entered Canada between 1946 and 1952.

Fonte: Table made by the author with data presente in the book MARQUES, Domingos; MEDEIROS, João – *Imigrantes portugueses: 25 anos no Canadá*. Toronto: edição do Movimento Comunitário Português, maio de 1978. Pág. 13.

On February 19th, 1953, the Canadian legation informs the Portuguese minister of affairs that, taking into account the representations of the Portuguese Charge d'Affaires in Ottawa, the Canadian government makes an agreement that allows the immigration of 300 Portuguese citizens in Canada. They should be interviewed, and make medical exams in Lisbon, Porto and Funchal by the medical delegation, which would arrive in March of the same year. The Canadians refused to go to the Azores to examine candidates to emigrate to Canada, although, after some negotiations, they ended up to admit 20 Azoreans who made their candidacy, but they would have had to go to Lisbon to make the medical exams. On March 12th of that year, the negotiations would be finally complete.

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