

7. 1953 – The first contingent of Azoreans and other Portuguese

14/02/1953: In the article «Emigração para o Canadá» of the Azorean newspaper *Correio dos Açores*, it is reported that the government, through the Junta da Emigração, had sent the emigration inspector to the district of Ponta Delgada, to assess the possibilities of sending workers to Canada.

Workers should meet criteria such as:

- be male, aged between 22 and 35 years;
- at least the 3rd grade of elementary primary education;
- physical robustness proven by chest X-ray and they do not have contagious diseases;
- financial capacity to move and settle at the beginning (with an amount of 10 thousand escudos) and a clean criminal record;
- The working conditions, locations, remuneration and services to be performed would be fixed by the Canadian Immigration Services, which promised to find work for these immigrants, as long as they stayed at least 1 year in Canada;
- it was forbidden to go from Canada to the USA;
- job offers were aimed in particular at agricultural workers and winegrowers, and registrations were made at the candidates' municipal councils, the deadline being from February 18 to 28 of that year.

However, it was not until March 1953 that the Portuguese authorities became aware of the process of recruiting Portuguese emigrants to Canada:

- **Employees admitted:** 100 farmers, 75 winegrowers, 50 specialized workers, including 10 bakers, 5 cabinetmakers, 10 carpenters, 5 bricklayers, 10 shoemakers and 10 upholsterers, and even more 50 professionals and technicians, thus constituting a total of 275 Portuguese;
- **Operation:** The Canadian immigration team would arrive in Lisbon on the 20th of April to interview the candidates to emigrate, who had already been chosen by the Portuguese authorities, and the Director General of Economic Affairs would help, providing whatever was needed. need, as well as an interpreter, and service visas would be collected before leaving France;
- **Places of choice and examination of emigrants:** candidates to emigrate to Canada would be chosen and examined in mainland Portugal in the cities of Porto (30 agricultural workers and 50 specialized workers) and in Lisbon (20 farmers from the Azores and 50 professionals and technicians from this area from the mainland), and in Funchal, on the Madeira archipelago (50 farmers and 75 winegrowers);
- **Determination factors:** As for farmers, they favored those who were single, but if they were married, their dependents would also be interviewed by the Canadian team, as well as the chief of family, whether the family went with the candidate or later, and as for the winegrowers, they had to have a working knowledge of the English language, and despite having priority to work in the vineyards, they could have to work in orchards. Also to mention that the 50 engineers and technicians who would go would be interviewed by the head of the selection team, and would only

be accepted after the head of the placement division had approved them. (they ended up not emigrating because they would not immediately work as engineers).

- **Physicians Criteria:** They would be examined first by Dr. Roberto Faria, from Hospital Britânico in Lisbon, while in Funchal and Porto, would presumably be examined by the doctor from the Junta da Emigração, who would consult Dr. I would ask about the criteria for Canadian doctors, and candidates for emigration, had to have a chest X-ray with them, along with a report from the radiologist, noting that emigrants' passports would not be stamped by the National Department of Health and Welfare. -stay until the person has passed the final assessment by the Canadian official physician;
- **Information about candidates:** They had to cooperate with the authorities, taking criminal and security records with them;
- **Documents:** Before contacting the Canadian immigration team to be examined, each emigrant must have a valid Portuguese passport;
- **Towards Canada:** Farmers would go to the Immigration Superintendent of the Eastern District in Montreal, Province of Quebec., winegrowers to the Immigration Superintendent of the Central District of Toronto, Province of Ontario, skilled workers would go to different locations taking into account their abilities, and the professionals and technicians would obey the instructions given by the head of the Placement Division to the Headquarters of the Emigration Department, when the O.S.8 forms were ratified.
- **Transport to Canada:** The Portuguese authorities would do whatever it took necessary for approved emigrants to be transported to Canada. It turns out that the emigrants who were selected, or else the Portuguese authorities would have to pay for transport to the aforementioned destinations.

21/04/1953: A total of 20 people from São Miguel board the ship *Lima* in Ponta Delgada, heading to Lisbon to be examined by Canadian doctors, despite having been examined by Portuguese doctors in the Azores.

08/05/1953: The first contingent of Portuguese emigrants leaves the port of Lisbon on board the Italian ship *Saturnia*. Two Azoreans were refused to emigrate to Canada, but would not return to the Azores. They went on their way to Brazil, with travel paid by the Portuguese government. A total of 18 Azoreans would make their way to Canada.

13/05/1953: On the 13th of May of this year, 85 Portuguese immigrants arrived in Canada, men, including 67 from the mainland, and 18 from the island of São Miguel. From Halifax and Quebec City they were driven to various parts of the country and housed in buildings provided by the Immigration. In these places, the bosses chose the arrived immigrants, with some of them examining their hands, what made some emigrants feel humiliated for feeling like animals. These pioneers would come to work essentially in agriculture and in the construction of railways.

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Figure: The 18 pioneers of emigration from São Miguel, Azores and Portugal to Canada. From the back row to the front row:
First row (from left to right): Evaristo Almeida (Atalhada, Lagoa), José da Silva (S.Cruz, Lagoa), José Bento (Achadinha, Nordeste), António do Couto (S.Pedro Nordestino, Nordeste) Constantino Carvalho (Feteiras, Ponta Delgada), Manuel Machado (Furnas, Povoação), Guilherme Cabral (Matriz, Ribeira Grande), Jaime Pacheco (Pedreira, Nordeste).
Second row (from left to right): Armando Vieira (Água de Pau, Lagoa), Afonso Tavares (Rabo de Peixe), Énio Vasconcelos (Salga, Ribeira Grande), João Martins (São Brás, Ribeira Grande), Manuel Arruda (Bretanha, Ponta Delgada), Manuel Vieira (Água de Pau, Lagoa).
Third row (from left to right): Vasco Moreira (Fajã de Cima, Ponta Delgada), José Martins (Feteiras, Ponta Delgada), Dr. Mário Ferreira da Costa (Inspetor da Emigração), Manuel Pavão (Candelária, Ponta Delgada), Vitorino Castro (Feteiras, Ponta Delgada).
Source: RIBEIRO, Ana, compilação – *50 anos de emigração Açores – Canadá*. Angra do Heroísmo: Edição da Presidência do Governo Regional dos Açores e da Direção Regional das Comunidades, 2004. Pág. 5.