

Dutch and American Immigrant Agricultural Settlement in Central British Columbia: 1938–1990

B. Francis

Langara College (retired)
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2J5

This study is based on two sets of interviews, with Dutch and American agricultural settlers, conducted with an interval of approximately 25 years. The similarities and differences in settlers' backgrounds, migration, settlement, and agricultural development are examined.

The "push" and "pull" of migration are discussed. The homogeneous Dutch group was drawn to the Bulkley Valley by a community, established in the late 1930s, of families, friends, and orthodox Calvinist church group members. The diverse American settlers migrated, often drawn by "cheap land," as individual families.

The Dutch focused on intensive agriculture, especially dairying. Americans focused on "ranching." Farming experience, personal objectives, availability of development capital, and stability of markets were major influences on the extent of both part-time and full-time agricultural development. Reflecting their economic viability and a strong family farm tradition, Dutch dairy farms often transferred to a second generation.

Success in agriculture, immigrant community cohesiveness, proximity, and the strength of initial commitment to immigration contributed to differences in settler stability in Central BC/Canada.

Introduction

The main reason [we came] was for our boys. I made a good living down there, but I didn't see where I could ever help my boys [to ranch].

I went on the bus to Rotterdam to go on the boat. Mom and Dad were standing by the house waving goodbye. I'm sure they were crying. I started crying. Then a lady sitting beside me said, "Oh don't be so ridiculous. You're not going to Canada are you?" I couldn't express myself, but a girl that was sitting close to me said, "Yes, she is going to Canada."

...in the Fall when you shipped your yearlings you'd try to get even with the bank. Some years you couldn't even do that. So in winter time you'd go out and after you fed your cattle [you'd] knock down...trees...and haul them into [town]. That kept groceries on our table and the banker satisfied.

Then I started to learn English. But the first few years were quite hard. Sometimes when I was home alone [and a] truck came into the yard, I wanted to lock the door. I was scared.

These interview excerpts vividly describe the experiences of the Dutch and American immigrant agricultural settlers. Both groups have made significant contributions to the post-World War II agricultural settlement and development of Central BC from Vanderhoof/Fort Fraser to beyond Moricetown in the Bulkley Valley (see Figure 1). As the quotations imply, the similarities and differences in the backgrounds of these Dutch and American agricultural settlers and their patterns and processes of migration, settlement, and agricultural development are the subject of this study, which is based on information from immigrants who were active agricultural settlers in 1964.

The designation "Dutch" or "American" is based on place of birth. In most cases the agricultural settlers interviewed had immigrated as adults. Settlers of Dutch or American origin were chosen for two reasons. First, they were the members of the two largest immigrant groups. Second, differences between these groups were immediately apparent. These conclusions were based on information from Canadian National Railway Land Settlement records and discussions with those persons/offices having specialized knowledge pertaining to agricultural settlement. Included among these were the District Agriculturalists in Prince George and Smithers and the Provincial Tax Assessment Office, Smithers.

"Agricultural settler" is a term used to refer to persons who in 1964 owned or leased rural land and were engaged, or intended to engage, in agricultural activity. In practice, this ranged from those who held only rural land, or were only part-time subsistence farmers, to those who were full-time commercial operators. For the

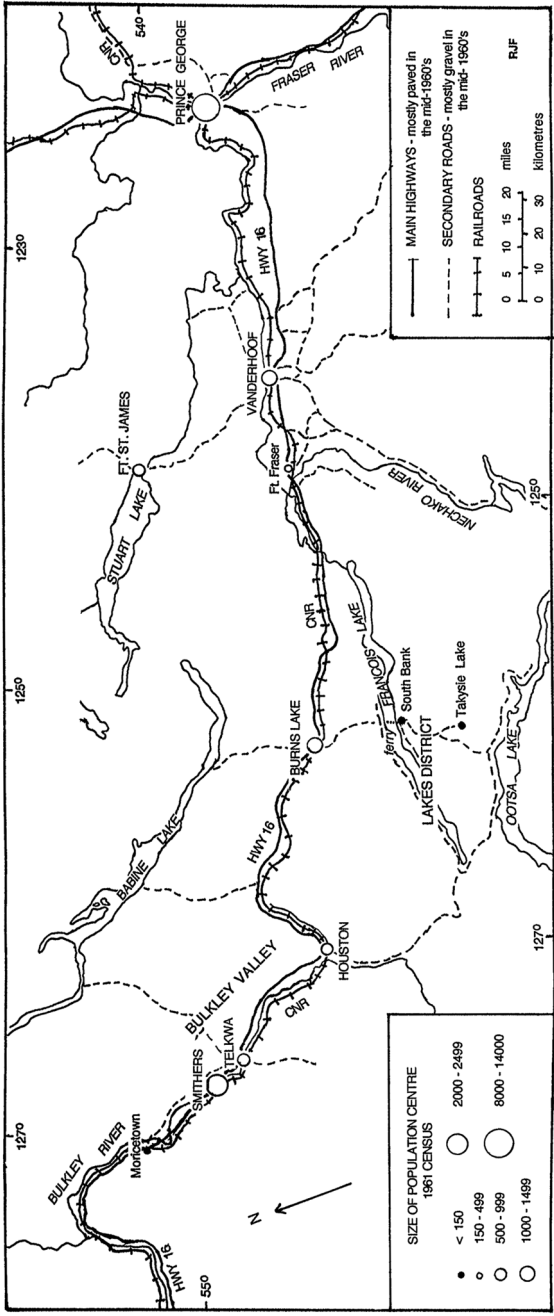


Figure 1 Central British Columbia

purposes of this study, full-time agriculturalists, farmers, or ranchers are those who earned more than 50% of their income from animals or crops, while part-time agriculturalists are those who earned less than 50% of their income from these sources. Income from timber on a farm property is not considered agricultural income. The broad definition of agricultural settlers encompasses a wide range of activities which contributed to the development of an isolated, marginal, agricultural region. Unless otherwise stated, information on agricultural settlers pertains to heads of households who were married adult males or, in two cases, single adult males.

All of the American and most of the Dutch immigrant agricultural settlement refers to the post-World War II period. The War caused a break in movement which made the settlers' origins easier to identify. The post-World War II period was chosen because there was little if any immigrant agricultural settlement during the War. This break made it much easier to identify persons of Dutch and American origins. However, in 1938 and 1939 a few Dutch families had moved into the Houston area (Smith, ca. 1971: 81-3), both from elsewhere within Canada and directly from the Netherlands. These families became an important focus when Dutch immigration was renewed in 1947. For this reason six settlers from this early group, who were identified as active agricultural settlers in 1964, are included in this study. All but one of the Dutch immigrants interviewed settled in the Bulkley Valley, and that settler immigrated independently of the Dutch in Bulkley Valley. Information on the type and level of agricultural activity will refer only to Dutch settlers in the Bulkley Valley.

The principal sources of information were from 1) interviews which included filling out a detailed written questionnaire and 2) follow-up taped interviews. The former were conducted in the mid-1960s with settlers who were considered agricultural settlers in 1964. One hundred and five of these interviews were conducted with American settlers and 46 with Dutch settlers. These interviews had been preceded by reconnaissance field work in the summer of 1963, when a few pilot interviews were completed. Four of the Americans contacted during this reconnaissance were not reinterviewed. Settler identification depended on information received from the previously noted agencies and persons having specialized knowledge, or through word of mouth—the "bush telegraph" among the settlers.

The follow-up taped interviews, conducted in the summers of 1989 through 1993 and 1995, were less structured than the earlier questionnaires so that anecdotal information might provide a

greater depth of understanding and might illustrate, in an interesting manner, the nature of the settlers' concerns and experiences. These interviews with the settlers and their families reviewed previously collected information on settler background, migration, and early settlement. New information was also collected on the intervening 25 years. Twenty-six Dutch and 50 American settlers were reinterviewed. In cases of deceased settlers, other family members were interviewed. Among those who were reinterviewed were six American and one Dutch settler who had moved either to the Okanagan or the Lower Mainland. When settlers were not personally contacted during the second set of interviews, attempts were made to collect such information as the settlers' history of agricultural achievements and relocations and, if relevant, their dates of death. The greatest difficulty in obtaining information occurred when people had left the area after having been resident for only a short time, or had moved out of BC.

There were eight additional Dutch immigrants identified in the mid-1960s who owned, according to the Provincial Tax Assessment records, more than 95 acres of rural land who were not contacted for this study. Some of them had farmed in the past, but information on their status as farmers in 1964 is incomplete. Twenty-seven additional American immigrants were similarly identified. An unknown proportion of this group would have qualified as agricultural settlers for this study.

From the combined sources of interviews and anecdotal information, a total of 45 Dutch settlers and 112 American settlers are included in this study. For some of the American background, information on up to four additional settlers has been included. The study area was selected because, in 1964, it contained four isolated pockets of agriculture: namely Prince George, Vanderhoof/Fort Fraser, the Lakes District, and the Bulkley Valley. All four pockets were accessible by surface from the Highway 16/Canadian National Railway transportation corridor and were discontinuous with other agricultural regions. Individually the pockets were small enough in population to facilitate identification of immigrant agricultural settlers. Prince George was dropped from the second round of interviews because of the limited number of settlers originally contacted and the anticipated difficulty of collecting information in an area where, after 25 years, the population had greatly expanded.

The Setting

To understand the experience of the Dutch and American settlers, it is necessary to understand the nature of the host areas they were moving into. One critical characteristic is that Vanderhoof/Fort Fraser, the Lakes District, and the Bulkley Valley had, and, to some extent, still have particularly in terms of agriculture, some attributes of marginal or fringe settlement areas (Francis, 1970; Gajda, 1961; Stone, 1962). The marginal nature included a limited number of directions of land transportation access (Stone 1962, 374) from the Highway 16/Canadian National Railway corridor to outside areas. These limits were also qualitative. For example, in the early 1960s Highway 16 from Prince George through the Bulkley Valley was not completely paved and most of the secondary roads were unpaved. As one of the American women who lived south of Francois Lake described the effects of weather on transport:

The only time I [didn't] like it was spring breakup. It's sloppy [referring to unpaved road conditions]. When we first came the ferry [across Francois Lake] would be out in the winter. We could get out by driving [over 100 miles] around by Ootsa if we had to.

Moreover, particularly at the beginning, other essential services such as power and telephone were frequently lacking.

Long feeding seasons, variable rainfalls associated with low hay yields, and the necessity of clearing "bush" to develop hay land are physical limitations with economic costs. Hence the unfavourable comparison made by an American settler:

Up there [in Vanderhoof] you feed six to eight months a year. I came down here [to the Okanagan Valley] and saw they were getting four hay crops. And they'd feed for two to three months.

Economic disadvantages included the high transportation costs of shipping cattle to livestock sales in locations such as Edmonton or of trucking milk from the Bulkley Valley to the Lakelse Dairy in Kitimat. At a personal level, many settlers, even though they were under-capitalized, came searching for "cheap land" which they hoped to develop. As described by one individual, "[I] spent my last pennies to buy the land and had nothing to go ahead with." For at least the first decade or two following World War II, the study area might be characterized as part of a "pioneer fringe."

A second factor influencing the Dutch and American agricultural settlers was the impact of the forest industry. In an often symbiotic relationship between agriculture and forestry, many agriculturalists had income from logging and sawmilling, with timber frequently coming from the settlers' land. However, as mills within the region became larger and more integrated and smaller mills shut down, logging and sawmilling moved to a more year-round activity. Consequently, the opportunity for part-time seasonal employment, which left time for farming in the summer, diminished.

There have also been direct negative effects of forestry on agriculture. Unique to Houston was the situation where the farm land of seven of the 18 Dutch interviewed was sold to Bulkley Valley Forest Industries Ltd., which officially opened on August 13, 1970 (Smith, 1971: 123), for its mill site, or was sold for land uses associated with eventual village expansion. Commonly, the potential for earning high wages in the forest industry made agriculture less attractive to families attempting to farm or ranch:

[Indeed] farmwise [the mill has] a bad impact...because [workers] can make way easier a dollar in the mill [than on the farm]. I have to pay [a labourer] the wages that are paid in the mill. [Now my son, who wanted to farm,] can make [logging] in a month as much as I make in a whole year. Why should [he] fool around with ranching?

With the expansion of logging into increasingly remote areas came improvements in the transportation system which some times benefited agriculturalists. For example, the ferry link across Francois Lake was upgraded in terms of vessel size, operating through the winter, and an expanding of the schedule in part to accommodate logging trucks.

Migration: Background Process

Dutch Settlers

As previously indicated, Dutch agriculturalists, who were interviewed in the mid-1960s, settled in the Bulkley Valley in either the late 1930s or beginning in 1947. They were a highly homogeneous group whose emigration occurred within the context of a national crisis. Their experiences as migrants were affected by government policy, crafted in both the Netherlands and Canada, and by strong associations with orthodox Calvinist church groups.

Similarities among these settlers is particularly evident in terms of their farm backgrounds and religious affiliations. All but two of the 45 interviewed Dutch agricultural settlers had come from farm families or had worked on farms. In the Netherlands, 40 of the settlers were members of orthodox Calvinist church groups. Of these, 35 reported belonging to Christian Reformed Churches and five to Canadian Reformed Churches in the Bulkley Valley. The traditional and strongly held value-systems of these denominations contributed to a cohesiveness among these immigrants. One of the wives commented on the particular significance of the church community to the women:

A lot [of the women] were just home on the farm and they would very seldom get out at all. They'd go out to church. That was the highlight of the week. That was their social day and they'd get caught in what everybody else did. It was quite lonely for the women, I think more so than [for] the men.

The Depression, the fear and uncertainty created by World War II, and the economic hardships in the immediate post-war period, all contributed to a sense of crisis in the Netherlands. Over three-quarters of the interviewed settlers cited economic reasons for coming to Canada. Most commonly this was expressed in terms of farming. A "push" to emigrate is evident in references to "limited farm opportunity in the Netherlands", "no chance to own a farm [in the Netherlands]", and "lost a rented farm [in the Netherlands]." The "pull" of Canada shows in the perception that this was a location where farm land was available and where there would be "an opportunity for [my] sons [to farm]."

This concern with the lack of farming opportunity against the predominance of farming backgrounds is particularly understandable given the tenuous status of many within Dutch agriculture. Only nine indicated they were farm operators and one-third of these were not owners. Another 13 reported that they had worked as farm labourers or managers. The largest group, 19 out of the 45 settlers, indicated their experience was limited to work on family farms as young adults, or to being brought up on a farm without ever having had another occupation. For those who were farm owners, it was not feasible to subdivide their holdings among the sons of often quite large families. The prospects were bleak in the crowded and economically depressed conditions of the Netherlands, especially for those who did not owe established farm units.

The post-World War II migrants were relatively young. They averaged a little over 27 years of age at the time they entered Canada, with at least 66% being under the age of 30. Twenty-two of these settlers were single, including three who were dependent children. Nine of the 23 married settlers had married in the same year that they emigrated from the Netherlands. This suggests that many immigrants, who were in the early stages of establishing themselves economically, lacked the opportunity to become successful agriculturalists in the Netherlands.

Less commonly expressed reasons for coming to Canada illustrate a broader sense of concern among the Dutch migrants. For one emigrant from the late 1930s, stringent government quotas on production, imposed to deal with agricultural surpluses, epitomized the Depression. "The whole [bulb-growing] industry started to collapse. Then the government started to cut down. The early bulbs you could only grow 60% and the late ones only 40%." Apprehension associated with World War II and its aftermath was expressed in many ways. One settler referred to his "business being destroyed by the Germans." Others expressed concerns arising from the "Berlin airlift", the "threat of communism", and the "fear of war." Hofstede (1964: 181) noted: "A general feeling prevailed that it was impossible to build up a normal life again out of the vast post-war chaos." Within this climate, emigration often became a viable option. A quotation from the book *To All Our Children* (VanderMey, ca. 1983: 48), which describes the post-World War II Dutch immigration to Canada, helps summarize the situation:

But the rejoicing [at the end of World War II] was short-lived. The country's economy lay in shambles. Growth seemed impossible. Housing was in short supply, and population continued to increase. Many people saw no future in the Netherlands for themselves and their children. They pondered the notion of getting away from the mess and starting a new life somewhere else on the globe.

The effects of institutional activities and policies on Dutch migration are evident in several instances. The Dutch settlers who came to the Houston area prior to World War II entered under a provision of an Order-in-Council of March 31, 1931(P.C.695) which permitted immigrants "having sufficient means to farm in Canada" (Hawkins, 1972: 89-90). Settlers were required to deposit \$1000 (Smith, ca. 1971: 81) in a Netherlands bank which could be drawn on to meet the requirement of purchasing or perhaps renting a farm (Smith, ca. 1971: 81) within what was variously reported

as being from three months to one year of arrival. If efforts to establish a farm failed, the deposit could be used to cover return passage to the Netherlands. An early Houston settler suggested that the requirements might have been more flexible. He remembered that the \$1000 could be made up of \$500 in the bank and a \$500 guarantee from a sponsor.

Immediately following World War II, the government of the Netherlands encouraged emigration as one strategy for dealing with a perceived population pressure expressed in terms of overcrowding and economic problems. A settler recalled:

[There] was a promotion, propaganda deal in Holland at that time, for people to leave. The government was even encouraging that. They had evenings where people could come and they'd tell you about Canada, the US, Australia, different countries.

The Netherlands was able to negotiate a three-year agreement with Canada, effective January 30, 1947, which allowed entry of sponsored farm workers (VanderMey, ca. 1983: 48). According to the terms of the agreement, sponsors were to guarantee employment in return for the immigrant's working for one year, although in practice the period was sometimes less. Immigration regulations were amended so that, by 1953, a significant number of non-agriculturalists were admitted (VanderMey, ca. 1983: 49). However, only five of the 38 post-war settlers who provided information entered Canada after 1953. Hence, for the most part, they came as sponsored agricultural workers. Two-thirds of these settlers reported having been sponsored by previous settlers; i.e., relatives, friends from the Netherlands, or other Dutch persons.

Severe restrictions were placed on the amount of money that could be taken out of the Netherlands. As a consequence most immigrants arrived virtually penniless. "I had \$67 by the time I arrived in Smithers [in 1952]."

Orthodox Calvinist church groups have a long history of fostering emigration from the Netherlands and immigration into North America (Petersen, 1955: 54). For example, the farm community of Neerlandia, Alberta was founded, in the early 1900s, "in an attempt to build a centre where the Dutch could preserve their culture, religion, and sense of ethnic unity" (VanderMey, ca. 1983: 46). During World War II, the Immigration Committee of the Christian Reformed Church was formed in Chatham, Ontario to assist anticipated postwar immigrants (VanderMey, ca. 1983: 42). In the Bulkley Valley, Dutch settlement was initially nurtured by Jacob Prins (who had immigrated to Edmonton from Andijk, North

Holland in March of 1927 (*In His Soil*, 1985: 129)), in his capacity as field man appointed for Central BC by the Christian Reformed Church's Synodical Committee (*In His Soil*, 1985: 130). Prins made two trips to the Netherlands (in 1937 and 1938) and several trips into the Bulkley Valley starting in the summer of 1937. These trips were paid for by the Holland-American Line and the Colonisation Department of the Canadian National Railway (Smith, ca. 1971: 81). Their purpose was to encourage immigration and agricultural settlement which might produce revenue from increased freight.

In 1938 and 1939, a Dutch community of 12 families and two single males, all of whom were members of the Christian Reformed Church, was established (Smith, ca.1971: 81-83) in the Houston area. Six of the settlers interviewed in the mid-1960s were from these families, five had come as heads of the families and one came as a dependent child. Half were from Andijk and all but one at least knew of Prins either from the 1937 and 1938 trips to the Netherlands or because of associations in Andijk. This group, under Jacob Prins' guidance, either first came to Lacombe, Alberta and then quickly moved to Houston, BC or went directly to Houston. One settler, who did not know of Prins, met immigrants in transit to Canada, who were going to meet Prins in Alberta. After a short time on Prince Edward Island, contact was made with Prins who directed this family to Houston.

The pre-war Dutch community became the focal point which drew post-war Dutch immigrants to the Bulkley Valley. Often the movement was not direct. Indeed, slightly more than half of the sponsored postwar immigrants initially came to non-Bulkley Valley sites. Eleven families and single adults came to Alberta, eight to other British Columbia locations, principally Vancouver's environs, and three to other Canadian destinations. These settlers usually moved to the Bulkley Valley within a fairly short time, with 17 arriving within three years and the other five within nine years.

When provided, the reasons most often referred to for coming specifically to the Bulkley Valley were personal contacts and church related influences. Eighteen mentioned relatives, five contacts with Prins, three the presence of friends, and three the existence of churches. Anticipating comparisons with the American settlers, it should be pointed out that three immigrants, who had originally settled elsewhere, indicated that they were aware of cheaper farmland in the Bulkley Valley.

For the Dutch settlers, information about Canada, prior to emigration, again demonstrates the importance of family and friends in the migration process. Eighteen of the settlers indicated that they

or their families had received information from relatives, and 11 cited friends. In both cases, the information was largely from people already resident, though mostly for only a short time, in Canada. Eleven specifically mentioned official Netherlands emigration organization sources including those associated with the Christian Reformed Church. Precisely which organizations was not clearly remembered.

Anecdotally, it is evident that most settlers did not know, based on the information they received prior to emigrating, what Canada would be like. When asked if they had known some simply laughed, said, "No!", and then would begin to elaborate. For example:

My brother [who was already in Canada] was logging trees to make farm land out of it...I didn't know those type of things. We [thought]everything [would be] the way it was in Holland. ...And we didn't think about the differences of [a] raw, completely new country.

One settler had been to North America before World War II. He felt he knew what to expect. For the others the contrasts with their homeland, especially of an isolated, sparsely settled area like the Bulkley Valley, were too great to understand clearly.

American Settlers

The Americans constituted a much less homogeneous group which was not strongly influenced or constrained by religious affiliations and government regulations. The Americans did not migrate against a background of crisis within their country of origin, though a personal sense of crisis, in terms of an inability to pursue full-time agriculture, was often apparent. However, both settler groups saw, within the context of immigration, an opportunity to engage in agriculture.

A greater diversity of backgrounds among American settlers is evident in terms of religion and work/farm experience. Thirty of 82 American settlers who provided information indicated no religious attachment. The others specified ties with one of 17 different Protestant groups or, in six instances, simply said they were Protestant. Three indicated a Roman Catholic background. Further, almost half of those who indicated some degree of religious affiliation in the USA, although sometimes clearly tentative, identified no such affiliation in Canada. With the partial exception of nine Mormons, all of who lived in the Vanderhoof area (the growth of a

large Mormon community around Vanderhoof post-dates 1964), there was no sense of a shared, strong church community as among the members of the Christian Reformed and Canadian Reformed Churches.

At the broadest level, the two groups are similar in that most of the settlers indicated, 90% of the Americans and 95% of the Dutch, that they had come in some degree from a farm background. For present purposes, farm background includes being brought up on a farm, having some farm work experience, or, for the Americans only, taking university programs which included agricultural courses.

However, several differences relating to the last job(s) in the country of origin suggest that the Americans were less fully involved in agriculture than the Dutch. Approximately 67% of the Americans who responded, versus 75% of the Dutch, indicated that their last work involved at least some agriculture. Dependent males who were living/working on a family farm were considered to have farm occupations. A higher proportion of Dutch fell into this group. Many more Americans than Dutch indicated that their farm work was only part-time. From the point of view of income, a minimum of just over half of the Americans had had little or no agricultural income in the period immediately prior to emigrating. The comparable figure for the Dutch was closer to 25%.

One difference in the types of non-agricultural employment is worth noting. Twenty-one Americans indicated full or part-time work within the forest industry including logging, sawmilling, and logging-truck driving, with three more having some university course work in forestry. The son of one of the settlers, who for a time after immigration earned his major income from agriculture, reported "I was born in a logging camp in southern Oregon. [My dad] worked [in the States] all of his life in the woods." Skills related to the forest industry were potentially very useful and, in some cases, may have drawn American agricultural settlers to Central BC. "Bush" work was not part of the Dutch experience, though, of necessity, many quickly adapted to it. The same can be said for a few of the Americans. One settler, who stud-logged the first winter, commented, "[As a rancher] I had been used to sagebrush and cactus."

When asked for the reasons why they migrated, the Dutch and Americans answered in somewhat different ways. American responses were often fuller and commonly directed to specific conditions in Central BC rather than simply Canada. This clearly reflects more detailed knowledge based on trips prior to settle-

ment, word of mouth, and access to a variety of print sources such as provincial Lands Service bulletins (British Columbia Department of Lands and Forests, Lands Service 1959a; British Columbia Department of Lands and Forests, Lands Service, 1959b) and information requested because of Canadian National Railway ads in USA magazines. As previously noted with the Dutch, a majority of the Americans, when questioned concerning reasons for settling in Canada/BC, referred to opportunities in agriculture. Some settlers simply commented that they “wanted to farm” or “wanted to ranch.” In more detailed responses, the economic “push” from within the USA is clearly illustrated by the observations that “ranching is too expensive in the US”; “the US [has] high taxes”; too many “government restrictions” (a sentiment shared with the Dutch); “increased irrigation costs in the US”; “We couldn’t even start to pay the interest...on one place [we were offered] in northern California.” The flip side of the coin, the economic “pull” of the area of destination, is demonstrated by reference to “cheaper land [in Central BC]”; “[being able to] ranch with a minimum of money in Canada”; and “the low cost of living in Canada.” As with the Dutch, Americans included comments on the economic “opportunities [to farm] for sons.”

Reflecting their more detailed knowledge, a few Americans included the attributes of the physical environment among the reasons for immigrating to Central BC. For example, references were made to “lots of hay and summer pasture”, “range for cattle”, and a “climate similar to Oregon.” As well, broader lifestyle considerations were mentioned. Settlers from both groups spoke of its being “too crowded” or of “too many people” in their places of origin. Several Americans spoke of the pace of life illustrated by statements such as “[I] didn’t like the hustle and bustle of the ‘rat race’”, and I was considering “semi-retirement”. Another said Central BC was “a better place [away from an urban setting] to raise children.” For some the “hunting and fishing” opportunities were clearly inviting.

The appeal of the “frontier” was reflected in several anecdotes. One settler referred to his signed copy of Rich Hobson’s (1951) book *Grass Beyond the Mountains*, and the interest it had generated among his friends in the States. A few mentioned its appearance in the May, 1952 *Reader’s Digest* book section (Hobson, 1952). “See it was his book we came in here on.” Another spoke of attending a lecture and movie, in the States, at which Ralph Edwards described his pioneering in the Bella Coola area (Stowe, L. (1957). *Crusoe of Lonesome Lake*). In fact, the speaker and producer of the film had

been Ralph Edwards' son John (Turner, 1996). Subsequently, "When my parents came back [reporting on a visit to Kamloops and McBride]. I thought 'Holy ___ !' I better get my bags packed, we're moving north."

The Americans, in contrast to the Dutch, did not leave because of any internal national crisis. A few of the older Americans vividly recounted experiences of the 1930s. One man, whose father was caught with a large ranch mortgage at that time, recounted, "They cleaned him out. He had some steers and they even took his saddle horses, the bank did." However, most American immigrants came after the mid-1950s, well after any immediate impact of either the Depression or World War II.

Yet, for many of the Americans there may have been a sense of personal crisis. The average age of the American settlers was older than that of the Dutch, and most were married. Even though they often had some farm background, the last jobs, of many settlers before migrating, were not in agriculture or were only in part-time agriculture. Further, they often expressed dissatisfaction with their previous lifestyles while indicating they had wished to own a "ranch". They appear to be a group that were well into their working lives and were facing the prospect either of losing their rural/agricultural roots, in an increasingly crowded urban oriented society and economy, or of emigrating. Many of these factors are summarized in the simple observation "[I] didn't like my [public service] job; [I] dreamed of ranching."

The regulations governing immigration allowed easier entry of American agricultural settlers. Immediately following World War II, as in the 1931 Order-in-Council (P.C.695), USA citizens were among admissible classes of immigrants including possibly qualifying as "agriculturists having sufficient means to farm in Canada" (Hawkins, 1988: 89-90). In 1950, an Order-in-Council (P.C. 2856) enlarged the admissible classes of immigrants, still including USA citizens, to encompass more Europeans, among them the Dutch (Hawkins, 1988: 99). In 1962, racial discrimination was removed as a major feature of entry, and skills became the main criterion for unsponsored immigrants' admission. However, USA agricultural settlement in Central BC continued in part under regulations allowing the landing of a person who was "likely to be able to establish himself successfully in Canada...in agriculture" (Hawkins, 1988: 125). The financial requirements for admission were apparently easily met as no settler referred to major entry problems of this type and clearly there were settlers who entered with insufficient funds to purchase fully operational farm units.

Unlike most of the Dutch, the Americans did not come as sponsored farm workers; their emigration was not promoted, nor were there church-related structures which provided assistance.

The Americans immigrated to Canada, with a handful of exceptions, directly to Central British Columbia, on average nine years later than the Dutch (see Table 1). The entry of the American settlers began to increase in the late 1950s, after most of the Dutch had arrived, with approximately 50% of the Americans arriving after 1960. This difference in timing of arrival indicates that the two ethnic groups were interviewed at different stages of settlement which may influence measures, such as the level of agricultural development and settler stability, which will be discussed later.

Table 1 Year of Entry and Year of Purchase of 1964 Properties: Dutch and American

<i>Area</i>	<i>Year Entered Canada (Average)</i>	<i>Year Purchased 1964 Property (Average)</i>
Vanderhoof. / Ft. Fraser		
Dutch	1951	1954
American	1961	1960
Lakes District		
Dutch	N/A	N/A
American	1959	1960
Bulkley Valley		
Dutch	1951	1957
American	1958	1958
Total		
Dutch	1951	1957
American	1960	1959

Source: Author's field work.

Unlike the Dutch, all but one post-World War II American settler in Central BC lacked ties with Americans who had entered the area prior to the war. However, the Americans, with three exceptions, made trips to Central BC before purchasing and immigrating. The exceptions involved properties which had been in the family since the 1920s and purchases based on the recommendations of

a relative or friend who had immigrated. It was relatively easy to make these trips because settlers came mainly from Oregon, Washington, California, the Snake River Basin of Idaho, and Montana (see Table 2 and Figure 2). They were able to jump in the family car, pickup, or truck and in a short time be in Central BC. This comment oversimplifies some experiences. For example, in the early and mid-1950s prospective settlers sometimes faced many miles of unpaved road before arriving at their Central BC destinations. Sixty-five percent of the Americans who responded indicated that these initial trips, to some degree, involved looking for a property. Other reasons included visiting resident relatives or friends and vacationing.

Table 2 Americans Immigrant Agriculture Settlers in Central BC—1964: Percentage by State of Origin

<i>State</i>	<i>Area of Settlement within Central BC</i>			
	<i>Vanderhooff Ft. Fraser</i>	<i>Lakes District</i>	<i>Bulkley Valley</i>	<i>Total</i>
Oregon	40.7%	21.9%	14.3%	30.4%
Washington	13.6%	15.6%	14.3%	14.3%
California	3.4%	12.5%	23.8%	9.8%
Idaho	6.8%	18.8%	4.8%	9.8%
Montana	10.2%	0.0%	14.3%	8.0%
Colorado	1.7%	9.4%	4.8%	4.5%
Nevada	3.4%	6.2%	0.0%	3.6%
Arizona	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	2.5%
South Dakota	3.4%	0.0%	4.8%	2.7%
Alaska	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	0.9%
Indiana	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	0.9%
New York	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Utah	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Wisconsin	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.9%
Wyoming	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	0.9%
Total	52.7%	28.6%	18.7%	100.0%

Source: Author's field work. Based on 116 settlers.

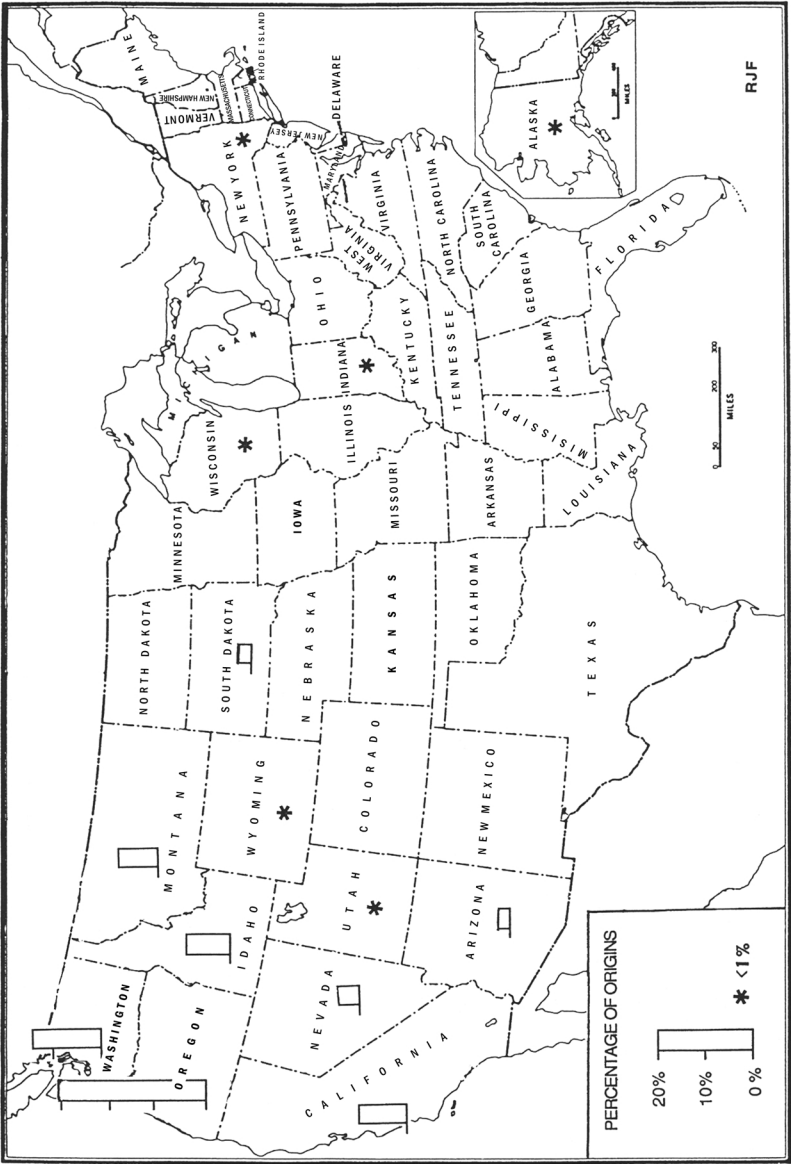


Figure 2 American Immigrant Agricultural Settlers in Central BC—1964: Percentage by State of Origin

Americans most commonly made their initial purchases of property shortly before settling in Central BC. Table 1 shows these purchases to have occurred, on average, in the year prior to entry. Those who acquired land after settling did so quite quickly. Hence, a characteristic scenario would have been for a settler from Oregon to come to Vanderhoof in the summer of 1961 or 1962 looking for a ranch property, return that fall or the following spring to finalize a purchase in the "Little Oregon" area south of Highway 16, and move up after school was out in June.

In summary, the Americans tended to move into Central BC, as individual families or small groups of families, having visited and purchased prior to immigration. In contrast, the Dutch often moved as part of a community with a strong religious base where extensive family and friendship ties were common. They had very limited prior knowledge of Canada and, to a lesser extent, Central BC prior to settling and purchasing.

Agricultural Development

Beyond some shared characteristics of marginality, there is a major difference in the type of agricultural activity pursued by the Dutch and Americans. This is fundamental because it is associated with other differences including: 1) a higher proportion of Dutch receiving a majority of their income from their farms, 2) large loans, as through the Farm Credit Corporation, being more readily available to dairy farms and hence the Dutch, and 3) the choice by some Americans of acquiring large holdings in remote areas consistent with the pursuit of ranching.

Types of Agriculture

Dairying

The Dutch were heavily involved in dairying while the Americans most commonly engaged in ranching activities. For example, Table 3a shows that, in 1963, approximately 65% of the 26 full-time Dutch farmers earned the majority of their farm income from dairying. One additional full-time farmer indicated milk sales without clarifying whether they were the major source of income. These numbers are from a total of 44 Dutch agricultural settlers in the Bulkley Valley (the single Dutch settler from the Vanderhoof/Fort Fraser area has not been included in the discussion of the type of farm, or the proportion of income from agriculture). In 1963, an

additional five or six of 18 part-time farmers had milk cows and sometimes sold dairy products.

Table 3a Types of Farms of Dutch Settlers Mid-1960s and Overall, Farm Income >50% and <50%

Type	1963 Farm income				Overall(a) Farm income			
	>50%		<50%		>50%		<50%	
	Majority of Sales	Some Sales (b)	Some (c)	Total	Majority Sales	Some Sales	Some (d)	Total
Beef	5	4	12	21	10	3	(e)	(e)
Dairy	16 or 17	1	5 or 6	22 to 24	24	1	(e)	(e)
Eggs	1	4	8	13	1	1	(e)	(e)
Horticulture	0	4	4	8	2	2	(e)	(e)
Sheep	0	0	1	1	0	0	(e)	(e)

Information for 1963 applies to 26 full-time and 18 part-time agriculturalists.

Information for the overall period applies to 35 full-time agriculturalist, and 9 part-time agriculturalists. Also see Table 5.

- (a) Overall period of settlement from arrival in Central B.C. through 1990.
- (b) Either less than half of farm sales from a particular product or proportion unclear.
- (c) For individuals with less than half of their income from farming a particular product may be sold or only be for own consumption.
- (d) Any individuals who earned more the half of their income from agriculture during any part of their overall period of settlement and also for some time earned less than half of their income from agriculture are not tabulated in this category.
- (e) Insufficient information.

Source: Author's field work.

When the overall period from initial settlement to 1990 is considered, the Dutch involvement with dairying was even greater and was often long term. Slightly over half, 24, of all Dutch, or approximately 70% of 35 full-time agriculturalists were, for some period, dairy farmers. Ten operated continuously from at least the mid-1960s or earlier through to 1990 or until their farms were taken

over the next generation of family. Two more operated dairy farms for 10 to 15 years with their farms going to a second generation. In Houston, at least, four dairies, all of which ceased operation around 1970, were active for from five to 10 years. Reflecting the unstable market conditions of the early 1960s, three or four dairies ceased operation. Data on the other full-time dairymen is not available and, for the overall settlement period, information on part-time farmers who owned cows is incomplete.

The maximum number of full-time Dutch dairy farms occurred just prior to the cessation of commercial milk production in Houston in the early 1970s. At that time, the Houston dairymen, who were part of the Bulkley Valley Dairymen's Association, sold their quotas and sometimes cows and equipment to Dutch operators in the Smithers/Telkwa area. In addition, a dairy farm licensed to sell raw milk shut down. As a result of these closures, milk production became concentrated in the Smithers/Telkwa area.

Factors contributing to these closures included the small size of the operation, the likelihood of higher transportation costs in the Houston area versus Smithers/Telkwa, high wages associated with the forest industry, various personal considerations, and the sale of land to the Bulkley Valley Forest Industries Limited mill. For example, one couple became too old to manage the farm by themselves and they were not in a position to turn over their farm to their children. "...it was getting too much for us ...[and] all the kids were... [out] of the house." In another case, a farmer sold his property to the mill and then leased back the land and continued to operate his dairy until the land was needed as part of mill development.

American involvement in full-time dairying was slight as is seen in Table 3b. In 1963, there were no full-time American dairy farmers, while, for the overall settlement period there were only two or three. One of these farmers operated for 10 to 15 years and the other(s) for a couple of years at most. An estimated 14 of 47 part-time agriculturalists, who were resident for all of 1963, reported some sales of milk products. With two exceptions of small mixed herds of beef and milk cows, these agriculturalists owned from one to a few milk cows. These animals apparently provided milk for the farm family and in some cases "pocket money" from cream, sometimes hand-separated, shipped principally to the Bulkley Valley Creamery in Telkwa or the dairy in Vanderhoof. The former closed May 31, 1969 (Johnstone, 1995) and the latter burned down in the early 1960s.

Table 3b Types of Farms of American Settlers Mid-1960s and Overall, Farm Income >50% and <50%

Type		Mid-1960s Farm income			Total	Overall(a) Farm income			Total
		>50% Majority of Sales	Some Sales (b)	<50% Some/ Intend (c)		>50% Majority Sales	<50%(b) Some		
Beef	1)	20(d)	2	23/7	52	25 + 9(f)		20	(i)
	2)	2(e)		6/7	15				
	3)	2(e)		9/9	20				
Dairy	1)			14/2	16	2 + 1(g)		3	(i)
	2)			3	3				
	3)			4	4				
Eggs	1)			6	6				(i)
	2)			2	2				
	3)			1	1				
Hort- culture	1)	1	1	2	4	1 or 2	2		(i)
Sheep	1)	1		7/3	11	2		2	(i)
	3)			1/3	4				
Horses	1)		1		1		1		(i)
Mixed	1)				1	2(h)		(i)	
Unclear	1)				4				

Information for pre-1963 applies to 23 full-time and 47 part-time agriculturalists.

Information for the overall period applies to 37 full-time agriculturalist and 68 part-time agriculturalists. Also see Table 5.

1) Settled pre-1963

2) Settled 1963

3) Settled 1964

(a) Overall period of settlement from arrival in Central BC through 1990.

(b) For the overall period information on types of farms for individuals who earned less than half of their income from farming is based on 25 re-interviews from the late 1980s and early 1990s.

(c) Have had sales or intend to sell.

(d) Includes three probably earning 50% of their income from agriculture and two who were working only on a ranch but were living off previously acquired capital.

(e) Moved directly to working only on a ranch but had reported no income from the unit.

(f) Probably the majority of income is from beef cattle.

(g) Probably the majority of income is from dairying.

(h) One is both significant beef cattle and horses and the other is mixed crop livestock.

(i) Insufficient information because information on individuals with less than half of their income from agriculture is based on only 25 re-interviews.

Source: Author's field work.

Ranching

By contrast, Table 3b shows that, in 1963, all but three of an estimated 23 full-time American agriculturalists, who had settled before 1963, were primarily cattle ranchers. In total these numbers might be considered high in the sense that they include at least two settlers who were living off previously accumulated capital while they brought their ranches into production as well as a few for whom the level of development is uncertain. Excluded from consideration are the 18 settlers who arrived in 1963 and the 23 who arrived in 1964 and, therefore, lacked a full year of farm earnings in 1963. For these groups, two settlers in each year reported they were going directly into full-time cattle operations.

When the overall period of settlement is considered, it is estimated that as many as 34 of 37 Americans, who may have been full-time agriculturalists, earned a majority of their farm income from the sale of cattle. Among this group was at least one person who combined significant horse sales with the cattle income and one, and perhaps a second, who initially owned dairies. Based on anecdotal information, there may be as many as four or five additional full-time agriculturalists who were cattle ranchers. Of those who ranched full-time, approximately one-third were active for less than five years. This short involvement commonly occurred soon after settlement when economic conditions tended to be least stable. The majority of the remaining two-thirds ranched for over 10 years with most operating continuously from the time they became full-time agriculturalists up to the second interviews of the late 1980s and early 1990s or until they retired.

Part-time American farm settlers had a similar emphasis on cattle. Thirty of the 47 who settled before 1963 either had, or indicated they wished to acquire, cattle. In addition, all 1963 arrivals who provided information and 20 of 23 persons who entered in 1964 either had, or wished to have, beef cattle. For the Americans, ranching was virtually a synonym for farming.

The Dutch, as shown in Table 3a, had a more limited involvement with cattle. In 1963, approximately 35% of the 26 full-time Dutch farmers were raising or selling cattle with cattle providing the principal farm income for at least five of them. The cattle in some operations were associated with mixed farming, suggesting an earlier less specialized type of agriculture than subsequently developed. For the overall settlement period, about 37% of the 35 full-time Dutch farmers were, for some period, involved in raising beef. For most of these, cattle, for varying intervals, provided the principal farm income. Interestingly, among this group five were

originally dairy farmers who shifted to beef for a variety of reasons including the early instability of dairying, cessation of dairying in Houston in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the turning over of dairy operations to a second generation. Only two Dutch farmers started as principally beef operators in the 1950s or 1960s and remained so when they were re-interviewed in 1992.

In 1963, two-thirds of the 18 part-time Dutch agriculturalists reported having some beef cattle. These animals were usually raised in combination with other animals and with crops.

Other types of agriculture (see Tables 3a and 3b)

As part of less specialized mixed farming in the earlier years there were some sales of eggs reported. In 1963, four of the full-time Dutch farmers reported such sales. As well, there was one producer who specialized in eggs. None of the Americans interviewed undertook such a specialization and, in the mid-1960s no full-time American farmer reported selling eggs. However, one settler in the second interviews spoke of having as many as 700 chickens, and of peddling eggs twice a week. It may be there were chickens raised for personal use, and possibly there were limited sales that went unreported.

Four Americans who were full-time farmers reported having sold potatoes or other vegetables as a means of earning part of their income. Usually, this occurred only for a few years and only for a short time after arrival. In one and, perhaps, a second case these crops were briefly the major income source. One family reported selling potatoes and carrots for about 10 years. Among the Dutch, for the overall period, there were two full-time horticulturalists, one of whom operated for many years.

During World War II, when European supplies were cut off, the unusual situation arose in which some of the Houston settlers from 1938 and 1939 raised spinach seed. However, this group of settlers generally operated mixed farms which reflected the lack of markets for specialized products, except in unusual circumstances, in the relative pioneer conditions of the late 1930s into the 1950s. Hence their sales might commonly have included cream to the Telkwa Creamery, chickens, eggs, beef, unpasteurized milk, vegetables, and hay.

Information on the number of settlers who had large gardens for personal use is only anecdotal. Apparently such gardens were somewhat more common among the Dutch. Sometimes their presence was taken as an indicator of probable success among new settlers. One of the American wives commented:

We didn't sell garden vegetables but we gave an awful lot of garden food away...We never had to buy carrots or potatoes...He [the agricultural agent who visited shortly after they arrived] looked at the garden and said, "Oh, I see you folks'll succeed."

Problems were encountered in selling eggs and vegetables. As local grocery stores were replaced by chain stores it became more difficult to market goods through these outlets. Some of the vegetable producers indicated that the type of packaging and volume required made it difficult for them to sell to large commercial buyers. Several agriculturalists suggested that Egg Marketing Board regulations adversely affected the development of small specialized eggs producers.

A small number of Americans raised sheep, with a total of 11 in the Vanderhoof/Fort Fraser and Lakes District reporting either raising or intending to raise sheep prior to 1964. One or two of this group may have run full-time sheep operations for short periods. Apparently, after 1964, no one established a full-time operation. Among the Dutch, only one part-time farmer reported having sheep in the mid 1960s and there was no indication of either Dutch or American settlers attempting full-time sheep-raising in the Bulkley Valley.

Background influences

Settler background appears to be one of the important factors contributing to a pattern of an American emphasis on ranching and a Dutch emphasis on dairying. Some Americans had been directly involved in ranching while others simply came from areas in the northwestern United States where ranching was a common activity. At the very least, even for those who had come from urban centres, ranching was part of their cultural mythology as was suggested in the earlier reference to Rich Hobson's, *Grass Beyond the Mountains* (1951). In the relatively undeveloped area of Central BC, ranching was perceived as an appropriate type of extensive agriculture. Indeed, this perception may have contributed to development problems. Some settlers may have failed to recognize the extent of hay field development necessary to accommodate the long winter feeding season. In terms of its ability to carry stock, land was often not as "cheap" as originally thought.

In contrast, the settlers from the Netherlands had experienced intensive land use whether it had been associated with the dairying common to Friesland, the place of origin for 40% of the Dutch (see Table 4 and Figure 3), or with the tulips fields around Andijk in North Holland. Given the economic opportunity, they commonly

opted for the more intensive type of agriculture with which they were more familiar: in this case, dairying.

Table 4 Dutch Immigrant Agricultural Settlers in Central BC—1964: Percentage by Province of Origin

Friesland	40.0%	North Brabant	6.7%
North Holland	15.6%	Groningen	4.4%
Overijssel	15.6%	Utrecht	2.2%
South Holland	6.7%	Zeeland	2.2%
Drenthe	6.7%	Total	100.0%

Source: Author's field work.

Proportion of Income from Agriculture

A higher proportion of the Dutch, versus American settlers interviewed, for some period of time derived a majority of their income from farming (see Table 5). In 1963, nearly 60% of the 44 Dutch settlers were full-time agriculturalists. When the overall period of settlement is considered, slightly over 75% of the Dutch were, for some interval, full-time agriculturalists.

Of the 72 Americans who settled before 1963, a maximum of 32% reported agriculture as providing more than half of their income in 1963. This value may be inflated by the inclusion of those depending on accumulated capital or living at a subsistence level. For the overall period this value, which includes the settlers who arrived in 1963 and 1964, is estimated to have been essentially the same at 33%, with a possible seven additional settlers reaching the level of full-time agriculture for some period, out of a total of 112 settlers. It is worth noting that there were instances in which part-time ranchers had more cattle than those who were receiving the majority of their income from ranching.

Care must be taken in evaluating information on the proportion of part-time to full-time agriculturalists since the information is derived from two groups which are not fully comparable. The Americans, as previously noted, were contacted much closer to their time of initial settlement than the Dutch who had settled in Canada an average of nine years earlier. There may have been a higher proportion of part-time American agriculturalists during the initial stages of settlement when failure rates tend to be high. In addition, in the mid-1960s, approximately 15% of the part-time

American agriculturalists indicated they were not intending to or expressed doubts as to whether they would try to become full-time farmers. Among the Dutch, these feelings were hardly expressed, perhaps because the first interviews were conducted well after initial settlement. Nevertheless, the impression exists that a higher proportion of the Dutch succeeded in becoming full-time farmers.



* Flevoland mostly reclaimed since Dutch settlement in Central B.C.

Figure 3 Dutch Immigrant Agricultural Settlers in Central BC —1964: Percentage by Province of Origin

Table 5 Proportion of Income from Agriculture: Dutch and Americans, Mid-1960s and Overall

Year(s)	<i>Dutch</i>			
	<i>Proportion of Income from Agriculture</i>			
	<i>>50% full-time</i>	<i><50% part-time</i>	<i>Total</i>	
1963	26	18	44	
Overall—for some period of time	35	9	44	
Year(s)	<i>Americans</i>			
	<i>Proportion of Income from Agriculture</i>			
	<i>>50% full-time</i>	<i><50% part-time</i>	<i>Unclear</i>	<i>Total</i>
1963 (settled pre-1963)	23(a)	47	2	72
1963 (settled-1963)	2(b)	16		18
1964 (settled 1964)	2(b)	21		23
Overall(c)—for some period of time	37	68	7	112

(a) Includes three probably earning 50% of their income from agriculture and two who were working only on a ranch but were living off previously acquired capital.

(b) Moved directly to working only on a ranch but had reported no income from the unit.

(c) Overall period of settlement from arrival in Central BC through 1990.

Source: Author's field work.

Dairying

The fact that there was a higher portion of full-time Dutch agriculturalists is related to their principal type of agricultural activity. Dairying in the Bulkley Valley evolved to provide a stable econom-

ic base and many Dutch became full-time farmers as a result of the strong ties they developed with this industry. From the 1950s to mid-1960s, Bulkley Valley milk was processed and sold through several agents including individual farmers who were licensed to bottle and sell their own, sometimes unpasteurized, milk; Northland Dairy Limited, Prince Rupert; the "Co-op", which built a milk plant in Smithers that existed from the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s; Lakelse Dairy, Kitimat. However, sustained stability for the dairy industry dates from November 15, 1967 (Johnstone, 1995) when the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association bought Lakelse Dairy and when farmers from the Bulkley Valley Dairymen's Association subsequently joined the FVMPA as Associate Members. One Dutch settler commented, "In March of 1968 when we joined Fraser Valley, then every two weeks there was a cheque." Prior to this, stability was lacking. "I was afraid to look at my milk cheque."

There were several key components to the stability. First, production management in the form of a fluid milk quota system began to be introduced in 1964 (Johnstone, 1995). Under it the volume of fluid milk sales and, hence, farm income became fairly predictable. Second, the Bulkley Valley Dairymen's Association became the sole suppliers of fluid milk for the area from Burns Lake through Prince Rupert for the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association. Hence, not only was this a large market, but it grew from an original quota of approximately 2.5 million litres per year to a little over seven million litres per year by the end of 1993 (van der Muelen, 1993). Third, problems of quality control in the processing of milk were corrected. Finally, a new milk plant, completed in 1983, replaced the Kitimat plant. The building was financed by the BVDA and equipped by the FVMPA which owned the unit. The building costs were paid off in 1990 from revenue derived from the difference in transportation costs between shipping milk to the Smithers plant shipping to Kitimat. Once the plant had been paid for the reduced transportation costs accrued directly to the milk producers.

The stability of dairying in the Bulkley Valley was brought into doubt in the late 1980s by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and by the North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations, which threatened the ability of the FVMPA to manage milk production for a closed market. Several dairymen commented on the probable decrease in the value of their milk quotas in the late 1980s and the delays in farm improvements as a consequence of the threats to the closed market.

Ranching

Ranching has not experienced the same stability as dairying, which, in part, accounts for the smaller proportion of Americans who have become full-time agriculturalists. There is no production management as with dairying. Instead, a number of ranchers referred to the economic instability associated with the wide variation in cattle prices. One settler expressed it in the following terms:

I've seen it happen three times in my lifetime. First I was down there in Oregon and them cattle got up to 48 cents a pound. My God, them guys never heard of such a thing. They thought, "We're going to make a fortune." They ran to town and bought things, just as much as the bank would lend to them. And the next year they're dropping off like flies. Can't even pay their feed bills.

[This price fluctuation has happened twice since I've been in Vanderhoof] 72-73, first time and probably...84, 85?

Another settler spoke of a time when, "Cattle prices were starting to drop and machinery prices were going up. [Any additional actions to save the ranch would] just have prolonged the agony."

Several ranchers reported that the high bank interest rates of the early 1980s proved crippling to their operations when combined with dropping cattle prices. This suggests a further source of economic instability for ranchers who, less frequently than dairy operators, qualified for long-term, low-interest rate Farm Credit Corporation loans.

Also, ranchers had to contend with selling their animals to largely non-local markets. This incurred transportation costs and weight loss involved in shipping, initially by rail, to livestock sales in Edmonton. Later, cattle commonly went by truck to additional sales yards in locations such as Calgary, Williams Lake, and Fort Mcleod (Johnstone, 1996). Opening of local sales yards in Vanderhoof, the first in 1974 (Vanderhoof Auction Market, 1996), and the buyer practice of purchasing at and shipping directly from the ranches provided other sales alternatives.

Background influences

In addition to the nature of dairying and ranching in Central BC, there are influences related to settler background which affect the proportion of Dutch and American settlers who became full-time farmers. As previously noted, a majority of both the Dutch and Americans lacked the capital necessary to move directly into full-time agricultural operation. Most post-World War II Dutch immigrants had come as farm labourers without funds. The heads

of households of the 1938 and 1939 immigrants were supposed to have had sufficient funds to acquire a farm and immediately become farmers. Most, perhaps all, of this group, who were still agricultural settlers in 1964, earned more than half of their income from agriculture for some period. However, in the first years their farms were partially subsistence operations. The Americans came with more capital including some whose efforts were being financed, at least in part, by USA-based sources. Yet there was only a small group, estimated at a maximum of eight to 12, who had sufficient capital to move directly into full-time ranching.

In general, the Dutch evidently come from a stronger farm tradition and farm experience. This group, who often initially lacked sufficient money to return to their country of origin even if they had wanted to do so, had a strong personal commitment to full-time agriculture sustained by family, religious, and community values. Among the Americans, as a group, there was probably less commitment to full-time farming. It has already been pointed out that some explicitly stated they intended only part-time farming. In addition, some either expressed a "will see" attitude with respect to their possible extent of development or indicated they would stay "small" and supplement their farm income. Others, in what one described as the "euphoria" of early settlement, expressed possibly unrealistic goals given their financial resources. For example, a recent arrival indicated he wanted to start with 10 head and build up to 200, and, although he put in several tens of acres of oats, he never built fencing and never had cattle. For some, a rural lifestyle which included hunting and fishing may have figured as prominently as ranching. For others, who come from a background that included considerable "bush" experience, it may have been quite natural to take up logging or milling in Central BC rather than focusing on farm development. This assessment of the differences in commitment to agriculture may be affected by the timing of the interviews with the Americans which was much closer to their arrival in Central BC.

Other Income Sources

During re-interviews, some full-time American ranchers reported a significant income which supplemented cattle sales. Commonly the supplemental income came from logging or sawmilling, often from their own land. The availability of timber resources is understandable given the relatively remote and exten-

sive nature of many of the ranch properties. As one settler commented:

I think most of us would have gone bankrupt if it hadn't been for logs. We took about two million [board] feet off this place. Maybe 40% to half of our income [came from logs] in those years the yearlings weren't returning very much.

Also, there were slack periods in ranching which allowed alternative employment.

In the winter time you'd go out and after you fed your cattle [you'd] knock down spruce trees and jack pines and haul them to [a sawmill].

Examples of other income sources included driving a local school bus which provided a steady second income and whose time demands were compatible with ranching. Several ranchers reported that their wives worked. "[Her income] probably was the stabilizer. That was the backbone of the income because that was there every month." Another spoke of the deliberate strategy of selling eggs and vegetables and butchering a few animals a month as a way of diversifying his income sources.

Although there were exceptions, the Dutch dairymen apparently depended very little on non-farm income sources once they reached the stage of earning more than half of their income from agriculture. Basically, this reflects the day-in and day-out time demands of a dairy. Also, there was far less timber available for exploitation on the generally smaller and more developed dairy properties.

The non-agricultural income sources for the part-time American agriculturalists were quite diverse. As with the full-time agriculturalists, many derived significant income from logging their own properties. Indeed there were "stump ranches" where the only income from the holding came from the property's timber. Also, settlers, often with forest industry backgrounds, worked elsewhere as loggers or in mills. A number of other jobs ranging from heavy-duty mechanic and car-body repair through truck driver, village maintenance worker, teacher, and hydro lineman were also reported.

Similarly, among the part-time Dutch logging and mill work figured prominently. This was especially evident through the 1950s when there were many smaller mills and the forest industry was less specialized

The amount of agricultural produce raised by part-time farmers, including those who only expressed the intent to farm, varied greatly. At one end were those with no, or at the most limited, subsistence involvement. At the other extreme, one settler, who at one time had 115 cows and was purchasing 400 yearlings a year, had his principal income from another business venture.

Transition to Full-time Farming

A major problem faced by the under-capitalized immigrants was the difficulty, without a major capital infusion, of developing a unit to the level where the transition from part-time to full-time farming was possible. For example, one American settler said that he could raise a maximum of 50 head of brood cows (most put the figure lower) while working at a full-time job off the ranch. Beyond this number of animals, the time demands for haying, caring for the animals, and perhaps clearing additional land were simply too great. Yet, based on these animals, there was insufficient farm income to quit the outside job. One settler described the efforts to develop a part-time unit in the following terms:

[Ranching never paid for itself. I] worked from around one o'clock in the afternoon to about midnight in town. Went home, got up around five o'clock in the morning, and farmed until I had to go to work in town. Seven days a week. And I sat back and wondered why the hell I did it.

Rarely settlers reported making a gradual transition to full-time farming without receiving a major loan to support this move. For example, one settler reported slowly building up over a twenty-year period to the point that most of the income came from the ranch. This involved gradual clearing, often financed by provincial loans for new land clearing (British Columbia Department of Lands and Forests, Lands Service, 1959b: 31), obtaining leased crown land, working off the farm, and logging his land. However, major capital infusions, frequently Farm Credit Corporation loans, most commonly financed the transition to full-time farming. The greatest proportion of these loans went to dairying (17 of a reported 30), with ranchers being the next most-common recipients (nine to beef and one to sheep), and speciality egg and vegetable units receiving a total of three (see Table 6). Apparently FCC loans were more readily available for dairying than for ranching because milk income was relatively stable, especially after the quota system was introduced, while cattle prices

where subject to wide fluctuation (Shufelt, 1996; Johnstone, 1996). Because of their strong association with dairying, and to a lesser extent speciality crops and eggs, these loans were disproportionately important to the Dutch in establishing full-time farms and were therefore an important factor in a higher proportion of Dutch becoming full-time agriculturalists. Most of the FCC loans accomplished the objective of establishing full-time farms that operated for many years.

Table 6 Farm Credit Corporation Loans to Dutch and Americans by Farm Type

<i>By Farm Type</i>	<i>To Dutch Farms</i>	<i>To American Farms</i>
Beef	2	7
Dairy	17	0*
Eggs	2	0
Sheep	0	1
Vegetables	1	0
	22	8

*Though it seems likely in one case, it was not possible to confirm whether any American received an FCC loan for dairy development.

Source: Author's field work.

Quite typical for the progression of a Dutch settler to full-time farming would have been the experience of a hypothetical young married couple who arrived in 1950. The husband would have worked in a variety of logging and sawmilling jobs before saving enough to make a down payment on a small existing farm property in 1957. Fairly soon he would begin building a small dairy herd, which he hand-milked, as well as raising chickens for eggs. However, the off-farm income would remain the chief source of income until he obtained a FCC loan in 1964 which would be used to put in a milking parlour, buy additional milk cows, and purchase additional equipment. The children of the characteristically large Dutch families often contributed their labour. For example, several of the children clearly remembered "picking roots" as part of land preparation. As they grew older and earned off-farm incomes, they sometimes gave financial support to the development and continuing operation of the farm.

A few from both settler groups obtained large bank loans to finance the transition to full-time farming. For example, one farmer, who had been refused a FCC loan, obtained bank financing as well as using his own labour and funds to construct a number of farm buildings he required. Infrequently, settlers reported using proceeds from the sale of a previous full-time business, for example sawmilling, to make the transition.

Transfer to a second generation

Many of the Dutch dairy farms in the Bulkley Valley have transferred to a second generation. Of the 18 farms that were part of the Bulkley Valley Dairymens' Association in 1990, 12 were owned or operated by the children, including their spouses, of Dutch agriculturalists who were interviewed in the mid-1960s. An additional two farms were held by Dutch settlers who moved after the mid-1960s into the Bulkley Valley from elsewhere in North America. Generational transfer has sometimes been possible because of financial assistance from the parents. "This is another aspect, if I hadn't given my [children] a break they couldn't have...started [dairy farming]." Some operations have grown to the extent that they support more than one family. Within such partnerships, off-farm work has occasionally been taken to supplement farm income. Partnership arrangements have the advantage of placing fewer time constraints on the individual dairymen. Dairy farms remaining within the Dutch community are a reflection of both their economic viability and the strong family-farm tradition among the large Dutch families.

Among the Dutch, successful generational transfer of other types of full-time farms, as full-time operations, was restricted to one cattle ranch. Most full-time non-dairy farms did not transfer. The comments of one settler addressed his concerns in this regard. "I would have really liked to pass [the farm] on to the boys. There was no money in it and I [understand] that they didn't want [to farm]."

Information on transfer of full-time farms to a second American generation is incomplete both because of the more dispersed and less cohesive nature of the American settlers and the non-centralized nature of ranching. Partial information suggests that fewer full-time American ranches were transferred to a second generation, which continued to operate them as full-time ranches, than was the case for the transfer of Dutch dairy farms. Twenty-six of the Americans re-interviewed had, for some time, been full-time farmers. All but three or four ran beef operations. Apparently, five or six of these ranches in 1990 were at least partially operated or

owned as full-time ranches by a second generation. In two instances sons, who were already working full-time on the ranches when interviewing was done in the mid-1960s, have fully taken over the ranches. The lower rate of transfer to a second generation of Americans partially reflects the lesser economic viability of ranching, smaller families and hence fewer children to take over farms, and perhaps a weaker family-farm tradition. No instance was encountered in which a part-time farmer had a son or daughter take over an operation and develop it into a full-time farm.

Stability of Settlers

Settler stability, in this context, refers to whether the heads of households from the mid-1960s were still resident in Central BC in 1990 or had died while resident in Central BC, or had moved out of Central BC. The Dutch, in comparison to the Americans, have been the more stable group of settlers in terms of staying both in Central B.C. and in Canada. As is shown in Table 7, all of the Dutch heads of households have stayed in Canada, 84.4% of them remaining in Central BC and 15.6% moving to other BC or Alberta locations. The latter movement was principally to the southwest coastal area of BC. In contrast, an estimated 47.7% of the American heads of households remained in Central BC. Of the 52.6% who moved out of this area, 22.4% have been identified as having, at least initially, returned to the United States, and 20.7% as moving to other parts of BC or Alberta. The latter destinations were mostly the Okanagan and the southwest coastal area. The destination of 9.5% is unknown, though the impression gained from field work is that most probably returned to the USA.

The Dutch

One of the influences associated with the far greater stability of the Dutch settlers in Canada is the much longer initial time-break with their country of origin when they emigrated. For the 1938 and 1939 Dutch settlers in Houston, the outbreak of World War II quickly eliminated any possibility of an early return to the Netherlands. Immediately following the war, the severe restrictions on emigrants' funds, along with the high cost of visiting or returning home in the 1950s when ships would have been the dominant means of transport, contributed to a clear break. One settler put it succinctly, "I had no money to go back or I would [have] in the first year." By the time they could go back, they were established, their children had learned English, and return was unlikely.

Table 7 Dutch and American Agricultural Settlers' Status in 1990

Area	Resident 1964	Status 1990							N.A. (a)
		Central BC			Outside Central BC				
		Living	Dec'd	Total	BC/AB	US	Neth.	Total	
Vanderhoof/Fort Fraser									
Dutch #	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
%		100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Amer. #	63	23	9	32	14	10	0	24	7
%		36.5	14.3	50.8	22.2	15.9	0.0	38.1	11.1
Lakes District									
Dutch #	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
%		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Amer. #	32	8	6	14	4	11	0	15	3
%		25.0	18.8	43.8	12.5	34.4	0.0	46.9	9.3
Bulkley Valley									
Dutch #	44(b)	28	9	37	7	0	0	7	0
%		63.6	20.5	84.1	15.9	0.0	0.0	15.9	0.0
Amer. #	21	8	1	9	6	5	0	11	1
%		38.1	4.8	42.9	28.5	23.8	0.0	52.3	4.8
Total									
Dutch #	45	29	9	38	7	0	0	7	0
%		64.4	20.0	84.4	15.6	0.0	0.0	15.6	0.0
Amer. #	116	39	16	55	24	26	0	50	11
%		33.6	13.8	47.4	20.7	22.4	0.0	43.1	9.5

(a) Information is not available.

(b) Includes pre-World War II settlers into the Houston area.

Source: Author's field work.

The Dutch

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year." By the time they could go back, they were established, their children had learned English, and return was unlikely.

All of the Dutch settlers who responded to the question on travel indicated that they had visited the Netherlands at some point. However, information from 18 families illustrates the strength of the initial break between settlement and the first visit. There were only five reported visits within the first 10 years. These most commonly occurred with young, single, highly mobile males, or at a time of sickness in the Netherlands when either a husband or wife would return. Four reported initial visits during the second decade of settlement, six in the third decade, and three after 30 years or more.

Except at the very beginning, no Dutch settlers reported seriously considering a return. One expressed it this way:

No, no, never, never. I like to visit [the Netherlands] but not to live there again. We've changed and they've changed. Holland was a very, very conservative country when we left and now it's a very liberal country.

The strong "push" and "pull" influences on migration probably contributed to stability. These included, as previously discussed, the national policy which encouraged emigration, the consistent feeling on the part of the settlers that there were better economic/farming opportunities and less threatening political conditions in Canada, and the attitude on the part of the orthodox Calvinist adherents that there was a mission involved spreading the "word" to other parts of the world. For example, one settler stated:

There was no chance for me [to go back] in the first place...I was chased by the Nazis in Holland all the time when I was a kid. [Reference was then made to the fear of Communism]. I felt so safe here [in Canada].

The Dutch settlers apparently made a long-term commitment to migration. Anecdotal comments suggest that the people remaining behind generally expected the moves to be permanent. "We called it 'living funerals' because you left with nothing in the early fifties. [In] '49 they went on a boat and everybody thought 'we'll never see them again'."

Others have noted the stability of the Dutch. Anecdotal information from his historical research led Ganzevoort (1995) to conclude that only a fraction of one percent of the post-World War II Reformed settlers to Canada from the Netherlands, who arrived

before 1960, ever returned to their country of origin. He felt that return rates for non-Reformed immigrants of the same period were also very low. Based on his extensive journalistic work with the Dutch community in Canada, van der Heide (1993) came to a similar conclusion. Therefore, the commitment to Canada of the almost exclusively Christian and Canadian Reformed settlers in the Bulkley Valley appears typical. (Higher return rates have been noted under other circumstances. For example, Frijda's research (Beijer, Frijda, et al., 1961: 301), conducted in the latter 1950s on non-agricultural overseas emigrants, excluding those migrating to the United States, found that 10% of those studied returned permanently within 4.5 years of departure).

The greater stability of the Dutch, in comparison to the Americans, in Central BC and in Canada, partially reflects the greater cohesiveness of the Dutch community with its strong ties to religion and large family groups. Also, the relatively high proportion of successful Dutch farmers, who sometimes retained an active interest in a farm when it was transferred to a second generation, may have influenced stability within Central BC. The single Dutch settler who was re-interviewed after leaving the Bulkley Valley gave the reason for departure as retirement.

The Americans

The Americans' initial break with the USA, as demonstrated by return visits, was not nearly as complete as that of the Dutch with the Netherlands. The inference here is that frequent American visits shortly after immigrating were associated with a greater return rate. Americans were able to bundle into the family car or truck and visit their former homes at minimal cost and within a matter of a few days or less. From the beginning many visited on a regular basis. One family spoke of the whole family's going back the first Christmas, and then of one or the other of the adults going back every two or three years. A son spoke of his father's going back every two years and of the kids returning every summer at the beginning. A wife indicated that, as a condition of moving the family, her husband "promised" that she would be able to visit every year. With longer residence, the number of trips tended to decrease because of the effect of such variables as increased commitment to Central BC, less flexible schedules of older children, and fewer living family members remaining in the United States. The partial data on returnees to the USA indicates that at least half returned within five years or less of initial settlement. The observation that,

“After six or seven years it didn’t matter anymore [we were established],” rings true.

Often the Americans migrated with the expectation of improved economic conditions. This was not as compelling an influence as with the Dutch who came from a background of severely depressed economic conditions and the fear associated with potential international crises. Overall, the Americans might be viewed as having less to gain from emigration which may be why some of them returned to the USA.

The partial information on the Americans who have resettled elsewhere in BC or Alberta indicates most moved either because they felt there were greater economic opportunities elsewhere, or because the southern part of the province was a preferred retirement location. For example, a settler who never really attempted to farm moved to Quesnel because he had a business opportunity similar to the one he operated in the USA. In another instance, two members of an extended family succeeded in establishing ranches in more hospitable conditions in Alberta.

Summary

Both the Dutch and American settlers anticipated that they and, often, their children would be able to farm or ranch in Canada or, more specifically in the case of the Americans, in Central BC. These opportunities were limited in their countries of origin:

My dad had five acres and we were working on it with three boys. But you [can’t] split up five acres between three boys.

Dad’s whole purpose [in moving from a farm in the USA] was to get both of us started.

...the picture we had of Canada was [that there was] so much land here that hadn’t been developed and you could become owner of land here [and farm]

For the Dutch, the added factors of planned government emigration, economic crisis at home, and European fear associated with events such as the “Berlin airlift” created a strong “push.”

As a group, the Dutch came from a background which included a stronger farm tradition, more agricultural experience, and a greater commitment to developing a farm in Canada. As one of the Dutch dairy farmers put it:

We came to this part of the country with one goal in mind. We wanted to have a farm. You didn’t have a future in Holland.

An American settler commented, "Both [my wife] and I came from ranching people and we basically [know what was involved]." Then he added, "There were a lot of people [who'd] never been on a ranch...loggers that came up to be ranchers." Among the Americans the attraction of a rural lifestyle that included hunting and fishing and the sometimes romantic appeal of being a "pioneer" were factors.

Most of the Americans immigrated as individual families, whereas the Dutch settlers had many extended family ties and a strong religious community within the Bulkley Valley. One of the first group of post-World War II Dutch settlers recalled, "[Many relatives] came later. We sponsored every one of them. In total six or seven of [my wife's] brothers and sisters came." The importance of the Reformed Church community, including the pre-war Houston Christian Reformed settlers who became magnet a for post-war immigrants, was conveyed in the following way, "We were a strange group of people here. We were a group to help each other. If there was a problem we could talk about [it]."

For both immigrant groups the initial adjustment to a new setting was often more difficult for the wives in a family unit. They were "more isolated" than the men as the latter often went out to work while the wives stayed on the farm. An American woman observed that some of the women who previously worked found this particularly difficult. Among the Dutch, the women had less opportunity to learn English. Under these circumstances, the weekly church services were vital to the Dutch women:

Now church life style that was a must
 So in God we put our trust
 Walked our distance of five miles
 And with it carried all our smiles.

(Excerpt from a poem by S. Vriend)

The Dutch were not able to visit Canada before immigrating, while nearly all of the Americans took the opportunity to visit Central BC and purchase property before immigrating. However, many of the Americans who were looking for "cheap" land, because of their limited capital, did not understand the development problems they faced.

I didn't know what I was getting into. I started out with 11 head of cows and two old broken down tracts and I was gonna make her on my own [i.e., build up slowly using my limited capital]. It's just not in the cards.

Another with limited finances said, "We actually quit farming because of our health. We were sick of starving to death."

The principal full-time agricultural activity of the Dutch was dairying, and of the Americans, ranching. The ranching emphasis also applied to part-time American agriculturalists. These choices were consistent with both the general backgrounds and the specific experiences of the two groups. The preference for ranching made the American choices of remote properties more likely. The Dutch clustered in the Bulkley Valley initially, in large part, because of the attraction of the Dutch community. Fortunately, this proved a good area for dairying. The choice of ranching contributed to a smaller proportion of Americans becoming full-time agriculturalists. In contrast to dairying, ranching activities lacked a stable income because of the fluctuation in cattle prices. Some Americans came with sufficient capital to be able to move directly into full-time ranching. However, few Farm Credit Corporation Loans were available to the larger portion of under-capitalized part-time ranchers as a means of financing the transition to a full-time agricultural unit. In contrast, the Dutch often got these loans because dairies were considered more likely to succeed. In turn, a higher proportion of Dutch became full-time farmers.

For both groups, work within the forest industries, particularly in the early years of settlement, provided income and partial financing for agricultural development. Many of the Dutch recalled being a "...labourer in different saw mills." Some even bought "a small saw mill." Similar experiences were common among the Americans. In addition, many of their more remote properties had considerable timber stands which were often used as a means of providing income and financing agricultural development.

More second-generation Dutch have taken over farms than is the case for second generation Americans. This difference was influenced by the greater economic viability of dairying, in contrast to ranching, and the stronger farm tradition among the Dutch.

Also, a larger proportion of Dutch have remained in Central BC and Canada than have Americans. Factors here include the support provided by the larger, extended Dutch families and the cohesive church community; the relative ease with which the Americans could return to their place of origin; the Dutch involvement in dairying; the isolation of many of the American ranches which contributed to social as well as economic stress.

The last words belong to the settlers:

I never, never, since '51, I never thought "I made a mistake [by immigrating]"...Pretty rough time [at first]. But we knew what

farming was, how to milk cows, how to clean barns... We only had one thing in mind. We wanted to be on our own. We wanted to start our own farm...the farm was the goal.

The main attraction was the cost of land. It was cheap [relative to Washington]. But we didn't look at the whole picture. [You] need more shelter [for animals]. [You have] half the growing season [and] twice the feeding. She's hard scrabble I tell you, unless you can do it on a large enough scale.

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