

And as soon as the chance came I took it. Everything didn't go smoothly, however. I'll give you one example of the kind of difficulties I had to face.

I had all my papers except the police certificate. I knew it was ready, but that I was expected to pay twenty escudos under the table before I could secure it. As I was against this kind of corruption, I kept going to the office to ask for it. The office was thirteen kilometers away and I made the journey three times. The officials never asked for a penny but they didn't hand over my certificate either. So in the end I gave in and handed over twenty escudos. You can see what life was like in Portugal, and the dishonesty that went on even in the Department of Justice.

José Roliça, Strathroy

I FELT OBLIGED TO EMIGRATE TO CANADA

I learnt to write my name while I was in the army. I was twenty years old at the time. I hadn't had any chance of learning before this, because I started work when I was very young. There was no future at all for me but to continue to live in the tiny house I had built for myself in São Miguel. It cost enough too.

In 1953 I heard people talking and saying that Canada was a rich country on the Northern border of the United States. I was really surprised when an "American tourist" (3) turned up in my island with some overalls and two dollars. "Why shouldn't I try?", I thought. But I didn't manage to emigrate that year. I was married, and I was afraid of risking a passage to mainland Portugal without being absolutely sure that I would be able to emigrate to Canada. The passage from the Azores to the mainland cost a lot in those days.

I heard that Canada needed field workers, labourers who were ready to work hard without counting up the hours of labour they put in. I was a worker of this kind I thought. So under the illusion that I was going to a very rich country, I took out a few loans here and there to enable me to secure my papers. I had a

(3) A Portuguese immigrant living in the U.S.A. is often called "an American", in the Azores.

hard struggle, because for me it was terribly expensive to take my whole family, even as far as Ponta Delgada. When I had obtained all I needed I was left with a debt of twelve contos. And at that time twelve contos was a lot of money. So, you see, after I had gone through all this, I really felt obliged to emigrate to Canada.

Manuel Trindade, Hull.

I HAD TO LEAVE PORTUGAL OR END UP IN JAIL

When I was young, the Portuguese ship building workers went through very difficult times. I was sixteen years old when the employees of several ship-building companies went on strike. The labourers got the worst of the strike. At that time I had a job as a welder's apprentice. After the crisis was over I managed to get accepted for the naval ship yards of the C.U.F., and went to the industrial college of Marques de Pombal where I took an evening course in electrical welding. After serving in the army I got married, and, as an officer of 3rd. rank in the C.U.F., I was earning forty six escudos a day. This had to be enough for all of us, for myself, my wife, our son and my mother (who had been widowed when I was eleven). Our life was a daily struggle. We had to struggle for a house to live in – for even part of a house to live in. We had to struggle to acquire a small measure of independence. During the time of the birth of our son my wife was terribly ill and everything went wrong. Medical expenses were enormously high and I had a feeling that we would never come out of it all. So I began to rebel against the whole system in my country, a system which allowed a workman like myself who really wanted to work hard, to earn only 46 escudos a day in the city of Lisbon. Such wages were hardly enough for a man to eat properly. I realised that I had to get away or I would end up in jail. And that would disgrace my whole family.

I even tried to go to Angola and work there for a diamond company but I had to obtain a passport, money for the journey and I don't know how much deposit for security, a letter of invitation, sponsors and friends over there. So that way out was barred to me.