

## A Letter

The articles in our last issue about works written out of the experiences of Dutch people who immigrated to Canada after the second world war, prompted Marianne Brender à Brandis to write the following interesting letter to John Michielsen. We thank both sender and receiver for their permission to reprint it here.

“Joan Magee, a friend of mine, gave me a copy of the CAANS Journal containing the paper in which you included a discussion of Maxine Brandis’ book *Land voor onze zonen*. Maxine (her real name was Mattha Cornelia, shortened to Madzy - Maxine was a short-lived *nom de plume* which she detested) was my mother, and I am just completing a biography of her.

“I used both the Dutch and the English versions of the book, of course, but I also had access to her many other writings, including over thirty columns which she wrote for *De Nederlandse Courant* in the early 1960s. Her views about immigration evolved in very interesting ways. One factor in this evolution is that *Land voor onze zonen* was designed primarily for readers in Holland. (The English version came first, and she herself did the translation. For the Dutch version she added some amplification

and explanation which had not been necessary for English-speaking readers). The newspaper columns were written for Dutch immigrants in Canada and deal with some of the same subjects but also some different ones, and present different slants and angles of vision. Moreover, life experiences of her own occurring between the writing of the book and the writing of the columns brought about changes in her views.

“In the course of my book I explore the many shades of opinion and feeling about immigration which her published and unpublished writings reveal. She was a prolific writer, though much of her work was not revised and polished for publication; one of the reasons for this was that she suffered severely from rheumatoid arthritis, and the pain in her hands gradually interfered with her ability to type and finally stopped it altogether. Then, undaunted, she recorded material on tape and hired a typist to transcribe it, laboriously corrected the rough drafts and had neat drafts typed.

“I thought you might be interested in these bits of additional information about Madzy Brender à Brandis and her writing.”