

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION.

Statistics recently published show that during the year 1902 there arrived in Canada 32,880 immigrants from the United States, 20,794 from Great Britain and Ireland, and 30,361 from the continent of Europe. This showing is satisfactory enough, so far as the total immigration is concerned, but it would have been immeasurably more so if the European quota had been very much the smallest of the three.

There is simply no comparison in the value to Canada of foreigners from the United States and foreigners from any country in Europe, and this is true also of any proposed comparison between European and British immigrants. It is not merely a question of language and literature, though it is partly that; or of expert knowledge of and practical skill in agriculture, though that is of very great importance. It is in the last resort a political difference between races that have been developed in very different social and institutional environments. The European immigrant is not accustomed to individualistic society. He has been reared amidst survivals of the village community and of the feudal system. He is politically an infant as compared with those brought up in the free, if turbulent, political atmosphere of Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. He has to learn after he comes here what freedom means and how to use it, and as he speaks his own foreign tongue and associates with others who use it, his political education cannot as a rule proceed very rapidly or go on very far. It is practically impossible for English-speaking settlers to understand the political ideals of these imported aliens, or to ascertain how far or in what way they may be modified by residence in the northwest.

The presence of these somewhat inferior races in the great western domain entails an almost unendurable burden on those who have to promote the spread of Christian civilization in that new country. On the success of their efforts along educational and evangelistic lines more than on anything else depends the future destiny of the northwest, and, with it, of the whole Dominion. From this point of view, as well as from others, the time has obviously come when expenditure to promote immigration may safely be very much curtailed, and when the country may usefully leave people to come of their own accord. The efforts to induce immigrants to settle in Canada should be limited to the United Kingdom and the United States, and might hereafter in these countries be limited to the circulation in attractive form of perfectly trustworthy intelligence regarding the districts available for settlement. While the Dominion was staggering under a load of debt incurred to secure the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway there was some defence for a strenuous immigration policy and for paying little attention to the character of the immigrants; but that time has gone never to return, and now the immigration policy need not be overdone while undesirable immigrants may usefully be dispensed with.

It is no reply to this contention to remark that only an extremely small proportion of the whole northwest has yet been taken up, and that the evil, if there is any, is as yet infinitesimal. As a matter of fact, this is a wrong view of the situation, but, not to dwell upon it, there need be no doubt that the Canadian churches have their task of maintaining religious services in the new settlements made indefinitely more onerous by the presence in numerous districts of people who are too diverse from the ordinary Canadian type to be reached by a reasonable expenditure of money and labor.