

WAR AND IMMIGRATION

Although the United States is not involved in the European conflagration it is already evident that it will be affected at many points. At just how many is a subject for speculation in the Boston Transcript which asks, "how much of our alien population at present engaged as hewers of wood and drawers of water are likely to be drawn away from us? The call has come across the water for the mobilization of the reservists of several of the countries that would be participants in such a struggle, and while the responses are by no means negligible there is not as yet a movement discernible that is likely greatly to reduce the number of our foreign-born population in this country. Although this is neutral territory and must remain so, there is nothing in that relation to prevent former subjects of other Governments to return to their fatherlands as individuals even though it is their declared purpose to fight against some other Power when they get there."

"Only in exceptional cases," says the Transcript, "will any such drift be prompted by love of country. Men and women who find their opportunities in the United States better than in their own countries, even when the latter are at peace, as a rule will not find them any more attractive when at war. There is, however, a certain rather crude code of chivalry and standard of patriotism that some nationalities feel they must recognize no matter in what part of the world they may be. An immigrant may become a good American for all practical purposes, and yet be unwilling to incur the ostracism of those whom he has left in the land that gave him birth and in dire emergencies he reacts to the necessities of the country of his nativity. Perhaps this may not be true of those who have become citizens of this country, but there is a great number of aliens doing its work and sharing in its opportunities and benefits who are not citizens and do not desire or expect ever

to become such. Among these are many boarding their earnings that in due time they may go back whence they came and live in comparative ease upon the fruits of their industry and thrift.

"From the ranks of these there may be not a few who will feel impelled to return for the time being and help protect what they still regard as their heritage. But we do not expect as many to take the back track as was the case during the panic of seven years ago. At least we hope not. We would rather take chances with those already here and partially adjusted than to undertake breaking in a new, and so far as our institutions are concerned, a primal mass of raw material to take their places. The effect upon immigration would be somewhat problematical, but it would probably be to very materially lessen it. Even were those seeking our shores unrestrained at home the facilities for crossing the ocean would not be as comprehensive and inviting as they are at present. Some of the foreign countries rather encourage emigration in time of peace. It relieves congestion and to some extent it affords an outlet for the deportation of undesirables, many of whom get past our own sentinels. But in time of war the vigilance is greater at the home ports than at our own. Every man who can carry a gun has a value, and the barriers put up on home territory may not be so easy to break through as those established in our own ports."

Conditions in Canada although similar, are likely to be more seriously affected. It seems certain that immigration will practically cease and it may be years before we recover from the cessation of the influx of capital in human form, which has been such a strong contributing factor in our national progress.