

The Immigrant in Canada

"If I had known as much then as I do now," is the constant lament of the old man and the old nation. Once only in history has a nation been endowed with the experience of age and the strength of youth. That nation is Canada.

Across the border line, which separates us from the United States, is a nation 100 years older than we, which has passed through in a remarkably close degree the development which we must experience in the next 100 years. We can learn from the United States; from its failures perhaps even more than from its successes.

The outstanding failure of the United States in the opinion of the late British Minister at Washington is to be found in its city government. The chief factor in that failure is the treatment which America has accorded to the immigrant. It is in the treatment of the immigrant that Canada can learn most from the failure of our neighbor. It is from the proper treatment of the immigrant that Canada can gain most in the next quarter of a century.

In the United States industry has dominated politics since the decline of the influence of the South in 1850. All through this period the cry of industry for cheap labor determined the policy of the Government toward immigration. The open door to the land of freedom and opportunity sounded well on the floor of Congress. But in secret councils it was the open shop of cheap foreign workers that counted.

The immigration policy of the United States, like that of Canada, has consisted simply in the invitation to come. After the immigrant had arrived and passed the insignificant requirements of Ellis Island he was told simply to go where he pleased. Of course he went to the cities, the mines, the factories, the railroads. He seldom went to the land. Not only did he go to these places, but he was herded there in great congested districts, and segregated from the life of the land. He formed a little Russia, a little Italy, a Jewry, and a little Greece in every city on the continent.

The result was a poor, and too often a slum population. This population had the inalienable right guaranteed by the constitution to vote for presidents, judges, congressmen, mayors and aldermen. The immigrant exercised this right at the bidding of the boss and the ward heeler. For many years the small group of capitalists in control of the political machine legislated and administered as they pleased by means of the great solid foreign vote, which they bought for a few odd jobs, a little judicious flattery, some Christmas turkeys and campaign drinks and cigars.

This is the lesson that faces the Canadian people to-day. "What will we do with the immigrant?" is the question that must be answered unless we are prepared to follow in the footsteps of our neighbor. It is useless to say that this cannot happen in Canada. It has happened on a small scale already. It is happening in Toronto to-day. It is happening in the West.

In 1901 the population of Canada was 94 per cent. British and 6 per cent. foreign. In 1911 it was 89 per cent. British and 11 per cent. foreign. The foreign percentage of the population had almost doubled in ten years. The increase has stopped now, but after the war it will go forward by leaps and bounds. It is more than likely that by 1940 the population of Canada will be over half "foreign."

There is nothing very wrong with the foreigner as an immigrant. He is not the degenerate product of the city slums. He is industrious, be he Italian, Slav or Jew. He has race qualities that will form a valuable element in the new Canadian that is to be. The mysticism of the Slav is needed in the dominant Anglo-Saxon materialism. The communistic tradition of the Slav will be a useful corrective for the individualism of the Scot. The happy careless and passionate Italian has a distinct contribution to make to the spirit of our people. The Jew with his

strange anomalies, his idealism and thrift; his cleverness and industry, is to be welcomed rather than despised.

Our danger is not from the immigrant, but from our own indifference and failure to put him to better uses than those of a political machine. We cannot get rid of the immigrant. We cannot do without him. He must come. The unanswerable law of survival bids our doors open to him. But we can direct the immigrant as he comes and after he arrives. We can, instead of leaving him alone to sink to the lower levels, take him and place him where he can do most good for himself and his adopted country.

Perhaps the chief trouble with our immigrant population is that it is segregated. The immigrants in the cities are crowded together. In the prairies they gather into colonies, and too often present a strong wall of indifference to every influence in the land. In some way we must shuffle the pack. It spells ruin to the country to allow the formation of racial cliques on a large scale. Much of the shuffling can be left to chance, and the size and opportunity of a new country. But the experience of the United States shows us that this is not enough.

The Ontario farmer is in need of help. It is safe to say that eight-tenths of the Slavs and Italians in Canada come from the country. If these people could be put on Ontario farms with their families as hired help, a long step forward would be made. The farmer is needlessly mistrustful of the foreigner. On better acquaintance he will find him a good, honest workman. The immigrant could settle down in a small house on a corner of the farm with a plot of ground of his own. His children would go to the district school and grow up on an equality with the other children. In time he would buy a part of the farm, and when the old people retired a new generation of Canadians would be established on the land. This is no idle dream. It has happened no further away than Mimico. Not long ago an old Canadian farmer, whose children had gone to the city, sold 200 acres for \$11,000. The man who bought it is an Italian who worked for the owner for years. In August the Italian's son is to be married to a neighboring Canadian girl.

Fear has been expressed that a system of serfdom might arise out of such an experiment. This is too academic an objection to deserve much notice. Hydrophobia might arise out of it, too, but we need not worry about it yet. This objection indicates chiefly that the person who made it wanted something to talk about. The process is much more likely to be in the direction of the small holding. All these people need is a stirrup and they can be depended upon to climb into the saddle.

The Unemployed

From The Ottawa Journal.

In 1913, when the West had its last big crop, the grain growers found it necessary to bring 25,000 harvesters from the East.

Unless something unforeseen occurs, the crop this year will be bigger, and owing to the war there will be fewer farm hands on the prairies to harvest it.

With a bigger crop to handle, and fewer men to handle it, there should be work for 30,000 unemployed during the harvest months.

It will not be possible, in a year like the present, to get skilled farm hands in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces. There will not be more help on Ontario and Maritime farms than is necessary to harvest the eastern crop.

It is therefore quite reasonable to assume that most of the help required will have to be got in the cities. The battalions of unemployed now vainly seeking something to do will be in demand then; and 30,000 jobs should make a big difference.

It is poor consolation for a starving man out of a job in May, to be told that he will get work in July and August; but it is well for him to know that the situation is not so bad or the future so dark as he imagines. Most of the grain growers will need men before the actual work of harvesting begins, and if things can be tided over for a few weeks the problem will have reached a much less acute stage.

Neglectful

From The Columbia State.

We wish the English gentleman who subsidizes the American press would send on the amount due us at once. Here we've been doing pretty good work for the man, and the miserable tightwad hasn't loosened up a shilling's worth.