

THE IMMIGRATION WORK

ALEXANDER FOWLER HAS MANY INTERESTING EXPERIENCES

Story of the Immigration Department Work at the Port of Kingston Very Cautious.

The port of Kingston, popularly known as the gateway of Eastern Ontario, has been since its establishment, one of the most important ports of immigration of Canada. The work has sprung so much into the limelight through recent legislation, in formation about it will prove of general interest.

Previous to 1908, Kingston had no immigration service. The work of accepting and rejecting foreigners was carried on, in a haphazard fashion, by a well meaning, but over-worked revenue staff. In 1908 the Government saw the necessity of creating a service to deal with the problem. At that time there were employed on ~~the immigration branch~~ of the Revenue Department, the late Capt. J. Goughigan, James Hanley, George Comer and William Greaves.

In 1911 Alexander Fowler was appointed in full charge and he has taken the responsibilities and worries of the work since then.

In considering the purpose of this department one must remember that its work is not merely that of excluding undesirables from the country. Desirable men, in good health, from any friendly or neutral country are welcomed to Canada by the immigration staff, and are encouraged to make their homes here. This is particularly the case if their business or trade is one in which there is a scarcity of labor in this country. Canadian labor is considered first. That is to say, if there are more men in Canada working at a certain trade than the demand calls for, laborers at that trade are either not encouraged to enter Canada or are excluded unconditionally. If, on the other hand, there is a scarcity of labor in any trade, all foreigners working at that trade are encouraged to come into the country. At present there is a great scarcity of farm labor over here, particularly in the west. There is also a great lack of female domestics. Therefore the department fulfils its duty by giving every encouragement to prospective farmers, cooks, housemaids and waitresses. Little restriction is placed upon these people entering the country. Provided that they do not come from a country unfriendly to the Allies, that they are in reasonably good health, and that they have enough money to provide against their becoming a public charge, they are gladly welcomed to Canada. People following other trades than those mentioned have other restrictions placed upon them, according to their desirability as Canadian residents.

Great precautions are taken to exclude any undesirable from Canada. The occupants of each boat are carefully scrutinized by the inspector, and all suspicious-looking characters are rigidly examined. Prior to the war out-going steamers were not inspected, but since 1914 every outbound boat is examined to prevent any interned aliens escaping. This problem of escaping aliens is a serious one at present. Scarcely a day elapses but a citizen of some unfriendly country tries to leave Canada by way of Kingston.

Besides the rejection of alien enemies and undesirables from Canada, Asiatic immigration is discouraged. Chinese must pay a tax of \$500 upon entering this country. No Chinese laborers are admitted through Windsor, while merchants and students are let in with discretion. The principal idea of the immigration department is to fill Canada with as many desirable residents as possible, but, for the safety of the nation, to make sure that they will be good citizens.

When one realizes that during the summer there are two boats daily from Cape Vincent, two or three from the Thousands Islands, steamers from Clayton, Rochester, Ogdensburg without including the multitude of small craft each of which has to be inspected, the extent of the work may be imagined. Last year there were over 150 farmers, mainly Americans of English descent, who came to Canada by way of Kingston. Last year about 600 immigrants applied for admittance while fifty of these had to be rejected.

The life of an immigration inspector is a hard one. Many people entering the country look upon the inspection as an infringement upon individual rights, and do not realize its necessity. This causes more unpleasant affairs in the immigration office which are hard to avoid. Amusing incidents occur, however, which tend to relieve the monotony of the work. For example, a man crossing one day, upon being examined by the inspector declared that he was a German citizen and had come to Canada to join the German army. Before he realized his mistake he found himself under a military escort.

Immigration officials have many interesting experiences with eloping couples, and have been the means of breaking up a large number of youthful romances.

Only last Sunday, a prominent Kingston married man brought with him from Ogdensburg a pretty young woman. A telegram from the authorities there started Mr. Fowler on his track. The pair was located the following morning registered at a local hotel. The girls was sent to Brockville and thence deported to Ogdensburg.

The methods employed by Canadian immigration inspectors are undoubtedly superior to those used in the United States. No head tax is levied on Canadian immigrants, but the qualifications for admission are strict. On the other side anyone having the head tax of \$8 is admitted. The Canadian department is not considering the adoption of any measures to retaliate on the strict regulations recently imposed by the Americans.

Mr. Fowler has now the additional work of issuing permits to men between eighteen and forty-five years

of age who might be liable for overseas service. He has already issued a large number.