

Speed the Parting Guest

It is reported that thousands of aliens in Northern Ontario are trying to get back to Europe. This ought surely to be exactly in accord with the views of those who object to the presence of aliens, and would discourage further immigration of that kind. It will tend to diminish friction between foreigners and returned soldiers, and help to solve the problem of unemployment. At the same time it involves no hard treatment of the alien. It is simply letting him have his liberty of action, and ought to please him and please those who object to his presence.

But now the cry is raised that if the alien is allowed to go he will be escaping the burden of taxation. So far as the Dominion goes he is not liable to direct taxation. Hardly any income earned by a mechanic, even at the highest war wages, is liable to income tax. In order to reach the foreigner, therefore, it would be necessary to pass a new law and make it retroactive. Meantime the foreigners would have to be detained in the country. And the detention would have to be for a long time, judging by the manner in which the income tax is being collected under the present law. The tax bills for the year 1917 have only just been distributed.

The suggestion appears to emanate from a mere desire to worry the foreigners, without regard to the interests of the community. Find out what the foreigner wants, and then prevent him from doing it. One is reminded of the story of the parent who said: "Go into the next room, find out what Tommy is doing, and tell him to stop."

The common-sense plan is to let the foreigner go if he desires to do so, and facilitate his return. The amount of taxes that could be collected is not worth the trouble of collection.