

Word comes that the immigration committee of Congress propose an act to prohibit entry to the United States of emigrants from anywhere in the world except Canada, Newfoundland, Mexico and Cuba. The prohibition is to continue for four years. As the committee is unanimous, the proposition seems likely to carry in Congress.

It is a remarkable development. No country in the world has ever yet forbidden the entry of outsiders from most of the rest of the world as a national principle. Even Japan, in the era long ago when she objected to European visitors, did not bar Asiatics. And the Washington proposition is the more curious because made in a democracy which not only is the largest in population in the world, but includes the greatest admixture of foreign races any country in the world has known.

What is the reason? The reason is clearly two-fold. One idea is an aim to protect the present American labor from competition. The other cause is the feeling aroused in the United States by the ideas and practice of such as the Industrial Workers of the World on this continent, and Bolsheviks and Spartacans in Europe.

Regarding the latter matter, American democracy beyond doubt stands in the main, like the British democracies for fair play to all human beings within the national limits. That is the principle of all intelligent democracy. There are vast shortcomings yet in civilization. A host of grave inequalities and injustices assuredly exist. Some of the people are far better off in money or comfort than most—far better off than anybody should be while so many others live under distressing pressure—but this unsatisfactory condition is recognized by the majority of us to be in the main an unfortunate inheritance from past ages for which none of the living are largely to blame—a bequest from the constitution of human society which developed long before the present generation was responsible—and which can not be altogether remedied in a day. Most of us are anxious to improve things. Most of us try to work at the job, or to encourage those who do, and most of us wish to give each other fair play while the effort goes on. The existing shortcomings are not set down to malice on the part of anybody. And improvement grows. Bye and bye, things will be much better. But Bolshevism and I. W. W. gospel impute the shortcomings of civilization to present class greed and cruelty and wilful class malice, and they aim to attempt to remedy the trouble in a day by bloody violence dictated by a malice, a cruelty and a greed more foul by far than that which they impute to "the bourgeoisie" the imaginary foe their diseased imaginations has created.

The principle of the Bolshevik and the I. W. W. being deliberate crime against part of their fellow-citizens wherever they are, their principle inevitably means a head-on collision with the principle of any free and intelligent democracy. This is in part what is happening in the case of the United States. And as the rank and file of the I. W. W. and the Bolsheviks consist chiefly of hare-brained maniacs from the slums of Europe, it is no wonder that leaders of the United States people are suggesting a cavalier means of checking the immigration of such criminals to this continent. Nor is the inclusion of Britain in the prohibition altogether strange. While the mass of the dangerous aliens on this continent, and most of those who are likely to come, are ignorant or hare-brained products of the continent of Europe, some of the worst agitators, because the shrewdest and most specious and most irreconcilable, are Englishmen and Scotchmen.