

Mr. E. N. Lewis, M.P., maintains his records for bringing live questions before the House of Commons. He seems to be nearer to the people in his methods of thinking than most of his associates in Parliament. Now he proposes an amendment to the Immigration Act which is intended to check the tendency among foreigners to carry deadly weapons for the settlement of their differences of opinion. He desires to have immigrants searched on landing, and the cases of any found with weapons referred to the Minister of the Interior with a view to having the armed immigrant deported if he be not shown to be a man of good character.

The trouble is, of course, that the first things which the unarmed immigrant will see, when he gets ashore in Canada, are shop windows full of weapons for sale. From this, if he be a discerning man, with a deductive mind, he will infer that he had better buy a knife or a gun at once; for it is plain that he is in a savage country where the inhabitants go armed. Obviously, it would be no more than fair play to the immigrant to remove from his sight these signs of our "savagery," which the police will subsequently tell him are very much exaggerated. If he comes to the country unarmed, we ought not to insist in this way that he arm himself, not to punish him later for having taken our advice.

Mr. Lewis has another clause in his bill which provides for the searching of any person by a peace officer who has reason to believe that he may be armed; and, if arms be found on a person who has immigrated into the country within two years, the Minister of the Interior may order his deportation. This is apparently to meet the case of the man who has caught the knife-carrying custom since landing in Canada. But would it not be more just and possibly economical to enforce the law we have against the exposure of weapons for sale, and so avoid educating this newcomer into bad habits. The fact is that we probably have law enough now to reduce the practice to a harmless minimum if it were rigidly and universally enforced.

However, it will do no harm to impress upon the minds of foreigners coming to this country, by a special examination, the fact that it is a crime to carry arms in Canada. If that fact were once driven well home, it would be easier for the police to enforce the law afterwards. Then if it were made difficult for a foreigner to buy a weapon, we should have the evil well in hand. Men do not carry weapons for amusement. Undoubtedly the great majority of those who do are under the impression that they would not be safe in this country without them; and once we can remove this feeling—in one way, by disarming their fellow immigrants—they will not be likely to keep their money locked up in useless articles.