

DANGER FEATURES IN THE BUILDING UP OF CANADA

The Less-Desirable Immigrants Increasing in Greater Proportion Than the Better Class—So Far the Dominion Has Been a Mortar, Not a Crucible.

IEWS OF AN ENGLISHMAN WHO LIVED IN CITY

Writing in the Sydney (Australia) Morning Herald, Mr. Charles F. Sigo, an Englishman, who spent several months in Toronto, says:

Canada may be likened to a vast mortar, in which a new nationality is being founded out of a large number of ingredients. The racial, national, and sectional interests in Canada are exceedingly numerous. There are the Canadians themselves expressing their own national consciousness, so far as it has been aroused; settlers from Great Britain; eager dollar-hunters from the United States; the placid Americans; the French-Canadian population, holding its religion dearer than anything else, and still unaffected by the materialism of the age; the Indians, lazing away their days in compounds; negroes serving as porters and attendants; farmers representing every nationality in Europe; Jews congregated in their own quarters, and generally making money; Poles and Austrians doing pick and shovel work; the Chinese, with their virtual monopoly of the laundry business; Japanese and Hindus, and Mormons, eight thousand strong, on the lands of Southern Alberta.

Mortar, Not Crucible.

He said Canada was a mortar, and the figure seems accurate. There is no justification for using the term "crucible," for so far the nationalities have not fused, they have mixed and blended to some extent, but the most interesting phase of Canadian life is the extent to which various nationalities have kept to special districts and occupations, and have retained their special traits. No one now dreams that the French will be absorbed, and some of the elements: Chinese, Japanese, negro, and Hindu, are such as Canada does not wish to absorb. Some of the European nationalities which might otherwise be fused into the Canadian nation show a disposition to segregate themselves, there being special settlements of Ruthenians and Russians.

After Port Said some Canadian towns are the most cosmopolitan in the world. Over a score of languages are taught in Winnipeg schools. Even in Montreal one sees in almost every street French, British, Germans, Jews, Italians, Greeks, negroes, Chinese, and Austrians.

A Dangerous Feature.

It is rather a daring experiment in nation-building this that Canada is carrying on. She certainly has the precedent of the United States, but it should be remembered that the population of the States was far greater than that of Canada before the tide of immigration had reached the same dimensions. The disquieting feature of the immigration is the numbers coming from southern Europe. It is true these men largely do the hard and dirty work of the Dominion. Without them there would be less rapidity in railway construction, roadmaking, and the digging of sewers. But it is a very open question whether Canada is not loading on prosperity too heavy a price for this expansion. She is throwing into the mortar in which the Canadian nation is being beaten out the least desirable elements of the least progressive nations of Europe. Austrians, Poles, Russians, Greeks, and Italians are pouring in by thousands. Most of them are undesirable, and of the duties and responsibilities of

citizenship they have but the haziest notions.

They are a perpetual problem to medical health officers, for they delight to crowd together under absolutely unsanitary conditions. I have been in boarding-houses in Toronto conducted by foreigners for foreigners, and found the bathroom let as a bedroom, while from the appearance of the bath I should imagine it had not been used for months. Even in mining and lumber camps these people herd together under conditions that make them an easy prey to tuberculosis and typhoid fever. They have no perception of the danger of contagion, and neglect the simplest precautions.

Will Not Learn Readily.

It is not to be supposed they will learn readily, for they have centuries of unfavorable environment against them. To force cleanliness and sanitary conditions upon them may be possible by prosecution and fine, but to give them a true understanding of British institutions and teach them that the liberties guaranteed them are not to be treated as license will be another and more difficult matter. It is certain that the number of such people that can be assimilated without injury to the nation is limited, and Canada will either be compelled to keep a check on this immigration or be prepared to have for ever an alien laboring class, whose evolution and ideals and standards of living are different from hers.

Already the stream of immigrants is bringing a taint of criminality to the country. In 1911 practically half the persons convicted of indictable offences were immigrants, a class forming only 22.1 per cent of the total population. Surely this is sufficient warning that the whole fabric of the democracy will suffer unless more care is shown in the selection of material. Much splendid stuff is going to the building of the nation. The British Isles are giving of their best farm laborers and mechanics, the United States of their most skillful farmers, and the French, German, Dutch, Belgian, Swiss, and Scandinavian elements are extremely valuable. It is all the greater pity that the undesirable elements should be allowed to mix with them.

Undesirables Increase Swiftly.

The really disquieting feature is that the least desirable elements are making the fastest percentage increases. Canada is less an Anglo-Saxon country to-day than it was a decade ago, the immigration from Britain and the United States having fallen to about 77 per cent. of the whole. In 1901 the British and French elements formed 87.74 per cent. of the population. In 1911 only 82.58. During the decade the largest percentage increases were:—Bulgarians and Roumanians, from 354 to 5875; Grecians from 291 to 3594; Austro-Hungarians (Austrians, Bukovinians, Galicians, Hungarians, and Ruthenians), from 18,178 to 129,103; Finnish from 2502 to 15,497; Polish, from 6295 to 33,365; Italians, from 10,834 to 45,411; Jews, from 16,131 to 75,681; unclassified nationalities, from 1460 to 18,310. Observe the preponderance of the Slav and Southern European elements in the list, and consider if this is for the good of the future Canadian nation. During the same period the Chinese population rose to 27,774, and the Japanese to 9021. Canada would do well to take a lesson from Australasia, and remember that quality counts as well as quantity.