

IMMIGRANTS WILL BRING PROBLEMS

J. S. Woodsworth Addresses Canadian Club on Expected Rush to Canada After the War.

At a Canadian club luncheon yesterday J. S. Woodsworth, secretary of the Canadian Welfare league, spoke on "The Immigrant Invasion After the War—Are We Ready For It?" His address was an extremely careful and detailed survey of the immigrant problem in Canada. It was illustrated by numerous charts, prepared by the lecturer himself, which showed in a most effective manner such facts in connection with the subject as were capable of being presented in statistical form. Besides giving a wealth of information on a vital topic, Mr. Woodsworth offered many practical suggestions for making the best use of the human material supplied to Canada from the old world.

Future With Immigrants.

Mr. Woodsworth said in part:

I count it a great honor to address this representative body of Canadians on a subject which most vitally affects the welfare of Canada.

The phrase "immigrant invasion" is no scare headline. So far as numbers go, the future of Canada lies not with the native-born Canadians, but with our immigrants—possibly with our foreign immigrants.

At this time in the discussion of all subjects there is only one starting place—the world war. With every important topic two questions present themselves, "What is the relation of this to the war?" and "After the war, what?"

This war has clearly revealed to us what we had only begun to suspect—that we had in our midst large numbers of undigested aliens who might at any time cause a serious disturbance within our body politic. At election times we have begun to hear of the German vote or the Ruthenian vote, but we have put aside the whole question as merely a matter of party warfare or election pyrotechnics.

But now that registration of aliens is considered necessary, now that many Germans and Austrians in Canada are under guard, now that the mayors of some cities are apprehensive of foreign outbreaks—now we begin to realize the seriousness of our problem.

The danger now to be guarded against is that a sudden panic may lead us to take extreme positions and thus intensify and perpetuate racial bitterness and animosities.

Unification Not Complete.

The fact is that Canadian unification is still far from complete and the introduction of foreign elements is making the process extremely complicated and difficult.

What of immigration after the war? At this stage it would be of little advantage to indulge in speculation as to the outcome. If the allies should be defeated—for most of us such a contingency is unthinkable—our fate would then probably be bound up with that of the United States.

If the allies win, much will depend upon the terms of settlement and the nature of the indemnity. Probably England will enjoy a period of rapid trade expansion that will lessen the overseas migration. There is a general impression that many of the farmers of Belgium and France may have no heart to return to their devastated homes, but will prefer to start anew in the friendly new land of Canada. Possibly though, on the other hand, the male population will be so reduced and the whole land so impoverished that it will be absolutely necessary to retain every available man to rebuild the waste places.

Germany, from which in recent years we have had few immigrants, will undoubtedly need to conserve her resources and Poland may again become an independent kingdom, in which case instead of sending forth her best she will rather call her sons from afar to return and build up something of the former glory.

From the frontiers of Austria and Russia, from the fragments of older nations, from despoiled fields and war-ravaged villages, from war taxes, will doubtless come larger and yet larger armies of immigrants.

This movement of the peoples from southeastern Europe has during the last quarter of a century been slowly gathering momentum. First it was directed toward the United States. As the returned immigrants carried back the news of wider opportunities in the new land, the thoughts of men more and more turned westward. Then came the enactment by the United States of stricter immigration laws. This did not stop the stream, but helped to direct it into more northerly channels—Canada welcomed the oncoming hosts.

While admittedly the question is exceedingly complicated and it is impossible to determine accurately what the resultant effect of the war will be, it appears altogether probable that the war will accelerate rather than retard this world movement of the people.

Canada Stands to Gain.

In support of this conclusion two general considerations may be urged—first, war tends to break down national and social barriers, to loosen old associations and to enlarge our little world; second, this war will change the whole economic map of Europe and of the world. Trade currents will take entirely new directions. The precise effects no one can prophecy, but on the whole Canada—a new country, largely as yet undeveloped and with unlimited natural resources—stands to gain.

Are we ready for more immigrants? Even without a greatly augmented increase our problem is a serious one. As

yet no constructive policy has been adopted for dealing with it in any adequate way.

Our immigration department, has made excellent arrangements, but more far-reaching measures are absolutely necessary. Our industrial system, our educational system, our political system must be decidedly modified to meet the new needs. We have a commission on conservation of natural resources. Why not a commission on conservation of human resources?

Canada's population in 1901 was 5,371,315; of this 57 per cent, or 3,030,195 was British.

The immigration from July 1, 1900, to March 31, 1914, was 2,906,022. The various nationalities were represented in the following proportions: Total British, 38.41 per cent; United States, 34.41 per cent; total non-English speaking, 27.18 per cent.

The total immigration for 1912-1914, was 384,478, as against 402,422 in 1912-1913, or a decrease of 4.46 per cent. The British immigration was 142,622, as against 150,842, or a decrease of 5.26 per cent. Immigration from the United States was 107,530, as against previous year, 132,002, or a decrease of 22.54 per cent. From other countries the immigration was 134,726, as against previous years 112,881, or an increase of 19.35 per cent.

You will notice that whilst there was a decrease in immigration both from Great Britain and the United States, there was an increase in our non-English immigration.

Little in Common.

While we superficially class all these peoples as foreigners, we must remember that in reality each is a foreigner to all the others. The French, for instance, have very little in common with the Germans, the Germans with the Russians, the Russians with the Jews. The Canadians are the amalgam which must bind together these diverse peoples. My question is, mix these peoples together, and what will be the outcome? From the racial standpoint it is evident that we will no longer be British, probably no longer Anglo-Saxon. From the standpoint of eugenics it is not at all clear that the highest results are to be obtained through the indiscriminate mixing of all sorts and conditions. But if they do not intermingle and intermarry the situation may be even more serious, as we will then set up more or less of a caste system.

Religious Standpoint.

From the religious standpoint what will be the outcome? For it must be remembered that most of our foreign immigrants do not belong to the

marches which are at the present time dominant in Canada.

From the political standpoint it is evident that there will be very great changes and very serious dangers. The recent civic elections reveal to us the strength of the foreign vote. Never before were national lines so sharply drawn or was there greater bitterness. Whilst it is true that these people are not united and that the English majority may retain its power by pitting one against the other, at the same time it is also true that such a condition is far from satisfactory, and would inevitably result in placing any party at the mercy of any one leading nationality, thus practically giving that nationality the balance of power.

From the social standpoint, we must remember that each nationality brings with it its own social customs and ideals. Which will prevail? From the industrial standpoint, there is the serious question as to whether with such a rapid influx Canadian standards of living can be maintained.

Let me say a good word for the foreigner. Few of us realize the riches which he brings with him. In fact, from Europe these streams of immigration bear with them valuable deposits which may enrich our national life if we have but the good sense to conserve them. A high idealism, love of art, music and literature, patient industry, deep religious devotion. All these the immigrant brings to our shores. We cannot afford to lose any one of them.

Dealing with the education of the foreign immigrant children, the speaker said:

"It is indisputable that while the Canadian children maintain the numbers of the various grades, there is serious dropping off on the part of most of the foreign nationalities. Many of those in the junior grades are probably new arrivals just beginning English, but undoubtedly, right across this country there are large numbers of children who are leaving school at an early age. We are thus mortgaging the next generation.

Bi-lingualism.

Several important questions arise. First, there is that associated with the term, "Bi-lingualism." Personally I have a great deal of sympathy for the foreigner in his desire to retain the language which his father and mother speak, and which is the language of his religious expression. I can see no reason why under proper safeguards provision should not be made for the teaching of other than the English language. We do this in our universities where we realize the cultural value of the various European languages. Why should it not be done at the age when children can most readily learn a second language? But, this should be done in such a way that it would not interfere with unifying influences of the school. English should be the language of our schools and should be taught thoroughly. The question of separate schools is quite distinct and altogether too complicated to be entered upon here. The fact is that we have undertaken bigger problems than we realized, e.g., the Mennonite communities in southern Manitoba and the Doukhobor colonies in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Coercion would be simply Germanization or Russification.

Further modifications in our public school system become necessary. Our school system is built up on the principle that it is to the benefit of the state that the coming citizen should receive a good elementary education. Formerly our citizens arrived by the gateway of birth, now most of them come via Halifax or St. John. We have made no general provision for the teaching of adult immigrants.

Race Map of West.

The race map of western Canada looks very much like a crazy patchwork quilt. How can these peoples be sufficiently united to form one strong nation? Europe has been transferred to Canada. Here we have all the divisions of race and language and social customs, and all the inherited animosities of centuries. What Europe has failed to do in a thousand years Canada must attempt.

May I venture to suggest that the Winnipeg Canadian club has a unique opportunity of initiating a movement which will at once call attention to the problem and contribute to its solution."