

## IMMIGRATION

By J. W. MacMILLAN.

A flowing tide of immigration is a new phenomenon in Canada. But ever since the potato blight of 1848 drove the Irish from Ireland the United States have been subjected to the same inrush. We are fortunate in being able to study the experiences of our neighbors during this long period. Some of the facts disclosed may be appropriately set down here.

1. The tide of immigration ebbs and flows with good and bad times. It is at its highest in years of business prosperity, and sinks to its lowest in times of depression or panic. In 1908, for instance, on account of the depression which began in the autumn of the preceding year, the net immigration into the United States was scarcely more than 200,000, whereas in the preceding year it had exceeded a million. The effect reached Canada a year later, and the arrivals at ocean ports during 1909 were less than a third of those of 1908. The reason for this variation lies in the fact that the chief immigration agent is the prosperous immigrant. Thousands of letters, the most convincing literature as to the attractiveness of the new country, are sent through the mails every week from the immigrant settled in the country to his relatives and friends in Europe. When he tells of plenty of work at good wages the relatives and friends are apt to follow him across the sea. When he himself has lost his job they make up their minds to stay at home.

2. The immigration from the north and west of Europe tends to diminish and that from the south and east to increase. For obvious reasons the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic races are more desirable than the Italic and Slavic. In 1880 the United States was receiving 80% of the more desirable, in 1906 but 30%. In the same period the Italic and Slavic immigration had increased from 8% to 65%. The establishment of a steamship line from Trieste to Canadian ports may be taken as an indication of the same tendency in immigration to Canada.

3. As immigration develops the "bird of passage" appears. Many laborers will go back to Europe for the winter. During the last ten years one third of the immigrants to the United States returned. We shall soon have to add a column in the statistics for "net immigration."

4. Contrary to the prevalent belief immigrants do not add disproportionately to the crime and insanity of the land they adopt. The recent investigation of the U. S. Commission on Immigration makes this fact plain. Where the figures seem to support the mistaken view the explanation is to be found in the disproportionate number of adult males among the immigrants, for nearly all criminals come from that class. There are practically no child criminals, and few women criminals. It is a fact however, that the first generation of native born children of immigrant parents are more criminally inclined. But that is the fault of a new environment, and does not impugn the moral health of the newcomers in themselves.

5. The immigration to a country is not a net gain to population. This is the most startling and alarming fact about immigration. To an extent which it is impossible to determine exactly they displace the native stock. It may surprise many to learn that the population of the United States was growing faster before immi-

gration set in than it has grown since. An estimate was made in 1810 based on the natural increase of the resident population at that time predicting a hundred millions for the end of the century. In fact the census of 1900 reported only six millions, and that included nearly twenty millions of foreigners or their children. It is noticeable that in the southern states, to which the immigration has been slight, the birth rate has continued normal throughout the century. Whereas in New England, which has received the largest number of immigrants, the birth rate has fallen from having been the highest in the Republic to being the lowest.

Doubtless other causes have contributed to this result, but one of the chief causes lies in immigration. The classes of the native stock engaged in casual and manual labor are first displaced, and with the ascent of the foreign born in the scale of comfortable living the process of displacement reaches higher.

Having noted these lessons to be learned from the experience of the United States we may proceed to contemplate the gains derived from immigration. They may be stated under two categories, that of money and that of people.

The actual capital brought in by these people adds up to an enormous amount. It is required by our laws that each adult be in possession of \$25, and for each child half as much must be shown. This amount is doubled in winter. It is known that the immigrants coming from the United States commonly bring large sums. So it is safe to conclude that an average of \$25 is brought into Canada for each immigrant. During the past year alone that adds up to \$10,000,000. Since 1900 it adds up to over \$63,000,000.

The economic value of a human life has been the subject of numerous investigations. Professor Irving Fisher computes that the net worth of a person at birth is \$90, and at the age of twenty is \$4000.

Now, immigrants are mostly between the ages of fourteen and forty-five. They are thus of superior economic worth to the population they come amongst and may be called selected stock. The cost of rearing these citizens is saved to the community they come to, a cost estimated in the United States as reaching \$1000 for each child brought to maturity. Thus this human form of capital is brought to us without expense. Making the conservative estimate that one-fifth of the foreign born population of Canada earns one dollar a day we have these people adding \$120,000,000 a year to the earnings of this country.

The Canadian laws dealing with immigrants are largely modelled upon those of the United States, and may be fairly characterized as prudent and just. Moreover, a somewhat extensive observation justified the assertion that the officials who enforce them are honorable and humane men. The next step should be the extension of paternal supervision of these ignorant and comparatively helpless strangers. They are protected till they get into Canada, then they are left to shift for themselves and frequently become the prey of rapacious fellow countrymen or cheating employment agents. A chain of government employment agencies, equipped with interpreters which would give trustworthy infor-

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