

I think that for the thousands that have been given us of English, Irish, Scotch, Galicians, Germans and Scandinavians, we should know what we have had to pay. If the hon. gentleman would be good enough to give the total number, then we could arrive at an approximate estimate of what each immigrant cost the country.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR (Mr. Sifton). I feel that I ought to give the committee as much information as I can, and I shall just briefly give the figures. The number of immigrants we got in 1896 from all countries was 16,833. In 1897 there was an increase, the number being 19,304. Up to the end of April, 1898, it was 5,216. To make a comparison between the three years, I might give the figures for the first three months of each year. From the 1st January to the 30th April, 1896, there were 3,776; from the 1st January to the 30th April, 1897, the number was 4,294, and for the same period this year, it was 5,216. So that there is a fair amount of improvement and progress. The number has almost been doubled from 1896 to 1898. The information is perhaps of more value, if we take the number of immigrants arriving in Manitoba and the North-west Territories at the points of entry and who are agriculturists. I find that in 1896 the number was 4,196. In 1897, the first year for which I could in any way be held responsible, the number was 10,874. And for the first three months of 1898, it was 15,605, showing 15,605 in the first three months of this year as compared with 4,196 in the whole year of 1896. My hon. friend asked what has been the result of the work in the United States. His reference to the agents we have there are quite correct, so far as the names are concerned, and I have this to say of them that I think we have an intelligent, capable, and hard-working lot of agents, who are doing the very best possible to secure a desirable class of immigrants to our North-west country. They succeeded in getting, during the first three months of this calendar year, something like 4,000 agricultural settlers, who went to Manitoba and the North-west Territories, and I regard that as an extremely satisfactory result.

My hon. friend referred, with some degree of particularity, to the question of the Galicians. I will have to share with the hon. gentlemen upon the other side of the House the honour of discovering the Galicians. Out of a total number of settlers in Canada who came here in 1896—and we would not, I fancy, be held responsible for any of the immigration work done in that year, because no steps were taken in that branch of immigration by this Government until the beginning of 1897—there were nearly 3,000 Galicians. The total number was 16,833. During the period when the hon. gentleman's friends were in power, they had therefore also entered, to some extent, into the Galician industry, and while it is true that

Mr. SPROULE.

4,000 came last year, 3,000 came during the last year for which the hon. gentlemen are responsible. I do not blame them for what they did in connection with Galician's immigration, and I do not share, in any degree, the views of the hon. gentlemen with regard to the undesirability of these people. Having spent the greater portion of my life in the North-west, I have had the opportunity, to a very considerable extent, of familiarizing myself with the conditions of life there, and therefore know pretty well the class of people we must get if we are ever going to settle that country with an agricultural population. I do not share the belief of the hon. gentleman who has spoken adversely of these people. I remember distinctly when the Mennonites and Icelanders came to Manitoba, and I remember that at that time almost the same kind of criticism was addressed to these people that has lately been made against the Galicians. But we have found that although the Mennonites and the Icelanders were not a very attractive lot of people when they came to the North-west, yet after overcoming the difficulties of the start on prairie life, they became the most valuable settlers we have in Manitoba and the North-west. For my part, having seen all classes there, I have no hesitation in saying that the Galicians compare quite favourably with the Icelanders or Mennonites when they first came. It is true that a certain number of camp followers will gather around any large body that may move in any direction, and the same thing occurs in connection with the bringing of people from central Europe. If the agents collect with care 1,000 or 2,000 people whom they consider desirable immigrants and forward them through the agencies placed at their disposal, it follows that along with these people is bound to come a certain number of other people whom the agents did not collect and for whom we are not responsible. The result is that when these parties come out, let us be as careful as we will, there will be a certain number not possessed of sufficient means to make a separate start. It is a complete answer to the charge that these people are paupers to point to the fact that the Canadian Government has never contributed a dollar to their passage money nor has the Government of Austria.

Mr. SPROULE. I understood the Deputy Minister to say that they would subsidize steamship agencies to bring them out.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Our general policy is to pay a bonus to steamship agents for all the bona fide immigrants they take to this country. That applies to the Galicians as to the Germans and others.

Mr. SPROULE. In Galicia to get rid of them, they pay also fees to the steamship companies to take them out of the country.