

The U.S. Sends Its Teeming Masses

[INCLUDING SOME THOUGHTFUL MIDDLE-AGED PEOPLE]

Each year Canada and the United States exchange citizens on a scale which may be unique in history.

Last year, over twenty thousand people left the U.S. to live in Canada. At the same time, Canada saw over twenty thousand of its citizens move to the U.S. The two-way flow is historic. Between 1897 and 1930, 1,435,338 Americans went north, 120,000 of them in the single year 1912.

The Americans who've chosen to leave their native land are not, as one might think, mostly young; young adults are a small part of the whole, less than 10 per cent. The qualifying standards are designed to favour persons in their late youth or their early middle age. In recent years much attention focused on young men from the United States who were deserters from the armed forces or who went to Canada to avoid the American draft. Canada treated them as it treated all other persons crossing the border—they were accepted as visitors or landed immigrants, depending on their desires and qualifications. The military status of persons seeking entrance into Canada has never been a factor in deciding admission. At no time were deserters or young men avoiding the draft a major percentage of the Americans coming into Canada.

The Americans who go to Canada also differ remarkably from the stereotype that the word "immigrant" suggests. Immigrants were once assumed, correctly, to be men and women simply seeking a decent living.

In the calendar year of 1971, a total of 24,366 Americans took a one-way trip north. Of that number, 1,487 were classified as "owners, managers or officials."

Another 4,828 were professional people: 774 professors or principals, 797 school teachers, 178 graduate nurses, 211 religious professionals, 154 authors, editors or journalists, 188 musicians and/or music teachers, 237 social workers, 186 science technicians and 379 miscellaneous professionals.

Charles and Jean Argast, a couple in their forties who left their Indianapolis suburb in the

spring of 1969, were typical. After sober (and one can honestly say, prayerful) consideration, they moved to Vancouver in British Columbia. Their motives are difficult to put into words—they felt that it was necessary that they remake their lives in a new land, and they went to Canada because it was at once foreign and familiar and it promised a kind of freedom they sought.

The move was difficult—they were breaking the ties of a lifetime. Charles, a partner in a prosperous electric appliance company, sold out his share and started in Vancouver as an employee, not a boss, at a markedly lower salary. Jean had to cope with the enormous problems of moving twelve people from one home and one country to another—problems of manners, customs, friends, schools and identities. Charles had to qualify as a landed immigrant under the point system: he gained points for education—he had a university degree from Marquette, two years of law and was studying for an MA in theology; but lost points for age—a minus for each year of his age over thirty-five. He needed fifty points out of a possible one hundred and he made it.

The Argasts were and are committed people. They were active in public service and ideological groups in Indiana, including one called "Hooiers for Peace." They moved after years of consideration and many exploratory trips, but having decided, they did not hesitate.

"Once you start walking across the border," Charles said then, "you'd better keep walking."

They found a pleasant nine-room house in Coquitlam, on the outskirts of Vancouver, and, as they told *Life* magazine then, they had immediate positive reactions. "Canadians are more oriented to people and their needs and less to a system," Charles said, and Jean noted that they could easily spend their weekends in the British Columbia wilderness "exploring all the niches and crannies and getting away from the urban octopus." She said she felt as if they were "stepping back a generation or two."

That was four years ago.

Immigrants are admitted to Canada on the basis of a point system. Points are given for things such as educational level, age, occupational and professional skills, and the ability

to speak English and/or French. Persons desiring more specific information may obtain it through the nearest Canadian consular office.