

DANGER OF STATISTICS

"Well, statistics can get pretty tiresome at times, and I was delighted when, in reading the Research Division's report, I ran across a refreshing piece of information that confounded all the rules. There is a stubborn exception to almost every rule. In this case the exception was an immigrant who had had virtually no formal schooling at all -- barely enough to let him in -- and no skills. When he landed in Canada he was lucky to find himself a job as a common laborer.

"But after six years of residence he owned an enterprise employing 150 workers and had graduated to the highest income bracket of all the group!

"I like that story, although it might be just as well if the schoolteachers forgot it. After all he was only one in 7,000, but the story does prove that for those who have the ambition, the stamina, and the will-to-work even the most formidable obstacles can be conquered. It proves, too, that Canada is still a country in which every man can have his chance.

"Yes, everyone has his chance. In a land which from the very beginning has been made up of immigrants it is only natural, perhaps, that this is the way the Canadian people want it. I feel sure that, if he thinks of immigrants at all, the average native-born Canadian would like to see the newcomer 'get a break'. The Research Division, in fact, found definite evidence that this is so. The report found evidence that the attitude of the 'old Canadians' toward the new had been steadily changing for the better. The report has this to say, and I quote:

'A clear indication of the magnitude of this change is the extraordinary income growth of the 1959 applicants (for citizenship) who could not have achieved such results over a period of six years and four months if they had been confronted by a society which did not accept them positively. On the contrary, the fact that more than 84 per cent of all the immigrants in this survey were able to reach income levels consonant with those of established residents proves, or at least indicates strongly, that as a rule immigrants in Canada are received without prejudice and that they are given an equal opportunity with the rest of the population'.

ACCEPTANCE OF NEWCOMERS

"That part of the report, a thoroughly human part, is the part which I think I like best. It makes it so clear that the successful absorption of the newcomer is not alone a matter of the immigrant's education, or of his skill, or even of his determination to succeed. It is in some measure due to the decency, the spirit of fair play, the friendliness and helpfulness of those who sometimes call themselves native-born but who are not unconscious of the fact that they are really immigrants only a generation or two

removed. This spirit of helpfulness is well exemplified by organizations such as the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services and other bodies engaged in similar work.

"I have said a great deal this afternoon about education and technical training. It is a pretty important subject. No matter whether we are talking about the economic impact of immigration, or national levels of unemployment, or of the integration of the Canadian Indian into the national community, we sooner or later find ourselves confronted by the fact that we must start paying much more attention to education and training in future than we have been doing in the past.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

"It is clear from the summary of the report I have been speaking about that education and training are the greatest single assets which immigrants bring to Canada. From a purely economic point of view, the capital investment and current outlays are saved to the extent to which an immigrant received his education abroad. Furthermore, any country profits from the competition of skills and education which invariably arises through the immigration of adults from technically and culturally highly-developed countries.

"The educational authorities in Canada have reported on several occasions that we should have had the greatest difficulty in carrying on our educational institutions in the years immediately following the War had it not been for the large numbers of professors and teachers Canada was able to recruit in Europe and elsewhere. Reports from both the Research Division of my own Department as well as the Department of Labour indicate, in addition, that the Canadian economy could never have grown to the extent it did during the 1950's without the recruitment of engineers and skilled craftsmen from other countries.

"From reports such as these the pattern of Canada's future personnel needs in industry seems relatively clear. No matter whether they are native-born Canadians or immigrants, those who are to succeed in this country from now on must have adequate education and training. There is some reason to believe that this may come to apply to Canada even more than it may to some other industrial countries. Our economists have pointed out that, because of the size of the Canadian market, our small or medium-sized industry must compete in the markets of the world with industries from larger countries where mass-production is on a large scale. However, small-scale yet competitive manufacturing is widespread and successful in such small European countries as Austria, Sweden and Switzerland. Some Canadian economists feel that Canada, too, must 'compete through quality' in the same way, but they warn us that this is not possible without the maintenance of a highly-trained corps of special management and artisan-workers...."