

Verdun 2,048 patients have been received since the opening of the establishment, and of this number forty per cent. were of foreign birth. In the same institution there are at the present time no less than thirty persons, in a population of four hundred and sixty, who, if subjected to anything but the most cursory examination, would never have been allowed to set foot in the country.

The cause of this load being foisted upon us is not hard to find. It lies in the laxness of our immigration acts, which do not demand a certificate of good bodily and mental health from each person landing, and limit the period during which such parties may be deported to one year.

No effort should be spared to relieve the Dominion of such an incubus, and the remedy is in our own hands. It consists in the passing of stringent laws providing for a full knowledge of the past history of every alien seeking our shores. The true place to prevent the coming of the dangerous immigrant is not at the port of entry, but at that of departure. Each person preparing to emigrate to Canada should be rigidly examined by salaried medical officers, appointed by the Dominion Government, as to his mental fitness at the time of examination, and should also show proof that he has never been insane or epileptic, and that his parents have never been affected with insanity. If found to fulfil all the legal requirements, a sworn certificate, containing his full personal description and vouching for his mental and physical health, should be given him. Without such a certificate he should not be allowed to land, and the vessel bringing him should be obliged to take him back on its return trip at the expense of the owners. The health officers at our ports should, in addition, be clothed with authority to reject any immigrant on arrival if circumstances developed during his passage should demand it, and, instead of one year, the period of probation during which an immigrant might be returned to his own country if afflicted with insanity, unless surely due to causes arising after his arrival, should be extended to two or even three years.

Doubtless such legislation would be bitterly opposed by steamship companies as tending to lessen the number of their steerage passengers, and by irresponsible emigration agents, who send out every soul they can for the sake of the commission received on ocean and railway tickets. But the interests of the State should be paramount to such selfishness, and the Government should insist that Canada, while a hospitable refuge for the deserving poor, be not made an asylum for the diseased and defective.