



Italian.



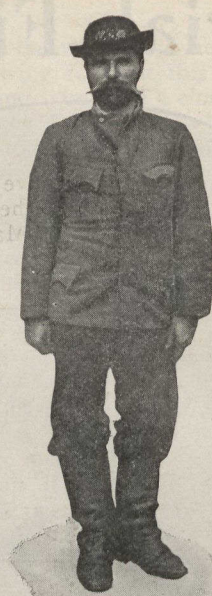
Scandinavian.



German.



Hungarian.



Bukovinian.



Russian.

TYPES OF EUROPEANS IMPORTED TO THIS COUNTRY, MOST OF THEM CAPABLE OF ASSIMILATION.

Population and Prosperity

An Unrestricted Stream of Immigration Into Our Growing Industrial Centres Will Inevitably Depress Wages

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PERHAPS few, if any, Canadians consider it worth a second thought to question our present immigration policy. It is considered an axiom that progress and increase in population go together. For years our statesmen were almost reduced to despair, in attempting to divert part of the great stream of European immigration to Canadian shores. And now that immigrants are coming by the tens of thousands, it is hailed as an infallible sign of economic progress.

We have as yet not been forced to seriously question the expediency of the present policy. It is true that on the Pacific slope strong opposition has been shown to Asiatic immigrants, but this has been based, for the most part, on race prejudice. The immigration of Chinese and Japanese has been discouraged in every possible way. In 1908, as a result of the strong opposition of British Columbia to the immigration of East Indian labourers to that province, the Indian government undertook to keep its people at home, even although they were but "moving on" to another part of the Empire. The government of that country, among other things, disabused the minds of its subjects of the false impressions spread by literature distributed by interested parties. The steamship companies were given to understand that their activity was regarded with disfavour. Positive measures, moreover, were adopted, which resulted in the practical exclusion of Indian labourers from Canada. The most formidable of these measures was the application to Hindu immigrants of section 38 of the Immigration Act, which provided that any immigrants who have come to Canada otherwise than by continuous journey from the country of which they are natives or citizens, and upon through tickets purchased in that country, may be excluded. As there is no means by which a continuous journey from India to Canada can be accomplished, the measure is effective. Moreover, by an order in council, dated June 3, 1908, the amount of money in possession, required in the case of East Indian labourers upon landing, was increased from \$25 to \$200. These measures have served their purposes; the number of such immigrants in 1908 was 2,626; in 1909, it was only six, and since then the number has been a negligible quantity. The Japanese immigration to British Columbia has also practically come to a standstill, principally on account of the opening up of Manchuria as a new field of enterprise, and the opposition of the Japanese government to the emigration of its people to Canada.

THE question may be asked why the opposition to Asiatic immigration, aside from race prejudice, has not been extended to certain immigrants from Southern Europe. In the case of East Indians, the causes for this opposition are apparent. *Tabu* in the selection and preparation of food, and caste in their associations, are conspicuous facts among them. With regard to the percentage of illiterates, investigations have shown that it is greater than for any other race immigrating to this country. In fact, between one-half and three-fifths of them can not read or write. They do not occupy an impor-

tant place in the labour supply of the West. Their efficiency is low, their employment irregular, their competitive ability small, and their industrial position insecure. Their assimilative qualities are lower than those of any other race in the West. The strong influence of custom, caste, and *tabu*, as well as their religion, dark skins, filthy appearance, and mode of life, have stood in the way of association with other races, and it is evident from the attitude of others that they will be given no opportunity to assimilate. And the same holds true in many respects of the Japanese and Chinese immigrants. It is quite clear, then, that until many changes are wrought, Asiatics of the labouring class will find no place in Canadian life save in the exploitation of our resources.

While Canadians are almost a unit in opposing immigration from Asia, they show almost equal unanimity of opinion in regard to encouraging an influx of people of European descent into this country. Tremendous forces are combined in favour of a policy of unrestricted immigration of this class; sentiment and business, generosity, selfishness, labourers, employers. We are prone to view immigration in its details, and not in its entirety. We see this or that individual or class advantage, not the larger national welfare. The interests of capitalists and of newly-arriving immigrants are abundantly considered. The interests of the mass of the people now here are overlooked.

THE problem is not as acute with us as with the people of the United States at the present time; it must inevitably become so. The Fall River riots and labour wars of the republic will be, in the not distant future, repeated in this country. And why? The answer is clear. An unrestricted stream of immigration into our growing industrial centres will inevitably depress wages and the standard of living. Canadians and Britishers in general have been accustomed to a far higher standard of wages and of living than the people of Eastern and Southern Europe. The depressing effect of the ever-present and ever-renewing supply of immigrant labour upon wages appears most clearly at the time of wage contests. In the United States this has often appeared to be the most important aspect of the question. In that country and in our own the law against contract labour does not check the great stream of those guided by friends to a "job." If immigration were suddenly stopped in a period of normal or of increasing business, wages in many occupations would at once rise, and that without the aid of strikes or of arbitration. This would affect most of those occupations which now present the most serious social problems, in mines, factories, and city sweat shops. In some small measure the war in the Balkan States, by recalling many men for service, has had this influence.

Organized labour, of course, thinks most of these immediate effects. Commonly labour's protest is

based upon the untenable "lump of labour" theory—that there is only a certain amount of work to be done; and that every foreigner who comes to Canada takes the place of a Canadian workman in sharing in that labour. That there is an error in this too rigid conception of the influence of new supplies of labour need not now be argued. But there is no mistaking the influence of continually increasing numbers in gradually and permanently depressing the whole plane of wages. It is generally assumed that when the immigrants and their children become Canadianized and raise their standard of living, their presence no longer has any effect in depressing wages below what they otherwise would have been. In fact, it is generally assumed that the general prosperity is enhanced by the mere growth of numbers, and by a dense population. The idea is measurably true so long as national growth is one of extension into unoccupied areas, and the average density of population is low. It ceases to be true when the equilibrium between population and resources has been attained; or when the movement is from the country to the city. And recent statistics gathered from the census show that the growth in Canada's population has been largely an urban growth; and that the country districts have not held their own.

LAST century popular education and ideals were rising at the same time that a rising scale of wages was made possible by industrial improvement accompanying the development of great natural resources. Yet the fortunate union of events did not suffice to prevent the growth of discontent. Popular aspirations outstripped material progress. Much more ominous is the situation, now that the pressure of population in the United States, in England, in Germany, and in most European countries, is beginning to check and reverse this trend of the popular welfare. And the same must hold true for Canada if the present policy of ruthless exploitation of our natural resources, and the encouragement of the immigration of a class of people of low economic standards, is followed. Our capitalists and the people in general may appear to gain for a time; but the nation will without fail discover that it has bartered the peace and security of its children for the pleasures of a brief season.

The question to be faced, then, is: would we have the level of the popular welfare fall in Canada even by a little, if that could be prevented? Would we rival other lands in population rather than in prosperity? Would we wish to gain in density of settlement while losing in that largeness of opportunity and of outlook which makes possible the most distinctive traits of Canadian life? In a truer and wider sense than has been realized the watchword of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association is true: Canada for the Canadians. Already Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver, have become great cities, the delight of the real estate speculator, but filled with menace for the true friends of humanity. Is it not about time that a voice was raised in protest against the present madness for mere numbers?