

# The Immigrant Invasion after the War---Are we ready for it?

By J. S. WOODSWORTH.

The phrase "immigrant invasion" is no scare headline. So far as numbers go, the future of Canada lies not with the native-born Canadians, but with our immigrants—possibly with our foreign immigrants.

At this time in the discussion of all subjects there is only one starting place—the world war. With every important topic two questions present themselves: "What is the relation of this to the War?" and "After the war, what?"

This war has clearly revealed to us what we had only begun to suspect—that we had in our midst large numbers of undigested aliens who might at any time cause a serious disturbance within our body politic. At election times we had begun to hear of the German vote or the Ruthenian vote, but we had put aside the whole question as merely a matter of party warfare or election pyrotechnics.

But now that registration of aliens is considered necessary, now that many Germans and Austrians in Canada are under guard, now that the mayors of some cities are apprehensive of foreign outbreaks—now we begin to realize the seriousness of our problem.

The danger now to be guarded against is that a sudden panic may lead us to take extreme positions and thus intensify and perpetuate racial bitterness and animosities. Every consideration should be given to our "Alien enemies" resident in our midst. Many are anxious to return home, not to enlist, but to join and assist their parents and wives and children, who, they realize, are in a deplorable condition.

Further, it is worthy of note that had another alignment of the nations taken place the situation in Canada might have proved extremely awkward.

The fact is that the Canadian unification is still far from complete, and the introduction of foreign elements is making the process extremely complicated and difficult.

What of immigration after the war? At this stage it would be of little advantage to indulge in speculation as to the outcome. If the Allies should be defeated—for most of us such a contingency is unthinkable—our fate would probably be bound up with that of the United States.

If the Allies win, much will depend upon the terms of settlement, and the nature of the indemnity. Probably England will enjoy a period of rapid trade expansion that will lessen the over-seas migration. There is a general impression that many of the farmers of Belgium and France may have no heart to return to their devastated homes, but will prefer to start anew in the friendly new land of Canada. Possibly though, on the other hand, the male population will be so reduced and the whole land so impoverished that it will be absolutely necessary to retain every available man to rebuild the waste places.

Germany, from which in recent years we have had few immigrants, will undoubtedly need to conserve her resources, and Poland may again become an independent Kingdom, in which case, instead of sending forth her best she will rather call her sons from afar to return and build up something of the former glory.

From the frontiers of Austria and Russia, from the fragments of older nations, from dispossessed fields and war-ravaged villages, from communities struggling under the burden of heavy war taxes, will doubtless come larger and yet larger armies of immigrants.

This movement of the peoples from South Eastern Europe has during the last quarter of a century been slowly gathering momentum. First it was directed towards the United States. As the returned immigrants carried back the news of wider opportunities in the new land, the thoughts of men more and more turned Westward. Then came the enactment by the United States of stricter immigration laws. This did not stop the stream, but helped to direct it into more northerly channels—Canada welcomed the on-coming hosts.

While admittedly the question is exceedingly complicated, and it is impossible to determine accurately what the resultant effect of the war will be, it appears altogether probable that the war will accelerate rather than retard this world movement of the people.

In support of this conclusion two general considerations may be urged—first, war tends to break down national and social barriers, to loosen old associations and to enlarge our little world; second, this war will change

the whole economic map of Europe and of the world. Trade currents will take entirely new directions. The precise effects no one can prophesy, but on the whole Canada—a new country, largely as yet undeveloped, and with unlimited natural resources, stands to gain.

Are we ready for more immigrants? Even without a greatly augmented increase our problem is a serious one. As yet no constructive policy has been adopted for dealing with it in any adequate way.

Our Immigration Department has made excellent arrangements for the care of immigrants during their journey, has provided for their comfort at points of transfer, has even helped them financially until they obtain a foothold, then we have left them largely to shift for themselves. The theory has been that once the immigrants landed home safely, our existing institutions were sufficient to the task of caring for them. But this theory has proven entirely untenable.

More far-reaching measures are absolutely necessary. Our industrial system, our educational system, our political system, must be decidedly modified to meet the new needs.

Let me present the results of some statistical studies:

Canada's population in 1901 was 5,371,315; of this 57 per cent, or 3,630,195, was British.

The immigration from July 1st, 1900, to March 31st, 1914, was 2,906,022.

The total immigration from 1913 to 1914 was 384,478, as against 402,432 in 1912-1913, or a decrease of 4.46 per cent.

The British immigration was 142,622, as against 150,542, or a decrease of 5.26 per cent.

Immigration from the United States was 107,530, as against previous years 139,000, or a decrease of 19.35 per cent.

From other countries the immigration was 134,726, as against previous year 112,861, or an increase of 19.35 per cent.

You will notice that whilst there was a decrease in the immigration both from Great Britain and the United States, there was an increase in our non-English immigration.

While we superficially class all these peoples as foreigners, we must remember that in reality each is a foreigner to all the others. The French, for instance, have very little in common with the Germans, the Germans with the Russians, the Russians with the Jews. The Canadians are the amalgam which must bind together these diverse peoples.

My question is, mix these peoples together, and what is the outcome.

From the racial standpoint it is evident that we will no longer be British, probably no longer Anglo-Saxon.

From the standpoint of eugenics it is not at all clear that the highest results are to be obtained through the indiscriminate mixing of all sorts and conditions. But if they do not intermingle and intermarry the situation may be even more serious, as we will then set up more or less of a cast system.

From the religious standpoint, what will be the outcome? For it must be remembered that most of our foreign immigrants do not belong to the churches which are at the present time dominant in Canada.

From the political standpoint it is evident that there will be very great changes, and very serious dangers. The recent civic elections reveal to us the strength of the foreign vote. Never before were national lines so sharply drawn or was there greater bitterness. Whilst it is true that these people are not united, and that the English majority may retain its power by pitting one against the other, at the same time it is also true that such a condition is far from satisfactory, and would inevitably result in placing any party at the mercy of any leading nationality, thus practically giving that nationality the balance of power. Unfortunately already these foreigners have been corrupted. At a recent election a non-English friend of mine invited a fellow-countryman to come with him to the polls. The man replied, "Oh, no, Me no voted. Me no drink." What was the use of his voting? Such is the prevalent idea of the franchise.

From the social standpoint, we must remember that each nationality brings with it its own social customs and ideals. Which will prevail?

(To be Continued.)