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THE ROUND TABLE

LAND SETTLEMENT AFTER THE WAR

A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the British Empire—Republished Under the Above Heading

THE question of what is to happen to the vast numbers of men who will be disbanded at the end of the war has already agitated many minds. In a great crisis such as the present, in which there is a clear goal ahead, it is generally a safe rule to leave after-the-war problems to settle themselves, and not distract energy or thought from the more pressing task of beating the enemy. But there are questions to which foresight can be applied without these evil consequences, and even with highly beneficial results. This is one of them.

On many aspects of the problem it is not possible to express any confident opinion. There are at present some 3,000,000 civilians, in the prime of life, who have enlisted for the duration of the war only. Nobody can tell how many of them will be killed or maimed before peace is signed. Nobody can tell with accuracy what the state of employment in the United Kingdom at the end of the war will be, and whether there will be an excess or a shortage of labour, with which to meet industrial needs. Predictions on all these points are numerous, but are conflicting. The industrial conditions after the war may well be as unexpected as have been those of the war itself. But one thing can be said with confidence, and that is that there will be a large emigration to new countries. Whether employment is good or bad there will be many, who, having tasted a life of adventure and in the open air, will never go back to the steady plodding of an English factory or office stool. There will be some reaction from the strain of the past months, and to some ease and security and home will offer the supreme attraction, if employment can be found. But for very many, escape both from war and from the strain and distress of post war conditions into the freedom of a new world will seem the golden road to happiness and success.

This is simply a theory of what may reasonably be expected to happen after unsettled times. It is a matter of history that restlessness comes after war. There was, as the following figures show, a marked rise in the number of people who left Germany for the United States after her wars against Austria-Hungary and France in 1866 and 1870.

1862	27,529
1863	33,162
1864	57,276
1865	83,424
1866	115,892
1867	133,426
1868 (for six months)	55,831
1869	131,042
1870	118,225
1871	82,554
1872	131,109
1873	149,671

(From Report of Immigration Commission, Washington, 1911.)
In our own case exactly the same thing happened after the Boer War of 1899-1902. The number of emigrants from the United Kingdom rose from 140,000 in 1898 to 259,000 in 1903, increasing in 1907.

Emigrants after the war will be drawn by two motives, which may or may not conflict. On the one hand, they will tend to go to those countries where they will feel most at home, and where they are most certain of finding employment or occupation. On the other hand, they will wish to remain under the Union Jack. Whether or no they go to populate the British Dominions, or are lost, probably for ever, to the United States or the Argentine. (*Out of 259,000 emigrants who left Great Britain in 1903, 123,000 went to the United States.) will depend largely on the provision which is made to meet the situation in the Dominions themselves. The British Government will probably do little in the matter one way or the other. Its natural tendency will be to try to keep men employed or to settle them on the land within the United Kingdom, for reasons of defence. Danger will still be greatest here, and strength must be maintained where it is most required. In any case to promote emigration to foreign countries is to confess a failure in social policy to organize emigration to

the Dominions would be to interfere with the affairs of a self-governing colony. The problem is one which, when it arises, will have to be dealt with almost entirely by the Dominions themselves. What is likely to be their position? It is, of course, as impossible to predict with assurance the condition of industrial employment in the Dominions at the close of the war as it is to prophesy about the industrial condition of the United Kingdom. But there is this difference between the two, that, whether employment be good or bad in the industrial world there is an almost inexhaustible field for the absorption of new and desirable emigrants in the Dominions which does not exist in the United Kingdom, and that is the land. There is land available for closer settlement in the United Kingdom, and there is grave need for a larger country population upon it. And a vigorous effort will almost certainly be made to absorb some of the men discharged from the armies in this ancient standing, a slow business and the total absorbing power is obviously limited. In the Dominions the land supply is for practical purposes unlimited; there are great tracts which for development want nothing but people, "more homes," as Cecil Rhodes put it, and the policy of all the great Dominions has been to found their civilization on the basis of a population educated in British traditions of liberty and government, settled on the land.

Thus amid much that is uncertain two facts stand out. First, there will almost certainly be a large emigration to the Dominions after the war, emigration which no active policy on the part of the British Government will have encouraged or will be able to restrain. Secondly, whatever the condition of industry and trade after the war, there is one certain method in which a large number of these men can usefully and to their own advantage be provided for, and that is on the lands of the Dominions.

Merely to point to these facts however, is not enough. Unless they are not only foreseen, but unless action is taken in time to adjust the supply to the demand grave trouble is bound to ensue. It is no more practical to dump large masses of men on the land

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Persons claiming exemption from service on Juries, persons who claim to be qualified to serve on a panel different from that on which they are entered, and all persons who have objections to offer to the panels or either of them are hereby notified that a Court of Revision of the Jury Lists for St. John's will be held in the Magistrate's Office from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday of next week and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the week following.

Police Court, October 31st, 1916.
CHAS. H. HUTCHINGS,
Justice of the Peace.
oct31,12j

at short notice and expect them to be farmers or farm labourers, than it is to expect men to learn any other trade by the light of Nature. Agriculture or pastoral farming is a business which may not require extensive book learning, but it is one which requires a great deal of practical training and experience in local conditions before it can be made to yield even a modest living. Therefore, after the war, unless some provision is made in time, there may be a rush of emigrants to the Dominions, whom it will be impossible to absorb. The Dominions will then be in this position: they will either have to encourage these immigrants to flow off elsewhere, or, as was the case in South Africa after the war, they may find themselves forced to close their doors to the best blood in the empire. Nobody who realizes the great importance of laying a solid and homogeneous human foundation in these new lands can look with complacency on the loss of other lands of men whom it may be necessary to replace later on by people of another race and tradition. Nobody who remembers the feelings of indignation which were aroused by the closing of the ports of Cape Colony and Natal after the Boer War to all men not possessed of a considerable sum of money will desire a revival of these feelings at a critical moment in the history of the British commonwealth. The spectacle of the Dominions refusing to admit the battleworn men who have risked their lives in defence of their own liberties, to the lands in which they would most naturally expect to find a welcome, or of such a failure to foresee their needs as to result in poverty and disappointment as the only alternative of going to a foreign land, would be a disastrous sequel to feelings of mutual admiration and affection engendered by the war. Yet that is what may happen unless steps are taken to deal with the matter in time.

Moreover, there will be other immigrants after the war. It is certain that there will be a great migration from most of the countries of continental Europe for the same reasons that will cause migration from the British Isles. The empty lands available for white colonisation are not settled by men of British stock they will be peopled by other races, already trained in rudimentary agriculture perhaps, but living at a lower standard, and unfamiliar with the spirit of liberty or the institution of the commonwealth. The recent history of the United States shows how grave a problem an excessive foreign population may present.

Fortunately the problem is one in which there is much experience to guide us. All the Dominions have had to deal with land settlement in their time, and some on an enormous scale. If men cannot be dumped on the land direct, experience shows that if they are properly housed in cantonments on arrival and given rudimentary instruction in some systematic way, they can be turned into useful farm hands in an amazingly short space of time, and that with an adequate system of expert advice and supervision, but half-trained men can farm on their own with fair success. The business of rapid land settlement is not easy, it requires thorough study of successful experiments and of local conditions. But in proper circumstances it can be done. Even, as is possible, every ship that leaves these shores within a few months of the termination of the war, it will not be impossible to provide for them if steps are taken in time.

As has been said, this is a matter which is pre-eminently one for the Dominions themselves, for they alone understand their own problems and conditions. On them, therefore, does the chief responsibility for provision rest. Certain committees or commissions have already been appointed locally to look into the question. They cannot bring too earnest labour or careful forethought to the problem with which they are called to deal. There is also much to be said for bringing these committees into touch with one another, and with the British Government. For in its essence the problem is an imperial problem. It will only be handled properly if it is dealt with in a spirit which looks past Dominion interests and is able to consider the well-being of all those who have fought or suffered for liberty in this war.

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