

HIGHWAYS OF PROGRESS

its assets and liabilities, of the inevitable demands upon its resources and the careful adjustments by which alone they may be preserved, has thus far been subject for little more than a passing thought. National security calls for a just accounting of the business affairs of this great nation.

Let us try to cast our minds twenty or twenty-five years ahead and see what will then be our condition. The main elements of this problem, which above all others should command our attention, are three: Possibilities of population, actual and possible natural resources, and possibilities of productive application of one to the other. As the prudent man, about settling himself in life, sums up his possessions, his opportunities for earning income and the demands upon him of a family to be fairly cared for and left in a position to begin the world at least as advantageously as he did himself, so the people of the United States should know with reasonable exactness just where we must stand half a century from now.

The population index has the simplicity of ascertained vital statistics. Subtracting from the total population of the country as returned by each census since 1880 the immigration for the decennial period, the ratio of increase for the first decade is slightly over, and for the second decade slightly under fifteen per cent. So careful an observer as Leroy Beaulieu gives the natural increase of our population as fifteen and two-tenths per thousand per year. It is fair, therefore, to reckon the increase by the excess of births over