

# Immigration After the War

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[The question of to how great an extent immigration from abroad to the United States will be resumed when conditions are again normal is one of the utmost importance to this country. We have so long been dependent upon the inflow of foreign-born citizens as an addition to our labor supply that, were this tide halted we should feel the effect of it throughout our economic strata, as we have already felt to a moderate degree the effect of the war in this regard. With peace talk very much in the air, therefore, the following article by Commissioner Howe is not only timely but highly valuable. The article is the text of an interview accorded by him to the "New York Times Sunday Magazine." It is here presented in full. Editor. *Economic World*].

Over a million immigrants a year, or practically a hundred thousand a month, were coming through Ellis Island previous to the outbreak of the war two years ago, and that was about 90 per cent of the total immigration into the United States, making of our depot the greatest portal in the world.

The war checked immigration automatically and almost entirely. This means that the war stopped contributing something like \$500,000,000 to \$1,000,000,000 a year to the wealth of the United States, assuming that each immigrant is worth, in potentiality, only about \$500 to \$1,000.

For the two years ending June 30th, 1916, the ebb and flow of the tide of immigration and emigration was practically balanced, and that has not been the case in over 50 years. For the year ending June 30th, 1916, the arrivals were over 176,611, the departures 169,578, a net increase of 7,033. In the year ending June 30, 1915, arrivals were 243,370, the departures 271,138, a net decrease of 27,768, while the immigration of the year ending June 30, 1914, was 1,200,000.

Therefore, I may safely say that the net result of the war so far has been for us, in the human equation, the loss to the country of approximately 1,500,000 people who otherwise would doubtless have come to our shores.

One principal effect of this has been the shortage of labor, especially in the unskilled trades, such as railway building, construction work, agriculture, etc. In several parts of the country severe labor famines have resulted.

This affords one explanation of the unwonted increase in wages. It also explains the large number of successful strikes and the general advance in wages for unskilled labor, which, in some parts of the country, is getting more money than inside semi-skilled trades. Especially is this true in New England, in Pennsylvania, Michigan and the Central West, and also where the munition factories are using what available labor they can find to double and triple shifts.

To-day it is almost impossible to get farm hands because men are able to get such high wages in the cities. In the West unskilled labor is getting \$3, and \$3.50 a day. In the East the general scale of wages for unskilled labor has risen from \$1.75 to \$2.25 and \$2.50 a day.

In my opinion this labor shortage will continue for a considerable time. Prosperity is so widespread it has begun to affect industries not immediately touched by the war. Industries producing comforts and luxuries are waking up and demanding more men. Everything indicates the prosperity tide will continue several years unless a combination of unexpected mishaps brings it to an untimely close. And wages will continue to rise. To-day almost anyone can get a job that is able to work.

Reports from Federal, State and Municipal Employment Bureaus all indicate that employment could be had for many thousands if they were available. Daily we get demands for hundreds. A few weeks ago two shiploads of Spaniards came to Ellis Island and they were hired as they got off the ferry on Manhattan Island. The wages agreed upon were \$2.25 a day, but in a few weeks these Spaniards had thrown up their jobs for better pay elsewhere.

The condition will remain as long as the war continues. There is an embargo on emigration in all European countries except Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. From Scandinavia the immigration has fallen below the normal; from Greece it is also below the normal; from Italy it is about half of the ante-bellum size; and from

Spain and Portugal it remains about the same, which is inconsiderable.

Immigration after the war will depend on a variety of influences. The Central Powers and Russia are likely to forbid emigration entirely; they will want the able-bodied men at home. This can be done in a variety of ways, by refusing passports, by legislation as to inheritance laws, by forbidding return, etc. These and similar obstacles may make it practically impossible to get out of these countries.

However, I expect a pretty heavy immigration from Great Britain as soon as peace is declared, especially to Canada. We are not likely to have many from France, as indeed we have never had since the early Colonial days. The French are too largely a home owning and individual fortune-building race to migrate in considerable numbers.

Those who come will not seek free land, for it is all taken up. Nowadays a man without capital cannot become a farmer, and this drives the bulk of immigrants to the cities.

Despite the despoliation of Belgium only a few hundred Belgians have come to these shores during the war. Those driven from their homes have found temporary refuge in Holland, England and France, expecting to go back to their homes after the war. The Belgians, like the French, are a home-owning and building race, and do not migrate.

I expect to see very few more German immigrants. Before the war the average was only about 25,000 a year. The bulk of our German population came here between 1830 and 1870. During the last generation and longer the Germans have been staying at home. Next to the United States, Germany has more immigrants than any other country in the world. Previous to the war the average annual immigration into the German Empire was probably 750,000.

Germany will keep all her people at home after the war to recapture industry and trade. She is better able to do this than any other European power, due to her high state of organization. Previous to the war 5 per cent of her population was employed by the State in industries and activities owned by the Government, such as railways, mines and forests. War has led to a very great extension of the State activities in Germany. So when the war is over I expect Germany to send her men back to industry in companies and regiments just as she sent them to the firing line. Thus many industries will be carried on, almost in the military spirit, so as to carry the nation over the transition stage until individual initiative can adjust itself again. One thing is sure: Germany will be a much more highly socialized State after the war than before, and this will keep Germans at home.

I expect Italian immigration to go on as it did before the war as soon as peace is declared. Italy does not discourage emigration to the United States; rather she encourages it. A large percentage of Italians who come here return to their native land with from \$500 to \$2000 and thus can collectively increase the wealth of Italy very materially. The Government recognizes this and has worked out the most intelligent and humane emigration policy of any nation in Europe.

I think the post-bellum immigration here from Greece, Turkey and Armenia will be great; possibly more than before the ante-bellum immigration. It will undoubtedly be very heavy from Serbia, Bulgaria and Rumania. These countries have suffered terribly. Large parts of Asia Minor and Macedonia have been completely devastated. There will be a begonia from that near-Eastern congeries of nations.

Our heaviest immigration will come, I believe, from Poland, Hungary and the Eastern part of Europe. Unless Russia prohibits emigration hundreds of thousands will come to us from that vast country.

Poland has been swept over by armies; farms, cities, villages have been destroyed; millions have been torn from their homes; many have been killed; many others exiled; few have incentive to return to the old homes; the families are gone; the wives and children are dead of starvation or bullets; there is no reason to go back. This is true not only of Poland, but also of parts of Silesia and Hungary. The people are not a home owning peasant class as they are in Belgium and France, Holland and Denmark. They are farm laborers with nothing to identify them with their native country. The same thing is true of Galicia,

The Jews have suffered more than any one from the war, as they always do. In Russia and Rumania they are not permitted to own real estate; they are kept within the pale, and whenever opportunity offers are subjected to oppression. So I expect more Jews than ever to turn to the United States when the war is over.

Immigration from Ireland in recent years has been somewhat checked by the Land Purchase Acts, which make it possible for Irish tenants to acquire land titles. Since that opportunity was opened Irish immigration has slackened. If England adopts a genuinely humane policy toward Ireland and Home Rule is given a substantial hold on education and the development of the kind of aspiration that has been animating Ireland so many generations, then I expect the Irish to remain at home, and the big emigration from Ireland to end.

There are two other forces making for heavy immigration from all countries, including Germany, France and England. Three hundred and fifty million people have been upset by the war; families have been broken up, farms destroyed, businesses ruined, taxes made almost unendurable. Many will want to escape militarism and the burdens of war; many will be inclined to see the shores of a country free from war and not governed by the military and aristocratic classes.

There is also this to be considered. Fully 30,000,000 men have been under arms; have lived a freer life in many ways than ever before; have learned self-reliance; have enjoyed the democracy of the trenches. Out of this number it will not surprise me if millions have been made restless, discontented and unwilling to go back to the mines, the mills and the great states. Many will have the spirit of tramp life. They won't want to settle down. They will turn toward America.

Finally, we must consider the women and children. There will be left probably 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 widows and unmarried women and perhaps two or three times as many fatherless children. The great majority of these will have friends, relatives or acquaintances in the United States who will want to help; as they do today. Probably 80 per cent of those who come here in normal times are assisted by friends and relatives in this country. So we may expect to be confronted by a vast number of crippled and weakened men, of women and children who look to America as a place of refuge.

All of this is, of course, somewhat conjectural. If Europe turns to reconstruction and bends her energies and makes sacrifices to put her people to work and to make life attractive, as some countries undoubtedly will do, immigration to this country may be partially checked.

But, whatever happens in Europe, the first year after the war will, I believe, see a greater immigration to this country than we have ever known in our history. After that first year I look for the tide to fall, growing less and less each year, until it finally equalizes again.

## CIGARETTES IN U. S.

Particularly is this the era of the cigarette. Despite various types of hostile agitation, and even some statutory repression, American cigarette consumption has in the past decade, particularly in the past year, shown a huge expansion. In ten years the number of cigarettes subject to Uncle Sam's tax-gatherers has increased fivefold.

This year there is indicated in figures to June 1st an output of twenty-five billion cigarettes, showing the unprecedented annual gain of 45%. The career of the cigarette in recent years may be thus diagrammed (in millions):

1916 .... 24,860	1912 .... 13,183	1908 .... 5,760
1915 .... 17,957	1911 .... 10,486	1907 .... 5,270
1914 .... 16,869	1910 .... 8,663	1906 .... 4,513
1913 .... 15,571	1909 .... 6,836	

Likewise, if to lesser degree, is the course of consumption of large cigars illuminating. This year will witness a new record, with a gain to date of 8% (in May 13%). Output figures for recent years have been (in millions):

1916 .... *7,725	1912 .... 7,044	1908 .... 6,488
1915 .... 7,096	1911 .... 7,048	1907 .... 7,302
1914 .... 7,174	1910 .... 6,800	1906 .... 7,147
1913 .... 7,571	1909 .... 6,667	

\*Estimated.

This year, with increased individual and class consumption, we are burning up 244 cigarettes per capita a year, as against only fifty-two ten years ago. If allowance be made for the fact that our regularly smoking population is about 23,000,000, the change becomes still more impressive.

Truly we now have much money "to burn."—Boston News Bureau.

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