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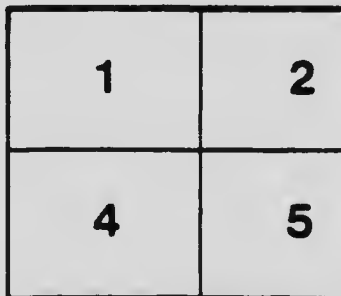
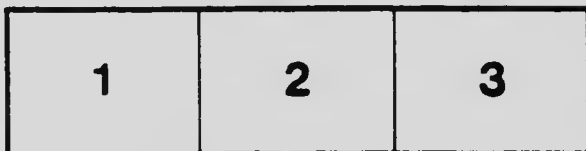
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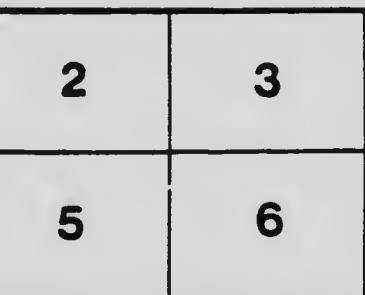
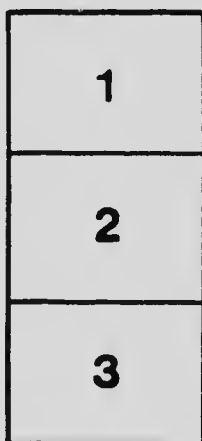
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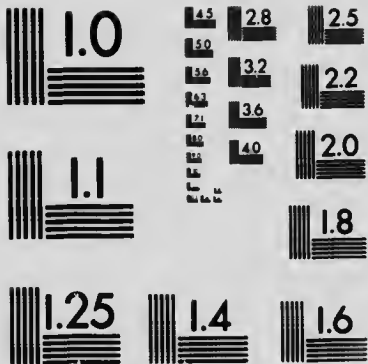
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Educating the Coming Canadians

BY

FRANK YEICH



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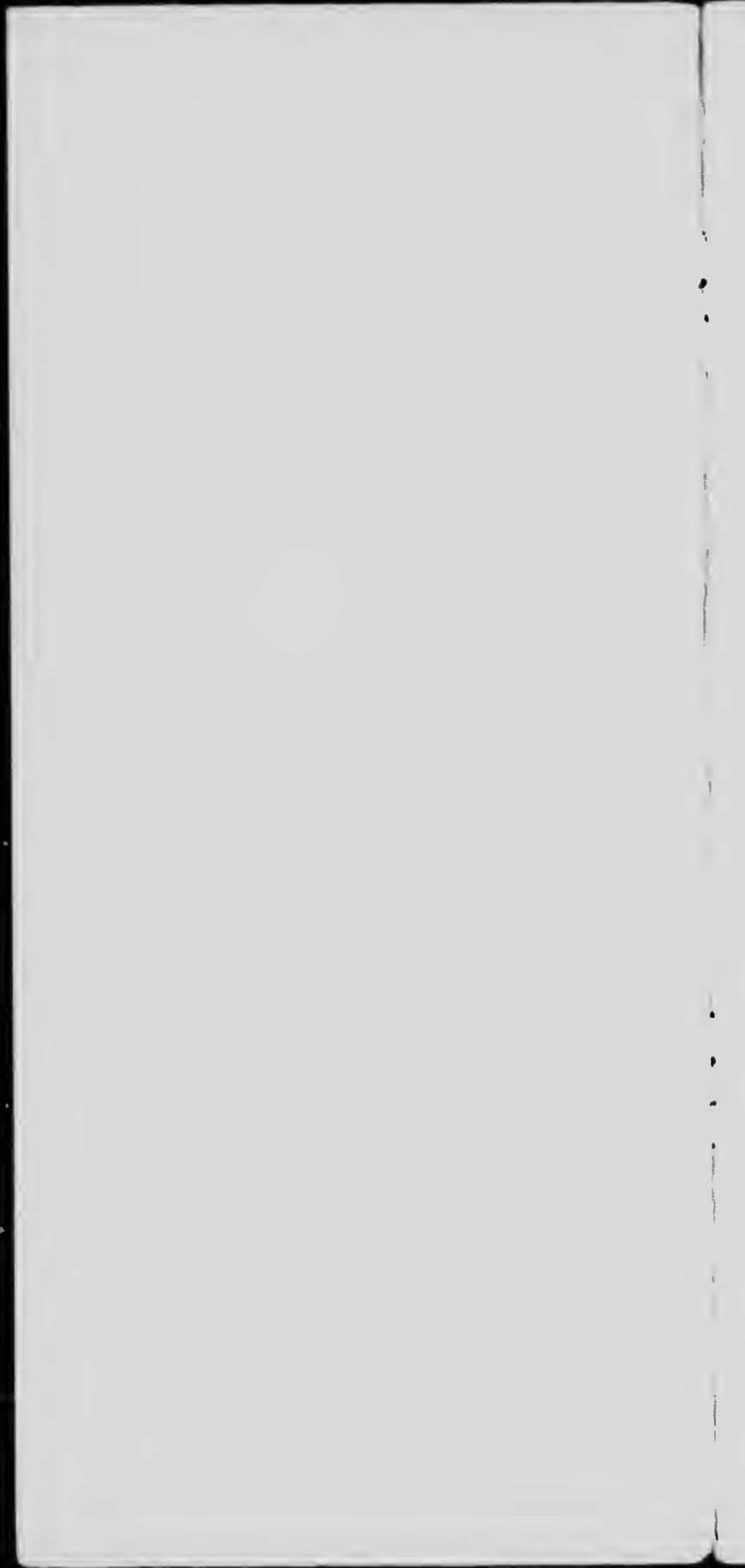
"The Westminster"

by

The Immigration Department

of

The National Council of
Young Men's Christian Associations
of Canada



THE problem of the immigrant is with us in Canada. Especially is this the case with the non-English-speaking newcomers, over 600,000 of whom are reported as having entered Canada within the last fifteen years, or twenty-five per cent. of the total immigration. The problem of assimilation is rendered all the more difficult by the fact that this great human inflow from alien lands represents scores of countries and nationalities, and that their marked tendency is to forgoth-er, whether settling in city or coun-try, in separate groups or colonies.

It is only in recent years that the welfare of the immigrant has been seriously studied. While the Gov-ernment has always shown a com-mendable interest in the newcomers, so far as looking after their safe transportation from ports of entry and their further distribution to objective points, much has been left to be done for them that has been held not to come within the purview of the State. This want has been filled to some extent by the efforts of the churches and the Young Men's Christian Association.

A programme of service to the foreign immigrant should include, to be efficiently and immediately prac-tical, the teaching of English. It must of necessity be preliminary to his finding a real foothold in his new home, as it must precede his intelli-gent action as a citizen and voter. Ignorance is as dangerous to the Commonwealth as idleness or dissipa-tion; illiteracy is ever a menace to free institutions, and national self-preservation, as well as the injunc-tion of the Golden Rule, calls for the equipment of the new-comer with the language of his adopted country at the earliest moment.

The method used in the teaching of English to foreigners is known as the Roberts System, its basic idea being found in "The Art of Teaching and Studying Language" by Francois Gouin who claimed that oral instruction was the first step in teaching a new language. The merits of the system, are:

A man who knows nothing of the language of the foreigner can use it and produce results.

The foreigner will learn to think in English and not translate from his mother tongue.

He will learn English after the same manner as he learnt his mother tongue.

The lessons are prepared for adults and deal with experiences of daily life, which are clothed in a new garment of language.

No matter what the mother tongue of the foreigner is, the system is applicable to all. It is used by men of forty-two different tongues and it works equally well with the Chinaman as the Italian, with the Finn as the Armenian.

Its simplicity. A child of ten has used it effectively to teach a domestic the English language.

It is full of action and a teacher of ordinary ability need not have a tedious moment in the class room.

The students begin to talk the very first lesson. They leave the class room knowing some English and every time they meet they get something new.

Each lesson is arranged according to the laws of mnemonics, so that the least possible strain is placed on the memory and the student is able to concentrate his attention on right pronunciation and enunciation,—and

It appeals to the practical judgment of foreign-speaking men, for they see that the English taught them is such that they can use every day in the experiences of life.

Over twenty thousand foreigners are now studying English by the Roberts' Method. The system has been further adapted to Canadian use in a teacher's manual entitled, "English for Coming Canadians." The course consists of,—

(a) A preparatory course, including a manual for guidance of teachers (the volume above referred to); lesson charts and lesson leaves, and three Readers, namely (a) Winning Qualities, (b) Makers of Canada—explorers and statesmen, and (c) Winning a Dominion.

Foreigners who master the thirty lessons in the preparatory course will have had ten lessons on home life, ten on the work life and ten on the business life of men. These will place at his command more than a thousand English words in common use. Reading and writing are also taught, though the main purpose is to help the foreigner to a talking knowledge of English.

It is interesting to a degree to visit a class of foreigners thus studying English. Here is a moulding shop in a Canadian loundry. The barnlike room is peculiarly bare and unattractive, and dims the sunlight that filters through the dust-coated windows. In a corner a group of two-score laborers have gathered for a half-hour of their noon time. Some are standing, and some in the foreground are seated on the mould boxes. All are facing a young professional man who is acting as teacher in a purely altruistic spirit. To him it is a labor of love, looking for no reward other than that of the consciousness of helping his fellow men. Suspended from the brick wall is the study chart for the day, the lesson dealing with a few simple phrases having to do with the elements in their daily life. The actual articles referred to,—dishes, watch, hand implement—are

used as parallel object lessons. One swarthy thick-set workman, a Macedonian, is the first to grasp the pronunciation and meaning of the word or sentence. How his dark eyes sparkle with interest as he wins the nod of approval from his half-hour-a-week teacher; how broadly he smiles over the mastery of another speech obstacle, and how he turns around to help his slower comrades. Before the lesson ends all join in a review of the day's lesson, repeating and re-repeating it till it would seem as if the dullest-witted among them had made some headway.

The Young Men's Christian Association in Montreal conducted several classes for foreigners last season, the members including Italians, Polaks, Russians, Austrians and Syrians. McGill University students acted as the volunteer teachers.

In the fall of 1911 the Ottawa Young Men's Christian Association organized English classes for non-English-speaking foreigners, starting by holding three classes three times each week in the regular educational curriculum. "We enrolled about twenty-six men and the classes were held in the building," writes the Secretary. "The experience we had during the first month or six weeks proved to us the advisability of branching out and reaching the larger constituency, most of whom could not be coaxed to take the work in the environment of an Association. Having this in mind, we approached the question through the section of the city in which they live and found one man who had learned English in the Cartier Association Educational Department, up on the North Shore. He at once understood the idea and allayed the fears of the other men, who thought it was some church seeking to organize a mission. We rented a room and at once the enrolment increased

until at the present time we have upwards of one hundred men in nine classes, including seven nationalities. The work has been greatly assisted by the co-operation of foremen in the employ of the city and railways. One or two of the men in charge of sewer construction gangs have rendered us valuable assistance, and our difficulty now is to find teachers who are willing to give the time necessary." This same Association has opened the first reading room devoted exclusively to the non-English-speaking foreigners, where their mail is also handled.

The West End Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association of Toronto had nearly six hundred foreigners, representing fifteen nationalities, enrolled in classes in English last season, under fourteen volunteer teachers. Many evidences of appreciation on the part of the men have been given. Two of the classes were conducted at the Finnish Presbyterian Church. A total of 110 students enrolled, taught by University of Toronto students. The classes advanced to such a degree that English hymn books are now used in the meetings held Sunday afternoons. The pastor, Rev. J. E. Zuomala, wrote at the close of the past season, as follows:—

"We desire to thank your committee for the help you have given us during the winter, and the teachers for the class in English. Many of our people have learned how to speak English and we are very thankful that language and we like that very much."

Another large section of the Toronto Finnish community is reached in their gatherings in the Finnish Hall. Here to crowded audiences illustrated lectures on Canada, talks on citizenship, on how Toronto is governed and other aspects of national or civic life have been given

through interpreters, the service winning evident approval and appreciation.

Industrial establishments employing foreigners in large numbers are gradually coming to see the value of teaching the rudiments of English to their men of alien tongue, and are more and more showing their appreciation in a tangible way, either by contributing to the cost of the work or by giving the men the time devoted to the study. A Toronto corporation, operating a large foundry plant, has expressed its opinion of this form of altruistic service in the following unsolicited letter:—

“We have pleasure in stating that your educational work in connection with our Bulgarians has been very satisfactory and profitable. The men themselves appreciate it and we believe it will tend to make them better citizens of this country. It is also of some benefit to us, as a company, inasmuch as they are able to understand their orders in English much better and to that extent they are better workmen. These classes have been held on Tuesday of each week, and we have given the men the half hour free in order to assist them in learning the language. We wish to tender our thanks to the teacher who has done the work, and also to the Young Men's Christian Association for its valuable service.”

One of the bright foreign students in a Toronto class in English, who is indeed a star pupil, submitted the following composition which is reprinted verbatim. In view of his short experiences with our language the results are praiseworthy:—

Study 1. The Horse.

(1.) Write down all the things horses do for the farmer.

A horse is doing different kind of things on the farm. At first he bring the fruit from the land to the farm. Second, he have to draw the different kind of machine which are used on the

land. Third, when the wife of the farmer wanted to go shopping in the town, the horse has to run so quick as possible before the light car (bucky).

(2.) Tell what horses do for people in the city?

In the city they are obliged to work for different trade, regarding the circulation of transportation of the business.

(3.) When I was a horse and a gentleman would have the goodness to say, "You can choice what kind of work you like." Well then I would prefer to be a horse who is only use for take a drive.

Study 2. The Cow.

It is not easy to tell how cows are drinking at a creek, because there are different ways to do so. I have seen many times cows standing before a creek or river, leans over his head and start to drink. But when it is mid-summer and a very hot day, the cow walk into the creek not only for drink but to cool his body.

The cow is useful for many things but in the first place for feeding people. She gives us nice milk and after the preparation of milk we get butter and cheese.

The story of the picture is a country picture. When we make a drive in the country, it is almost a beautiful view to see a farm. Around the house of the farmer we see the cows in different color. One cow is drinking in the creek, another is eating grass, while many others are laying on the ground ruminating their food."

The following is another interesting illustration of a composition by a foreigner after only a few months' study. The handwriting in this case is excellent:—

The Learners. The Boy and Girl.

There was once a girl who came early in the morning to the school because she his not ready her a lesson, she sat an little bench and take out the paper from the bag and put it on big bench, she put her the bag an the floor, and begin to writ but she his no ink in her little bottle; then the girl asked somebody about the ink for her.

One boy who would did to help for she, he bring a big bottle with and sat

an bench take the pengolder of the little bottle and put it in his mouth and begin to work. The girl lifts up the paper and watching the ink run. But the bench was swinging and splashing the ink, and the girl couldn't watches the ink run well, and the ink was spilled on the bench and run down to the floor, they make a trouble. The teache come to help them and asked; who makit, its the boy because he couldn't right run the ink, said the girl, no sir, I am spilled it because the girl did not right watching it.

The teacher said ollright.

V. CHETVERIKOP.

In Winnipeg one of the new Association branches is in the heart of the foreign section, where work of this nature is being concentrated upon the foreign-speaking population.

Classes in English are carried on in Welland, Sault Ste. Marie and other Ontario towns where there is a foreign industrial element.

The Young Men's Christian Association in London has conducted, for three years past, two classes in English for seventy Russians employed in a stove foundry.

In Port Arthur the Industrial Commissioner placed \$400 in his budget for the conduct of classes in English and civics, to be held in the Labor Temple and the Finnish Church. This is probably the first instance where a municipality has tangibly recognized its responsibility in this direction, and it opens the question as to the obligation resting upon Governments or Councils—federal, provincial or municipal—to undertake the education of the foreigner in the interests of the State and not leave it to volunteer effort as at present.

The Toronto Board of Education is, however, assisting in the teaching of English to several hundred foreigners who gather in evening classes in a public school in St. John's Ward. The experiment is regarded as being most successful. In

Winnipeg the over-crowded conditions of the night schools prevent many foreigners from taking advantage of them. The Calgary Public School Board operate, in connection with its technical department, night classes for the teaching of English to foreigners, 200 were enrolled last season, the local Y. M. C. A. supplementing the work by giving talks on citizenship and allied themes.

The need of a working knowledge of English by a foreigner is self evident, without it they are handicapped at every turn. As the Industrial Banner puts it:—

"It is important that those who do not understand or speak the English language should become acquainted with the significance of the laws of this country, and should understand the importance of their citizenship through a right interpretation of the English language as it is written and spoken. Hundreds of foreigners who come to Toronto have from time to time been compelled to submit to conditions that they could have escaped if they had known the English language. Orders are frequently posted in factories that new arrivals from other countries do not understand. They are compelled to suffer from impositions that those who speak the English language never have to experience."

But so far, as has been said, no systematic effort has been made by either the Provincial or Federal authorities to assimilate or educate the foreign speaking immigrants, such work having been left largely to philanthropic and religious institutions. There is in fact great need of a national Canadian organization similar to the North American Civic League for Immigration. There is room, moreover, for co-operative effort on the broadest lines by both religious and secular organizations, and co-operation might and should include representative foreigners.

The writer was privileged to attend a supper in the interests of this work, which included among the guests a leading manufacturer and employer of labor, both English-speaking and foreign; a labor leader, a clergyman, a president of a Y. M. C. A., settlement workers, volunteer teachers of foreign classes, and a score of advanced pupils therein, representing almost every country in Europe from Austria to Norway.

While these and similar commendable efforts are being made all over Canada to help solve the problem of the coming Canadian, it must be admitted that only the fringe is being touched, even though seventeen thousand foreigners were taught English in a thousand Y. M. C. A. classes in North America last year.

In addition to the necessity for educating the foreigner to some elementary knowledge of English and of Canada, probably the two most outstanding needs from a national view point are an amendment to the naturalization law and a better distribution of unskilled immigrant labor. At present the only requirements for naturalization are three years' residence and a certificate of good character. It would seem that some test regarding literacy, and a longer period of residence, would tend to raise the standard of citizenship. Naturalization by proxy should also be eliminated.

One of the great problems of the Canadian cities is the large amount of unemployment among the unskilled men, during the winter months, and the only thing which would remedy this would be the establishment of Federal Employment Bureaus, which would act as distributors of unskilled labor. At present the only work done of this kind by the Federal authorities is among agricultural laborers and domestic servants, who are each year bulking less largely in the immigration.

What is the response of the foreigner to this proffered help, educational and otherwise? It is true that as yet only a comparatively few of the total arrivals have taken advantage of these opportunities. Many are suspicious of any such move, believing it unlikely or impossible that it is marked by unselfish motives. Others are indifferent to their illiteracy, content with the low standards that have marked their lives. Little such as they care that "men may rise on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things." But others again, in whom ambition has a place, respond to the chance. They are naturally the higher types and make apt and excellent pupils. The tongue of the European seems to adapt itself to language mastery, difficult as our paradoxical English must appear to them.

The outlook for the future is encouraging. Immigration conferences have become a feature of the times. Surveys of the foreigner, in his boarding house or home or workshop, are constantly being made, not only under Government sanction but by philanthropic and social workers. The subject was the theme of a "two days' conference" at the recent International Y.M.C.A. Convention, held in Cincinnati, Ohio, and a similar gathering, on an international scale, will be held as a feature of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915.

Studies of the conditions of the foreigner under varying circumstances are being made and a literature on the subject is materializing as a result. Recently, a union of forces in Toronto, representing churches, Y.M.C.A. and many other sympathetic organizations, was effected for the express purpose of meeting and greeting the young men new arrivals; some of the churches have set apart men to act as immigration

chaplains, the Canadian Northern Railway has a ship's mother on each of its Atlantic steamers, to be of service to the female immigrants, and all the railways have welfare men on their trains to render help and guidance to all who travel under their charge.

In many of the Canadian cities, moreover, various forms of help are being extended to the newcomers. Public School buildings are being utilized as neighborhood centres, following this line of effort successfully carried on in several United States centres, and these buildings are largely used by the non-English-speaking population. On every hand are evidences of an awakened public conscience towards those whom we have invited to Canada. Not that they ask or would accept patronizing aid or sympathy, but rather a brotherly recognition of their existence and an unselfish desire to assist in their transplanting into new conditions and a new environment. One who is native-born, or long a resident of a country, need only put himself in the place of a new arrival, especially one speaking a foreign tongue, to appreciate the loneliness of his position, the strangeness of his new surroundings, the suspicion of his fellows, and his consequent anxiety of mind. "Put yourself in his place" and an intelligent, practical sympathy, ever mindful of his self-respect, will be the outcome.

A little paper published in the interests of the immigrant by the Young Men's Christian Association carries on its front page: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" Once the interrogations of the old prophet of Israel penetrate deep enough, we too will cease to be respecters of persons and dividers of humanity into castes, but will recognize the brotherhood of man in its deepest and

widest meaning. We will see in the most unlettered and least attractive of our inflowing army of newcomers, a man, a prospective citizen and a brother who needs the touch of a brother.

The education of the coming Canadian is of vital import to the Canada of to-day and even more so to the Canada of the future.

Credit should also be given to the excellent and far-reaching work, along the same lines, carried on by the Reading Camp Association under the direction of Rev. Alfred Fitzpatrick. The teaching of English to foreigners in Canadian lumbering, mining and railway construction camps is an important feature of the programme of this organization. Over seventy qualified teachers represented, last season, their working force, and the results are a tangible contribution to the problem of Canadianizing the non-Anglo-Saxon.





