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SEVENTEENTH
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

WOMEN'S

National Immigration Society

MONTREAL, CANADA.

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WOMEN'S National Immigration Society.

The Women's National Immigration Society held their Seventeenth Annual Meeting on Monday, Dec. 12th, 1898 at the Home, 87 Osborne Street. The Meeting was presided over by Dr. Roddick, M.P., and besides a large number of ladies, there were present Rev. G. Abbott-Smith, Rev. James Patterson, Messrs. John Hoolahan, Dominion Government immigration agent; A. Regimbal, assistant immigration agent, and E. Marquette, provincial Government immigration agent.

The following Report was read by the Secretary:—

The Committee of the Women's National Immigration Society have much pleasure in presenting to their friends and the public their Seventeenth Annual Report.

264 immigrants have passed through the Home during the past year.

150 English, 28 Irish, 68 Scotch, 4 Welsh, 1 French, 3 Swedes, 4 Danes, 4 Germans, 2 Assyrians.

148 Church of England, 29 Roman Catholics, 73 Presbyterians, 2 Baptists, 1 Methodist, 1 Congregationalist, 8 Lutherans 2 Greek Church.

40 Girls of former years returned to the Home to board until re-placed.

Six parties, under the care of a travelling Matron, were sent out by the Hon. Mrs. Joyce, St. John's Croft, Winchester, through the auspices of the United British Women's Emigration Association, comprising in all 128 young women.

4 girls were sent out by Mrs. Foster, Queen's Square Bristol.
7 girls returned to England.

It will be seen that the total number of immigrants is considerably larger than last year. The cut rates to the North West proved a great attraction, and the larger number of immigrants passed straight through to Winnipeg and Vancouver, where they come under the kindly influences of the Girl's Home of Welcome in Winnipeg, and the committee of the Women's Council in Vancouver. We cannot but rejoice at this, knowing the great need of the North West; but we would remind the friends of emigration that there is also a continuous demand for well trained servants in our eastern cities, and that women who are not prepared to face the rougher conditions of life in the North West can find high wages and comfortable situations in Montreal and other eastern cities. In many cases places can be secured beforehand for such servants.

Of the 128 emigrants sent out by the United British Women's Emigration Association, 23 remained in Montreal for service; all these emigrants were of the right kind, and gave evidence of the care that is taken by that Society in selecting suitable subjects for emigration. It is to be wished that a larger number still availed themselves of the excellent travelling arrangements and the careful guidance of experienced matrons provided by this Society.

We regret to record the giving up of the Wortley Rest Home for Woman Emigrants in Liverpool, owing to the bereavement of Mrs. Drysdale, who has for many years been its main support. Its place is partly supplied by the Home of the Young Women's Christian Association, and arrangements have also been made elsewhere.

Their work in Scotland has been supplemented this year by the Canadian Government, who sent over a lady with a view to meeting the needs of the North West, by inducing the emigration of a large number of respectable young women prepared to take service on farms.

In June, 60 Scotch girls were selected and brought out under Mrs. Livingstone's capable and careful direction. Places had been found for them beforehand, and they were forwarded to

their destinations after passing a night in Montreal; 34 were accommodated at the Home, and 26 found a friendly shelter at the Home of the St. Andrew's Society. We hope next year to be able to report as to the success of this experiment, which it is hoped will be repeated, as we are convinced that in careful hands it is one of the best pieces of work that can be done for Canada. It would seem well, if possible, to bring the girls over in smaller parties, as with so large a number as 60, it is difficult to give the individual care that is necessary in effecting the transition to a new country, and only those who have had charge of such parties on board ship are aware of the great difficulties that arise, due not only to the inevitable "mal de mer," but to sudden relaxation of the ordinary routine and the familiar restraints of life in the old country. It cannot be too clearly realized that such work to be well done involves qualities of a high order; and upon it depends largely the attitude of mind with which the immigrants approach their new life, and often the success or failure of their first settlement.

Of the 7 returned immigrants, 5 were women with such a want of mental balance, amounting in some cases to actual disease, as to be unfit subjects for colonization, and it cannot be too strongly urged on those who recommend people to come out to Canada, that our free life and exhilarating climate demand a thoroughly sound mental condition, and that it is most unwise to transfer to Canada nerves shattered by trouble, or cases of congenital hysteria. Thanks to the laws of the country we are usually able to return such cases with free passage, but there is always a useless waste of money incurred by others, and the Home has usually the burden of their support till they are returned.

The Joint Sub-Committee for the active furtherance of Women's Immigration, reports, that owing to the decision of the Government to employ their own woman Agent in Scotland, they undertook no action in that country.

In regard to Scandinavia, we have received from the Canadian Government the promise of a bonus on all women

immigrants we may obtain from those countries ; and, are thus encouraged to proceed with the work. Some time was spent last year in endeavouring to make arrangements from this side, but it was hoped that a member of the Committee who was spending the summer in England, would be able to visit Sweden and make personal inquiries. This proved impossible, and we are now making an attempt by correspondence, though we feel it is probable that a personal visit will be needed before satisfactory arrangements can be concluded.

Miss Fowler, of the Girl's Home of Welcome, Winnipeg, sends the following report of her work :—

The 8 months from April 1st to Dec. 1st have been successful ; 159 persons have passed through the Home, of whom 83 were *bona fide* immigrants and the remainder transients and City girls. The immigrant women and girls have been satisfactory both as regards character and capacity, and we have been particularly fortunate in having some very capable women pass through our hands. There is endless demand for these as farm housekeepers. We were not able to accommodate more than one-half of Mrs. Livingstone's girls ; we formed a high opinion of the judgment with which they had been selected, and are very sorry to hear that the Government is hesitating as to whether to continue the plan of sending women Agents over to Europe to collect girls. We believe the scheme to be of great value to the North West. Our financial outlook is not specially bright, as during the current year we have had no Government grant, and but slight support from the public, but we hope that better times are ahead and that we shall get support both from Dominion and Provincial Governments.

Owing to the extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway Sheds, it became necessary this summer to vacate the house 84 Osborne Street, which had to be pulled down, and on July 12th the Home transferred its quarters from 84 to 87 Osborne Street, a bright commodious house on the other side of the street. The change necessitated very hard work on the part of those ladies of the Committee who remained in Montreal during the summer,

but thanks to their exertions and those of the household, the change was effected with great economy and success. We have better accomodation and a more cheerful house, but have had to increase our rent. We are thankful to have secured a house so conveniently near to the Railway Stations, and feel ourselves in every way well equipped for our work.

During the summer we received a visit from Mr. Hazen, M.P., who is interested in the Self Help Emigration Society, and who inspected the Home.

In the New Year we had a successful gathering of former immigrants, now in service in the City, and spent a pleasant and lively evening together: since then a member of the Committee has kindly come down every Sunday evening to the Home to welcome any of those girls who care to come in and spend a homely and pleasant hour after Church. We hope in this way to make the Home attractive and friendly to our girls, as we wish them to feel that it is always a friend to them and that they can look to the Matron and Secretary for counsel and help at any time.

Many of our old members return to us to board in between places. In order to prevent too frequent change of place, the Committee has lately imposed a fee of 25 cents on replacement.

The old arrangement continues in force by which the girls on first settling are recommended to the clergyman of their special Church in the parish where they settle.

The Rev. James Patterson, Presbyterian City Missionary, has visited the Home at frequent intervals, and receives from the Secretary the address of all Scotch girls placed in Montreal.

By a recent arrangement the Matron is informed by telegram from the Government Agent at each place of landing if any single women immigrant is coming on to Montreal by train, and is enabled to meet all such immigrants on arrival. This is an extension of our previous work in meeting all immigrants who had personally notified us of their coming. In this work we had the kind and active co-operation of the Dominion Immigration Agent, Mr. Hoolahan, and the Provincial Immigration Agent, Mr.

Marquette, to whom with their Sub-Agents the Committee are specially indebted. This is at present the only contribution towards the work of the Travellers' Aid Society that is made in Montreal, but it is greatly to be desired that a regular Agent of the Travellers' Aid Society should be settled in Montreal, which is now such a centre of travel as to make such work almost imperative.

In conclusion the Committee wish to express their sincere thanks to Dr. Grace Ritchie-England, the Hon. Visiting Physician, for her kind services to the immigrants whenever need has arisen: and, they would acknowledge many kind gifts towards the expenses of the move, etc.

Mrs. Hugh Allan, Hymn Books; Messrs Scott, 2 Mats; Mrs. Botterell, Table Cover; Mrs. T. G. Shaughnessy, a dividing partition between the sitting Rooms.

The whole respectfully submitted,

EVA VOSBURGH,

Secretary.

The reports were received, and Rev. James Patterson spoke of the interesting features of the annual report, and alluded to the great improvements that have taken place during the last twenty years for receiving and accommodating immigrants arriving in this country.

Mr. John Hoolahan expressed great satisfaction with the annual report, and the financial statement, and complimented the ladies on the able way in which the work of the society was being carried on.

Mr. E. Marquette remarked that the number of people emigrating to this country, instead of increasing, remained always about the same. Something should be done both in England, and in Canada to remedy this. From conversations he had had with different people whilst over in Britain, he found that Canada was somewhat handicapped in the way of offering in-

duancements to emigrants. A young girl had greater inducements to go to Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, or the Cape than she had to come to Canada. She could emigrate to Australia, for a guinea, whilst to come to Canada she had to pay from \$23 to \$25.

The Australian Government helped a great deal. All the steamship companies subsidized by the Government were under contract to help so many bona-fide domestic servants or farm laborers. He had talked with Mr. Colmer, of the Canadian High Commissioner's office, London, and that gentleman was of opinion that if the Government would offer some inducements in the way of reduced passages to those of good character, it would be of considerable benefit.

Miss Proctor spoke of the temptations on shipboard to females travelling alone, and urged for a Government shelter in Montreal. She was strongly of opinion that Canada did not hold out the inducements she ought to to emigrants. We should try and get a good class of people, and these could be found especially in Ireland, which country stood first in the world in the matter of morality.

The Irish people were used to an amount and class of work to which the English laborer was not accustomed, and they would make good settlers for the Northwest. Again, the Irish followed each other, and the best immigration work was always done by families. She spoke in favor of Government aid, through societies that could be trusted to send only persons of good character, and said that if, at the end of five years, a society could not show by its books that the majority of its emigrants had done well, it should cease to have any Government patronage. If it was made disagreeable to people to send out undesirable emigrants, they would soon stop sending them.

Rev. G. Abbott-Smith made a few encouraging remarks. The chairman spoke of the absolute necessity of state aid to secure increased immigration. He contended that something should be done in the way of examining emigrants as to their suffering from incurable congenital diseases, etc., and expressed

the pleasure it would afford him to assist the society in any way he possibly could before the Dominion Government.

The reports were adopted, and the retiring office-bearers were re-elected, viz :—President, Mrs. Cox ; First Vice-President, Mrs. Gillespie ; Second Vice-President, Mrs. Cramp ; Third Vice-President, Mrs. Reuben Taylor ; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Percy Vosburgh ; Board of Management : Mrs. Hugh Allan, Mrs. A. A. Allan, Mrs. Botterell, Mrs. Bernard, Mrs. Aspinwall-Howe, Mrs. Robert Mackay, Mrs. Vincent Meredith, Mrs. Sutherland Taylor, Mrs. T. G. Shaughnessy, Mrs. G. Abbott-Smith, Hon. Mrs. Waud, Mrs. Cunliffe, Mrs. A. Whitney, Mrs. Walton, Mrs. Auchmuty, Miss Hall, and Miss Laidlaw.

The following report was not received in time to be submitted with Report, but is printed by order of the Committee :

IMMIGRATION WORK IN VANCOUVER, B. C.

December 8th, 1898.

The first year of our work is now drawing to a close, and the Committee appointed by the Vancouver Local Council of Women, last January, feel that although hampered by many difficulties and some disappointments, a fair beginning has been made,—a number of good and useful women helped to find employment, and a number of householders assisted in finding domestic helps. The committee of three, to which a fourth name was added later, under the Presidentship of Mrs. Stitt, have worked most harmoniously together, with the warm-hearted co-operation of Mrs. Skinner, the President of the Y. W. C. A., and the advice and assistance of the Ven. Archdeacon Pentreath and Miss Bourne. The latter, as Secretary of the G. F. S., has, by her energetic efforts and keen sympathy with working girls, brought the Vancouver branch of the G. F. S. into a most flourishing state, and it will be most difficult to fill her place.

The first party arrived on the 1st of May in charge of Miss Turnbull, who so splendidly performs the arduous work of bring-

ing these large parties of women from the Old Country. Since then, two other large parties and several smaller ones have come to us. In conjunction with the Y. W. C. A., we board and lodge the new arrivals, if necessary, at the lowest possible rate; but the Committee have nearly always arranged situations, into which the girls went at once.

The want of a small home, such as Miss Fowler has at Winnipeg, is very much felt; and not only are we hampered by want of accommodation for our large parties, but we have no funds at our disposal to help deserving cases of ill health, and even to pay for our small expenses.

This Immigration scheme is one of such mutual benefit that we hope the U. B. E. A. will see its way to assist us in raising a small fund to start an Immigration Home or Club in Vancouver, and we commend to the notice of women of means, anxious to find interesting work, and an outlet for the truest benevolence this splendid opening. Miss Fowler's work at Winnipeg is an example of what can be done by one woman.

Thirty-two individuals have arrived in Vancouver under our auspices, and with one single exception are doing well, and are employed as follows:—Children's Nurses, 9; General Servants, 27; Teaching, 1; Sick Nursing, 1; Needlework, 1; with friends, 2.

A very large number of letters have been received, of enquiry from all parts of the Old Country, and from Eastern Canada, to all of which replies have been sent, with advice and offers of help. Payments of loans have been collected and dispatched to England.

The average wage earned by these women is \$15.00 per month; a few get as much as \$20.00, and a clever needlewoman and dressmaker going out by the day can make more still with board.

The Chinese have a firm hold of the domestic labour market, but the great influx of population during the past 18 months, numbers of whom are young married people with young children, has largely increased the demand for nurses, as well as

for women servants generally. However, with this increased demand, the proportion of Chinese is very large—too large when the high rate of wages is considered; for they are not cheap labour as many imagine. Good Chinamen get 20, 25 and 30 dollars. Some in hotels and boarding-houses much more. The steady quiet work, clean appearance, and great adaptability and aptitude makes the first class Chinaman a formidable rival, and as they almost invariably sleep out, the smallest house can use them daily.

A scheme for starting a Home or Club for Women who work by the day is interesting us much, and we ask all women who have the cause at heart, to assist in drawing out some feasible plan, by which women of the better classes may be induced to take up domestic service by the day, making a profession of it, as they do typewriting, clerkships, etc.

Residential Clubs for women workers are successfully worked in the United States, and are self-supporting. Any information as to the working of these "Clubs," by our energetic neighbours, will be much valued. There is no doubt of the increasing demand for domestic help in British Columbia and the ability to pay well for it, and surely it is possible to meet this demand from our huge surplus female population, rather than by the alien labour of China. On the whole, much consideration is shown by the employers; but they have a perfect right to demand *efficient* work in return for the excellent wages given. Unfortunately, women coming here in the past have failed to recognise this, and many employers have returned to Chinese labour who had given it up.

Neither the climate nor the conditions of life make British Columbia a country for invalids or women of delicate health. In a bustling young community all must work, and work hard for all they earn, and women out of health, and delicate, break down altogether, under the often Spartan-like life many of us are forced to lead. Therefore, no greater mistake can be made than to send delicate women, who *must* work for their living, out here.

At the present moment, we have half a dozen cases which are giving us anxiety and who are out of work through ill health.

For Governesses and Companions there is no demand whatever; there is a close trades unionism in the shops, and preference is nearly always given to local women. Of Post Office Clerkships and Typewriters, the same may be said. Board and lodging we calculate at \$15.00 per month, so a woman must earn \$30.00 per month in a shop or other employment to bring her earnings to the level of the average domestic wage of \$15.00, with board and lodging.

This is but a hurried and brief outline of our work during the past year; but will, we trust, interest our sisters in the East, and help them to realize the conditions of labour and our requirements in the West.

HELEN F. MCKINNON,

Secretary, V. I. C.
