

# THE FUTURE OF IMMIGRATION

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PERIODICALLY the press gives notice to the utterance of some public speaker in which he expresses the sanguine belief that the time may not be far off when Canada will be able to adopt another attitude towards immigration, and again extend welcoming arms to an enthusiastic horde of aspiring new citizens. The implication is that the drop in the volume of immigration to its present mere dribble is the result of restrictions Canada has imposed upon free entry in recent years; that should the glad word go out that the Dominion has let down the bars, there would be a surging rush from overseas to these shores, and the immigrant tide would rapidly attain proportions akin to those of the first decade of the century or in the years immediately prior to the depression. Such a view reveals profound ignorance of the situation which has been developing and has come about.

Immigration is not like a tap to be turned off and on at will, but is a movement for which the soil has to be long cultivated and properly fertilized, and then the tender plant must be sedulously and tenderly nurtured. Once immigration has reached a virtual stoppage as it has to-day, an entirely new beginning has to be made to build it up again. Under the most favorable circumstances, if we are to judge by the experiences of the past, it would be some years before a flow of considerable proportions could be induced. Regarding the prospect from the standpoint of the prevailing situation, one is forced to the conclusion that nothing less than an absolute revolution of conditions can be expected to bring about again an immigrant flow to these shores such as the country has known in the past.

What basically and concretely, and likewise pithily, has been Canada's experience with immigration as a factor in population building and accomplishing the work of the country? Here are facts which every man in public office who ventures to voice his views on immigration should know, but few do know. Since Confederation, Canada has received a total of approximately six and a half million immigrants, which is equal to about two-thirds of the country's present population. The Dominion Government alone has expended a sum exceeding \$55,000,000 in getting them, and the railways an amount greater than this. What has

Canada to show for this effort and expenditure to-day? Obviously since Canada's population is stated to be 77.76% native born, something has happened to the majority of the immigrants.

For more than sixty-five years people from all over the world poured into the Dominion, with the declared intention of establishing homes, at the rate of approximately 100,000 a year. The greater number are definitely not to be found on the Dominion expanse to-day, for the Government census of 1931 shows an immigrant population of 2,307,525, or equal to about 35% of the number official returns show to have entered since Confederation. Allowance must, of course, be made for immigrants of the earlier years who have died in the Dominion, but their number would make small difference in the total. In approximately sixty-five years of modern development, Canada has been able to do no better than retain one immigrant of every three she attracted.

One is now naturally most interested in the latest period of volume immigration, that between 1920 and 1930, when the movement between Europe and Canada was systematized and regulated to the highest degree, when all manner of settlement and placement schemes were in operation, and newcomers moved from old to new homes through the most orderly channels and under the most encouraging circumstances. Losses can be traced with fair accuracy in the decade of what was considered perfected immigration. A survey of the movement of peoples from the seventeen sources from which Canada was wont to receive the greatest number of new citizens shows that, of the 1,218,500 newcomers to arrive, only 401,250 could be found in Canada at the time of the last census. This is equal to less than 33%, or an even poorer showing than that made by the broad period since Confederation which includes the decades of haphazard, unregulated settlement.

Losses have been general among newcomers from all countries, but more severe in some cases than others. Only the foreign born among the immigrants increased their proportion in the population in the period, and even so there were severe losses among them, though the record of British immigration for the period is particularly disheartening.

The ten-year period was one in which British immigration was very much to the fore, marked by the launching of various schemes for pre-training and assisted settlement of British people on the part of British and Canadian Governments, the transportation companies and private corporations. Yet at the end of the 1931 census only one-fifth of those Britishers brought out under such splendid auspices, after such planning and effort and expense, could be accounted for in Canada.

As but one depressing phase of the British immigration of this decade, when so much was apparently being accomplished, one might cite the much heralded and publicized three thousand family scheme. Under this the Canadian Government made arrangements with the British Government to assist three thousand selected British families to settle on farms in Canada. In addition to passage assistance which moved them from any port in the United Kingdom to any Canadian Atlantic port for £3-0-0, they were lent \$3,000 per family by the British Government, repayable over a period of twenty-five years. Families were personally selected by the Canadian authorities and approved by the British authorities.

At the time, when we consider the way these families were handpicked, the solicitude over their transfer and establishment, the community efforts to welcome them and assist them to a good start, it seemed the acme in British settlement. It still does. Yet of these families for whom everything reasonable to ensure their success seemed to be done, one-half had given up their farms and presumably returned to England at the time of the Government's last report some time ago, and their numbers are no doubt much further reduced to-day.

While patriotism and sentiment have always rated British immigration highest, the newcomers from the United States have been regarded as the most valuable in their material contribution. The part American settlers have played in building up Western Canada is notable, having accounted for settlement upon about one-third of the free homestead land, and in addition being the heaviest purchasers of privately held land. It is accordingly staggering to find that, despite an immigration of some volume from across the border during the decade between 1920 and 1930, native born Americans did not increase at all between the two census dates. In fact, in 1931 there were actually 29,448 fewer citizens of United States birth in the Dominion than in 1921.

Canada has, in fact, comparatively little to show for the intensive effort and elaborate expenditure in inducing and moving immigrants of these two most desirable classes in recent years. Between the years 1921 and 1931 the proportion of people born in the British Isles to the total Canadian population declined from 11.66% to 10.99%, and those from British possessions from .45% to .42%. In the same period citizens of United States birth declined from 4.25% to 3.32% of the aggregate population. The proportion of these two most highly regarded stocks in Canada fell in the ten years by 1.6%.

Even the foreign born, though they stayed in greater numbers, could not be altogether induced to remain after coming to Canada. The increase in the number of Austrians in Canada between the two censuses, for instance, was only about a fifth of what it should have been. Only about one-half of the Czecho-Slovakians who should be in Canada as a result of the ten years movement could be accounted for. Figures of the increase in Finns are only half of what one is led to expect. Increase in the German-born in Canada is only about 60% of what statistics lead one to look for. Fewer than one-half of the Dutch to enter Canada as immigrants in the ten year period were to be found. There were only about 60% of the Yugo-Slavians one was justified in looking for.

Canada has always accorded a particularly cordial welcome to the people of the Scandinavian countries, rating them as the most desired of foreign immigrants. It is regrettable, therefore, to find that in the ten-year period many of the Scandinavian immigrants apparently did not find Canadian conditions such as to induce them to stay. Review of the census figures leads to the conclusion that Canada has been successful in keeping only about 60% of the Danes, less than one-half of the Norwegians, and only about one-third of the Swedes who came.

Immigration statistics read side by side with census figures show Canada to have been very like a sieve through which the greater number of immigrants passed almost as rapidly as they arrived. Colonists have either returned to their native lands or, which is probably true in the majority of cases, have used the Dominion as a mere stepping-stone to the more populous and prosperous country to the south, this being determined either before they left the native land or after they appraised Canadian condition and opportunity.

This is a situation of which the public speaker seems to be in the main ignorant when he optimistically talks of a new tide of immigration to build up Dominion population and accomplish the country's work, just as he disregards the very drastic changes which have come over conditions since the depression engulfed the country. In such utterances it is usually British immigration that is referred to, for it is upon British immigration Canada has largely concentrated since the war, and in British immigration the Dominion is vitally interested at the present time. The extreme desirability of a further British movement is broadly recognized if this element in the population of the western provinces is not to be entirely swamped through the heavier introduction of continental Europeans in the past and their present more rapid rate of increase. And it

is precisely British immigration which it is going to be so difficult to start flowing again in the future.

Those who talk so sanguinely of an early resumption of British immigration seem to assume that Canada has been engaged in rigorously discouraging it. They are perhaps ignorant of, or at least overlook, the fact that there have been no restrictions whatever placed upon the movement of Britishers to Canada in recent years. The Order in Council of August 14th, 1930, which restricted immigration to (a) wives and unmarried children journeying to heads of families established in Canada, and (b) agriculturists with sufficient money to start farming in Canada, did not apply to Britishers from the Mother Country, as it did not apply to citizens of the United States coming from that country.

In the last four fiscal years Canadian immigration from all sources has totalled 147,660, to secure which the Dominion spent \$6,689,600, or approximately \$50 per immigrant, as compared with approximately \$11.00 over the period since Confederation, and the transportation companies continued their proportionate expenditure. Immigrants to enter Canada in the last fiscal year, 13,903, were, with the single exception of 1868, the smallest annual number to be recorded since Confederation. This, of course, may be partly explained by the restriction of movement from continental Europe, but not altogether. What has been the result of leaving the door wide open to Britain?

In the same last four fiscal years Canada has received 40,029 immigrants from the United Kingdom, or about two-thirds of the number she received from the same source in the single year 1930. The annual figure declined from 27,584 in 1931 to 2,260 in 1934, which is apparently the smallest figure ever to be recorded. And throughout this period there was no more in the way of regulations to keep British immigrants out than there was in 1929-30 when 64,082 entered. What is the explanation of this?

It is to be found, of course, in the steady decline in Canadian economic conditions while the situation in Britain has been steadily brightening, *plus* a distinctly unfavorable attitude which has been developing in Britain towards Canada as a land of hope and opportunity. It is the latter which constitutes the more serious difficulty for Canada to overcome. One can confidently look for an improvement in Canadian domestic conditions which will make the Dominion at least as desirable a place for the average citizen as the British Isles seem to-day, but it is going to take much longer to eradicate those baneful views of Canada which have been subtly developing over the past few years.

The reasons for this are clear, though to the average citizen matters of immigration in general constitute an undercurrent in national affairs, and do not greatly impinge upon his consciousness. But he cannot be entirely ignorant of the movement which has been under way in recent years back to the British Isles. In the last five years deportations of British immigrants have totalled 17,209, while in the last three years only 12,445 immigrants arrived. But this represents only a fraction of the total movement back across the Atlantic. It does not take cognizance of the thousands of unrecorded voluntary deportations, of the multitudes who have gone back in desperation to old homes because they had encountered the utter impossibility of making a living in Canada.

None can tell the actual proportions of this. One hears on every hand of immigrant families returning to the homeland for vacations, and induced to remain there by the improvement in conditions and the brighter prospects in comparison with Canada; of immigrants of a few years out of employment going home on speculation and finding jobs they could not get before; even of men placed in employment in Canada being sent for by former employers in the British Isles to fill jobs from which they had previously been removed. These in the aggregate must be considerable.

It is not that Canada is alone in this respect. A remarkable statement was issued recently by the Overseas Settlement Department of the British Government, indicating that for some time immigration from the Dominions had been greater than emigration to them. Emigration to all Dominions in 1933 and 1934 respectively was 20,760 and 22,966 residents of the United Kingdom, and immigrating in the same years from the Dominions were 44,642 in 1933 and 38,846 in 1934. The same trend is seen in the movement between the United Kingdom and foreign countries. Emigration to these in the two years covered was 26,256 and 29,230, and immigration from them 48,843 and 59,324 respectively.

The point is that these returning farmer families, deportees, and industrial workers constitute, from one point of view or another, the worst sort of advertisers that Canada could have. They are sufficiently numerous for their views to have become widely disseminated, and to have thoroughly permeated the populace, adding a yet gloomier tint to the picture of Canadian conditions drawn by press despatches and correspondence from this side. It has created an entirely new attitude towards Canada, which it is going to be very hard and take a long time to overcome. It is going to be a very difficult and lengthy task to erase that conception of Canada steeped in difficulty and sunk in depression, and implant another

of Canada a land of hope and opportunity, with the bulk of the people from whom immigrants are usually drawn, especially if British conditions continue on the up-grade and the country continues to look after its unemployed as it has been doing.

Canada, climbing slowly out of the depression and beginning to raise again the question of immigration after permitting it to lie dormant for years, must realize that conditions in this respect have changed in every way, and any policy of the future for colonizing Canada from Great Britain must take all these into consideration. The best of effort put into immigration in the past was only one-third successful. Even so, the type of immigration the Dominion has known in the past is part of history. It will never be experienced again.

In Great Britain, apart from the fact that that popular regard for Canada as a land of hope and opportunity can never be revived to the same intensity, a new generation has grown up which has known luxuries and amenities in living which their fathers and mothers never knew, and lacking the spirit of adventure and enterprise which brought so many of the last generation out to Canada to make some of the West's finest pioneers. Social legislation is so generally in force, and the worker assured of such attention in all untoward circumstances, that the inducement is gone for him to pull up stakes and try to better his conditions in a new land where he has largely to carve out his own niche.

Even should this spirit of initiative be exhibited, and the individual be independent and have regard to the future of his family, Canadian conditions have changed in such a way as to preclude the colonization methods of the past, only partially effective as they were. There is virtually now no free agricultural land, the great lure of pre-war homemakers. Nor can apprenticeship through farm labour, so generally adopted in the post-war period, be considered a practical step to farm ownership. Mechanical assistance has gone far in eliminating the need for hired help; even the harvester excursion has been discontinued; the farmers' sons have returned in numbers to the farm, many to stay there permanently wiser men. The country patently expects that after the depression a proportion of its unemployed will remain permanently on its hands for casual placement. And the prospect of the agricultural industry is not such as to encourage any external movement calculated to augment further the acreage under cultivation and production.

Altogether the matter of a future immigration to Canada, particularly British, on a greater proportion of which the public

will insist, is fraught with considerable doubt, uncertainty and perplexity. It is not one to be acted upon hastily or rashly, without a thorough understanding of all phases of the situation and the profoundest study brought to bear upon it. Definitely Canada must reconcile herself to the fact that the practice and schemes of the past are obsolete. Possibly they were as effective as possible under the circumstances, though they did such an imperfect job. But as Canada begins to glow over the first dim promise of a returning prosperity, and immediately begins to disinter the immigration question, it must be appreciated that to secure even the measure of success she has experienced in the past something entirely new must be tried.

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## PSYCHE

FLORENCE WESTACOTT

Long time in sore uncertainty I stood,  
Holding my unlit lamp. What was this Love?  
I heard the taunt; 'Psyche, who dares not prove!  
'Psyche, who dreads some deep disquietude  
'Should she once set aside her dreamful mood!  
'She speaks of bright immortal from above,  
'Gliding on pinions of his mother's dove,  
'A god, who bides nor glance nor question rude!  
Surely, I deemed, my lamp was given for use,  
That I might view Love clearly and aright,  
To learn if it be joy or woe he brings;  
Reason shall guide henceforth; I cease to muse.  
The flame shone out—no vision met my sight—  
I heard the sound of Love's departing wings.