

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION

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DURING the last three years it has been my privilege to cross Canada six times—from Halifax to Victoria and return—visiting most of the important cities *en route*. In the course of my travels I met in different parts of the Dominion men actively engaged in the public and business life of the country, many of them men whose names are known all over Canada; and I also met many men and women in humbler spheres of life. The information gathered from these sources, added to an extensive knowledge of Canada gained by long residence there in years gone by, enabled me to place before the British public a series of articles on “Canadian Economic Conditions” calling attention to the splendid opportunities existing in the Dominion not only for British settlers, but for trade and for the investment of British capital; and as these articles have had a very wide circulation, I hope they have been helpful to Canada.

Last November I was asked if I would write an article on Immigration for the REVIEW. This invitation I have much pleasure in accepting, and if in the course of this article there should be a certain amount of criticism I trust it will be accepted as the criticism of a friend who is sincerely anxious to help solve this greatest of all Canadian questions.

When travelling across Canada I was impressed, in every part of the country, with the great importance of immigration, and particularly so in Ontario and the Western Provinces. In nearly every part of the country people expressed disappointment that so few settlers are arriving, and in one rural district in the West it was put to me in this way,—“There is any amount of vacant land out here, near to railways, which can be bought at low prices and upon easy terms of payment, and we want to see these lands settled, so that we may have near neighbours. Closer settlement such as this will make country life more attractive to us all, and will also help to build up towns and villages in our midst, and incidentally do much to keep the young people on the farms.”

This undoubtedly represents the views of large numbers in the country districts, but in the larger cities and towns also the demand for a more vigorous immigration policy is everywhere

noticeable. In view of this I made it my business to discuss the question with all sorts and conditions of men, including Mr. Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Forke, the Minister of Immigration, the Premiers of most of the Canadian Provinces, the heads of the great railways, and other business men. As the result of all these enquiries, and of a careful study of publicly expressed Canadian opinion, I have definitely come to the conclusion that,—

1. The people of Canada wish to secure a much larger number of immigrants than they are getting at present.

2. They are particularly anxious that the great majority of these new arrivals should be of British origin.

If this diagnosis is correct, it is important not only to consider the present situation as regards Canadian Immigration itself, but to take into account the conditions prevailing in Great Britain and also the broader question of Empire migration, both of which have an important bearing upon the success or otherwise of efforts to promote Canadian Immigration.

Looking back to the period just before the war—the four years 1911 to 1914 inclusive—we find that Canada received over 1,450,000 immigrants, an average of 363,000 per year or 1000 per day. At the time of writing I have not seen the official figures for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1928, but during the Calendar year 1927, the number of immigrants arriving in Canada amounted to 158,884, made up as follows:

British	52,940
United States	23,818
Other Countries	82,126

We find therefore that in 1927 the number of immigrants arriving in Canada was less than 45 per cent. of those arriving annually during the years 1911 to 1914 inclusive. We find further—and this is very disconcerting—that of the new arrivals in Canada in 1927, only one-third were British, the other two thirds coming from foreign countries.

In considering the falling off in immigrant arrivals in 1927 when compared with the years immediately preceding the war, one has to remember that in the 1911-1914 period there was a large demand for labour in railroad construction, a demand which does not exist to any great extent today. But on the other hand building construction and work in connection with Power and Paper Plants is being done upon a larger scale than at any time in the history of the Dominion. Making all allowance for changed conditions,

one cannot help feeling that Canada can do far better in the matter of immigration than she is doing at present.

Efforts to deal with movements of population on a large scale are surrounded by many difficulties, and have to be entered upon after careful inquiry regarding conditions both in the country where it is hoped to secure the immigrants and in the country in which they are to settle. As most of the settlers Canada is likely to get from across the Atlantic, and especially those from the British Isles, are people who will have but little money, and upon arrival will either want work, or will have to be settled under some colonisation scheme to which the various governments and the transportation companies concerned will be contributory parties, it is important to know how many immigrants of the kind referred to can be absorbed annually. I have discussed this aspect of the immigration question with men in all parts of the Dominion, including Cabinet Ministers and ex-Cabinet Ministers, and also some of the great employers of labour, and though varying estimates were given me, it seemed to be generally agreed that Canada can easily absorb annually 250,000 settlers of the kind indicated.

It is not difficult to realize the importance to the Dominion of such an influx, amounting in four years to 1,000,000 new settlers, with all that this means in the way of increased production and larger demand for manufactured goods. In Canada one hears a great deal about the heavy burdens imposed by the railroad situation, a condition of affairs existing largely because there are more railroad facilities than are required by the population of to-day. When I was in Canada recently, the President of one of the greatest banks in the Dominion said to me: "Give us a million more people in Canada, and the railway question is settled". This is no doubt true, and one might reasonably suppose that many other problems would also be solved, including that of further reduction in taxation. Many years ago, when I was living in Canada, and had a great deal to do with Immigration, most of the new arrivals were going to the West, and I occasionally surprised some of my Western friends by telling them that we ought to look after the immigrants from the time they left their homes in the Old Country, until they got settled in the new land. The sturdy pioneers of bygone days, to whom Canada owes so much, were rather inclined to the view that unless immigrants could look after themselves they were not likely to be successful, and had better stay in their own country. To-day all that is changed, owing largely to the fact that financial assistance in one form or another is given to most of the new arrivals from the United Kingdom. But apart from this it is, I think,

desirable to remember that when an immigrant from across the Atlantic reaches Canada he is a stranger in a strange land, and a kindly welcome on arrival, together with a helping hand and some useful advice, may mean all the difference between success and failure.

The number of immigrant arrivals in Canada since the War leaves much to be desired. Figures given earlier in this article show that the arrivals in 1927 were less than one half of the annual arrivals in the years 1911 to 1914. People are said to be leaving Canada in considerable numbers for the United States. No doubt this is so, but I would point out that for the most part these are not newly-arrived immigrants, but are chiefly men and women born in Canada, who are attracted to the States mainly by reason of the increasing demand for their services arising out of the operation of the quota system applied by the United States Government against Europeans, but not against Canadians.

It is said that many of the Canadians who go to the States obtain employment in the large manufacturing centres in the East, while quite a number are educated men and women who find in the large cities of the United States greater demand for their services than exists in Canada. It is reasonable to suppose that with increased immigration and the consequent building up of large centres of industry and population in Canada this drain upon the country would be largely reduced, and in time practically cease. The immigration authorities in Ottawa state that about 40,000 Canadians returned from the States last year, and declared their intention to live henceforth in Canada. But notwithstanding this, the net movement southward is much larger than it should be.

Mr. Beatty, President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who probably knows more about immigration than any other man in Canada, stated recently that the Dominion needs a larger and more comprehensive scheme for securing immigrants, and he is reported to have said further that during the past three years the net addition to the population of Canada—apart from the natural increase—amounted to about only 80,000 per annum. This, of course, for a country the size of Canada means virtual stagnation, and when we remember that among the civilized nations of the world manpower still remains the final test of strength and security, it would appear to be time for Canada to be up and doing.

Since the War, the British Government has taken an active part in the matter of Dominion settlement. Under the provisions of the Empire Settlement Act, 1922, the British Government is authorised to provide \$15,000,000 per annum for fifteen years,

to enable it to co-operate in agreed schemes for assisting the migration of suitable persons in the United Kingdom, who intend to settle in any part of the Empire. What is known in Canada as the 2,000 families scheme is worked in connection with this fund, as are other branches of immigration work. Australia and New Zealand have been very active in these matters, much more so than Canada. The space at my disposal will not permit me to deal in detail with the working of the Empire Settlement Act. One is, however, justified in stating that it has not been the success its promoters anticipated, and it is felt by many who have closely studied the subject that the Act of 1922 needs reconsideration and amendment.

In Canada, men whose business it is to keep in close touch with immigration matters complain of the non-elasticity in the administration of the Act in London, whilst in Great Britain one is told that the numerous regulations imposed by Canada and the manner of interpreting them, tend to restrict emigration to that part of the world. A few weeks since there was a debate on the subject of emigration in the British House of Commons, when Mr. Lunn, M.P., who was a member of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's Labour Government, referring to the fact that Great Britain had not spent as much money as expected said: "That is not the fault of this country, as there are always thousands more people wanting to go to the Dominions voluntarily than the Dominions can take".

During the six years the Empire Settlement Act has been in operation only \$17,500,000 has been expended out of an authorised expenditure of \$90,000,000. Unfortunately, the amount unexpended each year reverts to the Treasury, and is lost for the purposes of Empire Settlement. From May 1922, when the Empire Settlement Act became operative, until December 1927, approximately 251,000 settlers have been assisted to settle in the overseas Dominions, the distribution being as follows:

Australia.....	137,814
Canada.....	74,509
New Zealand.....	38,862
Africa.....	609

Remembering that in connection with the different schemes carried out under the provisions of the Empire Settlement Act of 1922, money is provided upon a fifty-fifty basis, the Dominion interested putting up an amount equal to that furnished by the British Government, and remembering also that actual Settlement overseas is administratively a matter for the Dominion Government concerned, which therefore has much to say—and properly so—as to the kind of settlers it will accept under the Act, it must be admitted

that the British Government is not alone to blame for the poor results thus far achieved.

Unfortunately for Canada, the Dominion Government for many years past has not dealt seriously with the question. Conservatives and Liberals have been alike to blame. Until recently it was the custom to run Immigration as a kind of subsidiary in connection with some other Department,—at one time with the Department of Agriculture, at another with the Department of the Interior. And since a separate Department of Immigration and Colonisation has been established it has been nothing unusual to find that instead of a Minister being in full charge of its affairs, there has been an "Acting Minister", whose chief work was connected with some other Department of State. This was changed in September 1926 when the Hon. Robert Forke was appointed Minister of Immigration and Colonisation. Mr. Forke has lived in Manitoba for about forty years and is himself a successful settler from Scotland.

Owing to the combined action of the British and Canadian Governments, and of the steamship and railway companies interested, there are very low rates of passage, and approved persons can travel from a British port to a Canadian port for less than it costs to travel from Glasgow to London. The rate from Great Britain to Halifax, Saint John or Quebec is approximately \$10, to Winnipeg \$22.50, to Vancouver \$40, and to other points in proportion. The parties entitled to the benefit of these rates are individuals willing to become domestic servants or household workers, certain approved families, and single men who have had actual farming experiences.

Those who know Great Britain realise that it is useless for the Canadian Government to try to get any large number of farmers or farm labourers from that country. Under existing conditions the average farmer and his family are very unlikely to emigrate, and farm labourers are so scarce that in many parts of the United Kingdom farmers find difficulty in getting sufficient men to work the land. In view of all this it would seem to be desirable, under proper safeguards, to extend the benefit of these low rates to others who are physically fit and are willing to work on the land or in the woods. In most of the villages and smaller towns in Great Britain there are large numbers of men who, though in many cases employed in workshops and factories, are by reason of their upbringing and surroundings quite familiar with the conditions of rural life. They cannot perhaps technically be described as agriculturalists, but they are men who know something of country life and of gardening and carpenter work, being in fact just the kind needed in Canada.

In the aggregate there are many thousands of such men who are willing to work and anxious to improve their lot in life, and I suggest that the Canadian authorities might with advantage seriously consider what can be done with them.

Some time ago I had a talk on this subject with Mr. Amery, (Secretary of State for the Dominions), and I understood from him that when the other parties concerned are willing to do likewise, the British Government will be prepared to make its *pro rata* contribution to permit of an extension of the present low rates to individuals who are not at present entitled to benefit by them. I might also mention that in the United Kingdom about 300,000 boys are annually leaving school and looking for work. Most of these boys are of the finest type, just the kind likely to make good settlers in Canada.

Sir Robert Horne, M.P., (ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer), who recently visited Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the Empire, on his return to Great Britain a few weeks since, addressed a great meeting in Glasgow. He then said—"The object at which I would aim is to ensure that an adequate portion of our population should every year have a chance of making for themselves a career in countries under the British flag, where opportunities for a happy and successful life are infinitely greater than anything which can be offered to them at home". Public opinion would certainly back up Sir Robert Horne and those who think with him on this question, and such support is a matter of no small importance to those who have to look after the interests of Canada.

One feels that the movement to encourage the migration of women from the United Kingdom to Canada is capable of great extension. It is almost as difficult to get domestic servants in Great Britain as in Canada itself, but many young women who would not go into domestic service in the old country would be willing to do so in a new country, where, at any rate in many of the smaller towns and in the rural districts, they not infrequently live with and are treated as members of the family. It is interesting to note that according to the 1921 census, there are about 2,000,000 more women than men in Great Britain, whereas recent figures show that in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia there are approximately 250,000 more men than women. Clearly it would be to the advantage of both Canada and Great Britain to make an effort to restore the balance.

In the United Kingdom the migration work done by voluntary societies is very important. Agencies such as the Salvation Army,

the Church Army, the Y. M. C. A., and Dr. Barnado's Homes, and others looking after the movement of women and children, have done splendid work, and have been instrumental in directing large numbers to Canada and other Dominions. But some of these Societies seem to be discouraged in regard to their Canadian efforts. The London *Times* had an article recently severely criticising the new Immigration regulations of the Canadian Government. The London *Daily Telegraph* in a leading article several months ago said: "Canada now insists that every would-be immigrant shall be passed by a Canadian medical officer in this country,—she will not take the remotest chance of a British doctor taking too lenient a view. . . This is said, rightly or wrongly, by the emigration agencies to be operating as a restriction, and as a deterrent to emigration". The chairman of the Y.M.C.A. migration department publicly stated the other day that: "The tendency of the Canadian Government to impose more and more rigorous tests and regulations has undoubtedly had the effect of retarding emigration to the Dominions". Other criticisms could be quoted, but it is not necessary.

Since returning to Great Britain from Canada I have discussed the question of emigration with Government officials, and with railway and steamship agents, men whose daily business it is to direct intending settlers to Canada, and they are almost unanimous in expressing the opinion that the present regulations, and the application and interpretation of them, are seriously interfering with their efforts. Unfortunately Canada has created the impression that British settlers are not specially desired, and I understand that the movement from the United Kingdom to Canada is smaller this year than it was in 1927.

Though British born I lived for some years in Canada, which I know from the Atlantic to the Pacific just as well as I know my native land, and if I interpret aright the views of Canadians, they desire largely increased immigration and are anxious that the bulk of the new arrivals should be British. Mr. Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister, speaking in Parliament on the 31st of January last, said "We have felt that as a British Dominion we should welcome in larger measure than from any other country immigrants from the British Isles. It is the desire and the wish of the administration to encourage, as largely as we can, immigration from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We want to build up this part of the British Empire with people of British stock". Mr. Forke, the Minister of Immigration has frequently said practically the same thing, and no one who knows Mr. Forke will for one moment

doubt his genuine desire to carry this policy into effect. But the fact remains that, notwithstanding her abounding prosperity, Canada is not getting in the way of immigration what the Prime Minister and the Minister of Immigration tell her she ought to get. Clearly all is not well with the Department of Immigration itself.

Mr. R. B. Bennett got near to the real trouble when in the course of a debate in Parliament last winter, speaking of immigration, he said "It is not the Statute that prohibits, but the regulations made by order-in-council under the Statute".

Canada is a vast country with enormous undeveloped resources, and practically every one who knows the Dominion agrees that what it needs most is population. How to solve the immigration problem, and increase the movement of desirable settlers to Canada is the most important question with which Canadian statesmen have to deal. Prompt action is desirable, and I venture to suggest to the Canadian Government the appointment of a Royal Commission to be given wide powers, and authority to investigate the whole subject; and I do so in the belief that such a commission, whose work need not be unduly prolonged, would be able to make to the Government recommendations regarding immigration that would prove of inestimable value in dealing with this vital question.