

WHAT NEED OF IMMIGRANTS ?

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WE in Canada have been the victims of the art of cartography. The development of map making on the principle of Mercator's projection has resulted in northern people learning to picture their country out of all proportion to its real extent. Large maps which grace the walls of our public schools, and from which we receive our early instruction in geography, give a false representation of the area of Canada. One has only to compare the pictorial view on a globe with that of the map to realize how over-drawn are the northern countries. Greenland on Mercator's projection appears to be of about the same area as Africa, but reference to a globe will show how far this is from the truth. In the same way the northern portion of Canada seems to offer unlimited areas for settlement. We then examine the relative positions of Canada and the United States; from our maps we see that Canada is far greater in extent, and so we see no reason why our country should not surpass the Republic. Sir Wilfred Laurier seems to have become possessed with such an idea when he made that statement, which we are so pleased to re-utter, that the 19th century was that of the United States, but that the 20th century was Canada's. The fact is that the United States was simply building the foundation for its economic development in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and that the twentieth was to witness the actual construction. In 1870 the population of the United States was 38 millions and by 1900 it was 75 millions, a truly amazing growth, and not likely ever to be equalled. Although the population in the next thirty years did not increase with the same rapidity, in actual numbers the growth was greater during the twentieth century. If you turn from mere numbers of people to the well-being of the country, or the increase in the production of economic goods, then indeed is the twentieth century to the United States. It is only within the last decade that the surplus that American industry was creating began to find its way into the living of the people. Only from 1924 onwards have wages actually risen, and the tide has scarcely begun to run in this direction. Industrial efficiency came into its own with the advent of the Great War, and the resulting shortage of labour. The immigration law of 1924 gave another

stimulus, and within the last two years we have witnessed the greatest displacement of man by machine. These changes, I repeat, are only beginning to have their effect, so that the full meaning of American prosperity is yet to be realized. Just now the interpretation is expressed in the stock market, but one cannot conceive of the activity there as a permanent feature. We underrate the power of the American people if we believe that they will be content with what they have already achieved.

We need in Canada to "re-orientate" ourselves; to make an appraisal of our future, based upon what we can learn from the past. The grandiose development which seems to be just ahead must be soberly considered, without the rosy glasses through which we like to look. There is no need for dismay or pessimism because we have not made the progress for which we had hoped after every census has shown us that the past decade has again demolished our castles. Twenty-nine of the years of "Canada's century" have been traversed, and during these years great progress has been made. Not so great as some fond imperialists had hoped for, but a sufficient growth to offer a fair guide to our development in the years to come.

The old mercantilist doctrine that the prosperity of a country is conditioned by the number of people within its borders still forms the basis of many judgments. Mussolini is one of the latest exponents; and although he couches his exhortations in somewhat different terms from that of the pamphleteers of the 17th century, the words of Sir William Temple seem to be re-echoed. "The true and natural ground of trade and riches is the number of people in proportion to the compass of the ground they inhabit. This makes all things necessary to life dear, and that forces men to industry and parsimony." Such expressions are not so crudely formed in Canada, but constantly some public body forms a resolution or utters its opinion on the slow growth of the population, and how necessary it is that our numbers increase more rapidly in the future. The Annual Report of the Royal Bank of Canada makes reference to our needs in these words: "The most pressing internal problem of the country is the need for more population. . . Without a substantial increase in immigration we cannot hope to maintain that balance in expansion which is essential to sound prosperity." Of course the utterances of bank presidents have to be discounted, for the nature of their business frees them from any great anxiety as to the regular payment of dividends. Banks seem to make money in times of depression as well as in times of prosperity; so when the bankers speak for the well-being of a country,

it is largely with a detached interest. Nevertheless, as many of the bank directors are members of concerns which are more vitally affected by changing conditions, the statements are worthy of some consideration. The *Financial Post Year Book* for 1928 characterizes our supposedly slow growth in these terms:

Canada's population has passed the 9,500,000 mark. At the time of the decennial census in 1921, the population of the Dominion numbered 8,788,483, so that the intervening seven years have seen an increase of approximately 750,000. This is a disappointing showing to many who had anticipated that after the war this country would receive a large influx of British and continental migrants.

The presidents of both our railway systems do not overlook any opportunity to emphasize the need of a larger population, and their subsidiary colonization companies turn to each new immigration scheme with fresh hope.

The only phase of our problem that seems to be overlooked, and yet the only one that is really significant, is this:—what have been Canada's powers of absorption in the past, and what does the history of other immigrant-receiving countries show? The fact is that neither Canada nor any other country has absorbed influx of peoples on the scale that many now consider possible. The following table shows the figures for immigration, excess of immigrants over emigrants, and the gain per cent for the period 1901 to 1927:

Year	Immigration	Excess over emigration	Gain or loss %
1901	49,149	47,349	.88%
1902	67,379	65,259	1.17
1903	128,364	124,844	2.19
1904	130,331	120,881	2.04
1905	146,266	139,046	2.25
1906	189,064	162,264	2.55
1907	124,667	58,667	.90
1908	262,469	134,469	2.00
1909	146,908	- 26,092	- .38
1910	208,794	20,794	.29
1911	311,084	122,084	1.13
1912	354,237	261,237	3.21
1913	402,432	279,432	3.38
1914	384,878	241,878	2.81

Year	Immigration	Excess over emigration	Gain or loss %
1915	144,789	7,789	.08
1916	48,537	-120,467	-1.65
1917	75,374	-100,000	-1.34
1918	79,074	25,074	.27
1919	57,702	- 38,298	- .49
1920	117,336	- 32,664	- .41
1921	148,477	28,427	.28
1922	89,999	43,000	.46
1923	72,887	- 44,113	- .48
1924	148,560	- 55,440	- .55
1925	111,362	10,362	.01
1926	96,064	3,064	.03
1927	143,991	66,991	.86

For the period from 1901 to 1927 our powers of absorption were .8% or less than 1%: in other words, we retained 8 immigrants for each thousand of our population during those years. This is the history of our immigration, the actual result that has been secured during two decades. What reason is there to expect that the next twenty years will be entirely different? Our present population is less than ten millions. On the basis of this historical survey, about .8% should be our maximum immigration for each year, that is, some 80,000 people. It is safe to expect that there will be a movement of people both to and from the United States, so that the figure I have deduced might be used as a basis for European immigration. During the year 1927 some 120,000 people came to Canada from Europe, and in 1928 about 126,000. Canada is now getting more immigrants than would seem sound from an economic survey. Happily the excess is not as yet very great, and there is little likelihood of a very rapid increase in the number of arrivals. A computation of this kind will probably be considered as rank heresy by those Canadians who see national greatness depending upon the number of people within the country. Yet any examination of immigration data will show that an increase of more than 1% is most exceptional. The United States in the period from 1908 to 1921 admitted 9,117,265 immigrants and watched 3,218,023 depart, leaving a net increase of 5,899,242. A good many Canadians seem to think that it is possible for the Dominion to receive arrivals in the same number. In 1908, however, the population of the United States was about ninety millions, and in 1921 it was more than 106 millions. The years with the largest immigration meant that the United States was absorbing fewer than nine persons for each thousand of the population, while

Canada was taking more than thirty per thousand. The average power of absorption for the United States was probably less than .5%, while, as we have shown, the Canadian figure is .8%, more than twice as great.

Argentine is a country that makes possible a very fair comparison with Canada. Prof. Gregory, in his study *Human Migration and the Future* (1928), gives the immigration figures for the South American Republic. The population of Argentine was 7,885,237 in 1914, and it is estimated as 9,613,305 for 1926 (Canada's population was estimated at 9,378,000 in 1926). Argentine is more advantageously situated to retain her immigrants after their arrival, as the neighboring republics offer little incentive to the inhabitants to cross the border. This country, then, has had no years in which the emigration exceeded the immigration as was the case in Canada. Yet the indexes of absorption are no higher than in Canada. The period from 1910 to 1913, which includes the peak years, gave an excess of 156,000 per annum, or about 2% for the mean population. From 1920 to 1926 we have a duplication of our own story, the annual excess being about .9%.

At the World Population Conference of 1927 an Australian statistician presented some very interesting summaries of the movement of immigrants to the island continent. From his computations it would appear that Australian powers of absorption are even less than our own. For the conclusions presented gave an annual increase of only six persons per thousand of the mean population, or .6%.

When the Canadian population problem is viewed in its proper perspective, it is seen that the Dominion is doing all that might be expected of her, and that her population growth is just as great as that of any other country. As yet we have not discussed the real question, which is, what is to be gained by a larger population? It is scarcely necessary to repeat that mere numbers are not sufficient, and yet many Canadians look no further forward than the counting of heads. This attitude is well developed in our municipal affairs. City after city forms amalgamations of metropolitan areas, so that it may rise a step in the statistical reports. Montreal makes secure its position as Canada's largest city by drawing in another suburb or two; Vancouver seeks to become the third city by amalgamating Greater Vancouver, and so it goes. Such a policy will not serve for national development, and we must justify population growth only by the greater well-being of the individual citizens. Prosperity must be achieved for agricultural labourer and factory employee, for the logger in the woods and fisherman on the

sea. Increased car loadings and bigger bank loans cannot be used in this estimate of prosperity. They are relevant only in so far as they show greater well-being for the humblest of our citizens. Is this prosperity to be secured by immigration?

To answer this question, it is unnecessary to enter into any speculative discussions; history will give us all the data that we may need. The population of the United States is now 120 millions, ten times that of Canada. Are the citizens of the United States ten times better off than the people in Canada? The population of the United States doubled between 1890 and 1929, and yet no one would venture to say that the American people are twice as prosperous as they were before. In fact studies tend to show that the wage-earners and farmers were losing ground until about 1919. The agricultural class is only now getting back to a 1914 level, while the wage-earners appear to be getting weekly wages about 30% higher than they got in 1914. The heavy unemployment during 1928 will tend to make the real wages about 25% higher than they were before the war. The country is prosperous, so every one says, but there is a close approximation to truth in the statement of Clarence Darrow when he said that prosperity has come to the prosperous. In some industries in the United States the increased productivity per man has risen 60% above the 1914 level, and yet the general body of the public have not had their standard of living raised by anything near that.

What has Canada to offer in comparison, with less than 1/12 the population of her neighbour? Indexes of production for Canadian manufacture are extremely difficult to compile, and any figures that I may offer must be accepted as largely speculative, and yet I think the attempt is worth making. In the following tables there are given comparative data for Canada and the United States in several fields:

Indexes of Production in Manufacturing 1920-1926 (1920=100)

Year	United States (Fed. Reserve Board)	Canada
1920	100	100
1921	77	91
1922	101	102
1923	120	112
1924	112	109
1925	125	118
1926	129	135

These two index columns should not be compared with each other year by year only in so far as they show percentage increase. On this basis it is seen that the development has been just as rapid in Canada as in the United States; and I think that if the figures for 1927 and 1928 were available, Canada would be placed to even greater advantage.

Another standard by which to measure the prosperity of a country is by estimating the productivity for each worker in industry. Comparative figures are given in the following table:

Year	Relative number total employees		Relative output per employee	
	U. S. A.	Canada	U. S. A.	Canada
1920	100	100	100	100
1921	76	75.4	104	135
1923	87	88.9	125	146
1926	92.3	99.7	133	147

On the basis of this table it is seen that Canada, so far as these indexes show, is in just as strong a position as the United States. Although immigration has been relatively small in the past five years, and a good many Canadians emigrated to the United States, these losses do not seem to have affected our development. Comparable data for wages in Canada and the United States are not available, and from all reports it would seem that they are somewhat lower in the Dominion. This, however, is largely due to the failure of the workers to press their demands for a higher standard. The surplus is there; production figures show it. All that is necessary is pressure to direct the flow of goods from the prosperous to those that are less prosperous.

A large influx of immigrants will not add to Canada's prosperity. In fact Canadians should really be asking, how much immigration can we afford? Of course there are many interests that stand to gain from a larger population. All those who are engaged in the distribution of goods find their business increased with more people to serve. The railways are holding thousands of acres of land that they would gladly dispose of, at a price. The farmer secures little benefit by finding that the railway is doing more business, and the railway employee will probably find it just as hard to get an increase in wages as before. So one can follow the results of an increase in population. The story is plainly written in the history of the American nation, so that he who runs may read.