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Prize
CLASS A

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In what way could the smallness of population within the overseas Empire be corrected? Could this best be remedied a) by State-aided emigration, or otherwise, from Great Britain, or (b) transferring population from congested areas within the Empire.

SUMMARY:

Introduction: Imperial development interrupted by last war - attention focussed on Empire problems by present war - the uneven distribution of population in the Empire - Britain and India the only countries that can supply emigrants in considerable numbers.

Emigration from Britain: Impulses that attracted early emigrants - absence of such

impulses today - necessity of allowances to attract emigrants - private enterprise unsatisfactory - State aid necessary.

Suitability of Empire countries for taking in British emigrants:

- a) Those likely to benefit from white immigration
- b) Those likely to benefit from coloured immigration
- c) Those not likely to benefit from immigration of any kind.

Important Considerations: Falling population of Britain - post war European food crisis.

Emigration from Overseas Empire: India the only country able to spare large numbers for emigration.

Obstacles to Indian emigration: Harsh treatment of Indians in South Africa - 'White Australia' Policy - Caste system among Indians.

Suggested Remedies: Protecting of immigrants - Attractive allowances to draw better classes.

Important Considerations: Payment of large

allowances a strain on the Indian treasury - reactions of foreign Powers e.g. Japan to such emigration.

Conclusion: British migration should be confined mainly to the Dominions and Indian migration to tropical regions - Such transference of population will be of definite advantage to the whole Empire.

In what way could the smallness of population within the overseas Empire be corrected? Could this best be remedied (a) by State-aided emigration, or otherwise, from Great Britain, or (b) transferring population from congested areas within the Empire.

"Nothing" said Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in 1909 "strikes me more constantly in what I may call 'the misdirection of natural energy' than the extraordinary contrast between the amount of time and labour and ingenuity which is expended on the least of our home political questions compared to the plentiful lack of thought and energy devoted to even the biggest problems of Empire ---". Despite Mr. Chamberlain's

efforts and those of Lord Milner, the development of the Empire according to some systematic plan has not hitherto been attempted. The Great War of 1914-18 is largely responsible for this, and in the desire for world unity that followed the war, people lost sight of the more practical ideal of Empire unity. No serious efforts have since been made towards the evolution of a scheme whereby some systematic work may be done towards improving the Empire.

The present war has set many minds thinking on post-war problems, and the future of the British Empire has been the subject of much discussion. It has been realised that the Empire's future depends on a more sympathetic understanding among its peoples and a more careful examination of their grievances.

The whole Empire is in common agreement that nothing should be left undone towards attaining these ends. Many schemes have been proposed for making the Empire more united and more prosperous, and among them is a proposal to even out the distribution of population within the Empire by a systematic transference of population from congested areas to underpeopled ones.

A glance at the statistics of Empire population shows us that there are large areas of land that are very scantily populated. Tasmania for example, where sheep-farming and fruit-growing are the principal occupations, is rich in minerals and has plentiful supplies of water power. Yet with an area almost equal to that of Ireland, her population is only equal to that of Cardiff. New Zealand is

slightly larger than Great Britain and supports a population of just over one and a half millions. Newfoundland, in spite of her lumbering and fishing industries, has only about seven inhabitants to the square mile. Canada is an immense tract of land with a population of about three persons to the square mile, and Australia, thirty three times as large as Great Britain, supports a population smaller than that of Greater London. Unfortunately the greater part of Australia is waterless desert, so that she has room for fewer immigrants than is generally supposed. Nevertheless her capacity for absorbing immigrants is still very considerable. The only countries of the Empire that can supply emigrants in considerable numbers seem to be Great Britain and India.

A glance thus shows us that the

population of the Empire is very unevenly distributed. Emigration from Britain and India to other parts of the Empire will help to some extent in correcting this unequal distribution of population. Let us first consider emigration from Great Britain.

The prime motives which inspired the early English emigrants were the desire for religious freedom, for free trade and for gold. The desire for religious freedom led to the establishment of the New England States by the Pilgrim Fathers and of Maryland and Louisiana by Roman Catholic refugees. The impulse of trade led Englishmen into Africa and the East, while the desire for gold brought about the development of Australia and British Columbia.

Such impulses, save for the excitement

If an occasional gold rush, do not exist today. Future emigrants will not have such exciting prospects before them as a sudden accession of wealth, or a sudden emancipation from religious persecution. Steady work and slow advancement are all they can expect.

Such prospects will not attract many. The more prosperous classes would almost certainly refuse to emigrate, and emigrants would only come from the poorer classes of society. Such people who have been failures at home, are likely to be failures abroad, and will be a hindrance rather than a help to a foreign country.

Emigration would therefore be unsatisfactory if left to private individuals. It is evident that certain attractions must be provided to encourage the emigration of better classes of citizens. These

attractions would naturally take the form of grants of money and land, and could be offered either by private companies or by the State.

Much of the pioneer colonisation work of Britain was done by private enterprise through such companies as the British East India Company. In those days trade with Africa and the East offered dazzling prospects, and shares in such companies were readily bought. These companies helped colonists to settle down in foreign lands where their presence would help in trade with the natives. Today no private company can monopolise the trade with any country; nor would any company be eager to settle colonists in foreign countries. Private companies will therefore be of little assistance in aiding emigration.

The British Government will have to step in, and State-paid allowances ought to be offered to attract emigrants. Definite attempts on these lines have been made in the past, and these led to the Colonisation of Nova Scotia by the old soldiers of the Peninsular Wars, and the formation of Graham's Town in Cape Colony. Australia used to attract immigrants by the Wakefield system whereby the money realised by selling State land was used to help immigrants. We must remember that the country from which emigration takes place, and the country to which the emigrants go, are both bound to benefit by this movement of population. An agreement ought therefore to be reached between the British Government and the Empire countries concerned, whereby each of them undertakes to defray a part of the expenses incurred in

helping emigrants. The assurance of State aid during their first few years abroad will encourage emigrants and make them more self-reliant.

Having seen that State aid is essential to any systematic migration, we must proceed to consider the suitability of various parts of the Empire for immigration from Great Britain. In this connection it is convenient to divide Empire countries into three broad groups, namely those likely to benefit from white immigration, those likely to benefit from coloured immigration, and those not likely to derive benefit from immigration of any kind.

All the Dominions fall within the first group of countries. Much British immigration used to take place into these countries both before and after the last war. When the slump of 1929-32 came on, the Dominions, fearing

that their existing populations were not protected against widespread ruin, refused to accept further liabilities in the form of British immigrants. Since then, in spite of much discussion, no permanent arrangement seems to have been made between Great Britain and the Dominions on the question of British immigration. The fact that this matter is being considered is seen however from the recent statement of the British Government that it intends to encourage the migration of demobilised soldiers into the Dominions when the war is over.

In 1908 an Australian Labour Senator said that if the large estates in Australia could be broken up, there would be room for hundreds from Great Britain to come and to prosper; but "until the Government of the Commonwealth determined to impose a tax on unimproved land and compel the

utilisation of these fertile tracts of country, there was no use in saying that there was room for further population." Though doubtless a prejudiced judgment, this contains a helpful suggestion, namely a way in which greater areas in the Dominions could be thrown open for immigrants. The necessity for such drastic steps is fortunately not acute, and the fact remains that all the Dominions have room for British immigrants and would be glad to have them if some arrangement could be made with Britain.

The second group of Empire countries, namely those likely to benefit from coloured immigration, are those countries in which conditions of life are not suitable for Europeans. British North Borneo, Sarawak, the Solomon Islands and Papua are very suitable for Indian immigration, and unsuitable at the same time for immigration

from England. In these countries, standards of living are low and the climate is too warm for Europeans. The same applies to most of the British Possessions in Africa. The climate of North Australia is also a deterrent to European settlement.

The last group comprises those countries in which the presence of immigrants is likely to be harmful. An example of such a country is Bechuanaland where the natives are very backward and carry on their agriculture and stock-raising in a very primitive manner. Any immigration is likely to result in the domination of the immigrants over the natives. Immigration into such countries from Britain should especially be discouraged for this reason.

Whilst bearing in mind what has already been said, we must consider two factors that are likely to influence future emigration

from Britain. The first is the realisation that the population of England is steadily falling. Statistics are not available here of the latest developments, but it is likely that the War has accelerated this decrease. This circumstance would tend to discourage all emigration from Britain but for the fact that there is the fear of a food crisis in Europe after the war. England is likely to be affected in spite of her efforts at food production. A fall in population is likely to adjust itself in course of time, whereas a famine even for a few years is something more serious. The latter consideration ought, therefore, to outweigh the former, and induce the Government to encourage emigration on a large scale.

Our short survey of emigration from Britain has thus shown us that Britain needs an outlet for her surplus population. Migration from

Britain into tropical regions ought to be discouraged, but the Dominions can profitably absorb large numbers of British emigrants.

The possibility of emigration from other parts of the Empire should now engage our attention. Of countries in the overseas Empire, ~~the Union of South Africa~~ Burma and Malaya may be able to supply emigrants, but the only country that can supply them in considerable numbers is India.

Many unfortunate barriers lie in the way of Indian emigration.

The unpleasant treatment of Indians in South Africa has served to discourage Indians from migrating to any areas where Europeans predominate. The attitude of the South Africans towards Indian immigrants has been most short-sighted and unintelligent.

It is to be hoped that Indian comradeship with South Africans on the battlefield in the present war will help to correct this attitude.

The 'White Australia' Policy constitutes another barrier to emigration from India. This policy is certainly a justifiable one and owes its origin to a fear of the consequences of importing cheap oriental labour. It shows us how strongly some of the Dominions feel on the difficult question of competitive standards of living between the white and coloured races. In Australia especially, a strong Labour Party has expressed its determination to create and maintain a 'fair and reasonable' standard of living. The 'White Australia' Policy has nevertheless created a large volume of ill-feeling among Indians, not to speak of Chinese, Japanese and Malays, who feel that while they

are cramped up for lack of room, thousands of square miles are shut to them. The Indians argue that the climate of Northern Australia makes it unfit for white labour. In addition, severe winters are unknown in Australia, so that the climate will not seriously affect Indian immigrants. Lastly, Great Britain cannot supply Australia with sufficient immigrants for purposes of defence. These arguments are sound in themselves, but the problem of labour conditions has yet to be solved.

The third formidable barrier in the way of Indian emigration is the caste system which prevents the friendly association of the different castes that may be thrown together in the process of emigration. This causes a lack of unity among Indian emigrants.

Thus it would appear that migration from India is attended by several drawbacks

whose presence is not felt in the case of migration from Britain. These are not insurmountable, however, and can be overcome if they are approached in a spirit of sympathetic understanding.

Provision should first be made to ensure that the rights of the emigrant Indian will be respected. For this purpose it would be advisable to set up boards in order to safeguard the rights of emigrants in their new home. In Ceylon for example, Indian labour is protected by a Board of Indian Immigration and an Indian official resident in Ceylon. The existence of such a board in South Africa would have prevented many of the indignities the Indians suffered there.

Indian migration to Australia would nevertheless hinder the smooth administration of the country owing to the differences that

are bound to arise between the Australians and the immigrants. It would be wise to appoint trained officials such as the Native Commissioners of Rhodesia to act as a link between the immigrants and the existing population and to ensure the friendly working of the administration.

Such prospects of fair treatment are bound to attract Indians from the respectable middle classes, whose standard of living is comparatively high, and among whom rigid caste distinctions do not exist. A State-paid allowance during their first years of settlement will help them to maintain a standard of living equal to that of the average Australian. Australians will then have no cause to complain that the quality of Indian immigrants is poor or that immigration will lower Australian standards of living.

We must nevertheless remember that all

the obstacles in the way of Indian emigration are not likely to vanish immediately these suggestions are put into force. The overcoming of these obstacles is likely to take a long time, and the best that can be done in the circumstances is to hold out such attractive offers to emigrants that Indians from the most intelligent classes will be induced to emigrate.

This brings us to a consideration of the allowances paid to emigrants. Allowances to Indians in Australia may have to be several times greater than the average wage in India. The payment of such allowances to large numbers of emigrants would be a great strain on the Indian treasury which would prefer to send emigrants into regions like the African possessions where living is cheap. In addition, the Indian labourer is alien to the people of these lands by conditions of labour and climate, so that he is very suitable

for immigration into such regions. For these reasons Indian migration to Australia may not receive much support from the Indian Government, and may have to be left partly to private enterprise.

Immigrants must also have some training beforehand in the occupation they intend to pursue on emigration. Furthermore, immigrants into any country must have a wide variety of occupations so that they can mix more easily with the existing population. India cannot supply emigrants trained in a very wide variety of occupations, whereas Britain can do so because she is a highly industrialised country.

While making these observations we ought not to lose sight of the fact that foreign countries will not fail to watch keenly any major developments that may take place within the Empire. The Power whose

reactions to such developments should concern us most is Japan, a country much interested in the subject of immigration to Australia. If migration from Britain to Australia takes place on a large scale, Japan will not complain, because the argument that coloured immigration would lower labour conditions could still be advanced. But if the migration of Indians to Australia is allowed, the argument will hold no longer, and Japan will clamour for the admission into Australia of large numbers of her people. When permission to immigrate is refused, she will naturally grow discontented. China will also desire to send some of her surplus population to Australia. Considering the help China has rendered the Empire during the present war, we could not turn down her request so easily. It would not be wise, therefore, to allow the immigration of Indians to Australia on a large scale.

All these circumstances point towards the desirability of emigration to the Dominions from Great Britain rather than from India. The ill-treatment of immigrants, the 'White Australia' Policy and the caste system are the most formidable barriers in the way of emigration from India; while the inability of the Indian treasury to support large numbers of emigrants, and the reactions of Japan to Indian immigration into Australia, are also factors to be reckoned with. The immigration of Englishmen into Australia and the other Dominions is not attended by so many hindrances, and we have seen that emigration from Britain is necessary in view of expected post-war developments. It would be best, therefore, to do all in our power to transfer people from Britain to the Dominions, while confining Indian migration to tropical regions like Africa where the standard of living

corresponds with that of the Indian labourer. As an experiment, however, we could transfer a small number of well educated Indians from the upper classes to Australia, and observe their progress. If these Indians mix well with the Australians it will be possible to transfer larger numbers of Indians later on. Till then, British migration aided by the State, should take place on a large scale.

A systematic transference of population in this manner is probably the best method of strengthening the Empire. Underpeopled areas will be developed and the relief of Congestion will afford more opportunities for healthy development and a more vigorous life. The whole Empire will grow richer, and each country will develop that Empire consciousness which is so essential to the well-being and defence of a great Empire.