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SECOND PRIZE

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Royal Empire Society Essay 1939.

Class A.

"The Problem of Migration Within the Empire"

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The Problem of Migration within the Empire.

Summary.

- A. Definition of the scope of the Essay. The subject limited for given reasons, to "Immigration into New Zealand from the British Isles."
- B. Showing the necessity of immigration for purposes of defence, since our population is declining and mere natural increase however rapid, cannot raise our population quickly enough for us to be able to resist Japanese aggression.
- C. Showing that British migrants are available.
- D. Showing that migrants can be absorbed into New Zealand; giving first the methods of migration possible and next the economic aspect, showing that immigration brings prosperity and we therefore have unlimited absorptive capacity.
- E. Lying the main difficulty - our high standard of living, which hinders migration through our unwillingness to lower it even temporarily, in order to help migrants establish themselves.
- F. Lying the solution to the trouble. We must pay the price, or perish.
- G. Showing that we are approaching disaster slowly but surely, yet imperceptibly, and intimating that unless we act now or soon, then it will be too late for us to save ourselves, and ~~the~~ disaster must follow.

New Zealand is, I believe, the finest and most desirable country as far as human habitation is concerned, in the Empire, perhaps in the world. Arthur Shee has called it "The Island of Splendour." He describes it as -

Arthur Shee.
"The Motherland
and the Empire."

"Made green with the running of rivers
And gracious with the temperate air."

And yet for all her hundred thousand square miles, New Zealand has a population of barely a million and a half. Surely the migration problem must be most acute here. But I have chosen to discuss only New Zealand of the four Dominions because, living in New Zealand, and attending a school where public questions are discussed freely and widely, this problem as it affects New Zealand is more vivid to me now, than could ever be the problems similarly affecting Australia, Canada, or South Africa, ~~after weeks of reading~~. I choose from these four only, because it seems to me that they alone of all the lands in the Empire, are really suitable for migrants of British stock, and wholly unsuitable at present for the aboriginals of British Possessions in Asia or in Africa. My reason for so thinking, I base on the disparity between the whites and the coloured peoples. It seems to me that though in some distant age, the world's population must become comparatively homogeneous, ~~that~~ we are not ready for it yet. Were we to be so rash as to permit five millions, say, of even the finest African or Indian types to settle in New Zealand, it would be as a drop in the bucket to India or Africa where millions are born each year, but in New Zealand, tremendous difficulties would arise - the troubles presented by differences in language, law, customs, religion. Were intermarriage took place, trouble

must occur to some extent, for the laws of heredity work strangely when different racial types mix. So at the present, white immigrants only, in any number could conceivably be allowed to enter New Zealand, and taking account of the present European struggle, I shall take it for granted that our migrants must come from the British Isles. Thus I have narrowed the subject "Migration within the Empire" to "Migration from the British Isles to New Zealand," remembering that immigration into Great Britain from New Zealand is sufficiently insignificant to be negligible.

New Zealand is, as I have said, a fine country with a healthy and temperate climate, but is as yet relatively unpopulated. This, I think, is due to our hitherto remoteness from the rest of the world and especially from Great Britain and Europe. But now this has altered, and remoteness is changing to greater and greater nearness, in particular, to Japan and the Far East. But the Far East is no longer far, and as indefinite and unlimited British naval protection is uncertain (the more so since Britain is involved in a war from which she cannot, in all probability, emerge for some years), invasion by Japan is possible. So to form an opinion of the likelihood of our being allowed to work out our own destiny uninterrupted, let us look at some facts, whose significance is self-explanatory, bearing on the subject. The density of population per square mile in Japan is 482. In New Zealand it is 15.51. Since, however, that vast area of New Zealand covered by mountain, lake, and forest, is unable to support any large population, a comparison of the density per square foot of arable land may be fairer.

New Zealand 54. Japan 2,978

Nevertheless one would think that by filling with her own natural increase, New Zealand would become less empty and less weak and therefore less desirable to this hungry "have-not" power. But let us again consult some relevant figures. In 1926 the number of children in the primary schools of New Zealand was 223,388 - in 1938 there were only 206,002 - a decrease of 1,450 each year, which was not apparent from our census figures for a reason parallel to this: in a recent decade, whereas the number of children under sixteen years of age in New Zealand decreased by 10,000, those over sixty increased by 40,000, showing an apparent net gain of 30,000.

In considerations of population, the figure of real import is the Net Reproduction Rate, as defined by Professor Kuzynski of London. When this rate is more than unity, the mothers of each succeeding generation are more numerous than those of the last; when it is unity the mothers of one generation will exactly replace themselves in the next; when it is less than unity, the number of mothers in each succeeding generation is decreased and a decline of population must occur and must continue, obviously in a geometric progression, unless the rate alters. Our Net Reproduction Rate in New Zealand is, or was in 1936, .967. Our population can, therefore, so long as the rate remains below one, never rise above a million and three quarters. Obviously, we must raise our birth rate which is at present 18 per 1000, and this must be our final aim for even a million immigrants can not help us if they join us in maintaining

a net Reproduction Rate of less than one.

But here another consideration arises. Even if we could achieve a birth rate of 26 per 1000 (the 1911 rate), and if we could maintain it at that level, we should get a natural annual increase of 11,000 or thereabouts, and in 15 years increase our population by only 165,000, raising it to a figure still far short of two millions. But more, we should then have less workers and dependers, proportionately speaking, than we have today, for the whole of the 165,000, being under 16 years of age, would be only an encumbrance, another 165,000 mouths to feed. Thus, as a safety measure against invasion, an increase in the birth rate would be of no practical value for at the least, twenty years. So as far as our internal defence is concerned, the only way in which we can rapidly attain security is by immigration, for immigrants give an immediate increase both in the number of potential defenders and the number of potential mothers. As to their numbers, 80,000 immigrants a year, with the birth rate at the 1911 level, would produce by the year 1960, a population of well over three and a half millions. Suppose then that we could have 80,000 immigrants a year with a birth rate of 26 per 1000, then with this increased population, our defensive strength would be greatly added to, because we should be more self contained and less vulnerable to blockade.

Referring once more to the necessity for defence I shall quote the great Japanese Emperor, Jimmu Tenno, who said in 660 B.C. -

"We shall build our capital all over the world, and make the whole world our dominion." This has no real significance in itself, but when we realise that concerning this particular rescript, the Japanese military textbook, "The Army Reader" states:- "This Rescript has been given to our race and to our troops as an everlasting categorical imperative," - we can see what an enormous threat is constituted to New Zealand, whose climate is so well suited to the Japanese. In the game of bridge, when the only possibility of making Rubber is to play the hand a certain way, then that is the way to play the hand. So too, when our only hope of achieving safety for the future of New Zealand is by large scale immigration, then from our point of view, immigration is enormously desirable, if it is possible, (for in such a vital issue, it is not so much the degree of possibility - or of probability - that counts, as the seriousness of the possible event.

When I say "if it is possible," two questions are involved. They are -

- (i) are suitable migrants available?
- (ii) can they be absorbed?

In dealing with the first of these questions, "are suitable migrants available?", I shall first quote W. E. S. Adams, Warden of All Souls College, Oxford, who said in 1937 - "In some local communities in Great Britain, up to 80% of the registered workers have found themselves unemployed, not for a few weeks, but for many months, and sometimes longer..... and the question arises whether there are not available in the near

W. E. S. Adams at
1937 Migration
Conference.

world better opportunities than in the congested areas of Northern Europe, for mitigating the social distress of such unemployment." Here are some figures of British unemployed. —

January 1933 - 3,000,000 - 23%.

January 1937 - 1,700,000 12%.

July 1939 - 1,250,000 in spite of the tremendous employment on ~~defence~~ defence forces and munitions. What would be the result if for a few years the present European trouble ceased, or even died down?

It is agreed that every civilized country has a certain pool of unemployed, but England has an excessive pool and one that under peaceful conditions would be even more excessive. So for ten years at least, there will be a large number of British unemployed available for migration. And these need not be drawn on directly, for when men who have been in regular employment, emigrate, they leave their jobs open for unemployed comrades to fill. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, speaking as Secretary for the Dominions in 1938, said repeatedly that "the British Government is thinking in terms of millions of settlers going from Britain to the colonies." Millions — that shows conclusively that migrants are available.

Mr. MacDonald
Secretary for Dominions.

New Zealand is a land of exceptional possibilities of development, a land of relative freedom and advanced social legislation. If we had expanding industries here, there would be many of the artisan and middle class of Britain who would most gladly come out, happy to escape from

English overcrowding and nearness to troubled Europe. How long such migrants will be available is entirely another matter. British Population is expected to begin its decline about the year 1963, and this decline will first of all affect the age groups suitable for migration.

He who will not when he may,
When he will he shall have nay.

That migrants are available is clear, and while we can we should avail ourselves of them. In the words of Mr. M. J. Savage, Prime Minister of New Zealand "We have no economic right or physical power to justify holding empty territory."

The obvious course it seems, is to get immigrants. But here arises the next question. "Can these migrants be absorbed?" In discussing this question, it is fitting to consider first the different types and methods of immigration that are possible. A. E. Mander, author of the booklet "To Alarm New Zealand", puts forward a scheme wherein the New Zealand Government would guarantee work to immigrants for one year, during which space of time he calculates that at least 80% would leave for private employment. He advocates, therefore, Planned Migration.

Another exceedingly successful, though small, type of immigration is the Fairbridge farm scheme, by which children are taken as migrants, and brought up and trained in a combined school and farm, in the district in which they are later likely to live. Thus their adopted country has become their home before they actually reach

working age.

But experience has shown that planned migration is a very difficult and risky undertaking. "The Road of Group Settlement has been strewn with failures," said W. J. S. Adams, at the 1937 Migration Conference. In actual experience, the numbers who have settled by group methods in any country have been a very small fraction compared with those who have come by infiltration. And infiltration is without doubt, the best of these methods, as the individual can choose, perhaps under advice or even supervision, from the variety of occupations this country offers, and find his place in the agriculture or industry of New Zealand, much as he would have done, in his own country.

In dealing with our absorptive capacity the next thing to be considered is the economic aspect. It seems that our capacity is very great, for increasing population in a country obviously hastens the increase of wealth, rather than decreases it, because of

- (i) more and easier exchange of services.
- (ii) more specialization.
- (iii) more mass-production.
- (iv) lighter burden of taxation.

With regard to the idea that harder work will increase our capacity to absorb immigrants, it would seem at first sight that the more work that the present workers do, the less there will be left for others to do. But picture a thirty hour week in New Zealand. With rising costs all around, there would be fewer employed than ever. So it is possible that

our high standard of leisure, our many holidays, and our short working hours, may in some measure be responsible for our unemployment and apparently small absorptive capacity today.

Another thought bearing on the matter of our absorptive capacity, is that of our secondary and tertiary industries, which, had we a larger population, could be well developed. Such a project is the Lake Manapouri and Dusky Sound, Hydro-Electric scheme. The enterprise would produce electricity and use it for the production of nitrates, aluminium, iron, rustless steel, for the hydrogenation of coal and the production therefrom of motor spirit. These developments it will be seen, would become basic industries in New Zealand, likely to support secondary and tertiary industries, they would be strategic industries for munitions in New Zealand and the Empire; they would develop into great exporting industries for their products are in world-demand, and are likely to remain so. Many such schemes have been outlined and proved to be economically sound. All we are waiting for, is the necessary population to support them.

I have now produced arguments to the effect that immigrants in large numbers are needed, are available, and can be absorbed; but my task is by no means finished and my discussion incomplete, without what is, perhaps, the most important point of all, "What opposition is there in New Zealand to immigration?" There is opposition to immigration in New Zealand,

but it is the opposition of ignorant and unthinking minds who cannot perceive the fallacy in their arguments. They see in immigration immediate competition for their jobs, and less power on their part to force their employers to give good wages and good working conditions. They visualize less steady work and poorer rates of pay, and, very naturally oppose immigration. But these can be persuaded to larger and wiser views, and as a last resort can be overridden. The real stumbling block is our standard of living - our little old calf whom we worship, and deify. Rapid increase in migration will mean hard work and a lower standard of living during the transition period until our greater population has made our industries really economic, until we have a well balanced internal economy. Here is the crux of the whole matter. To populate our lands quickly, to save our children and our country, we must be prepared to sacrifice for a time our standard of living, and it is our unwillingness to make this sacrifice that constitutes the opposition, the real opposition to immigration - "We are planning a new offensive on the war. The preparations are detailed and colossal. No troop however will be moved until we have a guarantee from the enemy that they will not be fired upon. - Is this an unfair comparison? In both cases there is much detailed planning, whose effect is spoiled by the same unwillingness to pay the necessary price for success.

There is only one solution to our problem, only one way to safety - we must

Dr. E. S. Stallo.
The Second Hundred
Years.

pay this price. We must be prepared to temporarily lower our standard of living, which will rise again through the prosperity brought to us by immigrants. We must heartily encourage immigrants of British stock to come to settle in New Zealand. No man in New Zealand would protest against our birth rate rising to the 1911 level of 26 per 1000, but this as I have shown would merely mean more mouths to feed. Then why not 100,000 immigrants to begin with? If we begin the work with a will, we shall soon solve the minor problems which arise. We must get them here while we can. Shall we run our lives thinking first of our race and our ideals, or thinking first of the great New Zealand God, common to all classes and to all parties - "The All Highest Standard of Living."

In conclusion, to show the urgency of the situation, to show that if we do not make the decision now, then ~~the~~ disaster will ^{follow} ~~come~~ as sure as the sun shines and rivers flow, I give a quotation from A. E. Mander, author of, "To Alarm New Zealand."

"The course of history" he says, "is mainly determined by processes and developments which, being gradual, do not easily catch the eye of the contemporary observer, or capture the imagination of the ~~sub~~ subsequent historian. Only when some long and almost imperceptible process has culminated at last in a sudden world-shaking crash; only when some very gradual shifting of the weights has finally resulted in a sudden dramatic toppling over of a nation or civilization; only when some

A. E. Mander.
To Alarm New
Zealand.

hidden creeping change, some slow and silent process of strengthening here or weakening there, some unseen growth or gathering of forces in one part, or some unmarked extension of decay elsewhere - only when at last the process reaches its climax, and issues in some sudden, startling, staggering, shattering event; only then is it recognisable as "History"

(2940 words.)

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