

A PAPER ON
IMMIGRATION

BY
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READ BEFORE
The Tacoma Rotary Club
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Other organizations such as the I. W. W. and the Red Socialists are composed of the foreign element. Such parties of malcontents create unrest, depress business, and do not add materially to the sum total of human happiness. "The plain truth is," says Prof. Ross, of the University of Wisconsin, and one of our authorities on immigration, "that rarely does any new immigrant bring in his intellectual baggage anything of value."

There is one more point. These immigrants from southern Europe are a floating population, most of them males, with no thought of America or of trying to become Americanized. They save what money they can and invest it in America? Indeed no. They send it back to the old country where it means more. In 1907 \$275,000,000 were sent back in this way. Four hundred dollars actual cash goes out for every able bodied laborer that enters. Count Wichenbury, an Austrian authority, says, "Italy, which was on the brink of economic ruin 20 years ago, is today, because of its emigration to the United States, financially so strong that she is able to carry on a long and costly war without the slightest convulsion." What country supplies the money?

Many other things might be mentioned concerning the effects of immigration

but time forbids. It is sufficient that we realize the volume to be over 1,000,000 yearly. That the racial characteristics of these people makes them unfit for citizenship, and until we change the nature of the American himself there is little chance of Americanizing the immigrant; that the effects of immigration are: lowering of wages, displacement of native stock by decreasing the birth rate, lowering the standard of living, increase in the worst kind of crime, the increase of insanity and pauperism, the existence of such organizations as the I. W. W. and Red Socialists, the exportation of millions of gold, corruption in politics, and unrest among the laborers, foreigners as well as natives. "Something must be done and done immediately," says Prof. Ross. "If immigration ceased today, the burden from past neglect and exploitation would go on for years. Thoughtful people whose work takes them into the slime at the bottom of our foreignized cities and industrial centers find that deterioration is actually upon us."

We cannot allow this to continue. We dare remain indifferent no longer. It is high time for the American voter to interest himself in this question, and then do something. We will have to admit that we Americans are to blame for



many of the conditions surrounding the immigrant. We do not associate with them; we do not try to Americanize them. However, that does not alter conditions one whit. You can not change the American's unwillingness to associate with the Italians any more than you can remodel the Italian into an American citizen in a year or two. If immigration continues as it has, there are only two possibilities: first, the development of a new race in America, a race neither American, nor Italian, nor Russian—but a composite race; or, second, the growth of separate racial groups within this country, and this means absolutely no assimilation.

Do we want either of these? Our country has more laborers than it needs; we have agitation and unrest everywhere. Are we going to try some new remedy on this disease, or are we going to its source and restrict immigration?

Several methods have been suggested to restrict immigration, the best of which are as follows: **First**, the exclusion of those unable to read and write. This measure has three times passed both houses of Congress and been vetoed by the President. **Second**, the exclusion of unskilled laborers unaccompanied by wives or families. This would do away with the floating population and aid in

assimilation. **Third**, increase in the head tax. Canada has done this in the case of the Chinese. It now amounts to \$500 and is very effective. **Fourth**, the material increase in the amount of money required to be in possession of the immigrant at the port of entry. **Fifth**, the limitation of the number of each race arriving each year to a certain percentage of the average of that race arriving during a given period of years.

It is this last method that the Tacoma Rotary Club favors. It will cut down the immigration from Southern Europe and is absolutely fair to every nation. Our Japanese and Chinese restriction acts would then be unnecessary. In spite of all that has been published, the discussions, the dickerings in Congress; in spite of all the evils of unrestricted immigration, no efficient laws have been passed. Yet authorities are agreed that immigration should be restricted. Three Congresses have passed laws, but the great masses of the people have been indifferent. In vetoing the last immigration bill, President Wilson said: "If the people of this country have made up their minds to limit the number of immigrants by arbitrary tests and so change the policy of all generations of America that have gone before them, it is their right to do so; but I do not believe they

have. I respectfully submit that no one can quote their mandate to that effect."

Rotary can give this mandate.

We of Tacoma believe that no organization is better adapted to take this matter up and see it through. Rotary is a vital, living force in every community. It is exerting a powerful influence in each of the hundred and forty-seven cities where clubs exist. Let the different clubs discuss this question and at the international convention in San Francisco, let us get together, decide on the one restriction we want and then **Do Something**. This is not a political subject any more than is the management of our city parks. Religion does not enter into it. It is a burning national question which must be answered. It affects the very foundations upon which our country rests today. If the 20,000 members of Rotary get together and put their shoulders to the wheel we can accomplish anything. Every member of Rotary is a power in his community. We have accomplished wonders in our several cities, but the time has now come when we must do greater things. We have the opportunity to serve not only our city, not only our state, but the whole country, and in the end it will be better for all humanity. The Tacoma Club unanimously votes to take this step and we be-

lieve that the Rotary spirit is capable of putting an immigration restriction law upon the statute books. Are we willing to make the effort? Are we as citizens willing to give time and thought to one of the most vital questions before the American people today? Are we willing to forget ourselves and do something which will make our country a better and cleaner place in which to live? In these days of strife, is the protection of the Stars and Stripes worth it? Rotary answers aye.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted by the ROTARY CLUB OF TACOMA:

WHEREAS, It is our firm conviction that the immigrants we are now receiving so far exceed our powers of assimilation that they are menacing the very foundations upon which our American institutions rest; and

WHEREAS, Unprejudiced authorities who have given this subject the most exhaustive study agree that immigration should be further restricted immediately; and

WHEREAS, The European war and the opening of the Panama Canal mean more immigrants than we have ever before received; and

WHEREAS, The indifference of the voters alone will make possible the continuation of this deplorable state of affairs; therefore be it

RESOLVED, By the Rotary Club of Tacoma:

FIRST, That this Club demands, in the best interests of our foreign born population as well as our native element, the immediate restriction of foreign immigration to this country,

and a more rigid selection of those who would become immigrants.

SECOND, That we as a club, and individually, will use all means within our power to place the real facts of the immigration problem before the voters in Tacoma and the neighboring communities.

THIRD, That the Tacoma Rotary Club take up this question with every Rotary Club in the United States, asking each member of these clubs to inform himself on this subject so that the International Convention in San Francisco may take some decided stand, and by agitation throughout the whole country make it imperative that our government place an immigration restriction law upon the statute books.

FOURTH, That a memorial be sent to the next Congress by each Rotary Club asking for the immediate passage of legislation that will at once further restrict the immigration to this country.

FIFTH, That this Club urges the restriction of immigration by fixing the number of immigrants to be accepted from each of the foreign nations in accordance with a fixed percentage of the number of immigrants from any one nation who were admitted to citizenship in the United States within the past twenty-five years.

W. CARR MORROW, Chairman.

R. M. SHAFFER.

GEO. W. BALL.

A. J. RITCHIE.

J. B. KAISER.

