

## Immigrant Life and Education in America

By HARRY M. SHAFER, Assistant Superintendent, Public Schools, Los Angeles, California

[The Americanization, Adult Education and Naturalization preparatory training in the City of Los Angeles is under the supervision of Miss Flora D. Smith with Mrs. Alice Osborne McKenna as assistant supervisor. As assistant superintendent of the Los Angeles City Schools, Harry M. Shafer, is in general charge of the Adult schools and the Americanization work conducted in that city, which is popularly known as America's Mecca of sunshine, eternal summer and tourists. Los Angeles has grown so rapidly since 1920, when the census showing the number of foreign born by nationalities and the ratio of Naturalization among these was taken, that in the absence of up-to-date figures it would be difficult to venture a guess. At present Los Angeles maintains thirty-eight Americanization evening schools with one hundred and ten classes; seventy Americanization day schools, with two hundred and sixty classes and home groups. The day classes vary, according to a report to the United American from Mr. Shafer, but the proportion of nationalities in attendance, as compared with the proportion of unnaturalized aliens residing in that city, is thought to be in ratio, though there are no specific figures available at present. The enrollment in both evening and day school adult classes in Los Angeles, according to figures compiled on November Seventh, is 14,297. In addition to the Americanization classes reported, there are nineteen classes in Naturalization studies, where aliens are finally prepared for examination for citizenship. The registration in these classes shows 2446 men and 915 women, a total of 3361. Adding these figures to the number attending the regular adult classes, the gross Americanization enrollment in Los Angeles is totaling 17,658. Among those enrolled in the adult classes are a small number of illiterate native born Americans, but as this number is so small as to be negligible, the entire enrollment for Los Angeles represents immigrant or alien people who eventually will become citizens. To what extent the people, the school board and the school administration officials in Los Angeles are interested in training the foreign born people of that city for citizenship and their eventual participation in the privileges and responsibilities thereof, is amply shown by the annual appropriation of \$100,000 for adult immigrant evening schools, which is taken from the annual school budget of Los Angeles. The people of Los Angeles are meeting the situation in an American way. They have their problem and they are solving it, no matter the cost, without quibbling or waiting till they are being shamed into action by the country at large, as the case is in many instances, even in cities of large population with a considerable percentage of foreign born, whose home standards are more foreign than American, because no American influence is brought into their social life. Evidently there is no arrogant group of native Americans in Los Angeles whose members are denying that America has a responsibility and a duty to perform in the instances of the alien immigrant who is a legitimate entrant and a prospective citizen. A city with more than half the population of Los Angeles, with vast industries in which thousands of aliens are employed, financially matching the Los Angeles alien education program with just fifteen per cent, is hardly meeting the situation adequately, as a citizen of Los Angeles, or an unprejudiced citizen at large, would look at it. The standard of citizenship in an American city will from now on be gauged more by the attention given elementary adult education, than the elaborate all around technical education of the children of the community. In the following review of "Immigrant Life and Education in America," Mr. Harry M. Shafer presents a number of concrete facts relating to Americanization and the conditions pertaining to the alien within our gates, to the influences that are necessary to coordinate the alien's thought, speech, action and home life with that of the better type American. Articles of this kind are conducive to better understanding and a greater appreciation of the true facts which must govern all our efforts to make the people of America united in thought and expression; a people most fervently embracing the political principles upon which America stands: a shrine of human brotherhood, from which every contention of race, religion and place of birth, as governing among those eligible to a place in citizenship, must be banished.

—The Editor]

**T**HE SITUATION in Americanization and the conditions with which Americanization work deal have changed very materially during the last two or three years. Numerous influences, national and local, have been at work to modify the situation among the foreign born people, among whom the great body of Americanization work is conducted.

The immigration law now in force has reduced the quota of immigrants very materially, to a number much below that of previous years. During the past year ending July first, about 175,000 immigrants were admitted through the various ports of the United States. The number of so-called bootleg immigrants who reached this country without being counted or examined has been estimated variously by different persons, the number being stated as low as 150,000 and as high as half a million. The latest information on this question leads authorities to estimate the bootleg immigrants as about equal to that which occurred legitimately under the law. The illegal immigrants are landed in various ways at different ports, often as ostensible sailors on leave of absence from their ships. In such cases, termination of the leave is never recognized by the sailor. He never returns to his ship. A considerable number of illegal immigrants come in from the West Indies by way of Mexico. Still larger numbers come directly across the Mexican and Canadian borders, which are quite open and exposed. While a very simple examination has been

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