

Uncle Sam Is Not Encouraging Immigration

Speech Delivered by Charles H. Carey Before the Oregon Development League.

It is contrary to the present policy of the United States to encourage foreign immigration. This is also the attitude of Canada and Australia, while some of the South American nations, as Brazil, Peru and Argentine Republic encourage and assist immigrants.

In the earlier days of the United States, when the back country was undeveloped and there seemed to be unlimited areas of free and fertile land, it was to the interest of the states to do everything possible to get settlers and to develop the wilderness for the uses of civilization. But as early as 1837, protests against the influx of paupers and criminals from abroad began to be heard. It was then found that in the almshouses in the north Atlantic states more than half of the inmates were foreign born, and that many were recent arrivals. Congress called for an inquiry, and the state department had the American consuls in the various European ports from which the main streams of immigration emanated make reports on the subject. These reports showed that in some places there was practiced by the authorities a plan of paying the passage money of paupers, to get rid of them as public charges. Many such persons were shipped, \$16 per head being the fare usually charged by the vessels employed in the emigrant service. These persons arrived at Boston, New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and other ports in the United States, destitute of money and in many cases sick, infirm or crippled.

Need of Restrictions.

By 1852, it became evident that restrictions would be required. In that year the first congressional act really regulating immigration was adopted. It provided for a fee, or head tax, of 60 cents each, which was to be used to relieve distress and to defray expenses of inspection. Since that time several amendments and additional enactments have been passed, taking firmer hold of the whole subject. The head tax has been increased from time to time, until now it is \$2. Immigrants are now carefully examined, and diseased and defective persons are returned at the expense of the transportation companies that bring them. Criminals and other undesirable are excluded. Persons who cannot show that they have sufficient pecuniary resources of their own, or whose support is not guaranteed by others, are not allowed to enter lest they become public charges. The statutes regulating the admission and the deportation of foreigners have been made more and more stringent and effective, and a bill will be before congress this winter prepared under the direction of the commissioner general of immigration, which will aim to tighten the grip of the government, and to make it much more difficult for immigrants to enter, and to exclude all who have not the prescribed qualifications.

It is a curious fact, that in none of this legislation is any distinction made or sought between the class of persons who are land seekers, farmers, settlers or workers in country vocations and the other class who may be expected inevitably to gravitate to our already overgrown cities and there add to the misery and the poverty of the inhabitants of these great centers of population. Whether such a distinction is practicable, I am not prepared to affirm, but that the former class of aliens are not undesirable in the far western states will readily be conceded.

Where Majority Settle.

Now, if the three quarters of a million of immigrants that came to the United States in the year preceding June 30, 1909, one-half of the number indicated on landing that they intended to make their place of residence Pennsylvania or New York. Seventy per cent of the whole three-quarters of a million settled in six eastern states. Only 3144 out of 782,370 designated

Oregon as their objective place of location.

It was because of the increasing congestion of these people on the Atlantic seaboard that congress undertook in 1907 to provide means of relief, and for that purpose established a "Division of Information" in the department of commerce and labor, under the immediate control of the bureau of immigration and naturalization.

As the law now stands it would be possible for Oregon, if it were desirable, to arrange to secure for itself some portion of these foreigners. In accordance with the provisions of the act, the division of information has been organized and in existence since July 1, 1907.

During the year ending June 30, 1909, the division of information aided in the distribution of 5095 persons, principally in finding employment for these seeking work, and, of the number, 2465 were distributed to agricultural communities where they secured permanent employment on farms. But of the 5095 persons located, only 68 were classed as woodsmen, and only 21 as settlers. Only one person, a Swiss, was sent to Oregon; he was classed as a farm laborer, and not a settler was sent here.

Urban Population Grows.

This result is disappointing. The urban population of the United States grows rapidly, and apparently this is at the expense of the country. The 1910 census will show that such agricultural states as Iowa, for example, have actually lost in population during the past ten years. The poverty and misery in the great cities like New York and Chicago is appalling, but the great evils that grow out of the creation in such cities of foreign colonies, in which races and nationalities press to all intents and purposes the language, customs, habits of thought and the traditions of their native countries, are yearly becoming more portentous.

Now, the question arises, does Oregon want any of these immigrants, and if so, what is the best way to make advantage of the provisions of this new law?

I think that all will agree that it would be poor policy for the state to draw to itself certain classes of these persons, such as the very indigent, the unskilled, and those seeking employment of a character not to be had in Oregon. Besides these and other undesirable classes that might be mentioned, I should say that some nationalities would presumptively afford better material for what our state needs than others, and that men of some nationalities would, generally speaking, be positively objectionable.

What is Needed Here.

The towns in Oregon grow faster than the country develops. What is here wanted is a thrifty and lawabiding people, industrious, self respecting and earnest; people who by birth and association and education are fitted to understand and appreciate our political institutions; persons who have some skill as farmers, gardeners, dairymen, woodmen, stockmen, or fruitgrowers, and who have been accustomed to climate and soil conditions not very different from what they would find in Oregon. It would be a great mistake to advertise the advantages of Oregon among people that could not affiliate with our citizens and soon adapt themselves to our ways.

Now, a large part of the immigration of late years has originated in southern and eastern Europe. In 1909, countries of that section furnished about 67 per cent of the total immigration, as follows:

- Italy, 183,218, or over 24 per cent.
- Austria-Hungary, 170,191, or about 23 per cent.
- Greece, 14,111, or nearly 2 per cent.
- Turkey and vicinity, 11,659, or about 1 1/2 per cent.
- Russia, 120,460, or about 16 per cent.

It is estimated that in 10 years 2,500,000 aliens have come into our country, and that of that number about two thirds, or approximately 1,600,000 have come from Russia, Austria-Hungary and Italy, and they are now coming at the rate of nearly 500,000 a year.

Who Should Be Invited.

Here then is some 67 per cent of the immigrants of last year, or 507,000 persons, that to state the case in general terms, would not answer our requirements. Among the remainder a very large proportion are impetuous, and while it is no crime to be poor, and many a man who has succeeded in free America landed with a pittance in his pocket, it is nevertheless a condition that controls us, that any immigrant that should be invited to come to Oregon should have money to travel here with after he disembarks from the steamer. Indeed, what is required is not only men, but men who can afford to settle upon the land. They should be able to buy or rent a place, and to establish themselves in their new quarters.

A glance at the statistics again will convince that, by eliminating the less desirable from consideration, we have now narrowed down the available foreigners for Oregon settlers to small figures. In 1909 there were 79,122 such aliens who brought over with them upwards of \$50 each; this was out of a total of 751,736 persons—somewhat over 10 per cent. Of these, over 14,000 were English, and over 12,000 German. We have no means of knowing, of course, exactly how many money any of these brought, but it may be assumed that

several thousand of these persons, comparatively prosperous, from the north of Europe, would have been able to have located in Oregon had they been so inclined.

Obstacles to Coming.

It is perhaps needless to point out that ignorance of our language, lack of transportation money, the desire to locate near friends who have gone before, the difficulty of learning of Oregon's attractive conditions, all operate to keep the alien arrivals from reaching our state. Of the 782,370 persons admitted in 1909, 555,970 landed at New York, Boston, Baltimore and Philadelphia received half of the remainder, and another 100,000 were admitted in all the other ports, including Canada and the Pacific coast ports, as well as less important places on the Atlantic seaboard.

It would appear certain, therefore, that as nearly all arrive in the United States at places far distant from Oregon, this state need not fear that any encouragement to settlers it may be prepared to offer will set in motion an avalanche of foreigners to overcrowd our state.

On the contrary, the practical difficulty is to get these settlers.

I would recommend to the Oregon Development league that it cooperate, by the appointment of a committee for that purpose, with the legislative assembly of Oregon to devise methods to take the benefit of this statute. Under the direction of the state, and with the assistance of the various local clubs affiliated with the organization, suitable data can be gathered and prepared for printing, and an illustrated descriptive pamphlet may be printed

in such languages as are spoken by immigrants from certain preferred sections of Europe. The cost of these pamphlets will be small and can be provided for by state appropriation or otherwise; or, if it seems best, the division of information of the United States government may print these pamphlets, as it is authorized to do under the existing law.

State Agent Advisable.

It may be advisable also, if the expense seems justified, to have a state immigration agent regularly appointed and stationed at Ellis Island. Whatever is done in this direction should be under proper safeguards to ensure against drawing to the state undesirable classes of aliens, and it should, in my judgment, be plainly stated that the inducements that Oregon offers are not easy to be availed of by persons who have not sufficient funds at their disposal to begin life here under hopeful conditions.

In connection with what I have already said I also call attention to the fact that while by the laws of the United States transportation companies and private persons and companies are expressly prohibited from encouraging or inducing immigration by solicitation or advertisement, an exception is made in favor of states.

The state of Oregon, therefore, may if it so desires, advertise its resources and advantages for settlement directly in foreign countries. This method has some attractive features, since the better class of foreigners who have means to invest in farms in Oregon can thus be more certainly reached and interested before they have settled upon their plans.

The suggestions I have made are not in the interest of any company, or of any person, or of any locality. I am speaking as a loyal and patriotic citizen of Oregon, who is impressed in traveling over the state with the fact that its most important requirement, outside of railways and other highways, is a thriving and industrious rural population. Let the country develop and the towns will prosper. But by stimulating the urban population without opening up and putting to use the vast stretches of arable land that now lay idle, is not advisable.

The people of some sections of Europe make excellent citizens and soon become good Americans. These, very frequently, have been trained in the methods of intensive farming. Such will make a small tract support a family in comfort, enabling us to divide up our large farms and get better results from the soil. Such people would do well in the Willamette valley or in irrigated sections.

As a rule, I would advise locating families where they will have others using their language in the same neighborhood, and I think care should be taken to help them for a time in learning the customs and methods of farming that prevail here.

All this can best be managed and put in successful practice by a state immigration commission, and I have no doubt that the legislative assembly upon proper presentation of these considerations would provide for the appointment of such a body. I would expect it to consist of men who would serve their state without salary, and the total expense incurred would be but a trifle. Several of the states have

such commissions, and if Oregon would take advantage of the federal statutes I have called to your attention, I recommend that the league set the matter in motion.

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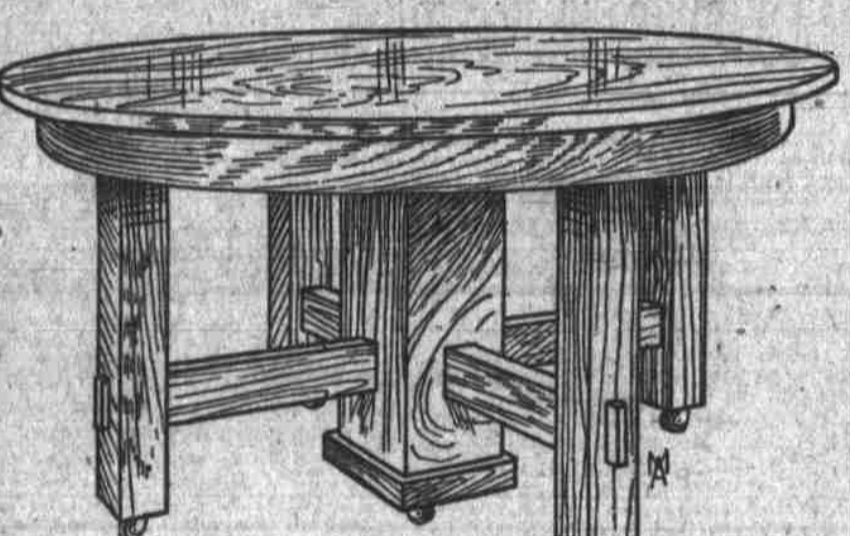
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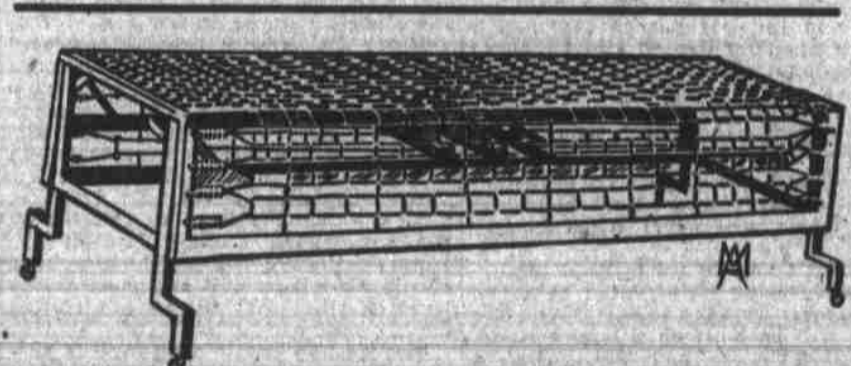
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