

# WAR CAUSES NEW IMMIGRATION PROBLEM

# IN THE LIMELIGHT

The government is doing much to help those detained at the Ellis Island Station during conflict—Commissioner Howe's efforts, bearing fruit

**M**ISTER COMMISH, excuse me. When you think? Dr. Frederick C. Howe, commissioner of immigration, was greeted in this manner at least a dozen times while showing a visitor through the detention ward at Ellis Island. The commissioner listened patiently first to one and then another, giving each a kindly answer, says a writer in the New York Herald. Among those who addressed him were an elderly Italian woman, who talked with a gesture expressive of the hopelessness with which she regarded her case; a young French woman, petite and earnest looking, who, when asked if she could cook, answered, "Tres bien," and a young Russian Jew, who during a previous stay in this country served in Sing Sing and is a member of the Welfare league.

"They all want to get away," said Mr. Howe. "We are doing everything possible to make it more comfortable and homelike around here. We have removed many restrictions which heretofore existed, on the theory that the more freedom they have the more orderly they are inclined to conduct themselves."

"But with all this there is bound to be a feeling among those who are detained, for one reason or another, against their will that they are imprisoned. In later years, however, some of them, I am sure, whether they are admitted to the country or are sent back to their native land, will look back on their stay at Ellis Island as an incident in their lives that was not altogether unpleasant."

Most of the aliens now detained on the island have been there since the European war broke out. In all there were some 500 Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Russians and others being detained when Doctor Howe first took up his duties as commissioner of immigration, the majority of whom had been ordered deported because of the violation of the immigration statutes.

They were men, women and children—peasants for the most part—from small towns and villages of Europe. Before the order of deportation could be carried out the steamship companies which had brought most of these people over were forced to withdraw their vessels from service on account of the war, and consequently those to whom admission to the country had been denied were forced to remain on Ellis Island. Some of them have since been admitted to the country, either conditionally or unconditionally.

The problem of making life a little more pleasant for those who remain is one which Doctor Howe has tried in a practical way to solve. He has come to know most of the unfortunate persons under his jurisdiction personally, and when he visits the detention ward, which he frequently does, there are always many questions to answer and heartaches to soothe.

Late one afternoon last October Doctor Howe, while going around the station on one of these tours of investigation, noticed a middle-aged woman, of neat, motherly appearance, with two pretty little girls cuddling up to her, sitting in the detention room. As the hour was late and he thought they were visitors Doctor Howe inquired what they were waiting for and if he could do anything for them.

The woman explained that she was British and with her children had been ordered deported. They had arrived from Great Britain about a month before, but had no friends in this country and no money and, therefore, had not been allowed to enter.

The healthy appearance of the two children, their pretty faces and their evident good breeding won over the commissioner on the spot, and he immediately interested himself in their case.

The woman's name was Mrs. Rita Horner, and her story was this: "When the war broke out she was living with her family, which, besides her husband, consisted of two sons and three daughters, on a dairy farm some miles out of Capetown, South Africa. The country about them was rugged and wild and the girls, despite their young years, were forced to walk many miles every day to attend school. The sons, who were older, helped to work the farm.

"The husband and the two boys, along with most of the able-bodied men in that section, enlisted in the British army soon after war was declared and were sent to the front. They took part in the fighting in Belgium and northern France. One son was killed and the father seriously wounded. All trace of the other son had been lost. Mrs. Horner was unable to work the farm by herself, so she raised what money she could and went to England with her three daughters—Una, fifteen years; Piri, ten years old, and Rita, nine years old. They had not been in England long when Mrs. Horner decided to come to America."

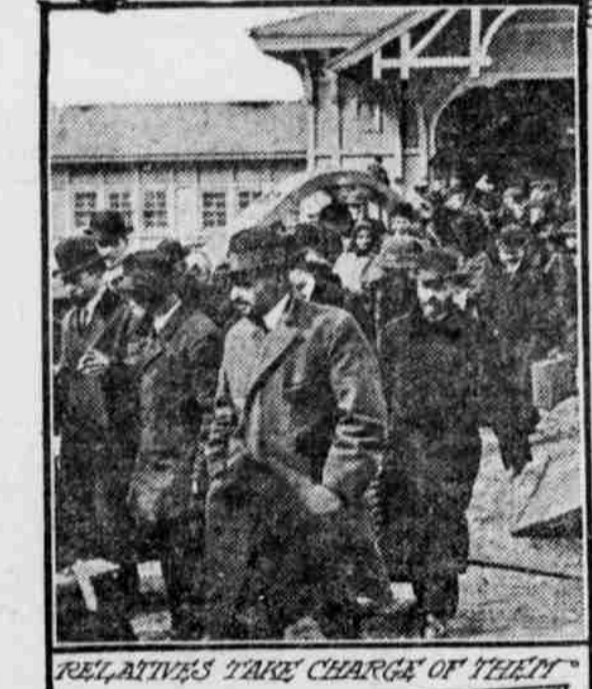
On hearing Mrs. Horner's story Doctor Howe communicated with the authorities at Washington. He explained that these people were all strong and healthy, that the children were beautiful and that there was no danger of them becoming a public charge. Furthermore, he announced his willingness to be responsible for them, and a few days after the machinery had been set in motion word came back from Washington that Mrs. Horner and her children would be released in his custody.

Meantime the family had made friends with nearly everybody on the island. The watchman and guards petted the children and gave them many little presents. The attendants did all they could to make them comfortable.

Despite these attentions the children sometimes



IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING IN NEW YORK



RELATIVES TAKE CHARGE OF THEM



IMMIGRANTS IN THE 'BULL PEN'

women have been given instruction in sewing and provided with material to make clothes for themselves and children. A school has been temporarily opened to teach the children, and the New York city public library authorities have donated a number of books printed in German and other foreign languages for the use of those who have a desire to read.

The men and women are permitted to mingle more freely in the various detention wards, and as a result of these innovations the feeling which prevails among those who have been long detained at the station is more cheerful than it was during the first few months of the war. Attempts to escape, which were frequent at one time, have come to an end.

"Ellis Island is the greatest portal in the world," said Doctor Howe. "There never has been any portal like it for human beings. In normal times nearly a million persons enter the country through it each year. They come largely from countries where the government means only militarism and taxes; they come to escape the feudal landlord, from industrial and social conditions which have become intolerable. They come with hopes of a fresh life, of a fresh chance, of opportunities for themselves and their children. They carry with them the visions of America which have been indelibly printed upon their minds from the letters which have gone back to Europe from friends and relatives already in this country."

"And the immigration laws of America have, in effect, if not in so many words, said that America welcomed those who did not fall within the excluded classes, those afflicted by disease or who are likely to become a charge upon the community. It held out an invitation to the strong and able-bodied to come and share in the making of a new nation, free from abuses and oppressions of the old world."

"And of those who come over 98 per cent are admitted. The rest are rejected because they fall within the inhibited classes. And it seemed to me when I became commissioner of immigration that the first contact of the alien with America should be one that would impress upon his mind the thing for which America stands; that the treatment they should receive, the experiences they should pass through and the contact they had with officials wearing the uniform of the United States should be those of kindness, assistance and courtesy. They come for the most part with fear in their hearts; they fear government rather than love it. And their instinct is to expect something very like what they received at home."

"First impressions are lasting, and it has been our effort at Ellis Island to make these impressions as democratic as possible, and to aid in as many ways as we could in protecting the immigrant and assisting him to his final destination. For the immigrant is imposed on; he is exploited. To prevent this as much as possible offices have been opened in New York city, one at the Barge office, at South Ferry, and the other at 240 East Seventy-ninth street, to which the immigrant can go and procure aid, assistance and advice about matters that concern him. Through these offices he is directed to schools and to the naturalization offices. The offices co-operate with the police department and with all the many agencies in New York which have been created to aid the immigrant. At these offices there are employment agencies which find work for men and women, and which aim to distribute them to farming positions to relieve the congestion in the cities."

"Similar protection has been accorded the alien in transit to the West, in securing the best transportation facilities and otherwise relieving the immigrant from the dangers which beset him while reaching his ultimate destination."

"War conditions brought probably 500 men, women and children to Ellis Island who for some reason or other had to go back to their native land; they were not admissible to the country. Each of these cases has been investigated personally, their friends and relatives have been looked up, and in the great majority of cases they have been admitted on bond to some person willing to be responsible for them. Positions have been found for hundreds, from whom periodic reports are required as to how they are getting along. Only in very rare cases have they failed to make good. In many instances they have risen rapidly and are now earning very substantial salaries."

"Similar efforts are being made to promote educational advantages for the adult immigrant—to encourage night schools. For the last year the names of all children of school age have been copied and sent to the superintendents of education all over the country, in order that they might immediately place children in school upon their arrival at their destination. By these means the government comes in immediate contact with the second generation of immigrants and begins its assimilation process as soon as they reach this country."

## WAR CHIEF OF BRITAIN



From servant to head of the thinking machine of the British army in the greatest war in history, this is the record of General Sir William Robertson, who a few months ago was appointed chief of the general staff at the war office in London and virtual commander in chief of the British armies.

Robertson's rise to the very highest possible position in the British army is unique. There is no other case on record of a ranker attaining the highest command in the British army, and only one other case in which a ranker even came within measurable distance of it.

Robertson is a genuine ranker, of Scottish descent. He is the son of a farm laborer in Lincolnshire, where he was born fifty-six years ago, and his preliminary education was received at the village school. When he left school he worked in the fields for a time, and

then he had a great stroke of luck for one of such humble origin. He became a butler in one of the great houses in the neighborhood.

At eighteen the military fever seized him and he enlisted. He chose a crack regiment, the Sixteenth lancers, and he must have made an ideal cavalryman, for even now he is the beau ideal of a dashing soldier, tall, well set up, and with an extraordinary firm chin and jaw. He had no one to help him along, and he served in the ranks for ten years, but before long his ambition was roused, and he probably foresaw that in his case the soldier's knapsack really did contain the field marshal's baton.

He began then the study of languages and of military history, both of which have stood him in such good stead in his subsequent career.

He is much like Kitchener and possesses some of the characteristics displayed by "K. of K." He is a tireless worker, has a mind that works like lightning, dispenses with red tape, is a masterly organizer and will have none but efficient, hard workers under him. Like Kitchener also he can say "No" to a peer or a prince, and if he considers a decision necessary he does not hesitate to announce it. He is a strict disciplinarian, and while greatly admired and respected for the honors he has won, he is at times feared by the officers.

## CLAPP LIKES DAY TRAVEL

Although he does a good deal of traveling over the country, Senator Moses E. Clapp of Minnesota rarely travels at night. This is not due to any prejudice against sleeping in one of the Pullman company's berths, either. He journeys by daylight simply because he likes to do so. Not long ago he and a younger man had to go on a trip of 14 hours or more, and the other man naturally proposed that they go on a night train.

"Why do you want to go at night?" asked Clapp, as if the idea of night travel was a brand new wrinkle.

"To save time, of course," replied the man. "One has to sleep anyhow. Otherwise one wastes an entire day."

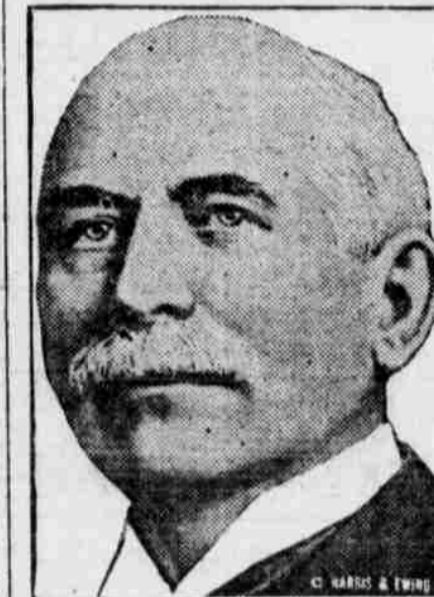
"Waste a day!" exclaimed Clapp.

"On a train! What're you talking about? Why, a train's the very place of all places where you don't need to waste your time. You sit in your office and people come in to interrupt you and you can fritter away an hour or two without accomplishing a thing. But on a train—there's the place to devote yourself to quiet reflection and think things out. Nearly every good thing I ever did I carefully thought out first while looking out the window of a train. No, indeed, you don't get me to go by night unless I have to. The chance to have a nice long day on the train is too precious to let go by."

So they journeyed by daylight.



## "OLD SHACK'S" POSER



Representative Warren Worth Bailey of Johnstown, Pa., is a person with definite views about things. When he favors or opposes a proposition he does so with much earnestness and intensity. For example, he has long been strongly in favor of an adoption of Henry George's single tax idea, and is equally strong in his opposition to the president's program for naval and military preparedness.

One night Bailey sat in the lobby of the hotel where he lives in Washington talking gravely about the good things in store for this nation just as soon as single tax comes to be generally applied throughout the country.

Congressman Dorsey W. Shackelford of Missouri was sitting close by. "Old Shack," as he is called, has a sense of humor, though he doesn't look it.

"I would like to ask you just one question," said he to Bailey, and Bailey

Shackelford might have against the single-tax doctrine.

"What I want to know," propounded Shackelford, "is this: Why is it that there was never a single case of appendicitis in this country until after Henry George began to talk his single tax? Just answer me that!"

## CHINA'S NEW RULER

Gen. Li Huan Hung, who has long been recognized as one of the ablest soldiers in China, is now president of the Oriental republic, having succeeded the late Yuan Shih Kai, and it is believed the change of rulers has put an end to the plans of the Nanking triumvirate and the Peking mandarin to re-establish the empire. The southern Chinese are solidly behind the new president.

At the same time, there is great anxiety concerning the attitude which Japan will take toward China. General Li spent two years in Japan in the study of military affairs, and he is looked upon as favorable to Japanese influence in China. He is regarded as the representative of the Japanese student element in Chinese politics, as opposed to the American student element, which always was very influential under the rule of Yuan Shih Kai. The Chinese who were educated in Japan have been prominent in the three recent revolutions in China, and it is natural that they should come into power under the new regime.

