

Current Comment on Leading Topics

IMMIGRATION PUZZLE

The subject of pauper and criminal immigration is one of the most important now before the people, and it is likewise one of the most complex. Many remedies have been offered, but none of them seems to meet all the requirements:

Another feature of our immigration problem is the tendency of these new peoples to colonize. This does not mean worse morals, nor does it necessarily mean lower economic efficiency, but it does mean worse American citizenship. These colonies, mere reproductions of Old World life, are self-sufficient. Their members, except those of the second generation through the influence of the schools, are seldom or never Americanized. To scatter these colonists broadcast among the people of the country would hasten their Americanization and would probably benefit them economically. No way to do this has been devised; but it may be possible to put a stop to the growth of these colonies and so to limit the evil. Probably the suggestion of the president—that the number of immigrants admitted at New York and other northern ports should be strictly limited and that the stream should be turned to the south, where there is a demand for new labor—would go as far toward scattering the population as any measure yet suggested.—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

President Roosevelt, who keeps a keen eye to the drift of political movement, apparently is giving small consideration to the outcry for further statutory limitation of immigration. He proposes to invest a million Porto Ricans with citizenship at one fell swoop. Having gone so far, it would be ludicrously inconsistent to set up barricades against the Japanese or industrious and self-supporting immigrants from southern Europe. Thus far it is the glory of our experiment in self-government that it has proven a successful solvent of all the races and all the religions. Here British, Irish, Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, Swedes, Russians, Poles, Slavs, Jews, Gentiles and Mohammedans dwell together in peace. In Russia under the stern rule of an intolerant despotism, the warring races are cutting each other's throats. The preachers of the Gomerian philosophy in that distracted country appear at the present time to be active factors in preventing the establishment of constitutional government.—Philadelphia Record.

Mr. Sargent gives us some startling information concerning the increase of crime, depravity, disease and other dangers to the social and political security of the country due, largely to this enormous immigration. He says that they might be lessened considerably "by distributing aliens now congregating in our large cities to those parts of the United States where they can secure employment without displacing others and where the conditions of existence do not tend to the fostering of disease, depravity and resistance to the social and political safety of the country. It is impossible to believe that a practical device cannot be found," he says, "if not through the action of the federal government alone, then with the co-operation of the state and civic authorities." Mr. Sargent adds: "Whether such a plan could be brought into existence through the efforts of our general government, or whether, under any of its constitutional powers, expressed or implied, the congress itself legislate directly, upon sanitary or moral ground, against the notorious practice of housing aliens with less regard for health and comfort than is shown in placing brute animals in pens, the bureau is unprepared to say, even if an expression of its views upon the subject were necessary. It is, however, convinced that no feature of the immigration question so insistently demands public attention and effective action. The evil to be removed is one that is steadily and rapidly on the increase, and its removal will strike at the roots of fraudulent elections, poverty, disease and crime in our large cities, and, on the other hand, largely

supply that increasing demand for all labor to develop the natural resources of our country." He shows that there are now 349,885 inmates in our public reformatory and charitable institutions, of whom 97,074 or 28 per cent are foreign born, and 39,646, or 11 per cent, absolute aliens, who have never even been naturalized. Of these, 19,764 are insane. The largest number (11,980) are Irish. The Germans come next, with 9,050, the English third (4,248), the Italians 3,266, the Scandinavians 3,125, the Hebrews 2,765, the Poles 2,064, and the French, 1,948. You will notice the remarkably small number of Jews, Poles and Italians in charitable institutions, in comparison with the large numbers who have come into the country within the last few years.—William E. Curtis in Chicago Record-Herald.

But if there should be a Japanese exclusion law, enforced like the one relating to Chinese, there would be great and immediate trouble. Japan is up in the world and has a high sense of national dignity. It would not submit with Chinese patience to the offensive treatment of its subjects by American custom house officials. The officials would have to change their methods so that the American government would not have to be continually apologizing for their misdeeds. The relations of the United States and Japan are most peaceful. They would not remain so with a Japanese exclusion law administered as roughly as its friends would like to have it. The trade of eastern Asia is worth a great deal to this country—to its farmers, manufacturers and railroads. It is worth so much that the Asiatics should be treated with common courtesy. The Chinese boycott, provoked by the offensive enforcement of the Chinese exclusion law, is alarming the American merchants. The considerable trade with Japan certainly would be affected if Japanese gentlemen were treated as Chinese gentlemen have been. The exclusion of Japanese laborers is a delicate matter to handle. It may well be alone for several years. The dangers of Japanese immigration, if there be any, will be apparent then. They are not now.—Chicago Tribune.

ASSET CURRENCY

In his magazine for September, Tom Watson arraigns Secretary Shaw's financial policy in ringing terms. It is only just to state, however, that he fails to mention an important feature of the secretary's plan, viz., that all asset currency issued shall pay a tax of six per cent so as to provide a fund for the protection of those who hold the notes of banks that fail:

They want the privilege of issuing paper money, not secured by United States bonds; and they want the existence of these unsecured notes to be kept a secret between the bankers and the government; and they want these unsecured notes to be engraved so that they shall be so nearly identical with the secured notes that the public will not be able to tell the one kind from the other! Mr. Shaw pointed out that the "emergency" notes could be made to look like the bond-secured notes, so that the public would not know the difference! Said Mr. Secretary Shaw: "The controller of the currency and the bank issuing the currency would alone know of its existence." Consider this a moment. The common people accept bank notes as money because the notes are based upon government bonds. Their value is guaranteed by the government. Mr. Shaw and the bankers now propose that the bankers shall issue other notes whenever "the emergency" arises, and that these new notes shall be engraved by the government in such a manner that the average citizen will not be able to distinguish the difference. The existence of these unsecured notes is to be a secret, known only to the controller and the bank! The public will not know that a trap has been set and baited. The public will not know that counterfeit money is afloat. The public would never suspect that the government was in collusion with

the bankers to put bogus paper in circulation. Therefore the public would eagerly accept the bogus notes, not suspecting that they were bogus. A crash comes! The bank shuts its doors. The bogus notes are outstanding. The holders lose every dollar, for the notes rest on no security. Yes; the innocent holders are ruined.

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

The various questions now before congress and the reports of department chiefs afford commentators a wide field for criticism and suggestion:

Postmaster General Cortelyou's report shows a postal expenditure for the fiscal year, of \$167,181,959 and receipts of \$152,826,585—leaving a deficit of \$14,572,584. But the report further shows that if there had been no deadhead matter there would have been a surplus of over \$5,000,000. So Mr. Cortelyou makes the recommendation urged by Mr. Wanamaker when he was postmaster general, that the franking privilege be abolished and each department pay for its own mail matter. This is a sensible recommendation. If the departments paid postage and the railroad graft was cut off, there would be no excuse for railing at the comparatively petty abuses of second-class postal privileges. As to these privileges also, Mr. Cortelyou's recommendation is a good one. He proposes, instead of the second-class privilege or subsidy, a flat rate like that for merchandise.—Chicago Public.

If the railroads could make congress and the people think that the president is trying to usurp the functions of congress they would be very glad. Therefore the following paragraph from one of the railroad editorials which are floating about the country: "Those who respect the functions of the three co-ordinate branches of the government must be gratified to know that congress is not yet ready to relinquish to the president the privilege and duty of legislating for the country. Fired by the applause of those who seem to understand his character so well, President Roosevelt has been led into many official extravagances of dictatorial prodding, with congress as the intended victim of his herding propensities." One of the constitutional duties of the president of the United States is to "give to the congress information of the state of the union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." The president has in two annual messages recommended legislation for the relief of the public in matters of railroad management. The house of representatives promptly passed a bill to grant that relief. The senate ignored the suggestion as it had a legal right to do.—Nebraska State Journal.

This is more promising for popular entertainment from democratic politics than for unity in the party as now constructed. Hearst, backed by his great wealth, spread out by his newspapers and elevated by his demonstrated strength with the populace on radical issues at the polls, has become no slight figure in democratic politics, and his disposition to assert a leadership in new directions of radicalism threatens for the party as violent a break-up as that which put Bryan to the front in 1896. But Bryan arrayed the plantation democracy against the domination of the Wall street faction. The Hearst revolt is to appeal especially to the industrial masses of the north, and is likely to prove as hostile to the southern plantation as to the Wall street element in the party—Springfield Republican.

The report of Secretary Hitchcock of the interior department reveals to the people the progress of his war upon fraud. By the aid of this report we can realize the amazing breadth of the work already done, and in progress for the protection of the public lands from those who would despoil them for private enrichment. Not before has it been possible to understand the extent of the government investigation into the land