

NEW ORLEANS AS A PORT FOR EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

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Beginning with September 17th and continuing for two days thereafter, there was held in this city a conference for the purpose of urging upon the trans-Atlantic steamship companies the need and the advantages of a steamship passenger service from European ports to New Orleans, constituting the latter a port of entry for foreign immigration.

The advantages of this project were clearly set forth at the conference, which was attended by delegates from the city of New Orleans, the members of the Immigration Department of the State of Louisiana, representatives of that State and contiguous territory, and representatives of steamship companies and railroads having terminal stations in New Orleans.

The chairman of the conference, Mr. George H. Smith, outlined its purpose. He was followed by the representatives of the city of New Orleans, who dwelt on the physical advantages of that city and its adequate car lines from the wharf to all points of the city and railroad depots. The economic advantages of New Orleans, the State of Louisiana and contiguous States were brought out, and stress was laid on the manifold agricultural opportunities of that vast section as yet unrealized. Finally, because the dock system of New Orleans is municipally owned and the city is vitally concerned in economic expansion, the steamship companies could be assured of encouragement and fair treatment.

Opinion was unanimous as to the need for diverting immigration, and it was contended that the activity of those in favor of the restriction of immigration derives its power from the alleged evil of congestion in the Northern seaport cities, resulting from a non-diffused immigration. Such congestion, it was pointed out, results in an abnormal competition of labor in the overcrowded sections; while in contrast, the Southland is greatly in need of labor. This need, it was argued, is intensified as long as there are not adequate steamship transportation facilities to stimulate a deflection of the immigrant to Southern ports. It was therefore considered timely that such ser-

vice be established, utilizing the large and adequate immigration station now completed at the port of New Orleans.

I

This conference has received widespread publicity and favorable comment. It cannot be gainsaid that the project outlined is of much significance to this country. For that reason, we desire to pass over the immediate local benefits which a steamship service between Europe and New Orleans would confer on the South, and call attention to the possibly larger idea underlying the movement. That idea is the conservation of the immigrant so that his energies may be directed into the proper channels.

In recent discussions concerning immigration, there is to be detected a growing understanding that the most effective way of conserving the immigrant is to direct him to such sections of the country where he is needed. In other words, experience has taught competent observers that one important feature of our immigration is that it is not properly diffused over a wide area. It would, therefore, be interesting to point out the conditions which have tended to bring about this understanding. Foremost is the striking fact that the Northern seaports, because of their geographical advantage, attract ever new layers of immigration, thereby augmenting the already large population of those ports, while, on the other hand, interior sections of this country which are sparsely settled could very well utilize a large portion of the new immigration for their growth and development. One of the important causes for this incongruous situation may fairly be attributed to the lack of adequate steamship transportation facilities to other ports of this country: for it may rightly be considered that such transportation facilities would provide the incentive to many to travel to other ports. It is well known that immigration follows economic opportunity. But it is a necessary corollary that the immigrant be provided with the facilities to get in touch with such opportunities. The inference is therefore inevitable that with adequate steamship facilities to other ports

of landing in this country, many would utilize them instead of plowing the beaten path. Consider in this connection the scarcity of labor in the Southland, which has resulted in recent years in the dormancy of the agricultural life of that section. What makes the situation of the Southlands still more anomalous is the fact that during all these years thousands upon thousands of peasant immigrants have annually arrived at the Northern seaports. Born and raised on the soil, inheriting a predisposition for farming, these immigrants come to this country to seek an outlet for their natural calling. The conditions they meet with in the East, instead of encouraging this idea, have an opposite and often vitiating effect. Life in the East is predominantly industrial. The peasant who comes here is not blessed with an over-abundance of the world's goods, and the necessity for immediately earning a livelihood drives him into the shop and factory. That this life is distasteful to him and but a temporary makeshift is best proven by the fact that when, after assiduous toiling he has accumulated savings, he returns to his native country, there to realize his cherished hope to become a farm owner and producer. Constant attention has been called to the fact that many of these peasant immigrants who return home are the victims of exploiters, who sell them lands at inflated prices and lands often valueless. Follows their impoverishment and their return to the United States with a repetition of their former experience in this country. Not only does this country suffer the loss of this peasant immigrant as a farm producer, but millions of dollars as well are annually exported to other countries as a result of the *Hegira*. In ironic contrast, as heretofore shown, vast sections of the Southland and far West have agricultural regions lying fallow and, despite all the hue and cry for labor, are still labor starved.

There is but one effective remedy, and that is the creation of an adequate steamship service to ports in the Southland, which service would tend to deflect labor to those sections. Only in that way can the peasant immigrant be given an immediate opportunity to pursue his natural calling. And as for the immigrant who prop-

erly belongs to the factory, he can find in the interior sections of this country superior opportunities because the stress of competition is not so keen. The deflection, therefore, is of benefit both to agricultural and industrial laborers, and retains for this country the immigrants' resources and productivity.

It is clear, then, that the project entertained at the conference is in accord with the principle of the distribution of immigration and thereby shows an outlook beyond the local needs of the South.

II

That the project of the conference should not prove abortive, certain practical features should be adopted. In presenting them we are mindful of the experience of the Galveston movement, which is germane to the discussion. That movement is the result of a private undertaking and was organized for the purpose of diverting the stream of Jewish immigration to Galveston as a port of entry. Organized in 1907, it has consistently adhered to this purpose with significant results. The thousands who have come to Galveston have been distributed over the interior sections of the country with benefit alike to themselves and to the communities where they have located. The gratifying results would have been even far more impressive had there been an adequate steamship service from Bremen to Galveston. The steamers that now ply between these points do not compare in speed and convenience to the service between Europe and our Northern ports. The journey is slow and arduous, thereby deterring the more timid from undertaking it. It has conclusively been proven that the movement would have achieved a far more rapid progress but for the totally inadequate steamship service referred to.

It would therefore be the part of wisdom to reap the benefits of the Galveston experience and to make it a foundation of the New Orleans project that a swift line of steamers operate between European points to that city.

The wisdom of such a step is apparent when it is remembered that a long sea voyage enervates. The seasickness, the discomforts of the journey, while in them-

selves minor disadvantages, all have a demoralizing effect, which effect is accentuated when the newcomer is subjected to close official scrutiny on landing. Minor defects are raised into prominence and, in his wornout condition, he may face a possible certification of poor physique and eventual deportation. Such a result would not be calculated to popularize the new route and, therefore, too much emphasis cannot be laid on the need for a steamship service to New Orleans which, in point of swiftness and reasonable comforts, will compare favorably with the service to the Northern seaports. The steamship companies should realize that this is the *sine qua non* of the great project in hand.

Of practical importance is the need for railroad service and rates which shall encourage the immigration westward of those of the newcomers who have relatives or friends in the interior. Many will probably use New Orleans as the initial destination with the object of penetrating westward. Of these, it may be said that they are in most cases not over-supplied with money. Every rouble, mark or franc counts. It is therefore essential that the railroad rates from out of New Orleans be not higher than the rates prevailing from Galveston, which is already a port of landing for European immigration. At present they are not equalized and it would be the part of wisdom of the railroad companies to anticipate the demands that will be made on them should the steamship service between European ports and New Orleans as port of entry, be established, and equalize the rates referred to.

Another important factor which will tend to increase railroad traffic will be the opening of the Panama Canal. This event will give an impetus to travel southward, especially for those who wish to reach the coast without the inconvenience of a long voyage clear around the isthmus. Because of the well-known railroad facilities of New Orleans and its being a terminal of importance, it follows that if the rates will be as reasonable as the service is efficient, that a stimulus will be given to the railroad journey from New Orleans to the coast.

Together with these problems of transportation, there is also the need of properly receiving the immigrant at New Orleans,

as the port of entry. To make his start easier, to protect him against possible exploitation either of money or productivity, it is necessary that a bureau be established in New Orleans to guide the immigrant and to place him where he will prove of greatest value, not only to himself, but to the South and to this country. Properly directing the Jewish immigrants arriving at Galveston has been one of the great factors in the successful distribution effected by that movement, and too much stress cannot be laid upon the value of a properly equipped bureau in the city of New Orleans which shall befriend the new immigrant and guide him into those channels where his potentiality may best be realized.

The foregoing review but fringes the subject, but we hope that some of its importance has been conveyed in this article.

Many Children Cared For

The annual report just issued of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York says that the institution has 1,319 children in its charge and boards 225 children in addition to those within its walls, and also assists in the support of 340 children in the homes of mothers, making a total of 1,884 children in care of the charity. Relief is also granted to widows so as to keep families intact, and with this object nearly \$30,000 was spent last year. The total expenditure exceeds \$300,000, and there is a deficit of \$57,878, which it is hoped to wipe out.

The Asylum has a country branch at Valhalla, N. Y., located on a farm of seventy-seven acres, and it is hoped that a large proportion of fruit and vegetables used in the institution will be raised on this farm. Encouragement is given to boys who desire to take up agricultural work. The president of the society is Louis Stern, the treasurer Martin Beckhard. Mr. Solomon Lowenstein is superintendent.

Rabbi Theodore F. Joseph of Allentown, Pa., gave an illustrated lecture on Lincoln in that city for the purpose of founding a social settlement. A considerable sum was realized to serve as a nucleus. Efforts are now being made to find a suitable house so that the settlement center may be opened at an early date.

STATE PENSIONS TO WIDOWS

The Campaign in Maryland

BY SOLOMON BAROWAY

A matter of great importance is now engaging the attention of social workers all over the country, which is destined to become an important factor in our relief work. It is the pensioning by the State of widows, who, on account of poverty, were heretofore obliged to part with their little ones whom they placed in institutions. The idea of institutional care for fatherless children having competent mothers has of late undergone a great change. It is now recognized everywhere that mothers who are mentally, morally and physically normal, are the best guardians of their children, and should be adequately helped to raise the children in their own homes, instead of sending them to institutions. The recognition of this fact has been widespread and has assumed the character of a national movement. The impetus to this movement was given by the White House Conference on the care of Dependent Children, in January, 1909, where a resolution adopted reads as follows:

"Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. It is the great molding force of mind and character. Children should not be deprived of it, except for urgent and compelling reasons. Children of parents of worthy character, suffering from temporary misfortune, and children of reasonably efficient and deserving mothers, who are without the support of the normal bread-winner, should, as a rule, be kept with their parents, such aid being given as may be necessary to maintain suitable homes for the rearing of the children. This aid should be given by such methods and from such sources as may be determined by the general policy of each community, preferably in the form of private charity, rather than of public relief. Except in unusual circumstances, the home should not be broken up for reasons of poverty, but only for the considerations of inefficiency or immorality."

The wisdom embodied in this resolution appealed strongly to the hearts and minds of people all over the country, who at once felt the injustice done by the separation of dependent children from capable mothers for reasons of poverty. The agitation for

realizing the principles contained in the resolution became general, but it was recognized at the same time that private charity alone, without State subsidy, is powerless to bring the idea to fruition. It would be a senseless proposition to insist on a widow raising her children at her own home without giving her adequate means to provide a decent home for them. The realization of the inability and failure of private charity organizations to extend adequate relief to widows with dependent children was instrumental in passing mother pension laws in seventeen States and two cities. In eight States acts are pending. In many other States widows' pensions are contemplated, and commissions have been appointed to study the question. This question was under discussion at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, at Cleveland, where Judge Pinkney of the Juvenile Court of Chicago explained how the pension act has become a blessing in that city to dependent children and their mothers alike. The Maryland Conference of Charities and Corrections, to be held in this city on November 19th, 20th and 21st, has mothers' pensions on its program. Three meetings have been set aside for "The Widow and the States," and your superintendent will read a paper, giving his views in favor of widows' pensions.

It should not be thought that the advocates of the measure have smooth sailing in getting pension laws for widows on the statute books. Great opposition has been manifested in many States, and, strange as it may seem, from quarters from which only co-operation and sympathy should have been expected, from social workers themselves. The opponents admit the inadequacy of relief granted by private charities to widows, but are basing their opposition on other grounds. They claim that widows' pensions would not diminish the number of commitments to institutions; that what we call "pension" is really nothing more than public charity, for the word "pension" implies payment for services rendered in the past; it also implies, without any reference to the needs of the individual receiving it, a fixed