

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CANADIAN MIGRATION

At not infrequent intervals the student of New World politics has thrust upon his notice the various problems arising from the dependency of the Dominion of Canada. It may be the announcement that a resolution has been introduced in Congress (1) to the effect that the President be requested to learn and advise Congress upon what terms, if any, honorable to both nations and satisfactory to the inhabitants of the territory primarily affected, Great Britain would consent to cede to the United States all or any part of the territory lying north of and adjoining the United States; or it may be the rumor of discontent over the deliberations of the Alaskan Boundary Commission; (2) or it may be the perpetual question of retaliatory tariff legislation that keeps to the front the fact that Canada is not likely to remain in her present colonial status for any long period. Speculation upon the outcome naturally raises some questions in the mind of every British American resident in the United States; and it is from that standpoint that I propose to discuss the thought which has been suggested.

The sentiment embodied in the resolution mentioned is not new to the American politician, as it has been broached more than once in national party conventions, and was embodied in the Articles of Confederation; nor is it distasteful to the average citizen of the United States. For purposes of discussion at least, let us therefore assume that, so far as this country is concerned, Canada may enter the Union any time she pleases. Let us see, in the first place, what grounds Americans have for believing that Canada is desirous of changing her allegiance; second, what Canadian sentiment is in regard to such a proposition; and, third, what the effect of such a change would be.

So far as the first inquiry is concerned, it takes no special acumen to see that the average man bases his belief on the fact that Canadians are about him on every side. He may know nothing of the statistics, but he has a fixed feeling that their name is legion; for a Canadian may always be relied on to disclose his nationality at the earliest opportunity. This trait, I presume, he has inherited from his British ancestors. Then, the presence of the many Canadians here, together with a firm conviction that the United States has the best government on earth, even if poorly administered, gives rise to the popular belief above noted.

Just at this point -it may be well to inquire to what extent migration from Canada to the United States has existed and does exist. This movement of population differs, of course, from early migrations known to history. The people have not sallied forth to try to dominate a foreign land. That would be impossible. They have not gone in a mad stampede to the slogan of gold, as in the rush to the gold-fields of Australia in 1850 and 1851, of California in 1849, and of the Yukon land much more recently. Individuals have been quietly slipping away, for reasons which seem satisfactory to them. Some steadfastly refuse to see any special significance in this movement, and regard it as of no more import than the movement of population from state to state in the union, or from province to province within the Dominion. Such persons, however, fail to grasp the delicate situation existing between the two countries.

Before attempting to account for the causes, however, or to discuss the possible results of this migration, I shall try to present the actual facts, as they reveal themselves to the investigator. Anyone at all interested in Canadian development cannot fail to be impressed by a study of the population statistics of the United States. From these figures it is my intention to try to show the number of Canadians resident in the United States, and the influence, from the standpoint of numbers, which they exert in the industrial and political life, and thereby seek to find an answer to the questions propounded. Of the countries supplying immigrants to the United States, Canada (3) stands third (4) in point of numbers; Germany, and Ireland coming first, in the order mentioned. The foreigners in the United States for the last three decades, together with the Canadian-born population, may be seen from the following table:

FOREIGNERS IN THE UNITED STATES

	1880	1890	1900
Total foreign-born population	6,679,943	9,249,547	10,341,276
Canadian-born population	717,157	980,938	1,181,768

The distribution of Canadians, as seen below, is interesting:

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CANADIAN-BORN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, BY STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1900

[**Note from the editor:** This table has been placed separately in the Franco-American collection of documents under the title of *MacLean Canadian population in each state 1900*. For each state of the United States, the table provides the French Canadian and the English Canadian populations.]

It will be seen from the foregoing table that the greatest number of Canadians is found in Massachusetts. The large manufacturing interests of this state have lured them across the line. Those who are there are almost wholly from the maritime provinces and Quebec. Michigan contains the next-greatest number, and these are mostly from the neighboring province of Ontario.

In proportion to her population, Nova Scotia has sent more people to the United States than any other province in the Dominion. They go literally in droves for a portion of the year, and naturally enough stay in the vicinity of Boston, on account of the direct communication between that port and points in Nova Scotia. To the ordinary observer it seems as if all the workers in Boston must have come from the Land of Evangeline. An experience of my own serves to illustrate this. One time, in traveling from the West, I was put by a Nova Scotia train conductor into the care of a Nova Scotia cab-driver, who took me to a hotel where I was met by a Nova Scotia clerk and served by a Nova Scotia maid. Later the Nova Scotia proprietor put me in a car, where a Nova Scotia conductor took my fare and directed me to the dock, where all were Nova Scotians, and thence to a ship officered and manned by Nova Scotians. A Nova Scotian always feels at home when he reaches Boston. As a matter of fact, we do find Canadian workers, both men and women, in every state in the Union, and forming a considerable proportion of the population engaged in gainful occupations. We hear so much about

the influx of French Canadians into the New England states that we are tempted to put aside the whole matter with the comfortable feeling that they form the bulk of the emigrants, and calmly ignore the stubborn fact that Canada is being drained of good English blood as well. Reference to the table just given will serve to clarify our ideas on this point.

[Note from the editor: A section with 12 very small graphs has been deleted here. These graphs showed the number of nationals from various countries that resided in the United States over the period of 1850 to 1900. These graphs, as the MacLean text states, show that Canadians fell in third place for countries of origin of immigrants in the United States.]

Canadians have rushed into the manufacturing and mechanical industries to a considerable extent. Statistics do not begin to show the actual numbers; for many come and go, and find temporary employment. The United States commissioner general of immigration says: "Urgent protests from our trades unions, labor societies, and individual workingmen against the employment of these transitory aliens have been sent to the Bureau and to Congress, and much irritation has been engendered between the United States and Canada." (5) Thus it would appear that the Canadian transient workers are not a very welcome class in the United States — a fact which should not cause wonder. A people whose chief interests are not in the land where they are earning a living is certainly not a very valuable element in the population of any country. The Americans quite justly resent the advent of such a class.

In connection with this discussion, it is well to observe the population of Canada for the decades since confederation:

1871	3,635,024
1881	4,324,810
1891	4,833,239
1901	5,371,051

Thus since 1867 the rate of increase of population has not kept pace with the increase of migration to the United States in the same period. The Canadian-born, as given in the census reports, do not by any means reveal the actual number of Canadians in this country. It is a conservative estimate to suppose that at least one-third of the Canadians living in the United States represent families, and, taking five (6) as the average family, the result would be about three millions of people properly belonging to Canada, but living in the United States; that is, more than half the entire population of Canada at the present time. In the light of the foregoing, is it not reasonable to admit the force of the American contention that, judging by actions, the Canadians like this country with its opportunities and institutions better than their own?

It may be urged, as an offset to this, that Canadians are returning, and that citizens of the United States are migrating to Canada. Accessible figures show that there is a movement in this direction, even to the eastern provinces. As far back as 1898, New Brunswick reports (7) 2,770 new settlers, and of these 2,486 were returned Canadians and 156 United States immigrants. But the "returned Canadians" were not necessarily all from the United States. Efforts are being made by the Canadian government to

induce settlers from the republic on the south to enter the country, and with considerable success; but it is not reasonable to suppose that the loss in numbers will be made good. There are in Canada 127,899 (8) natives of the United States, 87,049 of whom are naturalized citizens, while the remaining 40,850 are aliens. These people are largely of the farming class — people who are ready and willing to take up the new lands of the West. This taking up of new lands is not an attractive prospect for the average ambitious young person from the eastern provinces, and it is doubtful whether the agricultural interests of his country will ever appeal to him; and so he turns to the southern republic, with its limitless opportunities.

Although, as mentioned, there is much complaint in the United States about the class of workers who return to Canada for a portion of each year to enjoy the money they have earned, it will be seen that a large number remain as citizens in the country of their adoption, and thus become something of a political force in a country which, though foreign, has yet many interests in common with their native land. In all, 135,899 Canadians are naturalized citizens of the United States, 72,534 of whom are English and 63,365 French. This, of course, is not a large proportion of the total number living in this country.

"Why do the Canadians migrate from their own prosperous land?" one asks. The answer seems simple. The primary cause is economic: they go in search of higher wages. "Do they find that which they seek?" "Yes, in most cases." "But the living-expenses are higher," one urges. True, they are higher, but not enough so to render impossible a balance in favor of the States. Canadian workers do not tend to lower wages, as do some other foreigners, because their standard of living is practically the same as that of their American neighbors. But is this all? Is there, after all, an unacknowledged feeling that to remain a "colonial" is not to grow to the full stature of political manhood? This must remain a matter of pure speculation, but the suggestion is replete with interest. Is it that the nation which stands more than any other for free thought and free institutions is slowly and silently, with the magnetism of her principles of freedom, trying to bring about the union for which provision was made in the Articles of Confederation ?

The results of this migration were particularly interesting a few years ago, when imperial sentiment was at its height; they were interesting when a wave of wrath at the mother-country was passing over the great colony; and they are equally interesting now in the hour of Liberal triumph.

In seeking Canadian sentiment on the subject of absorption by the United States, one must recall at the outset the reply given by Sir John Bourinot to a learned American professor who asked for all the speeches and reports on the subject of annexation made in the Dominion Parliament. His answer, given in an article in the *Forum* several years ago, was: "There are none; annexation never has been a question in Canadian politics." The learned publicist was right. Yet, while not entering into Dominion politics, it was a question in at least one provincial election some years ago; (9) and there has been more or less feeling on the subject in several of the provinces at different times. Yet, in spite of this, the annexation idea does not seem to thrive and become a live issue.

In many cases there is actual animosity toward the Americans, who are regarded as legitimate objects for plunder during the tourist season. Their money is accepted, and their ingenious inventions are received, but their political patronage never. From a close and intimate knowledge of various parts of the Dominion, I do not believe this to be the slightest exaggeration. I have been much interested at different times in drawing out school children and grown people on this question, and in almost every case the bare suggestion of political union with the United States called forth a volley of disapproval. Sometimes the feeling was backed by deep conviction, but usually by tradition and unreasoning prejudice. But be this as it may, the feeling of hostility to annexation does exist to a very marked degree among the Canadian people. Yet, in the face of this, they are going by thousands to the States; they are doing individually what they regard as most revolting if done collectively. The consistency of their position may be challenged; but I suppose people rarely act consistently when their personal interests are at stake. When questioned in regard to this attitude, the response is usually to the effect that Canada is a country of magnificent resources and capable of great development, and eventually will be able to take her place among the nations of the world, either as an important part of a great empire, or — remote possibility — as an independent country; but in the meantime the best interests of individual Canadians are frequently served by accepting the opportunities offered by a nation near at hand. People sometimes say to a prosperous man: " We will associate with you and accept your hospitality, and we will do business with you; but we do not wish you to marry into our family." The position is about the same.

What is the foundation of this feeling of opposition to annexation? It lies solely in sentiment — sentiment strenuously encouraged by the few, possibly for self-aggrandizement. It seems a grand thing to vow loyalty to the country of our forebears, to swear fealty to a myth of a monarch across the sea. This is something that in emotional moments makes all our bosoms swell. We love it; we claim this shadowy semblance of authority far away. Our fathers fought at Bannockburn and Culloden, at Waterloo and Blenheim; and now we live united to our glorious past. The tie appeals to all. Our British blood runs fast and warm while we throw metaphorical flowers at the feet of our beloved mother-land. But let that mother-country raise her voice in unwelcome command, and we should see the erstwhile loyal child snarling out the venom of rebellion, as surely as freedom is in the blood of New World peoples. There are many English-born living in the Dominion, especially in the larger cities, where through wealth or social position they tend to dominate colonial sentiment. They scoff at the United States; they make ponderous jokes at her expense; and they even curse the country that is the mainstay of Canadians when she dares to criticise British policy. This was very apparent when the South African war was in progress, and the modest colonial who ventured to join the Americans in protest was treated with calumny and scorn. The "sentiment-breeders " were bitter those days. It is a fixed conviction, on the part of many who are thinking seriously in regard to the future of Canada, that the really earnest, native-born Canadian is beginning to feel that some kind of a change is needed, and, in spite of his avowed objections to the southern republic, he cannot help comparing conditions there and at home. The thinkers see that individual prosperity follows in the wake of American institutions and American enterprise. Sentiment at best is evanescent, and when faced with fierce facts is apt to shrivel into discontent.

Now as to the third query, viz.: What would be the probable effect of union? What do we see that would indicate the need of change? Two countries, practically equal in area and age; (10) the one rich, prosperous, and peopled by many millions; the other poor, of indifferent prosperity, and sparsely settled; the one the world's industrial center; the other the seat of infant efforts in industry; the one strong, hopeful, independent; the other weak, fearful of the future, fettered. This is not a pleasing picture for those who shout imperialism loud. Imperialism as a sentiment is grand; as a practical solution of pressing political and economic problems it is valueless, utopian, a dream of poets; not a practical program for practical people. What the farmers of the maritime provinces need is a near-by market for their butter and eggs, fish, fruit; and vegetables; not a man to represent them in the British Parliament in the far-away future. Boston is the natural market; but the tariff eats the profits. The only reasonable receiving-station for the produce of these provinces is Boston. There are no Canadian cities of any size near by. Montreal and Toronto, besides being too far away, are amply supplied from surrounding agricultural communities. Everyone admits the need of better trade relations between the two countries; and it likewise should be patent, to all that the only satisfactory trade relations which will ever exist will come through political union. The provinces west of the Rockies and east of the Laurentians are certainly bound by ties of nature and necessity to the United States, whatever may be said of the intervening territory. Infant and invalid industries would grow and strengthen when nurtured by American capital and enterprise. Galicians and Doukhobors and the fostering care of a nation across the sea will never make a great country of Canada; but a grand future awaits the people if they will but cast in their lot with their cousins who have made such a success of self-government. Canada for the Canadians is a myth; Canada for the British is dwarfing; while America for the Americans — a continental state — is the hope of the future. Then speed the day when Old World rule shall be withdrawn from the North American continent, and we may all — Canadians at home, Canadians in the United States, and American citizens — be one family; one in policy and government, as we are now one in ideals and interests.

(1) February 25, 1903

(2) October, 1903

(3) In figures given in the United States census reports. Newfoundland is included.

(4) Shown as follows by the *Chicago Tribune*, December 11, 1904.

(5) *Annual Report*, 1897, p. 7. Later reports voice the same sentiment.

(6) 5.2 is the average Canadian family at home.

(7) *Blue Book*, Department of the Interior, 1898.

(8) *Census of Canada*, 1901, VOL. I, p. 449

(9) *Nova Scotia*, 1886.

(10) This has reference to first colonization.

Source: Annie Marion MacLean, "Significance of Canadian Migration", in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 10 (1904-05): 814-823. The text has been significantly reformatted and abridged as indicated in the main body of the article.

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