

# Let's Deport The "Furriners"

By Virginia M. Lewis

"Send the immigrant back where he came from." "He is the cause of our depression!" "What has he ever done for this country?" Comments such as these are prevalent.

The immigrant is, notwithstanding impressions to the contrary, a human being with human needs. His first thoughts are: Where can I sleep? What shall I eat? How can I provide for my wife and children? So—

The Portuguese on Cape Cod mans the fishing boats, while his wife works the cranberry bogs. True, Pedro doesn't take the extra fish, and Maria doesn't actually take her surplus berries to Boston to be swapped for shoes made in Brockton and dresses made in New York. The results of their labors are canned by the Fishery and by the Cranberry Canning Company, and are shipped all over the world to satisfy the desires of other human beings for fish and cranberries. In the meantime Pedro and Maria use their wages to purchase shoes and dresses, which in no way is detrimental to the desires of cobblers and dressmakers. Were Pedro and Maria the great great grandson of Miles Standish and the great great granddaughter of Governor Winthrop respectively, this process of exchange would be no different. Immigrants are people, and nature in the working of her economic laws recognizes no national boundaries or accidents of birth.

"All that is true enough," it is said, "but immigrants menace our American way of life. They bring with them the poverty and low standards of the Old Country."

If these statements are true, then the American standard of living must be lowest in those states with the largest proportion of foreign-born inhabitants, and highest in those states with the smallest proportion of foreign-born. As Al Smith would say, "Let's look at the record!"

The record as to foreign-born population in the 1930 Federal Census, shows that the ten states with

the highest percentage of foreign-born were New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, California, New Hampshire, Michigan, Nevada and Illinois. The ten states with the lowest proportion of foreign-born inhabitants were South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Virginia and Oklahoma.

The record as to the standard of living, to the extent that a standard of living can be measured by income, is found in a recent study on immigration and its effects on American life, by Felix Cohen. Significant data are presented in the following tables:

A		
States with the highest percentage of foreign-born population.		
State	% Foreign Born	Per Capita Income
New York	25.9	\$700
Massachusetts	25.1	539
Rhode Island	25.0	561
Connecticut	23.9	607
New Jersey	21.0	517
California	18.9	605
New Hampshire	17.8	438
Michigan	17.6	473
Nevada	16.6	545
Illinois	16.3	500
Average	20.8	549

B		
States with the lowest percentage of foreign-born population.		
State	% Foreign Born	Per Capita Income
South Carolina	0.3	\$224
North Carolina	0.3	252
Mississippi	0.4	170
Georgia	0.5	253
Tennessee	0.5	232
Alabama	0.6	189
Arkansas	0.6	182
Kentucky	0.8	240
Virginia	1.0	305
Oklahoma	1.3	259
Average	0.6	231

It seems that the ten states with the highest proportion of foreign-born population show a per capita income more than twice that of the ten states with the lowest proportion of foreign-born. Let us examine these figures in an endeavor to find an explanation for them.

The first consideration is the relationship of natural resources to this per capita income. There is little doubt that the B group of states, that with the lowest per capita income, has greater natural resources than the A group, with the highest per capita income. Certainly the soil of Massachusetts or Michigan is not four times as rich as that of Virginia or Georgia. The prosperity of Nevada, due to silver, of California due of gold, if Illinois to coal, is offset by Oklahoma with its oil or Kentucky with its minerals. Mr. Cohen found that "Kentucky in 1935 produced \$98,486,000 worth of minerals, as compared with \$96,484,000 for Illinois, \$20,988,000 for Nevada and \$360,179,000 for California."

The economic plight of the Negro race does not even partially affect these figures, for less than 10% of the population of Kentucky and of Oklahoma is colored.

Since the Civil War did play a part in holding the South back, let us consider a section of the country which was not involved; the Pacific Coast. California has the highest proportion of foreign-born, 18.9%; Washington is next with 16.3% and then comes Oregon with 11.8%. It is in this order that these three states stand with reference to their per capita incomes: California first, Washington second, and Oregon third.

How about the Middle Atlantic States? New York stands first in the percentage of foreign-born, 25.9%, New Jersey 21.9%, and Pennsylvania 12.9%. They stand in the same order with respect to their per capita income.

The same thing holds true with the South Atlantic States. They

may be listed in both order of per capita income and foreign-born population as follows: Delaware first with a foreign-born population of 7.1%, Maryland second with 5.9%, Florida third with 4.8%, West Virginia fourth with 3.0%, Virginia fifth 1%, Georgia sixth with 0.5%; and North and South Carolina, the poorest states by per capita income in this group, have 0.3% foreign-born population.

As far as the West-South Central States are concerned, Texas leads in percentage of foreign-born with 6.2%, Louisiana is second with 1.8%, Oklahoma third with 1.3% and Arkansas fourth with 0.6%. The ranking as to per capita income is the same, Texas first, Louisiana second, Oklahoma third and Arkansas fourth.

Practically the same correlation appears in the New England States, the North Central States and the Mountain States.

Do these states rank in the order shown because of their foreign-born population or in spite of it? We are most familiar with New York State so let us take it for our case history. If New York is among the most prosperous states of the union in

spite of its immigrants, then at the time when there was the smallest proportion of immigrants in its population it must have reached its peak of prosperity.

What do we find? There never was a period when New York did not have a large percentage of immigrants, from the time it was settled to the present. History shows that in 1640 there were 18 different nationalities living in the City of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island. One of the Governors of this period allowed his dislike for Quakers to be so felt that his Board of Directors in Amsterdam cautioned him that tolerance "has always been the guide of our Magistrates in the City (Amsterdam) and the consequence has been that people have flocked from every land to this Asylum. Tread then, in their steps and we doubt not you will be blest." New York was always one of the most prosperous of the colonies and became one of the most prosperous of the states.

It wasn't that the good Dutch Directors cared very much about the Quakers. It was simply that they knew the coming together of men,

with their manifold wants which must be satisfied through their diverse skills and cultures, brings about prosperity.

In the 17th century immigrants flocked to Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware. These colonies were not as rich in resources and climate as some of the others, such as Virginia or the Carolinas, but the immigrants were more welcome there. They were freer to exert their labor. They paid back their welcome, and these colonies prospered, not because of the immigrants, but because, in the very nature of things, humans, whether immigrants or not, in order to exist must produce. The larger number of humans the more the production. The more the production of wealth the richer the community.

The answer to the question "What has the immigrant done for this country?" is this: The Census Bureau on pages 85-89 of "A Century of Population Growth" demonstrates that during the 19th century immigration contributed thirty million souls to the national population and forty billion dollars to the national wealth.