

"Immigration Report: A Banner Year" Newspaper Article, December 16, 1907

*IMMIGRATION REPORT
1907 A BANNER YEAR*

Influx of 1906 Exceeded by 184, 614
-Japanese Pour In

Washington, Dec. 15. - Immigration to America during the year ended June 30, 1907 was vastly greater than in any previous year of the history of the United States. This fact, with all its interesting and important details, is placed in strong light in the annual report of Frank P. Sargent, Commissioner General of Immigration, which was made public to-day. Of this great flood of immigrants, Commissioner Sargent says: An army of 1,285,349 souls, they have come, draw hither by the free institutions and the marvelous prosperity of our country-the chance here afforded every honest toiler to gain a livelihood by the sweat of his brow or the exercise of his intelligence-surpassing in numbers the record of all preceding years.

The report contains in tabulated form many phases of information bearing on the question of immigration, and in submitting this carefully compiled data, Mr. Sargent says: The immigration for the year 1907 exceeded that for 1906 by 184,614, and that for the year 1905 by 258, 850 an increase over the year 1906 of more than 17 per cent, and over the year 1905 of more than 25 per cent. During the fiscal year 1906 12,432 aliens were rejected at our ports; during the last year 13,064, an increase of 632 :hence the total number of those who have sought admission in 1907 viz_ 1,295,413. exceeds the number who applied in 1906 viz. 1,113,167. by 185,246. Commissioner Sargent says it is of particular significance that many immigrants landed at ports in the South during the last year, and he refers especially to a party of 473 Belgians—excellent types of immigrants—received at Charleston, S. C, having been induced to go there by the state authorities. The Increase of Immigration to the South, the commissioner says, "is directly connected with the growing desire of the Southern states to draw within their boundaries a number Of the better class of immigrants, it being considered by practically all of the leading men of that section that the future development and welfare of the South depend on its ability to receive and absorb a reliable laboring and farming element. Striking increases are also shown at New Orleans, Galveston and Honolulu."

Of peculiar significance is the table which shows the number of immigrants from each foreign country, together with the increases or decreases as compared with the previous year. Twenty-seven countries showed increases and eleven decreases. The tide, of immigration from some of the countries it, indicated by the following figures: Austria-Hungary, 355,452: increase, 73,314; Bulgaria. Serbia •and Montenegro. 11,253; increase, 6,693; France. 9,731 increase. 345; German Empire, 37,807; increase 243. Greece, 36,590; Increase, 17,091; Italy, including Sicily and Sardinia. 253,751: Increase, 12,611; Russian Empire and Finland 258,943 increase, 43,278; Turkey.20,767; Increase. 11,257; England, 56,637; increase. 7,146; Ireland. 34,530, decrease, 465; Scotland, 19,740;

increase. 3,874; China, 961; decrease. 583; Japan, 30,226; increase, 16,391: British North America, 19,918; increase, 14,865; West Indies, 16,689, increase, 3,033.

Interest naturally attaches to the proportionately large, immigration from Japan. While the exclusion laws have rendered practically nil the immigration from China, the immigration from Japan, although relatively not great, has trebled in the last year. This Increase is significant, too, because it comes in the face of regulations adopted by the American government, with the assent of Japan, which, it was supposed, would curtail the immigration of Japanese to this country very materially.

Commissioner Sargent presents excerpts from official reports made to his bureau by inspectors sent to Mexico and Canada to study the situation with special reference to the coming of Japanese to America, through those countries. The reports show that thousands of Japanese landed in Mexico during the last year and ultimately gained admission surreptitiously into this country. Once in the United States, it was impossible to find them, except in the rarest instances. While the regulations concerning Japanese immigration have tended to reduce the number of regularly admitted immigrants, hundreds if not thousands of Japanese are coming into the country by stealth.

Referring to the immigration figures from the various countries. Commissioner Sargent says the table "furnishes a striking illustration of the fact that the time has arrived when if people are dissatisfied with existing political, economic and social conditions in one country, they will find the means by which to desert their former homes and settle where a fair chance is afforded them. Its chief interest to the people of the United States consists in the question that must arise in the mind of any person examining the figures as to whether or not our ability as a race to absorb foreign elements is not on the verge, at least, of being overtaxed."

The financial condition of admitted aliens is always an interesting subject. Of those admitted 573,923 had less than \$50 each in their possession, while 107,502 were able to show amounts in excess of that sum. The total amount of money brought into the country by arriving aliens was \$25,599,893, or an average of almost \$20 person.

Of the 13,064 aliens who were turned back during the year 1,434 were contract laborers, but the number of contract laborers deported during the last year was 38 percent less than in the preceding year.

A table showing the outward passenger movement during the last year develops the fact that that movement was greater than in any preceding year for which statistics are available. The total number of cabin passengers was 224,993 and other than cabin 344,989. The aggregate number of outward bound passengers- 369,882- was 73,145 larger in 1906.

In a discussion of the new Immigration act Commissioner Sargent strongly urges that advantage be taken of a provision it contains for calling an international conference on immigration and emigration. In his opinion, now is the time to act. He says: There never has been a period when all the principal countries of the world were so deeply interested in the subject. Several of the leading European countries' have recently either passed or introduced in their legislatures immigration laws some of which are modelled practically after our own. Some of the governments are taking notice with the idea of adopting measures to discourage emigration of their citizens or to induce their return others are solicitous lest their subjects should forget their allegiance; and altogether there should be no difficulty in appealing to this awkward general interest with the object of accomplishing some international arrangement and understanding that will work for the general good.

The Commissioner points out further that, either through such an international conference or through amendments to this country's law*, adequate provisions should be made for the issuance of proper passports to persons who are coming to America. By this means such organization as the Black Hand Society could not gain a foothold here, because the passport would have to bear the record of the alien. It would do much, too the Commissioner, believes, to put an end to the "white slave traffic" although that even now is under reasonably good control by the immigration officials.

The financial statement of the bureau of immigration shows that, after the payment of all expenses, including nearly 750,000 for new construction, there was a net balance on hand on July 1, 1907, of \$3,979,515. The total expense of the execution of the immigration laws, exclusive of payments on account of special construction work, was \$1,645,373.

Among the recommendations made by Commissioner Sargent, many of which are administrative in character, are the following:

That legislation should be enacted to check violations of the law by professed seamen. That marine hospital surgeons be stationed at the principal ports of embarkation aboard to examine aliens before they start for America. That surgeons and inspectors, male and female, be placed on vessels of the principal steamship lines to examine incoming aliens. That arrangements be perfected for the detection of members of the criminal classes who seek to come to the United States. That a treaty be negotiated with Mexico respecting immigration through that country: or, if that cannot be done, that the Mexican border be closed to all except American citizens and bona fide residents of Mexico. That harmonious arrangements be made with Canadian government respecting the enforcement of the immigration laws of that country and the United States. That immigration stations be erected at Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore. That appropriations be made for improvements at Ellis Island, New York; Angel Island, San Francisco, and Honolulu.