EMPIRE MIGRATION.

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I circulate to my colleagues a memorandum prepared by the Oversea Settlement Committee. I consider it highly desirable that the Government should settle as soon as possible their general policy on the question of migration, and I hope that the suggestions made by the Committee may be approved.

DeVonshire.

January 23, 1923.

Memorandum by the Oversea Settlement Committee.

The Oversea Settlement Committee consider it is necessary to report to His Majesty's Government on the present situation regarding Empire migration and the working of the Empire Settlement Act, 1922.

Their annual report for 1922 is now being prepared for publication, but there are various matters of a political and confidential nature which cannot appear in the published report.

The position cannot be said to be satisfactory. Before the war the number of migrants leaving the United Kingdom annually for other parts of the Empire and foreign countries varied between 250,000 and a maximum in 1912 of 400,000. During the war migration ceased. Since the war only a fraction of the pre-war average has been restored, due partly to the high cost of ocean fares, the lack hitherto of effective machinery in the Dominions, the trade slump which has affected the Dominions as well as the United Kingdom, and above all by a lack of certainty and definiteness in the immigration policy of various overseas Governments. Statistics are appended showing the migration to Canada and Newfoundland, Australia and New Zealand in 1913, 1921 and the first six months of 1922.

In 1921 the population of the United Kingdom was greater by 1,200,000 than in 1913. The normal annual increase of births over deaths was 390,000 in 1921, and seems likely to average over 300,000 a year. It cannot be denied that Great Britain, in view of the changed conditions of world trade, is over-populated, while the Dominions, and especially Australia, are under-populated.

The ideal to be aimed at is to secure an annual flow of migration from Great Britain to the Dominions at least equal to the normal increase of the population of Great Britain, and in the next few years of anything between 500,000 and 700,000 persons a year.

The chief object of schemes for male migration to the Dominions must be settlement upon the land. The oversea cities are at present over-crowded, and afford no openings for any appreciable number of industrial workers from this country. It follows that male migrants from the United Kingdom, who will be largely drawn from industrial centres, will require training after arrival overseas to fit them for the job for which they are required, i.e., land work.

Youth and adaptability are such important qualifications for successful migration that it will probably be desirable to concentrate largely on juvenile migration. About 750,000 juveniles leave school annually in this country, and for a substantial proportion of them there is little prospect of British industry providing openings of a permanent and satisfactory character.
The Committee would be glad to know if the new Government are in agreement with these general propositions, and whether the Prime Minister will take an early opportunity of giving publicity to his view of the magnitude and urgency of the problem, and of the policy His Majesty's Government intend to pursue in dealing with it.

The Committee feel that some such further declaration of policy is vital, both for direction of the public mind at home and to secure greater co-operation on the part of Oversea Governments.

The Committee hope that such a declaration of policy will be followed by full and frank discussions between the Prime Minister and the Prime Ministers of the Dominions during the coming year, and as an increase of the British population overseas appears to be the right foundation for a policy of Empire development and Empire settlement, they consider that the subject should be one of the first to be explored by the proposed Empire Economic Conference.

The Committee have not yet learnt the views of the Government of the Dominion of Canada on any schemes for the co-operation of that Dominion under the Empire Settlement Act, 1922. They do not know what the policy of Mr. Mackenzie King is in regard to the whole subject of extended migration from this country to Canada. It is, however, understood that the question of relaxing the restrictions hitherto imposed upon immigrants from certain European nationalities is at present receiving the favourable consideration of the Canadian Government. In present circumstances, the Committee would regard any action of this kind as opposed to the interest of the Empire.

The only schemes for co-operation under the Empire Settlement Act hitherto put forward by any Government authority in Canada are those put forward by and at present under discussion with the Provincial Government of Ontario for the loan of costs of passage to migrants, and certain experimental schemes for the settlement of juveniles and for providing cottages on farms for married farm-workers with families. The Report of the Supervisor of Juvenile Immigration in Canada for 1921–22 shows that the applications received in Canada for children far exceed the number sent out. In this matter the Board of Education might help; but as regards adults, the outlook is not at present encouraging, as the Dominion Government has come to no decision in regard to the question of cooperation under the Empire Settlement Act in schemes for settlement.

In regard to Australia, where the necessity for development and population is most acute from an Imperial and strategic, as well as from a Dominion, point of view, it is important that, should a change of Government follow the recent General Election, the new Commonwealth Government should at once be fully seized of the policy and hopes of the British Government in this matter.

The political opposition of the Labour Party in Australia is no doubt formidable, and, subject to the concurrence of the Commonwealth Government, the Overseas Settlement Committee propose, if His Majesty's Government approve, to send out a special delegation of five representatives of the Committee, including a Labour Member of Parliament (Mr. Wignall, M.P.), to Australia.

The existing arrangements made by the Commonwealth and State Governments and by voluntary societies, &c., for the reception, distribution, training and supervision of migrants on and after arrival in Australia are far from adequate. The Committee have repeatedly made representations, and improvements are gradually being made, but much remains to be done.

An Agreement under the Empire Settlement Act, 1922, will shortly be entered into with the Government of Western Australia for 75,000 settlers to be migrated during the next three years. An Agreement is being negotiated with the Government of Victoria for placing 10,000 new settlers upon farms of their own in the next five years. A similar scheme for placing 6,000 settlers upon farms of their own in New South Wales has been agreed between the Government of that State and the Commonwealth Government, but this scheme involves, as does the Victorian scheme, an advance by the British Government of £300 per settler. These schemes are expensive, and can only deal with a comparatively small number of persons.

Migration to New Zealand is at present very much restricted, and the Dominion seems to be suffering from the effects of wild land speculation, and thus offers little hope or encouragement to any large scale immigration. It would be true to say that at present the New Zealand Government has no definite migration policy, though there are indications of the possibility of some developments of juvenile migration in the near future.

Until the attitude and action of the Dominion Authorities have made considerable advance, the improvements of the machinery here at home cannot usefully be
embarked upon, and the Committee have come to the conclusion that until changes have been effected at the circumference, any special propaganda or development of arrangements at the centre must be approached with caution.

The Committee would, however, like to report that as soon as the horizon is clearer, they are satisfied that decentralisation will be necessary. In encouraging, directing and selecting migrants, the County and County Borough Authorities must be asked to co-operate, and, if possible, voluntary associations formed in these or regional units. Should the Government give a lead in this matter, the co-operation of the Lords-Lieutenant, Municipal Authorities, &c., would readily follow.

To return to general considerations. Experience shows that migration booms in periods of good trade and stagnation in periods of depression. From the United Kingdom point of view, one can but wish that the converse were the case. The would-be migrants here have not the money to meet the expenses necessary to settling in a new home, and the prospects of employment overseas are not so bright. Hence the necessity for State-aided migration.

However, it must be borne in mind that State-aided migration has its limitations. The successfully settled migrant is a far better recruiter of new settlers than either financial State aid or the efforts and supervision of any Government Authorities or voluntary organisations. It is therefore to be hoped that if the Dominion Governments, particularly Canada and still more Australia, co-operate whole-heartedly with His Majesty's Government in making adequate arrangements for receiving settlers and giving them a fair chance of settling upon the land, successful and contented settlers will gradually become sufficiently numerous to attract adequate numbers of other settlers from this country, thus eventually making State aid less and less necessary. It is not likely, however, that it will be possible to dispense with State aid for a considerable time, and it is probable that in the immediate future State aid will be required on a larger scale than is provided for under the Empire Settlement Act. Such aid might perhaps best be given by payment of the whole or the greater part of the interest upon loans raised for British settlement.

But for all forms of migration clear and definite understandings between His Majesty's Government and the Oversea Governments are essential, and at present these are lacking.

Consequently, the present rate of migration, and, as far as the Committee can foresee, the rate for the coming year, is but a fraction of what is required by the circumstances of the case.

In the opinion of the Committee, the need for the migration of suitable persons from this country and the settlement of these persons overseas is now greater than at any previous period of British history.

With the above considerations in their mind, the Oversea Settlement Committee have passed the following resolutions:

1. That it is urgently necessary that the new Government should forthwith formulate the broad outlines of their policy in regard to Empire-directed migration and settlement—a policy which is equally necessary in the interests of this country and of the Dominions;

2. That if the new Government share in the views of the Oversea Settlement Committee as to the magnitude and urgency of that problem, they should take steps to confer immediately with Dominion Governments;

3. That for this purpose special conferences between His Majesty's Ministers and Dominion Ministers are essential; and

4. Therefore that the problem of Empire-directed migration, which is in reality the problem of relieving congestion and consequent deterioration here, and of affording the British race an opportunity of expansion overseas, should receive the fullest consideration at the forthcoming Economic Conference and should form the basis of that Conference.

Statistics of British Migration to the Dominions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total British Migrants.</th>
<th>1913.</th>
<th>1921.</th>
<th>First Six Months of 1922.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Australia</td>
<td>56,779</td>
<td>27,751</td>
<td>18,337</td>
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<tr>
<td>To Canada and Newfoundland</td>
<td>190,854</td>
<td>67,907</td>
<td>22,184</td>
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<tr>
<td>To New Zealand</td>
<td>14,235</td>
<td>11,513</td>
<td>6,430</td>
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<td>261,888</td>
<td>107,171</td>
<td>46,951</td>
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Of the British migrants in 1921 and 1922, the following received free passages from the British Government:

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<th>1921.</th>
<th>First Six Months of 1922.</th>
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<tr>
<td>To Australia</td>
<td>10,637</td>
<td>6,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Canada</td>
<td>14,433</td>
<td>2,541</td>
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<tr>
<td>To New Zealand</td>
<td>4,494</td>
<td>2,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,564</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,490</strong></td>
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