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Title:- Give an Account of Migration Within the Commonwealth. How does it Effect Your Own Country?

The Summary.

1. The Meaning of Migration:- The word migration itself means the movement of people into new areas usually a distance away from their original home.
2. The Occurance of Migration:- Migrations have occurred throughout the human history and have played an important part in the peopling of all the areas of the world.
3. The Different Types of Migration:- Primitive migrations, of which there are traces, were tribal and were usually made in search of food. In modern times economic pressure became the basic motive of migration, areas of low population density, attracting people from areas where density is high and economic opportunity

consequently low. Modern migrations have been those of individuals and families, rather than of mass groups.

4. The Beginning of Migration:- Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the largest International Migration in history has taken place with the migration of vast numbers of Europeans into other continents.

Since World War II we have experienced a great change in the Commonwealth today. In the past hundred years, the Englishmen or Britons were usually the ones who migrated to the other colonies throughout the Commonwealth in search of opportunities to further their fortunes. Whereas the native colonists were contented to remain at home, to tend the fields and be servants of their rich Lords. In many cases, those who wanted, were not allowed to travel. They were compelled to stay in their native homes and attend to the fields. Much the same is in evidence in some parts of the British control over Africa today.

Like all the other major problems of the British Commonwealth, the problems of migration is constantly changing. The conditions which govern migration from Great Britain to Australia or Canada, for example, are very different now from what they were a hundred

years ago. Then Canada and Australia were infant agriculture countries with plenty of spare land for farmer settlers.

The United Kingdom, though the leading industrial country in the world, still had half of its population engaged in agriculture, and, with her numbers growing rapidly, the population of England and Wales quadrupled during the nineteenth century she was able to supply large numbers of emigrants, a high proportion of whom had been born and bred on the land.

During recent decades the population of Great Britain has not only begun to tend towards decline, but has become heavily industrial. But the overseas Dominions themselves have by now become industrial as well as agricultural countries. Normally, recruits to industrial occupations in any country are provided by the natural increase of the population, by attracting labor from agriculture, and, where necessary, by immigration from outside. It seems as though a period of intensive industrial development lies in front of the Dominions, and that their immigration policy will be to favor the admission of skilled labour rather than settlers on the land. The latter will certainly be needed in all the Dominions for some

time to come, but skilled workers in such industries as building, engineering, iron and steel making, and so on will be in greater demand for years to come.

Thus, although, as we shall see later, there is still an urgent demand for British immigrants in the overseas Dominions, and readiness on the part of British people to supply the demand, the problem of migration has changed completely during the last two or three generations. Moreover in considering the change in the problem of migration today we cannot confine our attention only to the British Commonwealth. Conditions all over the world affect migration today, and not only economic conditions. Centres of population pressure are not the same as they were in the nineteenth century. The populations of some countries which were then expanding are now stationary or declining, while those of others are expanding rapidly.

In the latter group are countries like Russia, Japan, and India. Russia has plenty of spare land and most of the necessary economic resources to accommodate her population increase for generations to come, but Japan and India are in a very different position. The pressure of population on Japan's land resources has already had the gravest

results for the world, and India's emigration problem, as we shall see, raises the most formidable difficulties in Inter-Commonwealth relations. In fact as Japan and India remind us, and other instances could be given from such European countries as Italy. The problem of migration is now no longer one merely of economics and the readiness of individuals to emigrate in Italy.

Inside the British Commonwealth, with the one exception of India, the problem of migration is greatly simplified.

The countries of immigration, that is as far as white settlers are concerned, the Dominions and Southern Rhodesia which still require immigrants, prefer British immigrants to any others, and enter into schemes of reciprocal benefit with the Government of the United Kingdom for their supply. In fact, as far as the Dominions of British settlement are concerned, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, the problem of migration from the United Kingdom is almost the whole problem. There are, however, two exceptions to this general statement. Both the French Canadians and the Afrikaners in the South of Africa have reservations in this matter of British immigration since they fear that it may tilt the racial balance

against them.

The broad position at present is that all these four countries want British immigrants, practically as many as they can get. But, naturally, they want young and vigorous people, and, as we have seen, for the most part skilled in such trades as building and engineering, who will be valuable nation-building assets. But these are precisely the people who are needed at home, and, further, the population trend of Great Britain is a factor of major importance in this question. In sixty years the annual increase in the population of the United Kingdom fell by more than two-thirds. Recently the British birth-rate has shown an upward trend, but the influence of the falling birth-rate of the last few decades will be felt for a good many years to come, and during the first Post-War years it has already shown itself in a severe shortage of labour in some essential industries in this country.

Nevertheless, the Dominions of British settlement want British immigrants for a variety of reasons. All of them are expanding their manufacturing industries on account of natural security as well as from economic motives, all of them are concerned with the problem of manpower in connexion with national defence as well as industry, and in all of them, except French Canada, the

birth-rate trends are such as to lead to an ultimate decline in population. In the past Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa have all drawn on this country for their immigrants. During the hundred years ending in nineteen hundred and fourteen, twenty million persons emigrated from the British Isles, but thirteen and a half millions of these went to the United States. However, about four millions went to Canada, two and a quarter millions to Australia and New Zealand, and about three quarters of a million to the two South African Colonies of Natal and the Cape of Good Hope.

There were various causes for this vast wave of emigration, which illustrates perfectly the operations of the two great forces of 'push and pull' in all migration. It is the push of inferior conditions at home, combined with the pull of more attractive conditions overseas, which accounts for the greater part of emigration the world over. In the early decades of the nineteenth century the economic depression which followed the Napoleonic Wars strengthened the hands of those who recommended emigration as a relief to the prevailing poverty. Consequently, intending emigrants were given some assistance to emigrate, but not necessarily to British overseas countries.

The rate of emigration was not uniform. It varied according to economic conditions in the United Kingdom, and to the prevailing political and even philosophic theories. Thus, the widely accepted doctrine of Malthus, who taught that population would always be to the limit of the available resources for its support unless prevented by the natural checks of war, famine, and disease, inevitably caused emigration to be regarded as a more humane method of regulating population than the 'natural' checks of Malthus. Gibbon Wakefield, one of the most famous of the 'Colonial Reformers' of the first half of the nineteenth century, advocated emigration based on a practical method of land settlement as a bridge between the mother country and her colonies.

In South Africa the white settlers were finding it hard to compete with the natives, and the demand of Cape Colony and Natal for immigrants was very small. Again, after the Franco-Russian War, there was a wave of emigration from this country owing to industrial depression arising largely from the growing competition with our exports in world markets from the United States and Germany.

Then, towards the end of the nineteenth century, other considerations began to enter into the question of

emigration from this country to the colonies. In nineteen hundred and twelve a Dominion's Royal Commission stressed the argument that the organization of emigration from the United Kingdom to the Dominions was at the heart of the whole problem of developing the vast resources of the Dominions and increasing the power of the Commonwealth as a whole. In nineteen hundred and eighteen the United Kingdom Government created an Overseas Settlement Committee to give help and advice in the matter of emigration to the overseas countries of the Commonwealth and to foreign countries.

The slump which quickly followed the nineteen hundred and fourteen to the nineteen hundred and eighteen was caused the Committee to say in its report for nineteen twenty that the United Kingdom now had a surplus population, at any rate for the present and in nineteen twenty two it recommended a policy of State-aided migration as the best cure for unemployment at home and the best means of fostering the industrial development of the Dominions and increasing Inter-Commonwealth trade.

Nevertheless the report made it seem that the Committee looked to emigration to the Dominions chiefly as a means of developing their primary resources, since large-scale

industrialization in those countries lay still in the future. A special Conference held at the Colonial Office in nineteen twenty one also stressed the prime importance of settlement on the land and recommended a scheme of aid for intending emigrants, who should be elected and approved by the Governments concerned. The Dominions were ready to co-operate in such a scheme, and at the Imperial Conference of nineteen twenty one all the delegates except those from South Africa, who were unable to join the others because of some domestic labour troubles of their own, agreed a system of State-aided migration from the United Kingdom.

The Empire Settlement Act passed a law saying that an expenditure of three million pounds a year, of which one million was to be spent in training intending emigrants and on assisted passages, while the remaining two millions were to be devoted to financing enterprises in the Dominions in connexion with the scheme.

Australia and New Zealand, and to a lesser extent Canada, all made arrangements for settling British immigrants on the land under this scheme, but the results did not come up to expectations. In fact, immigration in the following few years was well below the pre-nineteen fourteen figure, and

even below the figure for nineteen twenty before the scheme came into operation. Yet still the number of emigrants from the United Kingdom continued to decline, only twice, during the years nineteen nineteen and nineteen thirty, did their numbers equal half the number of emigrants in nineteen fourteen.

Nevertheless, renewed efforts were made by the United Kingdom Government to increase migration by means of land settlement. In nineteen twenty five a scheme was agreed with Australia which was to cost thirty four million pounds, provision was also made for the settlement of three thousand families in Canada, on farms that had already been prepared. The Australian scheme was a failure owing to the high cost of creating farms in that country. The quality of the land available was much too poor for settlement.

The Canadian scheme was at first successful, in fact, more than three thousand families were settled. But the world economic slump of the late nineteen twenties and early nineteen thirties ruined many of the settlers, who had to abandon their farms. Thus, by nineteen thirty three the number of emigrants returning to the United Kingdom was about equal to

those going out.

The Effect of Migration on our Country.

In the Bahamas, we do not have a problem as far as migration is concerned. This is a British Crown Colony and is protected by strict immigration laws, and we have many restrictions which prevent mass migration.

Few of our Bahamian people migrate elsewhere. Primarily, due to the fact that this country has been economically sound for quite a number of years. At present we have little or no unemployment in these islands. As the trend now goes we expect to enjoy this prosperity for quite a number of years to come. Such being the case, we find, that there are quite a large number of people seeking to migrate here to further their fortunes.

During the winter season a great number of North Americans, Canadians, Cubans, English and a large number of other nationalities are employed in the various hotels here. Usually these people are allowed to remain in the colony and eventually they become citizens of the colony.

List of books consulted :-

1. The British Family of Nations by John Bestman.
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