

the Minister in charge of Immigration in Canada, in which he stated that the encouragement of British immigration will hold the first place in his programme, and that he hopes to secure the co-operation of the British Government under the Empire Settlement Act for extending his schemes. We have also noted the encouraging speech of the Governor-General of Australia at the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament last June, when he said that the migration policy of the Commonwealth was to act in full co-operation with the British and States Governments; that it is intended to develop the nomination system and to encourage private schemes for the development and closer settlement of Australia; and that it is hoped, in co-operation with the States, to extend the facilities for the housing and training of settlers on arrival by the erection of suitable accommodation and the establishment of training-farms. And we all, of course, have fresh in our memories the sympathetic manner in which Mr. Mackenzie King, Mr. Massey, and General Smuts dealt with this topic in their speeches at the opening of the Conference.

All this shows that both overseas and in this country this question, so vital to the prosperity of the Empire, has been receiving the closest attention of the several Governments. Yet progress is slow.

Some Obstacles to More Rapid Expansion of the Movement.

I cannot avoid the feeling that if the Empire is to be populated and developed by people of British birth and British blood the movement must be quickened. What we have to consider now is how best to quicken it, while at the same time adopting a policy which will not force the pace beyond the limits of its economic possibilities.

(1.) Economic.

Perhaps the primary difficulty in the way of the rapid expansion of settlement is economic. It is, unfortunately, the case that many of the circumstances that make us specially anxious to stimulate this movement are themselves obstacles to its progress, as a study of statistics on the subject will show. The graph of pre-war migration given in the final report of the Dominions Royal Commission shows a startling fall immediately after the slump of 1907, followed by a very rapid rise as trade began to recover. The same causes, in fact, which bring about unemployment also hinder migration. Good times and good trade at home and overseas afford the best opportunity and the liveliest encouragement for the would-be settler to launch forth on his new experience and makes his success more certain; and the successful settler, as we all know, is the best propagandist for migration. Such conditions, unfortunately, have not existed during the past two years.

(2.) Political.

We and you alike have our political difficulties also to face. In this country the policy of Empire settlement has met with opposition from certain extreme elements. Every case of failure is widely advertised, and publicity, which has deliberately been given to these cases, has, within our knowledge, adversely operated against the movement. You, too, I can conceive, in the Dominions encounter similar difficulties, especially in times of depression such as the present, from those who fear that the introduction of fresh workers, even though destined for agricultural occupations, may affect employment and wages.

(3.) Psychological.

Lastly, there are what may be termed the psychological difficulties. Many feel a not unnatural timidity at the idea of leaving their homes, of cutting themselves adrift from old associations and setting out to seek a new life in a strange country, where they fear that even among those of their own race they may perhaps not find themselves welcome. Even in these days of rapid communication it is no little thing for men and women to make up their minds to travel across half the world to Australia or New Zealand and to make their homes so far from their native land. Canada, of course, is comparatively near, and the fact that it is within a voyage of a few days' duration from this country probably accounts in no small measure for the fact that a much larger proportion of migrants go there without assistance than to the other Dominions.

Relation of General Economic Situation to Oversea Settlement.

Some of these difficulties no doubt are not immediately remediable, or at least are not remediable by measures which come directly within the ambit of the settlement question. The economic problem—the problem of restoring trade, and especially of the development of inter-Imperial trade—is the subject-matter of the Conference as a whole. It will be dealt with under other heads, and perhaps we need not do more here than note its close relationship to settlement. Nor do I think that it would be desirable for me to follow up the suggestions thrown out by Mr. Massey and General Smuts at the first meeting of the Conference as to the connection between settlement and Imperial preference. That, as I have said, is for consideration in another part of the Conference. But on the general question of the bearing of the economic situation upon settlement I would just like to say this: We cannot expect to make water run up hill or to work economic miracles: we must adjust our plans to what is economically possible and economically sound, basing our judgment on the situation as we and you know it. And it is just because of these abnormal difficulties that we have met to seek a remedy. It is just because political unsettlement and commercial dislocation still overshadow the trade of Europe and infect by their widespread contagion the healthy development of commerce in general that we turn more eagerly to developing Imperial resources. We in these Islands are fortunate in partial or comparative isolation from the worst troubles of our neighbours in Europe. We have reached at last a more stable basis of prices, which is the foundation of commercial confidence, and