

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION

By Henry Ware Allen

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We Are, It Is Held, Overdoing the Matter Somewhat Under Our Present Laws

To the Editor of The New York Times:

In view of the fact that immigration to the United States has been so restricted that we are now losing more than we gain every year, the Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island, generously presented to America by the liberty-loving people of France, is more of a mockery, so it seems to me, than the gesture of welcome to a free country, and it might well, therefore, be removed and returned to its donors.

According to Secretary of Labor Doak and his able assistant, Mr. Garsson, the business of smuggling aliens into the United States, including, as this does, endless blackmail, has become a national disgrace. It is, of course, natural that this prohibition of immigration should be demanded when so many working men already here are unemployed. Nevertheless, it is at the same time true that every able-bodied immigrant of good character is an asset and not a liability.

The present restrictive laws would, if applied in times past, have excluded many thousands of immigrants who came to this country penniless or illiterate but who afterward became most desirable citizens, adding greatly to our wealth and progress. These laws would have excluded Pupin, Carl Schurz and Steinmetz.

It should be kept in mind that the United States is very much underpopulated. Texas is about the same size in area as Germany, yet Germany has ten times the population of Texas. Every one of our agricultural States could sustain many times its present population, provided the land were accessible at reasonable cost. So long as the frontier provided land at nominal cost, the problem of unemployment did not exist, and if at this time we had a scientific system of taxation, immense areas of land would be thrown open to settlement, amounting to the equivalent of a newly discovered continent.

If the United States were populated as densely as is England we would have a population of 1,964,000,000; If populated as densely as Germany, our population would be 1,053,000,000; as France, 579,000,000; as Belgium, 2,076,000,000. If half of our population were removed we would still have, under existing circumstances, the same proportion of unemployment as at present. The trouble is not that our

country is overpopulated. It is that land is held by monopoly out of use. Let the principles of an enlightened political economy be applied as was suggested by Henry George more than fifty years ago and we shall again welcome the unrestricted immigration to a land where unemployment does not exist.