

The Economic Club of New York

The Immigration Problem

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Introduction

William Church Osborn, Presiding Officer

Gentlemen of the Economic Club, the subject this evening, as you know, is the immigration problem. The first speaker will speak for 15 minutes and the other speakers will speak for a half-hour.

I think that in the selection of the speakers of the evening, if I had been present when Mr. Ely made up the program that I should have added one point of view to the diverse points of view which you will have, and that is the point of view of the biologist, because while this subject will be considered from the standpoint of labor and of immigration, perhaps of relation to all of the different standpoints, there is one which is controlling and which is not represented with us tonight, and that is the standpoint of biology, of that imperative and inescapable law of race that we have learned so much of in the last 30 years, and whose power over our individual development we have begun to respect so highly.

However, Mr. Ely has not put a biologist in the meeting, and I am not one myself, so that I shall merely announce the speaker of the evening, who is the guest of the evening. I don't think I need to introduce him to you. I only wish to say that the next speaker is Mr. Henry R. Curran, Commissioner of Immigration of the Port of New York. (Applause)

Henry R. Curran

Commissioner of Immigration

of the Port of New York

Mr. Chairman and my friends: The last thing that I expected when I went to Ellis Island was to be received among you at any time or in any place as a guest of honor. The usual greeting, when I am asked where I came from, what my job is, and I reply "Ellis Island," is a slight lifting of the eyebrows and a very forcibly expressed query as to how I got off the Island, how they came to let me in. (Laughter) And then I found further, and when you all go home this evening I know you will bear me out, that I have already lost all my oldest friends, one by one. I think they are all gone now, because every single one of them, if I knew him for 5 minutes at a time 3 years ago, when 3 or 4 or possibly even 5 citizens of New York voted for me for Mayor (Laughter), even to the friends of my childhood they have all demanded that I provide their wives with a cook right straight from the ship at Ellis Island. And, gentlemen, there are no cooks at Ellis Island. (Laughter) We have milliners and, and ladies' maids coming through in small numbers. We have social secretaries in greater numbers. (Laughter) Secretaries to statesmen in still greater numbers, but by far the great majority are national leaders of new thought, psycho-analysts. (Laughter and Applause)

Before Mr. Ely makes his usual attack on my watch, which I understand is to occur in a very few moments, I want to bring out three things, and the first is best told by the experience of two immigrants who are now tonight on Ellis Island, detained. They bear out in their story, which is not yet finished, one of the 3 main points in the immigration legislation now pending in Congress as I see it, and I think that it is most important for the future of the nation what Congress will do or undo in the present session.

The quota law expires on the 30th day of June and a new law is to take its place, and it may be with us for many years. The first thing that it must do, and that I believe it will do, because Senators and Congressmen, at least on this one thing, are all agreed, is to make it impossible for an immigrant to come half-way around the world, wondering all the way whether he will be within the quota or excess quota, and not finding out until he knocks at the gate at Ellis Island and then being told that through no fault of his own he arrived 5 minutes too late and must go all the way back to the place where he left.

Two months ago an Armenian family, father, mother and 5 children, came from Russian Armenia by way of South America. The Armenian quota was not exhausted and is not yet exhausted. They were all examined and found admissible in every singular particular, except for the fact that one of the children, a little girl 3 years old, had been born not in Armenia but in the Island of Cyprus, while the family were really visiting that island for a few months. The father, who speaks perfect English, had taken hold of some 900 Armenian refugees at the request of the

Allied Governments and was keeping watch over them on the Island of Cyprus, and while they were there it happened that the little 3 year old girl was born, and the quota for the Island of Cyprus was closed when the family came to this country. So they were all excluded. Under the law we could do nothing else. The case was taken into court. The judge held that the mother and four of the children could come ashore, and they have gone ashore, but that the little 3 year old girl, having been born in the Island of Cyprus, must be deported back to the Argentine; and the father was left there to accompany the 3 year old girl back to the Argentine.

I cannot imagine a more grotesque, unintended cruelty than that. The judge's hands were tied by the statute. It is that kind of a statute I am certain will be untied at the next Congress. Prior to that, however, when I ran across this case, when I met the poor, pretty little thing, we dropped everything else for the most of the afternoon, and I am positive that within the next 48 hours we are going to, even without the aid of lawyers -- I am not a lawyer, I am merely a member of the Bar (Laughter) -- even without their aid we are going to give that little 3 year old girl back to the mother who is caring for the other four. (Applause)

We are all agreed, and Congress is agreed, that we must have fewer immigrants from this time on. The Senate Committee is to report a bill that provides for 240,000 immigrants; the House, 170,000. The present figure is 360,000. Those figures are not the total annual immigration, because the western hemisphere is exempt from quota, and there are many specific exceptions on the law this year, and although we have a restrictive law we shall have between 600,000 and

700,000 immigrants enter the United States legally under the law, in addition to those who come as stowaways and are smuggled in across the two borders, not a very restrictive law.

We have 7 million aliens in the United States. We have a great many more than we have been able to catch up with, do what we may in trying to give decent city accommodations for them to live in, in trying to make them fit in 5 years to vote on the future of the nation. Very few of them will be fit in 5 years to vote on the future of the United States of America, and yet every single one of them, almost, can have that vote in 5 years from the minute they step off Ellis Island, and that vote is just as valuable as yours and just as valuable as mine, even though we try to train ourselves, to some extent, to exercise the vote with some ultimate effective good on the whole welfare of the nation.

We happen to be a self-governing country. It so happens that the American experiment of 150 years, which is 20 minutes against the ages, is an experiment in self-government; and are we not taking them in a little bit too fast for their own good? Are we not weakening our capacity for self-government? Are we a collection of foreign colonies or are we a nation of Americans?

Those questions are being asked, and Congress, in both Houses, has in a preliminary way given the answer, which is to have fewer immigrants, and there has been no dissenting voice. I favor fewer immigrants. I see them go by.

The fight in Washington and elsewhere, I am given to understand, is whether we shall adopt the 1910 census of foreign-born in America as the basis for our immigration, or the 1890 census. The present measure is the measure of the number of foreign born who were counted in America by the census of 1910. In the first place, why is it that either that year or 1890 or any other year goes simply on the basis of the foreign born in America to the complete exclusion of the American born Americans in America? Is that the point of view from which our immigration legislation should proceed? There has never been a mention in the statute of counting the American born in America and figuring out the character of our future immigration from that standpoint. If we deep on with the 1910 measure, the southeastern, the southern and eastern European immigration comes in, in the same proportion that it does today, whereas if we change to 1890 it means a smaller immigration from southern and eastern Europe and a greater immigration from northwestern Europe and the British Isles. I am in favor of the latter, of the 1890 basis, for this reason:

Take the whole American stock and supposing 20% of us came originally -- whether it is 20% or not -- but supposing 20% of us came 200 years ago from Ireland, 10% from Germany, 30% from Italy, or whatever the makeup is which constitutes the European national stock in the composite American, the whole 100 million of us, irrespective of citizenship today. Then I say let there come in each year the same percentage of people, the same percentage of total annual immigration that the nation has perpetuated throughout the years past to the present American

makeup, because that will keep us homogeneous; united we stand, divided we fall. No nation has lived that has not retained its quality of being thoroughly homogeneous.

Take 3 countries, and then I am through -- 3 countries of northwestern Europe, 3 in southern and eastern Europe, as a case in point: Ireland, Scotland, England, Germany, Norway, Sweden, have contributed to the present American makeup over the years 70%; 70 out of every 100 American inhabitants owe their origin to these three groups of countries. On the other hand, Russia, Poland and Italy have, among the 3 of them, contributed 8% to the present American makeup. What does the 1910 census do? Does it give us 70% cut of every 100 from Ireland, Scotland, England, Norway, Sweden and Germany? In 1920 it gave us 48 only instead of 70, which would bring in like to like in miniature every year, and keep us homogeneous. Does the 1910 census bring in 8 out of every 100 from Russia, Poland and Italy? No, it does not. At present, not only 8, but 27 out of every 100. So that on this basis these 3 countries obtain 3 times as many as they are entitled to, and at the expense of Germany, Norway, Sweden and the British Isles, an unfair quota, an unintentional transfer and pilfer of northwestern quotas by southern and eastern quotas, a deception, a taking something away that goes properly to northwestern European countries and giving it to the southern and eastern nations, and that is what is going on today. And those who wanted to keep on say that the 1890 census breeds discrimination.

Discrimination is in the 1910 census, and it will be perpetuated, preserved and solidified if the 1910 basis is continued.

Now, in closing, I should like to take this up more at length, because I think the element of fairness -- and we want to be fair, without favor, without prejudice, without choice -- the element of fairness demands that they come in like to like, according to what we are already, that is, all of us who are here. But it is added by those who oppose the 1890 basis that the southern and eastern immigration is superior to that of the northwestern countries of Europe and the British Isles. And I want to give you my answer to that from my own practical experience.

Last summer 2 ships came in, in the same week. One ship came from Sweden with about 1000 immigrants aboard, and all of the 1000 Swedish immigrants were admitted, palpably admissible, clear, waltzed through, except 2, a pretty strong percentage of admissibility. Those 2 were 2 young Swedish girls who had to wait overnight for their relatives, for their own protection, to come and claim them and take them away. By the next morning the whole 1000 had been admitted, passing every test.

In the same week a ship came in from the Mediterranean with a 1000 immigrants, and out of that ship of a 1000 immigrants we had to detain 500. Every bar in the immigration law was a bar against some of them. Scores of them had to be deported, never should have started, and were not fit for admission under the law.

So I say it is not true that that immigration, as we see it going by, practically, at Ellis Island, with an eye to the comfort of the immigrant, with kindness to him, with an eye also to the future of our American country, I say that that immigration, where we have to keep back 500 out of a 1000, is not as good as the immigration where we have to detain only 2 out of 1000. (Applause)

MR. OSBORN: The next speaker is a writer and publicist of distinction. Mr. Glenn Frank, Editor of the Century Magazine.

Glenn Frank

Editor, Century Magazine

I want to confine myself to this statement that I dictated this afternoon, because I want to cover all the territory I can in as little time as possible.

A SENSIBLE IMMIGRATION POLICY

By Glenn Frank

An H. G. Wells might write an “Outline of American History” in terms of the waves of “nativism” or anti-foreign feeling that have periodically swept over the American mind. We are today at the crest of one of these waves. We are in the midst of a crusade against the foreigner. This crusade is expressing itself in various fields and in varied ways, in Kukluxism, in the new

passion of the Nordics, who, by self-appointment, have become “the chosen people,” with a divine commission to play the role of racial Mussolini to the planet, in the almost immodest Americanism of the professional patriot, in a social reaction that needs a bogey with which to scare the electorate into its camp, in a political strategy that needs an emotional issue to distract attention from the oily naughtiness of certain Nordic politicians, and in our legitimately serious discussion of our immigration policy.

The most superficial excursion into the history of anti-foreign feeling in the United States shows that all the arguments and all the catchwords that are doing service today in our anti-foreigner crusade were in vivid use by Americans at least 175 years ago.

As Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman pointed out in an address before a recent meeting of the Academy of Political Science, Benjamin Franklin, in his “Observations on the Increase of Mankind,” wrote in 1751: “Why should the Palatine boors be suffered to swarm into our settlements and by herding together establish their language and manners to the exclusion of ours? Why should Pennsylvania, founded by England, become a colony of aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them?” And writing a few years later, Franklin says: “The Germans who come hither are generally the most stupid of their own nation, and as ignorance is often attended with credulity when knavery would mislead it . . . it is almost impossible to remove any prejudices they may entertain. . . Not being used to liberty they know not how to make a modest use of it. (And he expresses the fear that) they will soon so outnumber

us that all the advantages we have will not be able to preserve our language and even our government will become precarious."

In 1782, Thomas Jefferson, in his "Notes on Virginia," says of immigrants, "They will bring with them the principles of the governments they leave, imbibed in their early youth; or, if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing, as is usual, from one extreme to another. It would be a miracle were they to stop precisely at the point of temperate liberty." And years later Jefferson asks "whether it is desirable for us to receive the dissolute and demoralized handicraftsmen of the old cities of Europe."

Today we are likely to assume that immigration became a thorny problem only when migrations from the South and East of Europe set in. But, as Professor Seligman indicates in the address from which I am quoting, almost a hundred years ago Americans were crying for protection from English and Irish immigrants. In 1837 an anonymous American, signing himself "A Native," states in a letter to the Mayor of the City of New York that "Even the English if they are more tasteful than the Irish can never deviate from the precise customs of their country." From 1830 to 1840, a period that saw riots against foreigners in the streets of New York, Boston, and Cincinnati, the anti-foreign feeling in America was directed against the English, the Irish, and the Germans. And virtually all of the arguments and catchwords now being used by the Nordic apologists against immigrants from the South and East of Europe were then used against those

Nordic stocks to which much of the current discussion looks back longingly as the ideal source of immigrants. (Applause)

Now, I have said all this not to minimize the serious significance of our present-day problem, but to suggest 2 things which must, I think, be kept in mind if our consideration of immigration is to be intelligent:

First, the tense emotion that characterizes the present anti-foreign crusade in America is not a new and fresh emotion awakened by a new situation; it is as old as America; it is older; it is as old as the human race. It is rooted in racial psychology, of which we are just beginning to learn a little. It has been fostered by the psychology of nationalism, which may or may not be a permanent and workable form of human association.

Second, no problem is as simple as the catchwords that grow up around it. We shall probably succeed only in plunging the world into an era of race hatred and race wards if we allow our immigration policy to be permanently determined by the hasty generalizer of anthropology or the phrase-makers of swashbuckling, Jingoistic nationalism. The immigration problem cannot be isolated, as a germ is isolated; it cannot be dealt with in a statesmanlike manner save as an organic part of the twofold problem that today challenges American statesmanship: the problem of evolving in the United States a superior social order, and of using American influence for the development of a world politics that will ultimately mean a cooperation of cultures instead of a

competition of armies and navies and economic interests. The moment you attempt to divorce the immigration problem from these larger issues, and to treat it separately as you might do a sum in arithmetic, that moment you throw the formulation of immigration policy into the hands of racial dogmatism, political log-rolling, and the non-national selfishness of purely economic interests.

But meanwhile we face an immediate situation that must be met during the next few weeks. Our present immigration restriction law will expire on June 30. It was designed to put a check on the alarmingly great number of immigrants who wanted to come to the United States immediately after the war. It was frankly framed as an emergency measure, and during the last four years it has been assumed that we would, as soon as possible, arrive at a permanent definition of our immigration policy. More than forty immigration bills have been introduced in Congress. The one that is most to the fore is the bill introduced by Congressman Albert Johnson of the State of Washington. The emergency statute now in force limits the number of immigrants from any country during any one year to 3% of the number of natives of that country who were resident in the United States according to the 1910 census. Mr. Johnson's bill reduces the percentage of immigrants that may be admitted from 3% to 2%, shifts the basis of calculation from the 1910 census to the 1890 census, and attempts to provide the administrative machinery necessary for dealing with the innumerable human and international complexities and perplexities which interlock in the immigration problem. The intention of this bill is obvious. First, it purposed to reduce the total number of immigrants by reducing the percentage from 3% to 2%. And second,

it purposes to favor immigration from the North and West of Europe as against immigration from the South and East of Europe by making the basis of calculation the census for 1890, a time when our immigrants came less from the South and East and more from the North and West of Europe.

I do not desire to enter into a detailed discussion of this particular bill. I want rather to sketch a background for the discussion of the problem this bill is designed to meet. It is desirable to have clearly in mind the various immigration policies that have been proposed during our history. These may, I think, be accurately classified under 5 types of policy, which we may conveniently call the open door, the closed door, the swinging door, the door ajar, and the guarded door. By far the ablest single discussion of these 5 alternative policies that I have seen is in an address by Professor Julius Drachsler, printed in the proceedings for January, 1924, of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York. I have no desire to duplicate Professor Drechsler's richly detailed discussion, which I commend despite my dissent from certain points in it. I want simply to sketch briefly these proposed polices in turn.

The open door, by which is meant a policy permitting any and all who desire to come to the United States from any quarter of the globe to come without let or hindrance. Few, if any, Americans would seriously suggest such a policy as possible at the present time. Public temper is against it. The unhappy political and economic plight of Europe would push too many of Europe's weaklings in our direction if our door were open.

The closed door, by which is meant a policy of complete exclusion. The impossibility of a policy permitting no immigration whatever is so obvious that it need not be discussed.

The swinging door, by which is meant a policy under we should allow very free, if not wholly unrestricted, immigration for a period of years and then exclude all immigrants until we had thoroughly assimilated the blood and culture of those we had let in, as one eats breakfast at 8 and allows his digestive system 5 hours in which to do its work before going to lunch at 1. The narrow basis of analysis upon which such a policy rests and the obvious difficulties that would be encountered in its operation permit us to pass it with a few sentences.

The door ajar, by which is meant the sort of policy that has inspired the Johnson bill, a policy that adopts an arbitrary basis of calculation, such as the census of 1890, and an arbitrary percentage, such as 2%, as outlined earlier in this paper. There are several aspects of such a policy that lie open to serious criticism, but I desire to emphasize only the fact that it is inadequate as a permanent policy because it is arbitrary and mechanical. If we had arrived at final notion of what Americanism is and what we want it to become, and if we could invent an infallibly accurate meter that would tell us exactly when an immigrant is assimilated and record accurately the point at which our machinery and processes of assimilation break down, such a mathematical determination of the question might be possible. I submit, however, that we have

yet to round out and enrich our conception of Americanism, and that we cannot yet, save by guesswork, say that we can assimilate 2%, but cannot assimilate 3%, of any given number.

The guarded door, by which is meant a truly scientific regulation of immigration. Every sort of guard is today bidding for control of Ellis Island. Sentimental humanitarianism long held the post. Racial dogmatism is asking that the keys be placed in its hands. A perverted nationalism wants to write the rules of entry. There is only one applicant for the job who has unassailable references, and that the applicant is scientific statesmanship. (Applause)

Under a scientific regulation of immigration we shall, of course, select the sort of immigrants that will, in our judgment, help rather than hinder the building of a superior social order on this continent. Speaking broadly, we have all the people we need in the United States. The open spaces are filling up. If we are to build for the benefit of our children and of the rest of the world a superior social order we should not be in a hurry to make population press hard against food supply. The task ahead of us calls, as someone has phrased it, for the “skim” of the earth rather than for the “scum” of earth. Therefore we must select our immigrants. (Applause)

In selecting them we must scrutinize carefully the motives of migration. The quality of immigrants varies with the motives that inspire their migration, equipped with a stern sense of conscience and duty that is not a bad ingredient in a social order. The political motive has, in the past, given us good immigrants, but we must recognize that most of the world has caught up with

the democracy we were pioneers in preaching and that much of the justification for the asylum-for-this-oppressed theory of America has disappeared. The economic motive is, perhaps, the poorest credential for an immigrant. In earlier days, when men came to carve a permanent home out of this un-subdued land, the economic motive gave us adventurous immigrants, men of valor and vision. But today the economic motive gives us largely unskilled labor in search of quick returns in high wages. The case of migration today means a lower type of immigrant.

And we must, I think, select our immigrants upon the basis of their individual fitness for participation in our national life rather than upon any arbitrary racial classification. I do not dispute the fact that races have differing endowments of blood and culture. I do not dispute the fact that the promiscuous inter-breeding of races makes a coherent and creative national life next to impossible. But for us the die has been cast. Whether we regard it as a subtle poison or the elixir of life, foreign blood is in the veins of our national life. We are already a medley of peoples. We face a problem of social procedure as well as a problem of biology and anthropology. We cannot tear apart the racial strands of our national life, make outcasts of all but our own Nordic folk, and proceed to breed back to a one-race America. That way lies an ugly century of race hatred, social bigotry, and organized intolerance, with the spirit of the Nordics poisoned in the process. It seems to me, therefore, that we must decide what qualities this national experiment of ours calls for in its citizens, and then set about perfecting ways and means of judging whether or not prospective immigrants have those qualities. As the mental tests are perfected we shall find them among the instruments of our selection. We shall evolve a method

for getting the family background of prospective immigrants. We are only beginning to explore the possibilities of the science of human measurement. A truly selective immigration policy can come into effective operation only as fast as this science develops. If we Nordics are as certain of our superior qualities as our more ardent press agents assert we need have no fear that we shall not fare well in a scientific selective process administered by ourselves. (Applause)

Scientific statesmanship will not leave the number of immigrants to be determined as a by-product of the competing strategies of employers and labor leaders, but will determine that issue in the light of a farsighted program for the economic development of the United States. It has been well said that a “shortage of labor” does not always mean a “shortage of laborers.” As long as the problem of unemployment has not been solved, or as nearly solved as may be humanly possible, we have no right to meet what may be technically called “a shortage of labor” by calling in immigrant laborers. In the intensive development of the American social and economic order for the next half century we shall need leaders more than we shall need laborers. We must select out of the mass of men and women who would like to come to the United States those strains of blood and culture that are most likely to produce leadership. As yet we are mere babes in the matter of knowing how to go about the job of selection, but the fact that it is a difficult and challenging process does not justify our falling back permanently upon the lazy method of rigid racial classification and mathematical percentages.

Then, too, scientific statesmanship will see to it that those who come to us are wisely fitted into our national life. Immigration challenges us to a vast national adventure in vocational guidance. There is nothing but trouble ahead for us if we go on importing low class laborers to do “the dirty work” of the country on the theory that “good Americans” will not do it. Half a century of that sort of policy gives the lie to all our talk about the dignity of labor. A scientific social order will not recognize any work as “dirty” work. The national organization of information and guidance will enable us to prevent the congestion of immigrants in cities and will in time give back to all work its inherent dignity.

And, finally, scientific statesmanship will give us a realistic and creative nation of Americanization. It will invest this attempt of ours to build a superior social order with a richness of meaning that will force us to see that Americanization is something more than saluting the goddess of Liberty, learning the English language, memorizing the Constitution, and forgetting one’s racial and cultural heritage. Under scientific statesmanship Americanization will not be something we “do to the immigrant,” but the whole going process of American life. Americanization will be a national adventure in which we shall invite the immigrant to cooperate, not a specific course of treatment to which we ask the immigrant to submit in class rooms. Most of the things that now go by the name of Americanization will be taken for granted as obvious means to an end; they will not receive the major emphasis they do today. Under scientific statesmanship we shall not act as the frightened guardians of “institutions” which must be forever “protected” against assault; we shall act as the directors of a living human experiment

in which the abundant vitality and authentic vision of the people will readjust old institutions and create new ones better to serve the changing needs and better to express the growing spirit of America. Under such statesmanship the immigrant will not be made to feel that he is faced with the doctrinal test of a static political creed; he will be made to feel that he is to share in the creative task of building a new and superior social order. As any good modern teacher does in the class room, we shall rule the immigrant by the awakening of his interest rather than by the imposition of arbitrary discipline.

The hour for very severe restriction on immigration has come. But let us so administer restriction that our policy shall make for the moral and spiritual unity of America, not for an America split asunder by the warring hatreds of mutually suspicious and intolerant racial groups. (Loud Applause)

MR. OSBORN: There was one process of selective immigration that Mr. Frank left out of his interesting and stimulating address. It was practiced by the first Americans, who followed the custom of allowing the immigrants to enter and then thinning their number with the aid of the tomahawk and the scalping knife. Dr. Frank's reference to the permanency of the anti-foreign views reminded me of a very old joke which, perhaps, some of you recall, although the younger ones do not because it is so old, that appeared in "Punch." Two navvies on the street saw a curiously bearded man walking down the street and one of them said to the other, "I say, Bill,

who is he?" "He's a foreigner." "He's a foreigner? Let us have a brick at him." (Laughter) That characterizes a very large amount of the views of immigration.

The next speaker, gentlemen, is a representative of that great nation, mother of arts and sciences, mother of sturdy, common-sense men, which has made the most speedy and most successful comeback after the Great War, Dr. Antonio Stella, Chairman of the Committee of Immigration of the Italian Chamber of Commerce. (Applause)

Dr. Antonio Stella

Chairman, Committee of Immigration
of the Italian Chamber of Commerce

Mr. President and members of the Economic Club: I am very sensible of the honor you have done me tonight by asking me to come before you and discuss with you the subject of immigration. After Commissioner Curran has spoken pontifex lucidus, and I am sure you will think it very presumptuous of me to rise and express dissent to some of his views, yet the question of immigration is a many-sided question, a very complex and perplexing one, and in spite of the fact that almost since 50 years the question has been debated both officially and privately and in the press, we find there is a numerous difference of opinion in the vital points and in some aspects of the problem. Therefore it is permitted to express some views that may not be the views of the officials at the present moment in charge of our immigration service.

I find that the allusion of the President to the biological question is today one of the new features, so to speak, injected or brought into the determination of the admitting of immigrants. There would be no justification for my presence here tonight except for this new feature, that is, for the injection into the study of immigration of what we may call the sanitary aspect of the subject. You know that there has been a special investigation of what has been called the social inadequacy of the newer immigration that covers epilepsy, tuberculosis, insanity, feeble-mindedness and many other deficiencies.

As a medical man interested in the medical aspects of immigration I may be permitted to dwell briefly on these questions. Not to overstep the limits of time assigned to me, I have jotted down some of the remarks that I am going to submit to you.

It is first of all necessary to explain at the outset that of all the discrepancies of the nation in the matter of restrictive immigration, we must all agree on 2 fundamental points. I am sure that the friends and enemies of immigration are all agreed on that point. No one can deny to the United States the supreme right of imposing limitation or, for that matter, actually suppressing immigration, if it be for the best interests of the nation; and the other condition on which we ought to agree is that whatever arguments we bring against restrictive measures must be based on the viewpoint of American interests and not on the viewpoint of foreign nations.

In spite of a complete unity on these 2 conditions there is a great deal of difference of opinion in many other aspects, and I believe that the first misunderstandings arise from a lack of precision in the language of the framers of the new measures. This new proposed legislation is called sometimes a policy of selective immigration. As a matter of fact, the bill now before Congress embodies no principles of selection. The new measure is simply a restrictive measure and looks almost exclusively to a limitation in the number of aliens to be admitted.

A selective bill, proceeding upon the principle of the adaptability of the immigrant to American citizenship, would certainly not follow a mathematical formula and would not contain any discrimination of races. The eugenists, who are supposed to be behind the bill, certainly do not recognize race. Only the well born, in fact the best born, and those of sufficiently high physical, mental and moral standard should be admitted, quite independently of geography.

Yet we have here the report of the Eugenic Committee of the United States, approving the pushing back of the selective quota to the census of 1890, stating that it is not a question of the superiority of the northern or the inferiority of the southeaster European, but it is just a question of like-mindedness. Then we must conclude that it is not excellence that is not wanted of immigration, but something else.

Equally misleading and false are the results of certain investigations which have for their basis, at least apparently, all the present discriminatory features in the Johnson Bill; and to give you an

idea of how absurd the conclusions of some of those reports are, suffice it to say that the results of their special study, which have been given wide circulation, would attempt to show the superiority of the negro race over the white on every kind of social inadequacy, feeble-mindedness, tuberculosis, epilepsy, and every other deficiency except one, criminalistic tendency. The absurdity of those conclusions, too obvious to discuss, are evident.

I want to say that Chairman Johnson himself was almost forced to apologize for such statements when, at a hearing last December, criticism of this report came before the House Committee. He said that that pamphlet will be revised. For the moment, he said, they had to stick to some figures just to have some basis of information, but he hoped that a more complete study would be made. That is found on page 236 of the volume of the hearings of the house Committee.

The same fallacy is in the often heard generalizations on the result of the Army intelligence tests. Those tests are very misleading when applied to measure the index of the foreign born groups in this country. The statement that was made, that if those tests were applied to arriving immigrants potential insanity in them could be detected or excluded, is simply not found either in work or practical or clinical experience. Insanity has no relation whatever with intelligence; or, rather, intelligence has no relation to the development of insanity, as we know that during the war many of the highest mentalities broke down simply on account of the great stress imposed during the service. We can have insanity in the presence of some highly intelligent quotients. The disintegration of the personality can take place, in spite of high literary attainments.

I only mention these facts to show that the literacy tests, the intelligence tests, if applied and carried to their extreme consequences, will not prevent what has been claimed to be the prevalence of insanity among immigrants.

In this respect, may I be permitted to say that while there is a certain amount of insanity among the aliens, on closer investigation it will be found that the insanity was developed in them after long residence in this country. (Laughter) So that it was not imported. They could not import it, even if they wanted it, because the strict examination at the ports of embarkation and debarkation excludes automatically those actively insane.

It is also a mistake to consider immigration as a labor commodity, and both the attitude of the American Federation of labor and of the type of employer, both taking extreme views, the American Federation of Labor insisting on almost shutting down tightly the doors to immigration, and a certain type of American manufacturer insisting on unrestricted immigration, both of these views seem to me to be handicapped by merely class interests, and not for the good of the whole country.

There is no doubt that the American Federation of labor by insisting on the reducing of the hours of labor and raising of wages has contributed highly to the welfare of the working man, but when the Federation takes the stand that this country should regulate immigration simply to reduce the

output of labor, I believe the time has come, as Mr. Frank has well expressed it, where a more statesmanlike policy should be adopted.

In our great city there was a joint attack by the American Legion and the Federation of Labor, as we read in the papers, against immigration, accusing the new immigrant of being a menace to American institutions. May I be permitted to say that such a statement, as Mr. Frank has said, is one of the many catch-words, one of the phrases, my friends, that has no foundation in fact. If we were to continue along the medical interpretation of such a phenomenon, one would think that it is, in the language of Freud, one of those defense mechanisms against some evils that are more imaginary than real.

In the wave of political scandal that is now sweeping over the country, and in cases of political corruption in this city, and other cities, you very seldom found a foreign name, at least no name belonging to the despised south and eastern portions of Europe. (Laughter and Applause) It is simply not true that the greatest danger to American institutions comes from the immigrant classes. As Professor Butler has courageously stated, this danger is more likely to come from the unintelligent portions of the native born class. (Laughter and applause)

To those that think that American institutions and ideals cannot be absorbed by the newer immigrants, President Butler has to say: "While American civic and social institutions are indisputable of English origin, they are indisputably universal in their invitation and appeal. In

fact, they are the proud contribution of the English-speaking peoples to modern civilization. AS such they cannot be regarded as solely for the participation of the few but, rather, for the extension to all those peoples of whatever clime or color whose advance in intelligence and self-discipline fits them to partake of the advantages of these institutions.”

This is the statement by President Butler which should dispose of some of the acute propositions that have lately been exploited in a series of articles in the “World’s Work.” And in this connection let me mention right here that among the most extreme restrictionists you never find the leaders of thought in this great community, as I see here in this great hall, as your President, as President Butler, as the great Charles Eliot, before whom the whole intellectual world bowed last week in great respect, nor Doctor Finlay, or President Lowell, or any of the great educators.

The Commander of the American Legion who preferred charges of un-assimilability against the newer immigrant ought to be the first one, in fairness and justice, to testify to the pure Americanism, the true patriotism, and the great valor of soldiers of foreign extraction in the Great War. That certainly was the highest test of unity and sanity which the New World offered to the Old, showing how the diversity of origin developed here into a unity of purpose that no other nation could afford to show. (Applause)

It has been asserted in the statement that we read yesterday, that the rapid flow of immigrants has caused an indigestion in the American communities. Might I say that this is really true in this

sense, that the wholesale compulsory Americanization has probably caused any such indigestion. In other words, in Americanization you must bear in mind that Americanization, or assimilation, although such a word is not scientifically true, that such processes are biological processes. They should not be considered as political or commercial expedients. And in this respect I believe that all the great efforts of Americanization, of very quickly Americanizing the foreigner, are against the interests of America and that, in fact, they are at the base of the evils that are now charged against the immigrants.

There is another catchword, and another familiar charge made against the immigrants, and that is that recent immigration has depressed the standard of living and brought about lower wages. As a matter of fact, we know that wages have never been so high since immigration began to rise after 1890, and we must remember also that the newer immigrants do not take the place of the workers already employed, but they push them upward. In other words, the unskilled laborer will always move the skilled laborer upwards, without taking his job. Of course, there is always a certain number of unemployed, but those are what Mr. Roosevelt used to call the “unemployable.” Those are men who either do not want to work or those who refuse to do the dirty work that the immigrant from the southern and eastern parts of Europe is ready to do; that is, build the subways, and go on the farm; and the question of farms is a very important question. You all know of the abandoned farms in many parts of the country. You all know of the exodus from the farm to the city.

Why should not these willing men who come from the other side, as long as they comply with the rules and regulations of admission, laid down by the United States Government, develop the resources of this country? It is well to remember that there are now in the United States about six and a half million people from southeastern Europe, the majority of whom are American citizens, and some of them have attained a high position in the industrial and cultural life of the country. This is what we may say is a condition, and not a theory, that we are facing. Well, what are you going to do about that? Would you deport a man like Professor Pupin? Would you deport a man like Mr. Fatchelia, who lately attempted to steal the lightning from Jupiter? And let us not forget that there are obligations and treaties with friendly nations, and the proposed legislation would certainly offend them.

Is a treaty between 2 nations less sacred and less binding than between 2 individuals? As Mr. Root said, "Law does not cease to be law when it deals with international questions." Therefore, immigration must be considered also from that angle. It is not exactly a domestic question. It is an international question in its contacts with other nations.

I would have had a lot more to say if Mr. Frank's beautiful and instructive and constructive address had not contained some of the same ideas that I could not express in the glamour of phraseology that he gave to us. Therefore I have to cut short my remarks and come down to the conclusion, and say to you that the problem of immigration would cease to be a problem if we could remove the antagonisms against it that arise from misunderstandings, and these

misunderstandings cannot be removed until we face the facts with a clear and open mind, without prejudice and without bias, and in the same manner as we treat the foreign born that are here now with us in the same manner we shall expect the future Americans to be. So that this great American experiment, the foreigner, instead of being a disintegrated force, will be an active and a valuable addition to the great wealth of the nation. (Applause)

MR. OSBORN: Supplementing what Dr. Stella said about the foreign element in the war, some of you may not know that the Second Division was the division which suffered the greatest number of casualties in the war of any American division; and unless my memory is mistaken, something over 80% of the Second Division were either foreign born or the children of foreign born parents. (Applause)

It is a great disappointment to me that this immigration problem is not settled. I made a speech on the subject in my junior year, 42 years ago. (Laughter) And I find that it is still going on. But perhaps it will be settled by the next speaker, who is a very true American, a very able man, and the general organizer of the American Federation of Labor, and an old friend of this Club, Mr. Hugh Franey.

Hugh Franey

American Federation of Labor

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Economic Club: The position of the American Federation of Labor upon this question, the question of immigration, must not be construed to mean one of antagonism or hate, or bitterness of any kind, because I feel certain that there is no organization in the world that has done more to be helpful to the immigrant than has the organized labor movement of America. We have helped him fight this battle after he has been admitted. We have advised and counseled with him and in every manner tried to help him to establish himself so that he might at least have some economic freedom through the medium of our help through our trade unions.

I do not approach this subject from either the point of view of either the trade unions or one of antagonism to the immigrant, no matter what part of the Old World he might come from. I look upon this question, not as a political one, not as a racial one, but as a human question, and from that point of view I have always tried to consider it.

I think, without attempting to boast in any way, that I have had as much, and possibly more, contact with the immigrants of all countries than most people have had, personal contacts, relationships with their troubles and in their trials and struggles to get on in this great country of

ours, and I do not want to be understood as merely attacking for any selfish purpose this question, except in the broad sense of that which is best for this country of ours.

Just a few days ago the public press announced, quoting certain men who have great standing in our country, that unless this question of immigration, as embodied in the legislation now before the Congress, was defeated, that the Republican Party in the State of New York would be defeated. It is my opinion, and it may not be shared by you, that any party that depends upon its success as to whether the Immigration Bill is satisfactory to them or not, not only should be defeated in the State, but in the Nation as well. It is not a political question. It is not a religious question. It must not be used as a football for those who find it hand and convenient to use it as a subterfuge for some other ulterior motive.

The present legislation as proposed by the Johnson Bill is not at all satisfactory to Organized Labor, but if it is adopted we shall have to go along with it, as we have gone along with other legislation when it was passed. It is, however, going to relieve many of the conditions that are unsatisfactory at the present time.

The present law known as the 3% quota, a temporary arrangement if that law had not been in effect for the past two years, 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 immigrants would have come into the country each year. I submit to you that with that great influx of immigration, how would we have provided and cared for it? There would not be employment for them. In New York, where most

of them remain, there would be no facilities for housing them. There are insufficient facilities now to house those who are here, and many of them are living under conditions not fit for human beings to live in. These are things that must be considered. These are the things that that emergency law tried to deal with, and if there is going to be a law that is going to work hardship of on the immigrant, no one wants to see that condition changed more than we do; but if it is going to be a choice between give justice and opportunity and fair play and all the other nice things we hear about to the immigrants, might we not for a moment give some consideration to our own people, our American citizens, and those who are American citizens in the making? The law is intended to protect those who are here, not those who may come in the future.

There are some things in connection with immigration besides the large number who may come in here and bid and compete with the working men of America and take their jobs. I can readily understand that those who are taking certain points of view on these questions, simply because it is going to help those coming from a country from which they themselves have come, naturally must have more or less of a keen interest. But there are other things, and I am going to give you a few figures which are facts, and which can be proven, to show you that we have got to give, whether we will or not, some consideration to this great human problem, and in fact more consideration than we have ever give it during our lives.

Just prior to our entering the war there were over 900 alien insane deported, and others became state and public charges upon the nation after they came here, making a permanent cost of

millions of dollars upon the nation. In June, 1921, there were 10,000 aliens in the hospitals of the State of New York who had not become citizens. The cost to the State was \$377.54 per capita; total cost to the State, \$3,800,000. Alien patients in 13 civil State hospitals cost the taxpayers of New York more than \$3,000,000 last year, according to statistical reports of the State Hospital Commission made public on March 9, 1924. Sick aliens cost the City of New York millions of dollars annually. These people should have been deported, according to the reports of the Special Investigating Committee. It costs the City of New York yearly for the care of insane persons in hospitals and other institutions \$3,000,000 yearly; the United States about 75,000,000 of money on these insane who were mentally defective when they came here from other countries. Child labor and industrial conditions, in a large measure, are responsible for it.

According to a survey made in 1920 there were 435,000 persons ten years of age and over in the State of New York who could not either read or write. A large percentage of these were children of aliens.

That is a question. We hear much about our boasted America, its wonderful institutions; which are wonderful. The question is if we are going to have a wide open door, as some have advocated, if we are going to permit all of these people to come in, whether they are going to be fit, the right kind of citizens or not. I think the nation has the right to safeguard its own interest when it comes to that question, and you may call it by any term you like.

The question is still confronting you; whether you are going to deal with it from a scientific standpoint or otherwise I care not, but there must be some plan devised that is going to bring here, permit to come here, future citizens that will not only be a credit to themselves but an asset to the nation, and not a liability as many of them are at the present time.

There are 4,000,000 school children in this country who are on the borderline, under-nourished. A large percent of them are the children of immigrants. Some of the most outstanding cases of child labor, it has been exposed even recently in the State of New Jersey, were children 3 or 4 years of age employed at work, the children of aliens. I say this without disrespect to them, but because they have been made a prey to those who would exploit them and take advantage of these children and put them to work instead of giving them an opportunity to go to school and be educated and give a chance to develop and be trained.

I am not crying about the Americanization of anyone. I don't want to use any club methods of compelling people to be Americans. I think that our trade union has done something along that line. We are simply trying to help the immigrant to help himself, and by doing that give him a chance to develop and learn to appreciate the opportunities that will come to him if he takes advantage of them, and he invariably does. Then he will determine whether he is going to be a citizen or not. My parents were immigrants, and I raise no question of bias about them, but I do know something about the economic conditions, and I know that one of the greatest advocates of the open door, to admit immigrants without any restraint or restriction, were those who pleaded

before the Congressional Committee, when that Bill was up, and wanted them to come in because, they said, they wanted to get labor that would work for 27 cents an hour. That kind of labor does not make good citizens anywhere. Those who cry and want the open door want to have a chance to put the surplus labor in competition with those who are already here, and we know something about that. You can use all your scientific rules, and all your scientific measurements, but we know the men on the job and what they have to contend with, and when there are more than one looking for the same job the man who takes it at the lowest price invariably is the one who gets it, and the one who will stay outside of the trade union, refusing to organize, will get the preference by the so-called open shop advocates.

For my part, I want to see the immigrant come in here, if he is the right sort and the right type. I do not want the ships racing in here and have the first load that arrives to be admitted and all the rest turned back. I agree with Commissioner Curran not only in what he has said, but I agree with all that he has been doing since he has been on that job, and I want to pay him the compliment now that he is a good, first class Commissioner of Immigration, (Applause) for the very reason that he has applied the human aspect in dealing with immigration. The case that he cited here tonight is only one of many. We do not want to see families divided. We prefer that when the immigrant comes here that instead of sending his money back to the older country to his family that he brings his family here, and that they be admitted without any restriction, which is being done at the present time notwithstanding the statements that have gone out to the contrary. We want to see them come here, and when admitted, given every opportunity for development, and

we want the job which they occupy to be a good job that will permit them to earn in return for services rendered a compensation that will permit them to gradually develop themselves and raise themselves up in the social scale, so that they can send their children to school to be educated physically and mentally, to become strong in mind and body, so that they, if not the parents, will be a real asset to our great nation in the future.

This is not a problem for the manufacturer to solve. It is not a problem for the labor unions to solve. It is not a problem, as I see it, for the Government to solve, because when a number of contending groups go down to Washington, the committee having these measures in charge are naturally groping themselves to find some remedy to properly deal with this great human problem, and when they find groups representing great interests advocating certain legislation, they are not being helped at all and they get out the very best they can that might in a measure be satisfactory to all concerned for the time being. But it is my idea that some day we will all have to get together in one group, all of the different groups who at least believe that they are American citizens and are interested first of all in the security and safety of America, and go down there and say, "We have agreed on this type of legislation, we believe it is fair to the nation, fair to the immigrant, and we ask you to pass it." Then we will get it; and if we put the right kind of men in charge of it so as to have it properly function, I think that we will then have solved the immigration question and we will take away from some of the propagandists their most valuable asset, with which they have been sandbagging the people of the nation, and they will have to find something else as a substitute. (Laughter and Applause)

There are other things in connection with this question. I shall not even take the time allotted to me, but, as I see it, it is greater than any of the questions advanced, because it is a human one; the lives, the hopes, the aspirations of human beings are at stake, and when that is true it is nothing short of criminal to attach to it a political or religious taint in order that some particular group may advance their own personal interests.

Away back behind it all is the desire to me here and establish themselves in their homes. There is room for more people here, but we cannot hold them all in New York, or just in a few places. There are miles and miles of territory unsettled in this country where it would not require any great amount of legislation and planning to place into that vacant ground, into these localities, the type of people that may come to us in the future, the type of people that will come here and grow up through the development of that locality in which they may be located, in which they will take pride in what they are doing, not only a pride, but they will look upon the nation that has given them this opportunity to come here, to this great country from their own, where they had little or no opportunity of any kind because of conditions, and that they will place themselves in these unsettled sections by developments of all kinds, make themselves pioneers in development, pioneers in raising a new race, developed mentally and physically, strong and sound, with all the ideals that can be pressed into a childhood that has been given the right chance to come up, and not as some that we have, with our millions of children below legal age now working in the mills, mines and factories of our country.

Those children now and tomorrow will be the mothers and fathers of another generation, or part of it, and might we not look with fear upon protection we will have as a nation coming from children who themselves had been denied an opportunity or the chance to play and become developed?

Those are the things, after all, and it goes away back to the home; the home, the cornerstone of the nation. And the nation can only be guided and depended upon by the standards of its people. These people are welcome here so far as we are concerned if they are the right type, but America must not be made a dumping ground for the physically unfit, the insane and the criminally inclined, to come here and commit every crime against our laws, as well as become a permanent burden of taxation upon our people. (Applause)

These are not foolish ideas. They are based upon the things that are openly around us, happening around us every day. I fear not what may come. I am willing to do my job in helping to bring about that which may be better for the immigrant, better for our nation as a whole, but we cannot solve this problem by constantly disagreeing. The Chairman has said that 42 years ago he spoke on this question and he thought it was solved then. I will say that it is time that it was solved. It is time that it was brought to the point where we could agree upon that which is best as an immigration law to deal with the immigrant who may come to our country in the future. But until that time, let us stop using it as an excuse to get cheap labor; using it as an excuse to place into

political power one of the other of the great parties. Let us view it from the standpoint, and that only, of the human being, who has the same hopes, the same desires, and the same aspirations as we have, who knows from history that this great continent, where many of their forefathers have come and have established themselves in peace, in prosperity and in contentment, who were able to come up form the very bottom rung of the ladder to positions of importance and influence in the nation, let us not deal with the question because someone may come from a country that we do not like their nationality, that we do not like their race, that we at some time or another had some differences with someone among them. This nation will be better, the world will be better, when we introduce into it a little more consideration for the human element, when we keep that first and foremost and do not permit dollars and dividends and selfish desire to take precedence over it. If we do that we will solve the immigration problem, and probably the future generation will live to enjoy that which we have constructively built, built intelligently, built because we hated no man, no matter what country he came from, no matter what language he might speak. Even though we might not understand each other's words, we know as men and as human beings that right here in our hearts we should build it for all. And if we take that point of view we will solve this question and solve it right in the interests of America, of the individual, of the human being, and in the interests of the world as a whole.

I thank you for your attention. (Applause)

MR. OSBORN: I believe that the next speaker holds the long distance record on the subject of selective immigration, for he informs me that he recently addressed a Congressional committee on this subject for eight consecutive hours, and I am sure that our worth Secretary, Mr. Ely, was not present at that time, and I wish to assure you that Mr. Ely is present now. (Laughter)

Let me present, gentlemen, a very learned member of the Bar, perhaps the most learned member of the New York Bar, Louis Marshall.

Louis Marshall

Member of the New York Bar

Mr. Chairman, Fellow Members of the Economic Club: You need have no misgivings as to the length of my remarks tonight, because I know that there is a gentleman who controls this performance, and I will see to it that I disappear at the exact moment when my time expires.

We have heard some very interesting and remarkable address tonight, and we have heard in the midst of variety what, after all, seems to be to great extent the consensus of opinion which would lead one to believe that the time had come when one might hope for a solution of the immigration question. But that time has not arrived at Washington.

At that center of American legislation there is under consideration at this moment a measure which is intended to settle permanently the policy restricting immigration to this country.

We are not, therefore, here to theorize and to hope for a better day when we might sit around the table and arrange a suitable program. While we are considering, Congress is about to act; and the measure which is before us, which apparently has been accepted by a large majority of the House Committee on Immigration, is known as the Johnson Bill, which intends to restrict immigration arbitrarily, by rule of thumb, and, as I claim, in accordance with the discriminatory policy which is contrary to the genius of American institutions.

Nobody has ever presented the subject in as clear and philosophical and thoughtful a light as has Mr. Glenn Frank this evening. (Applause) He has analyzed the various propositions that have been discussed and the conclusion that he has reached has been that the settlement of immigration must be approached from a scientific standpoint.

Now, is the Johnson Bill an expression of a scientific study of the subject? I have appeared before that Committee on many occasions, and I have heard there representatives from all parts of the country. I have read the records of the testimony, so-called. I have given some of it myself. I have read the testimony presented before that Committee, and it consists entirely of assertions, of arguments to passion, prejudice, sympathy, sentimentality, the pocket-nerve, and other lines of thought and inquiry -- nothing scientific. You have had lots of statistics, and they are the

statistics that you can make while you wait, and you can give any interpretation to the statistics that you desire for the moment to give to them.

You can show, for instance, that in the long years of immigration to this country the State of New York has spent millions of dollars in hospitals, in insane asylums and in taking care of people who have become impoverished. There is no doubt of it. It has not all been spent on aliens. A great deal more has been spent on native born citizens, and our naturalized citizens. But those statistics halt at the important place. It is true that we have spent millions of dollars in the manner stated, but has anybody calculated what the immigrants have brought to this country, how many millions, how many billions they have added to our national wealth, how much they have done toward the creation of our great public works, our railroads, our mines, of various industries? How much have they left behind them when they died, to be added to the aggregate American wealth? That would be a fair comparison.

Has any scientist ever been asked to make an investigation, any sociologist, any real statistician? Not at all, not at all. Men who would not know an immigrant if they saw him on the street are voting as to whether or not he should be excluded.

The men who live in the southern and western states, in which there is practically no alien population, are the ones who are passing legislation, and the ones who are opposing immigration. The people in the southern states, where they have no child labor laws, are the ones who are

seeking to keep out immigrants, so that it is not the immigrant who has created the child labor problem in this country.

We are therefore again asked to consider whether there has been presented to Congress during the last few years any single scientific investigation or inquiry which would enable intelligent legislation to be predicated upon it. I defy anybody to show me in all these voluminous records a single statement which would indicate that immigration is or is not desirable on the basis of science. I have asked an amendment to the bill before the house, the same kind of amendment which was adopted during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, the appointment of a commission of experts, with the aid of Members of Congress of both Houses, who would make a careful study of the question on lines, indicated in the paper of Mr. Frank. But I am afraid that that is not what is desired.

When that former commission was appointed it did study the subject, both in this country and abroad, with the greatest care, and as a result of it we finally had placed upon our statute books the Immigration Act of 1917. What is that Act? It is an act which is, so far as we have ever had any legislation on the subject, scientific legislation. It conforms with the tests which Mr. Frank said should be found in a law. In Section 3 we are told who may enter this country and who shall be excluded, and those tests are these: No person who is mentally, morally or physically unfit shall be admitted. No person who is likely to become a public charge shall be allowed to enter. No person who is opposed to organized government shall come with our gates.

Now, that is a comprehensive plan, with many details which it is unnecessary to present to you.

But if that law were administered as it should be and those tests applied intelligently by a competent and adequate force of public servants, we would not have any question, we would not have any insane, and we would not have any paupers and we would not have any immoral people or criminals.

The difficulty with us in this country is that we pass almost all kinds of laws and then think that the law will take care of itself. We have never had an adequate force of men at Ellis Island or at any other port of entry. We have never had men who were paid salaries which would enable us to get competent men, men of the highest class, men who are fitted to enforce a law of the character, and the cry that comes forth is that we have to close the doors and not allow immigration to enter because it is too great a strain on the Commissioner of Immigration at the Port of New York and the other ports, and upon the men who are under him.

The better method would be to have 5 or 6 places for the immigrants to enter, so that it would not be the occasion of criticism by men like the Ambassador of Great Britain to this country, and that we have a sufficient number of men of the right kind to enforce the law. Then the law would be taken care of.

Well, we have passed the literacy test. I considered it a foolish provision; but let it pass. It is not enforced anyway in the southern states. When the harvest time comes, somehow or other Mexicans enter across the border, 46,000 of them between the first of July and the beginning of November of last year. 36,000 of them were in Texas and about 10,000 in Arizona. They could not pass the literacy test. Under the quota law of Mr. Johnson they are still excluded from count. They are non-quota classes. Why? Study the personnel of the Committee and you will find the reason. (Laughter)

Now, the quota law was passed in 1921 and, as Mr. Frank has said, it was an emergency measure. It was not intended that it should become the policy of this country. It was to be enforced for 1 year only, and then it was extended for 2 years longer by a joint resolution of Congress, and now although within the last 3 years there has been a very negligible amount of immigrants who have arrived in this country, not more than equal to 1/5 of 1 percent of the population of the United States, hysteria has seized certain parts of this country and they say that we must close the doors, close the doors permanently except to the extent of allowing about 150,000 or a 175,000 immigrants to come to this country.

Now, immigration must be a terribly bad thing if the great American people are suddenly frightened by the menace of that kind of immigration. Well, now, Mr. Johnson, who introduced the bill before, and who favored a basis of 3% on the 1910 census in 1921, suddenly is awakened, and he says we must lay down a principle which shall forever govern this country,

because if once place upon the statute books it is very difficult to get it off again, that it must be on the basis of 2% of the census of 1890. He is illogical. Why not 1790? Just as well, just as fair. But no. The reason need not be sought far. The reason is that under the present law the eastern and southern Europe is enabled to bring into this country just about the same number of immigrants as have come from northern and western Europe and that principle was adopted at a time when there were practically no people coming from northern and western Europe, and they thought it would be a very good thing, however, to pass it in that form so as to restrict the number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Let it be so. We are not now asking for a change in the present rule. Let that continue still as the temporary basis until such time when, by means of scientific study, we can arrive at the right basis of a restrictive policy is to be adopted. The legislators of New York of New Jersey, of Massachusetts, States in which the largest number, proportionately, of immigrants have arrived and have settled down, have passed unanimous resolutions objecting to the permanent policy of the Johnson Bill. I suppose that Texas, Florida and North Carolina would pass resolutions in the other direction, to have no immigrants whatever. We know how they look. We know how the act. We know what they have done. We know what they are capable of doing. We know what they have done. Well, what have they done? Who are they?

I put in evidence here as Exhibit A the list of the gentlemen who are here at this dinner.

(Laughter and Applause) It indicates a cross-section of American life. It indicates men who are leaders in every ranch of activity in this great metropolis. It represents the same kind of men that

you will find in every great, active commercial, economic and industrial center in America. I have no microscope by which I can test the quality of their blood, but I know enough of them to say that if the Johnson Bill had been in force when they or their fathers came here, we would have an entirely different kind of audience to speak to tonight. (Laughter and Applause)

You may be prejudiced, but what harm have you done to this country? How have you interfered with its growth? I leave it to any man of fair mind to answer that question. I do not wish to be personal, but for fear that anybody should think that I have a pedigree which runs back to the days of Columbus, so far as America is concerned, my pedigree runs farther back, but my father came to this country and was a working man, a common day laborer with pick and shovel, a track hand on the Northern Central Railroad, and I think he was just exactly as good as any man, even though he might not have come over, or his ancestors might not have come over, on the Mayflower. (Applause) I consider it an imposition upon the credulity of the American people to have placed upon our statute books, on any pretext whatsoever, a law which will distinguish between one American and another, and which will place a bar sinister upon those of us whose parents came from southern and eastern Europe, and elevate to a new aristocracy those who came from other parts of Europe.

This is a question that not only concerns the immigrant of today, but the immigrant of yesterday. I am not speaking of this question from any standpoint except that of right and justice; and, as the Commissioner said, of fairness. The idea that we should engage in a study of psychology for

the purpose of keeping out men and women who came here with a desire to be useful, to help this country, to give to their children the chance that we have had, to me is all wrong, and I say they should be made welcome and not treated with derision.

I do not mean to say that our doors should be opened wide, or ajar, or any other way than open equally to all who comply with the statutory requirements, the statutory tests of fitness.

And now they talk to us in that jaw twisting phrase, “un-assimilability.” And they are not satisfied with that, and they say that they are divided into the assimilable and the partly assimilable and the un-assimilable and the near assimilable. I have tried to find out what that means. (Laughter) And I confess that nobody is enabled by anything upon that law to form the slightest judgment as to what assimilable means, except that the gentlemen making the law puts his thumb into the scale, or into the apparatus which does the measuring, and measures according to his own prejudices. That is all it amounts to.

To my thinking, a man is assimilable who come here with a sound mind and a sound body and sound morals; who is industrious, who is ready to do his part in the world’s work, who is seeking to establish a home here; who, as Professor Drexler well puts it, feels at home here when he comes, when he engages in his occupation, who is ready to live for the country and to die for it. And I have not seen any difference among our aliens, or sons of immigrants in respect of patriotism from those who came here more than 10 years before they did, or 20 or 30 or 40. Our

Americans do not average, so far as their American pedigree is concerned, more than 50 years, anyway. I don't care where they came from. The old stock is dying out, according to scientists.

There has been a great book written, "The Passing of the Great Race," and it is the Nordic who is passing away and the inferior who is taking the place of the superior. That is the idea now, and therefore we will have to see to it that none of the inferiors come here, because who is the Nordic, is passing away.

I have heard some of these witnesses before Congressional committees rise up and in accents that were palpable, declaim against allowing the foreigners to come into the land of our fathers, and they themselves were immigrants. (Applause)

There is a great deal of humbug about all this, a great deal of politics, as somebody has suggested. There ought to be a little common sense, and we have not had it. We have merely had arbitrary regulations and we have not had a constructive act put upon the statute books with regard to immigration. What has been done with respect to the distribution of immigrants? Nothing. There has never been anything suggested of a practical nature bearing upon this subject. What has been done with regard to the education of the immigrant? Nothing. What has been done with respect to the real assimilation of the immigrant? Nothing.

We have received from the immigrants every year millions of dollars of head money, as a head tax, on the theory that the money would be used to help take care of the immigrant when he arrives here and help place him in his proper setting. What has been done with that money? It has been put into the federal Treasury and appropriated for the dredging of rivers and harbors. Those are questions as to which there should be investigation, and all we get is a shibboleth. Those who are familiar with the history of that word will know just what I mean, a mere phrase, a mere play, a mere ability to pronounce certain letters, and upon such a test to say that human beings -- they forget they are human beings, although Mr. Franey does not -- that human beings shall be treated as so much trash, and the speak to them when they come here as being dumped upon us, when we have laws preventing contract labor, and we have organizations which do not even allow immigrants to become members of their unions, and they say that they are not maintaining the standards of our country. I greatly prefer to that kind of a statement the statement of President Eliot, who has been referred to here this evening by Dr. Stella, that great philosopher and statesman and saint and prophet whom we love and revere.

What does he say on this subject? In 1910, when immigration was at its highest, when we had one million immigrants a year, he said: "Our country needs the labor of every honest and healthy immigrant who has intelligence and enterprise to come here." That was true then is true today.

Why should we keep people out who are willing to work and comply with the proper tests?

It has been said in Washington that this is no longer an asylum for the oppressed. I did not know that. I was one of those foolish enough to believe that that great tradition of America had not died and that we did not feel bound still to have our doors open to the oppressed. It has been said that it is no longer an economic question. Well, I felt when I heard that, that it would be well to tell that to the Economic Club.

My time is up, the lever has been pulled, and I depart. (Applause)
