

# ANNOTATIONS

## P L A N N E D M I G R A T I O N<sup>1</sup>

**P**LANNED MIGRATION is an excellent study with broader implications than the subtitle might suggest—The Social Determinants of the Dutch-Canadian Movement. It is really an examination of some basic ideas on planned migration using the movement from Holland to Canada as “an example of planned migration under almost optimum conditions.” (p. 10) The volume is divided into three basic parts, the first part devoted to Holland, the second part to Canada, and the third part to the Holland-to-Canada movement. A short fourth part gives a summary and conclusions, and there is an excellent twenty page bibliography.

In the first part Petersen examines the decline of the Dutch economy and the continuing high rate of natural increase which have resulted in the present population pressure felt in Holland. Mortality has been reduced in ways that might be envied by other countries of the world. Not only is good medical practice followed, but “the best of modern medical science is made available to the population through institutions associated with their churches or other groups to which they are bound by strong sentiments. Such a system has combined the advantages of the specialist and the family general practitioner; for the increase in technical efficiency is not counteracted by a decrease in rapport with the patient.” (p. 32)

Combined with the reduction of the death rate has been a continued high fertility. Petersen gives good evidence to support his conclusion that this has been due to the increase in

<sup>1</sup> Petersen, William: *PLANNED MIGRATION: THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF THE DUTCH-CANADIAN MOVEMENT*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1955. 273 pp. \$3.50.

urbanization (population concentration) without a corresponding increase in urbanism (urban ways of living). The history of Holland and the subsequent developments have been such that the traditional values are supported and maintained by tax-supported institutions such as the religious schools. Even the development of industry has taken place in such a way as to minimize its effect on traditional values that support the large-family system. After World War II the introduction of the family-wage has also supported traditional values.

Three socially accepted methods of relieving population pressure have been undertaken in Holland. Industrialization has not been effective because of the fear of the social consequences of industrialization and urbanization. Efforts have been made to establish the factories in the country rather than move the people to industrial centers. The result has been expensive and relatively ineffective. Draining the Zuider Zee in order to increase the amount of land available is continuing but is completely inadequate to meet population increases. Also the practice of shifting young farmers from restricted circumstances to a plot of their own encourages them to raise larger families and in the long run will probably intensify the population pressure it was designed to alleviate. Sponsored emigration has failed to meet its goal of 40,000 to 60,000 emigrants a year even though the government is now training aspirant emigrants in trades and languages. The major restrictions at the present time are those of other countries on immigration.

In Canada the English and French Canadians and capital and labor have varying feelings on immigration. There is little overt opposition to immigration and most of the objections are in terms of economic and geographic points, although the basic reasons are almost certainly such factors as ethnocentrism, the protection of special interest groups, etc. The traditional encouragement of agricultural immigrants does not reflect Canada's present economic requirements. "Canada has both the material and the spiritual elements essential for rapid development—the capital, raw materials, and power, on the one hand, and the verve and organizing ability on the other hand, to bring these together into a great industrial nation. Her one lack is people. . . . but the determinants of immigration policy,

as has been noted several times, are as broad as society itself." (pp. 151-152)

Three factors are important in looking at the characteristics of the Dutch migrants to Canada. In the first place they are encouraged because they are agriculturists. However, very few have settled in the Prairie Provinces; most of them do dairy and vegetable farming around urban centers. In the second place the Canadians favor the Dutch because they are Nordic. The rational part of the preference for Nordics is probably based on the assumption that they are more easily assimilated. The available data do not make it possible to check this assumption. The third factor is the Orthodox-Calvinist church. Early migration established the Orthodox-Calvinist church in Canada and the ties between the Canadian branch and the Dutch branch encourage migration; 40 per cent of the sponsored Dutch migrants from 1948 to 1952 belong to this group.

Petersen's chapter on Migration and Population Growth is an excellent discussion of various theories relating these two factors. As relates to Canada he concludes, "Thus, the common-sense view that immigration is increasing the population is essentially correct for present-day Canada. The unemployment rate is not a satisfactory index of absorptive capacity, nor can this concept be usefully defined by any other criterion." (p. 221)

Some of Petersen's concluding comments are well worth quoting:

For the particular case of Dutch-Canadian migration, this study has attempted to prove that the administrative controls set up in both countries have been established more in response to irrational pressures than as rational means of solving a social problem. . . . since our ignorance of social processes as a whole is thoroughgoing, planning in many areas tends to be a hit-or-miss affair, with social science (and social scientists) used largely to justify policy adopted for non-scientific reasons.

American sociology spent a long and fruitless adolescence studying "social problems" before it was learned that the prior task was to study society. Today, when there are more social problems than ever before urgently demanding solutions, pressure is being applied to return to that social-welfare frame of

reference. Physical and natural scientists may legitimately concern themselves with pure theory; but since sociologists have yet to evolve their first general theory, they must devote their main effort to applying their empirical generalizations. In this study, the answer to the question, "Knowledge for what?" is "For knowledge's sake"; and the answer to many of the specific questions raised in this monograph is the only one that our lack of knowledge permits: "I don't know."

It is impossible to do justice to a volume as "meaty" as this one in a review and some aspects of the discussion have not been touched. It is highly recommended reading for anyone interested in international migration, fertility, or general population.

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