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THE
EMIGRATION FRAUD:
A REPLY TO LORD BRABAZON.



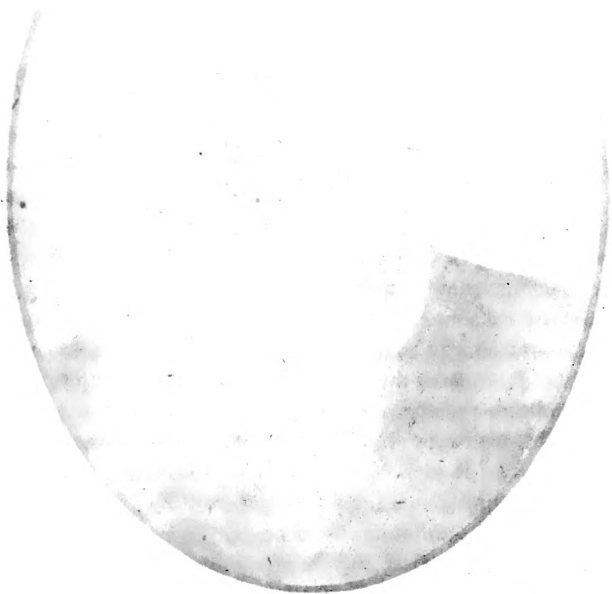
By H. M. HYNDMAN.

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THE
MAYOR
OF
LONDON.

I



By H. M. HYNDMAN.

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THE EMIGRATION FRAUD EXPOSED.

IT is natural that at a time when there is serious depression in nearly every one of our great industries, from agriculture downwards, many remedies should be proposed for the unemployed labour and "over-population" which apparently exists in Great Britain. Nor is there any remedy which is, at first sight, so simple and yet so satisfactory as Emigration. That if there are too many people in these islands they should go away of their own accord, or be helped away, to other regions where vast tracts of land lie uncultivated, seems no doubt a reasonable proposal. No one, I feel sure, would dispute that, granted the assumption involved in the "if," it would be the duty of the community at large to help those of the population who are in excess to reach countries where they could subsist by their labour, provided they could not get there without such aid. Nor could it, I think, be denied that emigration, conducted under the control of the people of England and the inhabitants of our Colonies jointly, would be better managed than any happy-go-lucky exodus, similar to that which we have so far favoured. There is nothing in the nature of the case, certainly, to deter men and women from going to our colonies situated in a temperate climate or to America; and millions who have emigrated have found happy homes and reared healthy families at the cost of rea-

sonable labour, though things are not now as they were. All that need be stipulated for before the State is called in to direct or to aid such emigration is, that it should be clearly shown that there is not plenty of room for the people here; and that circumstances in the country to which they would betake themselves are such at the time as to warrant their going or being sent.

This, I venture to think, is as complete an acceptance of the position taken by Lord Brabazon on State-Directed Emigration as he himself could desire. It is satisfactory, therefore, to find that I can fully agree with Lord Brabazon's statements concerning the present condition of large number of the workers in London and our other great industrial centres. For instance, when Lord Brabazon speaks of "the fearful competition existing in the centres of industry which compels large classes of honest, sober, hardworking men and women to lead such a bitter struggle for mere existence that the acquisition of the actual necessities of daily life is sufficient to engross their fullest energies and which leaves them without the least margin of time or strength for making any provision against the advent of disease and old age, much less for the accumulation of capital"—when Lord Brabazon writes thus, I say, he but repeats what a "visionary revolutionist" like myself has been urging for years past. So again I can heartily agree with what he so forcibly adds: "Whether there is or is not a demand for the State direction of emigration, of this I am confident, that means must be found, and that quickly, to put an end to the fearful struggle for life which is to be met with in the east and south of London, and in most of our large towns. The disease has got beyond the power of private efforts and has assumed proportions too gigantic to be dealt with by any power short of a Government or a powerful municipality. Starving men are not to be argued with"—this seems to me altogether excellent. . . .

“Whether the Government like it or not, they will have to take into their serious consideration how best to relieve this deplorable congestion of population in our large towns.” There is indeed “a social malady which, if allowed to continue unchecked, must inevitably end in some fatal national catastrophe.” Lord Brabazon is also quite right in stating that the Democratic Federation did its best, and with very great success, to meet and controvert his special remedy for this state of things, and I have every reason to believe will continue to do so. The difference between us therefore is narrowed to two points. First, whether there is really any over-population. Lord Brabazon says there is. I say, in spite of appearances, that there is not. Secondly, assuming the over-population to exist, whether the time is favourable for exporting the people. Lord Brabazon says it is. I, again, say it is not. On this second point, however, I shall not touch, for if I prove my position on the first it will be unnecessary to go further; and, besides, recent reports of the state of the labouring population in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, to say nothing of the United States, are certainly all against sending out more emigrants.

Before dealing with the main question, I would just add that we Socialists do not wish to keep the people in wretchedness in this country in order that we may have them at hand to make a revolution with, as Lord Brabazon, rather unreasonably it seems to me, suggests. We are no believers in a revolution of starvelings. At the very time when the Democratic Federation challenged State-directed and State-aided emigration, we issued a series of practical proposals for home colonisation and municipal employment, which are perfectly sound as far as they go, and would relieve the present distress at once, much more effectually than the removal of a few thousand families could relieve it. These proposals Lord Brabazon has. I

know, seen. The £10,000,000 which was wasted on the war in Egypt would have far more than carried out the whole plan. That we are revolutionists I am quite ready to admit; whether we are visionary remains to be seen. At any rate, the peer and the revolutionists are both agreed that the present condition of things cannot go on without leading to "some fatal national catastrophe."

Now for the "over-population" and Lord Brabazon's State-directed remedy for it.

To begin with, as it seems to me, Lord Brabazon proves a little too much. He says that the "increase of population outstrips the increase of the demand for labour," and goes on to argue as follow: "Every ten years between three and four million more mouths have to obtain food in this country; and inasmuch as the soil of England is not elastic and cannot be made to produce a greatly increased quantity of food; as England cannot at this moment supply all her sons with an adequate meal a day; and as she already has to import half the food which she consumes—the problem how we are to feed our surplus population is one which is serious now, will annually increase in seriousness, and unless solved within a very few years by some statesmanlike measure of relief to population, will not be long in settling itself, in a very unpleasant way for some of us, if we decline to grapple with it whilst it is still capable of easy solution." Now this argument, if pressed to its logical conclusion, surely means that one half our present population ought to emigrate. Lord Brabazon does not mean that, I know, yet that is the fair deduction from such a statement. But Mr. Samuel Smith says, and Lord Brabazon fathers his statement, that no changes in the land laws could do *more* than put four million additional people into agricultural employment. Do Lord Brabazon and Mr. Smith know what that admission involves? The total number of people now in agricultural employment

in England and Wales amounts to but 1,300,000 all told. What an enormous increase of produce, then, would the four million additional labourers bring about! It is the opinion of some of the most skilled agriculturists in the kingdom that under proper conditions this country might easily produce its whole food supply or its agricultural equivalent. We ought not to forget that our whole system is one gigantic machine of waste, and that, for example, whilst we import every year a large amount of artificial manures, we sweep down into the rivers and sea, in the form of sewage, at least £30,000,000 to £40,000,000 worth of manure of the very best description. What vast changes the proper use of that would effect! Yet a really scientific arrangement is almost impossible in our existing large cities. With proper application of machinery, careful dairy and poultry farming, and entire change of our method of dealing with human manure, it is almost impossible to say what might not be done with our lands, if at the same time the present wretched system of landowning were done away with, and one substituted in the interest of the whole community. None of those who have most earnestly opposed State-directed emigration are in favour of cutting up the land among the 35,000,000 of people. They do urge, however, that it should be used for the advantage of the whole people collectively and not for the gain of a class. Lord Brabazon does not dispute that some increase might be obtained; his friend Mr. Samuel Smith virtually admits that an enormous increase might be obtained; others say that our agricultural produce might be profitably doubled. Let us begin colonisation at home, then, and try emigration afterwards.

But we are now dependent on foreign sources for half our food supply, which we obtain partly in return for goods exported and partly in payment of interest on capital lent. To devote *more* labour to raising food than we can get it for

by devoting less labour to producing other commodities which we could then exchange for food, is clearly bad policy, so long as we command the sea and can carry on such exchange. It is not the amount of food which can be grown in these islands that limits population, or what Lord Brabazon calls the "supply and demand of labour," in Great Britain. That depends upon the state of the world-market for goods, and the profit which has been made by the capitalist class under the present conditions of productions. Thus there is "over-population," and thousands of men are out of work, all along the Clyde to-day; but about two years ago there were not hands enough to do the business which flowed into the ship-yards, and mere boys not out of their apprenticeship were coming from other centres to earn 32s. a week as rivetters. Is this sort of "boom" and depression with its accompanying periods of over-work, followed by slack time and "over-population," due merely to the natural increase of our people? Assuredly not. There is some other cause at work to make useful labourers useless within a period of a few months.

But I deny the actual over-population, so far as labourers are concerned, altogether. Never assuredly was the power of man over nature so great as it is to-day. Never in the history of the human race was so much wealth raised with so little labour. Relatively fewer hands are employed in the iron, coal, cotton, wool, and other industries than was the case a few years ago; yet a much greater quantity of wealth is produced. A few figures will make this quite clear. Thus in the coal industry 538,829 persons employed in mining and handling coal above and below ground in the year 1874 extracted 140,713,832 tons of coal. In the year 1883, 514,933 persons produced 163,737,327 tons, an increase of over 23,000,000 tons, though 24,000 fewer persons were employed. In 1874 the miners won 261 tons of coal per head; in 1880, 334 tons a head; yet in the latter year 53,896

of them were out of work—became over-population, that is. In the working of iron and steel 360,356 persons were employed in 1872, and produced and used 6,741,929 tons of pig-iron; in 1883, 361,343 persons were so employed, and they produced 8,490,224 tons, or an increase of 1,750,000 tons for virtually the same number employed! In the cotton and flax industry 570,000 persons used 1,266,100,000 pounds of cotton in 1874; while in 1883 but 586,470 persons used 1,510,600,900 pounds. In every case a trifling increase or decrease of persons employed contemporaneously with a great increase in production. It is the same in every department. The numbers employed in agriculture in England and Wales have fallen from 2,010,454 in 1861, to 1,383,184 in 1881, of whom but 800,000 are classed as agricultural labourers. Bear in mind that all this while population has been increasing at the rate of 10 per cent. in every ten years; so that the numbers of actual workers remain stationary or decrease, while the whole population increases. If greater and greater wealth is being continuously produced with the same number or a less number of hands, surely Lord Brabazon's arguments leak water at every seam. The over-population arises, then, not from a decrease in the powers of production, but from their increase. Improved machinery gives greater wealth to the employing class but renders employment for the workers more uncertain, substituting in many departments women's and children's low-priced labour for that of men; and brings about the periods of universal crisis such as that we are now suffering from—over-production, over-population, and the rest of it—more often, and renders them more severe. Has Lord Brabazon looked at the figures of the last census? The population of England and Wales is close upon 26,000,000. out of these, 14,786,000 are classed as "indefinite and unproductive;" and this although there are 1,800,000 of the domestic class included in the other 11,000,000! Surely the

over-population in Great Britain, then, consists of a great portion of these 14,780,000—for even the commercial and professional classes are included in the other 11,000,000—and not the unemployed portion of the 7,000,000 or 8,000,000 of actual producers about whom Lord Brabazon speaks. Why the 1,800,000 domestic class alone—what can we think of that vast array of useless persons eating their heads off and producing nothing? It is not the “indefinite and unproductive” 14,780,000, nor even the domestic servants, however, who are thrown out starving on the streets in bad times. No, it is for the most part the artisans and labourers, who make the wealth these people enjoy, that thus suffer.

Take it from another point of view. Mr. Mundella assures us triumphantly that the returns to income-tax have increased from £578,000,000 to £601,000,000 during even these years of depression. Mr. Mulhall tells us that the total income of the country is close upon £1,300,000,000. Mr. Giffen informs us that between 1865 and 1875 the capital of this country increased £2,400,000,000 or 40 per cent. That is, the actual savings did so, after the population had spent its income in the usual way. Thus capital value during that period, according to the head of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, who certainly is no friend of the workers, increased at four times the rate of the increase of population. What becomes of over-population here? Again, out of that income of £1,300,000,000 how much do the producing classes get? I say £300,000,000 or less. The highest estimate I have ever seen is £500,000,000. It strikes me, then, that a rather more equitable distribution of the results of labour is what we need, even without making preparation for greater production on the land or elsewhere, before we begin to talk of over-population in any sense.

For, be it remembered, Lord Brabazon expressly says that he and his friends do not intend to ship off the '2,000,000

to 3,000,000 pauperised and degraded people' who, according to Mr. Samuel Smith (whose figures Lord Brabazon quotes), are constantly a tax on the community. Not at all. These we are to have ever with us. But let Lord Brabazon speak for himself on this point. "And here it would be well to make it clearly understood that we . . . do not propose that Her Majesty's Government should transfer the idle, the vicious, the ne'er-do-weel, or the pauper from the slums of London, &c." Oh, dear, no; that would never do. It is the able, sober, useful labourers who want work but cannot get it, the men who are eager to get away and work for their wives and families but cannot, the very flower of our producing class, that Lord Brabazon proposes to transport for us. And these are the over-population; while the classes which live in luxury on other men's labour are, I suppose, essential to the well-being of the State—the very pillars of the Empire. How many families of labourers would the £35,000,000 taken in rent by 8,000 families keep in comfort in return for really useful work? How many hundred millions sterling do the capitalist class take in interest and profit? Surely a few questions like these ought to show Lord Brabazon the folly of his over-population theory.

Or, if not, take France. That is a country with a stationary or even a decreasing population; and France is on the whole a wealthy country too. Yet at this moment there is over-population, fearful over-population, in Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles, Rouen, Roubaix, and St. Etienne, even worse than there is in London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, Newcastle, Sunderland, Sheffield, &c. How does Lord Brabazon account for that? Would he recommend emigration as a panacea to the hardworking, thrifty, temperate, Malthusian Frenchman? Clearly not; it would be too absurd. Thus we have worse over-population in France at the present time than we have in England, and horrible misery for the

producing classes there as here though the one country has a stationary and the other an increasing population. Manifestly there is something more in this than Lord Brabazon thinks. If we emigrated 5,000,000 persons from England to-morrow, and continued our present system of capitalist production for profit, individual exchange, private property, and so forth, we should equally have over-population of the producing class at the next period of industrial crisis. "It is indeed lamentable to consider how many millions of pounds have been squandered," as Lord Brazabon truly says, "in the maintenance of able-bodied men and women in our workhouses." It is still more lamentable to consider how many hundreds of millions of pounds have been squandered, and are now being squandered, in the maintenance of able-bodied men and women in utter idleness and degrading luxury from their cradles to their graves. But it is nothing short of infamous that the whole system of production for profit throughout the civilised world, as well as in England, should be based upon the misery and degradation of the labouring class, that they should have no control over the exchange of the wealth which they produce, and that when the greed of the capitalist and the cupidity of the landlord bring about a period of glut and crisis they should be turned out workless upon the streets, treated as over-population, and then State-aided to the Colonies. there to be fleeced by the same classes in other ways.* Neither America nor our Colonies offer the openings that they did. There, as here, the landowner and the capitalist crush the mere wage-labourers, and regard them in times of depression as over-population, and treat them accordingly.

There is plenty for all in this England of ours—plenty of

* Out of a total realised national wealth estimated by Mr. Mulhall at £8,000,000,000 in round figures, 222,500 families, say 1,200,000 persons out of 30,000,000, own nearly £6,000,000,000.

food, plenty of raiment, plenty of everything that goes to make up a healthy and happy life. At this very time, the power of man over nature, the capacity to produce more and more wealth with a less and less expenditure of labour, is growing every day. Every improvement in machinery, every advance in chemistry, every development in electricity, means that all mankind could gain greater wealth and greater leisure at the same time. In agriculture, as in other departments, the advance in science, the application of machinery, is now almost as rapid as it has long been in manufacture. Yet the workers alone do not benefit by this. They work, it is true, in social union for social purposes, but their product, when finished, escapes from them into the hands of others; they are forced to compete against one another for a bare subsistence wage: the very improved machines they make and use hurry on the period of hard times and over-population for them; if they are not employed at a profit they are not employed at all; and all the while they see those who work not at all, or very little, living in excessive luxury at the cost of their degradation. Under any rational system of production, under any regulated system of collective exchange, they—ay and all of us—could enjoy a standard of comfort and a wholesome, happy, leisurely, yet active life, such as has never been known on the planet. Yet we are told it is utopian and visionary to urge that the workers should turn the machines which they make, the land which they till, the commodities they produce, to the advantage of the whole community.

I say, finally, then, that emigration is not even a palliative under present conditions; that it is harmful to the country, and that there is enough and to spare for all here at home. But I, too, look with sadness to the immediate future. For when a man like Lord Brabazon, who obviously feels for the needy and sympathises with the oppressed, can look at our anarchical society only from the point of view of his own class

interests, and is led astray by the fallacies of huckster economy, I despair of a peaceful solution to the inevitable class struggle even in England; and I fear that we must pass through the fiery furnace of "some fatal national catastrophe" to the goal of full economical freedom and organised work for all.



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