

White Alien Immigration Report, 1944

From: Zubrzycki, Jerzy Arthur Calwell and the Origin of Post-War Immigration Canberra, Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, 1995.

Extracts from the White Alien Immigration Report of 21 September 1944

Sub-committee on White Alien Immigration

Department of the Interior Secret

To -
The Chairman,
Inter-Departmental Committee
on Migration Policy,
Department of the Interior,
Canberra.

Your sub-committee on White Alien Immigration desires to submit the following report.-

White Alien Immigration

Introductory

The work of the sub-committee has been based chiefly on consideration of the following questions :-

- (1) What should be the general attitude towards alien immigration?
- (2) What types of non-British migrant are likely to be available?
- (3) Should there be a ban against ex-enemy aliens? If so for what period and by what method should the ban be imposed?

(4) What has been our experience in Australia with regard to the various classes of European migrant (assimilation, citizenship, acceptability, economic contribution)?

(5) What types would it be desirable to encourage?

(6) If sufficient British migrants were not available, is it likely that assistance to alien migrants would be necessary and what would this involve?

(7) What principles should govern the selection of alien migrants?

(8) What machinery would be required for selection and admission along these lines?

(9) Are the objections to the concentration of alien settlers in particular districts sound; are there advantages and what should be the attitude to group settlement or an unorganised tendency to concentration?

(10) By what means can Australian attitudes be influenced so as to facilitate the assimilation of aliens?

(11) What principles should govern publicity abroad and at home and what machinery would be necessary?

2. It is not desirable under existing conditions to give definite answers to many points arising out of these questions. Much will depend on the course of events, notably the position of Europe after the war. Further investigations which cannot be undertaken at present will be necessary and all that the sub-committee can recommend in regard to these matters is that

machinery be provided for the purpose of keeping the Committee and the Departments concerned fully informed on developments affecting post-war immigration.

The General Attitude to Alien Immigration

5. As it is likely that a much larger proportion of our future immigrants will be European aliens, the white alien must be regarded as an asset and not a person admitted on sufferance. It should be an important objective to ensure that the treatment and conditions of alien immigrants in the early post-war years will enhance Australia's reputation in Europe. Considerations which have led to these conclusions are briefly as follows:-

- (a) Australia needs additional population for reasons of defence, economic development, and population-growth. Defence reasons are obvious: the necessity for greater manpower has been demonstrated by events since December, 1941.

Industries both primary and secondary would benefit from a larger home market. A policy of full employment would maintain a high level of national income and consequently a large demand for goods and services, especially "tertiary" products and services, and thus there would be a strong demand for labour. In these conditions domestic supplies of new labour (from natural increase) would be insufficient and immigrant labour would be necessary.

Population-growth in Australia, as in most countries of western civilisation, is not great enough to assure any considerable future growth. Social measures to encourage increased reproduction are needed and without them immigration cannot contribute very much to future growth, since immigrants on the whole tend to adopt

the reproductive pattern, as they do other social characteristics, of their new country. Nevertheless properly controlled immigration can make a contribution of some importance to population-growth in Australia, assuming social measures for increasing reproduction are successful. This is because immigrants on the whole belong to the age-groups of most active reproduction; they increase the number of young parents in the population.

- (b) Migrants of British stock are unlikely to be available in sufficient numbers. In order to double our present numbers by the end of the century we would need about 60,000 immigrants a year (assuming a natural increase of about the same figure - an optimistic assumption). Total British emigration to Australia between the two wars averaged only about half this figure, and that was at a time when natural increase in the British Isles was still considerable, though declining.

In future there is likely to be little if any natural increase in Britain. At the same time social services are likely to be improved and thus reduce the pressure for emigration. The volume of migration from Britain therefore seems likely to be much smaller than in the twenties. Even so, Australia cannot expect to attract the whole of this British emigration; we have to compete with other countries.

- (c) Migrants must therefore be obtained largely from non-British countries. Reproduction has declined in the north-western countries of Europe, however, to much the same extent as in Britain, and, although the aftermath of the war may set up a desire for emigration from those countries for some time, it seems probable that in the long run the main sources of European emigration will be the

southern and eastern countries of
Europe.