

## OFFICIAL ENCOURAGEMENT OF IMMIGRATION TO IOWA

In the days immediately following the close of the World War, when the incidents of that struggle were still vividly remembered, the legislature of the State of Iowa enacted statutes intended to aid in Americanizing the people within its bounds.<sup>1</sup> Legislation such as this is a confession that some of the inhabitants of the State are still aliens in language and perhaps in spirit; and provokes a thorough study of the circumstances surrounding the planting of foreign communities on Iowa soil, for the story of the immigrant was not always completed when the incoming alien first found himself on the streets of an American seaboard town. Where in the wide land before him should his permanent abiding place be? In his answer to this question he was guided by motives that are of the greatest significance in our understanding of his subsequent relation to the new country. His choice of location may have been influenced or determined by free lands, political and religious conditions, groups of fellow countrymen already settled in a State or Territory, the solicitation of land and railroad companies, or the invitation of the State or community. The problem of this study is to discover how far the State of Iowa, which is now charged with the responsibility of educating its people in American ideals, was responsible for the decision of foreigners to make their homes upon its fertile prairies.

<sup>1</sup> The statutes referred to are: "An Act requiring the use of the English language as the medium of instruction in all secular subjects in all schools within the state of Iowa" and "An Act requiring the teaching of American citizenship in the public and private schools located in the state of Iowa and providing for an outline of such subjects."—*Laws of Iowa*, 1919, pp. 219, 535.

The original pioneers of Iowa were distinctly American: the census of 1850, the first in which nativities were recorded, indicates this fact. Of those born without the State of Iowa, natives of Ohio led, with Indiana as second. Pennsylvania, the New England States, Kentucky, and Tennessee also contributed important elements. Of the 192,214 inhabitants in Iowa at that time, 20,969 were foreign born—eleven per cent. Neighboring States, however, exhibited larger proportions: in Illinois and Missouri approximately thirteen per cent and in Wisconsin thirty-six per cent had been born in foreign lands.<sup>2</sup> A decade later, an increase had taken place in all the States of the Upper Mississippi Valley, with the exception of Wisconsin which exhibited the same figure. Fourteen per cent in Missouri, sixteen per cent in Iowa, nineteen per cent in Illinois, and thirty-four per cent in Minnesota were foreign born.<sup>3</sup> Slavery, which led immigrants to shun the southern States, tended also to keep settlers from Missouri. "No German ought to live in a slave state", declared Eduard Zimmerman in a sketch describing his visit to Missouri.<sup>4</sup> His advice was followed. The inflow of Germans which had early set in toward that State was checked, the stream being deflected to other parts of the then Northwest, but Iowa did not receive from the first great wave of nineteenth century immigration a share equal to that of her neighboring free States.

Geography was an important factor in distribution. A map in the *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, illustrates graphically the influence of physical features. The darkest coloring, indicating the greatest number of foreign-born, is placed as a heavy border along the seacoast and

<sup>2</sup> *Seventh Census of the United States*, 1850, pp. xxxvi, 663, 717, 925, 948.

<sup>3</sup> *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860, Population, p. xxxi.

<sup>4</sup> Zimmerman's *Travel into Missouri in October, 1838*, in *The Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. IX, p. 41.

the shores of the Great Lakes with strips of shading marking the course of the rivers and canals.<sup>5</sup> This was only natural. When the tedious and unpleasant ocean voyage had been completed many of the immigrants were ready to remain on the first land they reached. Others who had their faces set toward the West continued their journey but when lake and river steamer or canal boat finally deposited them at some frontier settlement they had no desire to purchase the equipment necessary for an overland journey and push onward across the prairies. They were not impelled by the motive of some early American pioneers who were driven by an eager desire to escape from all society. The most accessible location where land for a home was available was the abiding-place of the foreigner.<sup>6</sup>

In this respect Iowa was at a disadvantage during the decade of the forties. Railroads had not yet bound it to the navigation of the Great Lakes and immigrants ascending the Mississippi River found desirable homes on the eastern side above the Ohio, or were tempted to ascend the tributaries that flowed through the fertile Illinois prairies long before the lands of Iowa revealed themselves on the western bank. In the following decade other deterrent factors were at work.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Population and Social Statistics*, p. 297.

<sup>6</sup> This trait of the American pioneer is widely commented on by foreign travellers. On the road to Pittsburgh an observer noted, "Americans rarely remain here; they clear the wood, patch up a log house, and sell it to those emigrants who do not like the hard work of the pioneer."—Pulszky's *White, Red, Black, Sketches of American Society*, Vol. I, p. 267.

<sup>7</sup> Not until the early months of 1854 was the first continuous railway connection between Chicago and the Mississippi established by the completion of a line to Rock Island.—Cole's *The Era of the Civil War*, p. 41. This volume is the third volume of *The Centennial History of Illinois*. Before Chicago became the commercial metropolis of Illinois, the largest German settlements were located in the southern counties opposite St. Louis.—Beinlich's *The Latin*

When once a colony of one nationality has been formed in a certain location it acts as a lode to draw arriving fellow-countrymen. Few emigrants leave foreign shores with the intention of forgetting their past, and a settlement where the old language may be spoken and old customs retained makes a persuasive appeal. Wisconsin was, for some reason, an early favorite of German investigators. Emigration societies that studied the question of location reported it as first in the matter of natural advantages, resources, and climate. Guide books and pamphlets distributed in Germany repeated the statements, while a pioneer of that day declared: "In New York, every hotel keeper and railroad agent, every one who was approached for advice, directed men to Wisconsin."<sup>8</sup> Nor were Germans the only element attracted to this northern State. Parties of Norwegians made Wisconsin their destination; and an Englishman who had walked from Upper Canada through Michigan and Indiana found it the most desirable territory he had seen.<sup>9</sup>

An added impetus to this movement was given in 1852 when the legislature provided for the appointment of a Commissioner of Immigration who was to reside in the city of New York and give the newcomers information regarding the advantages offered by Wisconsin. Though this was the only authorized State agency and it had to compete with the efforts of land agencies and the employment bureaus maintained by railroad contractors, it was, nevertheless, successful in inducing thousands of settlers to make

*Immigration in Illinois in Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society, 1909, p. 212.*

<sup>8</sup> Everest's *How Wisconsin Came by its Large German Element in Wisconsin Historical Collections, Vol. XII, pp. 310, 318.*

<sup>9</sup> Flom's *A History of Norwegian Immigration to the United States, p. 381*; Quaife's *An English Settler in Pioneer Wisconsin, p. 39, Wisconsin Historical Collections, Vol. XXV.*

Wisconsin their destination. The office, however, was abolished by law in 1855.<sup>10</sup> At a time when in many States there was growing opposition to the participation of recent immigrants in politics another inducement was offered by Wisconsin in the form of generous provisions regarding the elective franchise: the Constitution of 1848 extended the right to vote to foreign-born male residents who had declared their intention of becoming citizens and possessed the other prescribed qualifications.<sup>11</sup>

In the meantime what efforts did Iowa make to parallel these activities of her neighbor? None at all. The average native born pioneer possessed a deeply-rooted prejudice against foreigners. Open and frank, hospitable and friendly to all that met him half-way, the unavoidable clannishness of the foreigners repelled him immediately. Moreover, with a profound faith in the superiority of all American institutions he looked upon the outlandish garb, unknown tongue, strange religion, and peculiar customs of the alien settlers as dangerous characteristics which threatened to subvert the foundations of the government.<sup>12</sup> Conse-

<sup>10</sup> Governor's *Message and Documents* (Wisconsin), 1854, Document C; Everest's *How Wisconsin Came by its Large German Element in Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XII, pp. 314, 319-321.

<sup>11</sup> Poore's *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and other Organic Laws of the United States*, Pt. II, p. 2030.

<sup>12</sup> The testimony upon the attitude of the pioneers towards the foreigners is contradictory. Mr. Birkbeck says: "The most perfect cordiality prevails between the Americans of German, and those of English extraction, in every part of the United States, if the assertions of all with whom I have conversed on this interesting topic, are to be relied on. National antipathies are the result of *bad political institutions*; and not of human nature. Here, whatever their original — whether English, Scottish, Irish, German, French — all are Americans. And of all the unfavourable imputations on the American character, jealousy of strangers is surely the most absurd and groundless." — Birkbeck's *Notes on a Journey in America, from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois*, p. 74. On the other hand note the statements: "I can assure the emigrant, that his reception amongst the native Americans will not be very flattering." — Holmes's *An Account of the United States of America*, p. 146;

quently the Iowa Constitution of 1846, in contrast to the liberal suffrage provisions of the later Wisconsin document, limited the franchise to white, male citizens, and in the middle fifties the Know-Nothing Party ran its tumultuous course through the party politics in Iowa.<sup>13</sup>

Settlers, however, were desired. An increase in population meant more post-offices and schools, better roads, a larger market, and the speedy arrival of the eagerly-desired railroad. The New England and central States with their rapidly developing industrial plants could no longer be depended on as a prolific source of migration: immigrants could be secured only by attracting to the State a part of the incoming aliens. With the example of Wisconsin in mind, Governor Stephen Hempstead, in his first biennial message on December 7, 1852, urged the appointment of a "commissioner of emigration" to reside in New York and advertise the opportunities offered by Iowa, but the committee of the House of Representatives to which this recommendation was referred made an adverse report and no action was taken. Nothing daunted, the Governor repeated the suggestion two years later, but with no better success.<sup>14</sup>

"Even at the best, it is no very pleasant thing for the native American to reflect that the foreigner, upon the sole qualification of a five years' residence in the country, can avail himself of all the privileges which, by birth, he himself is entitled to; that, limited as the knowledge of this class of persons must necessarily be of everything which appertains to his country, they still have a voice just as potential as his own, and which too frequently he lays entirely at the mercy of."—*The British Mechanic's and Labourer's Hand Book and True Guide to the United States*, pp. 268, 269. Mr. Birkbeck's opinion was probably influenced by his desire to promote immigration to his proposed Illinois colony.

<sup>13</sup> Poore's *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and other Organic Laws of the United States*, Pt. I, p. 538. For the Know-Nothing activities in Iowa see Pelzer's *The Origin and Organization of the Republican Party in Iowa* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. IV, pp. 493-498.

<sup>14</sup> Shambaugh's *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. I, pp. 430, 459, 460; *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1852, p. 124.

## THE DUBUQUE EMIGRANT ASSOCIATION

During the latter part of the decade a second rival on the North was becoming formidable by reason of its attractions for immigrants. The Minnesota Constitution of 1857 was as generous in its suffrage provisions as that of Wisconsin, and in the early months of 1858 the State legislature of Minnesota provided for a loan of five million dollars to aid companies in the construction of railroads.<sup>15</sup> These actions were noised abroad, and to citizens of eastern Iowa, the procession of immigrants steadily making northward with "Bound for Minnesota" painted upon the wagons, became an unpleasant sight. Northern Iowa was especially anxious to divert from its course part of this stream and on February 12, 1858, persons selected by the Board of Trade of Dubuque and representatives of many corporations of the city organized an Emigrant Association, the articles of incorporation stating that its purpose was the dissemination of reliable information regarding the advantages offered by Iowa to immigrants and the transaction of business as an agent for any companies or individuals interested in the selling, leasing, or buying of land.<sup>16</sup>

A travelling representative was appointed and descriptive literature was compiled, an appeal being made to the "brethren of the country press" that they publish in their papers "a full and reliable description of counties and towns, including the facts as to their assessed value, and that of the several towns named, population, timber, soil, streams, water power, mines, building material, &c., in each county; and also a description of the county seat, and of

<sup>15</sup> Poore's *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and other Organic Laws of the United States*, Pt. II, p. 1036; Folwell's *The Five Million Loan in Minnesota Historical Collections*, Vol. XV, p. 195.

<sup>16</sup> See the letter of S. M. Langworthy in *The Dubuque Weekly Times*, April 28, 1858. For the organization of the society see *The Dubuque Weekly Times*, February 17, 24, 1858.

each village, giving the population, number and denomination of religious societies and church buildings, number of schools, public and private, mills and manufactories, public buildings, distance to neighboring towns, stage routes, average price of town lots and also of improved and unimproved land in the vicinity".<sup>17</sup> Many of the local newspapers responded and from the information gleaned from the pages, pamphlets were printed, the cost being borne by voluntary subscriptions and an appropriation made by the city of Dubuque. In the course of the first ten months of 1858 approximately two thousand dollars was expended for this purpose with results that were regarded as highly encouraging.<sup>18</sup>

THE COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRATION OF 1860-1862

These activities on the part of Dubuque did not pass unnoticed in other sections of the State<sup>19</sup> and when the session of the legislature convened in 1860 citizens of Keokuk County petitioned for the appointment of an agent to represent Iowa in eastern cities. On the same day Representative F. A. Gniffke of Dubuque presented a bill providing for the establishment of a Commissioner of Emigration for the State of Iowa, which in due time was reported from the House Committee on Public Lands and passed by a vote of 54 to 22, the debate bringing out the fear on the part of many that unless some such effort was made only the undesirables would come to Iowa, the better class of immi-

<sup>17</sup> *The Dubuque Weekly Times*, March 10, 1858.

<sup>18</sup> *The Dubuque Weekly Times*, December 30, 1858. For a typical response to the appeal for descriptions see the facts concerning Buchanan County in *The Dubuque Weekly Times*, March 17, 1858.

<sup>19</sup> "The citizens of Dubuque have formed an Emigrant Association, and appointed E. S. Norris traveling agent. The objects of the Association are to encourage emigration to and settlement in Dubuque and Northern Iowa.— The objects are good, and well worthy of emulation by other portions of the State." — *Iowa Weekly Republican* (Iowa City), March 10, 1858.



grants being induced to proceed to other States more active in the presentation of their advantages.<sup>20</sup>

In the Senate the bill was referred to a special committee which in reporting favorably a few days later, called attention to the startling contrast between the number of immigrants proceeding to Wisconsin and to Iowa. During the eleven months of the year 1856 for which statistics were available the number of passengers arriving at Castle Garden who gave Wisconsin as their destination was 10,457 and the cash capital they brought with them was \$1,045,661.38. During the same period only 1855 persons, with a capital of \$248,335.40, stated that they expected to make their future home in Iowa. As the committee was unable to discover any natural advantage that Wisconsin possessed over Iowa they ascribed this favorable balance of 8602 persons and \$797,325.98 capital to the activities of the Wisconsin agent.<sup>21</sup> The Senate, however, did not follow the recommendation of the committee and the bill was defeated by a vote of 23 to 15, the Democratic majority opposing the creation of a position which meant another office for a Republican Governor to fill. After the vote had been taken, however, a Democratic caucus considered the question and a majority being in favor of reconsidering, on the following day a motion to that effect prevailed and a few days thereafter the bill was passed by a vote of 26 to 9.<sup>22</sup>

This "Act to provide for the establishment of a Commissioner in the City of New York, to promote immigration to the State of Iowa" appropriated \$2400 for the salary of a

<sup>20</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1860, pp. 234, 392; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), March 14, 1860.

<sup>21</sup> The report of this committee is printed in the *Journal of the Senate*, 1860, pp. 448, 449.

<sup>22</sup> *Journal of the Senate*, 1860, pp. 448, 460, 591; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), March 21, 1860; *Davenport Weekly Gazette*, March 22, 1860.

representative to be appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate for a term of two years. Eleven hundred dollars was appropriated for the upkeep of an office in the city of New York from the first of December of each year and a sum not exceeding \$1000 was allowed for the publication of a description of Iowa in the English, German, and such other languages as might be considered advantageous. Lest the agent be tempted to charge a fee for any of his services imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years was provided as punishment for anyone found guilty of such misuse of public office.<sup>23</sup>

The problem of finding a proper person to carry on this mission was solved by the appointment of Lieutenant Governor Nicholas J. Rusch. Indeed, according to newspaper accounts, the Democrats of the legislature were won over to a support of the measure only after an agreement had been reached that Mr. Rusch would be appointed. Being a native of Germany he had himself personally experienced the lot of an immigrant and with his ready command of the German tongue and his official office he was in a position to obtain the confidence of the incoming aliens.<sup>24</sup> Naturally some opposition to this appointment was manifested. "Only think of the Lieut. Governor of Iowa being jostled

<sup>23</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1860, Ch. 53.

<sup>24</sup> *Davenport Weekly Gazette*, April 5, May 31, 1860. The acceptance of this office by Mr. Rusch caused an interesting constitutional question to arise. The Constitution of Iowa provides that "no person shall, while holding any office under the authority of the United States, or this State, execute the office of Governor, or Lieutenant Governor". When the legislature met in special session in 1861 Mr. Rusch expressed doubts as to his right to preside. The Attorney General to whom the question was referred agreed that these doubts were well founded and hence a vacancy existed in the office of Lieutenant Governor. The Judiciary Committee, however, declared that "the position of emigrant agent is not an office within the meaning and purview of the Constitution". The question had been protracted throughout the entire session and Mr. Rusch did not preside, but at the regular session in 1862 he served in his official capacity.—Upham's *The President of the Senate in Iowa* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XVII, pp. 245-252.

and punched among the hotel porters, cabmen and agents of all sorts of houses from the St. Nicholas down", declared *The Dubuque Herald*. "How much honor will the position confer upon the State or the German population?"<sup>25</sup>

Experience, however, demonstrated the wisdom of the choice. To prevent the abuses and impositions usually practiced upon strangers, all agents and runners were excluded by the New York State authorities from the landing place at Castle Garden, but as a courtesy to his position as Lieutenant Governor, the officials gave Mr. Rusch a pass to the building. The imparting of information or distribution of literature, however, was prohibited and all he could do was to invite those interested to visit his headquarters. This office was opened on May 16, 1860, at No. 10 Battery Place. All counties in the State had been requested to furnish complete information regarding local opportunities and to provide maps showing the names of property owners. These could be consulted in the office and when a choice of location was made, advice as to the best route to be followed was given by Mr. Rusch. To provide for the proper reception of the newcomers, it was urged that societies be organized in all communities to assist the immigrants until land was purchased and actual settlement accomplished.<sup>26</sup>

The Civil War, which came soon after the inauguration of this policy, turned the attention of the people to other matters and at the close of the biennium for which the appropriation had been made the office was discontinued. Indeed, Mr. Rusch recommended that this be done for reasons quite apart from any connection with the war. An increase in the number of foreigners proceeding to the State had been noticed, it was true, for the number of persons who had

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in the *Davenport Weekly Gazette*, April 26, 1860.

<sup>26</sup> *Davenport Weekly Gazette*, May 24, 31, 1860; *Report of the Commissioner of Immigration in the Iowa Legislative Documents, 1861-1862.*

signified their intention of becoming residents of Iowa rose from 664 in 1859 to 776 in 1860 and 1665 in 1861; but even as a result of these exertions Iowa was not receiving what seemed to be a fair share of the immigrants. More than a hundred thousand had arrived in the United States in 1860 and of this number Iowa had received less than one per cent. Failure to persuade a larger proportion to move into the State was due to the fact that most of them had their plans made before they left their native country. Before leaving home they had been reached by agents of land companies, employees of various railroads, and representatives of other States, and had already determined their location. If any future efforts were to be made Mr. Rusch felt that they should be directed to foreign countries, but so long as the Civil War continued he questioned the advisability of such a move.<sup>27</sup>

THE BOARD OF IMMIGRATION, 1870-1872

During the four years of the Civil War, immigration remained about the same as in the four preceding years.<sup>28</sup> Even before the opening of the struggle a change had taken place in the attitude of most citizens toward foreigners. A reaction from Know-Nothingism had already set in and with the outbreak of the war came a great demand for labor in the North to offset the departure of the vigorous men to battlefield and camp. Moreover, the Federal government

<sup>27</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Immigration in the Iowa Legislative Documents, 1861-1862.*

<sup>28</sup> Immigration statistics for this period are:

1855 — 200,877.	1860 — 133,143.
1856 — 195,857.	1861 — 142,877.
1857 — 112,123.	1862 — 72,183.
1858 — 191,942.	1863 — 132,925.
1859 — 129,571.	1864 — 191,114.
1865 — 180,339.	

— *Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration in Reports of the Department of Labor (United States), 1919, p. 494.*

sponsored measures that even if not undertaken for that purpose greatly encouraged the influx of immigrants from overseas. The passage of the Homestead Law, the enactment of a law "granting to foreign soldiers, honorably discharged from the service, full rights of citizenship without the necessity of first papers", the establishment of a Commissioner of Emigration, and direct efforts to attract foreigners for military purposes helped to keep the stream of immigrants flowing. With the successful conclusion of the war, the nation with renewed vigor turned to the development of its great western prairies.<sup>29</sup>

All hands that could be secured were needed for this task but its speedy fulfillment could not be accomplished by the discharged soldiers alone. The eastern States presented opportunities that left little hope that help could be obtained from them: to look overseas was the only recourse. The State of Missouri which had felt some of the devastations of the war, made plans to attract immigrants within its borders, even before the final surrender of Lee, by creating a Board of Immigration which was authorized to present to prospective settlers, by means of literature and agents, the superior advantages that it possessed. Two years later, Wisconsin upon the urgent request of the Governor made provision for a similar board.<sup>30</sup>

With these examples so near at hand, sponsors of a corresponding policy for Iowa were not slow in arising. Early in the session of the legislature in 1868, Mathias J. Rohlf of Scott County, a native of Germany, introduced a bill to encourage immigration to the State. After a favorable re-

<sup>29</sup> Fite's *Social and Industrial Conditions in the North during the Civil War*, p. 193.

<sup>30</sup> *First Report of the State Board of Immigration in the Appendix to the House Journal (Missouri), 1867*, p. 569; *Journal of the Assembly of Wisconsin, 1867*, p. 23; Everest's *How Wisconsin Came by its Large German Element in Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XII, p. 327.

port by the committee to which it had been referred it was passed by the House of Representatives, but so late in the session that it never came to a vote in the Senate.<sup>31</sup> Governor Samuel Merrill also publicly expressed his regrets that Iowa was without an official to whom inquirers in these matters might turn. The Citizens' Association of New York through its president, Mr. Peter Cooper, requested from him such information as would be of interest to prospective settlers, and in reply the Governor presented an array of statistical and descriptive data, in conclusion emphasizing the fact that though the State possessed no agent or board of immigration, "we most cordially invite upright citizens of all lands and creeds, to come, here in this favored land to make themselves happy homes, and help us to build up the fabric of what is surely destined to be a mighty commonwealth."<sup>32</sup>

At the time the legislature met in January, 1870, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, and Wisconsin were distributing handbooks describing the advantages of the respective States. Citizens of Iowa maintained that their interests were beginning to suffer by reason of the greater publicity measures of their neighbors.<sup>33</sup> Agents of Minnesota, it was reported, were spreading the report among the people of Norway that summers in Iowa were so hot that no Norwegian could live there,<sup>34</sup> and statistics indicated that out of 251,000 immigrants to the United States during the first eleven months of 1869 only 7192 came with the

<sup>31</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1868, pp. 117, 339, 690; *Journal of the Senate*, 1868, p. 569.

<sup>32</sup> Shambaugh's *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. III, pp. 303, 304. Governor Merrill's letter is printed in *The Iowa Homestead*, December 4, 1868.

<sup>33</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), February 9, 1870.

<sup>34</sup> On this point see an interesting letter on Norwegian emigration conditions printed in *The Iowa North West* (Fort Dodge), February 10, 1870.

intention of locating in Iowa. These newcomers even passed over the fertile but untilled prairies of western Iowa to select less desirable locations beyond the Missouri; and the people of the State were reminded that these "great blanks on our prairies are marked by blank leaves in the ledger of our commerce, and keep our State back from its predestined wealth and greatness."<sup>35</sup> Encouraged by the recommendation embodied in the Governor's message that an appropriation be made to support some organization that would undertake the diffusion of information, Mr. Rohlf's again introduced a bill which this time became a law, though in a modified form.<sup>36</sup>

A Board of Immigration composed of the Governor and one member appointed by him from each congressional district was created by this law. A secretary who should act as Commissioner of Immigration was to be elected by the Board and he was enjoined to accomplish the desired publicity by means of essays, articles, and personal correspondence. Whenever they deemed it expedient the Board was to appoint and pay agents to act in the eastern States or foreign countries, but the members themselves were to serve without pay. Five thousand dollars was the appropriation made to cover the expenses of salaries and publications.<sup>37</sup>

Governor Merrill, by proclamation, gave notice of the appointment and composition of the Board. The first district was represented by Edward Mumm of Keokuk. A native of Holland who had been in the State since 1849 and a lawyer who had held many positions of trust in his home community, he was well qualified to serve. Mathias J. Rohlf's of Davenport who had been so industrious in securing the

<sup>35</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), January 12, 1870.

<sup>36</sup> Shambaugh's *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. III, pp. 303, 304; *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1870, pp. 198, 231, 289; *Journal of the Senate*, 1870, pp. 219, 287.

<sup>37</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1870, Ch. 34.

financial support for the commission was appointed from the second district. By actual experience he knew the troubles of a German emigrant and now was a leader among the German-Americans of Iowa. A representative of the Scandinavian element was secured by the appointment in the third district of the Reverend Claus L. Clausen of St. Ansgar. Mr. Clausen had been born in Denmark, had preached the first Scandinavian Lutheran sermon in Iowa in 1851, and through his missionary endeavors in all the pioneer settlements was well known throughout the northern part of the State. A second Hollander found a place on the Board, C. Rhynsburger, one of the leading business men of the settlement at Pella, representing the fourth district. Des Moines, in the fifth district, was entitled to representation because of its interest in all matters pertaining to the development of the State; and in S. F. Spofford, one of the immigrants from New England, who had risen to a position of influence in the industrial and banking life of the city, a competent member was found. Marcus Tuttle of Clear Lake, one of the pioneers of Cerro Gordo County, who in his young manhood had come west from his New York home, had served in the State Senate, and was prominent in the development of the northern counties, completed the membership. Germany, Holland, Scandinavia, and eastern United States — regions from which it was hoped new citizens could be secured — were thus accorded representatives on the Board.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> The proclamation of the Governor is printed in the *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), May 25, 1870. Information regarding the members of the Board has been secured as follows: for Mr. Mumm from the *Portrait and Biographical Album of Lee County, Iowa*, 1887, p. 362; for Mr. Rohlf from Eiboeck's *Die Deutschen von Iowa und deren Errungenschaften*, pp. 429, 430; for Mr. Claussen from the *History of Mitchell and Worth Counties, Iowa*, 1884, p. 143; for Mr. Rhynsburger from *The History of Marion County, Iowa*, 1881, p. 669; for Mr. Spofford from *The History of Polk County, Iowa*, 1880, p. 869; for Mr. Tuttle from *The United States Biographical Dictionary, Iowa*, 1878, p. 210.



The secretary, it had been provided in the law, was to be a person "familiar with the agricultural, mineral, and other resources of the State".<sup>39</sup> At the first meeting of the Board, A. R. Fulton of Des Moines was appointed to this position. Mr. Fulton had visited every part of the State in the course of the preparation of a series of articles entitled "Tour of Iowa Counties", published in the *Iowa State Register*, and he was thus personally acquainted with the situation in the Commonwealth.<sup>40</sup> Immediately after his appointment Mr. Fulton sent to all the newspapers in the State and to several of the leading journals outside its boundaries, as well as to bankers and other business men, a circular describing the organization and purpose of the Board and inviting correspondence on all questions regarding settlement. The receipt of letters of inquiry numbering about a hundred a month indicated the success of these publicity measures. Personal replies could not be given to all correspondents and Mr. Fulton prepared a handbook entitled *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants*, editions of which were printed in English, German, Dutch, Danish, and Swedish. These were sent out directly from the office in the Capitol building or distributed by the agents of the Board.<sup>41</sup>

The small amount of funds at the disposal of the Commissioners made impractical the appointment of a large number of State agents who would devote all their time to publicity work. The interests of the Commonwealth in the matter of securing immigrants were, however, bound closely to those of the railroad companies who possessed vast

<sup>39</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1870, Ch. 34, Sec. 4.

<sup>40</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), April 13, 1870.

<sup>41</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), April 12, 1871; *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, pp. 4, 18, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872. A description of Mr. Fulton's *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants* may be found in the *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), October 12, 1870.

stretches of land tributary to their lines which they were eager to have settled. Accordingly an agreement was made between the Board and representatives of the railway companies that persons who were mutually satisfactory should be commissioned as official representatives of the State which was to pay a small part of the salary and supply literature for distribution. The railroads were to pay the larger part of the salary. It was understood that such agents should not serve also as representatives of some other State though they might forward the interests of the railroad company's property which chanced to be located outside of Iowa. By this means, transportation and distribution of documents was obtained, and in the course of the biennium more than 45,000 copies of Mr. Fulton's book were put into the hands of prospective settlers, 30,000 copies being of the English edition, 14,500 copies of the German edition, and 2800 copies of the Dutch edition. There was delay in the publication of the Scandinavian edition, and no sooner were the copies ready in the summer of 1871 than they were destroyed by the great fire in Chicago.<sup>42</sup>

Three representatives of the Board were sent to foreign countries, E. T. Edginton going to England, Louis A. Ochs to Germany, and Henry Hospers to Holland. Their visits were of a temporary nature but before they returned much publicity had been given to the endeavors of the State of Iowa to secure desirable settlers and the work to be carried on by resident agents appointed in each of these countries had been organized. Emphasis was put upon the official nature of the Board which was directing the work because of the number of wild-cat schemes of emigration and colonization that were advertised in Europe many of them

<sup>42</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), May 25, 1870; *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, pp. 5, 7, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872.

seeking to turn the tide towards South America.<sup>43</sup> There is extant the following advertisement inserted by Mr. Hospers in many of the newspapers of Holland which illustrates this emphasis on the official status of the work:

“Mr. Henry Hospers, Mayor of the city of Pella, in the State of Iowa, United States of America, specially commissioned by the Board of Immigration of the said State of Iowa, will remain in the Netherlands until the 15th day of January, A. D., 1871, for the purpose of giving detailed information to all who wish to emigrate to Iowa, about the country, climate and prospects of said State. All letters will be promptly answered without charge; and further notice will be given at what places and times persons interested can have a general conference with him.”<sup>44</sup>

As a result of this notice many inquiries were received and a series of conferences attended by from ten to forty persons were held in about a score of the cities in the Netherlands. Here questions were asked and answers given, the interest manifested often being so great as to prolong the sessions until midnight.

In England, Mr. Edginton held meetings, distributed as many pamphlets as came to his hands — the supply was far below the demand — and placed items inviting correspondence in newspapers. How effective these brief articles were is manifested by the five hundred inquiries which were received in reply to one advertisement carried for a few weeks in a religious newspaper.<sup>45</sup> Mr. Ochs who was ap-

<sup>43</sup> *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, pp. 8, 33, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872.

<sup>44</sup> *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, pp. 19, 20, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872.

<sup>45</sup> *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, p. 23, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872. For the type of publicity used in England see the reprint from the *London Christian World* in *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), February 1, 1871.

pointed for Germany had proceeded as far as New York City in the summer of 1870 when the news of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War came to him and made necessary the deferment of his trip. In the spring of the following year he was able to proceed, and though the war had checked the emigration for the time being, it gave promise of causing a much larger movement than ever in the future.<sup>46</sup> Agents delegated to operate in the New England States found the "Western fever" prevalent, but they were hindered in their operations by lack of money, one of them claiming that if sufficient funds were at their disposal they could "depopulate these rock-covered hills".<sup>47</sup>

The results of the activities of the Board and its representatives were encouraging. The new Holland community in Sioux County profited largely by the exertions of Mr. Hospers and through the efforts of the New England agents hundreds of families from those States arranged to move to Iowa. The increase in the population of the State in 1871 was estimated at 50,000 and the Board reported that it felt justified in ascribing a large per cent of this number to the publicity given the State in this campaign.<sup>48</sup>

#### THE NATIONAL IMMIGRATION CONVENTION

Closely connected with its efforts to attract newcomers to Iowa, is the participation of the State Board of Immigration in a National Immigration Convention in the fall of 1870. The seaboard States had inherited from colonial

<sup>46</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), April 12, 1871; *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, p. 33, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872.

<sup>47</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), January 25, 1871; *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, p. 30, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872.

<sup>48</sup> Van der Zee's *The Hollanders of Iowa*, p. 153; *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, pp. 14, 30, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872.

times the privilege and responsibility of regulating the admission of foreigners through their ports, and in 1824 New York enacted a law requiring the master of every vessel to give a bond providing for the indemnification of the State or local authorities for any expenses which they might incur in the support of passengers brought in by his vessel. Five years later, in order to provide for the marine hospital, an extension of this law imposed a fee of \$1.50 on all cabin passengers and \$1.00 on all steerage passengers entering New York harbor. Similar in nature was the tax of \$2.00 imposed on every passenger entering Massachusetts ports after 1837, the sum being used as a fund to support "foreign paupers". But in 1849 the Supreme Court of the United States declared the New York law of 1829 and the Massachusetts law of 1837 unconstitutional on the ground that they constituted a regulation of commerce on the part of the individual States, a function which by the constitution was reserved to the national government. The decision, however, did not affect the validity of the New York act of 1824 which provided for the giving of a bond by ship masters to reimburse the State for any expense incurred for the support of passengers. Consequently New York and other States immediately provided by law for an extension of the bonding system with the alternative of commuting for the bond by the payment of a stipulated sum. Such payment was preferred by most ship masters and the sum became known as "commutation money" or "head money."<sup>49</sup>

Though small in itself this sum became a very obnoxious charge in the eyes of western men who eagerly desired the

<sup>49</sup> *Reports of the Immigration Commission*, Vol. XXI, pp. 24-28. This volume is entitled *Immigration Legislation* and in addition to a sketch of the development of this legislation in the United States, contains the text of the more important State and federal laws bearing on immigration. The *Reports of the Immigration Commission* are published in *Senate Documents*, 3rd Session, 61st Congress, Document No. 758.

coming of immigrants. That foreigners who had by means of patient saving and constant labor been able to gather together substance enough to make emigration possible should shoulder this additional burden at the very gates of the land of freedom seemed a mockery. Moreover, most of those who arrived did not tarry in the East, could never be a burden in those States and hence their fee was simply a donation to the States through whose gates they passed. With the annual influx numbering hundreds of thousands the western States were deprived of a large amount of capital. In spite of the payment of these fees, immigrants, it was claimed, were forced to endure inconveniences and even cruelties in the receiving stations, especially at Castle Garden in New York. Often they were starved during the delays, wrote an Iowa citizen in a protest to the officials at Des Moines; and when they were dead their bodies were sold for purposes of dissection. Captain Wirz of Andersonville Prison must at one time have passed through this establishment, the writer continued, and added, "I do not know of any other spot on earth where he could have learned that refinement of cruelty." Moreover, he claimed that letters from Englishmen disclosed the fact that rumors of these terrors were prevalent in foreign lands and that these disturbing reports actually deterred some from emigrating.<sup>50</sup>

Contemplation of these facts led to the gradual growth of the sentiment that the West should have as weighty a voice as the East in determining the conditions under which foreigners should be allowed to enter the United States. Let the entire matter, it was urged, be taken from the hands of

<sup>50</sup> This letter was written by William Lake of Clinton to Adjutant General N. B. Baker. It is printed in the *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), November 16, 1870. Mr. Lake was president of the St. George's Benevolent Association of Clinton and hence was in close touch with newly-arrived foreigners.

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the States and given to the Federal government.<sup>51</sup> So strong did this feeling become that in the autumn of 1870 a call for a national convention to meet in Indianapolis was sent out signed by the governors of Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, Michigan, and Wisconsin. On November 23, 1870, the convention was called to order by Governor Merrill of Iowa. Representatives were present from twenty-two States, two Territories, and the District of Columbia as well as the boards of trade of several cities and a number of German aid and immigration societies.<sup>52</sup>

Steamship lines and railroads were also interested in a freer movement of foreigners and, due to the lack of a definite program at the opening sessions, representatives of these interests were well on the way to assume control of the assemblage when the State delegates asserted themselves and after a sharp struggle regained the reins. Discussions of the abuses to which the immigrants were subjected featured the meetings. The only concrete result was the adoption of a series of resolutions — vigorously opposed by the representatives of New York — calling for more stringent legislation to prevent abuses and frauds, negotiation on the part of the President with foreign countries to secure a joint jurisdiction over emigrant ships, the establishment of a "Bureau of Immigration" under the auspices of the Federal government, and condemnation of all "schemes, combinations and monopolies" in connection with emigrant transportation as well as the "odious and unjust" capitation taxes. A committee consisting of one person from each State and Territory represented in the convention was appointed to memorialize Congress on these

<sup>51</sup> Note the remarks quoted from the *St. Louis Democrat* in the *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), September 28, 1870.

<sup>52</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), November 30, 1870; Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. III, p. 360.

points. This gathering, constituting as it does the first open assault in the struggle which finally led to the abolition of all State restriction on immigration, is worthy of notice in connection with Iowa's attitude on this question, especially in view of the prominent part which her Governor assumed in the deliberations.<sup>53</sup>

THE SECOND BOARD OF IMMIGRATION, 1872-1873

In his second biennial message, on January 10, 1872, Governor Merrill referred to the operations of the Board, commented on the difficulty of ascribing specific results to its endeavors, and expressed his faith in its value; but made no definite recommendations for future legislation. Popular interest in the subject, however, was so great that in both the Senate and House of Representatives bills were introduced providing for a continuation of the Board in slightly modified form. Though opposition was manifested the Senate bill became a law. The membership was reduced to five members one of whom was the Governor, who was to act as the president, and the others were appointed by him for a term of two years. Ten thousand dollars was appropriated for the salary of a secretary and for other expenses, with the proviso that no money should be paid as a salary "to any agent who may receive a commission as agent from the Board of Immigration."<sup>54</sup>

The composition of the preceding Board had had not been entirely satisfactory, because counties in the western part

<sup>53</sup> The following were commissioned by the Governor as Iowa's delegates: M. J. Rohlf, C. Rhynsbarger, S. F. Spofford, C. L. Clausen, A. R. Fulton, and Louis A. Ochs. *First Biennial Report of the Board of Immigration*, pp. 12, 13, Document No. 27 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1872. The participation of the shipping interests in this convention is described in an article in *Der Wöchentliche Demokrat* (Davenport), December 1, 1870.

<sup>54</sup> Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. III, pp. 359, 360; *Journal of the Senate*, 1872, pp. 303, 411, 417; *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1872, pp. 299, 530, 575; *Laws of Iowa*, 1872, Ch. 23.



of the State were without an official representative although the lands most in need of settlers were in that section. So keen had the feeling been over this that leading men in western Iowa organized an independent "Immigrant Aid Society" to give publicity to the advantages of the less densely populated parts of the State. In the organization of the new Board, however, criticism of this nature was avoided by the selection of Charles V. Gardner of Avoca as the fifth member, S. F. Spofford, M. J. Rohlf, and Marcus Tuttle having been reappointed.<sup>55</sup>

After the organization had been completed Mr. Fulton was selected to serve as secretary and preparations were made for such activities as the limited funds at their disposal permitted. Agents were appointed for England, Holland, Germany, and the eastern States and authority was granted the president of the Board to commission other agents as he saw fit provided this action entailed no expense. Fifteen thousand pamphlets were printed in German, seven thousand in Swedish, and a like number in Norwegian. Through the medium of the agents, who were assisted by the railroad companies in the matter of transportation, these leaflets were distributed and, being freely copied by newspapers at home and abroad, obtained a varied and wide-spread hearing.<sup>56</sup> To attract settlers was,

<sup>55</sup> Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. IV, pp. 77, 78; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), August 17, 1870; *Council Bluffs Bugle*, May 19, 1870. There was also dissatisfaction expressed because the Irish element in the State had no representative on the Board along with the Dutch, German, and Scandinavian members. Consequently the Catholic clergy of Iowa addressed a letter to Honorable Richard O'Gorman of New York City pointing out the advantages of Iowa and the success of the Irish farmers who had already made their homes in the State. A list of many of the Catholic priests in the State was added, all of whom promised to faithfully answer any inquiries which might be addressed to them regarding opportunities and conditions in their communities.—*Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), July 13, 1870.

<sup>56</sup> Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol.

however, not the only purpose. Fear was already being felt that the coming of large numbers of agricultural laborers would cause such a surplus of produce that prices would fall to an alarming extent. To prevent this condition the Board also emphasized the upbuilding of a home market to create a demand for farm products; capital and industries as well as homesteaders were to be invited to Iowa.<sup>57</sup>

Accordingly, H. S. Hyatt, editor and proprietor of the *Iowa Progress*, was given assistance in the compilation of a volume, *Manufacturing, Agricultural and Industrial Resources of Iowa*, and two thousand copies were ordered for distribution by the Board. Sketches of the physical features of the State that appealed to farmer and manufacturer, descriptions of the leading manufacturing and industrial centers — including the now forgotten cities of Cedar Bluffs and Boonsboro — and a statement of the laws of Iowa in reference to aliens were included in its pages.<sup>58</sup> With the same purpose in view the Board sanctioned the calling of an Iowa Industrial Convention, attended by members of boards of trade and other organizations, that met in Des Moines during January, 1873. Here the questions of encouragement of manufacturing, attraction of capital, cheaper transportation, river improvements, and changes in the usury, homestead, and other laws were considered.<sup>59</sup>

At the adjourned session of the Fourteenth General Assembly which met in Des Moines on January 15, 1873, there was presented for consideration the work of the Code Commission. In the Code as finally enacted the provisions relating to the Board of Immigration were not retained, but IV, p. 78; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), May 15, December 20, 1872.

<sup>57</sup> See an editorial in the *Iowa City Republican*, January 29, 1873.

<sup>58</sup> Hyatt's *Manufacturing, Agricultural and Industrial Resources of Iowa*, pp. 28, 52-59, 61-69, 75, 127, 147; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), May 15, 1872.

<sup>59</sup> *Iowa State Press* (Iowa City), January 22, 1873; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), January 24, 1873.

this omission did not prevent its functioning during the succeeding spring and summer. In September, 1873, however, the Board went out of existence.<sup>60</sup>

At this time there remained in the custody of the Board about twelve thousand copies of various documents in the English and German languages. By a concurrent resolution at the next meeting of the legislature, Mr. Fulton was authorized to circulate these publications, the actual expense of distribution to be paid from the unexpended balance of the appropriation made two years earlier.<sup>61</sup> The subject of immigration, however, was not an important question at this session. An attempt to provide for the printing of the report of the Board did not succeed; and though the board of supervisors of Palo Alto County petitioned for the appointment of another body to encourage settlers, no bill with this end in view was introduced.<sup>62</sup>

THE "HONORARY" COMMISSIONERS OF IMMIGRATION, 1878-1880

From 1874 to 1878 there was in Iowa no board or commissioner to aid or solicit immigrants. During the latter part of the decade the number of aliens coming to the United States fell fifty per cent below the figures for the preceding five years,<sup>63</sup> and of those who went on to the West,

<sup>60</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1873, p. 20; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), January 24, 1873; Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. IV, p. 78.

<sup>61</sup> *Journal of the Senate*, 1874, p. 175; *Laws of Iowa* (Private), 1874, pp. 88, 89.

<sup>62</sup> *Journal of the Senate*, 1874, p. 253; *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1874, p. 121.

<sup>63</sup> The figures on immigration for this decade are:

1870 — 387,203.	1875 — 227,498.
1871 — 321,350.	1876 — 169,986.
1872 — 404,806.	1877 — 141,857.
1873 — 459,803.	1878 — 138,469.
1874 — 313,339.	1879 — 177,826.

— *Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration in Reports of the Department of Labor* (United States), 1919, p. 494.

“warmer Kansas and cheaper Nebraska” were reported as attracting more than Iowa.<sup>64</sup> Conditions in Iowa were partly responsible for this movement to the trans-Missouri lands. The fall of 1877 was particularly depressing. “Rains have been nearly incessant”, wrote the Secretary of the Iowa State Agricultural Society, “sunshine has been the rare exception for a month; the roads are impassable; the mud unfathomable, and these conditions have laid an embargo on all sorts of trade. There is the curious spectacle of an interstate railroad suspending its freight trains because no products could be hauled to its depots. There is the marvellous fact that the pork packing season which should be nearly ready to close, has hardly had a beginning, and reducing prices to a figure much below that of many previous years. There is the startling phenomenon of corn rotting by thousands of acres in the field, and by thousands of bushels in the crib, rendered by the rains and mud nearly impossible to gather it; and so depreciated in quality as to be nearly unfit to be fed to stock.”<sup>65</sup>

As a result in the succeeding year there was even an exodus from the State. In his report for the year 1878 the Secretary of the Agricultural Society called attention to this emigration from Iowa and declared: “They have been induced to make this grand mistake by overdrawn sketches, and illuring pictures, which have been sent forth in pamphlets and scattered all over the land. Thousands of their advertisements are left upon car seats and are read with avidity by citizen and stranger. Railroad companies, emigrant societies, parties in Europe who want to invest in what they regard as money making enterprise, pool and buy large tracts of land on time, and a low rate of interest,

<sup>64</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), April 14, 1875.

<sup>65</sup> *Report of the Secretary of the Iowa State Agricultural Society*, 1877, p. 5.

and even then are using every exertion to get these lands into the hands of the actual settler."<sup>66</sup>

Economy, a necessary result of the hard times, made impracticable any appropriation large enough to finance a systematic advertising campaign to retain present settlers and attract new ones; but agents of land and railroad companies who in the past had rendered acceptable service in coöperation with the State were still available, and it was to them that the legislature turned. It was felt that if such agents were given authority to use the name of Iowa in their efforts mutual benefits would come to both the State and the companies. Acting upon this principle a joint resolution empowered the Governor "to appoint one or more commissioners of immigration, provided that the commissioners so appointed shall serve without expense to the state."<sup>67</sup>

Upon this authority a number of these "honorary" commissioners were designated — more than twenty being engaged in the activities before the legislature again assembled.<sup>68</sup> Their services, however, were not satisfactory to all the people, and the desire for more energetic State action was prevalent. "But enough of politics", wrote a correspondent to the *Iowa State Register*, in the conclusion of a letter which was filled with the politics of the Greenbackers. "What we want in Guthrie county is immigration."<sup>69</sup> Other parts of the State were similarly inclined, the people of Palo Alto County taking things into their own hands when in March, 1879, a convention at Emmetsburg organized a Board of Immigration of their own to forward

<sup>66</sup> *Report of the Secretary of the Iowa State Agricultural Society*, 1878, p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1878, p. 177, Joint Resolution No. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. V, p. 84; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), April 9, 1880.

<sup>69</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), January 17, 1879.

the development of northwestern Iowa.<sup>70</sup> After a decade filled with the stormy agitations of new political creeds it was with relief that attention was directed to the problem of securing laborers to construct the hundreds of miles of new railroads planned for the hitherto undeveloped counties and finding farmers to till the fields thus rendered accessible to markets.<sup>71</sup>

THE SECOND COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRATION, 1880-1882

By January, 1880, it was evident that the tide of immigration would rise in that and succeeding years to unequalled heights. Citizens, who during preceding years had been lethargic, now began to covet immigrants when, in response to the alluring invitation of other States, they passed Iowa by.<sup>72</sup> Governor John H. Gear had been advised by American consuls in foreign countries of the prospective invasion and though admitting the good results of the endeavors of the "honorary" agents, in his biennial message of January, 1880, he urged an annual appropriation by the State "in order that Iowa may not only maintain its position in the race for empire, but may more speedily secure the development of its resources through a knowledge of their unlimited extent."<sup>73</sup> Many of these unofficial commissioners met in the capital during the legislative session and in comparing notes found that Kansas had been able to accomplish great things by means of an

<sup>70</sup> *The Cedar Falls Gazette*, March 21, 1879.

<sup>71</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), April 22, May 27, 1881.

<sup>72</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), January 2, 1880. The immigration figures for these years are:

1880 — 457,257.	1883 — 603,322.
1881 — 669,431.	1884 — 518,592.
1882 — 788,992.	1885 — 395,346.

— *Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration in Reports of the Department of Labor* (United States), 1919, p. 494.

<sup>73</sup> Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. V, p. 84.

annual appropriation and a law giving the county boards of supervisors authority to contribute additional sums to aid in the movement. Such a policy they recommended as worthy of adoption in Iowa.<sup>74</sup>

Their interference in the matter, however, put all measures proposed in the interest of increased immigration in a less favorable position in the eyes of the people, who in the recent Granger agitation had learned of the evils of monopoly and corporations. Nevertheless an act designed to attract new settlers to Iowa was passed but it came into operation under a cloud of suspicion. "It is easy to understand for whom this donation was made", declared the *Iowa State Register*, "as scores of land agents swarmed about the capitol and hotels all winter to accomplish this purpose. Each one had a private ax to grind. They were not men of enlarged philanthropy seeking to build up the State with manufacturing establishments, but generally such as were land poor, that is, with more land on hand than they could pay taxes on. Now we suppose the Governor will be besieged to appoint one of this class, who will spend this \$10,000 for his and his partner's interests . . . . But wait and see who will be fleecing emigrants by charging large fees."<sup>75</sup>

These dire prophecies were not fulfilled, for the position of Commissioner of Immigration was tendered to George D. Perkins and accepted. Mr. Perkins was the editor of the *Sioux City Journal*, enjoyed a wide acquaintance because of his newspaper interests, and from his location in the newer part of the State was well informed on the prospects and needs of the western counties.<sup>76</sup> The sum of five thou-

<sup>74</sup> *The Cedar Falls Gazette*, February 27, 1880.

<sup>75</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), April 9, 1880.

<sup>76</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), April 23, 1880. For a sketch of Mr. Perkins's career see *Past and Present of Sioux City and Woodbury County, Iowa*, 1904, p. 72.

sand dollars a year for two years had been appropriated of which twelve hundred dollars a year was designated as the remuneration of the Commissioner of Immigration, who was to use the remaining fund to show "to the people of the United States the natural advantages and resources of the state of Iowa."<sup>77</sup>

Immediately there arose a question as to the interpretation of this clause. Many had approved of the act but had failed to note carefully the expression "of the United States". When the Commissioner interpreted this phrase literally, an important group of those who had sponsored the act immediately objected. "We certainly thought the law was passed for the purpose of encouraging immigration not only from other States but also from Canada, from all the countries of Europe, and even from Asia and Africa," exclaimed the *Iowa Staats-Anzeiger*. "We had no idea that it was a kind of Know-Nothing law and was narrowed in its application to the people of this country."<sup>78</sup> Mr. Perkins, nevertheless, did not allow any of the appropriation to be used in foreign countries.<sup>79</sup>

One of the first acts of the new Commissioner was the holding of an immigration convention at Sheldon, O'Brien County, on June 22, 1880. Here, under the direction of the Commissioner, subjects such as tree culture, fruit raising, dairying, and stock-raising were discussed in formal lectures and in question periods. Under the title *Information for the Home-Seeker* the proceedings of this gathering were printed and ten thousand copies distributed among those who desired to know the condition of agriculture in north-

<sup>77</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1880, Ch. 168.

<sup>78</sup> *Iowa Staats-Anzeiger* (Des Moines), April 9, 1880.

<sup>79</sup> *Report of Commissioner of Immigration*, p. 3, in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1882, Vol. I. In spite of Mr. Perkins's declaration there seems to have been an agent claiming to be commissioned by the State of Iowa soliciting settlers in England in 1881.—*Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), February 11, 1881.



western Iowa. Other publications were later prepared. "Auxiliary sheets"—two page pamphlets filled with information regarding the State at large—were furnished in quantities to local land dealers who promised to print descriptions of their particular section on the reverse pages. One hundred and seven agents were thus secured who were instrumental in distributing 422,000 of these circulars. The history, resources, and character of the State were more formally set forth in a booklet *Homes in the Heart of the Continent*, of which 36,000 copies were placed in the hands of inquirers. Two other pamphlets, *Iowa as an Agricultural State* and *De Volksvriend*, as well as advertisements inserted in Eastern papers, presented the opportunities of Iowa to many others.<sup>80</sup>

But, unfortunately for the success of this endeavor, the same legislature that had created the office of Commissioner of Immigration also passed a joint resolution "Proposing to Amend the Constitution so as to Prohibit the Manufacture and Sale of Intoxicating Liquor as a Beverage Within this State."<sup>81</sup> Many of the leading citizens of foreign birth were most vehement in their opposition to the adoption of this amendment, an attitude which brought down upon them and upon all foreign-born residents the wrath of the temperance workers. On the one hand the pro-liquor press derided the inconsistency of trying to promote immigration to a State where "personal liberty" was so little regarded. "Had the General Assembly of Iowa passed a good license law instead of appropriating \$10,000 for an immigration commissioner, immigration would have been treble to what it promises to be in the next two years",

<sup>80</sup> *Report of Commissioner of Immigration*, pp. 3-5 in the *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1882, Vol. I; *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), July 2, 1880.

<sup>81</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1880, p. 215, Joint Resolution No. 8.

stated the *Iowa Staats-Anzeiger*.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, the prohibition press openly rejoiced that people who were kept away on *such* grounds did not become citizens of Iowa, and recommended the "putting up the bars in Iowa".<sup>83</sup>

The upshot of this prohibition campaign was the development of a strong anti-foreign sentiment throughout the State, with the result that measures to induce immigration received little support. "We no longer want people merely to count up in the census, or to make stopping places on our once wide and unsettled prairies" it was explained. "*We want the best. For these we can afford to work or to wait. They will come in time.*"<sup>84</sup> The change that had taken place in the course of a few months is illustrated by the paper that had once been most eager to attract the oppressed peoples of Europe when it relapsed into the same vocabulary that the Eastern States had been making use of for fifty years and urged the legislature to pass a law prohibiting "pauper immigration" to Iowa.<sup>85</sup> Under these conditions the recommendations of the Governor and Mr. Perkins that the office of Commissioner of Immigration be retained and further supported met with no success at the session of 1884; and two years later when a bill was introduced to encourage immigration to Iowa, the House committee to which it was referred reported it back with the recommendation "that the same be indefinitely postponed."<sup>86</sup>

With the termination of Mr. Perkins' period of service, the official efforts of the State to attract new inhabitants to its cities and farms came to an end. More than eighty years

<sup>82</sup> *Iowa Staats-Anzeiger* (Des Moines), April 2, 1880.

<sup>83</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), January 21, 1881.

<sup>84</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), May 28, 1880.

<sup>85</sup> *Iowa State Register* (Weekly, Des Moines), May 20, 1881.

<sup>86</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1886, pp. 185, 213.

have now passed since the peopling of Iowa began and in the course of those years a stream of virile manhood and womanhood has flowed in from the older Commonwealths east of the Mississippi and the still older lands beyond the sea. The call of the West, the attraction of cheap lands, the solicitation of commercial interests, and the invitation of the State itself were each responsible for the coming of some, and in many cases there was a mingling of all these factors. To declare which of these was the most effective agent in securing settlers is impossible until each has been the subject of thorough investigation. Here only a summary can be made of the efforts of the State of Iowa.

A consideration of the preceding facts indicates that there has been no consistent policy. Five acts<sup>87</sup> have been passed, but of these no two have been similar in all details. One provided for a Commissioner to reside in New York City and direct the newcomers to the State. Another located the Commissioner in Des Moines and his campaign of advertising was to be conducted from this place. An indefinite number of "honorary" commissioners was made possible by a third law. Two Boards of Immigration have been created — their activities from the spring of 1870 to 1873 marking the only period of any length when a continuous effort was made, and even this was brought to a premature end, leaving undistributed a great amount of literature. Nine and a half years is the total space of time covered by the terms of these boards and officials, yet they extended over a period of twenty-two years from 1860 to 1882. To carry on these activities total appropriations of \$29,500 have been made.

<sup>87</sup> The following is a summary of these efforts:

	Appropriation	Service
1860: Commissioner of Immigration	\$ 4,500	2 yrs.
1870: Board of Immigration	5,000	2 yrs.
1872: Board of Immigration	10,000	1½ yrs.
1878: Commissioners of Immigration		2 yrs.
1880: Commissioner of Immigration	10,000	2 yrs.
Total	\$29,500	9½ yrs.

Statistics give no clue to the effect of the State's endeavors. The increase in the total number of foreign-born was remarkably steady from 1850 to 1900, indicating a permanent movement rather than violent fluctuations caused by changed policies.<sup>88</sup> The dates of the establishment of these offices come shortly after the beginning of upward trends in the wave of immigration indicating that they were created as a result of the increase in immigration rather than that the movement was influenced by them. Indeed, contemporary sources would almost seem to show that the legislators were influenced not so much by a desire to get settlers for Iowa, as to keep other States from securing them. Too often politics came in to affect the decisions: some objected because a Governor belonging to the other party would have the appointment in his hands; others approved because they could thus secure the good will of voters of foreign birth.

The abolition of all fees at the seaports which was so vigorously urged by the Immigration Convention in 1870 was secured in 1876 when the Supreme Court of the United States declared the laws of New York and other coast

For these acts see *Laws of Iowa*, 1860, Ch. 53, Secs. 1, 3, 1870, Ch. 34, Secs. 1, 10, 1872, Ch. 23, Secs. 1, 2, 1878, Joint Resolution No. 4, 1880, Ch. 168, Secs. 1, 3.

<sup>88</sup> The total numbers of foreign-born in Iowa according to the census reports were:

1850 — 20,969.	1880 — 261,650.
1860 — 106,077.	1890 — 324,069.
1870 — 204,692.	1900 — 305,920.

These figures are printed in *Distribution of Immigrants, 1850-1900*, pp. 445-447, in *Reports of the Immigration Commission*, Vol. XX.

States, imposing fees on immigrants, unconstitutional. Immediately these States which were obliged to receive the newcomers but had no way of charging them with the expenses of such supervision began agitation for the imposition of a national tax which, however, was effectively opposed especially by the transportation interests.<sup>89</sup> In 1882, however, a law was passed which laid a duty of fifty cents on each passenger not a citizen of the United States. This sum was paid into an "immigrant fund" which was used to carry out the other provisions of the Act — the protection of newly-arrived aliens and the relief of those in distress. This tax was in no sense intended to act as a method of limiting immigration, the principle of unrestricted immigration upheld by the western States in 1870 still obtaining.<sup>90</sup>

Since 1882 there has been in Iowa no definite and official encouragement of immigration. Indeed, so far as the official opinion of the State is embodied in the Governor's biennial and inaugural messages the sentiment favors a restriction on the influx of foreigners.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Reports of the Immigration Commission*, Vol. XXI, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>90</sup> *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. XXII, p. 214.

<sup>91</sup> *Shambaugh's Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. VI, p. 9, Vol. VII, p. 117.