

# Chinese Seeking Removal of Ban On Immigration

By IRVING HIMEL

**D**ID you know that in the last 20 years only eight Chinese immigrants were admitted to Canada; that Canada is one of the few remaining countries in the world to discriminate against the Chinese in the matter of immigration? For a country that prides itself on its democracy and on its friendly attitude towards the Chinese people, it is hard to understand why we continue to do nothing about our Chinese Immigration Act.

It was in 1923 that the Chinese Immigration Act was first passed. Up until that time, it was possible for Chinese who could pay a head tax of \$500 to gain admission to Canada. Not only did the Chinese Immigration Act put a stop to this practice, but it went much further and barred virtually all Chinese from entering Canada. The only groups excepted were diplomats and their servants, merchants, students and repatriate Canadian-born Chinese children.

**Y**OU may ask what is so terrible about that? Try for a moment to put yourself in the place of the Chinese person. How would you like to be told that, first, under no circumstances could you enter Canada unless you were either attached to the diplomatic corps or were a merchant or student?

Second, that you are the only people to whom such law applies; in other words, we prefer people other than Chinese in Canada.

Third, if you were married and had your wife and children in China, you could not even bring them into Canada to live with you.

Fourth, if you had your mother and father, brothers or sisters or sweetheart in China, the door to Canadian entry was forever closed to them.

Is it any wonder that over 56,000 Chinese Canadian residents have registered to leave Canada since 1924; that, according to Charles Woodsworth, an authority on Chinese-Canadian affairs, "Our Chinese population is decreasing at a rapid rate?" Is it any wonder that the Chinese have no stomach for our Chinese Immigration Act?

**A**CCORDING to the 1941 census figures, there were 30,713 male Chinese in Canada, and 2,914 female. One need not be a sociologist to appreciate the meaning in human terms of these figures: a home without a wife and family for the average Chinese Canadian male; limited opportunities for female companionship and any sort of a satisfactory personal life.

Back in the 1870's, when the first Chinese settled here, we did everything but shanghai them to come to Canada. We fed them on sales talk of Canada, the land of milk and honey with gold lining the streets, to get them to cross the ocean and work our mines and construct our railroads. Then, when some people decided that they had served their purpose, the Chinese Immigration Act was conceived following an American precedent—to keep the Chinese out.

**T**O the credit of our neighbors to the south, it should at least be said that Congress in 1944, recognizing that an injustice had been done, repealed the American Chinese Exclusion Act. We, however, still cling to what Prime Minister King has admitted in the House of Commons was "a mistake."

That we are clinging to it to our detriment is borne out by these words of Dr. Woodsworth in his recent study of "Canada and the Orient": "To take advantage of future developments, Canada should at the earliest convenient moment prepare the basis for an increased share of the Oriental market, in particular the Chinese market. Two steps are of real importance. In the first place, the Dominion should remove the resentment caused by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923."

As labor and legion groups in the United States urged the repeal of the American Chinese Exclusion Act, so, it may be assumed, similar groups favor the repeal of our Chinese exclusion law. Let it be remembered that during the war the Chinese Canadians furnished an entire company of men for Canada's armed forces.

**S**PEAKING in the House of Commons on October 27, 1943, Rt. Hon. Mackenzie King used these words: "May I say that I believe the people of Canada realize that we have had no more gallant ally that we have had in the Chinese, that the sacrifices which the people of China have made in the past seven years have been an immense contribution to the security of this entire continent."

It is particularly revealing that about the same time, the head of another nation, in the person of the late President Roosevelt, addressed Congress on the subject of the Chinese. He urged action: "China's resistance does not depend alone on guns and planes and on attacks on land, on the sea and from the air. It is based as much on the spirit of her people and her faith in her allies. We owe it to the Chinese to strengthen that faith. One step in this direction is to wipe from the statute books those anachronisms in our law which forbid the immigration of Chinese people into this country and which bar Chinese residents from American citizenship."

The Chinese people, and surely justice-loving Canadians as well, look forward to the coming session of parliament and action from Mr. King.