

Immigration in the Progressive Era

Directions:

Review the Excerpt from Coolidge First Address to Congress, and President Coolidge's Proclamation of Quota's for the Immigration Act of 1924 below and write down 5 initial reactions.

Background

The increasing number of immigrants arriving in the United States during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era created pressures within society that found their largest political expression in the nativist movement. Beginning with the Chinese Exclusionary Act of 1882, the United States Congress passed increasingly more restrictive and wider reaching immigration regulations. The Immigration Act of 1917 created an Asiatic Barred Zone and expanded the listed reasons, either political ideologies or illness, which immigrants could not have or be associated with if they wished to gain entrance into the country. In 1921, the Emergency Quota Act, created a national origins formula, which set quota restrictions based on the proportional population of certain immigrant groups. The United States would only permit a number totaling 3% of the total population of certain groups as noted by the census of 1910, to enter the United States. The Immigration Act of 1924 made this formula more restrictive by basing these limits on the census of 1890 instead of the 1910 census and setting the amount at 2% instead of 3%. Calvin Coolidge signed the bill into law in 1924. In both his first address to congress and his proclamation upon signing the bill into law, Coolidge reveals his reasoning behind backing the law. In reviewing his statements, we gain an insight into the thinking, right or wrong, of our nation.

Excerpt from Coolidge first address to congress – December 6, 1923:

American institutions rest solely on good citizenship. They were created by people who had a background of self-government. New arrivals should be limited to our capacity to absorb them into the ranks of good citizenship. America must be kept American. For this I purpose, it is necessary to continue a policy of restricted immigration. It would be well to make such immigration of a selective nature with some inspection at the source, and based either on a prior census or upon the record of naturalization. Either method would insure the admission of those with the largest capacity and best intention of becoming citizens. I am convinced that our present economic and social conditions warrant a limitation of those to be admitted. We should find additional safety in a law requiring the immediate registration of all aliens. Those' who do not want to be partakers of the American spirit ought not to settle in America.

President Coolidge's Proclamation of Quota's for the Immigration Act of 1924

A Proclamation

Whereas it is provided in the act of Congress approved May 26, 1924, entitled "An act to limit the immigration of aliens into the United States, and for other purposes" that "The annual quota

of any nationality shall be two per centum of the number of foreign-born individuals of such nationality resident in continental United States as determined by the United States Census of 1890, but the minimum quota of any nationality shall be 100 (Sec. 11a)...

“The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of Labor, jointly, shall, as soon as feasible after the enactment of this act, prepare a statement showing the number of individuals of the various nationalities resident in continental United States as determined by the United States Census of 1890, which statement shall be the population basis for the purposes of subdivision (a) of section 11 (Sec. 12 b).

“Such officials shall, jointly, report annually to the President the quota of each nationality under subdivision (a) of section 11, together with the statements, estimates, and revisions provided for in this section. The President shall proclaim and make known the quotas so reported” (Sec. 12 e).

Now, therefore I, Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States of America acting under and by virtue of the power in me vested by the aforesaid act of Congress, do hereby proclaim and make known that on and after July 1, 1924, and throughout the fiscal year 1924-1925, the quota of each nationality provided in said act shall be as follows:

Country or Area of Birth Quota 1924-25

Afghanistan - 100	Albania - 100	China - 100	Czechoslovakia - 3,073
Andorra - 100	Arabian Peninsula - 100	Danzig, Free City of - 228	Denmark - 789
Armenia - 124	Australia (incl. Papua, Tasmania & all islands) - 121	Egypt - 100	Estonia - 124
Austria - 785	Belgium - 512	Ethiopia (Abyssinia) - 100	Finland - 170
Bhutan - 100	Bulgaria - 100	France - 3,954	Germany - 51,227
Cameroon (proposed British mandate) - 100	Cameroon (French mandate) - 100	Great Britain & Northern Ireland - 34,007	Greece - 100

Hungary - 473	Iceland - 100
India - 100	Iraq (Mesopotamia) - 100
Irish Free State - 28,567	Italy (incl. Rhodes, Dodecanesia & Castellorizzo) - 3,845
Japan - 100	Latvia - 142
Liberia - 100	Liechtenstein - 100
Lithuania - 344	Luxemburg - 100
Monaco - 100	Morocco (French & Spanish Zones & Tangier) - 100
Muscat (Oman) - 100	Nauru (proposed British mandate) - 100
Nepal - 100	Netherlands - 1,648
New Zealand (incl. appertaining islands) - 100	Norway - 6,453
New Guinea (& other Pacific islands under Australian mandate) - 100	Palestine (with Trans-Jordan, proposed British mandate) - 100
Persia - 100	Poland - 5,982

Portugal - 503	Ruanda & Urundi (Belgium mandate) - 100
Rumania - 603	Russia (European & Asiatic) - 2,248
Samoa, Western (proposed mandate of New Zealand) - 100	San Marino - 100
Siam - 100	South Africa, Union of - 100
South West Africa (proposed mandate of Union of South Africa) - 100	Spain - 131
Sweden - 9,561	Switzerland - 2,081
Syria & The Lebanon (French mandate) - 100	Tanganiyika (proposed British mandate) - 100
Togoland (proposed British mandate) - 100	Togoland (French mandate) - 100
Turkey - 100	Yap & other Pacific islands (under Japanese Mandate) - 100
Yugoslavia - 671	

GENERAL NOTE.-The immigration quotas assigned to the various countries and quota-areas should not be regarded as having any political significance whatever, or as involving recognition of new governments, or of new boundaries, or of transfers of territory except as the United States government has already made such recognition in a formal and official manner.