

IMMIGRATION IN CUBA

From the earliest days of the conquest there was a general feeling among Spaniards that it was desirable to populate the colonies with whites, provided always that they were from the right place and professed the correct religious sentiments. Restrictive laws against undesirables were more numerous, however, than those designed to encourage white settlement. Consequently, a large percentage of the whites that entered the colonies did so clandestinely. This was especially true of the Canary Islanders who formed a larger group of settlers in Cuba during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than any other type.¹ A few persons, however, received the necessary royal permission to enter the colonies, and the experience of one such group led to the first legislation on the subject which is treated in this article.

Toward the close of the seventeenth century about one hundred families migrated from the Canary Islands to Santo Domingo. Their hardships were reported by the governor of the latter (on February 12, 1684 and March 14, 1686) and a request was made for royal assistance for the immigrants. The result was a *cédula* commanding that "families from the Canary Islands arriving in Cuba and Puerto Rico be given land in locations that were not prejudicial to their health."² Why any reference to Santo Domingo was omitted does not appear.

Nevertheless, there was no grand rush to Cuba and Puerto Rico after the new legislation. Some thirty families founded the town of Matanzas in 1693,³ but most of the immigrants were men without families. Not until the disasters of the Seven Years' War shook the Spanish empire were any real

¹ This is the impression one receives from an examination of the marriage and baptismal records in the Archivo de la Catedral de la Habana. See also Fernando Ortiz, *Los negros esclavos* (Habana, 1916), pp. 22-23.

² José María Zamora, *Biblioteca de legislación ultramarina* (7 vols., Madrid, 1844-1849), II, 234-235. The *cédula* was dated April 11, 1788.

³ *Ibid.*, IV, 226.

colonization projects brought forward. The first of such was a settlement of East Floridians at a place called Ceiba Mocha in the jurisdiction of Matanzas, in 1764. About one hundred families were given farms of one *caballería*⁴ each, a loan of money sufficient to buy a slave, and sixty pesos for tools and other expenses.⁵ This colony, however, grew out of necessity and not of policy, as is shown by the attitude of the government toward other projects brought forward by private individuals.

In 1769 a Frenchman named Le Nègre de Mondragón presented a plan for introducing twelve thousand whites and an equal number of slaves into Santo Domingo over a period of twelve years. The whites were to be German, Flemish, Swiss and Italian Catholics. The king, upon the advice of the Council of the Indies, denied the petition on the ground that foreigners were not wanted in the colonies.⁶

Another petition was made in 1776 for a grant of land on Nipe Bay in eastern Cuba. The colonists were to be Spaniards, Creoles, Canary Islanders, Indians and Negroes brought by a Spanish company. The Negroes were to be slaves imported free of duty. The category of the Indians is not clear. Although foreign whites were not included in the list of prospective colonists, this petition fared no better than the one mentioned above.⁷ Nipe Bay waited another century for settlement.

Meanwhile, slave importations into Cuba were increasing, notwithstanding the fact that the number of slaves arriving was not equal to the demand. During most of the time that the slave trade with her colonies was legal, Spain depended on contracts with countries, companies or individuals to supply the Negroes. The last contract—one of two years' dura-

⁴ A *caballería* was then about thirty-two acres. It is customary now in Cuba to reckon three *caballerías* to a hundred acres.

⁵ Archivo Nacional de Cuba (hereinafter cited as A.N.C.), Realengos, legajo 67, no. 3. The history of this colony is summarized in a paper by the writer which was read before the St. Augustine Historical Society and Institute of Science on May 20, 1941.

⁶ José Antonio Saco, *Historia de la esclavitud de la raza africana en el Nuevo Mundo y especial de los países Américo-hispanos* (3rd edition, in Colección de libros cubanos, XXXVII-XL, Habana, 1938), III, 33, 226.

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 239-240 and III, 220-227.

tion—was made in 1786 with the English firm of Baker and Dawson. An effort at renewal was fruitless for the demand was so great that the planters and business men of Cuba were clamoring for free importation of slaves. Francisco de Arango y Parreño, already in Spain as the agent of the municipality of Habana, supported his fellow-countrymen and secured a *cédula* (February 28, 1789) opening the slave trade of Cuba to all persons, Spanish or foreign, for a period of two years, on the payment of an insignificant duty.

Still in Spain at the expiration of the *cédula*, Arango, acting on instructions from home, succeeded in obtaining a renewal for two years. This was early in 1791. In November came the disconcerting news that the Negroes in Haiti had risen in revolt and were massacring the whites. The Spanish government, foreseeing the same danger for Cuba, took steps to stop the trade altogether. Fearful of losing the hard-won privilege of unlimited importation, Arango essayed the difficult task of disproving the danger with the argument that instead of a sprinkling of whites in a sea of blacks, as in Saint Domingue, Cuba had nearly as many whites as Negroes; hence, there was no cause for alarm. Convinced by this reasoning, the Madrid government "issued with all confidence" another *cédula* which amplified the former permit.⁸

Arango's confidence, however, seems to have wavered, for scarcely two months after he secured the renewal of free importation, he submitted to the king a plan for developing Cuban agriculture which contained a significant paragraph entitled: "Causes of the scarcity of white population. The utility of promoting white immigration to restrain the Negroes. Means of obtaining it." The scarcity of villages, "which if located in convenient places would be a powerful check on the seditious ideas of rural slaves," was the burden of his message. He proposed a *junta de agricultura* to handle the matter, and suggested the policing of rural districts and making country life more attractive.⁹

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 1-18, 220-282. The last-mentioned *cédula* was dated November 21, 1791; the preceding one February 20.

⁹ Francisco de Arango y Parreño, *Obras* (2 vols., Habana, 1888), I, 97-100. Arango's plan was proposed on January 14, 1792.

Cuba was then governed by Don Lu  s de las Casas, who was at one with Arango's views on colonization. Before the proposal of the *junta de agricultura*, Las Casas had begun the program outlined for the new corporation. In his work, as in the writings of Arango, slave importation and white immigration are linked together. On the one hand, he promoted the organization of a company to receive slaves which had been disembarked in Habana and, on the other, strove to encourage the settlement of families from the Canary Islands on land donated by the government. The number of white settlers that came was disappointing, but it did not balk the plan of Las Casas for establishing new towns in unpopulated parts of the island. To him Pezuela attributed the founding of more than half the towns existing in Cuba in 1868. Some of these towns were populated by colonists from more thickly inhabited areas¹⁰ of Cuba, for petitions to the home government for permission to bring in settlers were denied.¹¹

More important for the future of white immigration than the immediate efforts of Don Lu  s de las Casas was the establishment during his administration of two corporations—the Real Sociedad Econ  mica de Amigos del Pa  s and the Real Consulado de Agricultura y Comercio—in 1793 and 1794 respectively. The latter was a modified form of the *junta de agricultura* which Arango had recommended. Similar in their functions, and duplicating their membership in many cases, the two organizations usually worked hand in hand. The first to act on the question of white immigration was the Sociedad Econ  mica. Soon after its establishment a committee was appointed to study measures for developing the eastern part of the island. A report of this committee included this paragraph:

Before the calamitous ruin of the Colony of Saint Domingue, and before the horrible destruction and unheard-of crimes committed there by the Negroes were known, the first thing that came to mind when

¹⁰ Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Historia de la isla de Cuba* (4 vols., Madrid, 1868-1878), III, 265-266.

¹¹ Felix Erenchun, *Anales de la isla de Cuba* (7 vols., Habana, 1856-1861), 1855, pp. 1033-1035.

the development of our Island was discussed was the free and unlimited introduction of Negroes. This was the conclusion reached from the great prosperity enjoyed by that unfortunate Colony—prosperity which was due entirely to the multitude of slaves that cultivated its soil. Now, however, experience has shown that, although for the general development of the Island the introduction of slaves should be favored, it is necessary to proceed carefully with the census figures in hand, in order that the number of Negroes may not only be prevented from exceeding that of the whites, but that it may not be permitted to equal that number.¹²

At the time this was written the Consulado existed only on paper, for although the *cédula* providing for its creation was signed on April 4, 1794, the first session was not held until April of the following year. Even then the members were slow to take up the question of white immigration. In fact, the minutes of the corporation show that, while they trembled for fear of slave revolts, they were more interested in increasing their human chattels than in promoting the entry of whites. Two cases will illustrate the trend of their thoughts.

Serious consideration was given to a proposition by Philip Allwood to introduce even more Negroes than were coming under the free importation privileges.¹³ The proposition was finally rejected, but after long discussion the following recommendations were adopted to encourage plantation owners to buy female slaves: (1) to remove the sales tax on female slaves and retain it on males; (2) to oblige owners of female slaves to sell them to the owners of their husbands; and (3) to recommend “to his Majesty the merit of persons who distinguish themselves by settling Negroes on their plantations, taking into consideration the number of married couples and the increase obtained from them.”¹⁴

Not until 1796 did the Consulado take up the question of promoting white immigration, and then only because a serious slave revolt emphasized the danger that threatened. The

¹² *Memorias de la sociedad económica*, 1794, pp. 54-55. The report was made on November 5, 1794.

¹³ A.N.C., Junta de Fomento, libro 161, p. 16. The proposition was discussed on July 8, 1795.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

debate that took place is interesting. The Marqués de Casa Peñalver, after stating his misgivings, suggested that an equilibrium be maintained between whites and blacks by limiting the introduction of Negroes, and by importing whites. For the latter he suggested Canary Islanders and Indians from New Spain.¹⁵ A half century later both Indians and Chinese were imported as "white colonists"!

Arango took issue with the Marqués and read a paper he had prepared four years earlier to quiet the fears of the Spanish government, to which he added some new observations. England and Jamaica, he said, had been frightened on hearing of the revolts in Haiti, but closer examination of the situation dissipated their fears. Cuba was in even less danger than Jamaica because its large white population would prevent any such results as those of the neighboring island. He was supported by Nicolás Calvo, who added that the revolts in Haiti were successful only because of the revolution in France itself, and because of discord sowed by traitors.

Las Casas wanted to encourage Canary Islanders to bring their wives, but his efforts toward obtaining an appropriation for that purpose had been unsuccessful. As to the Indians, he was sure the home government would not agree to their importation. At the mention of Indians, Casa Peñalver declared himself ready to pay two reales per day wages and the passage of such laborers, if contracted to work for five years. Las Casas thought that the corporation should restrict its activities to promoting white immigration—not because he feared slave revolts, but because it had always been his policy to encourage the settlement of the island by white families.

The other members of the Consulado, although not exactly enthusiastic, favored encouraging white immigration, but were also emphatic in asking that the slave trade be promoted. The

¹⁵ Casa Peñalver's idea about Indians may have sprung from the following announcement in the *Papel periódico de la Havana* for November 21, 1790: "In the King's Frigate Venus, which arrived on Thursday from Vera Cruz, have come six Meca Indian girls who will be placed under the care of persons of their sex who are proper persons to instruct them in Religion, which persons may have the advantage of their services. Those who wish to contribute to this pious work should apply to the Governor and Captain General, and they will receive the girls on the condition that they give a receipt for them and assume the obligation to report to the said Superior authority in case the girls die or run away."

discussion was closed by Arango's suggestion that severe police regulations be adopted to prevent slave uprisings, and that measures be taken to encourage white immigration. Both motions were carried and a committee was appointed to execute the latter,¹⁶ while the former was a matter for the captain general's decision.

The report of this committee is indicative of opinion then prevailing among planters:

But the first precaution to be taken is without doubt the promotion with prudence and discernment of white colonization in the rural districts. . . . We see that almost all free persons live near the towns, and that the Negro slaves and a handful of whites are the ones that produce the wealth of the colony. It is necessary, therefore, for the Government to take an interest in remedying this evil, which to an agricultural country depending on slavery is of the utmost importance.

The remedy, according to the committee, consisted of establishing churches surrounded by twenty or more families, at convenient points in the rural districts. To encourage settlements at these places, donations of free lots for homes exempt from sales taxes for ten years was suggested.¹⁷

For the next twenty years only occasional mention was made of this subject. Half a century later José Antonio Saco lamented it in these terms:

The Cubans, allured by the extraordinary prices of sugar and coffee in the markets of Europe (due to the disaster in Haiti), multiplied their plantations. And, although they should have been restrained, or more circumspect in view of the bloody catastrophe in the neighboring island, the prosperity of the moment blinded them to the dangers of the future. What a misfortune that the good patricians of that epoch did not ask for the abolition of the slave trade, and clamor energetically for the importation of white colonists! Had they promoted so great a good, the present generation would bless their names, and adore them as the saviors of the country. But even in the midst of the terrors instilled in them by the destruction of Saint Domingue, they still longed for negroes, believing that without them there could be no prosperity for Cuba.¹⁸

¹⁶ A.N.C., Junta de Fomento, libro 161, pp. 144-145.

¹⁷ Erenchun, *op. cit.*, 1855, pp. 1033-1035.

¹⁸ Saco, *op. cit.*, III, 29.

For some time the troubles in the neighboring island promised to populate Cuba with whites. First from Haiti, and later from Santo Domingo, came thousands of refugees fleeing the vengeance of the blacks. For over a decade both French and Spanish refugees were permitted to land, and the former soon had the eastern part of Cuba blossoming with coffee flowers on extensive plantations. Toward the end of 1807, however, Charles IV, fearful of the designs of Napoleon, ordered all foreigners to be expelled. The order was not strictly enforced at first, but a break with France soon necessitated more decisive action. Even then the expulsion of unnaturalized Frenchmen was carried out with moderation until riots between French and Spanish broke out in Habana in March, 1809. After that it continued more rapidly. The number of naturalized Frenchmen was large, however, and their descendents have played prominent rôles in the history of the island. French blood and names are still easily traced.¹⁹

The expulsion of the French was scarcely completed when news from Spain of the proposal of the Cortes to abolish not only the slave trade but slavery itself brought forth a wave of protest from all important organizations and individuals in Habana. As spokesman for them, Arango, while condemning the slave trade, maintained that caution and long study should mark its termination. The gradual abolition of the trade by England and the United States was cited as a good example to follow. Those countries had not acted until they had plenty of slaves. Cuba did not have sufficient labor, and since less than one third of its slaves were females, reproduction could not supply the need. He even deplored slavery itself, but treated it as a necessary evil, lamenting the failure of previous governments to permit the introduction of foreign whites. On the last point he protested: "We tolerate, and have always tolerated the entry of Negro infidels, many of whom die infidels, but we cannot suffer the entry of white Catholics unless they be Spaniards."²⁰

¹⁹ Pezuela, *op. cit.*, III, 345, 392-400; José Antonio Portuondo, *La inmigración francesa* (published as an appendix to *Proceso de la cultura cubana*, Habana, 1938), pp. 71-85.

²⁰ Arango, *Obras*, II, 215-217; Saco, *op. cit.*, III, 91-103.

Although the abolition of the trade, and of slavery was mentioned occasionally in the Cortes between 1810 and 1814, no real danger to its existence arose from that source.

The terror of the slaveholders was renewed by the discovery of a plot in which a free Negro, José Antonio Aponte, figured. The leaders were executed but the desire of the slaveholders for gain was not purged. They were led, however, to support measures for providing a counterweight to the colored element under the guidance of no less an intellect than Alejandro Ramírez.²¹

This gentleman was promoted to the *superintendencia de real hacienda* in Cuba after a distinguished career in Guatemala and Puerto Rico.²² As intendant of Puerto Rico he obtained, with the assistance of Ramón Power, the *Cédula de gracias* of August 10, 1815, which opened the ports of that island to foreign commerce and gave special encouragement to white immigrants. Foreigners of the Catholic faith willing to take the oath of allegiance to Spain were allowed four and two-sevenths *fanegas*²³ of land for each member of the family, and half as much for each slave imported. They were exempt from all taxes for fifteen years and from poll taxes forever.²⁴ Although the land grants were negligible, the tax exemptions were not to be held in contempt. Most significant was the fact that the *cédula* marked a radical departure from Spain's age-old policy of exclusion.²⁵

Ramírez was scarcely settled in Habana, where he arrived in July, 1815, in company with the new captain general, José Cienfuegos, when he began agitating for white colonization. His former experiences had schooled him in the knack of co-operation with other administrative officers. It is not surprising, therefore, that by September 12, 1815, he had succeeded in organizing the *Junta de Población Blanca*.²⁶

²¹ Pezuela, *op. cit.*, III, 427-429; *Boletín del archivo nacional*, VIII, 123-135.

²² Zamora, *op. cit.*, III, 619-620.

²³ A *fanega* was equivalent to about 1.59 acres.

²⁴ Zamora, *op. cit.*, II, 234-239.

²⁵ The encouragement given to Americans to settle in Louisiana after 1788 was from necessity and not from policy. See D. C. and Roberta Corbitt (eds.), "Papers from Spanish Archives Relating to Tennessee and the Old Southwest," East Tennessee Historical Society *Publications*, 1937-1941.

²⁶ A.N.C., Junta de Fomento, libro 205.

The new *junta* (most of whose members were drawn from the older organizations) was independent of the Consulado and the Sociedad Económica but, under the leadership of Ramírez, the three worked toward the same end. These, together with the *Ayuntamiento* of Habana, petitioned the king for a grant of the same privileges as those enjoyed by Puerto Rico under the *cédula de gracias*. Representations on the subject were sent to the Crown by Ramírez and Captain General Cienfuegos.²⁷ The result was the *cédulas* of October 21, 1817, and February 10, 1818, treating white colonization, were issued. The first was almost a verbatim copy of the sections on immigration in the grant to Puerto Rico. It differed only in the amount of land to be given to the settlers, since a specific acreage was not mentioned. The captain general and the intendant were instructed to "practice what was convenient." Attention was called especially to the eastern part of Cuba where *realengos*, or royal lands, were more abundant,²⁸ and where there was "more urgent necessity for increasing the number of honorable white colonists." Ramírez and Cienfuegos were designated to select a committee of three persons to assist them in deciding on the "urgent and judicious measures to be taken." Among these were the promotion of matrimony among the settlers and, since Spanish subjects were preferable, steps to attract immigrants from the Peninsula and from the Balearic and Canary Islands.²⁹

But white colonization was destined to be wedded to the slave question. On September 23, 1817, Spain and England had entered into a treaty for the termination of the slave trade. On January 13 of the next year, however, José Pizarro, the negotiating minister, sent to the colonies secret instructions which read:

In order to avoid violence by the English, and to provide for the future increase of the Negro race, you will take particular care that those who fit out expeditions to Africa, and the ships that are used

²⁷ *Ibid.*, libro 170, p. 215; Zamora, *op. cit.*, II, 244.

²⁸ See D. C. Corbitt, "Mercedes and Realengos: A Survey of the Public Land System in Cuba," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, XIX (1939), 262-285.

²⁹ Zamora, *op. cit.*, II, 244-248; *Boletín del archivo nacional* (January-December, 1923), pp. 112-113.

be Spanish, and that at least one-third of the cargo be females, to the end that, by propagating the species, the abolition of the trade may be less noticeable in the future.³⁰

In view of this advice and of the problem of financing white colonization, Ramírez and Cienfuegos dealt with both matters in a joint disposition of February 7, 1818, which provided for a tax of six pesos on every male slave introduced into Cuba within the next three years when the treaty should go into effect, the proceeds to be placed at the disposal of the *Junta de Población Blanca*. Female slaves were exempt from all duties.³¹ Since more than fifty-six thousand slaves were landed in Havana between 1818 and 1821,³² it is needless to say that the *Junta* had full coffers.

Regulations for incoming settlers included provisions for transportation, lodging, hospital care, and three reales per day for three months for adults arriving within four years. Minors were to be given the same care and half the allowance. For the protection of their health the immigrants were sent, upon arrival, to Guanabacoa, Güines, Matanzas or Guanajay away from the less hygienic capital.³³

The first, and by far the most important colony, founded under the auspices of Cienfuegos and Ramírez, was that established on Jagua Bay, named afterwards for the former, and now one of the most important cities of Cuba with a population of about 40,000. Luís de Clouet³⁴ made a contract with the government for one hundred *caballerías* of land to be distributed among forty families that he was to bring to the island. Every family was to receive one *caballería* for each member over eighteen, for which, after two years, one hundred pesos were to be paid, plus four annual payments of

³⁰ Pezuela, *op. cit.*, IV, 49-50.

³¹ Zamora, *op. cit.*, II, 250; *Boletín del archivo nacional*, XXII, 125-126. It is of interest to note that on April 25, 1818, Portugal levied a tax of 12 pesos 2 reales on all slaves introduced into Brazil, the proceeds to go for promoting white immigration.

³² Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario geográfico, estadístico, histórico de la isla de Cuba* (4 vols., Habana, 1863-1864), II, 284.

³³ *Boletín del archivo nacional*, XXII, 119-121.

³⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Luís de Clouet was a native of Louisiana, but more recently attached to the general staff in Habana.

twenty-five pesos and ten more of fifty. Clouet's remuneration was thirty pesos for each adult and fifteen for each minor. In case the immigrants were brought from Europe the transportation allowance was to be doubled. During the first two years each one over ten years of age was to receive the navy ration allowance of three and one-half reales per day; others, a half ration. By 1823 some 845 white settlers had arrived in the colony, proceeding from Bordeaux, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Santo Domingo, Louisiana and other places.³⁵ The growth thereafter was slow but steady.

For his services Clouet was also to receive the *gracias y mercedes* granted by the laws of the Indies to the founders of new towns. These included civil and criminal jurisdiction over the colony during his lifetime, and the right to appoint municipal officers, these privileges to be passed on to one generation of heirs at his decease. Other advantages, although not listed as such, included the right to introduce slaves, agricultural implements, and provisions for the colony free of duty, and other articles on the payment of half the regular duties. Ration allowances were paid to the colonists through Clouet.³⁶

Another colony was planted in the province of Santa Clara where the *Junta de Población Blanca* had purchased 488 *caballerías* (about 15,000 acres) of land on a plantation named "Santo Domingo" at the bargain price of 15,000 pesos. Distribution was made on terms similar to those of Cienfuegos but rapid growth did not follow. As late as 1828 its population was only four hundred and seventy-two.³⁷ Less encouraging, however, was the colony on Guantánamo Bay (where "one thousand *caballerías* or thirty-two thousand *acres de los Estados Unidos*" were set aside from the *realengos*) which, during the life of Ramírez, was little more than a custom-house that he established there. A similar case was that of Mariel some thirty miles west of Habana in what is now Pinar

³⁵ Enrique Edo y Llop, *Memoria histórica de Cienfuegos y su jurisdicción* (2d. ed., Habana, 1888), pp. 25-69; Pezuela, *Historia*, IV, 56-57; Zamora, *op. cit.*, IV, 1-2.

³⁶ The contract is printed in *Boletín del archivo nacional*, XXII, 132-136.

³⁷ *Boletín del archivo nacional*, XXII, 165-171.

del Río Province. Nuevitas in the Camagüey area developed more rapidly under a plan resembling that of the first two.³⁸

The development of all the new settlements, and of Cuba as a whole, was seriously handicapped by the anomalous land system of the island, which had its origin in the "circular" grants made by the municipalities in the sixteenth century. Over a period of about two hundred years a large part of the island, measured off in circles of one or two leagues radius, was granted in usufruct. Careless location of centers, and the consequent overlapping of boundaries, led to litigations that three centuries of legislation have failed to solve. Furthermore, the grants were to pass in joint ownership to the heirs of the original holders. The experience of the *Junta de Población Blanca* with its colony at Santo Domingo illustrates the confusion that reigned. It was believed at the time of the purchase in 1818 to consist of 488 *caballerías*, but a survey made after many lawsuits in 1832, revealed only 266. Furthermore, several settlers had been granted land that did not belong to the government, for which it was necessary to indemnify the rightful owners.³⁹

An event of disastrous effect on the white colonization movement was the restoration of the Constitution of 1812 in 1820. Matters were temporarily taken out of the hands of the *Junta de Población Blanca* and given to the *Diputaciones Provinciales* which, occupied with the newly organized municipalities, had little time for anything else, and before the *Junta* regained power in 1823, Ramírez, its moving spirit, was dead. White colonization languished for a generation, until another force and another motive drew attention to the problem.

The Peninsular government took note of the situation and in April of 1827 manifested to the members of the *Junta* the advisability of levying a small duty on some exports for the purpose of securing funds. Five years later there was proposed a four per cent tax on court costs which netted, between 1833 and 1842, over 340,000 pesos.⁴⁰

³⁸ *Ibid.*, XXII, 146-171.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, XXII, 169. See Corbitt, "Mercedes and Realengos," for a discussion of the land problem.

⁴⁰ *Boletín del archivo nacional*, XXII, 124; Zamora, *op. cit.*, I, 94, and II, 250.

Increased funds led to little activity on the part of the *Junta*, however. An anonymous contemporary characterized the situation thus:

A serious charge against the colonial authorities is that of having neglected white immigration since the death of the prudent and able Intendant don Alejandro Ramírez, for although in the time of that virtuous functionary a *Junta protectora de población* of our race was formed, years and more years have passed without its members having met. The funds, which by Royal decree of September 17, 1817 were decreed to promote the increase of the said population, and those that are derived from a tax on court costs, have been diverted to ends other than those specified, and no advantage whatever has been obtained from the privileges and exemptions granted to new settlers by the said Royal *Cédula*. On the contrary, instead of an increase in the white population, that of the negroes has grown in the district then chosen as the site of the new colony: namely Cienfuegos.⁴¹

In justice to the *Junta* its part in the founding of a colony in the Isle of Pines should be mentioned. As early as 1778, agitation for a colony there was begun by a planter, but no action was taken for half a century. Under definite instructions from Spain the government of Cuba set aside ten *caballerías* of land near the village of Nueva Gerona for distribution as free building lots. Andrés de Acosta donated half a square league and the government purchased a large plantation for distribution as farms which were to be rent free for ten years. After that period they were to be paid for at the rate of one hundred pesos per *caballería*. The number of settlers was small. A few political and military prisoners became acquainted with the island, making it their home upon release. Much later American real estate companies, advertising the delights of "Treasure Island," were the real colonizers of the Isle of Pines.⁴²

In the meantime a considerable stream of whites was entering Cuba, but through no efforts of the *Junta de Población*

⁴¹ "Estado de la población blanca y de color de la Isla de Cuba en 1859," published as an appendix to Saco, *op. cit.*, IV, 37-39. This unsigned article contains references to the writings of "the virtuous youth, José Antonio Saco."

⁴² For the documents on this colony see *Boletín del archivo nacional*, XXII, 154-160. The American phase of the island began after the Spanish-American War and has little connection with the subject of this study.

Blanca. Most of them came from Spain and the Canary Islands as laborers, although some entered from the United States and other countries. By the thirties considerable foreign capital was invested in the island, and with it came foreign laborers, foremen, superintendents, engineers, and investors. The construction of the first railroad is a case in point. Promoted by the *Junta de Fomento* (formerly the *Consulado*), it was built with British capital, under the direction of an American engineer who supervised laborers, mostly Irish and German, recruited in New York.⁴³ Some thirty-five thousand whites entered Cuba between 1834 and 1839 and within the same lustrum about twenty-seven thousand slaves also arrived in questionable ways.⁴⁴

In spite of these figures the shortage of hands was acute and the remedy not patent. Britain had extracted from the reluctant Spanish government, on June 28, 1835, a second treaty designed to put teeth into the former which had been violated with impunity. Certain provisions of the second promising to reduce the importation of Negroes led to a renewed interest in white labor. The contrast between the motives of Ramírez and Cienfuegos and those of the leaders of the new generation is shown in the following quotation:

Since by the treaty celebrated with the English Government on June 28, 1835 the traffic in Negro slaves from the African coast was abolished, it cannot be hidden from the Government of Her Majesty what will be the sinister result of so philanthropic a measure on the agriculture of that island, and that the more scrupulous and exact the observance of this prohibition, the greater must be the crisis experienced by agriculture. Her Majesty, who always directs all her endeavors toward the welfare of the inhabitants of the island, and knows the importance of this serious business, would like to find the means to avoid any injury to fortune and wealth that this incident may occasion, so that timely precautions may be taken to the end that, since by the said treaty the annual importation of slave labor for agriculture will be diminished, other free laborers may be obtained by some means.⁴⁵

⁴³ D. C. Corbitt, "El primer ferrocarril construido en Cuba," *Revista cubana*, XII (April-June, 1938), 179-195.

⁴⁴ See footnote 41.

⁴⁵ *Boletín del archivo nacional*, XXII, 160-162. From a royal order of April 28, 1838.

The means to be considered for the prevention of a labor shortage was the "promotion of white colonization, a politic objective . . . and of known utility." The captain general was instructed to study and report on three points: the means of supplying the deficiency of laborers caused by the treaty; the state of the work of the *Junta de Población Blanca*; and the means of turning the stream of Canary Islanders from Brazil, Costa Firme and other places, to Cuba.

For advice the captain general turned to the *Junta de Fomento*. The members of this body were planters and businessmen eager to increase agricultural production, whose primary interest, although they had a general desire to see the entry of enough whites to counterbalance the blacks, lay in securing a supply of laborers. It is not surprising, then, that their observations, instead of laying emphasis on the colonization of white farmers, stressed the importance of white laborers. On the basis of their recommendations, which were forwarded to Spain by the captain general, orders were issued changing the direction of official efforts. One order, signed September 27, 1841, after expressing concern about the "fears inspired . . . by abolitionist ideas that were being born" in Cuba, instructed the *Junta de Fomento*

to take care that the tranquility and peace enjoyed by its inhabitants be not altered: to occupy itself in promoting the immigration of honorable and industrious Europeans: not to forget that the Government must fulfill faithfully the stipulations of the treaties in force about the abolition of the slave trade.⁴⁶

Although this order virtually transferred the work of the *Junta de Población Blanca* to the *Junta de Fomento*, the former was not officially abolished until February 21 of the next year when a royal order

placed under the direction of the *Junta de Fomento*, not the system followed up to now in that island, but the duty of preparing and adopting measures for giving occupation to useful laborers from the Peninsula, its adjacent islands, or from other points in Europe, who voluntarily go to settle there, seeing to it, if possible, that some of them be employed on selected sugar plantations, completely separated

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, XXII, 162-163.

from the Negroes, in order to learn the results of this kind of experiments when directed economically.⁴⁷

Ironically enough, just as the *Junta de Población Blanca* was receiving its death blow, an opportunity presented itself for the foundation of a colony on the Ramírez-Cienfuegos plan, but the government failed to take advantage of it. An association had been formed in Florida by a number of persons who had enjoyed Spanish rule before 1821, for the purpose of promoting a settlement in Cuba. On August 28, 1841, a petition was presented to the captain general, requesting a grant of land near the north coast for some one hundred families who were ready to emigrate with their slaves. The cedula of October 31, 1817, was mentioned by the Floridians as the basis of their hopes. Receiving no reply from the Cuban authorities, the request was renewed on July 22, 1843. Within the intervening twenty-three months immigration had been turned over to the *Junta de Fomento*, which made some fruitless efforts to provide for the colonists at Nuevitas. After a year of reports and investigations the matter was dropped. A law favorable to homesteading in Florida, in the meantime, had greatly lessened the desires of the residents to emigrate.⁴⁸

The abolition of the *Junta de Población Blanca* marks the end of an era in the history of Cuban immigration. At this time both abolitionists and pro-slavery men joined hands in search of a substitute for slavery. The latter were moved, of course, by the ever-lessening supply of slaves; the efforts of the former took the form of an attack on the institution. In the thirties the famous literary-reformist circle with Domingo Delmonte at its center, began attacking slavery with every weapon at its disposal—books, pamphlets, articles, and poems.⁴⁹ Feeling that there was little hope of abolition as

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, XXII, 163-164. This marks the beginning of official recognition of the movement for a sugar-mill served by white labor.

⁴⁸ The papers concerned with the proposed colony are in A.N.C., Junta de Fomento, legajo 136, no. 8395. The signers of the petition were D. W. Whitehurst, Joseph Hernández, John C. Cleland, J. R. Evartson, S. F. Jones, James Keogh, J. Weedon, and David R. Dunham.

⁴⁹ For example, the *Colección de artículos* and *Francisco* by Anselmo Suárez y Romero, the poems of José Jacinto Milanés, and the *Autobiografía* of the slave Juan Francisco Manzano, to mention only a few.

long as the slave trade continued in open defiance of laws and treaties, the Delmonte group essayed the difficult task of convincing planters that free white labor would be more desirable and profitable, sustaining that, given sufficient white laborers, slavery would die a natural death. A detailed examination of their writings is beside the point, but one project deserves mention, not only for itself but for what grew out of it, i.e., what contemporaries called "a normal sugar-mill," or one served by white labor, using cane produced by white owners of small farms.

The ideal plantation, according to José María Dau, the chief exponent of the plan, should contain thirty *caballerías*, which, it was estimated, could be brought under cultivation for about \$1,100. This price included land, tools, houses and clearing. As an experiment it was suggested that Canary Islanders be imported and settled on the land, four families to the *caballería*. These families were to purchase their parcels at cost, plus six per cent interest until the land was paid for. The promoter of the experiment was to build the mill and buy the cane at a fixed price. Dau estimated the total cost to the promoter at \$67,850, on which an annual profit of \$14,000 might be expected, while the settlers could easily clear \$703 each from the cane planted on two-thirds of their eight-acre tracts, the remainder of the land being devoted to vegetables for market and home consumption.⁵⁰

Criticisms were numerous, especially as to the diminutiveness of the farms, but in time there appeared landowners who were disposed to experiment. Anastasio de Orozco wrote to Delmonte upon the arrival of 249 Canary Islanders in Trinidad that many more were expected, and made the following comments:

We make use of the legal means among which are the treaties of 1818, that of Martínez de la Rosa, and especially of a Royal order communicated for its fulfillment to all authorities in the usual manner,

⁵⁰ José María Dau, "Ingenio sin esclavos," *Memorias de la Sociedad Económica*, 1837, pp. 270-280. This appeared as a pamphlet in the same year and was translated almost verbatim in David Turnbull, *Travels in the West. Cuba with Notices of Puerto Rico and the Slave Trade* (London, 1840), pp. 261-265. Another article on the subject by Dau is in the *Memorias* for 1838, pp. 100-116.

and that of going to the extreme of having the priests show the sin of buying Negroes. . . .⁵¹

By 1841 Catalans, as well as Canary Islanders, were being imported to the discontent of some of the resident fellow-countrymen of the former, who protested that "they did not want any Catalan Negroes here."⁵² Gaspar de Betancourt, patriot and reformer from Camagüey, made a beginning with five Catalans and expressed his intention of increasing the number to fifteen or twenty as soon as his overseer could "manage" them.⁵³ A short time later he declared himself ready to try twenty-five Canary Islanders on one of his ranches and a like number on another, his plan being to work out a system similar to the "normal sugar-mill."⁵⁴ Nor was he content to try alone. A constant stream of articles on the subject flowed from his pen, and his tireless efforts to persuade other landowners to follow his example fill his correspondence with Delmonte for the next few years.

A suspicion on the part of the Spanish officials that the advocates of white labor were also advocates of independence was an impediment to the movement. The government feared that, the menace of a Negro revolt removed, the ties that bound Cuba to the mother-country would be strained, and grounds for misgivings there must have been. David Turnbull, an Englishman identified with the anti-slavery group in Cuba, wrote:

The great object of the Creole patriots in Cuba is to increase the white population, and thus render further importation of Africans unnecessary. Without denying them the credit of philanthropic motives, it cannot be concealed that the desire for independence may be traced through all their reasonings, just as it is notorious that the sentiment is deeply implanted in their hearts.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Centón epistolario de Domingo Delmonte*. [Edición de la Academia de la Historia de Cuba.] (5 vols., Habana, 1924-1938), IV, 79-80. Orozco wrote on August 7, 1839. He seems to have attributed the treaty of June 28, 1835, to Francisco Martínez de la Rosa.

⁵² *Ibid.*, V, 12.

⁵³ Betancourt to Delmonte, April 18, 1841, *ibid.*, V, 19.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, V, 20, 23-24.

⁵⁵ Turnbull, *op. cit.*, p. 121. Turnbull became British consul in Habana shortly after his book was printed in 1840. From then until 1842 he was the storm center of the slavery question in the island and was finally forced to leave.

Betancourt denied the charge,⁵⁶ but today he ranks as one of Cuba's greatest heroes in her struggle for independence. One of his letters reveals still another motive. He suggested to Delmonte a plan whereby several ranches, worth fifty to eighty thousand pesos, could be bought and resold as small farms to white immigrants, netting a profit of four hundred thousand pesos on the land and additional thousands on passage money, estimating that each hundred thousand pesos invested could be converted into a million. This project was tied up with another for putting a railroad through the section where the ranches were to be purchased.⁵⁷

Betancourt continued through 1841, 1842, and part of 1843 to procure Catalans and Canary Islanders by every means possible, and to settle them on the ranches he already owned, while a number of other investors were persuaded to follow suit. Just as prospects were brightening the government censors stopped the publication of anything on the subject of white colonization. The following complaint was wrung from Betancourt:

The censorship does not let me say anything about colonization. . . . What does this mean? It is plain that the truth is not wanted: that only Negro laborers are wanted in the country: that we will be carried to the devil, if the force of public opinion and morality does not make modern people stop buying Negroes and bring in whites.⁵⁸

Slave smuggling, in the meantime, was becoming more frequent than ever under the "wide view" taken by Captain General Leopoldo O'Donnell. A slave revolt, however, or a threat of a slave revolt, turned the current of opinion. Whether or not there was a widespread plot for an uprising in 1843, it is certain that sporadic outbreaks occurred on several plantations near Matanzas, and that a number of whites were killed. Energetic action by Captain General O'Donnell and his subordinates restored order, but many Negroes were killed, some with the greatest cruelty. So thoroughly was the fear of the whites aroused that petitions from a number of

⁵⁶ Betancourt to Delmonte, June 20, 1841, *Centón*, V, 31-32.

⁵⁷ *Idem to idem*, December 25, 1841, *ibid.*, V, 60-61.

⁵⁸ *Idem to idem*, April 30, 1843, *ibid.*, V, 94-95.

planters demanded the enforcement of the treaties abolishing the slave trade—treaties which they had been breaking deliberately for years. One petition, signed by ninety-three planters, called attention to the fact that 498,000 of Cuba's 660,000 inhabitants were slaves—shades of Haiti's martyrdom! The contraband slave trade was denominated "a stain on our civilization, a horrible abyss in which all our hopes for future security and well-being are buried, a hydra that frightens those capitalists who would come to settle on our soil."⁵⁹

The captain general checked a petition circulating near Habana,⁶⁰ but was willing to have the matter studied by the proper authorities. Early in January, 1844, he addressed a questionnaire to a prominent slaveholder, Domingo de Aldama. The reply recommended the abolition of the trade, but in guarded terms.⁶¹ In the Sociedad Económica, however, the government was severely criticized for its laxness in this matter.⁶² The question, referred to the committee on white population of the *Junta de Fomento*, which had been responsible for white immigration for the past two years, produced the following resolutions: to receive five hundred agricultural laborers over a period of two years, and all skilled laborers that presented themselves; to pay thirty-two pesos for the passage of each laborer, and to provide each person upon arrival with eight pesos with which to buy "shoes, a straw hat, and clothes suitable to the climate"; and to provide him with food and lodging for one month. The immigrants were to repay only half of the forty pesos advanced, and, if at the end of a month jobs could not be found, they were to be employed by the *Junta* at four pesos a month, plus food and shelter.⁶³ Furthermore, the *Junta*, moved to encourage private enterprise by adopting the plans already suggested by the Delmonte circle, offered a prize of twelve

⁵⁹ The petition was printed in Saco, *Historia de la esclavitud* (1938 ed.), IV, 195-201. See also D. C. Corbitt, "A Petition for the Continuation of O'Donnell as Captain General of Cuba," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, XVI (1936), 537-543.

⁶⁰ Saco, *op. cit.*, IV, 202-206.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 207-222.

⁶² *Ibid.*, IV, 223-240.

⁶³ A.N.C., *Junta de Fomento*, libro 193, pp. 111-113.

thousand pesos to the first three plantation owners who should settle fifty white families on their land, and half as much to those securing twenty-five families. A second prize of twenty thousand pesos was offered for the establishment of a sugar-mill served exclusively by white labor, domestic servants included.⁶⁴

A contract between the *Junta* and Domingo Goicuría called for the importation by the latter of five hundred white hands who would agree to remain in Cuba for three years.⁶⁵ Although Goicuría himself went to Spain in search of immigrants, he met with such meager success that in March of 1846 the *Junta de Fomento* accepted an offer by Zulueta and Company of six hundred coolies to be brought from China.⁶⁶ In the summer of the same year the committee on white population announced to the *Junta* that, including the six hundred coolies, all efforts to introduce "white" laborers had produced a total of only 1,673.⁶⁷ The discouraged members of the corporation then turned their minds back to Africa, the only sure source of labor that they knew about. A resolution was adopted on December 10 to petition the queen for a modification of the treaty with England. The next move depended on circumstances.

The experimental shipment of coolies arrived in June, 1847, but the early reports on the new hands were far from satisfactory. The *Junta* was prepared, therefore, to listen when Simón Peón of Yucatán asked to be allowed to bring in Indians with which to compete for the prize offered for the development of a sugar-mill served by whites. Besides the prize, however, he also wanted three ounces of gold for each Indian imported. The *Junta*, after consideration, decided that the demands were excessive; nevertheless, the Spanish consular agents in Yucatán were instructed to report on the feasibility of obtaining laborers from that quarter. Their

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 115-117.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁶⁶ A.N.C., Junta de Fomento, libro 195, pp. 21-37 and legajo 195, no. 8746. The importation of coolies is the subject of a larger study in preparation by the present writer.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, libro 195, pp. 50-51. The report of the committee was dated July 18, 1846.

replies were not encouraging, but one of them ventured to suggest that prisoners of war might be purchased. The *Junta* refused even to consider such a plan. A private company, thinking to profit by the idea, however, arranged with the governor of Yucatán to purchase captured Indians. Its example was followed by others and some two thousand were imported during the next decade, some of whom were obtained by kidnapping.⁶⁸

About 1848 there began to arrive representatives of that sturdy race known as *Gallegos*, or Galicians. In 1852 one Urbano Feijóo de Sotomayor laid before the authorities a plan for a company with a capital stock of 100,000 pesos with which to import 50,000 of these Spanish "Irishmen." Permission was granted and importation was begun, the laborers being landed in Habana to the sound of their native music. But after the first few thousand had arrived, difficulties arose. One group of about two hundred broke into open mutiny, while others demonstrated their discontent in different ways. Suit was finally brought against the company for non-fulfillment of contracts and damages were awarded to the extent of 11,000 pesos, whereupon the company went into bankruptcy.⁶⁹

Another patch in this crazy quilt was the proposal, in the middle fifties, to import negro apprentices from Africa. The plan was never adopted, probably because of the attitude of Britain, which had also taken a hand against the Indian enterprise. It lived only long enough to provoke an order from Spain commanding the captain general's examination.⁷⁰

In the meantime Chinese coolies were proving their worth and had become the hope of the Cuban planters. The importation of Chinese was revived in 1852, and by 1874 some 125,000 had been brought in with contracts to work for eight

⁶⁸ D. C. Corbitt, "Los colonos yucatecos," *Revista bimestre cubana*, XXXIX (January-February, 1937), 64-99.

⁶⁹ Erenchun, *op. cit.*, 1855, pp. 1046-1048. The revolt is described in A.N.C., Gobierno Superior Civil, legajo 636, no. 20,088.

⁷⁰ Antonio Bachiller, "Examen del proyecto de inmigración de aprendices africanos," *Revista de jurisprudencia*, I (1856), 150-164. José Antonio Saco, *Colección póstuma de papeles científicos históricos, políticos y de otros ramos sobre la Isla de Cuba* (Habana, 1881), pp. 275-318.

years at four pesos a month, plus food, shelter and two changes of raiment a year. The outbreak of the Ten Years' War in 1868 brought rapid modifications in Cuban life. The offer of liberty by the insurgents led many slaves and coolies to escape and join the army of rebels. Spain then ordered the coolie trade closed in 1871, but the last ship-load arrived in 1874.

The abolition of slavery followed closely on the heels of the Ten Years' War, and attention was once more focused on white colonization. Suggestions for promoting it began to appear in print before gradual abolition was adopted in 1880,⁷¹ and by the end of the transition period (1880-1886) officialdom was convinced of the necessity of doing something to offset the labor shortage. The government announced itself ready to pay the passage of any white person desiring to go to work in Cuba for a period of at least one year, provided that the sum did not exceed the fare from Spain on the vessels of the Compañía Transatlántica. Passage money was to be paid either to the head of the immigrating family or to the *sociedad protectora* that was responsible for the immigrants. This was intended to encourage the entrance of transient laborers as well as settlers.⁷² We shall see that there was an immediate increase in white immigration, but there is reason to believe that the abolition of slavery had more to do with this than the encouragement offered by the government.

Captain General Manuel Salamanca sponsored a plan for bringing in hundreds of Spanish families to settle in the province of Camagüey and an appropriation of 40,000 pesos was made, but the promoter died soon afterwards. His interest in the matter was such that even on his death bed he gave thought to it. A *junta* composed of fifteen high-ranking

⁷¹ Pedro Gutiérrez y Salazar, *Reforma de Cuba, cuestión social. Abolición de la esclavitud, indemnización á los perjudicados con la abolición por medio de la organización del trabajo: de la inmigración y de las reformas económicas y administrativas que deben plantearse inmediatamente, con dos apéndices de interés para los generales y permanentes de la isla de Cuba* (Madrid, 1879); José Curbelo, *Proyecto de inmigración nacional para la Isla de Cuba* (Habana, 1882); Francisco Serrat, *Proyecto de inmigración blanca para la isla de Cuba* (Barcelona, 1886).

⁷² The decree was issued on December 7, 1886. *Colección de reales órdenes publicadas en la gaceta de la Habana*, 1887, I, 20-22.

government officials and prominent citizens was organized by his successor to carry on the work. Although installed in elaborate offices in Habana, it seems to have borne no fruit.⁷³

The removal of the blight of slavery and the growing sugar industry caused a flow of immigrants that far exceeded anything previously known in the island. The official statistics on the new immigration may be inaccurate, but they are sufficient to indicate the trend. Of the 69,364 Spaniards landed in Cuba between 1882 and 1886, 45,646 returned to Spain. In the next three years the number rose to 84,000. Another set of figures show that between 1882 and 1894 (excluding 1888) 224,000 arrived from Spain, while only 142,000 returned. The year 1894 alone saw the arrival of 40,900 and the departure of only 28,240.⁷⁴

Immigration was seriously interrupted by the outbreak of Cuba's final war for independence in 1895. Statistics for the remainder of the colonial period are scanty.

One cannot escape the conclusion that Spain's efforts in behalf of immigration were almost entirely wasted through the blight of slavery and unwise legislation. Slavery ended, laborers and settlers came in abundance. Nor did the flow terminate with the colonial period; in fact, flood tide was not reached until some years after the establishment of the Republic.

Under the American military authorities after 1898, the laws of the United States were applied to immigration.⁷⁵ On the eve of the establishment of the Cuban Republic the immigration laws of the United States were gathered into a concise document known as Order No. 155 of the Headquarters Division of Cuba.⁷⁶ In it are found the familiar prohibition of the entry of idiots, insane persons, paupers, polygamists, persons convicted of felonies, misdemeanors or moral turpitude, and those suffering from loathsome or contagious diseases. All

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1890, I, 46-47, 127-129; Antonio L. Valverde, *Colonización y inmigración en Cuba* (Habana, 1923), pp. 80-83.

⁷⁴ Carlos M. Trelles, *Biblioteca histórica cubana* (3 vols., Habana and Matanzas, 1922-1926), II, 360-361.

⁷⁵ *Colección legislativa de la Isla de Cuba*, 1899 (3d. ed. Habana, 1900), Circular Order No. 13.

⁷⁶ *Civil Orders and Circulars, Headquarters Division of Cuba*, 1902, Order No. 155.

Chinese except diplomats, merchants, students, and tourists were excluded, and the entry of contract laborers was forbidden. It is estimated that there entered the country between 1899 and 1905 some 150,000 Spaniards, besides thousands of other nationalities, including many Americans.⁷⁷ The rapid development of the island after its independence caused a greater demand for labor than even this flood of immigration was able to supply. Cuban planters, industrialists and statesmen, schooled under the paternalistic system, were not content to wait for the law of supply and demand to solve the problem, but asked for action on the part of the government. The result was a *Ley de Inmigración* of July 11, 1906, which authorized the executive to spend one million dollars—eighty per cent to promote the immigration of families from Europe and the Canary Islands, and twenty per cent for the importation of laborers, particularly from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Northern Italy, the head of each family contracting to reside on some particular plantation.⁷⁸

This law was scarcely signed before Tomás Estrada Palma, the first president, was retired and a second American occupation ensued, lasting until January 28, 1909. With the restoration of the Cuban government a new law was passed on June 23, 1911, that harked back to the Ramírez-Cienfuegos schemes of a century earlier. Three hundred thousand dollars were appropriated to be used for colonizing unpopulated sections of Cuba with desirable immigrants. One hundred and fifty to two hundred *caballerías* of land were to be set aside from the *realengos* inherited from the Spanish government for one hundred families imported by the secretary of agriculture.⁷⁹ From time to time agents were appointed to travel or reside in Europe. Commenting on this, Dr. Cosme de la Torre made the following statement in the Cuban senate:

In the golden days of President Estrada Palma, when the Cuban Congress was concerned with the interests of our agriculture, a wise law was passed appropriating one million dollars to promote immigration, a law that created the office of Commissioner General of Immigration in Europe, to attend to the necessities of this immigration. . . . Government has succeeded government, Secretaries of Agriculture

⁷⁷ Trelles, *op. cit.*, II, 362.

⁷⁸ *Colección legislativa*, XXI, 221-223.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, XXXII, 552-553.

have come and gone, the cloud of immigration inspectors in the whole Republic has been enormous; and if I make no mistake, there was a Commissioner, some years ago, that lived in Spain under excellent conditions, with a very good salary and without contributing anything to the promotion of immigration. And notwithstanding, during all these years the Spanish vessels that have come to our shores have brought hundreds and hundreds, thousands and thousands of immigrants, without the Cuban State's taking any action beyond one or two modest experiments. And I ask, How many people would have come if this million dollars had been employed annually as provision was made in the said law of Congress? How many immigrants would have arrived, if the governments, the Secretaries of Agriculture, had occupied themselves in favoring the entry of foreign laborers into our country.⁸⁰

A sample of expenditures from the immigration fund mentioned in the quotation above, may be found in a decree of President Mario G. Menocal in March, 1914, appointing Senator Manuel Fernández Guevara as special commissioner to Spain for the purpose of investigating "the best way to promote the immigration of Spaniards to our Republic on a large scale." Provision was made for the commissioner's passage and ten dollars a day from the "*Crédito de Inmigración*."⁸¹

The completion of the Panama Canal released the laborers that had been employed there and in December of 1912 President José Miguel Gómez gave the Nipe Bay Company permission to import two thousand workmen from either Panama or Spain for the sugar-mill at Preston. In the fall of the succeeding year the new president, Mario Menocal, went a step further and offered to pay a bonus of five dollars for every white person imported from Panama to Antilla or Santiago de Cuba—that is, to the eastern end of the island toward the settlement of which so much official effort had been directed since the days of Luís de las Casas. It was expected that five or six thousand would be secured by this means.⁸²

The Nipe Bay Company, however, afraid to depend entirely on white immigrants, obtained permission early in 1913

⁸⁰ This speech, dated July 30, 1917, is printed in Cosme de la Torriente, *Cuarenta años de mi vida, 1898-1938* (Habana, 1939), pp. 99-111.

⁸¹ *Colección legislativa*, XLIII, 337. ⁸² *Ibid.*, XLII, 371-372.

to bring in one thousand laborers from other West Indian islands.⁸³ Although that permit was revoked soon afterward, many others of a similar nature were granted later to sugar-mill operators and plantation owners; in fact, it became the custom for employers of labor to appeal to the president for Negroes from Haiti, Jamaica or other neighboring islands. The petitioner was usually required to agree to return the laborers to their homes at the end of the cane-cutting season, but fulfillment was often evaded and in recent years the government itself has had to repatriate these laborers. Authority for these permits was drawn from Order No. 155 and the law of July 11, 1906—laws that specifically forbade the entry of any laborer under contract. Signatures to the contracts were postponed until after landing, however, to overcome the difficulty.

Shortly after Cuba's entry into World War I all restrictions on contract labor were swept away along with laws prohibiting the entry of specified races. Cuba was assigned the task of providing the Allies with sugar for food and the manufacture of explosives. The sugar planters, always crying for more labor, asserted that they could not do their best unless the doors were opened to immigrants coming under labor contracts, especially Chinese. Farseeing statesmen fought the idea, but they were overruled on August 3, 1917, when President Menocal signed a law permitting the entry of contract laborers without distinction until two years after the end of the war.⁸⁴

Haitians, Jamaicans and other Antillans entered in great numbers, while some 150,000 Chinese were admitted. A few Koreans came from Mexico to develop the sisal-growing industry in which they had been employed. One sugar-mill experimented with a shipment of East Indians. Aside from the continuous flow of Spanish immigrants, few whites came.⁸⁵

The flood of laborers did not stop with the end of the war, nor at the end of the specified two years afterward. Whether

⁸³ *Ibid.*, XXXIX, 46-47.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, XXXIX, 595-602. Speeches in opposition are printed in Torriente, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-123.

⁸⁵ Torriente, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-123.

to reckon that period from the armistice or from the final treaty of peace was debatable, but the latter view finally prevailed. Two years after the treaty the old restrictions became the law again. However, enforcement officers chose to take a "wide view," so that it came about that while official reports showed the entrance of no immigrants, the daily papers openly announced the coming of thousands.⁸⁶ Post-war conditions in Europe motivated the emigration of great numbers, many of them to Cuba. Patriotic writers protested against this influx of foreigners, but the depression and the ruin of the sugar industry was the real check.

With the decrease of industry, the status of employed foreigners grew in unpopularity. This attitude was acutely accentuated during the revolutionary movements of 1933 and the years immediately following. Politicians, realizing the possibilities, drafted the famous "fifty per cent law" requiring that half the employees in any establishment be Cuban. The original legislation has been modified from time to time, but the general tendency has been to increase the percentage of Cubans. Restrictions on the entry of foreigners have become more rigorous—a complete reversal of the century-old policy followed by both colonial and national governments. The new legislation has not always been strictly enforced, especially since the outbreak of the second European war, Cuba's attitude toward refugees being very liberal. In the future, with the return of prosperity when sugar prices begin to soar, a new interpretation will probably be sought. It is not unlikely that another white colonization movement will be launched, for Cuba still has much undeveloped land and many untouched resources, but immigration in the future will be as independent of government encouragement or discouragement as it has been in the past.

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⁸⁶ Compare the messages of President Alfredo Zayas (*Gaceta oficial de la república de Cuba*, November 15, 1922, and May 12, 1924) with the shipping page of the *Havana Post* and with "La invasión amarilla," *El Mundo*, May 10, 1924.