

# FORUM: SHOULD CONGRES

## YES!

By Carol L. Thompson

**T**HE so-called "Stratton Bill," H.R. 2910, provides for the admission into the United States of 100,000 displaced persons from Europe in each of four emergency years. The basic immigration laws of the United States will not be affected by the terms of Mr. Stratton's proposal. Mental, physical, economic and moral qualifications will apply to each of the 400,000 displaced persons. Criminals, prostitutes, illiterates, paupers, those likely to become public charges, anarchists, Communists—all who are barred by the basic immigration laws will be barred by the provisions of the Stratton Act. Permanent quotas will remain in effect. Temporarily, however, a limited number of displaced persons unable to enter under the discriminatory quota system will be able to gain admission to the country. Under the bill, preference will be given to widows, parents, children and other relatives within the fourth degree of consanguinity of citizens of the United States or those who served in our armed forces in either World War. If passed, the Stratton Bill will allow, for a limited four-year period, a small annual addition to our population—less than one-tenth of one per cent in each year.

Few Americans are entirely ignorant of conditions in Europe that compel reconsideration of our immigration policies; few are really familiar with the basic problem of the Displaced Person, or with the Immigration Laws of the United States. Of the millions of homeless Europeans wandering on the face of that continent at the end of the war, about 850,000 remain, classified by U.N.R.R.A. as "non-repatriables." About 21 per cent of them are children under 18 years of age, many of them orphaned and with no idea of their "country of origin." The "non-repatriables" are unwilling to return to their homes: the Jews, because they fear renewed anti-Semitism; others, because they are anti-Communist and are afraid of Russia and her satellite governments. Christians (Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics and Protestants) comprise 80 per cent of the total; about 20 per cent are Jews. Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians, Yugoslavs, Estonians and Ukrainians are prominent among the D.P.'s. More than 50 per cent of the total number are women and children.

The government of the United States has led in taking the position that these people must not be forced to return to the countries of their origin, although every effort has been made to persuade them to do so. The U.S.S.R., on the other hand, takes the position that all D.P.'s should be forced to return to their former homes, and has refused to further any effort to find new homes for these people. With Russia unwilling to help,

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# PASS THE STRATTON BILL?

NO!

By Alice B. McGinty

**B**OTH opponents and proponents of the Stratton Bill have one great thing in common—their devotion to the quota system set up by the Immigration Act of 1924. The C.I.O., the A.F. of L., Earl Harrison, Chairman of the Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons, and former Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, and even Congressman William G. Stratton, sponsor of the bill, are not outdone in their loyalty to our immigration policy by the D.A.R. or the American Legion. The fact that the Stratton Bill would leave the policy essentially unchanged is the main buttress of the argument of those favoring the bill. Yet, the very existence of the bill itself is testimony to the utter irrelevancy of our present immigration laws.

## BREAKDOWN OF QUOTA SYSTEM

It was the breakdown of the quota system that brought about the Stratton Bill. President Truman issued a directive on December 22, 1945, ordering all legal immigration quotas from countries of northern Europe to be filled. Yet, between March 1, 1946, and March 1, 1947, only 18,000 immigration visas were issued. (A quota of 26,000 was included for Germany even though it was impossible for Germans to emigrate.) Red tape inherent in the immigration laws and lack of trained personnel in the State Department has thus prevented the United States from implementing that lofty stand she has taken on refugees and displaced persons both in United Nations debates and on the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. We have championed the "non-repatriables" at the bar of world opinion. It is, therefore, up to us to revise our present immigration laws to carry out this responsibility. Indeed, it is to our own best interest that we recast our whole thinking on immigration in the light of our present population trends.

## STRATTON BILL INADEQUATE

The list of worthy organizations and individuals supporting the Stratton Bill is indeed impressive. We can only conclude that the intensity of their desire to help the D.P.'s has led them to be content with half a loaf. We reject this philosophy, politically expedient though it may be, because it is based on the premise that the D.P. problem is limited, (U.N.R.R.A. estimates that there are 850,000), and can be cleared up in four years. We, therefore, oppose the Stratton Bill because it is not adequate to the task and because it makes no basic revision in our immigration policy.

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