

*Guide to the*

**Reports of the  
Immigration  
Commission,  
1907–1910**

*Dillingham Committee Reports*

**SR** *Scholarly Resources Inc.*  
*Wilmington, Delaware*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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ISBN 0-8420-4027-7

Manufactured in the United States of America

Scholarly Resources Inc.  
104 Greenhill Avenue  
Wilmington, DE 19805-1897

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# Introduction

**T**HIS MICROFILM EDITION of the Reports of the Immigration Commission (popularly known as the Dillingham Committee) is a reproduction of a 41-volume Senate serial set from the second and third sessions of the 61st U.S. Congress, December 5, 1910–March 11, 1911. The commission was organized to evaluate and study the conditions of immigration into the United States, particularly the so-called new immigration begun in the late 1880s, predominantly from countries in southern and eastern Europe. Record numbers of immigrants arrived in the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century, and as they arrived public concern grew from many areas over the impact of this relatively unchecked tide of immigration, which had been the policy of the U.S. government from its inception. This concern led President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907 to appoint Senator William P. Dillingham as chairman of a committee to assess the effect of the immigrants on American society.

At the end of the nineteenth century the United States underwent great industrial expansion. The need for cheap, unskilled labor for the manufacturing base provided the economic incentive for many to emigrate from their native countries. The rise of organized labor, the closing of the West, the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901 by a Polish anarchist, the explosion of city populations, and the accompanying deterioration of the conditions within cities were all factors that led to opposition to this wave of new immigration.

Attempts at immigration control in the United States began in the 1880s: the Chinese Exclusion Act, which

denied entrance to Chinese laborers, and broad restrictions against diseased immigrants and known criminals. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, a member of the Immigration Commission, was one of the leading advocates of administering a literacy test to all immigrants. Reform and control progressed slowly, however, because the idea of the United States as a sanctuary for the world's dispossessed was embraced by many, especially the nation's presidents. Many pieces of legislation, therefore, became caught between a reform-minded Congress and a traditional president. Industrialists who had come to depend on the large pools of cheap, unskilled labor sided with the president against those in Congress, who sided with the unions that wished to control this pool.

Power to regulate immigration was removed from the states and placed with the federal government, which formed the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1891, and in the following year constructed a facility on Ellis Island in New York Harbor to process new arrivals into the country's largest port city for immigration.

Concurrent with these debates, fashionable ideas of the time gave many opposed to immigration the intellectual justification for their opposition. The idea of Social Darwinism and the related eugenics movement in Europe caused many in America to believe that the new immigrants were diluting the stock in the United States, and they feared that "inferior" races would be unable to continue the traditional values upheld by older Americans.

Nativism also contributed to opposition to the new immigrants, particularly anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism. As large percentages of new arrivals professed one or the other religion, fears grew among established politicians that, should the new immigrants begin to wield power and vote in blocs, their loyalties would not reside entirely within the United States.

The commission studied how immigrants affected U.S. industries (in particular, mining, manufacturing, and agri-

culture), cities, and schools. Steerage conditions, crime among immigrant groups, banks, prostitution, and aid societies were all examined. A few volumes dealt with Japanese immigrants, "changes in bodily form of descendants of immigrants," and "fecundity of immigrant women."

The commission's recommendations concluded that, as a whole, south and east European immigrants were less desirable than those from northern and western Europe, and that controls should be enacted to reduce the flow from these areas. Its evidence for this claim, however, was not supported, and the report became a source of controversy. Representative groups favoring unrestricted immigration funded their own studies, most notably Isaac Hourwich's *Immigration and Labor* (1912), which was backed by the new American Jewish Committee. Hourwich exposed the Dillingham Committee's recommendations as groundless and biased.

Each volume of this report has a table of contents for easy subject area access; Volumes 1 and 2 are detailed abstracts of the commission reports, including the views of the minority. The roll contents section of the guide, which follows this introduction, lists the roll of microfilm where individual volumes can be found. Researchers are then advised to find the beginning of the volume and consult its table of contents for the page numbers that refer to their topics of interest.

#### MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION COMMISSION

- Senator William P. Dillingham (R., Vermont),  
Chairman
- Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R., Massachusetts)
- Senator Asbury C. Latimer (D., South Carolina)
- Senator Anselm J. McLaurin (D., Mississippi)
- Senator Le Roy Percy (D., Mississippi; replaced  
McLaurin in February 1910)
- Representative Benjamin F. Howell (R., New Jersey)

Representative William S. Bennet (R., New York)  
Representative John L. Burnett (D., Alabama)  
Mr. Charles P. Neill  
Mr. Jeremiah W. Jenks  
Mr. William R. Wheeler

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE IMMIGRATION COMMISSION

“Resolved,

“That a commission is hereby created, consisting of three Senators, to be appointed by the President of the Senate, and three members of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and three persons to be appointed by the President of the United States. Said commission shall make full inquiry, examination, and investigation, by subcommittee or otherwise, into the subject of immigration. For the purpose of said inquiry, examination, and investigation said commission is authorized to send for persons and papers, make all necessary travel, either in the United States or any foreign country, and, through the chairman of the commission, or any member thereof, to administer oaths and to examine necessary clerical and other assistance. Said commission shall report to Congress the conclusions reached by it, and make such recommendations as in its judgment may seem proper. Such sums of money as may be necessary for the said inquiry, examination, and investigation are hereby appropriated and authorized to be paid out of the ‘immigrant fund’ on the certificate of the chairman of said commission, including all expenses of the commissioners, and a reasonable compensation, to be fixed by the President of the United States, for those members of the commission who are not Members of Congress.”



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CITATION

This microfilm collection is a reproduction of U.S. Senate documents from the second and third sessions of the 61st Congress, December 5, 1910–March 11, 1911. The originals of this Senate serial set are located in the Morris Library at the University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.



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1	<p><i>Volumes 1 and 2</i></p> <p>Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission, with Conclusions and Recommendations and Views of the Minority. (These volumes include the Commission's complete reports on the following subjects: Immigration Conditions in Hawaii; Immigration and Insanity; Immigrants in Charity Hospitals; Alien Seamen and Stowaways; Contract Labor and Induced and Assisted Immigration; The Greek Padrone System in the United States; Peonage.) (S. Doc. No. 747, 61st Cong., 3d sess.)</p>
2	<p><i>Volume 2 (continued)</i></p> <p><i>Volume 3</i></p> <p>Statistical Review of Immigration, 1819–1910—Distribution of Immigrants, 1850–1900. (S. Doc. No. 756, 61st Cong., 3d sess.)</p> <p><i>Volume 4</i></p> <p>Emigration Conditions in Europe. (S. Doc. No. 748, 61st Cong., 3d sess.)</p> <p><i>Volume 5</i></p> <p>Dictionary of Races or Peoples. (S. Doc. No. 662, 61st Cong., 3d sess.)</p>

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3	<i>Volumes 6 and 7 (continued)</i> <i>Volumes 8 and 9</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 2, Iron and Steel Manufacturing. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 2d sess.)
4	<i>Volumes 8 and 9 (continued)</i> <i>Volume 10</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 3, Cotton Goods Manufacturing in the North Atlantic States—Pt. 4, Woolen and Worsted Goods Manufacturing. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 3d sess.)
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6	<p><i>Volume 13</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 11, Slaughtering and Meat Packaging. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 2d sess.)</p> <p><i>Volume 14</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 12, Glass Manufacturing—Pt. 13, Agricultural Implement and Vehicle Manufacturing. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 2d sess.)</p> <p><i>Volume 15</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 14, Cigar and Tobacco Manufacturing—Pt. 15, Furniture Manufacturing—Pt. 16, Sugar Refining. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 2d sess.)</p>
7	<p><i>Volume 15 (continued)</i></p> <p><i>Volume 16</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 17, Copper Mining and Smelting—Pt. 18, Iron Ore Mining—Pt. 19, Anthracite Coal Mining—Pt. 20, Oil Refining. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 2d sess.)</p> <p><i>Volume 17</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 21, Diversified Industries, Vol. I. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 2d sess.)</p>
8	<p><i>Volume 18</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 21, Diversified Industries, Vol. II—Pt. 22, The Floating Immigrant Labor Supply. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 2d sess.)</p>

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10	<i>Volumes 23–25</i> Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 25, Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States. (S. Doc. No. 633, 61st Cong., 2d sess.) <b>See roll 17 for errata.</b>
11	<i>Volumes 26 and 27</i> Immigrants in Cities. (S. Doc. No. 338, 61st Cong., 2d sess.) <i>Volume 28</i> Occupations of the First and Second Generations of Immigrants in the United States—Fecundity of Immigrant Women. (S. Doc. No. 282, 61st Cong., 2d sess.)
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16	<i>Volume 38</i> Changes in Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants. (S. Doc. No. 208, 61st Cong., 2d sess.) <i>Volume 39</i> Federal Immigration Legislation—Digest of Immigration Decisions—Steerage Legislation, 1819–1908—State Immigration and Alien Laws. (S. Doc. No. 758, 61st Cong., 3d sess.)
17	<i>Volume 40</i> The Immigration Situation in Other Countries: Canada—Australia—New Zealand—Argentina—Brazil. (S. Doc. No. 761, 61st Cong., 3d sess.)

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### **ERRATA**

#### *Volume 23*

Immigrants in Industries: Pt. 25, Japanese  
and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific  
Coast and Rocky Mountain States  
(Volume I)