

# **MONSTER PROTEST ON LITERACY TEST**

**Big Meeting at Cooper Union  
Denounces Smith-Burnett  
Immigration Bill.**

## **MEMORIAL SENT TO WILSON**

**Speakers Assail Measure as Un-  
American and Inhuman—3,000  
Persons Turned Away.**

The mass meeting in Cooper Union last night to protest against the Smith-Burnett immigration bill drew such a big crowd that the police ordered the doors closed shortly after 8 o'clock and turned away some 3,000 persons, who heard speakers at various points in Cooper Square. Besides a dozen speakers, most of whom characterized the measure as un-American, inhuman, and bad economics for this country, Bishop Greer, Seth Low, and Louis D. Brandeis and others wrote letters giving their personal reasons for condemning the effort to put into effect a literacy test as the merit of admission.

A memorial, which was unanimously adopted, was telegraphed to President Wilson by Leon Sanders, who presided at the meeting. The memorial read:

The Smith-Burnett Immigration bill, which is now under consideration by his Excellency, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, seeks to exclude from admission to this country immigrants of a class which has in the past materially contributed to the prosperity of our nation by imposing unreal tests which furnish no means of determining their character, ability, or fitness.

The most prominent feature of this measure, which is, in its entirety un-American and inhuman, is the much discussed "literacy test," which has been ascribed, even by those who advocate its enactment, as an arbitrary provision, calculated to shut out large numbers of immigrants, not because they possess qualities which render them undesirable, but merely because they come here from countries which have deprived them of opportunities to learn and to become educated.

The illiterate immigrants who came here in the past from Eastern and Southern Europe, and against whom this measure is directed, have built up by their muscle and their brawn the desolate sections of our glorious country. They have reclaimed our deserted farms; they have erected our buildings; they have constructed our far-reaching railroads; they have produced out of the bowels of the earth the coal, iron, and copper which we require and use to make possible the commercial prosperity of our Republic. They have built large and thriving cities out of small and dormant towns; they have opened up the vast hinterland of the United States, and sown there the seed which will develop that part of our country, so that it will thrive and prosper to our national advantage.

The literacy test, if adopted a quarter of a century ago, would have proved detrimental to the best interests of a quarter of a century ago, would have proved detrimental to the best interests of



# LITERACY TEST

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this country, and would have retarded its progress by preventing the coming of those desirable immigrants who have developed our great resources and established many of our great industries.

## Would Be a Step Backward.

To permit the adoption of such a test would be encouraging this country to take a long step backward, which would be very difficult, if not impossible, to retrace.

We, who live in the City of New York and who have had an opportunity to observe the untiring efforts of those immigrants to obtain here that education which was denied to them in the countries of their birth, and we, who are acquainted particularly with the manner in which the children of those immigrants avail themselves of all those educational opportunities which are afforded them here, vigorously protest against the imposition of a literacy requirement.

The bill contains a great many other unwise and vicious provisions, particularly that which calls for the exclusion of "persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority," a vague and superfluous provision which is most difficult of proper enforcement.

We hold that existing law, which prohibits the admission of criminals, paupers, immoral persons, and those who are afflicted with contagious diseases, is sufficient, if wisely administered, to exclude all those immigrants who are unfit to be associated with us, and who might prove a detriment to our beloved country, and, therefore, we, the citizens of the City of New York, in meeting assembled in the historic halls of Cooper Union, have

Resolved, That a copy of this memorial be forwarded forthwith to his Excellency, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, with our earnest request and prayer that he veto the Smith-Burnett bill. We have further

Resolved, That copies of this memorial be sent to every Senator and Representative in Congress, with the object in view of securing an end to restrictive immigration legislation similar to that contained in the bill which is now under consideration by the President.

The Rev. Dr. H. Nasliansky, rabbi of the People's Synagogue of the Educational Alliance, said that the bill would keep out the real worker and let in the educated idler. He said:

"It is a shame that we must find it necessary to fight for the maintenance of a principle that has made America great—the extending of a friendly hand to the peoples of all nations who are able to pass the requirements of our immigration laws, and who have helped to develop the country. This measure would exclude the real worker and admit the undesirable idler because he has a little education."