

September 4, 1940 -- Paul Dorsey, staff photographer for LIFE Magazine, has been able to get an article representing the viewpoint of the California Joint Immigration Committee. Dorsey says that although it carries the by-line of James K. Fisk, an American Legionnaire and Chairman of the Joint Immigration Committee, actually the article was ghost-written by Dorothy Kaltenbach, secretary to Mr. Fisk. Miss Kaltenbach was also formerly secretary to the late Mr. V. S. McClatchy, former Chairman of the Immigration Committee and publisher of the Sacramento and Fresno Bee newspapers. We were able to get this article on the strength of being engaged by LIFE Magazine to do research for Dorsey's photographic essay on the Nisei. I don't believe either Miss Kaltenbach or Mr. Fisk would approve of this arrangement under any circumstances. I am including the verbatim copy of the article in my complete report to Associate Editor Ed Thompson of LIFE. The article follows:

"By JAMES K. FISK

"Japanese in the United States, both foreign and American-born, of whom there are about 150,000, form one of this country's most foreign-minded and closest knit racial groups. They reside in all states of the Pacific slope, but are largely concentrated in California. The foreign-born among them, being ineligible to citizenship, cannot be naturalized; and their intense pride of race and almost fanatical love for Japan causes them, not only to keep a close touch with the mother country, but to adhere tenaciously to the Japanese manner of life. Their children, although American citizen by right of birth on the soil, are so strongly Japanese, in racial characteristic, that they do not become assimilated into the lifeblood of this country, and remain a part of the Japanese community dominated by their alien parents.

"Because of their unassimilability and the impossibility of competing with them due to their low standards of living, Japanese immigrants have never been really welcome in the United States. As early as 1892, when they began to come in in large numbers, to take the place of the excluded Chinese, there was friction between this country and Japan over the immigration of coolie laborers when a number of them were refused admission into the port of San Francisco on the ground that they were contract laborers. But still, they kept on coming, and as their numbers increased, agitation against them developed quickly. California demanded that Congress enact an exclusion law, similar to the Chinese Exclusion Act. In 1900, in the hope of quieting this agitation and forestalling the humiliation of an Exclusion Law, and possibly concerned over the fact that in that year, some 12,000 of her coolies were entering



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California, Japan announced that no more passports would be issued to the laborers for admission into Continental United States; this was, in effect, the Forst Gentleman's Agreement.

"This Agreement was continually violated. From 1901 to 1908, inclusive, Japan sent into continental United States, with her passports, 4 51,689 immigrants (not including those coming from Hawaii), most of whom were or became laborers. Again and again California protested to Congress and demanded an exclusion law. In 1907, realizing that something must be done, and fearful of war with Japan should an Exclusion Law be passed, President Theodore Roosevelt began negotiations for another Gentleman's Agreement, which was concluded in 1908. The details of this Agreement were secret, although it was announced that under its terms, Japan again agreed not to issue passports for continental United States to her laborers. According to Roosevelt, the intent of this Agreement was to prevent the increase of Japanese laborers population in continental United States, in a manner not injurious to Japan's pride.

"The second Agreement fared no better than the first. It was continuously violated. The American Courts were powerless to enforce its terms; the agreement being neither statute, law, nor treaty. Every Japanese coming with Japan's passport was entitled to enter. Between 1909, when it went into effect, and 1924, when the Agreement was terminated, the Japanese population of continental United States increased from 76,714 to 131,357. Their tremendously prolific picture brides contributed to this increase, each family averaging five children.

"California, with its mild climate and wonderful agricultural resources, delighted the industrious Japanese. In fact, some of their vernacular newspapers went so far as to call it "the New Japan". They were not content to remain day laborers, as had the Chinese, but rapidly acquired their own land or leased farm land which they frequently worked to depletion. Their women worked alongside the men in the field for long hours, often with their babies strapped to their backs. Whole towns became Japanese, the Caucasian population gradually leaving areas where the Japanese settled, since competition with them was impossible. They were, assertive and aggressive, and did not achieve the reputation for honesty and faithfulness that was enjoyed by the Chinese. California fearfully envisioned the complete control of her agricultural land by the acquisitive Japanese, and became thoroughly aroused. Feeling ran high, but there was little of the violence against the Japanese that had unfortunately marked the agitation for Exclusion of the Chinese.



"Failing to obtain relief from the situation from an indifrerent Congress and an antagonistic federal administration, California in 1913 passed the Alien Land Law, prohibiting aliens ineligible to citizenship from purchasing land or leasing agricultural land. The Japanese protested but in a measure circumvented this law by operating in the names of their American-b rn children. And still, their numbers increased. The situation was becoming almost a life struggle against the insidious peaceful penetration of Japanese.

"In 1924, came California's chance. The Immigration Restriction Act was passed in that year, and California, with the aid of other Pacific Coast states, was able to present such a convincing case against Japanese peaceful ~~penetration~~ to Congress that the Exclusion measure barring those ineligible to American citizenship as permanent residents was included therein. The fight was a hard one, however, for Japan had enlisted many friends to her cause--missionaries, church people, idealists, those interested in foreign trade and employers of cheap labor, government officials, members of Congress entirelu unfamiliar with conditions in California and other Pacific coast states, and therefore antagonistic to her cause.

"Thus was the Exclusion of Orientals made practically complete. Chinese had been barred by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Hindus and Malays were excluded by the Barred Zone Act of 1917. Filipinos as subjects of the United States, were permitted free entry until passage of the Philippine Independence Act in 1934 which limited the entry to fiftyper year until the Philippines will have achieved their full independence. After that, they will be subject to the Exclusion measure.

"Since the time of their Exclusion, and up to the present critical period of international affairs, the Japanese, both in this country and in Japan, have protested at every opportunity against the allegedly discriminatory treatment accorded them under the Exclusion measure. They claim that such discrimination is incompatible with the sensibilities of a proud people and demand repeal of the law. Their publicists even intimate that Japan's present predatory course in Asia is the result of the slight America placed upon the Japanese in excluding them from this country, and they confuse the Open Door (of trade) in China with the Open Door (of immigration) in this country, claiming that if one door is closed to them, the other door must be closed to us.

"They overlook entirely the fact that the Open Door in China is guaranteed by International Treaty, to which Japan was one of the signatories, while immigration is purely a domestic matter to be etermined solely by this country. Americans do not desire to migrate to China in vast numbers. The Exclusion measure is not discriminatory, for it applies to practically half e the population of the globe, of which



half, the Japanese constitute about 7 per cent. Enactment of this measure was not by any means the unexpected and undeserved blow to her pride that Japan claims. It was the direct result of 24 years of evasion by her of two agreements not to send her laborers to go to this country. The Japanese also protest continuously against the Alien Land Laws of the various states where they are congregated. And to satisfy their great desire for racial equality, urge that the naturalization laws of this country be changed so as to admit alien Japanese to American citizenship.

"All of these laws against which the Japanese protest, are based upon the premise that the United States desires as permanent residents and citizens, only members of the white race whose descendants will become absorbed into the life blood of the nation, and will not form separate and unassimilable blocs with their attendant racial problems. This was expressed by the "Founding Fathers" in the Naturalization Law of 1790, which provides that the privilege of naturalization shall be granted only to "free white persons." A grave mistake was made when citizenship was granted to everyone in this country regardless of the fitness or desire of the recipient for such citizenship. After the civil war, citizenship was granted to Negroes, so as to enfranchise those whom we had sought to free; but many unsolved problems have thus been created. However, the Negroes are a loyal and patriotic group, owing and giving their allegiance wholly and solely to the United States. They are here, furthermore, by our own act.

"There are still many alien Japanese in California, living a typically Japanese life, entirely apart from the rest of the population. By tremendous industry, skill, and incredibly low standards of living, they still control much of the fruit, vegetable and berry industry of the state, particularly in the south. White Americans cannot and will not work the same long hours, nor will they put their entire families, men, women, and children, into the fields day in and day out, as do the Japanese, to compete with them. Their control of a large portion of the food supply of the state, coupled with the fact that they own a large fleet of ultra-modern trucks, is disquieting, for they are frequently accused of unfriendly acts and espionage. But their numbers are decreasing, due to the fact that no more are permitted to enter the country. Also, age is taking its toll. Active agitation against them ceased when the Exclusion measure became effective.

"Large sums of money have been, and are being spent in this country by Japan for various propaganda purposes, including the attempt to induce public opinion to force repeal



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or modification of the Exclusion measure, and to create a more favorable opinion of her present course in Asia. She has even deliberately planned to propagandize in our schools. A text book on Japan, compiled in Hawaii under joint auspices of the Cultural Relations Society of Japan (Professor N. Royama, coming from Tokyo to assist in its preparation), the Institute of Pacific Relations, and the Territorial Board of Education was in use in the Honolulu schools in 1935, and its use on the continent was urged. It contained misstatement of fact with regard to Exclusion and omitted all but favorable reference to Japan's past and current history, and was withdrawn under severe criticism and was re-written.

"About a hundred American and Canadian school teachers go to Japan each summer as 'guests' of the Japanese government. Upon their return, they are, no doubt, ardent exponents of Japan's cause.

"The problem of Exclusion of alien Japanese having been solved, there remains now the problem of assimilation of their children, the Nisei, as they are called. There are in California today, more than 50,000 of these American-born Japanese. They, more than any other non-white group, strive to become an integral part of American life, and are quite outspoken and insistent in their demand for equality. But their racial characteristics are too strongly evident, so the American public does not grant them this equality nor welcome them into its social structure. They complain bitterly of the discrimination they meet at every turn, and their newspapers declare at length that such discrimination has no place in a democracy. Their attainments are of the highest--they are excellent students, good workers, and splendid people. But they cannot find work, except among their own people. American business houses will not give them employment because Caucasians will not work harmoniously with them. In California, inter-racial marriages are forbidden by law, so they marry members of their own race, which they generally prefer to do for "the pride of and purity of the Yamato race." Even in Hawaii, that much publicized melting pot, there is little inter-marriage between the Japanese and members of other races, particularly the Caucasian. "



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