

VOLUME 2/15: H.D. WILSON, CALIFORNIA JOINT IMMIGRATION  
COMMITTEE PAMPHLETS, A. MC CLATCHY, VS.  
CONGRESS AND JAPAN, SAN FRANCISCO: C.J.I.C.,  
1924.

Foreword

On May 15th, 1914, President Coolidge approved the Immigration Bill under protest, his protest being based on the inclusion in the bill of a general provision excluding aliens ineligible to citizenship. Having doubtless upon assurances of Secretary of State Hughes, the President believed that exclusion, so far as concerned Japanese, could be accomplished equally effectively and without injury to Japan's feelings by agreement, or treaty, or by giving Japan place in the quota. Congress almost unanimously, and without regard for party or district affiliations, held to the contrary. Subsequently, in answer to Japan's protest, Secretary Hughes, in a dignified, courteous and statesmanlike document, advised Japan that Congress had acted entirely within its rights and without any intent to insult Japan or hurt her pride, and that the matter was ended.

President Coolidge, in answering the Republican nomination for re-election August 14th, said: "I should have preferred to continue the policy of Japanese exclusion by some method less likely to offend the sensitibilities of the Japanese people. I did what I could to minimize any harm that might arise. But the law has been passed and approved, and the business is closed. We must now by some means hinder immigration to demonstrate the friendliness and respect which we feel for the Japanese nation. Restricted immigration is not an offensive but a purely defensive action. It is not adopted to offend others in the slightest degree, but only for the purpose of protecting ourselves. We cast no aspersions on any race or creed, but we must remember that every object of our institutions of society and government will fall unless America be kept American."

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, acting through its subsidiary organization, the Commission for International Goodwill, and with co-operation of various other associations, inaugurated a campaign to induce Congress to

modify the exclusion feature of the Immigration Act so as to meet the demands of Japan. Assurances were given Japan by these organizations that President Coolidge and Secretary Hughes are opposed to the exclusion measure, that the sentiment of the American people disapproves it, and that effort will be made by Japan's friends in this country "to have the wrong righted."

The reaction upon Japan and the Japanese in response to the suggestions contained in this campaign and to direct messages sent in evident to action taken and statements given out, both official and unofficial in character. The Foreign Office in Tokyo gave out a statement on August 11, which was published in this country, in which it was said: "President Coolidge may regard this incident as closed, but Japan does not. Japan will continue her protest."

In the belief that a campaign of the character referred to would be fruitless in the result desired by the organizations which inaugurated it, but would increase friction and ill will between the two nations, and that the movement was started in ignorance of important facts, a brief statement of the case was presented for consideration of Japan and the Japanese in the following letter to the Editor of "The Sun", of San Francisco, the most widely distributed Japanese newspaper daily newspaper published outside of Japan:

EDWARD J. LYONS  
PRESIDENT  
THE CALIFORNIA JOINT  
IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE  
1010 HUMBOLDT BANK BUILDING  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.  
HON. U. S. SENATOR  
WALTER W. WATSON  
U. S. SENATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
HON. JAMES D. PHILLAN  
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
PHOENIX GARFIELD HOTEL  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.  
HON. JAMES D. PHILLAN  
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
PHOENIX GARFIELD HOTEL  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.  
"JULY 21, 1914."

"My dear Mr. Allen:  
This is a memorandum (made at your suggestion) of certain views offered by me to our correspondents. You and I, with others of your race and of mine, are extremely desirous that the traditional friendship between our two nations should be maintained, and that the two nations should perform their duty to their respective peoples. I regard as my first duty that I should encourage you to act in accordance with my principles."

views and feelings, regardless of conditions and my permanent interests, but rather be who, even at the risk of including my friends and acquaintances in friendly relations, announce me frankly with the facts and submit them to my judgment for decision. It is in the belief that you entertain similar views, and with appreciation of your position as a leader of Japanese thought in California, that I submit these suggestions for your consideration.

**The Unwise Counsel of Friends**  
"In the matter of Japanese immigration to this country Japan, in my judgment, has been induced within the past six months to place herself in a false and embarrassing position by listening to the unwise counsel of those in this country whose she regards as her friends.

"She was encouraged by these friends to request from Congress and the nation action which could not be taken without violation of the statutes and policies which have governed our conduct in such matters since the nation began. She is now being encouraged by the same parties or persons in this country with the assurance that the action taken by Congress is not endorsed by public sentiment, and that therefore repeal or modification of the exclusion measure can be readily secured.

"I do not question the good faith of these friends of Japan. I do question their discretion. They are either ignorant of, or blind to, the fundamental facts and principles in the case. For reasons explained hereafter, Congress had no alternative than to follow the course adopted, if it will not undo what has been done, and, under existing conditions, the American people will not permit it to retrace the steps taken.

"Congress, in this matter, acted in strict accord with the long established laws and policies of the nation, which have for their object the preservation of this country for the white race, as Japan is governed in her immigration and other policies by the obvious necessity for preservation of Japan for the Japanese. Until our laws and policies are changed at the demand of public opinion, Congress must continue to maintain its present attitude.

**Appreciation of Japan's Feelings**  
"By this with full and sympathetic under-

standing of Japan's position. She feels that whatever may have been the result of an exclusion policy directed against the people of Asia, including Japan, by the United States 150 or even to years ago, she has, through her own efforts and by study of Western methods risen to the position of dominant power in Asia and is recognized as one of the great World Powers, sitting in council on equal terms with United States, Great Britain, France and Italy. She feels, therefore, that her nationals are entitled to preferential treatment in the United States over those of other Asiatic nations, and to equal treatment with the nationals of Europe.

"I do not say there is not some justice in Japan's claim. I say only the claim cannot be recognized by the United States in the matter of naturalization and immigration until our fundamental policies in such matters have been changed; and that any efforts intended to secure modification of the existing conditions should be directed towards change in our fundamental policies rather than in urging Congress to violate such policies while still in force.

**Our Naturalization and Immigration Policies**  
"The privilege of naturalization was limited by Federal Statute in 1790 to persons of the white race. After the Civil War that privilege was extended by amendment to the black race in the effort to solve the problem created by slavery. Otherwise, the law has remained unchanged in fundamentals; and members of the yellow and brown races are barred from the privilege of naturalization today as they were 150 years ago. This statute, as applied to Japanese, was upheld by a recent decision of the United States Supreme Court.

"Our immigration policy has been in strict accord with the naturalization policy. Whenever the number of any branch of the yellow or brown races entering this country became large enough to justify concern, exclusion measures were adopted against it.

"The Chinese were excluded in 1852, by special act of Congress.

"The Japanese were excluded in 1907, under the Gentlemen's Agreement, and at Japan's request.

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**Not Discriminatory**  
"Congress determined, therefore, that the agreement should be essential and some effective method adopted for securing the agreed result—exclusion. Rather than give offense to Japan by enacting a special exclusion law against Japanese (which would have hurt her pride). That, as explained by President Roosevelt in his autobiography and in existing documents, the Agreement was an exclusion measure designed to prevent further increase in Japanese population in continental United States, lest economic competition and racial friction should create trouble between the two friendly nations; and it was agreed that should the plan fail to accomplish its purpose, an Exclusion Law should be enacted against Japan.

"The Hindus, and other Asiatics of the yellow and brown race, were excluded in 1917 by what is known as the Harrod Race Act."

**The Gentlemen's Agreement Ineffective**  
"These measures have proved effective in excluding all immigration referred to except that from Japan. The Hindus have ceased to come; Chinese population in continental United States has decreased over one half since 1912; but the Japanese population increased between 1917 and 1923 from 15,000 to 115,000 if the United States Census figures are adopted and from 15,000 to 125,000 if the corrected figures for population for 1923 are used. (See my brief prepared for consideration of the Department of State in 1921, Book 65 to 83). Since 1923 there has been material increase, the Japanese living alone in Hawaii and California amounting to 18,000 per year.

"Japan declares she has fulfilled the conditions of the Gentlemen's Agreement in good faith. It is not necessary to question her good faith in the matter. It is sufficient to point out that the Agreement in operation has failed to produce the desired and agreed result; that while its purpose was to prevent further entrance of Japanese for permanent settlement and any increase of the resident Japanese population, relative and new wives continued to come with the resulting multiplication of population referred to.

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was the agreed alternative if the Agreement failed in operation) Congress simply enacted into a general statute, without mention of Japan or the Japanese, the long established policy of the United States in discouraging immigration of aliens ineligible to citizenship.

"Japan should not regard this action as discriminatory against her people, since they constitute less than 2 per cent of the people affected, and she has no right to object to the principle of exclusion, since she has found it necessary to exclude Chinese and Koreans from Japan.

"Certainly, this nation, having determined to restrict immigration in the interests of assimilation, has done the obvious and logical thing in excluding incidentally aliens who are ineligible to citizenship and who are and must remain hopelessly unassimilable because of that disability imposed by our laws.

"Japan at the instance of presumed friends has offered and unoffered this in this country, has protested against this action and insisted that the result desired could be secured equally well and with less hurt to her people through a new Gentlemen's Agreement, or through modification of the existing Agreement, or through a treaty, or by placing Japan under the quota.

**Agreement, Treaty and Quota**  
"The friends who gave Japan this advice were either ignorant of the fundamental facts and principles in the matter or deliberately ignored them, for Congress, with full knowledge of these matters before it, could not and would not pursue any course other than that adopted. All other plans suggested are open to insurmountable objections under an established policy of the nation as to naturalization and immigration and undergo radical changes. This, it is hoped, will be made plain by the following statement:

"Immigration is a domestic question, the regulation of which, under the Constitution, belongs to Congress exclusively.

"All immigration coming to this country during this century save that coming from Japan, has been regulated by general or special act of Congress.

"Any attempt by the Executive Department to restrict immigration by agreement, or treaty, is an invasion of the Congressional prerogative; and Congress, apparently will no longer tolerate such invasion, particularly when the obvious intent is to violate or evade the established policy of the nation.

"The Gentlemen's Agreement not only constituted an invasion of Congressional prerogative by the Executive, but it surrendered the national sovereignty in surrendering to a foreign nation control of immigration from that nation. Such a relinquishment of sovereign right is made by no other world power, certainly not by Japan; and the United States has made such concession to no nation save Japan. These were sufficient reasons in the judgment of Congress for cancellation of the Gentlemen's Agreement, and for refusal to consider a similar agreement in the future.

"To place Japan under the quota now and to do so without violating the established policy of the nation, since such plan would give to certain aliens ineligible to citizenship, the same rights to admission as are granted to aliens eligible to citizenship, and further would discriminate in favor of one nation whose people are ineligible to American citizenship while still leaving all others ineligible to that privilege.

"The quota plan had the additional practical objection that if the immigration act were so modified in the future as to admit wives outside the quota it would make possible the entrance of a host of Japanese women married as wives for the 10,000 or 15,000 Japanese bachelors in continental United States, with a consequent material increase of the Japanese population.

**The Position of Congress**  
Congress, through a committee consisting of the Chairman of the Immigration Committee and the Republican and the Democratic leader of each house, explained these facts to the President and assured him, if he vetoed the bill it would be passed over his veto by an overwhelming majority, in accordance of what Congress conceived to be its plain duty. It must be remembered, too, that the

action of Congress in the matter was due only to small part to resentment at the tone of the letter written by Ambassador Hattori, for a poll of the House, two days before that letter answered showed 21 votes (a substantial majority) in the Senate pledged to the exclusion of aliens ineligible to citizenship, while in the House a much larger majority in favor thereof had been recorded for some weeks.

"What is true as to the facts and as to the attitude of Congress in late May when the President signed the bill, is equally true today. And public sentiment, which generally endorsed the principle of exclusion then, is becoming more pronounced now in its approval of the course taken by Congress as the detailed reasons therefor become known.

"I submit, therefore, with deference, that it ill compares with Japan's dignity to further press upon Congress or the nation requests or demands which cannot be conceded in the face of existing conditions. It is not the new Immigration Law, but our long established naturalization law and the immigration policy which follows it that blocks the way to Japan's desire. If our naturalization law were so amended as to make Japanese eligible to citizenship that provision of the Immigration Bill which excludes aliens ineligible to citizenship would cease immediately to act as a bar to the entrance of Japanese immigrants.

**Investigation Suggested**  
"It is as a true friend of Japan, and as one who desires to see a permanent continuance of friendly relations between Japan and the United States, that I suggest a dispassionate consideration of the suggestions of this letter and an investigation of the conditions as herein outlined. You will not think me presumptuous in expressing the belief that such a course will furnish more dependable basis for just and effective action than implicit reliance upon the assurances and advice of those who, however friendly to Japan, do not know, or else choose to ignore, the existing conditions.

"It is unfortunate, too, that lack of knowledge of these conditions and of the reasons which in-

duced the action by Congress, and a belief that it was inspired by dislike for, or intent to injure or humiliate Japan, or the Japanese, are creating a feeling of animosity on the part of the Japanese people here and in Japan, which, if not stricken, may materially interfere with friendly relations in the future. It is important that misunderstanding of this character be corrected by authorized statement from responsible sources.

"You will have noticed that on this side of the Pacific every effort has been made to prevent growth of misunderstanding or ill will; and that the four California organizations most prominent in the campaign for passage of the exclusion feature of the Immigration Act have been equally satisfied on just and courteous treatment of, and friendly relations with, the Japanese who have settled in this country practically at the invitation of this Government.

"With appreciation of your friendship and of the efficient work which you have done for your own people in California and for the State as well, in fostering friendly relations, believe me,

"Sincerely yours,

"V. B. McCLATCHY,"  
MIL K. ABRAHAM,  
Editor "Nishi Eki,"  
San Francisco, Cal.



CONGRESS  
and  
JAPAN

Inside History of the Exclusion  
Measure

The Fundamental Reasons Which  
Induced Action By Congress

The Movement to Have That  
Action Reconsidered

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