

VOLUME 2/15E: H.D. WILSON, SCHARRENBERG, P. AN ANSWER
TO DR. HENRY S. PRITCHETT, SAN FRANCISCO:
C.J.I.C., 1928.

An Answer
to
Dr. Henry S. Pritchett

**Who insists that a few California
Politicians are solely responsible
for excluding the Japanese**

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By Paul Scharrenberg
Secretary, California State Federation of Labor

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AN ANSWER

to

DR. HENRY S. PRITCHETT

and

**A Summary of the California Attitude
for Japanese Exclusion by Law**

By **PAUL SCHARRENBERG**

Secretary, California State Federation of Labor

Nearly all the forty-four men and women who represented continental United States at the second session of the Institute of Pacific Relations have written one or more explanatory articles for various American periodicals.

These word pictures of the Institute—of its origin and structure, of its unpretentious pioneering for a better understanding among the races and peoples bordering on the Pacific, were almost without exception fair and tolerant in appraising divergent opinions. The solitary and outstanding exception came from the pen of Henry S. Pritchett, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Said Mr. Pritchett:

So far as the United States is concerned, the matters which have brought irritation in the Pacific have arisen not through the action of governmental diplomatists, but through the acts of citizens of a state or of politicians who were ready to play local politics with international issues. The just irritation of the Japanese over the Exclusion Act is not due to the action either of the executives or of the diplomatic representatives of our national government. The President and the Secretary of State sought to bring about a cessation of Japanese immigration, which both Americans and Japanese recognized as inevitable, by a straight-forward arrangement which accomplished that object, while it did not affront a great and friendly neighbor. Their efforts were defeated by a few politicians, of whom those from the state of California were the most active.

After giving this body blow to the California "politicians" Mr. Pritchett opines that "nothing can be gained by a discussion of it (the subject-matter) in the next decade." Mr. Pritchett evidently feels that his fiery blast should be the last word in the discussion. If he has such a notion, his disappointment is going to be overwhelming. Californians

did not preserve their state as a heritage to the white race through whining or pleading or evading of the issue. Californians won the fight for exclusion (1) because they had the facts necessary for a convincing argument, and (2) because they had public-spirited men with sufficient ability to present those facts and convince any open-minded person of the righteousness of their cause.

But let us see about the "few politicians from the state of California" who, according to Mr. Pritchett, have so justly irritated the Japanese!

The demand for effective Japanese exclusion came from the common people in all walks of life. The demand was formally voiced over and over again by the following four California organizations in their respective annual conventions: the State Department of the American Legion, the State Grange, the State Federation of Labor, and the Native Sons of the Golden West. Does Mr. Pritchett mean to insinuate that these four great California organizations are controlled by a few politicians?

Three of these organizations are state branches of national organizations. And all three of these national organizations in convention assembled approved the California demand for exclusion by law. Does Mr. Pritchett mean to say that all are controlled by a few politicians?

If it be true, as alleged by Mr. Pritchett, that the President and the Secretary of State sought to bring about a cessation of Japanese immigration by diplomatic negotiation, why, oh why, did they fail in their efforts? Californians demanded exclusion in the early years of the present century. President Roosevelt and his diplomats gave us a substitute for exclusion. Its only merit was acceptability to Japan. The Roosevelt substitute for exclusion by law, known as the "Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907," never was satisfactory to the citizens of the western states. The agitation for effective exclusion continued and resulted in the fairly unanimous conclusion that the only way to obtain effective Japanese exclusion was to pass a law—just as had been done in the case of the Chinese.

Data compiled by the California State Board of Control showed that under the Gentlemen's Agreement the Japanese population of California had increased during the decade 1910-1920 by more than 25,000 from immigration only. During the same period the net increase of the Chi-

nese population, including births, was only 789. In other words, the Chinese Exclusion Act actually excluded.

Of course all this does not concern Mr. Pritchett whose interest in the struggle is apparently purely academic. But the people of California rejoiced when their insistent demand for effective exclusion finally found a satisfactory answer in Congress. The answer consisted in the insertion of a clause in the General Immigration Act of 1924 providing that "no alien ineligible to citizenship shall be admitted to the United States."

Exclusion of all aliens ineligible to citizenship offered a logical, simple, practical and effective solution of the entire Asiatic immigration problem. It followed the Federal law which since 1790 has made all the yellow and brown races ineligible to citizenship because of unassimilability and the menace they would offer if established here. Surely, if immigration is to be restricted, we should commence with that element which is barred from citizenship.

It was anticipated that Japan would protest against such legislation on the grounds of discrimination. But Japan was the only nation which did protest. As a matter of fact, the measure is not discriminatory against Japan, for it applies to approximately half the population of the globe, and the Japanese constitute not more than seven or eight per cent of those affected. It should be remembered, too, that Japan, in protection of her own people, wisely regulates the influx of Chinese and Koreans, thus discriminating against people of her own color.

It has been contended that if Japanese immigration to the United States cannot be regulated by diplomatic negotiation then the Japanese should be placed under the "quota" basis the same as the various nations of Europe. If Japanese immigration should be regulated by the "quota" basis in the same manner as immigration from European countries is regulated, the discriminatory law forbidding naturalization of Asiatics would still remain in full force. Many other discriminatory state laws pertaining to land ownership, leases, etc., would also remain in effect.

Again, if the quota basis were granted to the Japanese, it would necessarily have to be applied to all other Asiatic countries including China. Otherwise there would be still other and more justifiable charges of discrimination. Under the quota basis China would be entitled to ship more than two thousand coolies per annum to California. It is a

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singular fact that all Asiatic immigrants have always shown a marked preference for California. According to data submitted by the Japanese delegation at the recent Honolulu meeting, there are 258,844 Japanese in the United States. Of this number, 125,764 are in the Territory of Hawaii, and 103,396 are in California. The other Pacific Coast states together have 23,689. All the rest of the states have only 5995 Japanese as residents. These figures are quoted to prove that we are confronted by a condition and not a theory, namely, that the Japanese problem and the Chinese problem in America have always been distinctly California problems. California took the initiative in the long struggle for Chinese exclusion and California led in the fight for the present effective exclusion of Japanese. And California is not disposed to open her gates—not even to a couple of thousand unassimilable Asiatics per annum.

It is certainly to be regretted that Mr. Pritchett's pro-Japanese propaganda has been accepted for publication in so widely read a magazine as Scribner's. The politicians who are attacked by Mr. Pritchett can stand it. As long as politicians voice the sentiment of their constituents they may smile, but will scarcely deign to reply to a pro-Japanese lecture. The serious harm is done elsewhere. The uninformed residents of eastern states and the Japanese themselves are likely to arrive at wrong conclusions. They may begin to think that the Californians do not really desire effective Japanese exclusion. And that will be a most mistaken assumption. Mr. Pritchett may not realize it, but if he has the courage of his convictions he ought to finance the campaign of a few candidates for Congress in the West who will take his program and frankly declare for the abrogation of exclusion by law. Then, and then only, Mr. Pritchett will make a grand new discovery. He will learn that the politicians whom he attacks do represent the people.