

THE JAPANESE QUESTION

There are certain elementary principles all of which should be kept steadily in view if a nation wishes to act justly both by itself and by others. It must insist upon what is necessary for its own healthy life, and this even at the cost of a possible clash; but this insistence on what is due to itself should always be accompanied by all possible courtesy to and fair dealing with others.

These are the principles upon which the people of the United States should act as regards the question of the immigration of the Japanese into this country. The Japanese are a highly civilized people of extraordinary military, artistic, and industrial development; they are proud, warlike, and sensitive. I believe that our people have, what I personally certainly have, a profound and hearty admiration for them; an admiration for their great deeds and great qualities, an ungrudging respect for their national character. But this admiration and respect is accompanied by the firm conviction that it is not for the advantage of either people that emigrants from either country should settle in mass in the other country. The understanding between the two countries on this point should be on a basis of entire mutuality, and therefore on a basis which will preserve unimpaired the self-respect of each country, and permit each to continue to feel friendly good will for the other. Japan would certainly object to the incoming of masses of American farmers, laborers, and small traders; indeed, the Japanese would object to this at least as strongly as the men of the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States object to the incoming in mass of Japanese workmen, agricultural laborers, and men engaged in small trades. The Japanese certainly object to Americans acquiring land in Japan at least as much as the Americans of the far Western States object to the Japanese acquiring land on our soil. The Americans who go to Japan and the Japanese who come to America should be of the same general class—that is, they should be travelers, students, teachers, scientific investigators, men engaged in international business, men sojourning in the land for pleasure or study. As long as the emigration

from each side is limited to classes such as these, there will be no settlement in mass, and therefore no difficulty. Wherever there is settlement in mass—that is, wherever there is a large immigration of urban or agricultural laborers, or of people engaged in small local business of any kind—there is sure to be friction. It is against the interests of both nations that such unrestricted immigration or settlement in mass should be allowed as regards either nation. This is the cardinal fact in the situation; it should be freely recognized by both countries, and can be accepted by each not only without the slightest loss of self-respect, but with the certainty that its acceptance will tend to preserve mutual respect and friendliness.

But in achieving this policy we should bear steadily in mind that it is our duty to combine the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of offensiveness. Only the National Government can carry out such a policy effectively, and the surest way to do harm is for State, municipal, or other local governments to pass laws which would be ineffective to obtain the real object and yet would produce intense irritation. The best of all possible ways in which to achieve the object is that which the governments of the two countries have now by common agreement adopted; for the Japanese Government has on its own initiative and of its own accord undertaken to prevent the coming hither in any appreciable numbers of Japanese of the classes to which I have referred. This agreement during the last year or thereabouts has worked so well that actually more Japanese have left the country than have come into it, and there has therefore been a diminution of their numbers. If this continues, all difficulties will cease without the need of further action, whether by treaty or by legislation. On the one hand, it is for the common interest of both countries that Japan should effectively and rigorously carry out this policy. On the other hand, it is not only the interest but the duty of America to take no further action until it can be seen whether this policy is successful; and this is just as wise, just as incumbent on us, whether we do or do not believe that it will be successful. The success of the policy must be gauged by its actual re-

sults ; that is, by the extent to which it arrests the immigration of large bodies of Japanese. If the Japanese Government proves unable to carry its policy through, then undoubtedly this Government, by treaty or by legislation, must protect itself and secure the desired result on its own initiative. But in such a case it would be doubly incumbent upon us to take the action in the way that would provoke the least possible friction and cause the least possible hard feeling. Moreover, we should make it evident that the recognition of the fact that it is to the interest of both races that the masses of both races should be kept apart is in no way incompatible with the heartiest feelings of mutual respect and admiration between the two races.

The fact that all really patriotic and far-sighted Americans insist that hand in hand with a policy of good will toward foreign nations should go the policy of the up-building of our navy is often interpreted by well-meaning but short-sighted men as being a threat toward other nations, or as being provocative of war. Of the two assumptions the first is utterly unwarranted, and the second is the direct reverse of the truth. We have the right to say, for instance, what immigrants shall come to our own shores ; but we are powerless to enforce this right against any nation that chooses to disregard our wishes, unless we continue to build up and maintain a first-class fighting navy. The professional peace advocate who wishes us to stop building up our navy is, in reality, seeking to put us in a position where we would be absolutely at the mercy of any other nation that happened to wish to disregard our desires to control the immigration that comes to our shores, to protect our own interests in the Panama Canal, to protect our own citizens abroad, or to take any stand whatever either for our own international honor or in the interest of international righteousness. Moreover, those well-meaning but fatuous advocates of peace who would try to prevent the up-building of our navy utterly misread the temper of their countrymen. We Americans are ourselves both proud and high-spirited, and we are not always by any means far-sighted. If our honor or our interest were menaced by a foreign power, this

Nation would fight, wholly without regard to whether or not its navy was efficient. In the event of a crisis arising, the peace advocates who object to our building up the navy would be absolutely powerless to prevent this country going to war. All they could do would be to prevent its being successful in the war. A strong navy is the surest guaranty of peace that America can have, and the cheapest insurance against war that Uncle Sam can possibly pay.

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