

M. Alexander of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce to discuss with leading Japanese the feasibility of a friendly understanding between the two countries.

The two civilizations can not mingle, and the leaders in Japan agree that it is not well

to attempt to amalgamate them. They can not and will not understand our civilization, and no matter in what part of the world he is, a Japanese always feels himself a subject of the Emperor, with the Imperial Government backing him, much as a feudal retainer had the support of his overlord in exchange for an undivided loyalty.

The Attitude of Organized Labor towards the Japanese

By PAUL SCHARRENBURG

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THE Oriental immigration problem has always been distinctively a California problem. For seventy years the working people of California have striven for legislation prohibiting the further immigration of Oriental laborers. Certain internationalists and intellectuals of various shades have expressed doubts about the wisdom of adopting an exclusion policy. Men and women whose occupations have brought them into direct contact with the Chinese or Japanese have never had but one opinion as to the significance of their admission. Whether in the mining camps of the early fifties, in the factories and workshops of the later periods of industrial development, or as tillers of the soil, we find the same bitter complaints of the evils of such competition.

If Californians had been able to legislate on the subject, the question would have been settled long before the Chinese had arrived in sufficient numbers to constitute a serious problem. However, under our system of government Congress claims exclusive right to regulate immigration, hence it was necessary to convince the nation before the desired relief could be obtained. This was not an easy task. The small minority within the state whose interests were opposed to re-

strictive legislation were greatly reinforced by the merchants of older states, who feared to jeopardize the rich trade of the Orient, and by idealists who were loth to recognize the world-old significance of race in the application of their theories of political and social equality. Only by the persistent and sustained effort of the working people of California first the state and then the nation have been converted to the policy of Chinese exclusion.

No sooner had the Chinese immigration problem been disposed of to the general satisfaction of Californians when the menace of unrestricted Japanese immigration came to the front with startling rapidity.

For two hundred and fifty years prior to the arrival of Commodore Perry, Japan had excluded all foreigners (barbarians) except a small number of Dutch traders who were, however, restricted to a small island. Commodore Perry anchored off Uraga on July 7, 1853. Five years later the first official treaty between the United States and Japan was signed to take effect on July 4, 1859.

Only thirty-three years later, in 1892, the American Federation of Labor Convention adopted resolutions demanding extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act so as to include Japanese. And

fifteen years after this demand was made, *i.e.*, in 1907, a so-called "Gentlemen's Agreement" was arrived at through diplomatic negotiations whereby the Japanese Government agreed to keep laborers from America.

But the "Gentlemen's Agreement" has not been a solution of the problem. In California the demand for the exclusion of Japanese is more general and more pronounced today than ever before. Of course, the organized working people have been in the vanguard of this movement just as they led in the struggle for Chinese exclusion. Leadership in this respect does not mean hurling the most bricks. To the contrary, labor in California has severely frowned upon violent anti-Japanese manifestations. Although this is not generally known, it is a fact, nevertheless, that California trade-unionists have at all times made earnest efforts to eliminate the harsh, unpleasant features incident to such a campaign of propaganda.

There are many concrete examples to bear out this contention. But just one will suffice to illustrate the point. Two Japanese presented credentials as fraternal delegates to the annual convention of the California State Federation of Labor which met at Santa Rosa in 1915. The report of the Committee on Credentials made to said convention clearly sets forth California labor's attitude toward the workers in Japan and is quoted herewith:

There have been submitted to the Committee on Credentials two credentials for fraternal delegates from the Laborers' Friendly Society of Tokio, Japan, namely, B. Suzuki and S. Yoshimatsu.

Your Committee has given careful consideration to the question of seating these men. It has been said that the Laborers' Friendly Society is not a bona fide trade-union. It has also been alleged that these two men are not representing the working people of Japan, but are rather agents of the

Japanese Government in a well planned campaign to weaken our immigration laws, etc.

Your Committee, however, has not been furnished with any evidence to substantiate the allegations referred to. We therefore recommend that both be seated without vote.

We have arrived at this conclusion (1) because the seating of these delegates in no way affects our attitude or modifies our demand for the exclusion of all Asiatic laborers from our shores; (2) because we believe it is in accordance with the spirit of International Unionism and to our own advantage to aid and encourage the working people in Japan to organize and better their conditions.

The Committee's report was adopted and the delegates seated. During the second day's session Delegate Suzuki read to the convention a carefully prepared paper. His address was made a part of the printed proceedings.

The same convention which extended every courtesy to the Japanese delegates did not fail, however, to reiterate the old demand for an extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act so as to bar all Asiatics. United States Senator Phelan took occasion shortly after the adjournment of said convention to write to the California State Federation of Labor intimating "that the Federation had been trapped into a false position."

This was denied in a circular letter sent out by the Executive Council of the Federation, reading in part as follows:

No, Senator, we have not modified our views upon the Japanese menace. We fully realize the danger of the so-called "Gentlemen's Agreement" and we are anxious to have enacted an exclusion law which will effectively and permanently bar these little brown men from our shores.

Our objection to the Japanese in California is not, as you so well know, based upon trivial or sentimental reasons. We object to them for economic reasons, we

know Californians can not compete with them and maintain an American standard of living. And we have been in hopes that our kind treatment of the two delegates from Japan, and our own efforts to have them understand fully and unequivocally that we have no grievance against the Japanese as long as they remain in Japan, might have a tendency to bring about a better understanding between the wage workers of Japan and the wage workers of America. If we have failed in this honest endeavor it will be no fault of ours. We have at least tried.

In labor circles there was considerable discussion upon the question throughout the year, but when Suzuki returned from Japan a year later he was again seated in the convention with only a few dissenting votes. At that time (October, 1916) Delegate Suzuki extended a formal invitation to the convention to send a fraternal delegate to the fifth anniversary of the Laborers' Friendly Society in Japan, to be held the following spring in Tokio.

The invitation was referred to a committee, and in due time the committee submitted the following report:

Upon invitation of the Japanese Fraternal Delegate to send a Representative to that Country, your committee submits the following resolution and recommends its approval:

Whereas, The organized labor movement of California and of America stands ever ready to assist the workers of every country, color and creed, to emancipate themselves from exploitation, and

Whereas, It has been necessary at times for the working class of this country to protect their standard of living by favoring the exclusion of foreign competition, in the spirit alone of imperative necessity and self-protection, and

Whereas, We have learned, with interest and gratification, that the workers of Japan are organizing into industrial unions for their own welfare; a movement we can endorse; therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Seventeenth Annual

Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, that we give to Mr. Suzuki, the fraternal delegate from the Laborers' Friendly Society of Japan, our expression of good will and a message of hope and encouragement for a brighter future of the working class of his country; and be it further

Resolved, That, in assuming this position of a greater friendship between the workers of the East and the West, we must continue our unswerving stand upon exclusion until such time as immigration will not prove a menace to our own unions, our working people and our standard of living; and be it further

Resolved, That the question of sending a fraternal delegate from this body to the labor convention in Japan be referred to the Executive Council of this Federation, with the hope that a delegate can be selected to carry a message of good will and encouragement to the laboring class of Japan.

The report of the Committee was adopted.

In November of the same year Suzuki attended the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor which met at Baltimore. This convention was equally emphatic in defining the position of organized labor upon American-Japanese working-class relations, by the unanimous adoption of the following:

Resolved, By the American Federation of Labor in annual convention assembled at Baltimore, Md., that we note with extreme pleasure and satisfaction the fact that the working people of Japan are organizing into unions and federated under the Laborers' Friendly Society of Japan; that we bespeak for them and their movement all the success possible; that we recommend that the Executive Council continue its friendly office in an effort to be helpful to the organization of the workers of Japan in every way possible by correspondence, and that it send a message of fraternal greeting, good will and best wishes for the success of the movement to organize more thoroughly and practically the wage-workers of Japan to bring light in their work and their lives.

It had been hoped that the American Federation of Labor and the California State Federation of Labor would each send a fraternal delegate to the meeting in Japan but the international situation became more and more critical and finally resulted in America's entry in the war. That put an end to plans for developing a clearer understanding and promoting mutual good will between the workers in America and Japan.

Suzuki did not return as a fraternal delegate but since his last visit the workers of Japan have been represented at two international labor conferences held under the auspices of the League of Nations and in each instance the Japanese representative gave an excellent account of himself.

M. Masumoto, Japan's labor delegate to the International Labor Conference held in Washington, during 1919, was a man with the courage of his convictions. Addressing the conference on November 27, Masumoto characterized his government as an autocracy which is the enemy of social justice. Pointing to the Japanese flag, he declared that under it "there is a police regulation whose aim is to interfere with the organization of labor." Describing what he termed the danger of extending to the Government of Japan special treatment, Masumoto said the industrial workers of Japan were mostly women and children, and that their lives approached almost that of slavery.

A second international labor conference was held at Genoa, Italy, in June and July, 1920, to consider the problems of seamen. Just prior to said conference representatives of the world's seamen held an opening meeting in Genoa for the purpose of comparing notes and, if possible, to agree upon a joint program for submission to the official international conference.

At both of these meetings the seafarers of Japan were represented by Ken Okasaki, an able, courageous and resourceful champion of those who go down to sea in ships.

It has been my good fortune to come in personal contact with all three of these Japanese labor representatives—Suzuki, Masumoto and Okasaki—and it is not stretching a point to assert that men of this type are truly a credit to the working people in Japan.

Through association with these three men, often under decidedly trying circumstances, it has become a fixed belief with me that American-Japanese relations can be adjusted on a basis entirely satisfactory to the working people in both nations. No claim is made that this can be done by professional diplomats. But a series of heart to heart talks between workers' representatives from America and Japan will accomplish wonders. In fact there will be scarcely any ground for disagreement after a perfectly frank exchange of views has taken place. Of course, there must be honesty of purpose and discussion without disguise.

Japanese and American diplomats have so beclouded the main issue that the average man who is not a member of the diplomats' union, and hence not versed in the fine points of that game, can not possibly follow the play.

For years we have been told that the Japanese are peeved because of the anti-Japanese campaign in California. But is it reasonable to assume that any Japanese duly acquainted with the immigration policy of Australia and Canada can have any grievance against California's efforts to similarly protect herself?

Can it be possible that any considerable number of Japanese, outside of diplomatic circles, will seriously claim certain rights for their countrymen in California when these "rights" have

been and are being denied by other countries closely allied with Japan?

Every well informed Japanese knows that certain groups of workers in Japan have time after time protested against the importation of Chinese coolies. Is it not a perfectly natural corollary that the working people of the Island empire, if duly informed, will not only understand but actually sympathize with the identical attitude of American workers?

Trained diplomats may answer "No." But here is one California trade-unionist who believes that the working people in Japan will give an entirely different reply.

To be sure, the case must be presented to them in its entirety and also in its true colors. As years go by this becomes more and more difficult because politicians and statesmen (so-called) are doing their utmost to make frank and manly discussions of the problem a virtual impossibility.

But it is not too late to start right now. The organized working people in some of the countries of Europe are

no longer content with old diplomatic usages. They have insisted and in several instances succeeded in securing recognition for men from the ranks of labor. It was not a question of getting government jobs for labor officials but rather the driving of labor's viewpoint, labor's thought and language, into the exclusive set who are labeled "trained diplomats."

So here's hoping that responsible forces will soon be at work:

1. To bring about an intelligent appreciation throughout America of the economic need for the exclusion of Japanese.

2. To map out a plan, open and above-board, whereby it will be possible to reach a thorough understanding between the workers in Japan and the workers of America.

3. To cause the appointment of an experienced and thoroughly representative labor man for service (as an adviser) at each of the principal American embassies, but in particular at our embassy in Tokio.

Review of Exclusion History

By WALTER MACARTHUR
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"As became a people devoted to the National Union, and filled with profound reverence for law, we have repeatedly, by petition and memorial, through the action of our Legislature, and by our Senators and Representatives in Congress, sought the appropriate remedies against this great wrong, and patiently awaited with confidence the action of the General Government. Meanwhile this giant evil has grown, and strengthened, and expanded; its baneful

effects upon the material interests of the people, upon public morals, and our civilization, becoming more and more apparent, until patience is almost exhausted, and the spirit of discontent pervades the state. It would be disingenuous in us to attempt to conceal our amazement at the long delay of appropriate action by the National Government towards the prohibition of an immigration which is rapidly approaching the character of an Oriental invasion, and which