

JAPANESE ON THE WEST COAST

(C. B. Munson)

GROUND COVERED

In reporting on the Japanese 'problem' on the West Coast the facts are, on the whole, fairly clear and opinion toward the problem exceedingly uniform. In reporting, the main difficulty is to know where to leave off and what to leave out. One could gather data for fifteen years with fifteen men and still be in the position of the Walrus and the Carpenter:

If seven maids with seven mops  
Swept it for half a year -  
Do you suppose, the Walrus said,  
That they could get it clear?

Whisking up the grains of sand is the wrong approach, yet when your reporter declares there is a sea and a shore and some sand, and that he has sampled the general quality of sand in many varying beaches, do not be too hard in your judgment for him if he has stopped far short of sorting out each layer or tint or even each beach. You have to feel this problem - not figure it out with your pencil. We only cite the sand that our reader may never forget the complexities of even a shovel full of sand.

Your reporter spent about a week each in the 11th, 12th and 13th Naval Districts with the full cooperation of

cases attempted to do. The loyal Nisei hardly know where to turn. Some gesture of protection or wholehearted acceptance of this group would go a long way to swinging them away from any last romantic hankering after old Japan. They are not oriental or mysterious, they are very American and are one of a proud, self-respecting race suffering from a little inferiority complex and a lack of contact with the white boys they went to school with. They are eager for this contact and to work alongside them.

The Issei or first generation is considerably weakened in their loyalty to Japan by the fact that they have chosen to make this their home and have brought up their children here. They expect to die here. They are quite fearful of being put in a concentration camp. Many would take out American citizenship if allowed to do so. The haste of this report does not allow us to go into this more fully. The Issei have to break with their religion, their god and Emperor, their family, their ancestors and their after-life in order to be loyal to the United States. They are also still legally Japanese. Yet they do break, and send their boys off to the Army with pride and tears. They are good neighbors. They are old men fifty-five to sixty-five, for the most part simple and dignified. Roughly they were Japanese lower middle class about analogous to the pilgrim fathers. They were largely farmers and fishermen. Today the Japanese is farmer, fisherman and businessman. They get very attached to the land they work or own (through the second generation),

they like their own business, they do not work at industrial jobs nor for others except as a stepping stone to becoming independent.

The Kibei, educated from childhood to seventeen, are still the element most to be watched.

#### WHAT WILL THE JAPANESE DO

##### SABOTAGE

Now that we have roughly given a background and a description of the Japanese elements in the United States the question naturally arises - what will these people do in case of a war between the United States and Japan? As interview after interview piled up, those bringing in results began to call it the same old tune. Such it was with only minor differences. These contacts ranged all the way from two-day sessions with Intelligence Services, through business men, to Roman Catholic priests who were frankly not interested in the United States and were only interested in making as many Catholics as possible. The story was all the same. There is no Japanese 'problem' on the Coast. There will be no armed uprising of Japanese. There will undoubtedly be some sabotage financed by Japan and executed largely by imported agents or agents already imported. There will be the odd case of fanatical sabotage by some Japanese 'crackpot'. In each Naval District there are about 250 to 300 suspects under surveillance. It is easy to get on the suspect list, merely a speech in favor of Japn at some banquet, being sufficient to land one there. The Intelligence Services are generous with the title of suspect and are taking no chances. Privately, they

believe that only 50 or 60 in each district can be classed as really dangerous. The Japanese are hampered as saboteurs because of their easily recognized physical appearance. It will be hard for them to get near anything to blow up if it is guarded. There is far more danger from Communists and people of the Bridges type on the Coast than there is from Japanese. The Japanese here is almost exclusively a farmer, a fisherman or a small business man. He has no entree to plants or intricate machinery.

#### ESPIONAGE

The Japanese, if undisturbed and disloyal, should be well equipped for obvious physical espionage. A great part of this work was probably completed and forwarded to Tokio years ago, such as soundings and photography of every inch of the Coast. They are probably familiar with the location of every building and garage including Mike O'Flarety's out-house in the Siskiyou with all trails leading thereto. An experienced Captain in Navy Intelligence, who has from time to time and over a period of years intercepted information Tokio bound, said he would certainly hate to be a Japanese coordinator of information in Tokio. He stated that the mass of useless information was unbelievable. This would be fine for a fifth column in Belgium or Holland with the German army ready to march in over the border, but though the local Japanese could spare a man who intimately knew the country for each Japanese invasion squad, there would at least have to be a terrific American Naval disaster before his brown brothers would need his services. The dangerous part of their espionage is that

they would be very effective as far as movement of supplies, movement of troops and movement of ships out of harbor mouths and over railroads is concerned. They occupy only rarely positions where they can get to confidential papers or in plants. They are usually, when rarely so placed, a subject of perpetual watch and suspicion by their fellow workers. They would have to buy most of this type of information from white people.

#### PROPAGANDA

Their direct propaganda is poor and rather ineffective on the whole. Their indirect is more successful. By indirect we mean propaganda preaching the beauties of Japan and the sweet innocence of the Japanese race to susceptible Americans.

#### SUMMARY

Japan will commit some sabotage largely depending on imported Japanese as they are afraid of and do not trust the Nesei. There will be no wholehearted response from Japanese in the United States. They may get some helpers from certain Kibei. They will be in a position to pick up information on troop, supply and ship movements from local Japanese.

For the most part the local Japanese are loyal to the United States or, at worst, hope that by remaining quiet they can avoid concentration camps or irresponsible mobs. We do not believe that they would be at least any more disloyal than any other racial group in the United States with