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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Evacuation & Resettlement Study
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PRE-EVACUATION PRESSURE GROUP ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

P e r s o n a l i t y S k e t c h e s

(1) LAIL THOMAS KANE

In six years of newspaper work in Los Angeles with a Japanese language daily, I came into contact with a score of race-bating, race-hating men and women whose attitude toward Japanese residents of the state was summed up: "White Californians never wanted the Japs; they don't want them now. It was a grave mistake when the XIV amendment to the Constitution granting citizenship by right of birth in the United States was passed. Japs can never be assimilated. The sooner we're rid of them, the better off we'll be."

During my six years with the Los Angeles Japanese Daily News, the most persistent--though not most influential--proponent of this view whom I met was Lail Thomas Kane. I last talked with Lail Kane on April 12, 1942. He had called the office of the L.A. Japanese Daily News to get his last parting snipe. Our relations since our first meeting in March, 1939, had not always been friendly. On April 12, 1942, he was calling from his office in the Hall of Justice; he was a marine surveyor for the County Assessor's department.

"Is that you, Togo?" his voice was crisp, and he spoke with a tone of triumph.

"Well, so you're finally getting your way, aren't you? They're going to evacuate us, they say."

"You're goddam right we are. Are you packed, boy? You'd

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better shake a leg there, son. Remember, Papa Kane has called the cards right every time. Too bad you and that JACL bunch didn't pay attention to me when I spoke to that audience in the Japanese Church way back in '39. Remember? I told you I was the best friend you ever had, only nobody believed me."

"Did you call me up just to gloat?"

"Hell no, Togo. I don't have to stoop to that. You ought to know me by now. I just wanted to give you some personal advice, Togo boy, because, in spite of everything, I really am fond of you. I think you're all right, and given a half way chance, you can become a good American. I called to advise you to be sure to have your will drawn up. You don't have one, do you?"

"Why no, I've never thought of dying."

"In these uncertain times, Togo my boy, you should give more thought to your wife and baby. Be sure to have a will drawn up. It's worth the price. I've never given you any bad advice yet, have I? Didn't I tell you in April of 1939 that war was going to break out in Europe before that year was over? Didn't I warn you early this^{past}/year that Japan would attack us and there would be war on the Pacific? Didn't I tell you back in '39 that you'd all be interned when war came? Right, am I not?"

"Certainly, Mr. Kane, your powers of prognostication are remarkable. I should break down and weep."

"There's no need for sarcasm, Togo. You remember when your paper printed that lying story about me and my wife nearly had a nervous breakdown?"

"It wasn't a lying story; it was a reprint from the San Francisco News-Letter & Wasp. It merely exposed you as a Jap-baiting citizen. You called me up and threatened dire things after

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it appeared."

"And something dire almost did happen?"

"We received letters and telegrams from the San Francisco News Letter & Wasp threatening us with a \$50,000 copyright suit, even though we had received permission to reprint the article."

"Didn't I tell you?"

"Certainly, but we settled the suit out of court--for \$100--just nuisance value."

"Bygones should be bygones, my boy. Now that you are closing down your newspaper and haven't got a ghost of a chance to keep going, I just called to ask you if you want to put some of the books in your library to good use, Uncle Lail can use them. Give me a ring and let me know, be sure, my boy."

"I should tell you you've got a lot of crust, but I'm not. I want to know more about your opinions, predictions, even if we're on this telephone another hour. You've been the fountainhead of more anti-Nisei indoctrination than anybody I've met in Southern California. I want to get more of your predictions. Go ahead and gloat."

"I'll remember you by the mental gymnastics you've given me as well as by the nervous breakdown you caused my wife, Togo. Here's some more advice, straight from the shoulder. Two things you've got to stop--or do after they get you all into camp behind guards. They're going to have to separate the Nisei from the Kibei and the Issei. You're going to have to break these kenjin organizations. Remember me, mark my words, the minute you get those kens together, you're right back where you started. They're a bad influence on the Nisei. They're an influence from

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Japan. If you birds want to make a place for yourselves in America, just remember that any old world ideas should be discarded. They shouldn't put all of you in the same camp; there should be classification according to educational background, same ideals--alone without any Japan-izing influences. You better be thankful your families are being kept together, Togo, how'd you like it if you went into one camp and your wife and daughter into another? That's what would happen if this were Germany. They ought to send all the Kibei back to Japan; if the Nisei don't watch out, they'll be going with them. If you're not careful, your citizenship will be revoked. People aren't fooling around any more. There is a definite feeling that all Japanese, including the Nisei, should be deported to Japan after the war. This is a bill by Senator Stewart. I've received a telegram to go to Washington to testify, but I'm not going right now. Right at present, I don't think the possibility of its passing is so good. But as soon as the Japs attack the west coast, zoom, you just watch; see how fast the bill goes through."

"That's when you'll be laying for us again?"

"Yep. You betta my life. You're a different class of people. You were born here, sure. But that doesn't make you American necessarily. But if you're different from white American, you're different again from the Kibei and the Issei. They're real Japanese. You don't think alike. Now that's one of the tragic things. The Nisei--if they're going to win a place in America--have got to dominate the Issei. The fact that different groups among the Japanese must be associated together in these camps means that one has got to dominate. If the Kibei and Issei dominate, your goose is cooked; you'd better face

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it squarely. Good luck, my boy. Oh yes, one more thing. I want you to help me locate a man. Ever hear of Hiroshi Ohtomo?"

"No? who's he?"

"He is an engineer commander in the Imperial Japanese Navy. His address was 1 Madison Avenue, New York; he was in the United States after December 7, 1941. Two years ago he was in Los Angeles. I saw him at the Santa Fe depot. He's been in Los Angeles."

"Now, are you insinuating that I know of his whereabouts or am chummy with this type of company?"

"I'm not insinuating anything. Call me up Monday morning. And remember the books in your library." (I've never seen or heard)
(from him since; I've lost)
(contact with him.--TT.)

THE FISHING BILLS

Besides being one of the most vocal spokesmen of the view that "America is a white man's democracy" in Southern California, Lail Kane won attention in American Legion circles as the most persistent advocate of commercial fishing legislation aimed to eliminate Japanese alien fishermen.

In 1935, as honorary Chairman of the National Defense Committee, Navy Post No. 278, American Legion, Lail Kane submitted the draft of proposed legislation to "Americanize" the California fishing fleet before the American Legion State Executive Council for approval. This was granted, and the proposal became a mandate to be introduced at the next session of the State legislature. The bill stated specifically:

"...no commercial fishing license shall be issued to anyone within the State of

California unless such person be a citizen of the United States and an actual bona fide resident of California for more than one (1) year preceding application for said license."

It was introduced by Senator Nelson T. Edwards of Orange County as Senate Bill No. 444. In the Assembly, two identical proposals, framed on the same pattern, were introduced: Jones Assembly Bill No. 1826 and Hunt Assembly Bill No. 304. A third supplementary measure, Hunt Assembly Bill No. 1826, also appeared. Japanese commercial fishermen of San Diego, San Pedro, and Monterey, charged the measures as "discriminatory." They pointed out that the proposal would exclude them because they were not eligible to citizenship, whereas Italian, Portuguese, and Yugoslav alien fishermen could become citizens. The large canneries of the fishing centers, depending upon Japanese fishermen who were supplying them with their catch, also opposed the measures. Several California legislators, arguing against the proposals, stressed the discriminatory features of the bills. The Edwards bill, along with the supplementary proposals in the lower house, were killed in session.

Lail Kane publicly vowed that the fight had just begun.

"The Jap fishermen are a menace to our national defense. Many of the so-called fishermen on these boats are naval officers of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Some of the innocent-looking tuna boats which ply San Pedro Harbor could be converted in a few hours into torpedo boats," he said^{at} that time.

At the 1936 California Department convention of the American Legion, held in Hollywood, Lail Kane took the stump again for a resolution calling for a Legion Mandate to put across the fish-

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ing bill in the next session of the State Legislature. To secure Legion approval, he returned to his own Navy Post 278 with a full report.

"The goddamned greedy fish canneries and the Jap fishermen beat us. You know, some of our so-called Americans are so ruled by the almighty dollar that if you put Christ on a Cross fifteen feet away, some of these bastards wouldn't see Him because a piece of silver--the thirty pieces--stood in the way. The J.A.C.L.--remember those initials, gentlemen, the Jackals--they're the Jap-Americans, they did their little part too. They stood for Japan--against the United States. They opposed the measure; they wouldn't believe it was for National Defense. They said race prejudice, discrimination. Now, I want a unanimous vote of this Navy Post favoring the legislation so that I can take it before the 17th District and the County Council."

Lail Kane won his unanimous approval from the Navy Post; he took it before the 17th District meeting and secured a favorable report. When he submitted the draft before the County Council, he ran into some opposition. The force of his arguments prevailed, however; he rammed it home for a score. Then to the California Department Convention in Hollywood he went, fought the issue in committee, won approval again, submitted it on the floor of the convention, had it passed and approved. Once again, the proposal to "kick the Japs out of California commercial fishing" was a mandate of the California American Legion.

At the 1937 session of the state legislature at Sacramento, three bills, carrying the intent and purpose of Kane's original proposal, were introduced: Assembly Bill No. 754, presented by

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Assemblyman Gene Flint of Los Angeles; Assembly Bill No. 1019, ~~intere~~ introduced by Assemblyman Charles Hunt of Los Angeles; and Assembly Bill No. 2653, initiated by Assemblyman James Boyle of Los Angeles.

All three bills were again defeated in legislative session.

The previous defeat of the Edwards bill had brought recognition of the discriminatory aspects of the legislation. It was termed a "cinch bill", a form of extra-legal shake-down.

Lail Kane raged.

"The rotten deal made me furious," he told me shortly after I first made his acquaintance in 1939; by that time he had concentrated blame for failure of his proposal to pass upon the J.A.C.L. He chose to say: "The J.A.C.L. is in cahoots, or being used as tools of Jap spies and agents among the fishermen."

When asked if the same applied to the California State Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, San Diego Chamber of Commerce, San Pedro Chamber of Commerce, California Council on Oriental Relations, State Federation of Churches and Sardine Cannery Association, *all of which opposed the measure as discriminatory* he said: "They're all just a bunch of goddam ignoramuses who don't know their ass from a hole in the ground."

In summer of 1937, Lail Kane girded his loins for battle once again.

He stalked into the California Department American Legion convention at Stockton. He lambasted legislators who had opposed the fishing hills on the floor of the convention; he button-holed

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fellow Legionnaires everywhere, spread out confidential data which he had gathered as marine surveyor at San Pedro harbor showing the dangers in the Jap fishing fleet's presence there. He named dates, listed names, reeled off figures--always dogmatic in his confidence that what he said ~~was~~ was the TRUTH. He knew that he was in for a battle on the convention floor this time. Opposition within the Legion had grown. The record of repeated (twice in a row now) rejection of his measure in the state legislature had raised doubt in Legionnaire minds.

Kane met his opposition on the floor of the convention in the person of Tokutaro Nishimura Slocum, lone Japanese member of the Inglewood Post. Debate waxed highly emotional. Bitter words were exchanged. Both Kane and Slocum were past masters of vituperative oratory. Slocum had not been as close to the proposals as Kane and was handicapped for comparative lack of statistics and facts. He faltered. Kane smashed into his arguments. The Legion for the third consecutive year voted in favor of making the fishing bill another California Department mandate. The next session of the state legislature, however, was two years away--in 1939.

The American Legion must not forget about it, Kane declared. "Jap Slocum almost tripped me up, the little so and so," he related to me one evening in July, 1939; he had invited me to his apartment at 143 North Hope Street on Bunker Hill overlooking the Los Angeles City Hall. "But you know what that bastard did to lose that debate? He was going great guns and I was sweating like hell, when suddenly he cuts loose with the statement, 'you

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legionnaires--my comrades in arms--you wouldn't do anything so discriminatory and Un-American as passing this unfair resolution. You can't do this to my people.' When Tokie said that, you should have been there. The hush fell like death over the whole convention floor. There was muttering. Ahhah, he says 'my people.' Well, so Tokie's a Jap after all. So, they're his people, are they. That's exactly what the reaction was at that convention. That's why I won again and put Tokie into bad standing. Hahahah oh boy oh boy, that was sure a day."

To make double sure that no unexpected opposition would crop up in the 1938 California Department Legion convention held at Santa Monica, Lail Kane presented his fishing bill once again before the general session. The motions were almost perfunctory this time. There was no vocal opposition. The measure was again passed--unanimously this time; it was confirmed as a California Legion mandate.

In the early sessions of the 1939 State Legislature, State Senator Irwin T. Quinn introduced Kane's proposal. It was known as the only one out of half a dozen like measures which was backed by the American Legion.

By this time Kane's attitude toward the Nisei as "Jap stooges" appears to have crystallized. He said: "I'm rapidly being convinced that the J.A.C.L. which represents the nisei leadership is nothing more than an instrument of the Issei. You really take your orders from Japan. If you were really a patriotic American organization, you would support this fishing bill which is a national defense, patriotic proposal. You should know that the security of the United States is menaced by the presence of

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fishing boats manned by naval reserve officers of the Imperial Japanese Navy."

During this period, Kane bent untiring efforts to see that his message received due publicity. He was not too kindly received by city editors of Los Angeles metropolitan newspapers; his calls were too frequent, they soon ceased taking him seriously. "Oh, he's cracked on the subject" was not an uncommon remark made in reference to him.

Nevertheless, Kane was successful in getting sensational articles on his pet subject into the national magazine Ken (now defunct), into Liberty, into Saturday Evening Post.

He maintained close contact with the California Joint Immigration Committee, whose office secretary, Miss Dorothy Kaltenbach, he once introduced to me as "an old time, faithful friend of mine." Data and material for the Joint Immigration Committee's periodic mimeographed releases to the editors of newspapers along the entire Pacific coast were submitted by Kane.

In the Hall of Justice, one of the centers of county government in Los Angeles, Kane's influence as the No. 1 authority on "the Jap problem" was easily evident. County Assessor John R. Quinn, a prominent American Legionnaire, was on several occasions quoted in public addresses repeating Kane's warnings about the "Jap fishing boat menace."

KANE SPEAKS TO A J.A.C.L. AUDIENCE

On March 18, 1939, Lail Kane was invited by the

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Los Angeles chapter Japanese American Citizens League ton speak at a general meeting.

He was introduced by Dr. Michael M. Horii, then J.A.C.L. president. He was invited to present his views on the fishing legislation. Kane proved himself a bombastic speaker. He said he had no prepared talk, never used notes, because "I know this subject by heart--it comes straight from my heart."

Speaker on the same program, a Michael Cassidy, was presented by the J.A.C.L. as a sort of counterbalance to Kane's appearance. The evening turned into a rip-roaring debate between the two speakers; it quickly turned into a name-calling session. At the height of the verbal thrusts and parries, Kane offered to take off his coat and "beat that louse to a pulp." Later, he told me, "that squirt Cassidy didn't know how close he came that night to a goddam good beating. I may be a pretty old man now--in my two score and a half maybe, but I'm a hell of a lot stronger than that twirp."

The complete text of Kane's talk that evening was recorded by a member of our newspaper staff. It follows:

"Fellow citizens. Up until now, I'd like to congratulate the president and the committee on a very fine program; from here on, let your conscience be your guide. I was very deeply impressed at your opening ceremony and the presence of the Boy Scouts.

"A short time ago, until an increased pressure of business and other activities prohibited further work in the Sea Scouts, I was one of the four men in the Los Angeles area who had charge of all Sea Scout activities. There is no finer and more constructive work conceivable than backing the Boy Scout movement. Your efforts along that line will bear you fruit well worth reaping.

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"Now the next thing is that I came here entirely unprepared to make a speech. In the first place, I am not a public speaker and never made a speech in my life. The understanding was that your president was to submit a list of questions that they would like to have answered before the meeting. Where's the list? Sounds like Mexico. Quien sabe? Manana? Well, what do you want me to talk about?

"Now, maybe one of these might prove a foundation for further discussion. We had a luncheon, your president, some of the folks of your organization, and representatives of the various American-Japanese press, and the question that appealed to me most, the question that struck my particular funny-bone most, was after conceding that I was probably the moving factor and the person who had the greatest interest and who was making the most noise about this so-called anti-alien fishing measure, was: "Who's in back of you?" "Who's putting up the money?" Well, frankly, it amused me a great deal. I'm telling you this sincerely. The trouble is nobody's putting it up. I'm taking it out of my own salary. What there is left I spend for gasoline and oil--what there is left, I split up and put out for blueprints, photographs, and going to these different meetings and making these various talks. That's where the money comes from for the purposes of carrying on the work that I have been doing since 1934.

"After I returned from the maritime provinces of Siberia and had put in some time in the commercial fishing business in San Pedro, along the coast of Lower California, Mexico, Central America, why it was my conclusion that the proper and right thing to do from the standpoint of national security for the benefit of all the people who were citizens of

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this country was to restrict all commercial fishing in the state of California or under the jurisdiction of the state of California to citizens of the United States. And since that time, I have paid all of my own expenses and all my costs out of my own pocket. I even mortgaged my automobile, borrowed on my life insurance, borrowed from the Federal government (which is a matter of record and can be proved) to carry on this work.

"That happened to be to me at least the outstanding question which seems to bother your committee. 'Who was putting up the money?' Of course, I have heard a lot of stories that the Du Pont company, the munitions people, were backing me. It sure is a mystery to me--it's a secret--and they're sure holding out because I haven't got any of their money yet. That is a definite statement of fact made in a building dedicated to God. (Note--the J.A.C.L. meeting was being held in the Japanese Union Church at 118 North San Pedro Street in the Little Tokio district of L.A.)

"Nobody, anywhere has ever contributed one dime to any work that I have ever carried on. It's come out of my own salary, borrowed on my own personal assets. That, at least as far as I can see, should clear up that factor... and I can prove what I say!

"What's the next question?

"Are the Japanese actively engaged in espionage? Are the Japanese actually in spy activities on our coast? Frankly I am not qualified to answer that, and I say that in all humility. Are the Japanese actively engaged in espionage? If they're not, then they're the only 'civilized' nation on the face of the earth that's not engaged in espionage. No other nation on earth has ever

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denied that they are. Certainly it is perfectly logical and proper to imagine that any nation is engaged in espionage and counter-espionage. I don't believe if the United States were actually forced, that is, our so-called authorities were actually forced under oath, to state definitely that this government was not engaged in espionage, they couldn't deny that they were. It is a perfectly normal activity. Every nation is certainly, definitely and vitally interested in the armament and in the armed forces, natural resources, and the lack of natural resources of any possible or potential enemy, either of that nation or any of her allies. And I most definitely and most certainly do believe that Japan is engaged in espionage on the United States just as much or more than the United States is engaged in espionage on Japan.

"I'm chairman of the National Defense Committee of Navy Post 278 of the American Legion. Now, that post is organized entirely of navy veterans--men who served in the World War in the United States Navy. Practically every one of them are officers or enlisted men in the United States Navy today. In that post we conceived two different things. (1) Legislation for the State of California to enact a law which would restrict all commercial fishing under the jurisdiction of the state of California to citizens of the United States without discrimination, to men who were legal residents of the state of California. (2) We started the idea that the United States of America should organize a voluntary group composed of the owners, the officers and the men who man commercial and pleasure craft in the state of California as a supplementary group for the purpose of supplementing the organization of the United States for the purpose of off-shore

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and in-shore patrol. Large commercial fishing vessels, large pleasure crafts, small craft, for harbor patrol and things of that sort. The thing was worked out in quite a bit of detail and that places me in that position.

"Now, let's have your questions. If you are speaking of the bill the American Legion has introduced in Sacramento, in the first place, it is not anti-alien, as I understand it is your conclusion.

"But you say it is not anti-alien, but it is, because Japanese are not eligible to citizenship, and therefore, the bill is discriminatory. Most of the people who are engaged in the fishing business have resided in this country for some time. I feel that the majority of the Japanese feel that it is discriminatory.

"Well, maybe you got something there. In the first place the bill does not refer to any alien in any way, shape, form or manner. The bill merely and very definitely amends section 990 of the Fish and Game Code for the State of California and inserts the words, "The Fish and Game Committee of the State of California cannot issue to any person a commercial fishing license unless they are a citizen of the United States of America, and a registered legal resident of the State of California.

"The foundation in precedence is this: Oregon has that law. It's been in effect for 20 years. Washington has that law; it's been in effect for 25 years. Japan has that law. Panama has that law. No nation of any consequence in the world will allow any alien to engage in the commercial fishing industry and operate a fishing boat throughout its fortified areas, to thread

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its way through the anchored fleet of the United States, or any nation, 24 hours of the day. It's just absolutely and definitely inconceivable. It has never been done anywhere except in the state of California. The American Legion believes that situation should be corrected. You just dismiss the thing from your mind because you're entirely too self-conscious. If you think that it is directed against the Japanese, forget it. Don't get any idea in your mind that all espionage or counter-espionage/^{agents} in the United States are Japanese. Now, wait a minute.

"Of the total number of aliens involved in the commercial fishing industry in the United States, there are more of them that ~~ne~~ are not Japanese than there are Japanese. And up to date, the Japanese have done all of the talking. The Portuguese and Italians have made no effort to fight this bill, and we know from records available to us that numerically concerning resident non-alien or resident alien that there are just as many non-Japanese aliens engaged in the fishing fleet that can't get their citizenship as there are Japanese. Now, it is silly for anybody to imagine that any nation, particularly Japan, would employ exclusively men of Japanese racial characteristics. That was proved in a trial here some less than a month ago. We know that. It just isn't done.

"So it wasn't pointed at the Japanese. It was pointed definitely for the purpose of national security because I was the man who introduced it in the Navy post of the 17th District. I inter~~er~~duced it in the Los Angeles County Council. I introduced it at the National Defense Committee meeting in Hollywood and it was passed by 60,000 Legionnaires. It was introduced in Stockton and passed; introduced in Santa Monica and passed again/

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"Now it was not aimed at the Japanese exclusively. If it had been, the resolution would be worded in such a manner that it would not have restricted the issuance of these commercial fishing licenses or rather it would have restricted them only to those aliens ineligible to citizenship. I fought that battle in 1935 in Sacramento. They put that proposition to me in the Land Hotel. They came to me, a newspaper organization; a national newspaper organization came to me and put the proposition to me cold turkey--"If you will change the bill so it restricts this license thing and eliminates from the commercial fishing business only those aliens that are ineligible to citizenship, we will back you."

"When I tell you that that was a national organization with plenty of power, it's a temptation to say the least.

"I told them this; and I'll tell you the same, tell them the same tomorrow. There are three reasons that I can't. In the first place, that is not the mandate of the American Legion, and I can't violate the mandate of the Legion. It in turn prevents all alien and all non-residents of the state of California. That is the mandate of the Legion that was passed by 60,000 men unanimously and I can't change it. I'm just merely a small cog in a great big wheel.

"In the second place, as I told them there in the Land Hotel in Sacramento, that is a very definite and direct thrust at Japan. It is not warranted. It is not justified. Unquestionably Japan will protest to the State Department of the United States because the only aliens that are ineligible to citizenship are Japanese. The only others are so small or insig-

nificant or not worth noticing. And if we were succesful in view of the protest of the State Department to our Governor, and even if we did pass it and it became a law, which is quite an improbability, and the Governor signed it, the very first Court it ever got into, they would throw it out because it is illegal and will not stand in Court. The reason I say this is so, you cannot discriminate in State Legislature against any particular nationality where there is another nationality engaged in the identical business. Let's phrase it this way. In the fishing business of the state of California we have Portuguese, Italians and Japanese who are aliens. Japan has a most favored national treaty. If we enacted legislation which proved to be or proved to prohibit only those aliens that were ineligible to citizenship, we would prohibit only the alien Japanese and the alien Italian fishermen could fish, and the alien Japanese and alien Italian mother nations have both of them favorable national treaties, and such a law would be in definite violation of those treaties and the State of California cannot violate a national treaty. Therefore, naturally, even though we wanted to, the Legion most decidedly would not be interated. Get it straight once and for all. The Legion most decidedly would not be interested. The Legion never discriminated against anybody unless they were definitely anti-American. We each and everyone of us every time we open our meetings take an obligation to make right the master of might, and youa can't reconcile those to principles. They won't mix. I'm sorry.

"Let me ask you a question. Will Japan allow foreign boats to circle through her fleet 24 hours a day?

"No.

"Then that answers your question. When it comes to national security, they won't permit an American citizen to own a single boat afloat on the coast of other countries as well as of Japan. They even put the entire crew of an American oil tanker that was in command of a Japanese pilot, a Japanese official, that happened to go on the beach of a fortified area--they put the entire American crew in jail and kept them in jail for 48 hours.

"Now you talk about the United States, the people of the State of California, trying to restrict people living here or other nationalities from engaging in transporting back and forth through our fortified area and through our fleet. That is a silly position to take. It is utterly ridiculous. If Japan allowed it, then you would have an ordinary basis and fact on which to plead. If Japan doesn't allow it, then you certainly don't have a ground or basis for argument. The point is that if Japan doesn't think it good policy, neither do we."

(QUESTION--from the floor--

"How do you feel toward the Nisei?"

"Well, the best way I can express that is I remember a Nisei that long (holding his two hands about a foot apart in a gesture of measuring) and as red as a rose. Born to one of the closest friends I ever had on Terminal Island. In the first place, you are citizens of the United States and if you accept the obligations of citizenship with the same sincerity and the same patriotism that I accept them, I have nothing but honor and respect for you. If you can conduct yourselves as citizens in

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favor of those things that are American. If you allow yourselves to be swayed by pressure, influence or political oil to support any other measure than those that are for the benefit and security of the nation of which you are citizens, I have nothing but contempt and the meanest kind of contempt. How I feel toward the Nisei is your problem, not mine. How I feel toward the Nisei is entirely up to the Nisei. By their deeds and by their conduct we'll know them. That should answer that.

"Do I believe that you are a menace to the welfare of the peace of the United States?

"If the Nisei take advantage of the dual citizenship, acting at one time as American citizens, getting information or intriguing themselves in the position of political or commercial influence, particularly with the ultimate objective of selling this country down the river for the benefit of another nation to which they are equally responsible under dual citizenship, they are a very definite and a very decided menace to the security of the United States of America. That answer is yours--not mine. By your acts and by your conduct you'll be judged.

"There is no law against your basking why or how or anything else. This isn't a closed meeting. All that I am, all that I hold worth while, I owe to the honor and privilege of being a citizen of this country. That is true of every one of us."

(QUESTION--from the floor--

"Can't something be done about the Japanese fishing

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men who cannot get citizenship as the Italians and others can do?"

"Frankly, folks, that has been a problem. That has been a problem in drawing up this legislation. I say this sincerely. Now, I know intimately, quite personally; fishermen in the business; in fact I was engaged in it; in fact I was the marine superintendent for a year and three months. I know a lot of those fellows quite well. I operated a tuna clipper for a year and a half. It is my personal opinion that the big majority of the men referred to in this particular question have been in the United States 20 years or more. Now if they have, and if the fishing business has, as the statistics show it to be, we show approximately \$250.00 per net per fishermen per month return. Figure that against an American standard of living. \$250.00 per month per fishermen. Now from that they took 22c a day on board these ships from the Japanese; they took \$1.27 a day from the American--the difference in the cost of food. The Americans lived in San Pedro and a few in Long Beach, and the majority of the Japanese lived on Terminal Island. Now the rent on Terminal Island in the cannery barracks, and on the wharf of San Diego, was \$10.00 a month, and many of the families of these Japanese fishermen worked in the canneries. Now, just from ordinary mathematics, it is logical to conceive that if these individual Japanese fishermen used reasonable judgment, they either have a very definite equity or consequence in these fish boats or in the nets, or have shipped the money out of the country,

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or they got it deposited to their account here and they are in no dire distress even though they were refused the right to engage in the commercial fishing business. Now, I say that sincerely.

"There was a young lady, a typical woman, who was quite concerned about what would happen to the children. I am not saying this sarcastically. Frankly, she hadn't any reason to be concerned about it at all. Those men engaged in that business are in one of two positions. They are in a position to retire or they most certainly can be absorbed in the canneries ashore and take the place of American citizens that are now in the canberry business that will go afloat. That's a perfectly normal and natural conclusion.

"There is one factor that has been overlooked entirely with reference to the Japanese that we are particularly concerned about. These are your non-resident Japanese, the hundreds of men who come here from Japan, unload off your liners here on Terminal Island, taken overland to Tijuana on bond, when bond is dismissed, they proceed to Rosarita Beach and the canneries send their vessels on, and these men are engaged on board these ~~vel~~ vessels. Now there are 100 that are engaged on board American documented vessels in a violation of the national navigation laws of the United States. Men, 22, 24, and 26 years old with no right to be in the United States. If you don't think that is true, we can prove it to be a fact. We can't get it in the newspapers, but it is true. We have thousands of signatures testifying that to be a fact. Men who have been brought here from Japan by hundreds, young men,

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men who are still in the reserve of the Japanese Imperial Navy and Japan acknowledged it to be true. A definite statement of fact issued from Tokyo itself by cable to the United States acknowledges that it is very probable that these men are officers and men in the reserve of the Imperial Japanese Navy. We are not guessing. That's the men we were after. That's the men we're going to stop from emerging engaging in the commercial fishing business of California; from operating through our fleet 24 hours a day; from operating through our fortified areas, and if you don't think the American Legion is going to stop them, you'd better stop them."

(DISCUSSION--statement volunteered by Fred Tayama:

"I regards to the people who are coming here from Mexico, I talked to the secretary of the American Federation of Labor. He said that in the past that has been done.")

"I'll tell you where it started. It started when they had a strike down there in San Pedro. ^{Who} ~~He~~ started that strike? I'm thoroughly and absolutely convinced that the cannerymen started it. Who are the cannerymen? Alien Japanese and alien Italians. What happened after they organized it? They broke the strike. Now there're two unions--citizens and aliens. And the American Federation of Labor is the alien organization and that is the organization you're talking about. What they do for the United States provided the cannerymen told them to. Any time the cannerymen would do anything for the United States of America is because the percentage of profit is on their side. If they ever put a silver dollar in front of their face they couldn't see Jesus on a cross 10 feet away. If

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profit is on the other side of the fence, they are Americans.

"I'm thoroughly convinced from the information I have on hand and the letters I have on hand that the majority of the Italians engaged in the fishing business in the United States and the Portuguese can't get citizenship. There are just as many aliens engaged in the fishing business today that can't get citizenship as there are Japanese that are legal residents of the United States. Their records will burn in the fire or something. You remember the fire of 1906. The Japanese felt so badly about it.

"How many of you know that a Japanese child born of Japanese parents has no civil rights in Canada? Now, Canada is the nearest thing there is in the way of a political form of government to that of the United States. Do you know that the first or second generation born of Japanese parents can't vote in Canada? If you don't, it won't be hard to look up. Also, did you know that the same sort of thing applies to children of Japanese parentage in Peru?

"Now there are precedents right here in the western hemisphere which challenge your right to citizenship. Think that over carefully. Let it sink in. Remember, by your deeds will ye be judged."

more to Kum

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Pre-Evacuation Pressure Group Activity in Southern California

(Continued)
LAIL THOMAS KANE

Japanese Relocation Papers
Bancroft Library

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, Lail Kane was among the first among Los Angeles County employees to clamor for "removing Japs from civil service--they're a menace."

In the September 30, 1939, issue of the Saturday Evening Post, Kane had been quoted as saying: "The Niseis are trying hard to be Americans. I believe that in three or four generations they will be all right, but right now, with so many Isseis alive, the Niseis just can't rise above racial claims, in my opinion, based on human nature. That's why, in case of war, I'd intern them. On the other hand, we mustn't forget that they are American citizens with just as much right to be here as you and I."

The last note of fairness injected into the quotation was in actuality placed there by the writer of the magazine article quoting Kane. Magner White, the author, told this to me during his preparation for working on the article, which was entitled "Between Two Flags." White said at that time: "Kane is extremely dogmatic about his opinions. He is not necessarily motivated by a desire to be fair. He is an extremist in many ways. I'd say he's one track."

On January 22, 1942, Lail Kane called by telephone to my office. Our conversation went as follows:

"Togo, the Rafu Shampoo is a dead duck; you'd better get ready to close it up."

"We're still doing business."

"Mark my words, you haven't got a ghost of a chance to survive. In a short time every kit and kaboodle one of

you Niseis and Jackals will be under guard. Don't say I didn't tell you."

"I've just invested in a produce business. I hope to get started toward financial independence this year."

"Are you kidding me? Don't pull that stuff on me, sonny boy."

"I'm not kidding; you can check. Osage Produce Company--seventh street wholesale market."

"Now let me give you some advice. You should know the Japanese farmers are on their way out. For instance, the Army right this day is stringing up military communications lines in the Palos Verdes hills. There are Japanese farmers there now; they won't be there long. If your business depends on these farmers, where will your business wind up. You might as well face it. Mass internment is going to come. Why, don't you know that a number of nisei were doing active sabotage at Pearl Harbor?"

"What do you mean mass evacuation? Aren't they going to recognize the loyal ones?"

"Don't pull that stuff on me. You ought to know better by now. You tell me which are the loyal ones. Besides, if we get a bombing here, some of the men who see a Japanese face will run amuck. Just imagine, a guy carrying out the dead body of his wife from the ruined wreckage of his home, shattered by a Jap bomb. You think he's going to ask you if you're a loyal Nisei. Hell no, he'll just see a Japanese face and tear into it, that's all. For your own protection, it's better that you go into a camp."

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"Suppose a man doesn't want to go into a camp? Suppose he's perfectly willing to take a chance that he may be ripped to pieces as you say by someone who's run amuck? If he's a good loyal American citizen, shouldn't he have his choice about the matter?"

"Hell, no. No one but God and the individual knows whose loyal. The F.B.I. is not as smart as God. don't let them kid you. Besides, remember the lines in Shakespeara? 'Methinks he protesteth too much.' Well, the Nisei who have been waving Old Glory around so long, they have been protesting too much. Now look here, Togo, if I were an agent working for Germany, why shouldn't I pose under the patriotism of the United States? Why shouldn't I drape myself with the stars and stripes? Nope, you've got the issue before you, and you've got to face it. I hope you'll be in protective custody before the blow strikes. I hope your families won't be separated. This is a long war were in for--seven years duration. Remember my words, Togo. I'll call you again."

NISEI SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP--Kane

American-born Japanese who have dual citizenship should be deprived of their American citizenship, Lail Kane has urged for years. In the months immediately before evacuation, Kane indicated in conversations with me that he felt "the day is coming when the Nisei will have their citizenship taken away from them." Asked if he would aid in that movement, he said: "I know some injustice will be done to a few who are loyal. But this is a nation in which we are concerned

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with the welfare of the majority. You bet I'll be in there pitching--and pitching plenty hard."

This feeling that the U.S. citizenship of native-born persons of Japanese parentage should be challenged apparently is as close to Kane's interest as the fishing measure. Charles Ferguson, whom I last saw in January, 1943, and who then was Director of Adult Education at Manzanar, California, once made a study of the American Japanese problem for his Master's thesis at U.C.L.A. In the course of gathering data, he said he had interviewed Lail Kane. He recalled his meeting with Kane:

"Lail Kane is quite a guy-- a vicious man if I ever met one. He took me to one of those places that looked like a dive, and he had more to drink than he usually does I think because he got kind of confidential. He sure hates the Nisei's guts. He said he liked you, Togo; he said you were an exception and couldn't claim to be representative of the Nisei. He is an interesting duck. He cuddles with his wife; you know she's the stout matronly kind, talks baby talk. He calls her 'dearie' and all the endearing little terms. We left her and went to this dive like place. After a whole flock of martinis and stuff, you know what he suggests? That we go to a place he knows where he can get women! Boy oh boy, what a guy."

This story was related to me by Ferguson at Manzanar last year. Both Ferguson, and his wife Lois, who taught in the Center school, were employed by the W.R.A. in the education department.

--more to kum--