

Admits the Immigration Law Contains Inhuman Provisions

By H. J. LANGOE

"THE IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE wants to and intends to make some minor amendments to the immigration law so that it will be more humane."

This quotation is taken verbatim from a press interview in which Congressman Albert Johnson, chairman of the Committee on Immigration, in the lower house of Congress, aired some of his philosophies and mental reactions to current public opinion, some time before the opening of the present session of Congress. The United American is taking the liberty of accentuating the last part of the quoted statement, as it contains nothing more or less than an admission of error in the original draft, which is now the law.

The statement embraces one of two things: either that Albert Johnson, himself, or the committee as a whole, in drafting and pushing through Congress the original Immigration Quota law, as it now stands, were prejudiced and not wholly actuated by what he, as spokesman for the committee, asserted to be a simple expedient, a traditionally fair expression of American justice in the interest only of adequate protection for America and her people, or else it is an open admission of gross ignorance of facts obtainable, neither of which can gracefully constitute an alibi in keeping with the implied responsibilities resting upon the offices of chairman and membership of the Committee on Immigration in Congress.

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There is nothing wrong with the earlier American traditions of fairness. Our history is replete with incidents showing that the American people, in the past, have laid due stress upon strict adherence to the principles of justice—the kind that we have been so proud to term "the American brand." They maintained uncompromisingly that these principles should never be infringed upon, neither in our dealings with one another, nor in our dealings with foreign nations, and least of all in our dealings with the immigrants who knock at our door. Through the years since America entered the sisterhood of nations, the world has gradually learned to regard the American expressions of justice as a criterion, the acme in humane reasoning, and our strict adherence to these principles have done more than anything else to place the halo of esteem and admiration, love and respect around the very name—AMERICA.

Fortunately our earlier records tell most vividly this story.

Should we refer to some of the major legislative enactments which have been written into our state and congressional legislative records in recent years, many and noticeable digressions from the established principles of American justice would pass in review.

Perhaps it was too much to expect that America could escape its share in the abominable harvest of hatred which followed the recent world war, but those who have used their positions of trust and influence to plant the seeds of war hatred and intolerance in American soil, cannot escape the eventual consequences.

Is it safe to conjecture that the reactions, even at

this stage, have set in with sufficient force to show those responsible for this situation, the sorry contrast they and their speeches, their interviews and legislative accomplishments constitute, as permanent records in the American history? Perhaps we are venturesome, but there is a margin for our guess.

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"More humane."—Well, it may not mean much to those who are not affected by any of the needless and overly drastic clauses in this law, which smacks of fallacious reasoning, but nevertheless it carries a ray of hope to the families sundered by the specific and sundry provisions in the law.

As old as immigration to America itself, so old is the custom of the family provider, the husband and father, to leave his family behind in the old country, while, like an advance agent, he goes to America to accumulate enough to provide ticket money for his loved ones, and lay a foundation for a home in which to receive them. When the restricted quota immigration law went into effect, practically terminating immigration from many of the European countries, the struggling immigrants in America, who had waiting families in Europe, found themselves robbed of this fruit of their labor. The meager quota would, in most instances, prevent a reunion of the families on this side of the Atlantic for the remainder of their natural lives—only one alternative remaining open: the immigrant might leave America and return to his family and the conditions he left behind, with not one in a thousand chances of ever being able to re-enter this country as an immigrant.

Well, perhaps it wasn't any business of ours to consider that phase of the matter. "We didn't ask them to come in the first place," is the way many Americans, not feeling particularly interested in the immigrants, are frequently heard to exclaim. We might, even in spots, be so considerate that we can persuade ourselves to become a wee bit sorry for these unfortunate "foreigners."

Beyond that point the matter is rather boresome to the smug type of citizen who sees no reason why he should lose any sleep over such an uninteresting subject as the Immigration law.

Let us compare it with the prohibition law—well, that would hardly do, for somehow that brings home to every American a matter of serious dispute, anent infringements on old established prerogatives of personal liberty, the sanctity of the home, the automobile, the garage, the secret saloon compartment in the office desk, the hip pocket booze storage plant, etc., etc., oh, that's a different matter all together, even congressmen who vote dry, have "perfect" personal wet prerogatives that are no other citizen's business. No, of course, from a strictly American viewpoint of personal interest there is no comparison between the Immigration Quota law and the Prohibition law and Constitutional provisions.

Perhaps not.

There may be no real issue of sound comparison between these laws, yet, we compare the two, to draw

(Continued on Page Sixteen)