

# The Commoner.

ISSUED WEEKLY

Entered at the Postoffice at Lincoln, Nebraska, as second-class matter.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN Editor and Proprietor  
RICHARD L. METCALFE Associate Editor

CHARLES W. BRYAN Publisher  
Editorial Rooms and Business Office, 324-330 South 12th Street

One Year ..... \$1.00  
Six Months ..... .50  
In Clubs of Five or more, per year.. .75

Three Months ..... .25  
Single Copy ..... .05  
Sample Copies Free.  
Foreign Post, 52c Extra.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** can be sent direct to The Commoner. They can also be sent through newspapers which have advertised a clubbing rate, or through local agents, where sub-agents have been appointed. All remittances should be sent by post-office money order, express order, or by bank draft on New York or Chicago. Do not send individual checks, stamps or money.

**RENEWALS**—The date on your wrapper shows the time to which your subscription is paid. Thus January 31, '13 means that payment has been received to and including the last issue of January, 1913. Two weeks are required after money has been received before the date on wrapper can be changed.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**—Subscribers requesting a change of address must give old as well as new address.

**ADVERTISING**—Rates will be furnished upon application.

Address all communications to

THE COMMONER, Lincoln, Neb.

at the Japanese should be avoided if possible. The secretary will keep in touch with the president by telegraph and until his arrival in Sacramento the administration is in hopes that no action will be taken in California.

Following is an Associated Press dispatch: Sacramento, Cal., April 24.—Not the dignity of Japan, but the dignity of California is at stake in the controversy over the anti-alien law, according to Governor Johnson, and if the plans of the majority party here give offense to the government at Tokio, the California executive absolves the state from blame on the ground that federal statutes already have drawn the line which the state seeks to establish. In a statement issued today Governor Johnson defined the position of the legislative majority in the matter, trusting that Secretary of State Bryan, who is enroute from Washington to Sacramento to present the views of the federal administration, might learn thereby the attitude of California towards a law denying land ownership in the state to aliens barred from citizenship in the nation. That this restriction applies to the subjects of Japan or any other nation is not the fault of California, according to the views of the governor.

Such a law is being drafted tonight by Senator Thompson. It will be known as the alien land act, and will apply solely to members of foreign races described in federal laws and judicial decisions as ineligible to citizenship in the United States. When Secretary Bryan arrives he will be confronted with the new draft of the bill, and the question of whether or not it is discriminatory. Governor Johnson's view on this point is set forth in his statement as follows:

"The nation has solemnly decreed that certain races, among whom are the Japanese, are not eligible to citizenship. The line has been drawn, not by California, but by the United States. Discrimination, if it ever occurred came and went when the nation declared who and who were not eligible to citizenship. If California follows the line marked out by the federal government the United States and not California should be accused of discrimination."

If the justice of this view is conceded by Secretary Bryan in the conference he will hold with the governor and the members of the legislature there is little doubt the Thompson bill will pass unless Secretary Bryan states reasons of great urgency and can convince the leaders here that such action by the California legislature would precipitate a grave crisis.

The democrats in both houses have conceived the idea of calling a conference of the governors of Oregon, Washington, Nevada and Arizona to meet with Secretary Bryan and Governor Johnson next week, with a view of bringing about concerted action on the alien land question.

Resolutions will be introduced in both houses tomorrow directing that invitations be telegraphed to the executive of these states.

There is little sympathy for the plan among the majority, who having asserted their right

## The Commoner.

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 17

as a state to act, now declare that such a conference would only serve to cloud the issue.

Governor Johnson in his statement said: "The suggestion of the president that the secretary of state visit California for a conference on the pending land bills was at once accepted by both houses of the legislature and by the governor and we will be glad to welcome Mr. Bryan on his arrival. While the legislature very properly maintained the right of the state to legislate on a matter clearly within its jurisdiction, I am sure there is no disposition to encroach on the international functions of the federal government, or to wound the sensibilities of any nation. My protest has been against the discrimination to which California has been subjected in the assumption that action which has been accepted without demur when taken by other states and by the nation, is offensive if even discussed by California. I am merely defending the right of California to consider and if its legislators deem advisable to enact a law which is clearly within both its legal power and its moral rights.

"Much has been said of the dignity of Japan. We would not willingly affront the dignity of Japan or other nations. But what shall be said of the proposition that a great state, itself an empire, with possibilities greater than those of most nations, shall be halted from the mere consideration of legislative acts admittedly within its jurisdiction by the protests of a foreign power which has itself enacted even more stringent regulations on the same subject?

"What of the dignity of California? Admittedly California has a right to pass an alien land bill. No one suggests that such a bill should in terms describe the Japanese. It has been suggested that such a law in California shall follow the distinctions which are already a part of the law and policy of the United States. The United States has determined who are eligible to citizenship. The nation has solemnly decreed that certain races, among whom are the Japanese, are not eligible to citizenship. The line has been drawn, not by California, but by the United States. Discrimination, if it ever occurred, came and went when the nation declared who were and who were not eligible to citizenship. If California continues the line marked out by the federal government it should not be accused of discrimination.

"The constitution of California since 1879 said that the 'presence of foreigners ineligible to become citizens is declared to be dangerous to the well-being of the state, and the legislature shall discourage their immigration by all means which are in its power.'

The alien land law of the state of Washington provides that "any alien, except such as by the laws of the United States are incapable of becoming citizens of the United States, may acquire and hold lands, etc."

The state of Arizona, in 1912, enacted that 'no person not eligible to become a citizen of the United States shall acquire title to any land or real estate.' No protest was made against this policy of the laws of the United States, nor against its adoption into the laws of Washington or Arizona. If the legislature of California were to determine on similar action it would be merely following the declaration of our constitution, the policy of the United States government and the precedents of at least two states.

"This question in all its various forms is an old and familiar one. The only new thing about it is the hysteria which it seems to arouse when California is the place in which it comes up. My protest has been lodged against this discrimination. The state will not willingly do anything against which there are just objections, but it does resist being singled out on matters which pass unprotested when they happen elsewhere."

The governor's statement was hailed with enthusiasm by administration leaders in the legislature, who declared it outlined their position in the matter exactly. It was announced this morning that democrats in both houses were planning to introduce a resolution calling for a conference of all governors west of the Rocky mountains to be held in Sacramento during Secretary Bryan's visit for the purpose of settling upon a general policy on alien land ownership. Such resolutions may be introduced. The move will not have the support of the administration leaders, who declared when they learned of the plan that such a plan was unnecessary and joint action by the states would mean nothing for California.

### JAPANESE AND CALIFORNIA

The following is from the New York World: The current report of John P. McLaughlin, labor commissioner of California, himself violently

anti-Japanese, shows that the Japanese own 12,726 acres of land, an increase since 1909 of 1,935 acres. There are about 12,000,000 acres of agricultural land in the state.

In the same document it is said that Japanese lease 17,596 acres, a decrease since 1909 of 2,698 acres.

The anti-Japanese agitators always speak of "the hordes of Japanese who are pouring into the state." According to the report of the commissioner of immigration for 1911 and his bulletin for March, 1912, the number of Japanese in California decreased 4,933 during the two years and nine months preceding the last-mentioned date.

The Oakland (Cal.) Tribune of April, 1913, says: "The land-holdings of the Japanese in this state are inconsiderable. George Shima is the only large Japanese land-owner in California, and the only offense he has committed is making potatoes more abundant and 'cheaper.'"

The Pasadena (Cal.) News of April 8, 1913, says: "Chinese exclusion has not benefited California. If we permitted a limited influx of the race our horticultural interests would not have to depend so completely on the Japanese and our housekeeping burdens would be immeasurably lightened. Drat this racial prejudice, this narrow, bigoted point of view, anyway!"

In a letter to the Oakland Tribune of April 11, 1913, John P. Irish, formerly of Iowa, says: "This legislation in its origin and progress has been promoted by the most glaring falsehoods and the most malevolent misrepresentations."

The San Francisco Chronicle of April 15, 1913, says: "To enact such a law is to make every commercial nation on earth a virulent enemy of California, with most effective powers of retaliation, which human nature assures us would be put to immediate use. If California insists on boycotting aliens its people may expect with perfect confidence a return boycott which will make us squirm."

The same newspaper of April 9 last said: "As a matter of fact the Japanese population among us is not increasing or likely to increase, and the number now here is not large enough to seriously affect any interest. There is no doubt of the existence of all necessary legal power in the nation to deal with the Japanese question as it sees fit. It will be best for us not to invoke the exercise of that power. We are not suffering in any way which justifies the risk."

The San Francisco Evening Post of April 10, 1913, says: "California has worried along without these laws for fifty years and no great injury has resulted."

Idaho and the state of Washington have recently revised their land laws in favor of aliens. Idaho now makes no discrimination whatever. Washington permits all foreigners to own urban land, but excludes them from rural districts.

Much of the land in California which Japanese own or lease is in the least desirable regions of the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys, which white people shunned for many years. By drainage and high cultivation, the result of almost incredible labor, these lands are now prolific and valuable. If the pending legislation becomes effective the property will pass by forced sale from the hands of the industrious people who reclaimed it.

### CALIFORNIA'S ANTI-ALIEN LAND BILL

A newspaper discussion concerning the California matter is given by the Literary Digest in the following way:

The president's inclination not to interfere with California's enactment of an alien land law—frankly aimed at Japanese farmers—is expected by the press to bring this question up to the supreme court for decision as to whether such a law conflicts with the treaty of 1911. The point at issue is whether a state has a right under the treaty to prohibit aliens from owning land or holding leases for long periods unless they are prospective citizens. Many American newspapers outside California argue in the negative, and so do some of the Japanese papers, as well as the Japanese government authorities, who sent Ambassador Chinda to confer with Secretary of State Bryan about the affair. The acuteness of the situation in California is evidenced by a telegram sent to Congressman John E. Raker, at Washington, by State Senator J. B. Sanford, in which he said that "if the legislature refuses to enact such a law, the people will resort to the initiative." It has been suggested by some of the eastern papers that discriminatory land laws would not only conflict with the treaty, but would also deprive the Japanese in this country of property rights similar to those enjoyed by Americans in Japan, to which the