

The Japan Times.

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PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S MESSAGE.

In our last issue we referred to the just and lofty stand President Roosevelt takes in his Message to Congress, respecting the anti-Japanese movement in San Francisco. Our present purpose is to submit our views on the other topics the Message deals with as relating to this country. In the first place, the President presents the question of the right of the Japanese to become naturalised in the United States in a manner which cannot but arouse a profound sense of satisfaction in this land. We say this not necessarily because the matter bears directly on the interests of our race, but principally because Mr. Roosevelt, therein, gives proof of that model spirit of equity and respect of man's rights on which must ultimately depend all amicable relationship between nations, and which it is, as we believe, the aspiration of all true Americans to promote and realize in the highest degree.

In the second place, President Roosevelt's reference to the subject of pelagic sealing seems to call for an attitude on our part that should be free of all taint of pre-judgment and selfish interest, and guided by the noble spirit of international justice and humanity, especially in view of the laudable example the President sets before us in his treatment of the San Francisco affair. We are not a party to the Anglo-American arrangement for the protection of seals. In so far as we do not infringe upon the

territorial rights of America, we are at liberty to hunt seals on the high seas and no season limits bind us in carrying on the operation. And consulting our own pockets it is decidedly disadvantageous to join any compact that would tend to restrict us in the exercise of this liberty. This does not prevent us, however, from admitting that pelagic sealing is a practice most revolting to all sense of humanity and civilization. Considered from a purely economic standpoint too, the practice is a short-sighted one, that in the end will rob our sealers of the main part of their occupation, as the killing of the animals in their breeding period cannot but bring about their ultimate extermination. These are the aspects of the question that must not be lost sight of and should carry weight in determining our position in the pending negotiations with England.

There is at present much talk of fostering Japan's incipient deep sea industry, in which pelagic sealing figures largely. The voluntary surrender of the latter practice will no doubt be a sacrifice on our part. But if we are to enjoy the esteem of other nations it behoves us to endeavour to be in consonance with the best humanitarian principles in our own action. Even this way of looking at things in being guided in our doings is, however, a base one, in comparison with another which is to promote humanity and civilization for their own sake, but the nation's aspiration is that Japan be a power in that nobler work. We believe that the nation will not demur at little sacrifices in the cause of this aspiration, and should hope that it is prepared to be unassailably consistent in the solution of the sealing problem.