

(Reading of Telegram received January 16, 1907.)

Wright, Amembassy, Tokyo.

Your cable of January eleventh last clause very gratifying we will endeavor to get school difficulty out of the way (period)

Following letter sent by me to Ambassador Aoki announced cabled by him to Tokyo before your last interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs quote.

In accordance with your request (comma) I send you a note of the views expressed by me in response to your question this morning as to whether the United States could not enforce as to Japanese laborers (comma) seeking to come from Hawaii to the mainland of the United States (comma) the limitations of the passports issued by the Japanese Government for Hawaii only (comma) so that the passing of the Japanese laborers from Hawaii to the Pacific coast without authority of the Japanese Government would be stopped (paragraph) I am having a careful examination of that question made (comma) but (comma) as I said to you in our interview (comma) my impression is that additional legislation by Congress will be necessary to empower our Government officers to prevent persons passing from one part of our territory to another and I hesitate to ask for such legislation lest it should be misinterpreted by the people of Japan (period) At the same time I fully agree with the purpose of your suggestion and it seems to me that the policy of your Government to discourage the passing of your laborers from the Orient into this country exactly coincides with the course indicated by existing conditions in California as the course best adapted to prevent a

growing feeling among our laboring people on the Pacific coast regarding a labor competition which they find it difficult to meet (period) The real question in California with which we have to deal is undoubtedly this question of labor competition (period) Our laborers on the Pacific coast find in the Japanese laborers who have come to this country (comma) not merely a degree of physical vitality (comma) of industry and adaptability for the various occupations in which they are engaged which makes the Japanese laborer a formidable competitor (comma) but also a degree of economy and frugality in living which makes the Japanese laborer practically certain to drive out the American laborer if admitted to competition (period) The American laborer (comma) therefore (comma) naturally wishes to prevent competition (period) It might be more appropriate to say that the basis of that opposition is an admission of the Japanese laborers superiority than to say that it is an assertion of the Japanese laborers inferiority (period) The attempt to exclude Japanese from the ordinary public schools in San Francisco (comma) and also the boycotting of the restaurants (comma) and the assaults upon Japanese in the streets both of which I am glad to believe have now ceased are but symptoms of this undelying opposition to a successful labor competition (period) (paragraph) In aid of this opposition the labor organizations have sought to create and stir up race antagonism (period) This is an expedient which has been used under similar circumstances countless times in many countries where laborers have been threatened by the competition of foreign labor (period) It is always possible as between any two races under such circumstances (comma) and it would under ordinary circumstances be quite temporary and easily disposed of. That no normal antagonism really exists appears

from the fact that everywhere outside of the laboring people and of those who are especially desirous of the laboring vote, the evidence streams the other way. The moment one gets among the scholars and the professional and businesspeople of the United States he finds the Japanese welcomed as associates and receiving the highest consideration. The same is true among the laborers of the United States in those parts of the country where the desire to find some way to avoid injurious competition has not been awakened. In general it is fair to say that while the people of each nation doubtless esteem most highly their own people and their own customs, the respect and esteem in which the people of Japan collectively and individually are held by the people of the United States is not in any degree less than the respect and esteem in which the people of the United States are held in Japan. The difficulty which we are confronting is (comma) not the existence of any race feeling inconsistent with the strong and warm friendship which has existed between our countries (comma) but it is that whenever there is a strong, interested motive to stir up race feeling among laborers of any two races as a means to prevent labor competition (comma) it is always easy to do so (comma) and that motive exists on our Pacific coast (period) The motive seems likely to continue so long as the pressure of labor competition (comma) actual or anticipated (comma) continues (comma) and I confess I do not see how it is possible for any Governmental action to control it (period) We can prevent certain manifestations of feeling and can enforce observance of treaty rights (comma) but I see no way of controlling the feeling itself except by striking at the cause (comma) which is the apprehension of further and overwhelming labor competition (period)

How far the feeling stirred up in this effort to prevent competition would go, I cannot tell (comma) but I have most serious apprehensions of its growth (comma) and of the consequences hereafter upon the general feeling among the mass of the people of the countries. With these views which I endeavored to express to you this morning I welcomed your suggestion although as I said to you deeply as this Government feels the desirability of averting such <sup>consequences</sup> ^ as appear possible we have been unwilling to propose any measure to restrict the labor competition which lies at the basis of (the) whole difficulty lest the proposal should be misunderstood by the people of Japan and should be erroneously ascribed by them to the same attitude on our part which they resent in the action of the San Francisco school board, in regard to the school. A suggestion by your Government would not however be liable to any such misconstruction or lead to any such feeling, and I was very glad to take up the subject upon your initiative. I said that while our officers probably have no power under our existing law to enforce the limitations of your passports by interfering with the passage of your laborers from Hawaii to the United States the result desired could probably be accomplished by a formal agreement between the Governments which under our Constitution would have the force of law and that I thought that the result would be accomplished if the two Governments were to agree formally that neither Government should admit to its territories citizens of the other country except upon passports issued by the Government of that other country and that neither Government should issue such passports to laborers. You asked in substance whether such an arrangement if made would of necessity include the Hawaiian Islands

under the same general provisions as the mainland and I replied that I thought not because if the agreement specifically provided that we should enforce the limitations of your passports issued to Hawaii only, that provision having the force of law would confer the authority upon our executive without any further legislation so that laborers passports might well be issued for Hawaii, and still not be good for the mainland of the United States. Indeed I might have said that if such an arrangement were made, legislation to give it effect would become unobjectionable (comma) because it would not then have the character of a voluntary and unilateral movement for exclusion on our part (period) I also explained that the reason why we have not ourselves proposed and do not now propose such arrangement is the fear of being misunderstood by your people as I have indicated (period) End of quote.

If we can represent to California labor leaders that their action stands in the way of international agreement to relieve them from pressure of labor competition (comma) I think we can get settlement of school question.

Root.

To accompany despatch No. 153.

( Reading of telegram received January 19, 1907 ).

Amembassy, Tokyo.

In my last cypher telegram make eighty-fourth text  
sixth sheet and, thirty-seventh seventh sheet upon.

Root.