

The Japan Daily Mail.

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CALIFORNIA AND JAPAN.

Towards the close of September a Japanese named Kaneko Shinsei arrived in Tokyo as representative of the Fruit Growing Guild of California and of other important Japanese associations in that part of the world. During the present month this gentleman has had various interviews with Foreign Office officials. He is represented as having explained that the education question, which gave so much trouble a few months ago, had been again and again brought forward in previous years, but had always been amicably solved through the intervention of the missionary bodies, until a new weapon had been placed in the hands of the agitators by the destruction of the schools in the earthquake. Mr. Kaneko further threw considerable light on the unpleasant collateral incidents of this agitation. He said that, at the time of the earthquake and the fire, the Japanese residents had shown remarkable foresight: they had bargained for and actually rented buildings which in their judgment were likely to escape the fire, and had thus come into occupation of some 300 houses which the citizens of California were subsequently anxious to acquire for themselves. Then again, immediately after the earthquake, there had been a large influx of Japanese from Hawaii who behaved in a somewhat disorderly manner, and created among all classes an unfavourable impression which the newspapers did their best to magnify. Nevertheless, in spite of the anti-Japanese prejudice which thrust itself so prominently into public notice, it was an indisputable fact that the great landowners, the manufacturers and the capitalists of California were convinced that their enterprises could not be successful without an ample supply of Japanese labour, and that the success now in sight could not be achieved if the supply were cut off. Therefore these influential classes were distinctly opposed to any suspension of the tide of Japanese immigration.

In reply to the above representations, Count Hayashi is said to have explained that the restrictions recently placed by the Foreign Office on Japanese emigrants were not a direct outcome of the anti-Japanese agitation. As a matter of fact, it had been agreed, at the time of the inclusion of Hawaii in the United States' dominions, that the Japanese Government would impose a fine of from 5 to 50 yen on any Japanese subject who attempted to utilize his Hawaii passport for gaining admission to the United States continent. This agreement had not been originally enforced, and its recent operation had given rise to the impression that it was newly enacted. As to the school question, at the time of its occurrence sincere regret had been expressed by the Washington Government, which had pointed out that San Francisco was then virtually under the control of the labouring class, but that the United States Government hoped to correct that state of affairs before long and then to find a satisfactory solution of the education problem.

Japan, while placing every confidence in Washington's friendly statements, had nevertheless instructed Viscount Aoki to make a lengthy representation on the subject. With regard to the emigration question, the policy of the Japanese Government might be described as eclectic. No obstacles would be placed in the path of emigrants who were physically and morally competent to assist the landowners, manufacturers and capitalists of California in developing the country's resources, or in the path of students who crossed the seas with a really earnest intention of acquiring useful knowledge.

Mr. Kaneko, having heard the above statement, preferred a request that the admission of Japanese immigrants at the ports of San Francisco and Seattle should be fixed at three ship-loads of 150 each per month, making 900 in all, or 10,800 annually. The Minister replied that it would be impossible at present to sanction such a large figure. Japan regarded America as one of her very best friends and shrank sincerely from taking any step or preferring any demand that would embarrass the Washington Government. His Excellency thought, therefore that the limit should be fixed at about one half of the number indicated by Mr. Kaneko, though in the course of time and as the result of efforts which the Foreign Office would certainly make, he trusted that the larger figure might ultimately be reached. On the return of Mr. Ishii careful consultation will be held as to the further steps to be taken, but in the meanwhile his Excellency trusted that, in consideration of the great friendship entertained by Japan towards America, all Japanese subjects residing in the United States would behave with the utmost circumspection, and would studiously refrain from any writings, telegrams or speeches calculated to magnify or aggravate the situation. Of course if Japanese subjects who had settled in America found any necessity of employing their own nationals in the prosecution of their legitimate business, applications in that sense forwarded through the Japanese Consulates or the Japan Society would always be favourably considered. Finally, as to the nationalization problem, he could not in his capacity of Minister of State advocate the denationalization of his countrymen wherever they find themselves, but the Japanese Government would nevertheless insist that no invidious discrimination should be made against its country in this matter.