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**“A Flood of Immigration”**

**Japanese Immigration to the Philippines 1900-1941**

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## “A FLOOD OF IMMIGRATION”<sup>1</sup>

A rarity among Asian lands, the Philippines had large areas of potentially agriculturally productive land remaining uncultivated. Thus with great potential resources, broad habitable areas open for settlement, and geographic proximity to Japan, the Philippine Islands were a natural attraction for Japanese emigrants through the first four decades of the twentieth century.

According to the Report of the Philippine Commission for 1900, there were so few Japanese in the Islands that “they were hardly worth mentioning.”<sup>2</sup> Yet Japanese were beginning to enter the Philippines in small numbers, and census figures show 921 by 1903 and 3,438 as of June 30, 1907.<sup>3</sup> The first large group of Japanese to arrive in the Islands were laborers, principally from Okinawa, who were recruited in 1903 by the American builders of the zig-zag road to Baguio.<sup>4</sup> The fear on the part of certain Filipinos that these Japanese would become a permanent part of the Philippine labor force is evident in a report of a conference between Governor General William Howard Taft and the president and the secretary of the Filipino Labor Union on November 16, 1903. The subject of their meeting was the “Influx of Japanese Laborers Into the Philippines.”<sup>5</sup> That the American point of view was favorable to Japanese immigration seems clear from Taft’s remarks to his Filipino supplicants.

According to the Governor General, there was “work for all in this huge domain,” and the Filipinos therefore should be less worried about competitive labor but rather should “do a day’s work for a day’s pay.” Taft denied that there was any influx of Japanese and argued that the few Japanese who had come to the Islands had found jobs because of a shortage of Filipino

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<sup>1</sup> “There would be a flood of immigration,” warned Vicente Villamin in speaking against Philippine independence. (Quoted in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 6, 1930.)

<sup>2</sup> Generoso P. Provido, ‘Japanese Interests in the Philippines,’ (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1936), 28.

<sup>3</sup> US National Archives, War Department, Bureau of Insular Affairs 6144/171 ½ (Enclosure) (hereafter cited as BIA).

<sup>4</sup> The reluctance of Filipino laborers to show enthusiasm for the difficult, hard labor of road construction has been related to the fact that during the Spanish regime public works projects were traditionally assigned to forced labor. Thus a negative psychological attitude had been created which seriously impaired the efficiency of Philippine labor. See Provido, *op. cit.*, 28.

<sup>5</sup> BIA 1937/59.

laborers. Thus, despite the complaints of Philippine labor and with the apparent encouragement of the Americans, these pioneer road workers became the nucleus of the future Japanese colony in the Islands.

After completion of the Baguio road, some five hundred of the Japanese construction crew remained in the Philippines, finding employment in diverse enterprises and in several different locales. A significant group made its way to the area around Davao on the southernmost island of Mindanao where they found employment on the hemp plantations. Some remained in the vicinity of Baguio in central Luzon and developed highly successful truck farms and nurseries in the fertile Trinidad valley. Others found economically rewarding positions, especially in Manila, as artisans, cabinet makers, and in other forms of skilled labor of which there was a shortage in the Philippines. Still other Japanese immigrants followed a pattern of private entrepreneurship not dissimilar from that established by the Chinese.<sup>6</sup> They opened laundries, photo shops, barbershops, bakeries, restaurants and dry goods stores throughout the Philippines and by dint of “sheer industry, patience and honesty”<sup>7</sup> achieved unusual commercial and financial success.

By 1918 there were 7, 806 Japanese in the islands,<sup>8</sup> and Japanese immigration made up 50% of the annual increase in the Philippine population from without.<sup>9</sup> Both the Jones Act in 1916 and the Lansing-Ishii Agreement of 1917 had provided renewed stimuli to Japanese immigration.<sup>10</sup> The former went further than any previous American statute in promising

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<sup>6</sup> See T. S. Fonacier “The Chinese in the Philippines During the American Administration,” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1932).

<sup>7</sup> Serafin D. Quiason, “The Japanese Colony in Davao, 1904-1941,” *Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review*, XXIII, 2-4 (1958), 217.

<sup>8</sup> Provideo, *op. cit.*, 29.

<sup>9</sup> *The Post Intelligencer*, Seattle, January 19, 1919.

<sup>10</sup> In a rather curious interview given to the press on the occasion of his retirement as Japanese Consul General at Manila, Kurusu Saburo expressed the hope that the United States would retain control over the Philippines. Independence for an unprotected Philippines, opined Kurusu, would only serve to inject another disturbing element into a tense Far East. The particular danger alluded to by Kurusu was that as long as the United States was present, immigrants could be sharply limited or even excluded. But, Kurusu wondered whether once American protection was withdrawn, since there was so much land so sparsely inhabited, pressure on the Filipinos might be too strong to resist and “dangerous consequences” might

ultimate independence, and among its provisions increasing Philippine autonomy was one giving to the government of the Islands the power to make its own immigration laws subject only to approval by the President of the United States.<sup>11</sup> The Lansing-Ishii notes indirectly encouraged Japanese movement to the Philippines by the amicable Japanese-American climate which they immediately engendered.

Of primary importance to increased immigration, however, was the boom during World War I in the Manila hemp industry. Thousands of migrants from Japan flooded into the plantations of Mindanao. According to an account in the *Japan Advertiser* of August 13, 1919, “about 10,000 Japanese who were tempted by the high wages offered by hemp plantations . . . left Japan to engage in work there.” However, the same account noted that, “Since the signing of the armistice there had been a corresponding slump in the hemp trade and the men ire left without employment. Approximately 4,000 of the laborers were able to return [to Japan] and the remaining ones are stranded, the majority having no money to pay for their return passage.”<sup>12</sup> An appeal for funds was made to the homeland, and most of those desiring repatriation to Japan eventually returned, but a substantial number remained behind. Then in 1924 the American Congress contrary to the Gentlemen’s Agreement passed an Immigration Act excluding Japanese from entering the United States, and would-be Japanese emigrants looked increasingly to the possibilities of settlement in the Philippines. In 1925, 2,500 Japanese or four times the number arriving in 1924 entered the Islands.<sup>13</sup> By 1931, official population figures showed 19,281 Japanese living in the Philippines.<sup>14</sup>

Some of the outstanding characteristics of the Japanese immigrants quickly became

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follow. (*New York Times*, October 31, 1921.)

<sup>11</sup> A subsequent Immigration Act of February 5, 1917, specifically placed no limitation or quota on Japanese immigrants and was to apply to the Philippines until superseded by an act of the Philippine legislature and approved by the President.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Carlos P. Romulo, “From the Land of the Cherry-Blossoms and Chrysanthemums,” *The Citizen*, September 25, 1919.

<sup>13</sup> Provideo, *op. cit.*, 29.

<sup>14</sup> BIA 6144/171 ½ (Enclosure). At the end of 1934, because of a drop in the price of hemp during the depression, the number of Japanese had declined to 18,104. (Provideo, *op. cit.*, 29.)

apparent as did some of the attitudes toward them which the Filipinos began to develop. All those who have commented on the Japanese settlers in the Philippines unanimously praise their energy, their industriousness, their efficiency and their sense of organization. They were termed resourceful, thrifty, neat, clean, honest, and law abiding. Japanese homes, places of business and even clubs throughout the islands were usually easily identifiable because they were well kept and attractively landscaped. The Japanese had quickly established themselves as “good solid folk—an asset to the community.”<sup>15</sup>

Yet various antagonistic feelings, not incidentally uncommon toward newly arrived and ambitious immigrants in any country, began to emerge among the Filipinos. A large number of the Japanese continued to come from semi-tropical Okinawa where, according to a confidential report of Governor General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., “the people lead a very hard life subsisting on camotes and fish, enabling them to underlive and outwork the Filipino laborer.”<sup>16</sup> Most of the other immigrants came from extremely poor and backward rural areas along the Japan Sea coast in western Honshu and in Kyushu, and were accustomed to a bare subsistence-level existence. At the other extreme, there was a small group of university-trained engineers, agronomists, and economists who represented the most sophisticated urban element of modern Japan. The interesting thing is that respective Filipino counterparts of both elements--the common tao in the first instance and the emerging urbanized, Americanized professional class in the second instance—resented increasingly the intrusion of these Japanese newcomers. Added to this very basic economic antagonism were a number of sociological and psychological phenomena which caused a certain degree of friction and tension.

The Filipinos, on the one hand, criticized the Japanese for bringing over their own women and not intermarrying locally as the Chinese had done, but on the other hand they condemned the Japanese for the way in which they treated their wives, and, when the Japanese

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<sup>15</sup> Provido, *op. cit.*, 31.

<sup>16</sup> BIA 6144/171 ½.

did intermarry with members of indigenous non-Christian tribes such as the Bagobos in Mindanao, they were denounced for taking advantage of uneducated innocents. There was suspicion too of the Japanese for not adopting the Christian religion, a feeling perhaps in part encouraged by the Roman Catholic hierarchy which was naturally fearful of possible political control of the Philippines by non-Christians. Failure of the Japanese immigrants to assimilate generally as well as their close affiliation with the Japanese Consulate General in Manila or the Consulate at Davao aroused antipathy and even a certain fear.<sup>17</sup>

For the first time, during the 20's, what might be termed prototypical anti-Japanese rumors began to circulate among the Filipinos. One of the most popular stories was that Japanese spies were everywhere; and consequently, every Japanese with a camera was automatically suspect. This rumor was embellished further by transforming every Japanese male into a secret member of Japan's armed forces and even worse into trained map and chart makers. Rumors persisted that Japanese were busily at work in every corner of the Islands--bent over their drawing boards.<sup>18</sup> Japanese were accused of poisoning or at least planning to poison the Philippine water supply. Japanese-owned restaurants were said by some to be serving their Filipino customers ingeniously poisoned food, the effects of which apparently produced a much delayed reaction. Such rumors, while in the main ridiculous, relate to two parallel developments which, as will be discussed later, were closely connected. These were the increasing economic, political and military power of Japan and the approaching independence of the Philippines. The possibility of spreading Japanese economic penetration and even of eventual military invasion became increasingly unsettling topics for discussion and debate. The effect of such considerations and the publicity given to them was quite naturally to redound to the disadvantage

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<sup>17</sup> It was sometimes suggested that anti-Japanese feeling in Philippines was being fostered by the Chinese. (See "Atherton Report on Wood-Forbes Mission," November 15, 1921, BIA 22639-A/56-A.) In view of the Sino-Japanese enmity as a result of the 21 Demands, the Shantung question, etc., and the economic threat to the entrenched Chinese which the parvenu Japanese suddenly posed, such a hypothesis is perhaps tenable.

<sup>18</sup> This story was not creditable in view of the fact that for a small fee anyone could purchase excellent maps and hydrographic charts from the Philippine government.



of the Japanese immigrants.<sup>19</sup>

However, it seems clear that Japanese immigration did not produce any grave social or racial problems. In general, the Japanese did not find themselves in competition with native labor. The contributions of these newcomers to the Philippines were real and beneficial. While fears had been expressed regarding an untoward influx of Japanese immigrants into the Philippines, no really large scale migration of Japanese had ever taken place and no restrictive legislation had ever been enacted. Thus only when Japanese expansionism and nascent Philippine independence confronted one another did the problem of the Japanese immigrants and immigration come under close scrutiny.

Actually the number of Japanese immigrants coming into the Islands had remained extremely small. What tended to arouse attention and ultimately controversy were, of course, the disproportionate importance of these immigrants in the overall Philippine economic picture concurrent with the aggressive pattern of Japanese imperialistic expansion, which, beginning in 1931, was casting an ever-lengthening shadow over all of Asia and for which many felt the immigrants to be advance agents. It was generally held by scholars that there had been three major deterrents to the entry of any significant number of Japanese into the Philippines. These were the cooperation of the Japanese government which by an informal "gentlemen's agreement" with the United States limited the number of passports issued for the Islands, the American statute which forbade the immigration of contract labor into the United States or its territories or insular possessions, and the Public Land Acts of the Philippines which restricted Japanese land holdings. All of these were however subject to reasonable doubts since the application of the first depended upon the "gentlemanliness" of the Japanese government and

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<sup>19</sup> One of the first proposals to limit Japanese immigration had been made by then Secretary of Commerce and Industry Filemon Perez during the administration of Governor General Dwight Davis. However, Governor Davis made known his opposition to Perez's recommendation since any change in the immigration laws would necessarily lead to international complications which could only aggravate Japanese-American relations.

the enforcement of the latter two depended upon the efficiency and honesty of Filipino officials.

In a confidential report to the Bureau of Insular Affairs on October 12, 1932, Governor General Roosevelt noted that there were in the Islands three principal concentrations of Japanese: at Baguio (531 Japanese, according to a report of September, 1931, from the Japanese Consulate General) where they were almost all either in the local retail trade or in truck farming in the Trinidad Valley and where there had been no increase in the number of Japanese over the previous two years; in Manila, where there were said to be 3,981 Japanese, either in the retail bazaar trade or in the local fishing industry which they practically monopolized and where there had been a slight decrease in the Japanese population during the preceding three months; and in Davao, where 12,500 Japanese were in the hemp, lumber and copra trades and in various retail businesses.<sup>20</sup> Roosevelt commented that though there was no law restricting Japanese immigration into the Philippines, there had been an “abrupt decline” in the flow of immigrants and that, in fact, during the first six months of 1932 departures had exceeded arrivals, a development which he attributed to the depression which had hit the Philippines as well as the rest of the world.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, in Washington the Osmena-Roxas independence mission had succeeded in gaining sufficient favorable Congressional sentiment to secure passage of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting independence bill which by January, 1933, lay on the desk of President Hoover awaiting appropriate action. Roxas knew well that one of the arguments of those who in the United States were urging Hoover to veto the proposed legislation was that Japanese sovereignty might replace that of America once the islands were free. And he also knew that one of the most potent aspects of that argument was the fear that the Philippines would be inundated by Japanese immigrants. In a lengthy statement to the press, Roxas replied to these

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<sup>20</sup> BIA 6144/171 ½.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

critics:

There are some who, though otherwise favorable to Philippine independence, express the fear that an independent Philippines will not be able to maintain its integrity and may be annexed by some imperialistic power. The implication is, of course, that should the United States withdraw from the Philippines the islands would be taken over by Japan. Occurrences in the Far East last year gave some weight to this view. More recent happenings, however, have greatly diminished those apprehensions, and only two months ago no less an authority than Senator Borah, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate, in a statement advocating Philippine independence declared that in his opinion Japan does not covet the Philippines, because in his words, ‘Japan is facing the other direction—Manchuria.’

Current events reinforce this judgment, If Japan had any desire to colonize the Philippines, she could have taken them from Spain years before the United States acquired them. The fact is, the Japanese do not thrive in a tropical climate. Though there are no laws forbidding Japanese immigration to the Philippines, there are only about 8,000 of them in the Islands. Thirty-seven years ago Japan took Formosa an island of climatic conditions identical with those of the Philippines, and despite all the efforts of her government to colonize it the Japanese have refused to go there in large numbers. Not more than 300,000 Japanese reside in Formosa today.<sup>22</sup>

In reality, the arguments advanced by Roxas, while perhaps outwardly persuasive, were specious. Colonization or immigration as such had been of little real importance in the control or rule over many tropical areas by great powers from the temperate zones as was evidenced, for

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in the *New York Herald Tribune*, January 8, 1933.

example, by the small number of Americans in Roxas's own Philippines. As far as Formosa was concerned, the Japanese in acquiring that island had also acquired a hard-working Chinese population with whom their immigrants would have to compete—as well as an area where the population density was already high.<sup>23</sup> In the Philippines, however, the opportunities for immigrants were, as the Davao settlement had shown, almost limitless, and the tropical climate had never for one minute interfered with Japanese progress. Apparently unconvinced by representations such as those of Roxas, President Hoover vetoed the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act and in his veto message included reference to the danger of “peaceful infiltration” or “forcible entry” into the Philippines by “immense neighbor populations.” And he added, “Many of these races are more devoted to commercial activities than the people of the islands and the infiltration is constant and fraught with friction. . . . Nor has the spirit of imperialism and the exploitation of peoples by other races departed from this earth.”<sup>24</sup> Congress, however, was obviously unmoved by the warnings of President Hoover, for the very next day they voted overwhelmingly to override the presidential veto, and, pending its acceptance by the Philippine Legislature, H-H-C became law.<sup>25</sup>

Almost immediately at Manila the bitter and highly personal political struggle over H-H-C began between the Pros of Osmena and Roxas and the Antis of Quezon. In the midst of that fight, on July 1, 1933, a delegation from the House of Peers of the Japanese Diet arrived in Manila for a five day visit. Among the points that were frequently repeated in statements to social gatherings and to the press by the head of the group Dr. Hijikata Yasushi and other Diet members, the one that was most emphasized and most repeated was that the rich, undeveloped resources of the Philippines could be rapidly and profitably developed with appropriate infusions of capital and labor from Japan. For example, in a statement made to a farewell

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<sup>23</sup> Grayson Kirk gives the figure 340 to the square mile as of 1930, (Grayson Kirk, *Philippine Independence*, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1936), 195.)

<sup>24</sup> The veto message appears in full in the *New York Times*, January 14, 1933. It is interesting to note that the word “Japan” never appeared in the text.

<sup>25</sup> *New York Times*, January 15, 1933.

banquet given for the party on their last night in Manila, Professor Hijikata said, “Japan with her excess population is only too glad to cooperate with the Filipino people in the development of their vast national resources and if only men were needed to help them, Japan will be too willing to furnish them.”<sup>26</sup> While it is probable that this was Dr. Hijikata’s Japanized English and nothing more, nevertheless the impact of this and subsequent similar remarks was immediate.

In a farewell press interview on the afternoon of July 5, Hijikata was reported by the *Tribune* to have said, “You need labor here and Japan will be willing to help in this respect by extending its cooperation,”<sup>27</sup> while the *Bulletin* quoted him as saying, “As to labor, Japan can furnish all that the Islands may need. It is for this reason that Japan is encouraging the emigration of her people to the Philippines.”<sup>28</sup> Consul General Kimura Atsushi in his report to the Foreign Office on this Diet mission enclosed a sheaf of clippings from the Philippine press to support his underlined opinion that this kind of statement was not well received by the Filipinos.<sup>29</sup> Specific antagonistic editorials appeared in both the *Herald* and the *Free Press*. Both publications held that Japanese immigrants remained loyal to Japan and did not assimilate with other peoples and that therefore increased Japanese migration to the Philippines, as proposed by the Hijikata group, was dangerous to the future of the Islands. And in a carefully prepared and studied reply to the suggestion of Dr. Hijikata, Hermenegildo Cruz, Director of the Bureau of Labor, declared that the Philippines did not need then nor in the future foreign laborers for its agricultural and industrial development. While giving due recognition to the qualities of Japanese laborers, Mr. Cruz said that as an agricultural laborer the Filipino had no reason to “be envious of . . . the

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<sup>26</sup> *Tribune*, July 5, 1933. A day earlier at a banquet given in honor of the delegation by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce, Inabata Katsutaro, president of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Diet party, had said, “If you need men to help you develop your national resources, you can draw from us. They have done so in Brazil and in an audience that I had with His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, he expressed to me his gratification at the obedient, industrious law-abiding citizens we have sent to Brazil.” (*Tribune*, July 4, 1933.)

<sup>27</sup> *Tribune*, July 5, 1933.

<sup>28</sup> *Bulletin*, July 5, 1933.

<sup>29</sup> Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives (hereafter cited as JMFA). K.2.1.0.4-1, Aug. 16, 1933.

Japanese laborer.” He further stressed that an influx of foreign laborers would give rise to “numberless problems which later become difficult to solve and which redound to the detriment not only of the native laborers but of the foreign ones as well . . .”<sup>30</sup> Consul General Kimura in addition to noting the views of Cruz also pointed out to the Foreign Ministry that even the “pro-Japanese”<sup>31</sup> former Representative Gregorio Nieva had said that while Hijikata’s ideas were “very good” nevertheless “a cautious study” would have to precede any such step.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, although Kimura’s overall conclusion was that in general the Filipinos’ impression of the Peers mission was favorable, clearly the “trial balloons” of utilizing a high level goodwill delegation to try to pave the way for a receptive attitude in the Islands toward Japanese immigration had not succeeded. Moreover, one of Hijikata’s statements to the effect that the Philippines was “a veritable melting pot in the Orient with all races striving for the common welfare of the country”<sup>33</sup> which was his attempt to reassure the Filipinos that Japanese immigrants were both contributing to the development of the country and were easily integrating themselves into the local culture pattern had met with equal rebuffs. Typical perhaps of those whose concern had been aroused by the tenor of Hijikata’s remarks was Attorney Marcelino Lontok who on July 10 addressed a letter to Senate President Quezon, and after expressing concern about Japanese policies generally, Lontok said:

. . . . Japan has the obvious intention of sending more emigrants to the Philippines. Professor Hijikata confirmed this fact in one of his speeches delivered during his stay in the country as Chief of the Delegation of Peers. . . . Many prominent Japanese had made statements to the effect that Japan did not need the Philippines, but it appears that the policy of Japan is now more open and frank and that Japan has decided to send emigrants here. The consequence of

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<sup>30</sup> *Bulletin*, July 11, 1933.

<sup>31</sup> JMFA K.2.1.0.4-1, Aug. 16, 1933.

<sup>32</sup> *Herald*, July 7, 1933.

<sup>33</sup> *Tribune*, July 5, 1933.

this is to populate our country with Japanese by means of emigration. This would naturally lead later to an international conflict through “created interests.” The Japanese would demand protection, and if we failed to provide it they would seek the intervention of their government which would naturally result in Japanese domination. . . .<sup>34</sup>

It seems evident, however, that neither the Hijikata-type declarations nor the Lontok-type forebodings were given any particular consideration either by the Philippine Legislature in its decision to reject the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act or by the United States Congress which the next year passed the Tydings-McDuffie Act which once again set the date for Philippine independence.<sup>35</sup>

The next task that faced the Philippines was the writing of the Constitution required by the Tydings-McDuffie Act. In this process, of special import to Philippine-Japanese relations were those provisions which might pertain to the immigration and naturalization. As the probability of independence had become a reality, rumors of possible changes in the immigration situation were heard more frequently. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of July, 1934, the *Herald* which often served as a vehicle for administration opinion reported that in preparation for independence the government would present to the Legislature a bill to limit foreign immigration.

The very next day a member of the Japanese consular staff called on Insular Collector of Customs Vicente Aldanese whose office then held the administrative responsibility for immigration and asked for an explanation of the *Herald's* report. Aldanese said that what the government had in mind was not a simple quota system but rather a modified form of the United

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<sup>34</sup> Philippine National Library, Papers of Manuel L. Quezon (hereafter cited as QP), July `10, 1933, translated from the Spanish.

<sup>35</sup>The Tydings-McDuffie Act specified that the Islands would be independent “on the 4th of July immediately following the expiration of a period of ten years from the date of the inauguration of the new government under the constitution provided for in this Act. . . .” (Sec. 19 (a).) Since the Commonwealth Government under the new Constitution was inaugurated November 15, 1935, July 4, 1946, became Philippine Independence Day.

States Immigration Law of 1924 with the Philippine census of 1918 (except for Americans) to be used as a basis. Noting that there were in the Islands only 8,300 Japanese according to the census of 1918, Consul General Kimura advised the Foreign Ministry that such a proposal, if passed into law, would have a “negative influence on our future immigration policy.”<sup>36</sup> In trying to determine the causes of the motivation for the Philippine government to push for restrictive immigration legislation at that time, Kimura suggested that beyond the obvious factor of impending independence this was the combined result of a recession in Philippine agriculture, an increase in the number of unemployed Filipino farm laborers and the American attitude toward Philippine immigrants who were to be limited to 50 per year according to the Tydings-McDuffie Act. The Consul General opined that in such circumstances perhaps restrictive legislation directed at Japan was unavoidable.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the evident pessimism of Kimura, three significant factors contributed both to the failure of the Legislature to enact the described legislation and to the omission of a proposed similar provision from the Constitution as finally written. The first factor and one which the Japanese consular staff in the Philippines often failed to recognize was that despite the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act the ultimate responsibility for the Islands still lay very much with the United States. Perhaps the ease with which the Japanese in the Philippines, both officials and non-officials, gained access to the innermost circles of the Philippine power structure and acquired influence in it led the consular staff to overestimate the authority of these individuals. Certainly the United States was a tolerant and a permissive colonial power, but it was still the ruling authority in the Islands, and especially in such a sensitive area as immigration where relations with foreign countries were involved the Americans would make the final decision. Therefore, whether the United States exercised its influence indirectly and with substantial subtlety as was often the case under Governor General Frank Murphy or whether its will were to

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<sup>36</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, July 13, 1934.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*



be made clear through direct intervention, surely in a matter such as immigration legislation the American view would ultimately be decisive. And it seems quite clear that since at least in the 1934-1935 period the State Department was particularly anxious to do nothing which might aggravate United States-Japanese relations the probability that such legislation would be permitted to come into being was greatly mitigated.

A second factor which Kimura himself may have somewhat underestimated was his own personal influence and that of the local Japanese community. There is little doubt that certainly by 1934 the position of the Japanese in the Philippines was a very well established one, that the personal relationships between leading representatives of major Japanese interests in the Islands and Filipino politicians were both close and meaningful and that the awesome military power of Japan in the entire Pacific area, which had made itself evident with increasing frequency since the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident, had perforce significantly augmented the status and accordingly the influence of Japan's diplomatic personnel in the Philippines. Therefore, while proposed legislation affecting Japan unfavorably might, as in the case of the suggested immigration restriction, from time to time be bruited about either by individual officials or in the Philippine press, the possibility that any such action would actually be taken was drastically limited by the pressure that could be brought to bear either directly by the Consulate General or indirectly by Japanese community leaders. Moreover, by the 1930's the Japanese in the Philippines had a highly paid and effective Filipino legal staff whose influence was often crucial in dealing with pending legislation, and the Japanese also had developed a valuable coterie of "friends at court," so to speak, that is highly placed members of both the executive and legislative branches of the Philippine government who were often able to provide unofficial representation of the Japanese point of view.

The third factor, and in the case of the immediate failure of the Constitutional Convention to take any action restrictive of immigration probably the decisive one, was, as in so many other instances, the tremendous influence of Manuel Quezon. It was his view throughout

the deliberations of the Convention, in which incidentally he took no direct part, that the scope of the document should be as limited as possible and that all extraneous proposals should, if at all possible, be eliminated, especially where they might arouse international complications and thus deter the American President from giving his final assent to the Philippine Constitution, as required by the Tydings-McDuffie Act. Typical of such considerations, therefore, was the attitude of Quezon on proposed constitutional provisions limiting immigration as in similar moves directed at curtailing alien landholdings or nationalizing the retail trade.

On all three of these issues being examined by the Constitutional Convention, Quezon personally received significant memoranda from Consul General Kimura. The covering letter, which in its wording is perhaps as important as the contents of the memoranda themselves and the statement on immigration are herewith reproduced verbatim from the Quezon Papers.

JAPANESE CONSULATE-GENERAL

Manila, Philippine Islands

January 16, 1935

My dear President Quezon:

Sincerely appreciative of your courtesy and generous attention, and in accordance with our understanding I am enclosing herewith my brief memorandum on immigration and the proposed restriction on retail trade against foreigner [sic].

Reiterating my appreciation I am,

Very sincerely yours,

s/ A. Kimura

t/ ATSUSHI KIMURA

Consul-General for Japan

Hon. Manuel Quezon

President of the Senate

MEMORANDUM

#### IMMIGRATION

It is understood that the subject of immigration has been left out of the Constitution, and properly so, I believe, because this matter can be more elaborately dealt with by legislation. In point of fact, it is at present so regulated. The original provision contained in the draft under Article V prescribes annual quotas of immigration, which shall be equal and uniform for all countries. While the equality provision seems proper, if annual quotas of immigration are to be provided, the provision, if revived, may tie up the hands of the Philippine Government or its national legislature from adopting retaliatory measures by legislative action, should a foreign country discriminate against the admission of Filipinos into its territories or domain. Upon the other hand, the matter of immigration involves many reciprocal considerations, and it will perhaps be better to subject it to closer scrutiny in the light of international developments especially in the Far East.

As far as Japanese immigration is concerned, there does not seem to be any problem for few Japanese have come to the Philippines and according to statistics the influx, if it may be so called, has not increased. In Davao where it may be said there is any appreciable population of Japanese, the Japanese laborers number about 3000 whereas Filipino laborers employed in Japanese plantations number around 11,000 and our laborers instead of competing with Filipino laborers really help and cooperate with them and to their advantage.

Eventually under the Tydings-McDuffie law, the doors of America will be closed also to Filipinos. For sometime past, Japan has been endeavoring to secure equality of treatment of all races and has frowned upon racial discrimination, and the efforts of Japan, it is hoped, will prove beneficial to all oriental races. It is hoped that the Filipinos will not remain insensitive to this just pretension of Japan for Equality.

I am of the opinion, therefore, that the subject of immigration has been properly discarded from the draft of the Constitution, which means that the matter will be left entirely in the hands of the national legislature of the Philippine Government. It is submitted that the action of the Constitutional Convention should be maintained.

Quezon in turn wrote to Claro M. Recto, President of the Constitutional Convention:

My dear President Recto:

I beg to send you enclosed herewith memorandum received from the Consul General of Japan. These communications are self-explanatory. May I request that you

discuss these matters with the leaders of the Constitutional Convention and let me know your decision. It is not, of course, for me to say what the Constitution should or should not contain. I hope it is not out of place or improper for me to express the opinion that our Constitution should not be framed as to give the impression that we are not animated by amity and goodwill in our relation with foreign countries and their nationals. Of course, it is not only our privilege but our duty to the present and future generations to safeguard their well-being and any step that we take to this effect should not be understood as a step taken in the spirit of hostility to anybody but only in self-protection. Ours is a new country on the threshold of its national existence. The problems of our day and the economic sufferings all over the world are nothing but the effect of lack of economic plans in the past due to the freedom given to economic forces, both national and foreign, to do as they please. With these lessons staring us in the face, it is not strange that the Constitutional Convention should guard the Philippine Government against the possibility of a repetition of these affairs.

Very Cordially yours,

s/ MANUEL L. QUEZON<sup>38</sup>

In addition, Quezon spoke to the convention delegates as a group and urged them to consider the necessity of the new Philippine state to have “all the good will of foreign countries that [it] could muster.”<sup>39</sup> Thus from his private correspondence as well as from his public utterances, it is obvious that Quezon was using all of his considerable influence to try to dissuade the Convention from any action which might be considered unfriendly by any foreign state,

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<sup>38</sup> QP, January, 1935.

<sup>39</sup> *Herald*, January 31, 1935.

especially Japan. The extent to which his efforts (and coincidentally those of the Japanese Consul General) succeeded may be seen in the fact that the Constitution as finally drawn included no references at all to immigration or to the nationalization of the retail trade and that the problem of landholding was dealt with in a very tempered way.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, the question of the future course of immigration into the Philippines remained. These islands lying in proximity to the teeming millions of China and the crowded masses of Japan continued to be an attractive potential new homeland for nationals of both countries. With the prestige, power and protective mantle of the United States about to be removed and a growing aggressiveness on the part of Japan being evidenced, pressure on President Quezon and the National Assembly for a comprehensive Philippine immigration law increased. Many of the former arguments about the Japanese menace which before the Tydings-McDuffie Act had been cavalierly dismissed with the derisive term ‘bugaboo’ were now being reiterated as alarming realities.

Simultaneously with the establishment of the Commonwealth Government, for example, the *Commonwealth Advocate* editorialized, “Japan deserves our special attention because her nationals are aggressive and exclusivist. Japanese subjects are here not on their personal account to seek a means of living. . . . They are agents of the Mikado, promoters of an engrossing national ambition of conquest and expansion.”<sup>41</sup> Before passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, Roxas, Quezon and others had repeatedly asserted that the Japanese were not interested in the Philippines because of the tropical climate. Now however, many articulate Filipinos were not so sure. Said Salvador P. Lopez:

I understand that the colonization of Manchukuo is not yielding the results expected and that with so vast an area close by open to their occupation and exploitation thousands of Japanese immigrants still flock to South America and

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<sup>40</sup> See Article XII, Philippine Constitution.

<sup>41</sup> *Commonwealth Advocate*, October-November, 1935, 15.

to the South Seas, as if to show their decided preference for tropical climates. I need not add that Japanese immigrants find the climate of the Philippines very much to their liking. There, they thrive, they even get rich.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, the Japanese themselves were by no means unaware of the growing sentiment in the Philippines for some kind of control over immigration, and the possibility of the passage of restrictive legislation became increasingly acute with the convening of the First National Assembly, the unicameral body elected under the Commonwealth Constitution. In this situation the Consulate General in Manila was particularly eager to have available the best possible local legal consultants in order to be prepared to counteract whatever legislative proposals negatively affecting Japanese interests might be introduced. In a budgetary request submitted to the Foreign Office asking for 2,400 yen for local legal expenses for 1937 (the same amount as had been authorized for 1936), Consul General Uchiyama Kiyoshi noted that former Senator Jose P. Laurel who had been consulting attorney in the past for the Consulate General had in February of 1936 been appointed to the Supreme Court of the Philippines and thus had “on the surface” severed his relations with the consulate.<sup>43</sup> The problem of selecting a successor, wrote Uchiyama, was complicated by the fact that it was legally forbidden in the Philippines for civil servants to have financial arrangements with private citizens, private companies or foreign consulates. Pedro Sabido who was Laurel’s law partner and who had been of great service to the consulate in dealing with the Davao land question was also

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<sup>42</sup> Salvador P. Lopez, “Law and Equity in Davao,” *Commonwealth Advocate*, May, Second-half, 1936, 12. Willard Price wrote that the Japanese government subsidized steamship companies serving the mandated islands, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines in order to keep fares as low as possible and thus encourage immigration. He noted also that fares from the mandated islands to Dutch or Philippine territory were half again as low as the rates on the Japan-mandated islands trip. “In other words, Japan is anxious to have her people go to the mandates, but twice as anxious to have them settle in Dutch and Philippine territory. Why? Because the economic possibilities of these vast, luxuriant islands far surpass the best that can be expected of the small islands of Micronesia.” (Willard Price, “Japan in the Philippines,” *The Commonwealth Advocate*, August, First Half, 1936, 15.)

<sup>43</sup> JMFA J.1.2.0.J7-5, July 30, 1936. Secret.

according to Uchiyama, an “inconvenient choice” as legal adviser “on the surface” since he was himself a member of the Assembly<sup>44</sup>. At the beginning of July Uchiyama chose as the Consulate’s new legal consultant Vicente del Rosario who was formerly associated with Laurel’s law office. Del Rosario in addition to an L.L. B. from the University of the Philippines and an LL.M, from the University of Michigan and in his previous partnership with Laurel had also at one time served in the government as head of the Bureau of Lands, perhaps that organ of the Philippine government with which the Japanese had the most dealings. Thus with the continued covert guidance of Laurel and Sabido and with the hiring of del Rosario the Consulate General was well supplied with legal talent to provide advice and aid in its efforts to combat the several varieties of restrictive immigration legislation that began to be introduced into the Philippine Assembly.

The first such proposed bill against which the Japanese Consulate General and the Japanese community leadership working in concert marshaled their full resources was one entitled “An act providing for the identification and registration of foreign residents in the Philippines, and for other purposes” or more simply an alien registration law. This legislation came before the Assembly’s Committee on Labor and Immigration in the summer of 1936 and was said to be directed at the illegal entry into the Philippines of Chinese. While the principal target of Japanese objection to this bill was the proposed ten peso per head alien registration tax, the real concern of both the consulate and the community was that the successful passage of any legislation which would no matter how slightly restrict Japanese immigrants might constitute a giant first step toward the subsequent unleashing of a torrent of immigration laws.

Thus, in the name of the local Japanese Chamber of Commerce and over the signature of its President Dazai Shogo but with the full assistance of the Consulate General and its legal staff

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* Uchiyama commented that Sabido had rendered “great assistance” in every important problem affecting Japanese interests. “Considering his conscientious attitude I want permission to give him something silver worth up to 200 yen, asked Uchiyama, and the gift was authorized by the Foreign Office on Sept. 2, 1936. (*Ibid.* and JMFA J.1.2.0 J7-5(15), Sept. 2, 1936.)



a detailed memorandum was submitted to the Committee on Labor and Immigration seeking to convince the Committee that any registration fee imposed on the Japanese in the Philippines would be contrary to the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of 1911 between the United States and Japan. The memorandum pointed out that Paragraph 2 of Article I of that treaty included a provision which read: “[The subjects and citizens of each of the High Contracting Parties] shall not be compelled, under any pretext whatever, to pay any charges or taxes other or higher than those that are or may be paid by native subjects or citizens.” The Japanese legal position was that since, despite the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth, under the Tydings-McDuffie Act the Islands continued to be unincorporated territory of the United States and since there was no Japanese law or decree requiring alien residents of Japan to pay any residence or registration tax, the quoted section of the Treaty of 1911 was both pertinent and valid.<sup>45</sup> In addition, another document opposing the bill was submitted to the committee by the principal immigration officer of the Commonwealth, Insular Collector of Customs Vicente Aldanese who had always been well disposed toward the Japanese.

Nevertheless, these efforts did not seem to be bearing fruit, for on Sept. 9, 1936, Consul General Uchiyama reported to Tokyo that, although Vice Consul Kihara Jitaro who was himself a long time resident of the Philippines and who had many contacts in the Assembly was exerting all his efforts to block the alien registration law, he was not optimistic about the outcome.<sup>46</sup> On the night of September 22, Assemblyman Sabido paid Kihara a visit and told him that since the mood of the Assembly reflected a strong desire to control the Chinese in the Philippines through the passage of an alien registration tax, it seemed virtually impossible to prevent the enactment of this legislation. Again, as so often in the past, suggested regulatory laws theoretically aimed at the Chinese would also have a direct effect on the Japanese, and, though the Japanese had always sought specific exemption for their nationals from these proposed legislative acts, such

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<sup>45</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Aug. 8, 1936. Secret.

<sup>46</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Sept. 9, 1936.

distinctions were regularly refused by the Filipinos on grounds of equality of treatment, a principle which the Japanese themselves had consistently so vocally defended. However, in this case Sabido pointed out that as a result of his and the consulate's behind the scenes lobbying so far two improvements from the Japanese point of view had already been accepted in the proposed bill. One was the raising of the age limit of the applicability of the ten peso per head tax from twelve to eighteen, and the other was the inclusion of a clause exempting altogether from the alien registration tax those foreigners who were exempted by treaty with the United States.<sup>47</sup>

The legislative picture became suddenly clouded, however, when on September 30, 1936, a message from President Quezon was delivered to the Assembly:

Gentlemen of the National Assembly:

I have the honor to bring to your attention the necessity and advisability of enacting legislation regulating immigration of aliens to, and their residence in, the Philippines.

Paragraph 9 of section 2 of the Tydings-McDuffie Law and paragraph 9 of section 1 of the ordinance appended to the Constitution of the Philippines recognize in the National Assembly the power to adopt laws in connection with immigration, subject only to the condition that they shall not become laws until approved by the President of the United States. Immigration into the Philippines is actually governed by Congressional legislation, and the law on the matter was naturally drafted to meet the problems obtaining in the United States on the date of its enactment. One very fundamental provision of the law is the exclusion of Asiatics, and another is the exclusion of contract laborers.

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<sup>47</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Sept. 23, 1936.

Conditions obtaining in the Philippines and the position of the Philippines in relation to Asiatic' countries should impel us to eliminate the discrimination against Asiatics now contained in our immigration laws. The Philippines can ill afford to discriminate against her own neighbors.

On the other hand, full protection to Filipino labor demands that laborers of all classes and all races be denied admission into the Philippines, with the exception of skilled labor, when such is not available here.

Except as above indicated, the provisions of the Immigration Law now in force in the Philippines may be retained in the legislation that is recommended for enactment.

Respectfully,

(Sgd.) Manuel L. Quezon<sup>48</sup>

During the next several days the lobbying abilities and techniques of the Japanese were taxed to the utmost. Kihara met with one of his key informants Assemblyman Tomas Oppus, Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. The two men discussed what might be done either to bring about the revision of or to block entirely legislation aimed at controlling the entry of aliens into the Philippines. Oppus told Kihara that President Quezon had, contrary to his message of Sept. 30, secretly ordered that a bill controlling the entry of foreign labor into the

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<sup>48</sup> "Message of His Excellency Manuel L. Quezon President of Philippines To The First National Assembly on Regulation of Entry of Aliens and Residence in the Philippines," (Sept. 30, 1936), *Messages of the President*, Vol. 2, Part I (Rev. ed.), (Manila: Bureau of-Printing, 1938), 270.1.

Philippines be killed. But this presidential reversal of form had come after the Committee on Labor and Immigration chaired by Assemblyman Enrique B. Magalona had already adopted the administration's bill as advocated by Quezon in the Sept. 30 statement. Not only had the Committee's earlier action been taken with the full support of the members, but there was considerable resentment to what were being called the dictatorial methods of the President in trying to force the Committee in effect to rescind an action already approved and an action taken in the first place at the instance of the chief executive. However, Oppus told Kihara that Chairman Magalona had confided to Oppus that despite all of the obstacles indicated, he would work to prevent the enactment of the alien labor control legislation for 15,000 pesos.<sup>49</sup>

On the basis of this information provided by Assemblyman Oppus, Consul General Uchiyama met with Vice Consul Kihara and Morokuma Yasaku of the local Japanese Association. They decided that since the President himself had originally proposed the legislation, it was impossible for him to withdraw it publicly. Moreover, they recognized that both in and out of the Assembly nationalistic pressures made it very difficult for any of the Assemblymen to stand up and be counted or to take the leadership in opposition to legislation which would control the entry into the Philippines of foreign labor. Therefore, the three Japanese agreed that to advance 12,000 or 13,000 pesos to win over Chairman Magalona of the Committee on Labor and Immigration would be the most effective procedure in order to try to block the proposed law. On the morning of October 5th Morokuma met secretly with Oppus and gave him 2,500 pesos for delivery to Magalona and promised to hand over an additional 10,000 pesos after the bill had been successfully killed.<sup>50</sup>

The very next morning, October 6th, Vice Consul Khara whose principal assignment was to maintain contact with the legislators met personally with Assemblyman Magalona and presented the arguments from the Japanese side against the alien labor entry control bill. And,

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<sup>49</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Oct. 5, 1936. Very Secret.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

although the 2,500 pesos had already been turned over to Magalona by Morokuma, Kihara's mode of operation vis a vis Magalona was to act as though he knew nothing of the monetary transaction but was trying to win Magalona over to the Japanese point of view by persuasive logic. Kihara contended that considering the grave implications of the proposed legislation, out of justice to the interests directly affected the bill ought to be postponed at least until the next session of the Assembly. Further, Kihara stated that if it was absolutely necessary to pass some law pertaining to immigration, the Japanese preferred the previously proposed alien registration bill as amended. Magalona replied that the alien labor entry control act had originally been proposed at the request of the Secretary of Labor who in a meeting with Magalona on the preceding evening had again stressed the desirability of passing such legislation. However, Magalona assured Kihara that having heard and been duly impressed by the latter's arguments he would do his best to see that the bill did not pass at the current session.<sup>51</sup>

The energetic and diligent Kihara did not, however, rely solely on his own and Morokuma's dealings with Magalona as necessarily sufficient to forestall the passage of the unwanted` legislation. Contact with Assemblyman Oppus was of course maintained. Assemblyman Sabido too kept in very close touch with Kihara and was particularly helpful in giving the Japanese advance notice of the changes in the moods of the often unpredictable President Quezon to whom Sabido seemed to have fairly easy access. Still another very helpful source for Kihara was the President's Secretary and Chef de Cabinet Jorge B. Vargas who frequently served as an intermediary between the President and the Assembly and therefore almost always knew the probable fate of pending legislation. In the specific instance of the alien labor entry control bill, since it had already been approved by the Committee on Labor and Immigration and was pending before the Assembly's Committee on Bills on Third Reading, Kihara's personal acquaintance with the latter committee's Chairman Buenaventura Rodriguez

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<sup>51</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Oct. 7, 1936. Very Secret.

resulted in Rodriguez's agreement to postpone consideration of the bill by his committee.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, Kihara was still uncertain whether all of these efforts could in the end prevent the bill from being enacted, so he met in the greatest secrecy with the former legal consultant to the Japanese Consulate General Supreme Court Justice Jose P. Laurel to obtain his opinion as to whether the term "laborer" in the proposed legislation would in fact include Japanese farmers, When Laurel said that it would, both Vice Consul Kihara and Consul General Uchiyama were more determined than ever to do anything in their power to. have the bill killed.<sup>53</sup>

Uchiyama himself was far from idle, holding a series of personal meetings with Undersecretary of Justice Jose P. Melencio, Secretary of Justice Jose Yulo, who was consistently viewed by the Japanese as the arch villain within the executive branch of the Commonwealth government, and Presidential Secretary Vargas. Vargas took the position that there was nothing for the Japanese to be worried about since they could count on the good will of the Philippine authorities to give a liberal interpretation to the term "laborer" as used in the bill. Uchiyama answered Vargas by pointing out that all visas for immigrants had to be obtained at United States consulates, and based on past experience American officials would enforce the law with the greatest severity thus effectively making immigrating to the Philippines impossible for the Japanese. Moreover, Uchiyama insisted that the passage of such a law as the one under discussion would arouse a storm of anti-Philippine feeling in Japan, and he reminded Vargas of the effect on Japanese opinion that the American Immigration Act of 1924 had had. After further recalling to Vargas the temperate and friendly way in which Japanese Consuls in the Philippines. had characteristically handled the Davao problem, as though asking for a quid pro quo, he requested that in the light of the need for time to study the pending legislation and for the Japanese government to clarify its position this bill be

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Oct. 7, 1936.

postponed until the next session.<sup>54</sup>

By chance, while Uchiyama was calling on Vargas, the Consul General met President Quezon who told him that the purpose of the bill was not to keep out Japanese farmers but Chinese coolies and that Japanese farmers might enter as before. Uchiyama thanked the President for his good intentions but asked whether the bill might not be postponed until the next session so that there would be time for the two governments to consult more fully. The President replied that although he viewed such legislation as necessary, it was possible to postpone it to the next session.<sup>55</sup>

This indeed seemed to have been the break the Japanese had been waiting for and working for, and Kihara rushed off to the Assembly to make clear to his contacts there what the President had told Uchiyama. The peculiar workings of the Philippine legislative process and the special role of President Quezon in that process must have taxed to the utmost the patience and the ability even of such skilled lobbyists as Uchiyama and Kihara. For Uchiyama wrote to the Foreign Office:

In matters pertaining to the Assembly, it is difficult to trust the words of the President alone, and I can not easily relax. Though it had not yet become hopeful that we could stop the passage of the bill, when one considers the feelings of the President, though we were not out of the woods, we were working hard to find our way.<sup>56</sup>

What is particularly fascinating about all of these machinations, strategies and counterstrategies is that President Quezon's decision not to press for the alien labor entry control bill at the First Session of the National Assembly had been known by the Japanese since at least October 4. In effect what the Japanese Consul General and Vice Consul had been doing since that time was persuading the President not to push legislation to which he was for

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Oct. 7, 1936.

the present secretly opposed anyway. The President on his part carried out the charade of acceding to Japanese pressure since this permitted him to withdraw fairly gracefully from supporting a bill to which he had earlier publicly committed himself. Now only the Assembly remained as a possible stumbling block to at least the temporary demise of this initial attempt by the Philippine Commonwealth government to deal independently with the issue of immigration.

Assemblyman Oppus reported to Kihara that when the President's change of mind about the urgency of the legislation was personally conveyed to Chairman Magalona, Magalona replied that the bill could only be removed from the agenda with the consent of the committee members who had originally unanimously approved it. Now that the President had publicly indicated that he was no longer giving special emphasis to the passage of the alien labor entry control law at the current session of the Assembly undoubtedly a majority of the committee members would agree to have the bill withdrawn, Oppus thought. But in order to assure immediate action by the committee he asked Kihara to let him distribute at least a part of the 10,000 pesos that was to have been made available after the legislation had been killed.<sup>57</sup> Oppus also continued to show concern about the activities of Secretary of Justice Yulo who, he said, had supported the bill from the outset, had prepared the President's special message and who was keeping close tabs on Chairman Magalona.

However, by October 10, 1936, as the First Session of the National Assembly came to an end, Consul General Uchiyama could report to the Foreign Office that, despite the strong support of the bill by Yulo, as a result of the actions of Magalona the bill was completely stymied for this session. Nevertheless, Assembly Speaker Manuel Roxas had told Kihara that since much of the legislation being pushed by the administration had not passed the regular session due to a lack of time, he expected a special session to begin the following week, and since the special session was the "next session," he could not guarantee that this bill might not be reintroduced.

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<sup>57</sup> JMF A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Oct. 7, 1936. Very Secret.



“Therefore,” wrote Uchiyama, “we are uneasy once more, and we must keep very close surveillance on our contacts with the Assembly.”<sup>58</sup>

Uchiyama’s fears, however, proved to be without foundation, for as he was able to state to the Foreign Office on October 31, despite support from the Secretaries of Labor and of Justice, the alien labor entry control bill had been kept off the agenda of the special session. This success Uchiyama attributed to his own understanding with President Quezon and Kihara’s behind the scenes maneuvers at the Assembly with contacts such as that with Assemblyman Oppus. Most encouraging to the Japanese was Uchiyama’s assurance that the President had told him that renewed consideration of the bill was postponed at least until October of 1937.<sup>59</sup>

The full amount of money which had been promised by the Japanese in return for the death of the alien labor entry control bill, was paid by Morokuma but was paid out of funds subscribed originally by local Japanese residents to combat the possible passage by the Assembly of legislation which might negatively affect the Japanese landholdings at Davao. Since the immigration question was entirely separate from the land problem, however, the Japanese in Davao were disturbed over the way in which the money had been used, and Consul General Uchiyama urged that the funds be replaced as soon as possible. He noted that naturally a public subscription was out of the question. If it was difficult for the Foreign Ministry to supply the funds, Uchiyama recommended that the burden of one portion of the total could be assumed with the utmost secrecy by the NYK, OSK and Kaigai Kogyo (Overseas Development) Companies and the rest could be sought from the Ministries of War, Navy and Colonization and the Taiwan Government General. The Consul General bolstered his proposal with the remark that the problems which the alien labor entry control bill would have created had it passed could not be measured in money, so that his suggested requests for 12,000 pesos

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<sup>58</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Oct. 10, 1936.

<sup>59</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Oct. 31, 1936.

from the organizations mentioned seemed reasonable.<sup>60</sup>

Ultimately the 12,000 pesos was raised as follows:

Foreign Office	3,000
Ohta Development Co.	1,500
Furukawa Plantation Co.	1,500
NYK	1,000
OSK	1,000
Kaigai Kogyo	1,000
Mitsui	600
Mitsubishi	600
Yokohama Specie Bank	600
Daido Boeki Kaisha	600
Philippine Lumber Exportation Co.	600
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	12,000 <sup>61</sup>

There are many noteworthy factors in the above account of the fate of the first proposed immigration legislation introduced into the Philippine National Assembly, but, of course, the most impressive of them was the nature, scope and success of the lobbying effort of the Japanese. Here the term "Japanese" includes the resident Japanese community in the Islands, the several Japanese companies with business interests in the Philippines and the Japanese consular corps. The working relationship among these various sectors was both close and continuous thus assuring all concerned of a concerted effort in their uniform desire to secure a satisfactory result. Moreover, the contacts which had been developed and nurtured over the years by the Japanese with influential members of both the executive and legislative branches of the Commonwealth government up to and including the President proved invaluable in dealing with legislative action which was thought to be disadvantageous.

Rather startling too was the fact that all of this could take place in the face of or despite the American presence in what was still a colonial possession of the United States. Nevertheless, these activities and their outcome may provide concrete support for two theories: first, that the United States in the Philippines, once the Commonwealth government was in office, exercised a

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<sup>60</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Nov. 14, 1936. Very Secret

<sup>61</sup> JMFA A.6.0.0.1-33-1, Nov. 19, 1936.

permissiveness and a tolerance which is surely unique in the annals of colonial administration, and second, that as of the fall of 1936 the Americans were not sufficiently concerned about the entry of Japanese immigrants into the Philippines to cause them either to counterbalance or to overbalance Japanese lobbying with countervailing pressures of their own. For, as will be seen below, when finally the American authorities let it be known that they were not opposed to restrictive immigration legislation and would do nothing to prevent its enactment into law, the Commonwealth administration, though prevailed upon by the same brand of Japanese dissuasion, proposed, supported and obtained the passage by the Assembly of the Immigration Act of 1940.

The Japanese attack on China coming as it did in July, 1937, only a year and a half after the inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth, perforce focused increased attention in both Washington and Manila on the problems of Philippine security. Accordingly, the possibility of inimical activities on the part of alien Japanese in the Islands created concern in both capitals. Although in February of 1937, on a visit to Washington, President Quezon was still reassuring the American public and indirectly his own when he said, "I do not fear a military invasion . . . there are fewer Japanese in the Islands than there were a few years ago. Emigration exceeds immigration."<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, Quezon brought from the United States two special advisers, Messrs. George L. Brandt, an immigration expert from the Department of State, and Irving F. Wixon, Deputy Commissioner of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, to assist in drawing up a comprehensive immigration law for the Philippines.

Japanese Consular Reports of the 1937-1940 period sent from Manila to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Tokyo mirror a growing realization that some kind of immigration legislation was probably inevitable. But these reports, while expressing concern over such impending Commonwealth action, reiterated the view that restriction, if and when it came,

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<sup>62</sup> *Washington Post*, Feb. 27, 1937.

would be a regrettable though perhaps unavoidable consequence of American pressure and would not accurately reflect the warm feelings toward Japan which were attributed generally to high level Filipino officialdom. Japanese consular representatives made clear to their Filipino friends that in a period of expanding Philippine economic cooperation with Japan, inimical decisions in regard to immigration could only hinder the success of future joint undertakings. Typical of replies to such admonitions was one by the Secretary of Labor who stated that various immigration bills were indeed under consideration but that these were directed at stopping an influx of Chinese and were not intended to restrict the Japanese. However, the Secretary suggested that from a “humanitarian standpoint” the Filipinos who were Asians themselves would find it difficult to pass legislation directed at the Chinese alone. Nevertheless, he further intimated that the actual effect on Japanese immigrants, in the event such restrictions were enacted, might well be “minimized.”<sup>63</sup>

In the fall of 1937 Consul General Uchiyama was still greatly concerned about the seeming determination of the Secretary of Labor Ramon Torres to push for the enactment of immigration legislation, for the Secretary had recently told one of the Japanese consulate’s principal contacts Assemblyman Oppus that President Quezon’s “Social Justice” program could only be realized through a policy designed to protect Philippine labor.<sup>64</sup> Oppus told Vice Consul Kihara that he had advised Secretary Torres that the Philippines must be concerned with the possible political effects of any such proposals, especially in the case of Japan and that he had further pointed out that, since the number of Japanese immigrants had markedly declined in recent years, he doubted the necessity of such legislation. However, Oppus feared that such admonitions were having no effect on the Secretary, so by utilizing his position in the Assembly as Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations he maneuvered successfully to block at least for the time being the consideration of any bills pertaining to immigration. This

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<sup>63</sup> JMFA S10.1.1.-019, Reel 459, Mar. 20, 1937.

<sup>64</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Nov. 2, 1937.

he achieved by convincing President Quezon who was urging swift passage of the administration's budget that it would take the Assembly a great deal longer than anticipated to consider the budget. Since the next year 1938 was an election year both for provincial posts and for the Second National Assembly, Oppus obtained the agreement of the President that as soon as the budget was passed the current session would end, and thus Oppus was able to assure Kihara that there would be no more possibility that any immigration legislation would be taken up by the First National Assembly.<sup>65</sup>

In point of fact the actual number of Japanese resident in the Philippines was minimal considering the lack of statutory barriers to their entry into the Islands, and their presence hardly constituted a serious "threat." For example, in 1938, in what must be considered as objective an estimate as one can find, the Institute of Pacific Relations stated that according to Japanese records there were 21,500 Japanese nationals in the Philippines in 1935, that the statistics of the Philippine Department of Labor showed that the Japanese population increased by 3,573 in 1936 and 1937 and that the total Japanese population of the Islands did not exceed 25,000 by the fall of 1938.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the pressure of the increasingly grave international situation as it affected the immigration question in the Philippines was clearly reflected in both Washington and Manila in January, 1939.

For it was in January, 1939, that Brig. Gen. Charles Burnett, Chief of the War Department's Bureau of Insular Affairs, wrote a confidential memorandum entitled "Japanese Penetration of the Philippine Islands" in which he reported that estimates of the Japanese population varied from 18,000 to 24,000 with some even suggesting 40,000.<sup>67</sup> Gen. Burnett also noted ominously that the total number, whatever it might be, was slowly but steadily increasing, a fact incidentally never denied by the Japanese who however continued to

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<sup>65</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Nov. 17, 1937.

<sup>66</sup> *Herald*, Nov. 1 1938. There had been no official census in the Philippines since 1918. A publication of the Philippine Commonwealth Bureau of Health, *Vital Statistics, 1937*, had officially stated the Japanese population to be 17,911.

<sup>67</sup> BIA 6144/264.

emphasize how very small the number was.

It was also in January of 1939 that President Manuel L. Quezon delivered his annual message on the “State of the Nation” to the First Session of the Second National Assembly.

Speaking on the subject of immigration he said:

To protect the interests of our people and to repair an injustice done to certain races by existing legislation, we should enact a new immigration law. Under our present immigration law passed by the Congress of the United States, Chinese, Indians and some other orientals may not be admitted into the Philippines. Ours is an oriental country, and we are an oriental people. We belong to the same racial stock as some of those excluded by our laws. So long as other foreigners are allowed to immigrate to the Philippines, we should admit, under the same terms and conditions those coming from oriental countries. To avoid, however, a large influx of immigrants from any one country, we should establish a quota that will be the same for all countries.<sup>68</sup>

Apparently the Japanese consulate was not only disturbed but genuinely surprised by the contents of the Presidential statement because a few days earlier Supreme Court Justice Laurel had seen the draft of the President’s speech and had reported confidentially to Acting Consul General Kihara on January 22nd that there were no points in it which would particularly affect the Japanese and that there did not seem to be anything in it concerning the immigration problem. On January 24 after Quezon’s speech, Laurel told Kihara that the President had decided on the final contents of the address on the 23rd aboard his yacht and must have added in the section on immigration at that time.<sup>69</sup> Kihara, in his report to Tokyo, stated that it was not clear

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<sup>68</sup> “Message of His Excellency Manuel L. Quezon President of the Philippines to The Second National Assembly on State of the Nation and Important Economic Problems Jan. 24, 1939,” *Messages of the President*, Vol. 5, Part I (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1941), 259.

<sup>69</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Jan. 25, 1939.

whether the introduction by the President of the quota system concept was his own preference or was the result of the proposals made by the two immigration specialists sent from Washington and described by Kihara as having come to Manila to “solve the problem of Chinese immigration.”<sup>70</sup>

In explaining to the Foreign Office what he felt must lay behind Quezon’s pronouncement Kihara noted several points: (1) the 1936 special message of the President with regard to immigration legislation, (2) the influence of then Assembly Speaker Jose Yulo who as Secretary of Justice in 1936 had strongly supported such legislation, (3) the dissatisfaction of the Filipinos with the controls placed on their immigration to the United States despite the fact they were still under the American flag, (4) the increased awareness of the Filipinos as independence approached that they too were Orientals, (5) the entry into the Islands of Chinese and Indians as traders who after entry joined the labor force and thus competed with Filipino laborers, and (6) a sudden increase of Chinese entering the Philippines since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. On the basis of his own personal knowledge of the President and looking at his past statements on immigration Kihara concluded that the principal purpose of Quezon’s January 24 message was to stop the influx of Chinese and at the same time to include an anti-American gesture in the light of America’s treatment of Filipinos and that the proposals contained in the Presidential address were not directed against the Japanese.<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, in order to get a first hand impression of the President’s thinking and to make plain to him Japan’s views, Kihara met with Quezon on January 26. The Acting Consul General explained that Japan was in full agreement with the President’s desire to do away with differences of treatment of immigrants along racial lines. However, Kihara pointed out that to limit the entry of Japanese who in the past had never been limited in order to stop the

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

immigration of Chinese lacked justice and that he hoped that Quezon would give serious consideration to the quota decision in the light of the history of Japanese-Philippine relations. The President replied that in the past in the Orient, with the exception of Japan, the Westerners had assumed special rights and favors above those of the Asians living in those countries, but that he had never understood the logic of their behavior. "We Filipinos," he said, "intend to do away with such distinctions. Whatever the Americans may think, we are determined to do this."<sup>72</sup>

Kihara who had for so long lived in the Philippines and who of all the Japanese consular personnel had the closest personal ties with the dominant figures in Philippine politics must have heard what he thought of as music to his ears. For President Quezon had so brilliantly explained his proposed restrictive immigration legislation, i.e., that equal treatment on a quota basis would be pro-Asian and anti-Western, that Kihara could not conceive of his good friend indulging in any maneuver directed at the Japanese. And when the President in addition promised equality of treatment for all nationalities in any revision of the laws covering naturalization, Kihara must have been positively exuberant. For good measure Quezon also assured Kihara that close and continuous consultation would be maintained with Kihara by Secretary Vargas in all matters affecting Japanese interests.<sup>73</sup>

However, during February, 1939, Kihara's reports to the Foreign Office on prospects for preventing passage by the Philippine Assembly of a revised immigration law which would equally affect Japan were quite pessimistic. The chief reason for his pessimism was that every indication was that the new legislation had been worked out by the American and Philippine governments together, and, when the bill was presented to the Assembly with the approval of the Americans, Kihara felt it would be "almost impossible" to prevent it from becoming law.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, the Acting Consul General stated that while there did not seem to be "much

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<sup>72</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Jan. 26, 1939.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Feb. 21, 1939. Very secret.



room to maneuver,” he would do his best, and he estimated that in order to be able to act quickly in accordance with circumstances he needed at least 30,000 pesos to spend on “counter measures.”<sup>75</sup>

For the time being the major concern which was attracting Kihara’s attention was the exact status of the preparation of the proposed bill which had not yet actually been introduced and more especially the extent of American involvement in the preparatory process. Assembly Floor Whip Quintin Paredes had told Kihara confidentially that the act would not be sent to Washington before it was introduced into the Assembly for consideration. Nor did Speaker Yulo know anything of such a procedure. The President himself told Kihara he could not imagine how such a report got into circulation and assured him as before that when the government was ready to present its legislation, Kihara would be shown the bill in advance. However, in contrast to all of these reassuring statements, a Japanese spy had reported to the consulate that from within the office of then United States High Commissioner Paul V. McNutt he had been told that the legislation had been drawn up by the two American specialists and sent to Washington by the High Commissioner for the State Department’s approval.<sup>76</sup> Wrote Kihara, “Knowing McNutt’s way of operating as High Commissioner, it can be considered he would do something like this.”<sup>77</sup>

The general tenor of Kihara’s dispatches indicated that the situation prevailing in the Second National Assembly was radically different from that in the First where Kihara, then Vice Consul, had maneuvered so successfully that the only legislation considered unfavorable to the Japanese which had passed was the increase in the beer tariff. In the Assembly itself despite the reelection of Kihara’s friends Oppus, Magalona and Guillermo Z. Villanueva as Chairmen of the Committees on Appropriations, Labor and Immigration and Public Instruction respectively, he noted that there were unsettling signs such as the removal from the

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Feb. 28, 1939.

<sup>77</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, March 17, 1939.

Chairmanship of the Committee of Ways and Means of Maximo Kalaw after he had made a statement bitterly condemning United States policy toward Philippine industry. Moreover, Kihara recognized that the present Assembly was firmly in the control of what he called the Paredes-Yulo "combi." Yulo's attitude toward restrictive immigration legislation was well known since his earlier tenure as Secretary of Justice, and, though contacts with Paredes were close, Kihara feared that his future political ambitions would inevitably impel him to follow the wishes of Quezon and the Americans. Kihara also was greatly concerned about a shortage of locally available funds because Japanese companies in the Philippines were being seriously affected by an anti-Japanese boycott and generally unfavorable circumstances including, for example, stricter enforcement of fishing laws. Thus, he stressed that funds from the Foreign Ministry would be necessary if the anticipated demands for countervailing expenses were to be met.<sup>78</sup> Most distressful from the Japanese point of view, perhaps, was the growing evidence that the Americans who in 1936 had stayed out of the picture were now firmly committed to the passage of immigration legislation and that High Commissioner McNutt was if not anti-Japanese at least seemingly far more concerned with the Japanese entry into and presence in the Islands than had been his predecessor High Commissioner Frank Murphy.

During the remainder of March and throughout April and May, 1939, Kihara continued to press his personal interventions with President Quezon, Secretary Vargas, Secretary of Justice Jose Abad Santos, Justice Laurel, Floor Whip Paredes, Assemblyman Oppus and Assemblyman Magalona. He was told, for example, that the State Department's immigration expert George L. Brandt had suggested a bill incorporating a national origins quota system along the lines of the American immigration law but that the Filipinos had insisted on equal treatment for all countries. Kihara was further advised that not only would this permit a greater number of Japanese to enter the Philippines annually than would have been the case under the national origins scheme but that this was entirely in accord with the

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<sup>78</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, March 17, 1939.

traditional Japanese position in defense of “racial equality” as in the instance of Japan’s stand at the Versailles Treaty Conference. President Quezon kept his promise to Kihara and showed him the legislative drafts as they were prepared and gave him every opportunity to comment on them. Quezon also continued to maintain in his conversations with the Acting Consul General that the proposed legislation was really directed at the Chinese but that to treat the Chinese differently from other Asians was unacceptable since Filipinos were themselves Asians. Therefore, the President contended that no foreign country, especially an Asian country, i.e. Japan, could be excepted from the immigration quota equalization proposal.

In a conversation on April 11 President Quezon took a somewhat different tack and said to Kihara:

It is clear that I have always viewed the entry of Japanese as advancing the awakening of Filipino citizenry. I have prayed that the Filipinos could build a healthy body politic learning as fast as possible from the Japanese. If the Filipinos had learned quickly from the Japanese, there would be no reason or necessity whatever for today’s foreign immigration problem. I realize fully the contribution the Japanese have made to the development of the Philippines, and I want the assistance and guidance of your countrymen in the future. I have not the slightest intention of excluding the Japanese. But someone [Kihara’s note: Probably the High Commissioner.] thinks that if the number of Japanese in the Philippines increases, in the light of Japanese actions in China, on the pretext of protecting their nationals Japan will in the future go so far as to interfere militarily. Even with an increase in the number of Japanese, to Filipinos it seems most dubious that there is any great danger considering only the ‘interest’ of Japan at this time.<sup>79</sup>

These comments by the President were quite clearly directed at making very plain to the

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<sup>79</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 11, 1939.

Acting Consul General of Japan that Quezon himself was very favorably disposed toward the Japanese presence in the Philippines. Moreover, he wanted to assure Kihara that if any curb were to be placed on Japanese immigration it would be the result of the Filipinos' own failure and weakness rather than because of either the military strength or the economic success of the Japanese. Further, Quezon's allusion to "someone" who feared a possible future military intervention by Japan was probably well understood by Kihara, as his notation indicates, to mean that in the then prevailing international climate the United States was exerting strong pressure for passage of such legislation.

Meanwhile, Kihara was continuing to get regular reports from his faithful "friend at court" in the Assembly, Chairman Tomas Oppus of the Committee on Appropriations. For example, Oppus told Kihara that on April 17 the President had invited many key legislators to a luncheon and had requested swift action on a number of pending bills as well as having stated that the immigration quota bill would be ready for presentation to the Assembly within the week. Oppus noted significantly that General Douglas MacArthur, Field Marshal of the Philippine Commonwealth, was present at the meeting having been invited by Quezon, although his presence was supposed to be kept secret.<sup>80</sup> Kihara reminded Oppus that while it was true that ultimately the law would require the approval of the President of the United States, still the first hurdle for the proposed legislation was the Assembly itself, and therefore for the present all efforts should be concentrated on that body.

On April 28th Oppus told Kihara in strictest secrecy that although the Immigration Quota Law had not yet been presented to the Committee on Labor and Immigration, Chairman Magalona had heard in confidence from Speaker Yulo the bill's main points. Magalona had in turn told them to Oppus who then reported to Kihara. Oppus said that the quota for each country was to be 1,000 persons per year and that ports of entry would be limited to three: Manila, Cebu and Davao or Iloilo. Oppus warned that the Japanese needed to be particularly

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<sup>80</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 18, 1939.

concerned about the fact that Philippine shipping interests were pushing for Iloilo instead of Davao in order to enhance their own profits and that many persons were insisting on a figure of 500 instead of 1,000.<sup>81</sup> Even though Kihara had not yet seen the draft which Oppus had described to him, President Quezon had told the Acting Consul General a few days before that the administration hoped to be able to have the bill become law at the current legislative session. Since the session was due to end on May 18 and fearing that the government might try to push the bill through at one fell swoop, Kihara warned Oppus to maintain liaison with Magalona and to be particularly vigilant for any surprise moves.<sup>82</sup>

On May 10 Supreme Court Justice Laurel returned from his usual summer respite in Baguio and told Kihara that while he was in the mountain resort he had met with President Quezon and had advised him to be very careful in matters affecting Japanese- Philippine relations, especially in his handling of the immigration issue.<sup>83</sup> In any event, when the First Session of the Second National Assembly ended on May 18, 1939, Kihara could report to the Foreign Ministry with a great degree of satisfaction that “by our maneuvers” bills and resolutions unfavorable to the Japanese with the exception of the tax on piers used for the exportation of lumber and the revised fisheries law had been killed in committee or, if adopted in committee, had been returned to the committees on second reading or were still being considered and thus had never progressed far enough to come to a vote. As far as the immigration legislation itself was concerned, Kihara happily wrote that its presentation had been postponed by the administration because of the very strong opposition of Chairman Magalona of the Committee on Labor and Immigration and all of the members of his committee as well as by other Assemblymen.<sup>84</sup> By June 1st Kihara was able to advise the Foreign Office that President Quezon had told him that although it was necessary to call a special session of the Assembly to have the

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<sup>81</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 28, 1939.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, May 10, 1939.

<sup>84</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, May 19, 1939.

revisions of the Tydings-McDuffie Act appended as part of the Philippine Constitution, the President was now thinking of postponing the Immigration Law until the regular session in 1940.<sup>85</sup>

The same month, June, 1939, speaking in San Francisco High Commissioner McNutt advocated a re-examination of Philippine independence and proposed the substitution of dominion status. In support of his views McNutt gave public vent to his views on immigration which had privately been known much earlier both by President Quezon and by the Japanese. Said McNutt, “The Philippines is sparsely populated, and it is surrounded with nations whose teeming millions are spilling over their national boundaries. An independent Philippines thus faces a very real threat of racial extinction.”<sup>86</sup> Commenting on his reference to the “threat of racial extinction” the pro-Quezon *Herald* editorialized:

The High Commissioner is evidently referring to a possible influx of Chinese and Japanese immigration. The Chinese and Japanese have been coming to the Philippines as far back in history as any one has recorded or can remember. There has never been, to date, any threat of racial extinction. As a matter of fact, the Chinese are discovering their vast unsettled interior provinces by force, and the Japanese are constantly acquiring new territories for their surplus population. The threat of Oriental immigration, if it ever existed, is less menacing today than at any other time.<sup>87</sup>

But despite this rehash of the old arguments advanced in the days before Philippine independence was assured, something was missing. The disdainful “bugabooism” of the pre-Tydings-McDuffie era was gone and in its stead appeared a new realization of the very violent and rapid changes which world order was undergoing as well as of the specific deterioration in

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<sup>85</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, June 2, 1939.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in William H. Anderson, *The Philippine Problem* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1939), 169.

<sup>87</sup> *Herald*, June 26, 1939.

United States-Japan relations. In the last paragraph of the editorial was perhaps the key to the change which was beginning to take place in administration thinking.

But the proposal comes from such a high source and from such a good and proven friend of the Philippines that the Filipinos will certainly be willing to consider it carefully and thoughtfully. The world is not static, it is in a state of flux. . . . In view of the war-percolating and ever-shifting state of human affairs, the dominion plan may or may not find eventual acceptance.<sup>88</sup>

Therefore, while McNutt's ideas on immigration were being publicly refuted in the time honored fashion, the Quezon government was continuing its preparations to present restrictive immigration legislation to the Philippine National Assembly.

On August 15, 1939, a special session of the Second National Assembly was scheduled to begin. One week prior to that date Japan's Acting Consul General Kihara met once more with President Quezon to discuss with the President whether or not an immigration bill would be taken up at that special session. Khara was told in strictest confidence by Quezon:

As you know, the immigration bill is to stop the influx of Chinese immigrants. It is clear that in the past I have welcomed Japanese immigrants as leaders in developing Philippine products rather than, limit them as the Americans have done. But, while this is legally clear, from the standpoint of relations with the United States it is impossible [to leave things as they are.] Despite United States opposition, as President there is a proviso [in the bill] to permit immigrants above the quota. After independence is complete and we undertake large scale irrigation construction, we plan to develop various products with a fairly sizable number of Japanese immigrants, but at present the feeling of the United States toward Japan is rather bad. Until independence it is very difficult to confirm my schemes for Japanese-Philippine

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

cooperation. There is some opposition to independence in the United States, but I want to see independence secure before I retire. America doubts my policies toward Japan, but more than sincerely desiring independence I believe Japanese-Philippine cooperation is an absolute necessity.<sup>89</sup>

This statement seems to epitomize Quezon at his diplomatic best in dealing with the continued pressure that was exerted on him by the Japanese consulate. He began by reiterating the standard argument that immigration legislation was directed at the Chinese and not at the Japanese but again implied that inequality vis a vis brother Asians was impossible. He stressed once more the fact of his well evidenced good will toward Japan and the Japanese which all Japanese in the Philippines as well as in Japan had always attested, and he cleverly contrasted his and his country's traditional attitude toward Japanese immigrants with that of the United States. He referred once more to American pressure in behalf of restrictive legislation and emphasized the impossibility for him in his position to resist that pressure. However, he noted that it was his own efforts which, despite American opposition, would in the bill that was to be presented give to the President a flexibility to allow the entry of immigrants above the quota, and he reassured Kihara that after independence this proviso would be utilized to bring in to the Philippines a "fairly sizable" number of Japanese immigrants.

Perhaps his most telling argument and for Kihra apparently the most persuasive was Quezon's reaffirmation of his commitment to both independence and to Philippine-Japanese cooperation, for both the Japanese government and the leaders of Philippine politics had in the past held that the one was a prerequisite to the other, that in effect whatever would speed the departure of the American presence in the Islands ought to be accepted now in order to secure as rapidly as possible the bright future that both Filipinos and Japanese theoretically envisioned.

On September 25, 1939, shortly after the outbreak of World War II, President Quezon told Kihara that in the light of the collapsing international situation the Americans had greatly

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<sup>89</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Aug. 8, 1939.



increased their pressure for the passage of an immigration statute, and, although he himself had up to that time succeeded in postponing its presentation, he did not know how much longer it could be delayed.<sup>90</sup> Again, Quezon who knew that in the end American insistence on an immigration bill would bring about the enactment of a law which he himself also desired to see on the books was eager to convince the Japanese with whom an independent Philippines would have to live in the Far East that the real responsibility for the legislation lay with the United States.

Indeed, as Quezon well knew, American concern over the Japanese population in the Philippines was being increasingly felt in Washington as well as in the Islands. For example, a confidential report from G-2 in Manila to the Bureau of Insular Affairs in Washington in September, 1939, showed that during the first six months of 1939 Japanese led in the number of official entrants<sup>91</sup> with 779 immigrants reported as compared to 398 Chinese.<sup>92</sup> A subsequent report on October 19, 1939, listed figures on Japanese nationals received from the Bureau of Census of the Commonwealth Government with the notation that “This partial list is forwarded with a view to indicate the trend of increase of Japanese in the Philippines within the last two years.”<sup>93</sup> The figures showed a total to date of 23,849 Japanese in the Philippines with 4,700 Japanese, or 19% of the total, in Manila; 3,712 were in Davao Province and 14,181 in Davao City for a combined percentage of 71% of the total. In all it was said that Japanese made up 16% of the alien population of the Philippines as compared with Americans who numbered 8,639 and made up only 5% of the alien population.<sup>94</sup> A month and a half later on December 8, 1939, the total number of Japanese was put at 24,730 in twenty of 49 provinces and two chartered cities.<sup>95</sup> Some of the provincial totals showed Albay 94, Bukidnon 10, Cagayan 41, Mountain Province

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<sup>90</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Sept. 25, 1939.

<sup>91</sup> The report suggested that unreported immigrants were being landed from fishing boats along the Philippine coasts.

<sup>92</sup> BIA 28876. 350.5 P.I. 2050.

<sup>93</sup> BIA 1918/311-A.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> BIA 28876. 366.8 2010.

687, Nueva Vizcaya 7 and Zambales 42.<sup>96</sup> By 1940 the Japanese numbered second only to the Chinese among foreigners in the Islands.<sup>97</sup>

Nevertheless, despite an annual increase in the Japanese population in the Philippines, the overall total of Japanese residents had shown no startling rise. Moreover, examining the statistics for the most recent past, the average number of Japanese immigrants during 1935-1938 was only 2,720 per year:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Immigrants</i>
1935	1,802
1936	2,809
1937	3,881
1938	2,388
Total	<u>10,880</u> <sup>98</sup>

And, in addition to the statistical decline for 1938 apparently a result of the Sino-Japanese War, greatly complicated visa procedures instituted by the American consular authorities in Japan in May, 1939, had further effectively reduced the number of entering immigrants.

Yet, concern for an all-encompassing immigration law to be enacted prior to American withdrawal led President Quezon to reiterate his recommendation for such a statute in his message to the second regular session of the Second Assembly on January 22, 1940. The introduction of this legislation as in so many other areas of Japanese-Philippine relations during the 1931-1941 period was again primarily the result of the chronological simultaneity of the growing expansionism of Japan in Asia and the advent of Philippine independence. Although public debate often centered around such questions as the concentration of Japanese nationals in certain areas or the economic power of Japanese nationals in the Philippines, the basic elements in the Commonwealth administration's effort to have the Assembly pass an immigration act were

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<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.* In July 1941, a magazine article put the number of Japanese in the Philippines at 29,057 with 18,000 or more than half in Davao Province. (Antonio S. Gabila, "18,000 Japanese Can't Be Wrong," *Graphic*, July 10, 1941, 12.) At the outbreak of hostilities the number was given as 25,000. (The *Sunday Tribune Magazine*, Dec. 14, 1941.)

<sup>97</sup> *Free Press*, June 8, 1940, 39.

<sup>98</sup> Y. Morri, "Closing Doors in the Philippines," *Contemporary Japan*, June, 1940, 691.

the clearly expressed desire of the American authorities to have such a law enacted before complete independence and the concurrent desire of President Quezon to do whatever might be required to assure the realization of the independence for which he had so long campaigned. Quezon was also hopeful of being able to reassure the United States of his loyalty which in the stressful era of American-Japanese relations of the late thirties had sometimes been called into question. However, the Philippine President was still exercising the full skill of his diplomatic talent to try to convince his Japanese friends that he was acting under American duress, that in so far as Japan was concerned he would do everything in his power to mitigate the new law and that once independence was a fact, a new and happier period of Philippine-Japanese relations could, be embarked upon.

Since November of 1939 a new Japanese Consul General Yoshida Tanichiro had assumed the Manila post. He had been thoroughly briefed on the immigration question, and within a few days after the President's message of January 22, 1940, again requesting legislative action on an immigration statute, the new Consul General was busily engaged in familiar maneuvers. Greatly concerned, Yoshida on February 6th visited the one man whom Yoshida said Quezon trusted the most, Supreme Court Justice Laurel. Said Yoshida, "Without going into the contents, I want you to advise the President that in your opinion this bill should be postponed for consideration since this is a most 'inopportune' moment with the abrogation of the United States-Japan Treaty of 1911 and the inflamed state of Japanese opinion and the unhappy influence which will be brought to bear on relations between our two countries."<sup>99</sup> Laurel, who said he agreed completely, replied, "Since I am in a position of 'adviser' to Quezon on Japanese-Philippine relations, I must talk to the President on this as quickly as possible."<sup>100</sup> A week later Yoshida asked the Foreign Office to send him 20,000 yen for expenses to counter anti-Japanese

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<sup>99</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, Feb. 7, 1940. Very Secret.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

proposals in the Assembly.<sup>101</sup>

Nevertheless, in the 1940 legislative session neither Laurel's influence nor Japan's money seemed to be able to carry the weight they had in the past. The crucial differences were the full commitment of President Quezon to the bill, the clear desire of the Americans to have such a law enacted and the fact that the following year 1941 was an election year and that no reelectionist Assemblyman was likely to want to miss the opportunity of being able to go before the voters as a proponent of restrictive immigration legislation directed at Japan. The bill itself as introduced by the administration proposed that every nation without exception be given an annual quota of 1,000 immigrants into the Philippines. So hopeless had any possibility become for the Japanese of blocking passage of the law that Consul General Yoshida began to turn most of his efforts to the protection of the figure of 1,000.

Committee on Appropriations Chairman Tomas Oppus who was still doing his best for the Japanese consulate inside the Assembly told Consul General Yoshida that while he himself would try as much as possible to delay the bill in the end he did not believe he would succeed.<sup>102</sup> Oppus blamed American pressure on Quezon, Speaker Yulo and Committee on Labor and Immigration Chairman Magalona, and he further warned Yoshida that though President Quezon was insisting on the quota figure of 1,000, Yulo had said that there was a tendency in the Assembly to favor the "American figure" of 500.<sup>103</sup>

On April 12, 1940, the Immigration Law of 1940, Commonwealth Act No. 613 was passed in its second reading by the National Assembly of the Philippine Commonwealth. Chairman Magalona of the Labor and Immigration Committee strongly opposed an amendment proposed from the floor by Assemblyman Tomas L. Cabili to reduce the uniform annual quota figure from 1,000 to 500, but it was passed by the Assembly 29 to 18. Only Assemblyman Cesar M. Sotto of Davao who heatedly denied there was a Japanese problem in his province

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<sup>101</sup> JMFA J.1.2.0.J2-5, Feb. 13, 1940. Very Secret.

<sup>102</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 8, 1940.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

spoke against approval of the entire bill. Assemblyman Oppus said during the debate that the uniform quota principle discriminated against certain countries. He said that he favored a system like that in the United States of proportional quotas wherein a quota was established for each country in accordance with the number of its nationals already residing in the nation establishing the quotas. In order to be as fair as possible, Oppus contended, the Philippines should fix a proportional quota favoring countries whose nationals had shown an interest in coming' to the Islands. He pointed out that between 1929 and 1939 whereas the Chinese had averaged 3,500 immigrants per year and the Japanese 2,163 per year only 117 Frenchmen and 700 Germans had entered during the entire ten-year period.<sup>104</sup> However, on April 16 Malacanang announced that both President Quezon and then High Commissioner Francis B. Sayre were satisfied with the bill as passed by the Assembly on second reading.<sup>105</sup>

Consul General Yoshida, on the contrary, was not only far from satisfied, but he was deeply disappointed with the failure of all of his efforts at every level. Though Yoshida had never been optimistic from the beginning of the 1940 legislative session, he had, of course, hoped against hope that at some point one of his tactics might prove successful. For example, just prior to the bill's passage an appointment had been arranged with President Quezon for Morokuma Yasaku of the Ohta Development Co. Since Morokuma from among the Japanese long resident in the Philippines was perhaps personally closest to the President, it was thought by Yoshida that perhaps his influence might be of some help. But Quezon simply told Morokuma that the immigration bill had been pending for three years and could no longer be delayed, and once more, as he had earlier told former Consul General Uchiyama and former Vice Consul and Acting Consul General Kihara, the President assured Morokuma that under the clause giving the President special permission to admit nonquota immigrants the Japanese had

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<sup>104</sup> *Tribune*, April 13, 1940.

<sup>105</sup> *Tribune*, April 16, 1940.

no need to be concerned.<sup>106</sup>

After the bill's passage on second reading, Consul General Yoshida reported to the Foreign Office that his last chance to block the legislation was to try to do something at the time of the third reading but admitted that "the outlook is very bad."<sup>107</sup> He noted that before the second reading Quezon, Paredes and Magalona had all assured him that they would stand firm behind the quota figure of 1,000, but, although they had acted as they said they would, they were outnumbered and outmaneuvered by "insignificant members" of the Assembly who voted for the 500 figure.<sup>108</sup> He blamed this "fiasco" on a combination of American pressure which he felt at least on this issue outweighed even Quezon's influence in the Assembly and the fact that Speaker Yulo supported the 500 figure so that the less influential legislators thought that this was the figure the government really wanted.<sup>109</sup>

Not only was the Consul General's influence of no avail on this occasion, but he was called down for attempting to exercise it. On April 16 Yoshida reported to Tokyo that he had been called to Baguio where High Commissioner Sayre had his summer residence. Sayre asked him: "Have you been meeting with Quezon, Yulo and Magalona in regard to the Immigration Law under consideration by the present session of the Assembly?" When Yoshida replied that he had, Sayre advised him bluntly that the immigration question was not a problem being handled by the Philippine government but was the province of the American government,<sup>110</sup> that a consular officer had no business interfering in the domestic politics of his host country and that such activities "would not be tolerated and that he would have to discontinue them."<sup>111</sup> Yoshida replied that he had no intention of interfering in domestic politics but that he had wanted to

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<sup>106</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 9, 1940.

<sup>107</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 17, 1940. Very Secret.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> JMF J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 22, 1940.

<sup>110</sup> Sayre was apparently referring to the Tydings-McDuffie Act which reserved foreign affairs to the United States government during the Commonwealth period and also stipulated that no acts affecting immigration could become law without the approval of the President of the United States.

<sup>111</sup> BIA 28946/5.

explain to Quezon, Yulo, Magalona and anyone else who would listen the views of Japan on legislation which directly affected it. After more than 30 minutes of Sayre's insisting that Yoshida had attempted to influence the immigration bill and Yoshida's equally insistent denials, Yoshida told Sayre, "From now on no one will be able to say that I am interfering the slightest in internal politics."<sup>112</sup> An unhappy and frustrated Yoshida was not above venting a good deal of his spleen against Sayre whom he called "high handed" and who he said had from the time of Yoshida's arrival in Manila been persistently "obstinate and unfriendly."<sup>113</sup>

On April 18 Japan's Foreign Office Spokesman Suma Yakichiro told the press corps in Tokyo that the Japanese government was "paying keen attention to the Philippine immigration bill."<sup>114</sup> In discussing the bill which was about to come before the Assembly for its third and final reading, Suma said: "The passage would be a great blow to Japan since it unfairly hits the 2,800 immigrants who go to the Philippines each year and who contribute towards the prosperity of the islands."<sup>115</sup> Undoubtedly it was hoped that such an admonitory statement by a spokesman for the highest level of Japanese government would add the strongest kind of public support for the continuing efforts of Consul General Yoshida. Strong agreement with his government's position was also expressed by a distinguished Japanese private citizen with many friends in the Philippines when on April 20 Carlos P. Romulo, then publisher of the D-M-H-M<sup>116</sup> newspapers, held a radiophone interview with Takaishi Shingoro, chairman of the board of directors of the Osaka *Mainichi* and the Tokyo *Nichi-Nichi*.

Romulo: "What is your reaction to the Philippine immigration bill now before our National Assembly? Do you endorse Suma's statement?"

Takaishi "In view of the cordial relations between the two nations and in

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<sup>112</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 16, 1940.

<sup>113</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, April 18, 1940. Very Secret.

<sup>114</sup> *Tribune*, April 19, 1940.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Debate, Mabuhay, Herald, Monday Mail.*

view also of the valuable contributions Japanese immigrants have made to the development of your country, it is regrettable that your Congress should feel it must limit our Japanese emigrants whom you know to be desirable people. We hope the bill will not pass in the form unfriendly to Japan.”

Meanwhile in the United States, Japanese Ambassador Horinouchi Kensuke asked Secretary of State Cordell Hull to exert the influence of the United States Government on the Philippine Commonwealth to secure a modification or a withdrawal of what Horinouchi called the “anti-Japanese” immigration bill being considered by the Philippine Assembly.<sup>117</sup> Congressional reaction was generally antagonistic to the Japanese request for United States intervention. Senator Robert Reynolds of North Carolina hoped the administration would disregard the Japanese protest: “I do not see any reason why the administration should interfere in a Philippine internal question.”<sup>118</sup> Representative Martin Dies of Texas commented, “It looks as though the Japanese are copying Communist Trojan Horse tactics. I am for granting the Philippines independence in 1946. The administration, meanwhile, should not take any action, at Japan’s behest, which would result in Philippine political hara-kiri.”<sup>119</sup>

Neither Reynolds nor Dies nor their colleagues, however, needed to have had any fears that the Roosevelt administration would take any action to interfere with the deliberations of the Philippine National Assembly. State Department legal officers assured Secretary Hull that the proposed Philippine immigration bill was not in any way discriminatory nor did it violate any existing international obligations of the United States. Also, under American law the Philippine government had a clear right to establish its own immigration policies. While it was true that Hull had promised Ambassador Horinouchi that he would forward his protest to the proper Philippine authorities, much to the dismay of the Japanese government Hull did so without

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<sup>117</sup> *Herald*, April 20, 1940.

<sup>118</sup> *Herald*, April 22, 1940.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*



recommendation thus in effect upholding the controversial Philippine legislation.<sup>120</sup>

Thus, the last full measure of Japanese pressure had been exerted and had proved insufficient, for on May 2, 1940, what has come to be known as the Immigration Law of 1940 sailed through the third reading by a vote of 67 to 1 with only Assemblyman Tomas Oppus voting in the negative.<sup>121</sup> The press in Manila took the view that the almost unanimous vote could in large measure be said to be a reaction against the several admonitions and warnings emanating from official Japanese sources. However, the result of the voting had been a foregone conclusion, and from the beginning of the deliberations of the 1940 session of the Assembly the Japanese Consul General had, despite his own heroic exertions to try to block the bill,<sup>122</sup> been deeply pessimistic. The successful floor amendment cutting the annual quota figure from 1,000 to 500 had been perhaps the clearest indication of the final outcome of the Assembly's deliberations. Whatever their respective reasons, and they differed in each case, the support given the immigration legislation by President Quezon, High Commissioner Sayre and the overwhelming majority of the members of the Assembly was decisive. President Quezon signed the bill on May 26, 1940. It was approved by President Roosevelt in accordance with the provisions of the Tydings-McDuffie Act on August 26, and on Sept. 3 Quezon proclaimed the law in effect as of January 1, 1941.

Once the Immigration Act was on the books, the anticipated repercussions from Japan

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<sup>120</sup> Domei, the official Japanese news agency, in a dispatch from Manila blamed efforts to pass the legislation on what was called an "anti-Japanese" faction in the Assembly. Domei also intimated that passage of the Act as drawn would "be regarded as an unfriendly act by the Japanese Government." Foreign Office Spokesman Suma Yakichiro said he was "mystified" by reports from Washington that the State Department had said it was in no position to influence the Commonwealth government. (*Herald*, April 25, 1940.)

<sup>121</sup> Oppus in explaining his vote said that he wanted to see "our beloved Philippines . . . live in peace with all." (Quoted in Joseph R. Hayden, *The Philippines, A Study on National Development* (New York: Macmillan, 1942), 724.)

<sup>122</sup> A confidential intelligence report from G-2 in Manila dated June 26, 1940, stated that both Secretary of the Interior Rafael L. Alunan and Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce Benigno S. Aquino had evidenced pro-Japanese sentiments in the immigration discussions. Alunan was reported to have praised the new law but to have suggested that the bill might be "quietly amended" later on to give the Japanese special privileges. Aquino was said to have offered Committee on Labor and Immigration Chairman Magalona "a fair sum of money" to raise the Japanese quota to 1,000 or at least 750 instead of the proposed 500, (BIA 28876 336.8 2050,3850.)

failed to materialize. Protests and complaints of course persisted, but an observer might well consider them pro forma and recognize that the cultivation of Philippine friendship was still of much greater importance to the Japanese than any assumed insult contained in a restrictive but clearly non-discriminatory piece of legislation. Even before the final vote took place, Consul General Yoshida, concerned about maintaining the close personal relationship which he, like his predecessors, had with President Quezon advised the Foreign Office that the pressures that had been directed at Quezon should now be eased. For Yoshida noted that now that the second reading had passed the Assembly, if the President should press for any change in the quota figure of 500, in the light of the broad press coverage given to Japan's protests it would appear as though he were succumbing to Japanese influence. And Yoshida concluded that to so embarrass the President would not be desirable at all from the standpoint of future Japanese-Philippine relations.<sup>123</sup>

That Japanese efforts to make some accommodations to Philippine opinion for the sake of friendship between the two peoples were not only continuing but were bearing fruit seemed evident when at the end of April J. Maria Intengan, City Editor of the pro administration *Herald*, was sent to Japan by his newspaper in order to give its readers a first hand account of Japanese attitudes towards the Philippines. In two glowing articles Intengan indicated that he was practically overwhelmed by Japanese good will and cordiality. On April 28, he began his dispatch this way:

The Philippine immigration bill is causing quite a stir here in Japan, but not of sufficient importance to merit sensational headlines in the Japanese papers. There have been one or two editorials printed about the matter, but the man in the street, the average Japanese citizen, is not exercised over a question with which he is not fully acquainted.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> JMFA S10.1.1.0-19, Reel 459, April 23, 1940.

<sup>124</sup> *Herald*, April 29, 1940.

The next day Intengan interviewed Takaishi Shingoro of the *Maiuichi* and *Nichi-Nichi* newspapers, that same inveterate “authoritative spokesman” who had been interviewed by Romulo ten days before. Commented Mr. Takaishi:

Regarding your immigration question I recognize the justice of your country’s stand that aims to eliminate discrimination against any particular nation or race. On this ground we have no complaints to make. We only wonder if it is not possible to work out an ingenious formula whereby the people whom you recognize to be most desirable--the people bringing with them habits of thrift and intelligence and industry and are law abiding--can be given a slightly more generous quota than that for undesirables.

We hear that your legislature is considering the possibility of allocating 1,000 instead of 500 immigrants per annum to Japan. We recognize the friendly efforts your leaders are making towards us and we are grateful. Can they not go a step further and endeavor to make still more flexible its dealings with Japanese immigrants from whom the Philippines recognize no small indebtedness?<sup>125</sup>

Such remarks were indeed temperate and in fact might almost be said to be suspiciously moderate when one considers all of the objections which the Japanese raised prior to the bill’s passage.

Almost coincidentally with the passage of the new immigration law United States High Commissioner to the Philippines Francis B. Sayre arrived in Japan on an official visit. Sayre was quoted by Domei as saying that the immigration bill had been introduced in order “to prevent the minority race question from arising” in the Philippines.<sup>126</sup> He stated too that the

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<sup>125</sup> *Herald*, April 30, 1940.

<sup>126</sup> *Herald*, May 2, 1940.

United States had no finger in the making of the Philippines immigration legislation pie” and that “notwithstanding rumors to the contrary” the United States had absolutely nothing to do with the new law.<sup>127</sup> Foreign Ministry Spokesman Suma took the occasion of the Sayre visit to announce that Japan would be satisfied with a quota of 1,000 instead of the 500 which the bill assigned to her.<sup>128</sup> And on May after the new bill had become law with the quota figure of 500 unchanged, Suma continued to evidence a conciliatory attitude similar to that of Takaishi in the Intengan interview. Suma merely issued a perfunctory pronouncement expressing “regret” at the passage of the legislation but suggesting that advantage might be taken of special escape clauses if such steps were necessary to preserve the flow of Japanese immigrants to the Philippines.<sup>129</sup>

Just two days later Ashida Hitoshi, a prominent member of the Japanese Diet and an expert on foreign affairs, arrived in Manila for a short visit. When asked for his views on the new immigration act, Ashida said, “I cannot help but feel that it is an unfortunate measure because it limits Japanese immigration to the Philippines,” but he too expressed the view that the restrictions were not necessarily ironclad and that they might be “removed in the near future and that the relations between the two nations [would] be based on the principle of mutual understanding and good neighborliness.”<sup>130</sup>

In a further dispatch from Japan J. M. Intengan of the *Herald* again emphasized that concern in Japan over the immigration legislation had been nothing more than a “mild hubbub” and that in the eyes of the Japanese the responsibility for the bill’s passage was clearly an

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* Suma also said that the 2,800 figure which he had given out on an earlier occasion as Japan’s annual immigration to the Philippines had been in error because 2,800 had been in reality the total number of annual arrivals while the number of true immigrants was much smaller. (*New York Times*, May 2, 1940.)

<sup>129</sup> *New York Times*, May 4, 1940.

<sup>130</sup> *Herald*, May 6, 1940. Far more critical were the comments made by Manila attorney and businessman Deogracias Puyat on his return to the Islands after a one month stay in Japan where he had important business connections. Mr. Puyat said that reaction in Japan was very unfavorable. “Whether erroneously or not,” he noted, “they believe that this bill was aimed directly at Japan. On the boat on the way back to Manila, Japanese asked me whether I believed the measure would pass. They were naturally resentful of what they considered an unfair discrimination against them.” (*Herald*, May 8, 1940.)

American one. In fact, Intengan conveyed the impression that to many Japanese the law's enactment was also in part a reflection of growing Philippine nationalism which Japan found both natural and commendable. In an interview with Intengan, Mori Haraku, then in charge of Philippine affairs for the American Bureau of the Foreign Office and later appointed Acting Consul General and Consul in Manila, was quoted as saying:

We have observed the growth of Philippine nationalism, and we have given it our closest attention. We recognize its force in your country and it is a force that all nations dealing with the Philippines must reckon with. As a matter of fact, in deciding affairs dealing with the Philippines we consider it one of the most important factors in making our decisions. . . .<sup>131</sup>

Again, with independence in the offing the desire of the Japanese both officially and unofficially to reach amicable accommodations with President Quezon himself and to maintain as close contacts as possible with as many Filipino leaders as possible overrode all other considerations. It was believed by Japan's diplomats in the Islands as well as by the leaders of the Japanese community there that the nature of the relationships which had matured over the years between themselves and their many Filipino friends should not be permitted to be dissipated over what might prove to be in the long run nothing more than a momentary inconvenience. The most favorable view that could be taken by the Japanese of the immigration law was that its passage would serve as a seeming further reassurance to the Americans of both Philippine loyalty and of Philippine recognition of the theoretical dangers posed by a potential influx of Japanese immigrants. And having been thus reassured the Americans would have seen the removal of yet one more possible obstacle to the ultimate realization of Philippine independence, an independence which incidentally the Japanese looked forward to with increased anticipation.

Moreover, the Japanese continued to perceive signs that their forbearance was being

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<sup>131</sup> *Herald*, May 11, 1940.

rewarded and that the Commonwealth administration was eager, as in fact it was, to maintain friendly and close ties with Japan. That President Quezon himself wanted nothing to impede his direct personal contacts with the Japanese government was apparent when he told Consul General Yoshida with great agitation:

Since Sayre returned from Tokyo, he told me that he had protested to the Foreign Office in Tokyo about conferences between myself and other persons and the Consul General and that from now on these kinds of matters should be presented directly by the Consul General to Sayre and that Foreign Minister Arita had fully agreed. And [Sayre said] that Arita had agreed completely that formal conferences between myself and foreign consulates especially on matters affecting foreign relations were not at all appropriate. Is this true?<sup>132</sup>

Yoshida answered that Foreign Minister Arita would not promise anything which would make the duties of a Consul General “inconvenient,” and he promised Quezon that he would set Sayre straight on past practices in the Philippines.<sup>133</sup> While this whole matter was of course a continuation of the controversy between the High Commissioner and the Consul General that had arisen over the immigration bill, there was in reality little more Yoshida could do in his official capacity. The significance of Quezon’s remarks was his very obvious and very real concern lest his direct relationship with the Japanese Consul General be broken off. Still a further sign of what the Philippine President hoped the Japanese would understand as his personal

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<sup>132</sup> JMFA J.1.1.0.X1-U1, June 10, 1940. Very Secret.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* On September 21, 1940, High Commissioner Sayre reported to the Secretary of State that when Consul General Yoshida called to pay his respects at the time of his departure, Yoshida had requested a clarification of a letter dated July 22, 1937, from the Administrative Assistant to the High Commissioner. That document had been a statement from the High Commissioner’s Office explaining procedures for foreign consular officers in dealing with officials of the Commonwealth Government. One paragraph read; “Foreign consular officers stationed in the Philippines may appropriately address and appeal to the local authorities, throughout the extent of their consular districts, for the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of their nationals.” Yoshida reiterated to Sayre that this sentence had been the basis of his activities to which Sayre had objected. Sayre, however, replied by noting a different paragraph from the same letter: “Subjects of a political character and questions relating to exequaturs, visits of foreign war vessels and airplanes, and other formal matters should be dealt with as usual through diplomatic channels, i.e., through the Embassy or Legation in Washington of the country concerned.” (BIA With 28946/5.)

intention to see that the treatment afforded Japanese immigrants under the new law would be as indulgent as possible, as he had always promised in his prior discussions with representatives of the consulate, was his executive order of Sept. 3, 1940, placing the Bureau of Immigration, which would administer the new act, directly under the Office of the President.

Thus the determination of the Japanese government to “live with” the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940 proved to be of far more value to Japan’s interests in the Philippines than all of the scare effects which might have accrued from any continuing campaign of threats and vitriol. So that while there was no doubt left in the minds of the Filipinos that the Japanese felt the act to be unfair, the two mitigating factors which were constantly reiterated in both the Japanese press and by official spokesmen were American responsibility and Philippine nationalism. For the former in Japanese eyes the Filipinos were blameless, and for the latter they were to be encouraged and praised although the result might seem momentarily disadvantageous to Japan.