

Summary of remarks

of

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ATTORNEY GENERAL

before the

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The legal preparation of the United States in the emergency is far more effective than during the last emergency before the great war. Little additional legislation is needed. The power to control the entry and exit of aliens into this country has been revised. In case of war the handling of aliens based on present information will be done effectively, yet it is hoped with a minimum of hardship to them. During the last war, when the alien population was twice as large as it is now, only twenty-three hundred (2,300) civilians were interned. In this connection it is interesting to note that in the recent spy case in New York twenty-three out of twenty-nine persons arrested had been naturalized.

The situation in the country at large is better than it was a year ago when the Joint Conference of Governors and Attorneys General was held with representatives of the Department of Justice in Washington. At that time a good deal of hysteria existed and vigilante groups were springing up everywhere. That has disappeared largely as a result of the wise action of the Governors in different states. Registration control of aliens was, by unanimous consent, left with the Federal government. Matters of espionage, by common consent, have been left with the Federal government, where it belongs. Sabotage is the joint concern of both the Federal government and of the states; and several states have strengthened their sabotage laws as a result of suggestions made at the Conference.

However, anti-alien baiting has not disappeared, although it has been held down. Only a few states passed laws discriminating against

aliens and in several instances the Governors of the states vetoed such legislation. Other states, notably New York and Massachusetts, have passed statutes forbidding class or racial discrimination. Such discrimination, however, is continually coming up in times like these. Most recently it found expression in an open bitter attack on the Jews. That this attack should have been everywhere resented throughout the country shows that such Nazi methods do not find response in America, or outside of particular groups.

Under the Voorhis Foreign Registration Act, agents of foreign governments are required to register and to file certain information with the government. As a result of this the Department has knowledge of the kind of propaganda coming from abroad. Our view in dealing with it is to emphasize exposure rather than repression. Exposure blights vicious propaganda in what Justice Holmes used to call "the market place of ideas" far more effectively than an attempt to suppress.

You will be interested to know that alien registration is completed since our last conference, and for the first time we have a record of foreigners in this country. In this 3,500,000 were anticipated. Nearly 5,000,000 registered, although this is only 3 1/2 percent of our total population. The registrations are being classified and the classification will soon be completed. More than 40% have taken steps to become naturalized. When the break-downs are finished, we will have knowledge as to geographical concentration, the kind of organizations with which aliens are affiliated, their military experience, their

eligibility for naturalization, the nature of their arrests and convictions, the occupational groups, and their distribution among the professions.

The exchange of ideas between the executives of the states and the Federal government is extremely important and has worked admirably during the last year. I have found all of the Governors with whom I have been in contact entirely cooperative. There has been no attempt to encourage or dictate on either side. This valuable cooperation should continue.

The Special Defense Unit of the Department of Justice handles matters connected with national defense, and is concerned with carrying out this program. It deals with policies rather than prosecutions.

In the field, the United States Attorneys' offices have been instructed to cooperate with the state and local enforcement officers. Often when questions of civil liberties arise under the Federal constitution they can be dealt with through the local authorities and the complaints removed without formal trials.