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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 80th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

A Proposal to Remove Racial Discrimination From Naturalization and Immigration Laws

H. R. 4824. A bill to provide the privilege of becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States to all immigrants having a legal right to permanent residence, and to place all Asiatic and Pacific peoples on the same basis in immigration law as Chinese persons and races indigenous to India.

SPEECH

OF

HON. WALTER H. JUDD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 19, 1947

Mr. JUDD. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing a bill along lines which I stated here 4 years ago I hoped some day would become law, but which it was clear could not be acted upon favorably at that time, during the war.

The bill will erase all the discriminations in our nationality and immigration laws, which have so greatly contributed to ill-feeling in many parts of the world, and yet admit per year only a few hundred more persons of Asiatic ancestry who are presently ineligible. It will place all people in the world on an equal footing in their ability to become citizens of the United States. It does not change the quota law in any respect, it merely extends it. I believe in the quota law, and do not wish to change it; but I also believe no decent person should be excluded from its application solely on the basis of his race or an-

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cestry. Once this bill becomes law, no further changes will be needed in the quota law. All people whether in Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia, or the Pacific islands will be on a basis of equality.

When the Four Hundred and Forty-second Regimental Combat Team—the all Japanese-American outfit—returned from Italy, these men were given a hero's reception, which they richly deserved.

But when the mother of one of these boys, Sadao Munemori, who won the Congressional Medal of Honor, but who did not come back, wanted to become an American citizen, the answer had to be under existing law "No—you and all persons of your race are ineligible for citizenship, no matter what your personal attainments or your demonstrated loyalty and devotion to the United States and its ideals."

What then is the measure of citizenship? What further price must Mrs. Munemori pay to prove her worth?

This bill will grant the privilege of citizenship to this humble woman, and to others like her who have lived in our country for 20, 30, and 40 years, and who can meet all the proper qualifications for citizenship.

I do not need to tell you that America faces grave international problems. Our foreign relations have made notable advances in western Europe in these past

few weeks. We need to be certain that we prosecute our interests in the Far East as vigorously. We cannot hope to win the needed friendship of the peoples of the Far East if we continue to treat them as biologically inferior beings.

Japan's military machine, which had fattened on the issue of American exclusion, has been smashed. We are now engaged in one of the world's most hopeful projects—that of helping the Japanese people to learn the meaning and the practice of democracy.

We no longer fear Japan. We need and seek the friendship of the best among the Japanese. We need to strengthen them, and all other democratic elements in the Far East. I believe we can greatly serve American interests by removing the stigma contained in our exclusion laws. We have done this for the Chinese, the Filipinos and the people of India. There is but a short distance to go to complete the task once and for all.

Taking that final step, which involves very little for us but means a great deal to them, will bring rich returns in the stormy years that lie ahead.

It is very possible the Judiciary Committee's subcommittee dealing with this subject will in its careful study find a better formula for accomplishing the desired end. If so, I welcome any and all improvements. The essential thing is that we perform as early as possible this act of justice and wisdom.