

REPORT OF JOHN B. TREVOR

*President of the American Coalition
to the annual meeting, January 31, 1940, Hotel Willard*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It is my duty and privilege, as President of the American Coalition, to submit for your consideration a report of the operations of our society during the past year.

I wish to preface my remarks by extending the thanks of the Coalition to all the officers and to all the members of the Executive Committee and to all Chairmen and members of Special Committees of the Coalition, for their most helpful and cordial cooperation in carrying out the policies prescribed for us by the Board at our last annual meeting.

It seems to me that it should be a matter of particular gratification to the members of this Board, that four bills dealing with immigration and the alien problem generally in the United States were passed by the House of Representatives. I refer specifically to H. R. 4860, introduced by Congressman Dempsey, of New Mexico; H. R. 5138, introduced by Congressman Smith, of Virginia; H. R. 5843, introduced by Congressman Hobbs, of Alabama; and, last but certainly not least, H. R. 6724, introduced by Congressman Starnes of Alabama.

✓ Mr. Starnes' bill, H. R. 6724, was reported out favorably by the Senate Committee and passed. Unfortunately, some Senators felt constrained to introduce amendments, of a more or less minor character, to be sure; but, nevertheless, amendments which inure solely to the benefit of undesirable aliens in the United States. That is to say, amendments calculated to make it more difficult to expel a class of people, to whom this Government and our people are under no obligation, whatsoever, to show any consideration.

✓ Senate Bill 409, introduced by Senator Reynolds, of North Carolina, has been reported by the Senate Committee on Immigration. This bill carries the same number as a bill introduced by Senator Reynolds, but so changed in its character as to compel Senator Reynolds to take the position that, if it is called up for action, he will feel constrained to oppose its enactment with all the vigor at his command.

✓ Senate Bill 409, as the Committee reported it, purports to suspend immigration but does not suspend it. This bill would place certain classifications of relatives of aliens lawfully admitted to the United States in a non-quota class; that is to say, an element, which now is only entitled to second preference for application for quota visas, would have all numerical restriction upon their entry abolished.

This bill also grants discretionary power to the President to nullify the suspension of immigration in respect to certain quota immigrants, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of State. No such power should ever be granted, in my opinion, to any executive officer to nullify the provisions of a law to a degree which amounts to partial

abdication of legislative control by Congress over immigration.

Finally, the bill includes the substance of the Wagner-Rogers Resolution to admit some 20,000 refugee children from Germany. In view of the fact that the Coalition has taken action on all measures calculated to break down the system of restriction on immigration by quota limitations, it is not necessary to discuss this feature of S. 409 in detail. Suffice it to say, the bill now before the Senate should be beaten, and I call upon the representatives of societies here present, and their friends, to take appropriate action in the premises. On the other hand, Senator Reynolds has introduced a substitute bill, S. 3201, which should have your wholehearted support.

I feel sure that I voice the sentiment of all the patriotic societies assembled in this convention when I condemn without reservation or qualification the report submitted to the Secretary of Labor by Dean Landis of the Harvard Law School on the case of Harry Bridges. Our Second Vice President in commenting on this report in a letter to the New York Herald-Tribune referred to a quotation which I am constrained to repeat at this point: "The law," said Bentham, "is the science of being methodically ignorant of what everybody knows."

The most serious effort to influence public policy in which the Coalition participated during the course of the past year, was in connection with the movement to repeal the embargo on shipments of arms to belligerents in the present conflict now raging in Europe. In order that there may be no misunderstanding regarding our position in this matter, let me state, the American Coalition has always been emphatically opposed to the involvement of the United States in war, but, while holding firmly to this position, it was always the opinion of your officers that the Neutrality Law as it was drafted constituted a greater danger to America's involvement in foreign controversies, then a protection against such an eventuality.

On April 14th of last year, I appeared before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate in reference to a series of neutrality bills then pending. Copies of my analysis of these measures and comments thereon having been distributed at that time to the members of the Board of Directors, it is unnecessary to review the situation as it then existed. No action was taken by Congress at that session, but I think it is safe to say that the record amply substantiates the misgivings which we had at the time of the enactment of the first neutrality law. This law provided that whenever there should be an outbreak of war between foreign nations, the President should proclaim the fact, and, then, it would be unlawful to do certain acts set forth in detail under the statute. In spite of the clear intent of the law, a state of war has existed in Asia for a prolonged period, but the President has never proclaimed the fact, with the result that the Neutrality Law has been, to a great extent, a dead letter; but, even

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