

AN IMMIGRATION INQUEST

By the Sub-Committee of Both Houses of Congress.

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION

The Subject of Rigid Inquiry—Tacoma People Give Their Views on Chinese Exclusion.

Among the arrivals at the Tacoma hotel last evening were Senator Squire, Representatives H. Stump and H. Lehlback.

These congressmen constitute the sub-committee of the joint committee of the house and senate of the United States on emigration and naturalization; the existing conditions and laws of emigration and naturalization being the purport of their investigation. The Chinese question is also a subject largely to be discussed.

The committee's trip to New York last summer resulted in the establishment of a government station at Ellis Island in the New York Bay, for the reception of immigrants, and abolishment of old Castle Garden. In the east their investigations were not limited to simply the consideration of the two subjects named, but the subject of the violation of the alien contract law was also considered.

The sub committee now in Tacoma was detailed to obtain the opinions of the people of the Pacific coast as to whether there should be any alteration of the laws of the United States in relation to immigration and the naturalization of foreigners as citizens. The commission has been engaged in taking testimony at Seattle, Port Townsend and Spokane Falls.

It was recommended at Port Townsend that the revenue marine service be allowed to employ an additional force of men.

The committee and party are enthusiastic about the northwest country and are astonished at the wonderful development.

TAKING TESTIMONY.

The committee held a session today in the assembly room of the chamber of commerce, which prominent citizens were invited to attend and express their views.

The first witness called before the sub-committee today was General J. W. Sprague. In answer to questions of the committee Mr. Sprague testified as follows: "There are about 40,000 persons in Tacoma. I do not know how many are of foreign nationality. About every nationality of the Old World is represented here except the Chinese. There is no objection to the presence of the Japanese. The opposition to the Chinese is based upon their undesirable habits and the impossibility of their assimilating with the Americans. My personal objections are upon the same grounds. I would like to see the immigration laws so modified as to exclude all the criminal and pauper classes of the old world from landing here. I would not want to put an educational qualification upon immigrants, but I would like to have an educational test on voters. Men who have no education can become good citizens by industry and frugality. By prescribing a strict examination into the qualifications of intending immigrants I think we would practically exclude all the undesirable classes. There are men of every nation who would make desirable citizens, and I would prescribe no rule for the Chinaman that would not apply to any other nation. The coolie class of Chinese, and the corresponding class of every nation, should be excluded. Our frontiers are open for the smuggling in of Chinese, which is frequently done. I suspect a good many work in that way both north and south. I do not know whether there is any alien railway contract labor in this state now or not. I have reason to believe that we have in Tacoma a few anarchists, not so many as formerly. I don't think I would recommend the expulsion of the Chinese from the entire country. They seldom acquire property or attain to citizenship but they came in when the doors were open and it would seem tyrannical and unjust. The men who would like to work five hours a day for ten hours pay would like to see the Chinese excluded."

Isaac W. Anderson: "Have been a resident of Tacoma for 13 years. I approve the statements of General Sprague, they cover my sentiments as fully as I could express them. I believe that the present law should be strictly enforced, as it is not. I don't believe that the Chinese here now should be sent out. They are such a small proportion of the community that if they were kept out, they would long be an element in the social question. I was pretty severely criticised because I was not in favor of Chinese expulsion at the time because of the means employed. The Chinese never owned any Tacoma property. I think mainly because the Tacoma Land company refused to either sell or lease to them. I don't think that had the same number of Japanese located here the people would have risen against them. The expulsion of the Chinese has resulted in general benefit to the laboring classes. There is no doubt but that Tacoma laborers have been enabled to establish homes more quickly by reason of the Chinese exclusion than they otherwise would."