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Excerpts from an address by the Honorable Joseph C. Grew, Special Asst. to the Secretary of State, at the annual banquet of the Holland Society of New York, New York City November 18, 1943.

One of the proudest achievements of our country is our assimilation of many different races within our borders. We take well-justified pride in the term "melting pot" as applied to our nation. The existence and purpose and membership of the Holland Society are a living testimonial to that great principle, and it is especially interesting to note that even three centuries ago, when the Dutch West India Company had extended to all friendly European countries the privilege of trading with the then province of New Amsterdam, the town of New Amsterdam rapidly assumed the cosmopolitan character for which it has ever since been noted and that according to contemporary reports, eighteen languages were spoken among its 400 or 500 inhabitants in 1643.

The point I wish to make is this. In time of war, blind prejudice is always rampant. In the last war I remember that even loyal Americans with German names were all too often looked at askance. That bigotry fortunately does not exist today, but it does exist today among a large proportion of our fellow countrymen with regard to American citizens of Japanese descent. In fact many, perhaps most, of our compatriots refer to those fellow-citizens of ours quite indiscriminately as "Japs". In reading the many letters I receive from all over the country on that subject I very seldom know whether the writer is referring to Americans or to outright enemy aliens. There is, or should be, a great difference there.

In time of war, especially, we must take every proper step to protect our country from hostile acts, especially from espionage or sabotage within our gates. We have competent official authorities to attend to that consideration, and they are attending to it, constantly and effectively. I do know that like the Americans of German descent, the overwhelming majority of Americans of Japanese origin wish to be and are wholly loyal to the United States, and not only that, but they wish to prove that loyalty in service to their native land. Relman Morin, of the Associated Press, reports from the Fifth Army in Italy that the first unit of American-born Japanese troops went into combat smiling with satisfaction as if they were going to a baseball game; their motto is "Remember Pearl Harbor", and their commander said that he wouldn't trade his command for any other in the Army. Their officers, said Morin, are unanimously enthusiastic about the quality and spirit of those men and said they never had seen any troops train harder and more assiduously and never had any doubt as to what to expect of them in combat. A German prisoner was brought past their encampment one day; he gaped with surprise when he saw their faces and asked if they were Japanese. An interpreter explained that they were Americans of Japanese parentage. The German shook his head in wonder and said: "Ach; that's American." There are camps in our country today engaged exclusively in training these men for military service. I have met and talked to them. Their officers are proud of their charges.

What I wish to say is merely this. Those Americans of Japanese descent have grown up in our country, in our democratic atmosphere. Most of them have never known anything else. Among those few who have been to Japan, most of them could not stand the life there and soon returned to the United States. The overwhelming majority of those men want to be loyal to us, and, perhaps surprisingly, the few who don't want to be loyal to us often say so openly.

It does not make for loyalty to be constantly under suspicion when grounds for suspicion are absent. I have too great a belief in the sanctity of American citizenship to want to see those Americans of Japanese descent penalized and alienated through blind prejudice. I want to see them given a square deal. I want to see them treated as we rightly treat all other American citizens regardless of their racial origin - with respect and support, unless or until they have proved themselves unworthy of respect and support. That fundamental principle should apply all along the line - to every citizen of the United States of America.

Once, again, Gentlemen, I heartily thank you for the honor you have accorded me tonight.

