

# West Doesn't Like Playing Squat Tag With the Japs

—By HENRY McLEMORE—

SAN DIEGO, Thursday, Feb. 5.—Mr. Biddle is the attorney-general in Washington, but he could run for office in California and not even win the post of third assistant dog-catcher in charge of liver-spotted Airedales. That's the way they feel about Mr. "Blueblood" Biddle out here.

Maybe the feeling is all wrong. Maybe they have the man pegged incorrectly. I wouldn't know about that.

All I know is that Californians have the feeling that he is the one in charge of the Japanese menace, and that he is handling it with all the severity of Lord Fauntleroy playing squat tag.

I've been here a week now, and have traveled a few hundred miles up and down the coast, and have yet to meet a man, woman or child who doesn't think that Mr. Biddle's handling of the bow-legged sons and daughters of the Rising Sun is mighty ridiculous.

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THEY all got a laugh out of the latest action from Washington—the action that said that by February 24 Japanese in certain sections must leave their homes and move deeper into the interior. That's a stirring bit of action, isn't it?

Don't tell them to move away from defense centers now. No, oh heavens, no. Give them time to perfect their time bombs, complete their infernal machines, and generally prepare for the exodus. It would be a shame, wouldn't it, and an affront to civil liberties, to move the Japanese from defense centers without proper warning. It might even upset their plans of sabotage.

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HERE'S another angle for you to figure out. There is much talk about moving all the airplane factories out of California; take them inland for protection. Sabotage, and that sort of stuff.

Why move the plants and leave the Japs? Is it easier to move a gigantic factory than it is to move a family of Rising Sons of—well, Rising Sons?

Does it make sense to heave and haul a bomber factory miles and miles instead of lifting the Japs and their shacks and shoving them closer to the Rockies?

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THE government isn't playing fair with California. It shuts down race meetings. It calls off the Rose Bowl. It prohibits large gatherings of citizens. It asks that the roads be kept clear. Why?

Well, the general guess is that the government wants to be able to move the Army quickly against any uprising by the Japs. But nothing is done about the Japs.

It's like a guy standing by with a lot of first-aid equipment to help the victims of an accident which is expected to happen, but doing nothing to prevent the accident from happening.

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THE government is treating the Japanese out here so nicely that a fellow is almost afraid to know them. He might wind up being accused of being a fifth columnist.

But at the risk of having the F. B. I. collar me for being unfriendly toward a national enemy, and throw me in the calaboose for inciting unfriendliness among a race that hates us, I am going to keep hammering on this typewriter until the boys in Washington realize how California feels.

California wants the Japs put away until this thing is over. California figures that the true Americans among its Jap population will be willing to undergo a bit of undeserved hardship in order to forestall any dangerous action by the ones who aren't. And that's right. I have talked to enough of them to know that they are willing to be kicked around if it will help this country from being kicked around.

I'd better quit right here. One more paragraph and I'll be getting mad—not as a Californian, mind you, but as an American.