

'Enemy Alien' Brand Should Be Removed Very Carefully

HAVING lifted the stigma of "enemy alien" from Italian residents of the United States, Attorney-General Biddle lets it be known that he is considering doing as much for German nationals. Particular attention will be given, he says, to Germans who have fathers, sons and brothers in the American armed forces.

The attorney-general warns that no immediate action need be expected. This is easy to understand, since circumstances call for more than ordinary discrimination. It is true that in the last registration of the alien population, Italians outnumbered Germans by more than two-to-one; but a comparatively small handful of Germans have caused more trouble than all the Italians put together.

This is not to appraise, in the mass, the respective qualifications of Italians and Germans for residence in this country and eventual citizenship. Good people of both nationalities are found in every community. However, the simple fact of recent date is that very few Italians have been accused of subversive activities, whereas scores of Germans have been arrested, tried and convicted, with more cases pending.

The 1940 registration showed 694,971 subjects of Italy in the United States, leading all other foreign nationals. There were 315,004 Germans and, to complete the picture as it may relate to our Axis enemies, 91,853 Japanese.

The Department of Justice has put the Italians in the clear, and is now giving thought to the Germans. The much knottier problem will come when and if it is deemed expedient to consider the Japanese.

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