

EDITORIAL

Enemies in Name Only

Last January President Roosevelt issued a proclamation ordering the registration of aliens of enemy nationality fourteen years of age and over residing within the United States. The results of that registration have recently been disclosed in a report submitted to the Attorney General by Earl G. Harrison, Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization. A total of 934,100 Italians, Germans and Japanese aliens were issued certificates of identification, bearing their photographs, fingerprints and physical description, which they must carry with them at all times. Two-thirds of these were Italians, nearly one-third Germans and the remainder Japanese.

What proportion of these persons are "enemies" and what proportion are loyal to the United States? To begin with, there are between 200,000 and 250,000 refugees among them, who came to this country to escape persecution or because they did not want to live under the totalitarian system. They are technically enemy aliens, but there can be little question as to where their interests and sympathies lie in the war. There are thousands who have first or second naturalization papers, who are enemy aliens until they are sworn in as citizens of the United States. There are scores who have sons in our armed forces, hundreds who have lived here many years and whose children are American-

born, and there are those who are stateless, who have lost all citizenship. All these under the law are considered enemy aliens.

We may be sure that there are some fifth columnists and foreign agents in this group of nearly one million persons, but the enemy knows that sabotage and espionage are more effectively carried out by naturalized citizens and even by the native-born, than by non-citizens, who are easily detected and controlled. Since Pearl Harbor only 9,000 enemy aliens-less than one percent-have been detained by the FBI, and several thousand of these have been released after investigation, either conditionally or on parole.

Despite this we continue to hold all aliens of enemy nationality in suspicion and provide no machinery for separating the loyal from disloyal. The President, the Attorney General and war-production officials have publicly stated that there should be no discrimination in the employment of worker in defense or other industries because of national origin, and though we are faced with a serious shortage of skilled labor in war production many employers refuse to hire skilled workers who are not citizens, or they discharge loyal workers on the ground that they are aliens. Under the law, aliens may be employed even in secret and confidential war work, if permission is obtained from the federal department concerned. The latest figures show that such permission has been granted by the army and navy in 99 percent of the applications.

It should be a comparatively simple matter for the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice to devise a plan, as England has done, to "certify" those aliens of enemy nationality who are loyal to the United States and at the same time provide protection against those who are potential enemies. Friendly aliens who desire to be relieved of suspicion should be given an opportunity to place their cases before the department for investigation and determination as to their status. Such a procedure is followed at present in the case of aliens who have entered the country illegally and desire to legalize their status. Its extension to this problem would be both expedient and just.