

# Accused as Jap Agent, Writer Pleads Guilty To Faulty Registration

## Government Will Drop Count Charging Plot To Violate Statute

Ralph Townsend, a writer associated with Scribner's Commentator, charged with violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act as a Japanese agent and propagandist, pleaded guilty today before Justice T. Alan Goldsborough in District Court to a count in the indictment accusing him of failing to register properly with the State Department.

The defendant appeared in court with his attorney, Francis W. Hill, jr., former president of the District Bar Association, who asked that the case be referred to the probation officer. This was done.

The Government, through Albert E. Arent and Arthur B. Caldwell, special assistants to the Attorney General, announced it would nolle prosequere the other count in the indictment charging him with conspiracy to violate the act.

### Jap Financing Charged.

Mr. Townsend was accused by the Government of being associated with the Japanese Committee on Trade and Information at San Francisco, which, in turn, according to the prosecutors, was financed by the Japanese government through its consul general in that city.

The indictment, returned recently by the District grand jury, charged Mr. Townsend with writing and distributing pamphlets favorable to Japan and also giving speeches and radio talks.

The Government maintained that Mr. Townsend and David Warren Ryder, another defendant in the case, "acted as public relations counsel, publicity agents, agents and representatives" of the Japanese Committee on Trade and Information, from September, 1937, to August, 1940. Further, the Government asserted, they "informed and advised" the committee in matters pertaining to "the political interests and public relations" of the committee "and of the Government of Japan, and engaged in the placing and disseminating within the United States of information and propaganda favorable to the interests of said committee and the government of Japan."

### Specific Case Cited.

Specifically, the Government charged that Mr. Townsend in February, 1939, in San Francisco, caused the Alex Nicoll Printing Co. to deliver for mail distribution 31,000 copies of a pamphlet called "The High Cost of Hate." In addition, the Government contended that Mr. Townsend and Mr. Ryder wrote and edited numerous pamphlets favorable to Japan and distributed them without charge "throughout the United States in a manner which concealed the foreign political and financial interests responsible for the distribution."

The Government also said the committee sponsored a weekly radio program over Station KYA at San Francisco.

The committee, the Government contended in the indictment, expended in excess of \$175,000 and with these funds it "carried on a program of activity designed to influence public opinion in the United States in favor of Japan and against China."

Justice Goldsborough has set the trial for May 11 in District Court. Named as defendants in the indictment with Mr. Ryder and Mr. Townsend are:

Tsutomu Obana, secretary of the committee, who has pleaded guilty to four counts in the indictment relating to failure to tell the State Department fully about his activities, but who has pleaded innocent to the conspiracy charge; Frederick Vincent Williams, former newspaperman and publicity agent in San Francisco; K. Takahashi, former manager of N. Y. K. Steamship Line at San Francisco, and S. Takeuchi, former manager of the Mitsu Bishi Co., a Japanese importing concern in San Francisco. Takahashi and Takeuchi are now in Japan.

The six persons are indicted on charges of conspiracy to violate the Foreign Agents Registration Act.