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THE DEVELOPMENTS  
LEADING TO PARTICIPATION  
IN THE ALL CENTER CONFERENCE  
AND  
THE VISIT OF  
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE SPANISH EMBASSY



Concomitant with the decision of the Army to rescind the military orders that had excluded persons of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast areas, the WRA resolved to liquidate its relocation centers by January 2, 1946. On December 17, 1944, both the Army and the WRA <sup>2</sup>announced simultaneously the new policies that would greatly affect the future of 110,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry in the United States, particularly those 70,000 evacuees now remaining in the relocation centers.

At the Colorado River Relocation Center, Poston, Arizona, as in other relocation centers, the initial impact of <sup>2</sup>announcements upon the evacuees was very great. Only a small minority among them received with placidity and delight the news of the lifting of the exclusion orders. To the vast majority, the revocation of the orders that had established the prohibited zones specifically applying only to them meant little on the face of the decision of the WRA to liquidate the relocation centers within one year. The policy of closure of the centers meant to them that they were compelled to decide within one year when and how they should return to the normal stream of life on the outside. In the light of this coercive policy, the outside world loomed hostile; life in the normal stream appeared precarious and perilous.

For the past thirty months, the evacuees were sheltered in the center; they had been relieved from the onus of struggles for existence. Although limited to the barest necessities, they



had become accustomed to the parasitic living in the center. In spite of the intensive and aggressive relocation program, the WRA has so far succeeded in returning to the outside from Poston only a little less than one third of the original population. The earnest and tireless efforts of the WRA officials at Poston in the past two years have induced only approximately 5,500 evacuees to establish their homes on the outside. For many reasons, which have been discussed in detail in another report, the rest of the evacuees have postponed planning for relocation or have refused to leave the center. Most of the residual evacuees had been smugly deluded by the wishful belief that the center would not close for the duration.

To these people who had been dreaming the complacent belief that their leisurely life in the center had been assured for the duration, the WRA announcement of the liquidation of the relocation centers was a jolt. As the jolt was great, the awakening was rude and unpleasant. Many became dazed and confused. Others were perplexed and worried. Still others were vociferous in denouncing the new WRA policy and maintaining that the center should not be liquidated. The negativistic sentiment gained within a short time enough momentum to sweep the community, overriding confusion and anxiety. (See RSN: The Initial Impact of the Army Announcement of Rescission of the Exclusion Orders And the WRA Announcement of Liquidation of the Relocation Centers)

On the face of the violently negativistic public opinion, the members of the Local Council, Unit I, could not long remain inactive. They were sensitive to the outcries in the community asking for a concerted action to counteract the policy of closure of the center. In their regular meeting on December 20, 1944,

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wd. please  
S.)

Maybe they're right.  
It was not necessarily  
wishful. S.



three days after the announcement, they adopted a proposal championed by Councilman Ayaka Takahashi for the purpose of convening delegates from other relocation centers in order to work out appropriate measures. (Ibid, pp. 176 - 181) In Takahashi's opinion, the problem was common to all the nine centers (including Tule Lake), and by combining the strength together more effective opposition to the closing of the centers would be obtained. After boisterous discussions on the different phases of the conference, the following points were finally agreed on:

1. The conference be held at Poston asking all the nine centers to send delegates. Poston was selected because of the excellent weather during the winter months and because it would be convenient for the delegates to visit California on their return from here if they wished.
2. The conference be held sometime in the month of February.
3. Each center be requested to send five delegates. It was suggested that each of the five delegates should represent an evacuated area different from another so that the various areas of pre-evacuation residence be equally represented.
4. Invitations to the centers be sent after consultation with and approval by the Project Director and the WRA at Washington.

(Although not recorded officially, the Councilmen desired to hold the conference in a relocation center, because they doubted whether the WRA would defray the expenses of the delegates. The WRA had refused to assume the expenses when the Heart Mountain Community Council had proposed an All Center Conference for discussion of relocation at Chicago in the early part of 1944. Since center-to-center visitors are not charged for room and board, the delegates will save considerable expenses if such a conference is held in a relocation center.)



On December 21, the next day, the proposal of the Unit I Local Council for the All Center Conference was brought before the project-wide represented Community Council in its regular meeting. The Community Council adopted the proposal in toto and, to contact the project administration, chose a committee composed of Chairman Itaru Kubota, Vice Chairman Gyosuke Iseda, and Ayaka Takahashi. On December 22, the members of the committee visited Assistant Director John Powell in charge of Community Management Division and presented the porposal for approval. It was told that Powell was noncommittal and promised merely that he would submit the plan to Director Mills, who, he thought, would in turn transmit it to Washington.

Powell was noncommittal, because he was afraid to express his ~~own~~ opinion on the matter. Nor did Mills know what to expect when he received the news. They called <sup>for</sup> in consultation Richard Nishimoto, the Unit I Supervisor of Block Managers. Nishimoto advised them that such a conference be encouraged, because the WRA could not lose anything by doing so. For the sake of a harmonious and peaceful administration of the project, all resistance in the community against the closure of the center should be channeled into an organizaed action, he believed. "By allowing an organized protest, you will know at all time which way the wind is blowing. You will keep the hot heads and the irrational people in line. You got to give them chances to blow off their steam. There is no harm in such a conference at all. The delegates will meet at their own expenses and will pass a series of resolutions. Mr. Myer will have a chance to discuss the problems face-to-face with them. If he could not agree with



them, all he has to say is 'No'. The delegates can't do anything beyond Myer's refusal to accede to them."

Both Mills and Powell agreed in the end with Nishimoto's contention and decided to refer the proposal to Washington with their recommendation.

In the same afternoon, Corlies Carter, the Relocation Program Officer, heard the news from Nishimoto. Carter's immediate reaction was strongly negativistic. He wanted to stop such a conference from being held at Poston. He proposed to instruct other relocation centers not to issue the delegates permits to visit Poston. He thought that a great harm would be done to the progress of relocation in this center. Again Nishimoto prevailed on Carter with his argument, who agreed eventually that there might be benefits derived from the conference.

It was reported afterwards that both Mills and Powell consulted with Community Analyst French on the subject. French, too, thought that such a conference would not be harmful and should not be opposed by the appointed personnel. The analyst, however, advanced an entirely different reasoning. He believed that truly representative evacuees would not consent to assume the responsibility of representing the centers. The evacuees, too, would not trust even their own elected officials in bodies like the Community Council to represent them adequately in such a meeting. With the failure to choose truly representative delegates, the effect of the conference would be greatly minimized. The evacuees on the whole would be indifferent to the result of the conference and the delegates would be alienated from them. If, on the other hand, the conference was opposed, it would be-

*Good  
night*



come a camp-wide issue against the Administration.

On December 23, Director Duncan Mills sent a teletype to Washington asking for approval by Director Myer for the proposed All Center Conference at Poston. In reply to this inquiry, John Powell received a telephonic message from John Province, the Assistant Director at Washington WRA, on December 28. In the conversation, Powell was informed that the conference was approved on the following conditions:

1. The conference should not be held in any of the relocation centers. The site should be selected in a centrally located city outside of the centers.
2. The WRA could not officially sponsor the conference. The WRA would not assist in defraying the expenses.

Province, however, promised that the WRA would assist in making other arrangements and Director Myer would be strongly urged to attend the meeting.

The telephonic conversation was confirmed by the following teletype, which arrived on December 30:

INCOMING TELETYPE - 18 2:19 PM

WRA WASHINGTON  
DECEMBER 30, 1944

DUNCAN MILLS

REURTT DEC 23 NATIONAL MEETING EVACUEE REPRESENTATIVES. PLEASE INFORM COUNCIL AND OTHER INTERESTED RESIDENTS THAT WRA REGARDS WITH FAVOR THE IDEA OF AN EVACUEE-SPONSORED NATIONAL MEETING TO DISCUSS FUTURE EVACUEE PROBLEMS BUT CANNOT OFFICIALLY SPONSOR SUCH A MEETING OR ASSIST IN DEFRAYING EXPENSES INCIDENT THERETO. SUCH MEETING SHOULD NOT BE HELD AT ANY RELOCATION CENTER BUT RATHER AT SOME OUTSIDE POINT CONVENIENT TO ALL CENTERS. AFTER MEETING PLACE AND TIME HAVE BEEN DECIDED, WRA WILL ASSIST WHEREVER POSSIBLE IN MAKING PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS AND ARRANGING HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS. DIRECTOR AND SUCH OTHER WRA REPRESENTATIVES AS CAN BE RELIEVED FROM OTHER DUTIES AT TIME OF MEETING WILL BE GLAD TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS ON INVITATION OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE. COMMUNITY COUNCILS OR OTHER INTERESTED GROUPS AT ANY CENTER SHOULD FEEL FREE TO COMMUNICATE WITH INTERESTED REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS AT



OTHER CENTERS IN COMPLETING NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS. COPY OF THIS EXCHANGE OF TELETYPES IS BEING SENT TO OTHER PROJECT DIRECTORS FOR THEIR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE.

D S MYER

Meanwhile, the Community Council ~~had~~ learned that a similar All Center Conference had been proposed by the Heart Mountain Community Council and by the Granada Community Council, and that the Topaz Community Council had endorsed the proposals from the two Community Councils. The teletype read as follows:

INCOMING TELETYPE 4 9:17 AM

DELTA DEC 26, BACKDATE DEC 27, 1944

DUNCAN MILLS COLO RIV POSTON ARIZ

REQUEST THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM TOPAZ COMMUNITY COUNCIL BE DELIVERED TO THE POSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL. QUOTE . . . ORIGINAL PROPOSAL OF ALL CENTER CONFERENCE BY HEART MOUNTAIN HAD BEEN APPROVED BY TOPAZ RESIDENTS. SIMILAR PROPOSAL MADE RECENTLY BY AMACHE AGAIN APPROVED. TOPAZ COUNCIL STRONGLY RECOMMEND TO HAVE THIS CONFERENCE AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE. IMPORTANT PROBLEMS ARISE MORE THAN EVER SINCE ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPENING OF WEST COAST WHICH ARE OF MUTUAL INTEREST AMONG RESIDENTS OF ALL CENTERS. REQUEST YOUR FULL SUPPORT ON ALL CENTER CONFERENCE AND YOUR EARLY ANSWER. UNQUOTE. THIS MESSAGE DOES NOT IMPLY ANY ENDORSEMENT OF SUCH A CONFERENCE BY WRA OR TOPAZ PERSONNEL. DIRECTOR MYER INDICATED BY PHONE THAT SUCH A CONFERENCE IS HELD WILL BE ENTIRELY AT EXPENSE OF CENTER REPRESENTATIVES AS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED AND ADDED THAT BECAUSE OF RECENT CHANGE IN STATUS OF RESIDENTS THOSE NOT ON ARMY STOP LIST ARE NATURALLY FREE TO HOLD A CONFERENCE ANY PLACE THEY CHOOSE OUTSIDE OF CENTER.

L T HOFFMAN PROJ DIR WRA DELTA

With the disclosure that the conference had been planned earlier by other centers and that it could not be held at Poston, the exponents for the proposal were discouraged. They had taken a ~~slide~~ <sup>ride</sup> in the thought that they took an initiative for the meeting and proposed that the delegates be brought to this center. Having been frustrated in materializing their desire, they became suddenly ~~infid~~ indifferent to the idea of active-



ly promoting the meeting. The Community Council informed the Topaz Council that they were willing to participate in such a conference. Beyond that, the members of the Council agreed among themselves that they should wait for further developments before they would take any step upon the subject.

The residents in general, on the other hand, knew little about the proposal for the conference. The Poston Chronicle had failed to mention~~ed~~ the subject on its pages. The members of the Councils had not conveyed the information to their constituents outside of their close friends. Perhaps the Councilmen were right in not informing the residents about the conference, for they were only to participate in a proposal that would be sponsored by another center. No details were known to them besides the content of the teletype from Topaz. By the first week in January, 1945, the public opinion, too, had shifted. The chaotic state had subsided. The violently negativistic sentiments had waned. Many stories were circulated in support of the general contention that the center could not close within one year. The residents had again settled back to dwell on the ever popular complacent belief that the center would not close for the duration. They had come to believe that the WRA would be forced to modify its new policies in the year; they had wishfully deluded themselves by reasoning that the WRA could be forced to change its policies, if necessary, by a mass refusal to move from the center.

With the modification of the public opinion, it became known that all the evacuee leaders or all the residents that were informed had not been in accord with the Takahashi plan for



All Center Conference. Many of them had subsequently expressed *the opinion* that the promotion of such a conference was premature, because the WRA could not listen to the evacuees' appeal for continuance of the center on the face of its announcement that the Governmental agencies would be mobilized to solve all problems of relocation. Nishimoto, for example, had argued that the meeting could <sup>be</sup> profitably postponed until the summer when the WRA was bound to realize the shortcomings of its earlier plans. However, he was of the opinion that such a meeting would be beneficial to the evacuees as a cathartic agent if held at this time, even though no concession could ~~be~~ wrested from the WRA. Several others had been *adamantly* opposed to the plan, because they thought that there was no use in appealing to the WRA and, reflecting the popular belief in the community, a mass refusal to relocate was the best form of protest. Several others had opposed on the ground that the appeal should be directed to the Spanish Consul and the Japanese Government, and not to the WRA.

True, the proposal had been adopted unanimously by the Unit I Local Council and the Community Council on December 20 and December 21 respectively. The Councilmen, however, would admit that they had felt an enormous pressure from the residents, who clamored for an action by the Councils to lead an organized resistance to the closing of the center. They would not deny that they had bowed to the pressure, although there were many among the Councilmen who still believed that the WRA could be best stopped at the inception of the new policies. Some of them strongly believed that the WRA was raising a trial balloon for the closure in order to accelerate relocation, and that a deter-



mined resistance at the time would force the WRA to change its policies. Reflecting on the atmosphere of the Local Council meeting, Nishimoto recently confessed ruefully to his close friends, "They were terribly excited; they were hot. They wanted to stop relocation completely; they wanted to take steps to prevent evacuees from going out. The only thing I could do then was to take the heat off relocatees. Don't think that wasn't a tough task then."

(The proposal for the conference was presented for the first time to the representatives from Units II and III during the meeting of the Community Council on December 21. They had not been consulted in advance on the subject. Again, after they concurred on the proposal, they failed to report the matter neither to their respective Local Councils nor to the residents in their respective Units. Analyst French summarized it as follows:

The people of Units II and III had no voice in the discussions preceding the planning for the conference. Even after the adoption of the idea by the (three unit) Community Council, there was not much communication of ideas back to the people of II and III.  
Community Analysis Section, Colorado River Relocation Center; Report No. 46; Community Analyst Report  
From January 8 to 14, 1945.

Kenji Uyeno, the Unit II Administrator, resented the fact that the Councilmen had not consulted the residents before they voted for such an important issue as the All Center Conference. His opinion probably reflected correctly the general resentment of the residents towards their Councilmen.)

During the month of January, the proponents of the conference oscillated from one conviction to another, then to another.



In conformity with the oscillating characteristics of the attitudes and opinions of the residents in general at this time, these people, especially the evacuee leaders in the political circles, believed at one time that the WRA would carry out its policy of closing the center in spite of insurmountable obstacles they might face. They therefore were of the opinion that nothing could change the minds of the WRA officials and a meeting of delegates from the various relocation centers would not be of any value in profitably campaigning for postponement of the liquidation of the centers. Such a belief was particularly strong among the members of the Community Council during the first part of January. Robert Dolins, the special representative of Director Myer for explaining the aims and the details of the new WRA post-exclusion policies, had come from Washington and had left. He had explained to the evacuee leaders that the WRA could not exist after January 1, 1946, because the Congress would certainly refuse to appropriate for its continuance. As he put it, The WRA had been created on the exigencies of the military exclusion orders to provide temporarily for the dislocated evacuees. The WRA had been justified in operating the relocation centers while the exigencies existed. Now that the Army had rescinded the exclusion orders, the WRA could not exist beyond a reasonable length of time needed in liquidating itself. He had emphasized that the various Federal and State agencies had been mobilized to take care of the evacuees' rehabilitation on the outside and that no new agency or existing agency would take over the relocation centers.

The statements by Robert Dolins were emphatic and straight-



forward enough to convince, at least for time being, the political leaders and other evaucees in the Administration that the WRA would not budge from its determined course. Unit I Administrator Sumida said that nothing could stop the WRA from the liquidation of the centers. M. Okamoto, City Manager and a member of the Community Council, stated ruefully, "I guess the WRA is really going to close the centers. Maybe there is no use to have an All Center Conference."

From time to time, these same evacuees were of an entirely different opinion. On these occasions, they believed that the WRA could not relocate all the 11,300 evacuees from Poston within one year, and that the WRA would be compelled to revise its policies eventually. They were firmly convinced that the center would be maintained as long as evacuees remained here. While they were in this mood, they argued that the All Center Conference could be most effectively convened at a later date, possibly in June or July, and should not be held in February as originally planned.

On other occasions, although not simultaneously, they argued that the plight of unfortunate evacuees should be presented to the WRA officials at the earliest possible time, for the officials were not aware of the real conditions. Once had the WRA officials learned of the unfortunate circumstances of evacuees and the impossibility of closing the centers, they would modify <sup>then</sup> ~~its~~ policies. While the evacuee leaders were arguing along this course, they strongly advocated to hold the conference immediately.

In bringing out these changing sentiments, the discussions



on the subject of All Center Conference during the meeting of the Unit I Local Council on January 10 were significant. Chairman M. Okamoto reported that the Takahashi plan for the conference had been passed by the Community Council on December 21, and had been submitted through Director Mills to Director Myer. In reply Myer said that the WRA regarded such a meeting with favor, but it could not defray expenses of the delegates, Okamoto stated. He also added that the meeting should not be held at any relocation center, but should be convened in some outside city convenient to all centers. The chairman failed to mention, perhaps intentionally, that such a national meeting had been similarly proposed by the Community Council of Heart Mountain and that of Granada and endorsed by the Community Council of Topaz.

Okamoto then expressed his opinion that such a conference could accomplish very little on the face of the determined stand of the WRA to accelerate relocation by intimidating evacuees that they could not stay here longer than one year. He thought that holding the conference at this time was premature. By the summer, he believed, the WRA would be forced to relinquish the operation of the centers and another Federal agency would assume the responsibility. With the change, the centers would become permanent quarters for the evacuees that could not <sup>relocate</sup> or did not want to relocate. "The WRA is only operating cheap, temporary hotels for the evacuees at present," Okamoto stated firmly. "In August or thereabout, the centers will become apartments. The evacuees will be allowed to remain here permanently as long as they so desire. I don't know what agency will assume the responsibility, but some agency will come here as long as evacuees



are here."

Okamoto went on to say that for some relocation centers the task of raising funds to send delegates to such a national meeting would be too difficult. Such a task would fall upon the Community Councils of the various centers. Okamoto was of the opinion that all the Councils could not successfully raise the funds, because they did not have the solid support of the residents. He thought that only the Councils at Topaz, Heart Mountain, and Granada were firmly entrenched in the communities. Other Councils were too young in their histories to receive the confidence of the people or were discredited. The Councils at Gila, Minidoka, and Rohwer had been created rather recently. The Council at Gila, in addition, was discredited in the community, because it had passed "funny" resolutions such as "condemning the Japanese Army for the Bataan atrocities and condemning the Tule Lake segregants for the strike." "The Council at Manzanar is not a real Council," Okamoto went on. "It is a combination of Councilman and Block Managers. But they are not like the Block Managers in this camp. Those at Manzanar are known to the residents as stooges of the Administration and do not have the popular support, which is essential to a representative body. For these different reasons, I believe it would be much more profitable to postpone the conference until sometime in the future, awaiting further developments."

At this point, Councilman Hanaoka, representing Block 26, where evacuees from Imperial Valley are predominant with some from Los Angeles and from Salinas, shouted, "Why do we want to hold a conference? What are the purposes anyway?" It is sig-



nificant to note that the Issei Councilman in his early forties was one of the strong advocates of the conference during the Council meeting on December 20, although he opposed firmly against establishing any measures to prevent evacuees from relocating.

"The conference was proposed, as I understand it, because the WRA had announced the liquidation of the relocation centers," Okamoto explained perplexedly. "There are many people who cannot relocate even if the WRA tries to push them out. There are others who can relocate if the WRA would give them a little more assistance. The conference was planned to discuss these problems and to try to find solutions."

"Well, what's the use of discussing the problems among ourselves," Hanaoka retorted sharply. "We are nothing more than Japanese. We are enemy aliens and the children of the enemy aliens. We don't have enough influence over the American Government to make it change its policies. This is a national policy. We can't change it. I don't see any use for holding such a conference at all."

Another Issei Councilman argued against the conference from a different angle. He was a worker in one of the Mess Halls, which accommodated evacuees from Orange County, and had little knowledge of the trends in the political circles. His argument reflected one of the most popular reasonings in the community. "We don't need any conference," said he. "The best solution of the problem is to sit tight and refuse to leave the center. The WRA cannot afford to refuse to feed and shelter the Japanese nationals who refuse to relocate."

Councilman Ayaka Takahashi immediately asked for the floor



in order to defend the cause he had championed. He argued that the conference, if convened, would be of a great value in consolidating the strength of the evacuees in the various centers, and in putting up a united front to the WRA. There were many difficulties confronting the evacuees before they could re-establish their homes on the outside, and the majority of them ~~were~~ <sup>was</sup> anxious that their problems be presented to the WRA, he stated. In his opinion, the WRA would be willing to modify its policies to suit the needs of the evacuees after they heard appeals from the delegates in the conference. "I believe that the conference can accomplish a great deal," said Takahashi defensively. "Many problems can be thrashed out by talking face to face with the WRA officials from Washington, especially Mr. Myer. I see a lot of benefits in the conference. That is the reason that I had proposed ~~for~~ the meeting. I believe it is best to hold it as soon as possible, but I see many difficulties. The circumstances of the other centers must be considered." It is interesting to note here that Takahashi was reported to have said about one week previously that the WRA was definitely set to prosecute its post-exclusion policies and nothing could probably change its course.

Chairman Okamoto decided to conclude the discussion on the subject by saying that they could only await further developments in other centers. On this occasion, he was not enthusiastic about the meeting; <sup>he</sup> ~~he~~ strongly argued ~~ed~~ that the WRA would have to be forced to change its stand for the closing of the centers by the summer.

It was reported that Okamoto again explained ~~on~~ the subject



similarly to the members of the Community Council during their regular meeting on January 11, 1945. The minutes of the meeting reported as follows:

The WRA has approved of such a gathering but cannot defray expenses. They advised that the conference be held at a centrally located city outside of centers. All agreed that the expense involved presents a difficult problem since several of the center Councils are without any source of income. It was decided to temporarily hold this matter pending further developments and communication with other center Councils.

It was evident to competent observers that during the following two weeks, these political leaders were extremely confused. They said from time to time that the WRA could not close the centers within one year and it would modify its policies. Yet they were not certain of what they had been saying <sup>in a</sup> with seemingly assured tone. They were constantly in search of some evidences to support their belief from the appointed personnel. Analyst French reported that several prominent evacuees had asked him whether he actually believed in the closing of the centers. He stated that Okamoto asked at least twice if the centers would really close.

These leaders could not obtain satisfactory answers from the appointed personnel for their questions. The failure to force some of the appointed personnel to innocently admit that the centers might not be closed confused them furthermore. In the end, Okamoto wrote a letter of inquiry addressed to the Project Director, which contained several "baiting" questions that might unwittingly trick the Administration to reveal confidential information. Apparently their motives were twofold: first, they were troubled with the fact that they were not convinced of what they were saying to the people, and wanted to



obtain some information which would quell their uncertainty; and secondly, they wanted to possess some confidential information, because they would be able to map their future political course, and because the possession of such information would elevate their prestige among the residents. The letter read as follows:

Colorado River Relocation Center  
Poston, Arizona

January 22, 1945

MEMO TO: Mr. Duncan Mills  
Project Director

FROM : Minoru Okamoto  
City Manager

SUBJECT: Re Closing of Centers

The recent announcement of the revocation of the Exclusion orders and the concurrent closing of centers have raised doubtful and confusing questions in the minds of the residents. For various reasons, the majority of the residents, particularly the Isseis, have no intentions of either relocating to the East or returning to their former homes on the West Coast.

At the time evacuation orders were issued, the evacuees had no other alternative than to comply with the instructions. In a similar manner, we are now being more or less "forced" to leave the centers to an unknown destination. Enormous pressure seems to be put on the residents in order that the center may be cleared at the earliest possible date. To us, it seems an unjust and illegal procedure. There are many people who wish to reside in the center for the duration and feel it is their privilege to do so since they have come to rely on the statement of the National Director on several occasions that no person will be forced to relocate and that provisions will be made to take care of those who desire to remain in the center for the duration. They are willing to be classified as enemy aliens and to be placed on the same status. If, after confinement in this segregation camp, the Government requests them to relocate, they are willing to leave provided they may be readmitted to the center if their relocation is a failure.



Although WRA policies have been made on the closing of centers, no provisions have been made with regard to those remaining in camps. The evacuees would like to have clarification on the following four pertinent questions:

1. If, at the end of the year, the center is to be closed and there are residents still remaining, will they be "forced" out?
2. Will some center be maintained for those desiring to remain in confinement for the duration?
3. After January 2, 1946, what agency will take over such groups after the dissolution of the WRA?
4. If there should be people left in some center closing before the end of the year who are unable or unwilling to relocate, will they be admitted to centers still being maintained at such time? If not, what provisions will be made for them.

If you are unable to give a definite reply to the above, you will please contact the Washington authorities for a satisfactory answer. It will be greatly appreciated if a written reply to this memorandum may be had before January 25 at which time, the Community Council will discuss this matter,

/s/ Minoru Okamoto  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Minoru Okamoto  
 City Manager

To this inquiry, Okamoto failed to receive a reply for a long time, although such a reply was asked by January 25, when the Community Council wanted to discuss the matter. On January 31, during the regular meeting of Unit I Local Council, Okamoto explained to the Councilmen that he had written to Director Mills a memorandum in order to ascertain the status of those who refused to relocate. He then explained the four questions set forth in the memorandum. He, however, added sarcastically, "I asked for an answer by January 25, but I have not received it yet. I suppose they don't know how to answer the questions. No doubt, the questions are too tough for minor,



bureaucratic local officials. They might have referred the questions to Washington, because they could not answer them."

As Okamoto stated, many days had elapsed before Director Mills was ready with the reply, although he had not submitted the questions to Washington. He had turned it over to Arthur Harris, the Director of Education and the Coordinator of Information for Post-Exclusion Program, who was instructed to prepare a first draft of reply. When Harris' draft was completed, Mills inserted a few additions and made some corrections. He submitted the revised draft to Richard Nishimoto surreptitiously for his criticisms. With Nishimoto's comments in mind, Harris revised the draft. He was quoted to have said, "I had to rewrite three times until I am satisfied with it." The reply in the final form was sent to Okamoto on February 2. It read as follows:

Colorado River Relocation Center  
Poston, Arizona

February 1, 1945

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Minoru Okamoto  
City Manager

SUBJECT: Your Memorandum of January 22, 1945  
Re: Closing of Centers

I realize the truth of your statement that the revocation of the exclusion orders and the announcement of plans for closing the Centers have raised doubts, questions and considerable confusion in the minds of the residents of Poston. All of us in positions of leadership and responsibility must work constantly to remove doubt, answer questions, and straighten out confused thinking by providing factual information to all. We must furnish every help possible in the solution of individual problems, and antidotes for the poison of unfounded rumors and misinformation which circulate so rapidly in the Center.



You state that it seems unjust and illegal to force residents to leave the center, to bring "enormous pressure" to bear upon the residents "in order that the Center may be cleared at the earliest possible date". I cannot agree that enormous pressure is being used. Let me refer you to my first statement to the residents of Poston regarding the closing of the Center, which reads in part:

"There is no need for hasty decisions. . . . All plans should be made with great care, since your future depends on the decisions you will make."

Justice is a term which all of us like to define for ourselves. That is the reason we have courts of justice where questions arising from differing opinions on justice are decided by an unbiased and disinterested authority. The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the War Relocation Authority cannot confine people in Centers by virtue of its own decisions. It is also true that WRA does not have the authority to operate "shelter centers" for people who wish to occupy them voluntarily. Thus "justice" is often decided by "legality". If the workings of law seem unjust, the individual must go to the courts to have the matter decided.

In your memorandum you use the word "privilege" as well as the word "unjust". I wonder if what some people in Poston are seeking is "special privilege" instead of "justice". You state that "they are willing to be classified as enemy aliens and to be placed on the same status." That is exactly what the closing of the Centers will accomplish. All Aliens of Japanese, German, Italian, and Bulgarian ancestry were classified as "Enemy Aliens" while we were at war with those countries. All aliens of Japanese and German ancestry are classified as "enemy aliens" now. Only the aliens of Japanese ancestry inside the Western Defense Command area were sent to relocation centers. All others, with few exceptions, were permitted to remain in their homes, including aliens of Japanese ancestry outside the Western Defense Zone. The closing of the Centers returns aliens of Japanese ancestry to the same status as all other "enemy aliens". The only aliens confined in segregation centers or internment camps are those classified as dangerous enemy aliens or immediate family members thereof. To operate shelter centers for those who simply wish to be cared for during wartime would be granting a special privilege. I cannot agree that it is the privilege of any group to continue to be supported in a special center by the tax-payers of this nation in time of war, particularly as I am convinced that the granting of such a privilege would be against the best interests of that group in the long run.



The decision to close the relocation centers has been made possible and imperative by changing conditions in this country. The danger of invasion of our west coast by Imperial Japanese forces no longer exists. The attitude of the majority of people on the west coast towards people of Japanese ancestry has improved to the extent that it is possible for them to return and live securely. The Congress of the United States in becoming unwilling to appropriate money to operate the Centers when manpower in those Centers is needed in the industries of the nation, and when those Centers are an added burden upon a nation at war. The effect of life in the Centers, the more permanent that effect will be. When conditions change, policies must change. In wartime conditions change, policies must change. In wartime conditions change rapidly, and policies may have to be changed greatly in a short time. All of us, citizens and aliens, must accept these changes when they come. The War Relocation Authority must also accept them.

In the light of information which we now have, the answers to your questions are as follows:

1. If, at the end of the year, the Center is to be closed and there are residents still remaining, will they be "forced out"?

Answer: It is expected that, with all of the helps which are being provided to relocate residents in particular home in a particular community with economic security, it is unlikely that there will be any people left in the Center when the time for closing approaches. If there are, the same care will be taken in relocating those few as is taken in relocating all others, but they will be relocated. There will be no money available after the date set for the closing of the center to provide food or clothing, to pay employee, to provide transportation, electricity, water, sewage disposal, or schools in the Center. Money has been provided maintaining homes in normal communities.

2. Will some Center be maintained for those desiring to remain in confinement for the duration?

Answer: Hereafter the only persons detained will be those designated for detention by the War Department or the Department of Justice. No Center will be maintained for those desiring to remain in confinement for the duration unless they are designated as above.

3. After January 2, 1946, what agency will take over such groups after the dissolution of the WRA?

Answer: Those who are still found ineligible for relocation after review by the War Department and the Justice Department will be segregated in a Center or



Centers (not yet designated) that will ultimately be administered by the Justice Department.

4. If there should be people left in some Center closing before the end of the year who are unable or unwilling to relocate, will they be admitted to Center still being maintained at such time? If not, what provisions will be made for them?

Answer: If the population of a Center is reduced to a few hundred, or a number such that it is not feasible to continue to operate the Center, the Center may be closed before the end of the year. In any case, notice of closing will be given three months before the date of closing in order to give residents an opportunity to complete plans for relocation. It is my understanding that in such cases it is not planned to transfer residents of the closing Center to another Center.

These are the answers to your questions on the basis of the information which we have received from the Director. However, since the questions are of vital concern to many Poston residents, I am taking the liberty of forwarding copies of your memorandum and my reply to Director Myer in Washington for his confirmation or correction.

/s/ Duncan Mills  
Duncan Mills  
Project Director

It is regrettable that the hard work by Arthur Harris in drafting this reply was of no avail, for Okamoto, while reporting on the subject, informed the Councilmen falsely, either deliberately or because of his lack of command of English. During the special meeting of the Unit I Local Council, on ~~Dec~~ January 31, Chairman Okamoto reported that he had written a memorandum of inquiry to Mills, as he had mentioned in the previous meeting, and had received the reply. Without mentioning the detailed argument for the closing of the center in the reply, he stated that he had submitted four questions and had received the answers. "I asked, first, what will happen to the people if they did not relocate by the time the center closes. Project Director They refused to answer that by circumventing the issue. He mere-



ly states that there will be no one left at that time. As my second question, I asked what will happen to those who desire to be confined for the duration. The reply <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ that they will be taken care by the Department of Justice. Then, I asked what agency will take over the WRA centers. The Director states here that the Department of Justice will operate the remaining centers. As my last question, I asked whether the remaining residents of one center at the date of its closure <sup>will</sup> be combined with those at another center. He answers that the remaining residents will be taken care in another center. At the end, he states that the memorandum will be sent to Washington for corrections."

It is difficult to assume that Okamoto could have completely misrepresented the answers in this manner without premeditation, although his report was entirely in Japanese. Nevertheless, it is impossible to imagine that he could gain any benefit by falsely reporting. Nishimoto, who had been consulted in drafting the reply secretly, was shocked in hearing Okamoto's report, but he was compelled to remain silent for fear that it might reveal that he had known the content of the reply in advance.

One of the Councilmen remarked casually, "Well, they are good answers. We don't have much to worry."

Another Councilman said, "The Director said that it must be sent to Washington for correction. He is certainly saying a smart thing. He has laid paths for escape."

Okamoto's report came at the heel of the discussions on the question of sending delegates to the All Center Conference.



It is difficult to understand how the members of the Council reconciled the fact that they had acted in favor of the conference with the content of Mills' reply. It would appear that it was not necessary to send delegates to the conference for making appeals to the WRA against the closing of the centers, if they were willing to be under the Department of Justice, as Okamoto explained. It is very probable that they wanted to remain under the WRA, and did not desire to become internees under the Department of Justice, if they could help it.

Meanwhile, on January 22, the day when Okamoto sent his memorandum to Director Mills, a group of Indian Service officials appeared mysteriously on the project. They were Len Nelson, the former Unit I Administrator and the Assistant Director, Miss Cushman, the former Principal of Unit III High School, Dr. Beaty, the Director of Education for the Indian Service, and another official stationed at the Indian Affairs office at Phoenix. Their presence immediately attracted the attention of the evacuees in the Administration and became a source of many conjectures. In substance, the rumors were to the effect that the Indian Service would again take over the Colorado River Relocation Center and the evacuees would be allowed to remain here.

The evacuee leaders of the Community Council were quick to capitalize on their presence. Okamoto was said to have tried to force Len Nelson reveal some confidential information. As Nelson put it, <sup>Okamoto</sup> ~~the evacuee~~ wanted to hear from him that the Indian Service would take over the center and the evacuees could



stay here if they so desired. "He asked me if the WRA would actually close the centers," Nelson confided in Nishimoto. "I told him I thought so, although I did not know what the WRA would do in detail. He questioned me if the Indian Service would step in and take over the Japanese. I won't give him an answer. No sir."

The old "City Hall Gang" members --- Okamoto, Sasaki, Kawasaki, Yahiro --- gave a dinner party in their honor in the evening, and invited other political leaders such as Y. Katow, Sumida, and Nishimoto. During the party, Yahiro tried his best to obtain some inside information ~~on~~ the WRA and the Indian Service. Kawasaki, too, contributed <sup>his effort</sup> to achieve the aim of getting information by coaxing Nelson to drink glasses of whiskey. A heavy drinker as he was, Nelson refused to become intoxicated. As he confessed afterwards, he could not afford "to get drunk with those guys". The only admission Nelson made was that the Indian Service could not afford <sup>to</sup> let the land become desolate when the WRA liquidated itself. Nelson's statement was soon fabricated by Okamoto and his group to mean that the Indian Service was contemplating to take over the center.

(Nelson told the writer that the Indian Service intended to transfer the Indian School, now at Phoenix, to Poston. In addition, he was delegated with the duty to look over the agricultural tracts, on which his Office had invested ~~a~~ considerable money. He told the writer that the Indian Service wanted to keep the land under cultivation; and for the purpose it was being planned that Japanese be hired for farming in conjunction with the Hopi families to be imported. To Nelson's questions,



the writer replied that there would be at least 5,000 residual evacuees at Poston on December 31, 1946, and the majority of them would be rural evacuees. "That's what I want," said Nelson. "I want farmers."

He added that he was to present the plan of the Indian Service to Director Mills. If Mills' reaction was in any degree agreeable, he said, he would immediately go to Washington to appeal to the Commissioner. In his opinion, the Commissioner could exert enough pressure on Director Myer through Secretary Ickes to have the plan approved.)

The attitudes and opinions of evacuees with regard to the closing of the centers changed little since the end of December, 1944. (RSN: op. cit.) The rank and file in general believed that the center would not be closed as the WRA claimed. In contrast, the political leaders were extremely confused, although they came out with many statements from time to time that the center would be maintained for the duration. Perhaps because of the lack of conviction, they were happy when they received the notification from the Community Council of Topaz that the All Center <sup>Conference</sup> would be called on February 5, 1945. It was told that some of them had stated that they would be able to ascertain from Director Myer, who would be asked to attend, as to the "real intention" of the WRA announcement on the closing of the centers. It was also reported that they were anxious to contact the delegates of other centers to learn about the attitudes of other center residents. The matter was presented in the regular meeting of the Community Council held on Janu-



ary 25, 1945. The minutes of the meeting read in part as follows:

DISCUSSION ON ALL-CENTER CONFERENCE Letter was received from Topaz Community Council regarding progress on the proposed all-center conference. Topaz had recommended the gathering to be held in Salt Lake City tentatively on week beginning February 5, 1945. The first two days would be spent by delegates in preparing conference program with three to four days for official general discussion and decisions. The following was agreed upon after considerable discussion:

- a. Time and Locale --- Since more time is desirable to prepare agenda, Poston will request postponement of date to February 15. Salt Lake City is acceptable.
- b. Expense --- Various suggestions were made to ask for contributions from blocks, residents, etc. to finance the delegates' expense. It was decided that the most practicable would be to utilize the Community Council Finance Committee Fund. Approximately \$125.00 will be allowed to each representatives
- c. Number of delegates --- 2:1:1 ratio, two from Unit One and one each from Units Two and Three.
- d. Method of selection of delegates --- This phase left to the respective Units.

Since the entire residents must be consulted as to what problems they wished to have discussed at this conference, each Unit Council will be requested to hold meetings for this purpose. The suggested agenda and names of delegates from each Unit are to be forwarded to the Community Council by February 8, at which time, they will meet for final preparations.

On January 26, S. Yoshikawa, the deposed Issei Coordinator of the Community Activities Section and now the Public Relations Coordinator of the Community Council, visited both Sumida and Nishimoto to explore on the question of how the delegates be selected from Unit I. Both emphasized the importance of selecting persons who would have the confidence of residents and suggested that the Local Council be asked to devise a method by which such representative persons be chosen by combing the com-



munity.

On January 30, the Block Managers of Unit I discussed the subject of the All Center Conference sponsored by the Togoaz Community Council on a Unit level for the first time. Supervisor Nishimoto reported that the invitation had been received for the conference. He made his stand clear as follows:

"The meeting will be held at Salt Lake City probably from February 15. As I see it, it is held prematurely. The WRA has formulated its new policies for the closing of the centers. Every project administration is geared to one single purpose --- the closing of that center. It has worked out solutions for all problems for relocation. The WRA officials are convinced that their program will succeed.

"Enough time has not elapsed to know how effective or successful the new WRA program will be. We don't know how the WRA will take care of the unemployable and the infirm. We don't know how effective <sup>and</sup> the WRA's efforts to have the evacuees accepted on the West Coast. The WRA is still in planning stage. Its plan of solving evacuees' problems has not been tested yet. A conference with the WRA officials at this time must necessarily be in abstraction. Both sides will not have tangible facts to discuss.

"The WRA is firmly convinced that it can relocate the evacuees now remaining in the centers in one year. It believes that this is the best time to do so. On the other hand, we are convinced that all the evacuees cannot be relocated. We believe that there will be many Japanese who will be here at the time the center closes. The stands of the two sides are diametrically opposite.

"However, this is not an opportune time to appeal to the WRA to examine its policies. The WRA is dead set in carrying out its program. It will not budge. It will not listen to any advice or appeal from the evacuees. It is like a wildly running race horse; it is running to one direction and cannot see any other direction because of blinkers.

"However convinced of its success the WRA might be, there will be a time when the WRA will look back and examine its achievements. There will be a time when it will say to itself that the anticipated results have not been achieved. It is the time when it is vulnerable to advice and appeals from the evacuees. I believe that it will be sometime this summer. Such a conference as proposed now can accomplish most this summer.



"Nevertheless, the conference has been convoked. There is no reason that we should not support it, although I do believe that it is premature. The conference at this time will be beneficial insofar as presenting the attitudes of the evacuees to Director Myer. It will be very useful in assembling information and in exchanging ideas among the delegates from the various centers. The conference should lay foundation for holding the second and the third conferences at a later date.

"I cannot see that the conference will accomplish very much. Director Myer will succeed in selling his ideas to the delegates; and the delegates will not be so successful in selling the pleas of the evacuees to the Director. But this is the first conference of this sort. The second and the third meetings will be able to accomplish much more. In order to have the second and the third conferences, we must have this first conference at this time. The Block Managers cannot act as the standard bearer for the cause right now, but they should support the cause and assist the Councilmen as much as possible.

"Accordingly, the method of selecting the delegates from this Unit should be determined by the Local Council. Although the Block Managers were consulted as to the method, I expressed my opinion that it should be determined by the Council. The Council will convene tomorrow and probably refer the matter to the individual blocks.

"I have expressed my opinion on the conference. I have stated the stand the Manager should follow. I hope that you will approve this policy."

When Nishimoto concluded his speech, expressions approving his statements were heard among Block Managers such as "That's very good," "It is a good idea," and "We should follow that." Nishimoto then continued, "I see that you are in agreement with my thinking. I shall consider then that all of you have agreed with me."

Yanamoto of Block 11 stood up and asked, "I have received letters from three friends of mine at Manzanar that they would be soon coming to Poston. I have been told that the Manzanar residents would be transferred to Poston. Is there anything in the story?"

"I heard the same thing," Ishikawa of Block 21 said. "My



block people say that some of them received letters from Manzanar about the same thing."

"There is no indication at present that the WRA would combine centers," Nishimoto replied. "On the contrary, everything points out that the WRA will do all in its power to close the centers. At present Director Myer is absolutely against transferring evacuees from one center to another. Such rumors have been rampant from time to time; to me it sounds like the story we have heard here that Poston will be made into a rest home for the wounded soldiers."

Ishikawa inquired what the Managers should do in presenting the residents the conference proposal when they believed that it would be of no value. Many residents had heard about the proposed conference from their friends in other centers, from the vernacular press, and from others at Poston, Ishikawa reported. "They have been making all kinds of statements against the conference. They have been vociferous in maintaining that the conference would not accomplish anything and it would be useless to send delegates from Poston."

Supervisor Nishimoto instructed Ishikawa that if the majority of the block people believed that there would be no use to send the delegates and voted against the conference, that should be the stand of that block. "If the block people will have decided against ~~the~~ participation in the conference, it will become the stand of the block," Supervisor explained. "The Councilman from that block will have to be directed by the mandate of his people. He must report it to the Council and must act accordingly."



Another Block Manager reported that in his block there were several persons who were blatantly opposed to the conference and they might carry away the proposed block meeting.

At this point, Hamashima of Block 60 asked what would happen if the majority of the blocks voted to oppose the conference. "If the majority of the blocks in this Unit were found to be in opposition to the meeting, the Local Council would be required to vote against the decision of the Community Council, which had voted in favor of the proposal," Nishimoto replied. "If that happened, the Community Council would be forced to rescind and reverse its stand. No Council can act against the will of its people. It would certainly indicate that the Councilmen had acted against the people when they had voted for the proposal. It would also mean then that they are not true representatives of their people. However, as I have stated earlier, we should support the proposal as much as possible. There is nothing that we must obstruct the plan. The expenses are to be paid out of the Community Council fund. The fund is to be used for a good cause."

"If the Councilmen are forced to reverse their stand, they will lose their face," Ishikawa commented. "That will not be so good."

"The issue must be decided on its own merits," Nishimoto retorted. "It must not be decided on whether or not the Councilmen will lose their face."

"Well, I suppose that the Councilmen will bring the proposal back to the blocks and will try to obtain the consent of the people," Ishikawa said, as if talking to himself. "They



will act as chairmen of the block meetings and will successfully swing the people. That will be their job."

Thus, the Block Managers of Unit I agreed to support, although not aggressively, the proposal of the Community Council for participation in the conference. As indicated during the discussions, the residents in general had not shown any interest in the matter. Most of them had not been informed of the proposal; some of them had probably learned about it, but they were not in any way concerned about it. On the other hand, the few who showed any concern regarding the proposal were vociferously negativistic and found a great satisfaction in influencing their listeners against the proposal for participation. Indeed, there were enough evidences at this time that the anti-conference elements could swing the community if they pooled *together*. ~~The~~ Success or ~~the~~ failure of the proposal depended on an alignment of the various evacuee political factions during the ensuing several days.

Some of the well informed appointed personnel were aware of this situation. They knew that the evacuees close to the Community Council were strongly for the conference, whereas "the evacuee community was generally opposed to the idea." It is no wonder that they believed the evacuees were opposed to the meeting, because the negativistic sentiments were expressed loudly in the community. Their evacuee friends had probably heard these sentiments expressed and reported to them. As a result, the Administration was not concerned with the proposed Adl Center Conference. They concluded that the residents would not support the meeting wholeheartedly. They reasoned that the



delegates selected would not have the confidence of the residents. Consequently, the decisions reached ~~by~~ and the resolutions passed by the conference of such delegates would not have popular support; the people would <sup>be</sup> divided among themselves pro and con. The WRA should not fear the conference, they thought, because the delegates would be discredited in the eyes of public after the meeting. It was told here that the attitude of the Administration in minimizing the effectiveness of the All Center Conference was shared by the WRA headquarters at Washington.

The WRA officials were justified in predicting that the usual procedure in the past of selecting such delegates would be followed and they would not be true representatives of the community. The leaders close to the Community Council were contemplating to propose to the Local Council a plan by which the two delegates be selected in a special conference of the Councilmen and the Special Block Representatives, each block sending one representative for the sole purpose of conferring on selection. According to the political trends at this time, the participants of such a joint conference would nominate in all probabilities the following six evacuees:

Yoshitaro Katow, the Chairman of the Executive Board

Gyosuke Iseda, the Vice Chairman of the Community Council

Minory Okamoto, the Chairman of the Unit I Local Council  
and the City Manager

Richard Nishimoto, the Supervisor of Block Managers

James M. Suzuki, the Vice Chairman of the Unit I Local  
Council

Ayaka Takahashi, a member of the Community Council and  
the sponsor of the proposal

Of these six, Katow and Nishimoto would not accept the nomi-



nations, because they regarded the duty as political liability. In accordance with the Japanese cultural code of propriety, both Takahashi and Suzuki would decline the nominations, too. On the other hand, both Okamoto and Iseda were reported as very anxious to represent Poston at such a national conference. They would be chosen by the nominating committee, for they would be probably the only two who would be willing to accept the duty. Of the two, Okamoto must be regarded as fairly representative of the community, although he had many enemies and did not have enough popular support. However, if Iseda were selected, the people would certainly criticize the delegates as not representing them, for he had elevated himself to the present position as the result of a combination of his ambition and a series of curious circumstances. Thus, at Poston the All Center Conference was headed toward a failure.

By the evening of January 30, Nishimoto was convinced that the meeting was destined to be a failure; he saw that the residents at Poston might be antagonistically divided among themselves on the issue. He was afraid that the WRA would be justified to ridicule the evacuees for not getting together on the vital issue such as this; he deplored to hear from the WRA officials, "I told you so." He feared that chances for holding later meetings in the summer might be jeopardized if the people failed to get behind the conference solidly. The Supervisor realized that he must create quickly among the people an aggressive enthusiasm, although might be artificial, for the national conference. Enough efforts must be given to insure that true delegates be selected to represent Poston. ~~For these aims,~~ <sup>As a panacea,</sup> he



began to toy with an idea of holding a general election in Unit I.

On January 31, the following day, the members of the Unit I Local Council met for their regular meeting to deliberate earnestly on the subject of the All Center Conference. As an advance notice had been sent out to the members informing them of the agenda, all the Councilmen were present --- four of the blocks sent substitutes for their Councilmen. It was probably the first time in the past many months that there was no absentee in a meeting of the Local Council.

First, Chairman Okamoto reported that a letter had been received from the Community Council at Topaz convoking the All Center Conference at Salt Lake City for the week beginning on February 5, 1945. He added as follows:

1. Salt Lake City was accepted by the Community Council as the site of the conference.
2. Poston could not make preparations in time, and postponement until February 15 was asked.
3. Poston was requested to send four delegates. The Community Council decided to proportion them to the three Units in ratio of 2:1:1. That is, Unit I would be represented by two delegates.
4. The Community Council decided to pay each delegate approximately \$125.00 from the Community Council Fund as his expense.
5. Each Local Council was to be asked to work out plans for selecting the delegates from its Unit.

Okamoto continued to explain that the problems for relocation were varied. In his opinion, there were two main groups of evacuees here, viz., those who would relocate and those who would not relocate. Again he subdivided each of the two groups thus:

1. Those who would relocate, satisfied with the relocation assistance grants given by the WRA at present.



2. Those who would be able to relocate if the grants were increased.

And the second group was divided into

3. Those who would refuse to relocate, although they could.
4. Those who could not relocate under any circumstance.

The Chairman explained that problems were varied and complex; one single solution could not found for all these people. He stated that the Topaz letter had contained the itemized requests of the Heart Mountain residents, which had been drafted by the Heart Mountain Community Council for presentation by its delegates to the All Center Conference. The Heart Mountain document, too, divided the problems into two groups --- those for the people who could not relocate and those for the people who would relocate. In his opinion, people who claimed that they could not go out or would not go out would easily change their minds, say, one month from now. He doubted whether people who were saying "Ganbaru" possessed enough courage to stick<sup>it</sup> out here.

The Heart Mountain document read as follows: (The original in Japanese)

- I. The requests of those who could not return to the Coast or who could not relocate elsewhere

Although the exclusion orders of the Western Defense Command have been rescinded and the return of persons of Japanese ancestry has become possible, the present circumstances of center residents indicate that the majority of them cannot relocate. Therefore, they request that they be continued to be protected under the present set-up for the duration

#### The Reasons

- a. The moral and spiritual impairment due to the compulsory evacuation.



- b. The economic foundation that had been built in the past fifty years was completely destroyed.
  - c. During the wartime, racial discrimination, racial persecution, and fear for physical safety.
  - d. Issei have become old. Some of them are without children who can support them.
  - e. Suspicion and lack of confidence for governmental policies due to frequent changes. At the time of evacuation, they were disappointed with the Civil Control stations. At the Pomona Assembly Center and the Portland Assembly Center, the WCC failed to provide the clothing allowance grants. The discrepancies between the contents of the leaflet distributed under the name of Eisenhower and the subsequent WRA policies.
  - f. In the leaflet (page 8, line 29), it was stated that they were required to work for the relocation centers for the duration and fourteen days. Therefore, they are living here with the determination /to remain in the center for the duration and fourteen days./
- II. The requests of those who desired to return to the Coast or desire to relocate elsewhere
- a. They request special protection by the agencies of the Federal Government in order to insure the safety of life and property of all persons of Japanese ancestry who have relocated or have returned to the evacuated areas or who will do so in the future.
  - b. In case they are killed or wounded due to mob violence or individual assault or some other means after they left the centers, they should be indemnified appropriately.
  - c. They request that the Government provide financial assistance for the duration until such time as they can be self-supporting.
  - d. They request that the Government increase the present relocation assistance grants and rescind the punitive clauses thereof.
  - e. They request that the WRA field offices in the important areas be augmented with Employment Division and Legal Division.



- f. They request for those planning to go into farming and other enterprises that the Government through its loan agencies provide loans of necessary capital for long terms.
- g. A public relations agency be established to combat anti-Japanese activities and propagandas
- h. They request that the relocatees be provided with accident and health insurance.
- i. They request that the Government assist the relocatees in obtaining business licences, in reinstituting the eligibility for civil service, and in taking out life, fire, and automobile insurances.

Okamoto thought that the demands of the Heart Mountain people were not quite satisfactory and improvements could be made. He then conferred on the problem of selecting the delegates from Unit I. As expected, he presented the following two plans as his recommendations from which one should be chosen by the Councilmen:

1. The Local Council to select a special nomination committee from among themselves. The committee to select two persons, whose consents should be obtained in advance. The names of the two persons be submitted to the Council for its approval.

2. Each block ~~was~~ to be asked to choose a special representative. The special representatives and the members of the Local Council ~~were~~ to hold a joint conference in order to choose the two delegates. The selection ~~was~~ to be approved by the Local Council.

T. Tanaka of Block 42 agreed that the agenda of the conference be divided into two groups --- the problems involving those who desired to remain in the centers for the duration and the problems involving those who desired to obtain better conditions for relocation. He believed that one of the de-



legates should represent one of the groups and the other <sup>the other</sup> of the two the other group. He argued that one man could not represent the two groups simultaneously, the interests of which were not mutually agreeable. In his opinion, the people who wanted to remain in the center would not trust the delegate who might be planning to relocate or vice versa. "For instance, let us assume that one of the delegates was thinking of relocating in the near future," stated Tanaka. "We can easily imagine that he might be thinking only the interests of his own group. He might not give a damn as to what would happen to those who desire to remain here. That wouldn't be so good."

Eddow of Block 12 (He had <sup>been</sup> recently brought back from retirement during the controversy on the closure of the Mess Hall in Block 12. He was a prominent member of the earlier Councils.) presented the circumstances of his block people. Although admittedly there were many people in the block who did not want to leave the center, there were many others who could relocate if the WRA would give them more assistances. The pleas of these people should be presented by one of the two delegates, he argued.

Yamada of Block 2, however, took a contrary position. He said that the delegates should represent all different groups in the center simultaneously. Such delegates who could represent the interests of the different groups without bias should be selected, and the nominating body should bear the qualification in mind. "If what you say is right, it will mean that Ginjiro Fujiwara (the Presidents of the Oji Paper Company and one of the ministers of the present Japanese cabinet) cannot protect the interests of the poor people. That isn't so. Although he is



a millionaire, he still can represent the poor people adequately. I contend that the delegates should represent all the different factions.

Disorganized discussions followed immediately --- Councilmen arguing in groups of twos, threes, fours --- on the question of whether each of the two delegates from Unit I should represent only one of the other of the two mutually exclusive factions. The trend of the arguments was in favor of the contention that a person could not represent both of the two groups. They were sold on the argument that a person who was planning to relocate could not protect the interests of "sit-tighters" adequately.

Nishimoto then saw an opportunity to argue for his idea of holding a general election. He stated that there were little differences between the arguments advanced by Tanaka and Eddow on the one side and those by Yamada and others on the other side. He claimed that they were missing the main point. "You are arguing an awful lot about different individual problems for different people," Nishimoto stated. "There are not so much differences as you people believe. The approach to these different individual problems <sup>will</sup> ~~could~~ be simple if you analyze why the conference is to be held. Up to the time the WRA announced the policy of closure of the centers, we did not have these problems to discuss. Now that the WRA announced the policy, these many different problems arose. That is to say, if the center is kept open for the duration, we don't have these problems. It means that the continuance of the center is the only solution for all these problems."

At this point, many spontaneous remarks such as "That's right,"



"Hear! Hear!" and "That's what I say" were heard from the four corners of the room. "We have problems to discuss and solve, because the WRA has decided to close the center and there are many ~~A~~ people here who cannot go out of the center," Nishimoto went on. "The conference is held primarily for the purpose of finding solutions for these problems --- the problems of those who cannot relocate. We should not forget this point. I have heard some people say that they would relocate if they were given one thousand dollars. Perhaps you have heard similar requests. I hate these people. They are mercenary. They are trying to gain economic advantages at the expense of the unfortunate plight ~~and~~ suffering of those who cannot relocate. The delegates to the conference should not forget that the people want the center to be maintained for the duration. Other requests are incidental. If you accept my arguments, the duty of the delegates is not complicated. Their primary aim is to fight for the people who cannot relocate. Therefore, I propose that the delegates should be chosen to represent all the factions in the center."

Nishimoto contended that the people would have more confidence in the delegates to trust their problems if they had voice in their selection. He proposed that a general election be ~~held~~ <sup>held</sup>. He added that true representatives of the people must be chosen for the conference, because the WRA was skeptical *whether* ~~that~~ the evacuees would have much interest in the conference and whether truly representative delegates could be selected. "If the delegates are chosen in a general election, the WRA is bound to respect them," Nishimoto advised. "The delegates



will have greater weight in dealing with the WRA officials."

<sup>u</sup>  
^ Suzuki immediately argued in support of the idea for an election. He maintained that the WRA must be shown that the residents were solidly behind the conference and the delegates. Other Councilmen followed with their supporting statements. The proposal for election was then adopted without a process of voting.

A long discussion ensued as to the method of the election. Throughout the discussion there was no one <sup>to</sup> <sub>^</sub> doubt that it was the best method of selecting truly representatives persons. One of the Councilmen remarked that he liked the idea, because the Council would not be blamed for choosing persons contrary to the popular will. "If they blame the incompetency of the delegates after the conference, we can say to them that they have elected them and not we."

Out of many methods proposed for the election, the following procedure was adopted:

1. A nominating committee be created composed of nine Councilmen and nine Block Managers. The committee ~~would~~ be instructed as to the date of ~~its~~ meeting.
2. The committee be instructed to nominate seven candidates.
3. The names of the seven candidates be placed on the ballots.
4. The election be held on February 7, 1945.

It was agreed that one Councilman be selected from each Quad for the nominating committee, and the Block Managers' representatives be chosen <sup>from</sup> ~~by~~ among themselves. An election was held to select the nine members of the nominating committee representing the Local Council. The result was as follows:



Quad 1	S. Yamada	Block 2
" 2	G. Iseda	Block 3
" 3	Eddow	Block 12
" 4	Nagase	Block 18
" 5	Amano	Block 27
" 6	A. Takahashi	Block 36
" 7	Fujimura	Block 43
" 8	T. Tanaka	Block 42
" 9	S. Yoshikawa	Block 59

Chairman Okamoto conferred on how to formulate the requests of the Poston residents. Without much difficulty, the Councilmen agreed to take the matter back to their blocks and to ask ~~their block people~~ in block meetings what they wished to be brought up in the conference. Such requests of the various blocks should be submitted prior to the emergency Local Council meeting, which was agreed upon by the Council to be held on the afternoon of February 3 (Saturday). The Executive Board was asked to compile the block proposals to formulate a Unit I proposal. It was also decided that the method of the general election be submitted to the various blocks for their approval.

The emergency meeting for February 3 had been agreed upon for the purpose of officially adopting the general election and the instructions to the Unit I delegates, having been compiled from the various block proposals. The nominating committee was asked to meet immediately following this emergency session in order to select the seven candidates speedily.

Yamada of Block 2 and Yukawa of Block 5 proposed that the instructions to the Unit I <sup>delegates</sup> contain a special request to negotiate with the WRA for the continuance of schools to the last day of the center. (The schools at Poston were scheduled to be closed in June.) They maintained that the parents were greatly concerned with this problem; their worries were so great



that they might be forced to relocate, they argued.

Several Councilmen shouted in unison, "That's what they want."

Chairman Okamoto, too, took up the challenge. He maintained that Myer had not said that the schools would not be reopened in the fall. He had said that the schools would be closed by the end of the present school year, Okamoto explained. "You people worry too much. Don't you realize that that is the aim of the WRA? It is the best trick. The WRA wants to keep the people on the go. It wishes to keep them worried so that they will relocate. Don't worry about too many things <sup>too</sup> far in the future. The best thing <sup>to do</sup> is to sit tight and keep calm."

Okamoto explained that he had seen Maurice Lipian (the Assistant Project Director in charge of Administrative Management) and had asked him if the relocation centers would be operated after this year. Lipian said, as quoted by Okamoto, "It's up to the Congress. We have no money to operate the centers after this year." As Okamoto put it, it was not a great problem, because there was no budget allocations for the relocation centers when Japanese were evacuated from the West Coast. Budgets were immediately appropriated at that time; and the same thing could happen this fall.

"I was talking with one fellow regarding the number of evacuees left behind when the center closes. I said, 'eight thousand.' Mr. Nelson was listening and commented, 'I know a better figure than that. I say, six thousand.'" I asked him how he arrived at the figure. He replied that there were four thousand evacuees who could not relocate and two thousand evacuees



who would not leave the center. I thought he said a smart thing. It goes to show that the WRA people and the Indian Service people all know that it is impossible to close the relocation centers by the end of this year."

The topic of discussion then returned to the block meetings to be held to "ascertain the will of the block people." Okamoto suggested that these meetings be held either on February 1 or on February 2. He further stated that these requests of the blocks be submitted in writing to the Executive Board; the various blocks were asked at the same time to notify whether or not they were in agreement with the election method adopted by the Local Council. On suggestion of a Councilman, Okamoto<sup>o</sup> agreed to have the Heart Mountain document mimeographed and to distribute them to the blocks for their information and guidance in conducting the meetings.

(Analyst French reported on the methods of selecting the delegates from Units II and III as follows:

On Monday, January 29, the Local Council of Camp II met to discuss the plans for the all center conference. During the next several days, block meetings were held in which recommendations as to who should be the delegate and what he should ask for were made. On Thursday, February 1, another Local Council meeting was held. The Council chose John Kubota, the Supervisor of Block Managers, as the delegate. A committee was also appointed to go through the various recommendations of the blocks and prepare suggestions for the agenda of the conference.

In Unit III a still different system was worked out for choosing the delegate. The Councilman from each of the sixteen blocks was to be one member of the committee that did the choosing; each block also selected another member by whatever method it wished to employ. Three men from the Executive Board, the Block Managers' Supervisor, and the Unit Administrator were also to serve as committee members. The committee planned to nominate three candidates, then select the delegate from among them.



The committee met on February 7 and chose Jimmy Takashima, Ex-Chairman of the Community Council.  
Colorado River Relocation Center, Community Analysis  
Section, Report No. 49: Community Analyst Trend Re-  
port from January 29 to February 4, 1945)

Thus, the Unit I Local Council made an important decision to hold a general election. As French correctly put it, never before in Poston had an entire camp voted for a single slate of candidates in this manner; leaders and representatives were <sup>usually</sup> elected on a block basis. (Ibid) It was probably for the first time that the residents of any relocation center <sup>held a general</sup> ~~would~~ <sup>election</sup> ~~vote on such evacuees' initiatives~~ ~~initiated occasion~~. (The Planning Board at Tule Lake, it was told, was established by a camp-wide election; the Community Council of Minidoka is perhaps selected by residents at large. Nevertheless, these organizations and elections had been conceived and assisted by the WRA.)

As soon as the session of the Local Council was over, it became clear that the Councilmen were much in favor of the idea. Even Okamoto, who had been apathetic toward ~~the~~ election, was compelled to share the enthusiasm of the leaders. He admitted to French that he was very much in favor of this method of selecting the delegates than the usual pattern of choosing them from a ~~special~~ small group by a special committee. He explained that its purpose was to protect the delegates by having the conference sanctioned in advance by the general public, and also to strengthen the delegates' position at the conference by this show of support.

The enthusiasm permeated soon into the community. The residents, especially the older people, became election conscious; they debated in groups as to whom they should choose before the nominating committee had ever met to select the candidates. No



person well informed of the Unit I politics doubted that Nishimoto would be elected by a vast plurality. Already during the meeting of the Local Council, his name was mentioned as a strong contender. The Councilman of Block 14, for instance, reported that, during the meeting where his block people had met the night before to vote for or against participation in the conference, they went on record to request the Council to name Nishimoto as one of the two delegates. The Councilman of Block 21, too, reported that his block people had voiced their preference for Nishimoto as one of the two delegates. In subsequent days, <sup>the</sup> popularity of Nishimoto as a delegate mounted rapidly in all blocks --- in some blocks, he was teamed with Katwo, and in some others he was paired with Okamoto.

In spite of the popular demand, Nishimoto was not willing to assume the responsibility of representing Poston at Salt Lake City. He had already expressed his point of view to the Block Managers in their meeting. To many others he confessed privately that he did not want to go to the conference, because it would mean a political suicide; he would be glad to be a delegate if this conference were to be held in June or July. He was convinced that another conference was certain to be held at a later date; and by going to this conference he would eliminate himself from further participation, for the delegates would be bound by the "demands" of the various blocks, which were more than likely to be unreasonable and impractical. There was very little chance that such "demands" might be <sup>accepted</sup> ~~heard~~ by the WRA. As many residents were expecting that the conference would be able to force Director Myer to change the closure



policy of the WRA, they would be greatly disappointed with the result. They would accuse the delegates of incompetency without realizing their own shortcomings. They utterly failed to conceive the difficulty of changing a governmental policy, once that had been formulated.

Nishimoto brought in the members of the Executive <sup>Committee</sup> ~~Board~~, whom he would name as the Block Managers' representatives on the nominating committee, one by one. He talked to ~~them~~ in his private office in confidence as follows:

"It looks as if I am to be elected. I don't want to go. As you realize, the "demands" of blocks would be plenty tough --- something that cannot be accepted by the WRA. That means that I would have to come back empty handed, if I go. The resultant criticisms will be very great, because people expect a great deal from this meeting. When I am criticized like that, you will also suffer. They will say, 'That Supervisor of Block Managers is no good,' or 'What kind of Supervisor do you have any way? Why don't you have a better one.' You know as well as I do, there is no one to take my place.

"I am not shirking from the responsibility of serving the residents. I am trying to save myself until the second conference, where I can be of some use. I am not appealing type. I want to argue and put my points across by driving. As I see it, such tactics are not advantageous ~~in~~ the present meeting. When the people will have made up their minds more definitely, I will be too glad to represent them."

These Block Managers were instructed by Nishimoto to refrain from nominating him when they were chosen on the committee. In addition, he convinced many other Block Managers similarly that he should not be nominated. Instead, the Supervisor argued, ~~that~~ Katow of the Executive Board was the best man and Suzuki should be selected as his team mate. He believed that he had sufficient political strength and influence in the community to "save" Katow even if the conference would have failed and the residents would have become vocally critical of the delegates.



On February 1, Nishimoto sent a memorandum to each of the Managers that he <sup>had</sup> decided to name the members of the Executive Committee of Block Managers <sup>as members of the special nominating committee</sup>, unless the decision be challenged by the noon of the next day. On the next day, he officially designated the nine members of the Executive Committee as the Block Managers' representatives. Again, these Managers came to their Supervisor to ask his opinion as to who should be nominated as candidates. He suggested the following seven names:

G. Iseda; M. Okamoto; A. Takahashi; J. M. Suzuki;  
 Y. Katow; M. Nagai, the first Chairman of the Issei Advisory Board and the former Chairman of the Executive Board (now completely out of power); and  
 H. Nakachi; one <sup>of</sup> the prominent members of the Issei Advisory Board and later the Chairman of the Labor Relations Board. (Both Nakachi and Nagai were close allies of Nishimoto during their declining political days.)

As Nishimoto was an unofficial campaign manager for Katow, Kawasaki, the deposed Councilman of Block 13 and one of the old "City Hall Gang", campaigned earnestly for Okamoto. He visited each of the "Gang" and of his old political friends asking them to aid Okamoto's election. One of Kawasaki's friends, T. Matsumoto, the deposed Councilman of Block 36, came to Nishimoto with the information and stated that he did not support Okamoto. Matsumoto regarded Okamoto's chance as slim and intimated that he wanted to campaign for Nishimoto, who declined his good offer with persuasive arguments. Not only Matsumoto but others in the know predicted that Okamoto would not be elected and indicated their pleasure of seeing his defeat.

As Nishimoto prognosticated on the various occasions, it was already evident what <sup>proposals or "demands"</sup> the Blocks would ask the delegates to take to the conference. ~~as Poston proposal or "demands"~~. During the same Council meeting, the Councilman of Block 32 reported



that the people of his block had met and went on record to ask that "status quo" be maintained. The Concilman of Block 14 informed the Council that his block people too had voted for "status quo". The word "Genjo iji", or "status quo", was heard used frequently by residents during the ensuing several days. Almost all the blocks in Unit I that held block meetings either on the night of February 1 or on the night of February 2 resolved that the delegates be instructed to "demand" from the WRA "the commitment that the centers would be maintained for the duration in the present conditions."

In the summary compiled by the Executive Board from the various resolutions passed by the block meetings, the following result was indicated;

Sixteen blocks voted that the delegates be instructed to fight for the maintenance of "status quo".

Twelve blocks voted, with minor modifications, that the Heart Mountain document be adopted as the demands of the Poston residents. As it has been explained, the Heart Mountain document is divided into two sections, viz., those who could not relocate asking that the centers be maintained with the present set-up and those who would relocate asking nine different assistances. It means that twenty-eight blocks asked for "status quo", while twelve of these blocks had additional requests for those who would relocate.

One block voted that the All Center Conference was not necessary and that no delegates should be sent to it from Poston.

One block failed to reach any agreement.



Seven other blocks failed to submit their decisions by the deadline. (There were thirty-seven Councilmanic districts, as the Hospital had been recognized as one unit with one representative in the Local Council. <sup>Some</sup> ~~All~~ of these seven blocks submitted belatedly that they were in favor of adopting the Heart Mountain document in toto.)

The method of electing the delegates, i. e. a general election, was approved by all the blocks except one which went on record against participation in the conference.

In order to give the reader some idea as to the manner by which these block meetings were conducted, the meeting at Block 45 will be described in detail. This meeting was probably the best regulated and the most orderly. Its description will reveal the basis which was used in every block, although some blocks deviated from it considerably.

on February 1,  
During the evening meal time, the Block Manager of Block 45 announced in the Mess Hall that an emergency general meeting had been convoked to discuss various subjects pertaining to the proposed All Center Conference. The time was set at 7:30 P.M. in the same evening.

Promptly at 7:30 P. M. (In this block, the residents had been trained to gather promptly on time by the former Block Manager. In other blocks, people did not convene on time, and the meetings were held thirty minutes ~~to~~ one hour after the appointed time.) at the ringing of the Mess Hall gong, approximately sixty residents assembled in the Mess Hall. Among them, there were about ten women. All the heads of the families in the block were represented with the exception of one bachelor.



The Block Manager opened the meeting saying that the Local Council had referred two questions to the blocks pertaining to the All Center Conference; these questions must be acted upon by the block people. He then passed several mimeographed copies of the Heart Mountain document and those of the statement by the Local Council. The latter document read as follows:  
(Translated from the Japanese original.)

February 1, 1945

To Whom It May Concern:

Regarding the All Center Conference

On January 25, the Community Council approved the All Center Conference, which was proposed by the Topaz Relocation Center / in order to discuss / the problems of the closing of the centers. The Council resolved to send four delegates from Poston.

Regarding the method of selecting the two delegates from Unit I and the subjects to be presented to and deliberated at the conference, the Unit I Local Council met in an emergency meeting on January 31 and decided as follows:

1. The desires and requests of block people must be submitted to the Unit Council meeting to be held on the afternoon of February 3.
2. The method of selecting the delegates was decided as follows. This must be approved by the blocks.

From among the Councilmen and the Block Managers, one Councilman and one Block Manager shall be selected from each Quad and shall be named as the members of the nominating committee. The nominating committee composed of these eighteen persons shall choose seven candidates from among the residents. The names of the seven candidates shall be submitted to the residents in a general election. The highest two persons in the election shall be designated as the representatives of Unit I and shall be entrusted with full authority.

When we receive your approval, we wish to hold a general election by selecting a day at the beginning of the next week.

The Unit I Local Council



The Block Manager, meanwhile, turned the meeting over to Richard Nishimoto, the representative to the Local Council from Block 45. He stated that he wanted the Councilman to preside over the meeting inasmuch as it was being held by the request of the Council.

Nishimoto explained that the invitations had been sent to the Community Councils of all relocation centers by the Community Council at Topaz. The meeting would probably be called about February 15 at Salt Lake City; four delegates would be sent from Poston, two from Unit I. The total expense for participation would be paid out of the fund belonging to the Community Council. As the meeting was to last for one week, it was expected that several hundred dollars would be required to cover the expenses of the four delegates, Nishimoto reported. The Community Council had appropriated one hundred and twenty-five dollars for each delegate. At this point, Nishimoto sarcastically remarked, "The Community Council has about one thousand dollars. It has been rumored from time to time in the past that certain members of the Community Council misappropriated the public fund to hold drinking parties for themselves. It may be a good idea to use up part of the fund for <sup>a</sup> worthy cause such as this. If they don't have money, such rumors of spending the public money for their own entertainment would not be circulated in the community."

Nishimoto then went into a long narration on the history of the All Center Conference. He traced it as far back as the official WRA announcement of the closing of the centers. Then he reported on the first discussion on the conference during the



regular Local Council session on December 20. He explained in detail that other centers had been planning a similar conference independently. He then reported on the discussion on the subject during the Council session on January 31. As he spoke to the Block Managers in their meeting on January 30, he emphasized that the conference at this time could not be expected to succeed in achieving the aims that some residents wishfully anticipated. However, he stressed the advantages of assembling the delegates from all the centers in one place to discuss their mutual problems. He touched on the topic of current interest in the community --- the refusal of the Manzanar residents to participate in the conference. "Many people have asked me why Manzanar people have refused to participate in the conference. As you know, the representative body of that center voted against participation. Manzanar does not have two representative bodies --- the Council and the Assembly of the Block Managers --- as we have here at Poston. Some people informed me that they thought they could not get anything out of such a conference and deemed useless to participate. Others told me that the Manzanar Council is composed of stooges of the Administration and are afraid to buck up against the Administration. They call their project Director as "Out Great White Father." I was told that they believe Director Merritt knows their problems best and would protect the interests of evacuees without taking up fights themselves. I don't know which version is true. But I know the official interpretation of the WRA in regard to the refusal of the Manzanar Council. The WRA interpretes that the Manzanar people are satisfied with the relocation assistances and grants



and do not desire to make any protest."

Nishimoto stated that the WRA would similarly regard the Poston residents as cooperative and submissive if they voted against participation. He presented the following three questions as the agenda for the evening:

1. Whether or not Poston should participate in the conference.
2. Whether or not the proposal for the general election be approved.
3. To work out requests of the block people so that the delegates be instructed.

The first question was put to a vote, and was decided unanimously for participation in the conference.

For the second question, Nishimoto explained the purpose of holding the election by giving the following two reasons:

1. People were concerned with the problems of the closing of the center. The issue was of a great concern to them. Therefore, they should select the delegates in whom they had full confidence.
2. The WRA had in the past accused evacuees of not being able to get together to choose their true representatives. It has blamed them for not getting behind their leaders. In the various past conferences, the representatives of evacuees had a great difficulty because the WRA officials had reasons to question the legality or the validity of the method by which they had been chosen to represent their people. If a method, which the WRA officials could understand as the valid means of choosing the representatives in a democratic way --- i. e. a general election --- was used, they would have more weight in negotiating.

When the second question was put to a vote, it was also passed unanimously.

Then, Nishimoto inquired those present whether they had any persons in their minds as their nominees. He stated that such nominees could be considered by the nominating committee during its deliberation for deciding the seven candidates.



They immediately nominated Nishimoto and one Bill Ikuno, the former Block Manager and now a worker <sup>with</sup> ~~at~~ the Community Enterprises. Both immediately declined the nominations. Nishimoto especially explained that he could not accept the nomination by giving the reasons as he had given to the members of the Executive Committee. However, their protests fell on deaf ears; the meeting went on record and instructed the Block Manager to submit the name of the two persons to the Local Council as the preferences of the block people. (Since both Nishimoto and Ikuno protested vigorously to the Block Manager, he finally agreed to pocket the recommendation.)

Nishimoto then read the Heart Mountain document. When he finished, he stated as follows:

"I wish to caution you first. Let us not forget the fact that many problems have arisen because the WRA decided to close the center. We have not had these problems until then. That is to say, if the center is kept open for those who cannot relocate, there are no problems.

"I have heard some persons saying that they wanted one thousand dollars per person. Some have said that they wanted five thousand dollars. Let us make this point clear, too. If you are thinking of indemnity for your losses arising out of evacuation, you must wait until the end of the war. Indemnity can be discussed only at the termination of the hostility. If you are thinking these grants in terms of relocation assistance, I believe that you are trying to profiteer at the expense of the human sufferings of those among us less fortunate. The unfortunate ones are entitled to some special grants, no doubt, but just any one is not entitled to such grants."

Nishimoto went on to explain that he could not see how the WRA could close all these relocation centers in one year. He estimated that about 5,000 persons would be left behind at the beginning of September in the three Units at Poston. In order to relocate these 5,000 persons, the WRA would begin to use many



coercive methods.

"The WRA will start putting pressure on you about that time," Nishimoto warned. "But if you really desire to remain in the center, there should be nothing to be afraid of. Once you have decided to stay in the center for the duration, you would not be concerned with the closing of schools. You may have to live with Indians here. But that should be all right, too. One thing I must warn you right now is this ~~fact~~. That is, the WRA regards you ~~as~~ loyal to the United States. It does not care whether you have a secret desire for a Japanese victory, or whether you will return to Japan after the war. This statement was made to us by one of the high WRA officials of the Washington office. It will then mean that the WRA at that time will tell you, 'You are loyal citizens and aliens. You have declared so yourselves. Now, we want you to go on the outside and help to relieve the manpower shortage. It cost a lot of money to carry on the war. We must economize wherever possible. We cannot afford to operate these centers; they cost us too much money.' Be prepared for that time; you must make a decision. I do not believe that the Government would again use the Army to ~~throw~~ you out. I don't expect re-evacuation. But I don't know what the WRA will do with these 5,000 people. The WRA itself does not know the answer, I am sure."

"Well, if we have as many as 5,000 people left here, we have nothing to fear," an Issei known among the residents as an advocate <sup>of</sup> ~~for~~ ~~an~~ indemnity in the amount of \$5,000 per person stated in a relieved tone.

"I think the WRA will change its mind," another Issei with



better intelligence remarked. "It's impossible. I believe it is a good policy to send the delegates to the conference in order to let the WRA know what our problems are. It will be convinced that it is impossible to close these centers."

After these two remarks, the residents of the block present at the meeting remained silent. Nishimoto queried if they understood what to expect in the future; they nodded to this question. He was somewhat surprised by the manner the people behaved; he had anticipated a noisy, quarrelsome meeting, but it turned out to be just the opposite. A few moments afterwards, the Block Manager gained the floor and stated as follows:

"As Mr. Nishimoto stated, we had no problems until the WRA declared its intention of closing the center. It means that everything will be solved if the WRA changes its plan and decides to keep the center for the duration. Therefore, our block should resolve that the delegates should appeal to the WRA for the continuance of the center. We don't need to discuss the second part of the Heart Mountain document. It concerns those who wish to relocate. But they desire to relocate, because they are equipped to relocate. They are not many in number. There is a greater number of people who cannot relocate. For these people, the center is the best place for the duration. Let us vote now. I move that we appeal to the WRA for the maintenance of 'status quo'."

The motion was seconded and was passed unanimously by show-of-hands. Nishimoto again warned them that no obstruction be exercised over those planning to relocate in the future. He advised them to treat those relocating as decently and helpfully as possible.

"Sure, we don't need to hinder those persons relocating," an Issei remarked. "It's the freedom of an individual. It should not be hindered in anyway."

The block meeting was adjourned after one hour and a half,



and , on the next day, the block resolution was transmitted to the Executive Secretary of the Local Council.

~~The~~ Brief accounts are recorded here describing the various block meetings that were held either on February 1 or on February 2. These were reported by the Block Managers.

Block 2: (evacuees from the city of Los Angeles and transferees from the Salinas Assembly Center) The residents adopted the Heart Mountain document as their resolution. They, however, added a request for payment of damages to the properties stored in the warehouse in Unit II and destroyed by the fire on December 25, 1943.

Block 3: (evacuees from Riverside, San Bernardino, Bakersfield, and Delano) A heated debate took place in the meeting between G. Iseda, the Vice Chairman of the Community Council and the representative to the Local Council, and M. Nagai, the former Chairman of the Executive Board and the former member of the Local Council. Iseda defeated Nagai in the last Councilmanic election. Nagai attacked Iseda for voting for participation in the conference. He maintained that no conference of evacuees delegates could accomplish anything to forestall the WRA policy of the center closure. He believed that the best result could be attained by unifying the residents in the center on the program of obstinately refusing to leave the center. In the end, however, the block residents agreed that their wishes were identical with those statements listed in the Heart Mountain document.

Block 4: (Riverside, San Bernardino, Bakersfield, and Delano) The block people resolved that their requests were identical with those listed in the Heart Mountain document. However, they objected to the selection of G. Iseda on the nominating committee representing the Quad. They recommended that the Quad representative be elected by the residents in the Quad.

Block 11: (volunteer evacuees) They adopted the Heart Mountain document. They, however added that the WRA be requested to make an accounting of the wages for evacuees. They claimed that the present \$16.00 and \$19.00 per month were "cash advances" and not established wages. They wanted to receive the balances due to them.

Block 13: (evacuees from Delano, Bakersfield, and Riverside) They resolved that the WRA be asked to maintain "status quo". If, however, they must relocate, they demanded that they be returned to the conditions prior to the evacuation.

Block 14: (evacuees from Bakersfield, San Bernardino, and



Riverside) They demanded the maintenance of "status quo". The meeting was orderly.

Block 15: (evacuees from Arizona and transferees from the Salinas Assembly Center) The meeting was quiet and orderly. They asked that the Heart Mountain document be used as the basis of Poston demands.

Block 16: (transferees from the Salinas Assembly Center) In addition to the various requests in the Heart Mountain document, they requested the following items:

While they were at the Salinas Assembly Center, they failed to receive the clothing allowance grants, which had been promised by the WCC. The grants should be accounted and should be paid.

The facilities of the various loan agencies of the Federal Government should be available to the Issei.

The right to lease and rent land and the right to operate business enterprises should be guaranteed equally to the Issei and the Nisei.

Block 18: (transferees from the Salinas Assembly Center) They asked for the maintenance of "status quo". They stated in their resolution, "Among those attending the meeting, there was no one desiring to relocate."

Block 19: (evacuees from Bakersfield, Lancaster, and the city of Los Angeles) The meeting was heated and chaotic. It was reported that H. Nakachi, the former Chairman of the Labor Relations Board and one of the prominent members of the negotiation committee during the November strike, attacked the present Councilman, S. Sasaki. Inagaki, the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Community Enterprises, came to Sasaki's defense. Nakachi then accused both ~~for~~ a lack of planning with foresight. He wanted some action by the Council to stop relocation completely.

Block 22: (evacuees from San Diego County, Orange County, and the city of Los Angeles) In a heated meeting, they decided that there was not any use in sending delegates to the conference. Most of the residents, they argued, were repatriates and expatriates. There were some violators of the Selective Service Act in the block, and they were rather prominent. They believed that the Poston residents should appeal to the Japanese Government through the Spanish Embassy, and not to the WRA. They argued that they would not leave the center and could not be forced out. Therefore, there was no point in appealing to the WRA by holding this conference.

Block 39: (evacuees from Imperial Valley and transferees from the Salinas Assembly Center) They voted for "status



quo" in an orderly meeting.

Block 42: (evacuees from Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley) They voted for "status quo". They also resolved that Yoshitaro Katow, a resident of the block, be considered by the nominating committee as one of the candidates.

Block 43: (evacuees from Orange County) They had a heated and disorderly meeting. Many of them considered themselves as internees for the duration and did not see any necessity of leaving the center. They argued that they were willing to be removed to the Detention Camp if necessary. Others argued that a direct appeal be made to the Spanish Consul. The block people failed to reach any agreement and the meeting was adjourned in chaos.

Block 46: (evacuees from the city of Los Angeles) They decided to ask the WRA to pay each person a grant of one thousand dollars, if they are to be forced out of the center.

Block 53: (evacuees from Imperial Valley) They adopted the Heart Mountain document as their requests. They requested the Council to include one or two each on the nominating committee from among the Christian ministers and the Buddhist priests.

Block 60: (evacuees from Imperial Valley) They also adopted the Heart Mountain requests. In addition, they asked the delegates to negotiate with the WRA for the continuance of schools while the center is maintained.

As scheduled, the emergency session of the Local Council was held on the afternoon of February 3 (Saturday). The Executive Secretary Arita, declared that all the blocks that had transmitted their decisions by the deadline had agreed that a general election be held to select the delegates from Unit I. One block (Block 22), however, voted against the election, because the block people had voted against participation in the conference. Okamoto read the detail of the procedures for the election into the minutes, and declared that the election had been approved by the blocks.

Secretary Arita, then, announced that sixteen blocks had voted for "status quo" and twelve others voted to adopt the requests in the <sup>a</sup>Hart Mountain document as their ~~requests~~. T



There were many recommendations for modification and addition to the Heart Mountain demands, Arita reported. One block failed to reach any agreement, and one block voted against participation, he announced.

Okamoto then consulted the body as to what should be done about the recommendation from Block 53 asking that the Christian ministers and the Buddhist priests be represented on the nominating committee. A short discuss<sup>ion</sup> was held on the matter, and the Councilmen agreed that there was no time to contact the religious groups for the purpose, for the committee was meeting immediately after the Council meeting.

The next recommendation that was discussed among the Councilmen came from Block 30. It requested that all the seven candidates appear on the Block 4 outdoor stage to give their respective opinions on the WRA policy of closing of the centers. The reco~~m~~mendation stated that such a meeting was essential to give the voters opportunities to determine who were the best qualified delegates. The Councilmen, however, decided that this was not proper under the present situ<sup>ation</sup> in camp, for most of the people were in agreement in one way or another that the center should be maintained. In addition, they considered, the candidates were being asked to do some favors for the community at the expense of personal inconveniences; they would be happier if they were not asked to represent the center at the conference.

The last reco~~m~~mendation discussed came from Block 3. It stated, "When the delegates come back, we want to have them come to our block and make their report. In the past, we were usually



ordered to assemble in such a place as Block 32 Mess Hall by official notices. We don't want this to happen again. At least they should be polite enough to come to the blocks to make their report to the residents." The Councilmen, however, agreed that it was physically impossible to hold a series of meetings from block to block. They agreed to compromise with a suggestion from a Councilman that the people be asked to assemble at the Block 4 outdoor stage for hearing the report of the delegates after the conference.

Chairman Okamoto stated that most of the blocks agreed to adopt ~~a~~ a part of or the whole of the Heart Mountain document. But there were several modifications and additions requested by the various blocks. He instructed the Secretary and the Executive Board to compile these additions and to incorporate them into the requests stated in the document so that the Poston requests be formulated in time for presentation to the meeting of the Community Council of February 8.

Okamoto then reported that the representative of the Spanish Embassy, Captain Martin, would arrive at Poston on the evening of February 8. The Vice Consul stationed at San Francisco was to remain at Poston for two days --- February 9 and 10.

"In the past, it has been a practice to ask the blocks to hold meetings so that people will formulate what they want from the Spanish Consul. On this occasion, however, I don't see any necessity of doing so. The paramount question to all of us right now is the closure of the centers. If the blocks held their meetings, they would ask the same things as they did in making demands for the Salt Lake conference. I don't see any



sense to it. Therefore, I believe we should form a special committee from ourselves in order to work out questions and requests to be presented to the Spanish Consul."

Several Councilmen expressed their point of view that they could not see much use in asking anything to the Consul. One Issei Councilman pointed out, "We have asked many things in the past. But we did not see any results. You ask a certain thing today. ~~When~~ you receive his answer, it will be after the summer. "

"The Spanish Consul is no good. He can't do anything for us. We are not his people, so he doesn't care about us," another Councilman commented

"Oh, it will be a same old story," another Councilman remarked disgustedly.

At the suggestion of Nishimoto, the matter of framing the questions and requests was given to the Committee on Public Relations. Okamoto instructed the Committee to meet in the morning of February 4 (Sunday).

The meeting of the Local Council was adjourned soon after Okamoto reported on the memorandum received from Mills regarding the questions which he had submitted. (Supra, page 23 --- erratum, line 30 --- January 31 should read February 3)

Immediately afterwards, at 3:00 P. M., the nominating committee composed of eight Councilmen and nine Block Managers met in the same conference room to nominate the seven candidates. (Block Manager-Councilman Fujimura of Block 43 had been chosen on the committee to represent Quad 7, but he resigned during the Council meeting. He stated that he was not



qualified, because his block had failed to agree on any one decision, let alone for participation in the conference. His resignation was accepted without taking a vote. The other Councilmen in the same Quad, however, declined to serve on the committee, saying either that they were too busy and could not stay as they worked in the Mess Halls or that they did not believe well qualified, because they did not know enough people in camp. Therefore, Quad 7 was not represented.)

According to one of the Block Managers who participated in the discussion of the committee, G. Iseda was chosen as the chairman. Then the members discussed for great length as to how the candidates be selected. In the end, they agreed that each of the committee members write the names of seven persons on a piece of paper whom they believed should be the candidates. Again, on the question of whether or not the acceptance of the <sup>a</sup> candidates be requir<sup>r</sup>ed before they printed the ballots was argued for a long time. One faction contended that such acceptance should be obtained, because it would be very embarrassing if a person had <sup>been</sup> elected and afterwards declined to accept the result of the election. The other faction, on the other hand, argued that the persons chosen as candidates would not accept the nomination, because "no one wanted to go to the conference. Besides, it would not be nice to accept the nomination at the first time. When Mr. Kato was chosen as the chairman of the Executive Board, we had to visit his home several times before he accepted the position. We cannot afford to spend so much time. Furthermore, as I see it, we would be lucky if two or three of the seven candidates accepted the nomination after



our repeated beggings. That will mean that we must hold meeting after meeting in order to produce the seven nominees."

The members realized that there was not sufficient time to ask for the acceptance of the seven candidates when they were named, for the election was to be held on February 7, and agreed to take a chance in hoping that all the candidates would not decline when their names were printed on the ballots.

The election was held according to the rule which they had agreed, the Block Manager-informant reported. The result was as follows:

A. Takahashi	17 votes (He collected all the votes possibly cast for him. It means that He cast one vote for himself.)
Y. Kato	16 votes
M. Okamoto	16 votes
J. M. Suzuki	16 votes
G. Iseda	11 votes
M. Nagai	11 votes
T. Tanaka	10 votes

These seven men were chosen. Some of others with less number of votes were as follows:

R. Nishimoto	8 votes
Yimmy Yahiro	4 votes

~~Some~~ <sup>those</sup> with less than four votes included such persons as T. Sumida (Unit I Administrator) with two votes and K. Matsumoto (the Chief of Police) with two votes.

T. Tanaka, however, declined to accept the nomination. (He was serving on the committee.) He stated that he was on the detainee list of Department of Justice and could not leave the center. As Tanaka's declination was judged as legitimate, he was taken off the list and Nishimoto was now included among the candidates. However, Manager Murakami of Block 30, who had been instructed by Nishimoto, spoke up to inform the others that



the Supervisor had declared definitely that he would not accept the nomination. "We, the Block Managers, understand his stand on this issue," said he. "That is the reason that none of the Block Managers here voted for him."

"No wonder," Yoshikawa was quoted by the informant as saying. "I thought something was funny, because he only received eight votes."

A. Takahashi then declared that he did not wish to accept the nomination, because he was in ill health. After a lengthy discussion, the committee members decided to ignore these protests. "Let's take a chance," one of the members said. "Maybe Nishimoto will be willing to go if he was elected."

Yoshikawa was instructed by the committee to prepare the ballots. It was understood by them that the established regulations would be used for the general election.

On the evening of February 3, the Poston Poetry Club, the publisher of the Poston Bungei, the only literary magazine here, held a banquet at the Block 32 Mess Hall in order to entertain the regular contributors and others connected with the organization. While waiting for the banquet to commence, Nishimoto was informed by Secretary Arita that he had been nominated. The Supervisor was angry. He immediately approached Sasuga, the Manager of Block 2, who served on the nominating committee, and accused him of "selling him down the river."

"We did everything possible," Sasuga apologized. "Mr. Murakami got up and asked them to take off your name. But they refused. As you should know, none of the Managers cast his



vote for you. The eight votes came from the Councilmen. Now that you have been nominated, you better decide to go to the conference."

As Nishimoto saw the futility of arguing, he changed the subject and queried, "Are you sure Katow would accept the nomination?"

"We are sure of that," replied Sasuga. "The meeting held at Block 42 voted to recommend that Katow's name be placed on the ballots. Katow was present at the meeting, and he did not say anything at that time. It would mean that he is willing to be nominated."

A little distance away, Nishimoto observed Katow being congratulated by some Issei for having been nominated. To this, Katow was heard to say, "I haven't accepted the nomination. I have <sup>not</sup> said yes or no. I don't know what I will do about it yet."

Katow again repeated the same remark to several others when he was congratulated.

As they were asked to take their places at the table, Nishimoto sat next to Katow. He asked cryptically, "With whom would you go?"

Without giving him a chance to reply, Nishimoto continued, "Is Suzuki all right?"

"He is all right," replied Katow.

"I will try," Nishimoto answered mysteriously

As Nishimoto pointed out on several occasions, he saw the importance of creating the utmost interest in the community for the election. He was mischievously anxious to "show up"



the WRA, let alone for the purpose of giving the delegates the maximum prestige. He had been irked by the remarks of some of the WRA officials that evacuees were not capable of conducting their political life in a democratic way. He thought that this was a best opportunity to convince them that the Poston people were politically mature. He had known, too, that French had seen Director Mills to inform him that the people would be indifferent to the conference. "I want to thumb my nose at French, Powell, and some others," Nishimoto confessed to his close friends.

In order to attain his purpose, Nishimoto realized two possible means, viz.,

1. To have the morning of February 7, the election day, declared a project holiday for Unit I.
2. To stir up the Block Managers for the election during their meeting on the afternoon of February 6, the day prior to election.

The Supervisor prepared a memorandum to Director Mills asking him to grant a half-day holiday to evacuee workers in Unit I, other than those in the essential positions, on the morning of February 7 in order to allow them "to exercise their franchise." He obtained the signatures of Chairman Okamoto of the Local Council and Unit Administrator Sumida besides his own, and presented it <sup>to</sup> Mills. When he looked at it, Mills remarked, "A holiday?"

"Yes, why not?" Nishimoto replied. "Didn't Mr. Myer say that he will assist the All Center Conference in every way possible, although he will not pay the expenses of the delegates?"

"All right," said Mills reluctantly. "All right."



Having disposed the matter of project holiday, Nishimoto faced the Block Managers on the afternoon of February 6 in their regular meeting. He briefly accounted the results of the meetings in the various blocks over the proposals pertaining to the All Center Conference as reported during the emergency meeting of the Local Council on February 3. Then he explained the following rules for the general election:

1. The election should be held in the Block Managers office on February 7, from 8 A. M. to noon.
2. Those eighteen years of age or over are eligible to vote. They must be bona fide residents of the block.
3. Each voter must vote for two persons on the ballot. The ballot with a mark for one person is valid, but that with marks for more than two persons is void.
4. The Block Manager and the Councilman should act as the election committee for the block. In case either one appears on the ballot as a candidate, he must be substituted by the chairman of the Block Council or a member of the Block Council approved by the Block Council.
5. The ballots must be counted by the election committee and the counts must be certified by the committee and submitted to the office of the Local Council by 5 P. M. on the same afternoon.

The Supervisor then explained the importance of having a successful election in order to show the WRA that the residents were greatly concerned with the closing of the center and that they were solidly behind the All Center Conference. "This is the only means for the residents to show that they are worried about their future. Most of the blocks went on record that they want the center be maintained for the duration. If that is what they want, they must cast their votes for the delegates. This election is giving them a chance to voice their protest to the WRA. By voting they will be registering their protest. They



will be voicing their endorsement of the platform."

"Now let us suppose that ~~the~~ residents were indifferent about the election," Nishimoto continued. "Such a thing can happen easily. We know that from our experience in the past. If that happened, I am afraid of the consequence. The WRA will say to us that the Poston people are not supporting the delegates. Nor are they in agreement with the Poston platform, the WRA will say. It will be interpreted by the WRA that we are divided among ourselves. It will be a great shame. It will mean that we are again exposing one of the weaknesses of the Japanese; it will expose that the Japanese cannot agree among themselves and cannot get behind any one thing. We must avoid this at any cost. We must show the WRA that the people are unanimously behind what we have decided among ourselves. We must indicate that we are unitedly supporting our delegates. Let us get behind this election. Whether we succeed or fail, that will depend on our efforts. If the Block Managers try hard enough, we cannot fail to bring ~~in~~ the most successful election Poston has ever had. I expect each block to turn in at least thirty-five ballots; it will mean that the total ballots cast in Unit I number about one thousand. If we have one thousand ballots, ~~that~~ that will be enough."

The Managers, however, declared that they should aim for a greater turn out. Some of them declared that the <sup>blank</sup> ballots, which had been distributed to them earlier in the morning, were not quite enough. (Each block had received one hundred <sup>blank</sup> ballots.) They requested that additional ballots be sent to them in order to take care of all the eligible voters in the larger blocks.



The Supervisor was surprised that the Managers showed a great interest in the election. Nevertheless, he was hoping for the best without optimism, for he knew that the residents had never shown any great interest for elections in the past.

Then Nishimoto instructed the Managers that they should do everything possible within their power not to elect him. He reminded <sup>them</sup> that he had not been enthusiastic about the conference from the beginning, because he thought that its timing was poor. He emphasized that no one could expect the WRA to change its policies as the result of this conference. "As I told you again and again, we must not expect too much out of this conference. ~~==~~ Don't expect for a moment that the delegates will outtalk Dillon Myer and succeed in making him to announce that he will change his policy of the closing of the centers. It cannot be done. On the other hand, many of the people here are expecting just that. They believe that these delegates can influence the Government just like that. They think that the delegates can change a national policy as they will sometimes change a project policy. They don't seem to know the difference between a national policy and a project policy. I know for sure that the result of this conference will not satisfy these people. They will be very loud in attacking the delegates as incompetent and ineffective. I do feel my obligation to the delegates. It is my job to keep the residents informed as to what they should expect and what they should not expect."

Nishimoto went on to argue that he wanted to keep the public sentiment under control so that the delegates could return to Poston without fear of facing a hostile community. He stated that



he was not shirking a responsibility; he expected a second and a third conference of this nature, and would be anxious to attend those meetings. He explained that he could be of more value to the community if he avoided the first conference preferring the later conferences.

Nishimoto reported that he had not received an official notification of nomination yet, although he had been verbally informed. He stated that as soon after such a notification had been received as possible he intended to declare that he declined the nomination. "There isn't any use in voting for me, because I am not going," Nishimoto concluded.

Many of the Managers commented that they were doubtful as to how much they could succeed in influencing voters. They remarked that a general sentiment in the camp had already shaped up for electing Nishimoto. "I don't want <sup>to</sup> tamper with the voters. That is not fair," one of them protested.

"This is hard. You are already elected. We know what the people are thinking," another Manager remarked.

"I am not kidding you," Nishimoto retorted. "I am serious. I mean what I have said. If I am elected and I am forced to go, there is no other choice but to resign. I will quit my job as your Supervisor and then will go to the conference. I know that the result of the conference cannot satisfy the residents. I am willing to face the odium and attacks of the people, but I am not willing to see that you Managers are discredited because of my failure. I will not ask you to tamper with the voters, but you can at least tell them that I have withdrawn."

"I heard of a fellow campaigning for his election, but I



have never heard of a fellow working for his own defeat in an election," a Manager ~~slad~~ shaking his head.

"Well, at Poston we do many unusual things in a bigger and better way," Nishimoto replied in a humorous manner.

Soon after the meeting of the Block Managers, the Executive Secretary of the Local Council, H. Arita, heard Nishimoto had mentioned during the meeting that official notifications had not been sent to the nominees. He immediately prepared the official notifications and sent them to the seven candidates. Nishimoto in turn sent a memorandum in the same afternoon to the Local Council asking that his name be withdrawn from the ballot.

It was reported afterwards by several competent observers ~~afterwards~~ that the other six candidates were proud of the fact that they had been nominated. Of Nagai, for instance, Unit Administrator Sumida reported thus:

"I met Mr. Nagai this morning (February 6). You know that he argued and fought Iseda during the meeting at Block 3. He was against the conference. Now he has changed. He is for the conference. I guess that's because he was nominated. It must have been a surprise to him, too. He did not expect to be nominated, I am sure. He thinks that the Block Managers got behind him and succeeded in nominating him. He thanked me profusely for that. He wanted me to convey to the Managers that he appreciated it. He was all in smile. He looked awfully happy.

"He hasn't much of a chance to be elected. I think he knows it. But the fact that the Managers nominated him made him very happy. He thinks that his anti-Council stand was vindicated. That was a good thing after all, because he has been a down hearted man after he was kicked out of the Executive Board."

It is interesting to point out at this point that Sumida was disappointed that he had not been nominated. An intimate friend of his in the same block commented that he had been ex-



pecting ~~that he would~~<sup>to</sup> be nominated. Sasuga, the Manager of Block 2 adjoining Sumida's block, remarked thus:

"I know Sumida wants to go to the conference. But he doesn't know that he hasn't a chance. He is not aggressive enough. He is just a nice, quiet fellow. Even in his own block, people don't say nice things about him. I was told that he had refused to take his turns in the Mess Hall, although everyone else in the block is doing it to help the manpower shortage. He said he was too busy. I guess he got a kind of swell headed, because he became Unit Administrator."

Okamoto was confident that he would be elected with his color flying, according to a reporter of the Poston Chronicle. He was certain that he would get the most number of ballots. "But I don't know," said the reporter amusedly. "I have my doubt."

A. Takahashi, too, was confident that he would be elected. It was reported that he had told his friends that he was making plans for the trip.

Suzuki, on the other hand, was uncertain about the result of the election. He was reported to have confided that he was not well known in the community and doubted if he could be elected. "I am willing to go, but I am not sure if I will be elected," the informant quoted Suzuki. "I live in the Hospital and I don't know enough people, especially in the country blocks."

Of all the candidates, Y. Katow was <sup>justifiably</sup> confident of his election. His confidence was indeed justified, because he had been informed by Nishimoto that the Block Managers would be supporting him. He knew that the Supervisor had contacted various Block Managers and had instructed them to aid election of Katow-Suzuki combination. "I guess if any candidate pulled more than a half of the ballots he can't refuse the job," Katow confessed



to one of his colleagues.

On the eve of the election, therefore, many observers prophesized that with Nishimoto out of the picture Katano would be elected with a vast plurality, while the second place would be contested bitterly among Okamoto, Suzuki, Nagai, and Takahashi. They also prognosticated that the turn out for the election would be very heavy; some of them went farther to say that the total number of votes cast would be the heaviest in the Poston history. Their expectation was sound in the light of the development. The Block Managers had been convinced by Nishimoto that the degree of success of the election would be adjudged by the number of ballots cast. They had been advised to use the argument that each ballot would be considered as a protest against the policy of the closing of the center. The voters were to be told that they must vote if they wanted the center to be kept open. With such arguments they could not help but respond.

The majority of residents were still convinced that the center should not be closed. At the beginning of February, as in the latter part of December, they believed that the WRA must be appealed to in order to fulfill their wish of remaining in the center for the duration. During the month of January, there was hardly any news which might influence these residents favorably towards relocation. On the contrary, the news and information brought in from the outside --- from the newspapers and from the evacuees who had visited California and <sup>by</sup> the letters from the Caucasian friends of evacuees --- were generally unfavorable; in fact, they contributed to ag-



gravate the worries and anxiety of evacuees as to their future and their fear of the outside. Paramount in the minds of these evacuees were the several incidents of violence toward Japanese, which had been reported sensationally in the newspapers, especially in the vernacular press. They talked about the shooting of a restaurant operator at Wells, Nevada. They discussed the beatings of several Japanese at the depot of Caldwell, Idaho, where a mob of several Caucasians attacked the Nisei who were departing for the active service and their friends. The Doi case of Placer County, where the Japanese was shot ~~at~~ and his house was the object of an attempted dynamiting, was an absorbing topic of conversation for the evacuees. Many opponents of relocation were strongly reinforced; they were able to say proudly, "I told you so" and "This is no time to go out."

The reports of the evacuees who had made trips to California were in general unfavorable, too. Although some of them were able to say, "It's not so bad. It was much better than I had anticipated", others complained of the acute shortage of housing, to say the least. Many of them reported that they had noticed a strong current of racial animosity, although they were willing to add that they might have been overly sensitive. One of them who had visited Orange County was quoted by an informant as follows:

"The Nitta family is not doing so well. They were keeping themselves to their own farm. The gang which had intimidated George Iwakoshi (for Nitta and Iwakoshi, RSN: op. cit.) visited Nittas. They tried to intimidate them, too. The mob said that they wouldn't be safe to stay there and told them to go back to the camp. Of course, Nittas spotted some of the mob and reported to the WRA at Los Angeles the next morning. Just the same, it isn't any<sup>too</sup> pleasant."

M. Okamoto quoted Itaru Kubota, the Chariman of the Community



Council, who had visited Fresno to make preparations to take his family back, as follows:

"Somehow people found out that I came back to Fresno to operate the hotel I own. One night, a group of about thirty men came to my hotel. Two of them acted as their spokesmen. They tried to scare me. They said it wouldn't be safe for me to stay in the city and told me to get back to the center. I was scared.

"The next morning, I reported it to the WRA office. Mr. Fisher (the WRA field officer) came over and asked the detail. I had the numbers of some of the automobiles, and I gave them to him. He then went to see these people and told them that he would turn them in to the FBI if they did not behave. Those people were frightened, because Fisher rode in an automobile with ~~the~~ Federal Government license plates."

About this incident, Okamoto commented thus:

"I don't think there is anything to be afraid of. They wouldn't try to hurt you; all they are interested in is to scare you. But it is unpleasant just the same. I don't like the feeling of expecting something unpleasant like that to happen any moment. A thing like that will be constantly on your mind."

There were others who reported their unpleasant experiences of lesser magnitude. There was a well-to-do Issei, who visited his Caucasian friends in Los Angeles. He said regretfully, "I visited about five of my Caucasian friends. I was rather intimate with them before evacuation. Two of them were very unfriendly. They told me that they did not want me at their homes again; they told me to stay away from their places. Three others were all right in a way; but they were not as friendly as ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> used to be. One of the three told me frankly that he was glad to have me come over to his place, but he was afraid of his neighbors. He said that his neighbors would not understand and he might be ostracized by them. He begged me not to come to his home too often."



Another Issei who was listening to this story commented that he had heard similar experience narrated by two other persons. This sort of information created an impression among many residents that the pressure of neighbors was so great that even their pre-evacuation friends were not dependable.

This belief was further strengthened by the letter coming to evacuees from their pre-evacuation friends in California. These letters invariably advised the evacuees that they would be "too happy to have you come back here immediately. But the general sentiment in the community was very antagonistic towards the Japanese people. There are many people whose sons were killed or wounded in the Pacific. They don't understand you people like we do. I can't advise you to return immediately for your own good. It is much better if you waited a few months until the sentiment becomes better." (Corlies Carter was aware of these letters, too. He commented that these letters were being written by their so-called Caucasian friends. They were the people who had been benefitted economically by the evacuation. Some of them might be using the land belonging to the Japanese and might be making money. Some others of these people might be living in <sup>the</sup> houses belonging to the Japanese for nominal rent. They were economically motivated to say that they would not advise for the immediate return of these evacuees. Nishimoto, however, reminded Carter that there were many Caucasians who sincerely believed that it would not be safe for the Japanese to return immediately. It was not inconceivable at all that these sincere friends of the Japanese heard several hostile remarks expressed against the Japanese and became justifiably alarmed for



the safety of the Japanese.)

Thus, at the beginning of February, the majority of the residents were opposed to relocation. They were afraid to go out of the center to establish their permanent homes on the outside anew. Within the two months after the official promulgation of the policy of closing of the centers, there was very little to ~~minimize~~ <sup>alleviate</sup> their fear of the outside. There was no stimulant to revitalize their ambition for establishing their independency. ~~The Time lapsed~~ that would ordinarily heal most of the resultant scars from the jolts of the official announcement had failed to offset the effects of the discouraging reports from the outside. It is no wonder that they believed tenaciously that the center should not be closed. They did not desire to leave the center for the duration; they wanted to change the WRA policy of ~~the~~ closing of the centers if they knew how.

This desire of the residents to remain in the center for the duration was the focal point of the discussions between the representative of the Spanish Embassy, Captain Martin, and the representatives of the residents. It was expressed again and again in one form or another during Martin's visit. (It is <sup>that</sup> true <sup>^</sup> at this time ~~that~~ the negative or the negativistic sentiments were heard less frequently. No longer were the expressions and emotion of the people regarding the problem of ~~the~~ closing of ~~of~~ the center intense and violent. On the contrary, a slight increase was noted in the number of persons who became to believe that "the center would close after all in spite of what we might do against it." The community had quieted down



to such an extent that many people felt safe enough to express such a statement as cited below, which they would not <sup>have</sup> dared to do so earlier:

I suppose the WRA is actually going to close the centers. I believe it means business this time. There isn't much we can do to stop the WRA.

Characteristic<sup>ally</sup> of opportunistic people, there were many people who were vocally opposed to relocation and vociferously championing the maintenance of "status quo", while these same people were secretly making plans for their future on the outside. Therefore, it might be safely said that the vast majority of the people desired to remain in the center if possible, although their calculations of such a possibility varied greatly from an extreme skepticism on the one hand to a blind conviction on the other hand. Nonetheless, to all these people any attempt to forestall the WRA in <sup>its</sup> attempt to close the center was extremely satisfactory. An extreme example of this ambivalent attitude is eloquently illustrated by the case of Itaru Kubota (Supra, page 78).

After he came back from a short visit to Fresno, he immediately prepared to relocate permanently with his family. As he was quoted by a competent informant, he told many of his friends that he had no other choice <sup>but</sup> to take over the possession of his hotel, which had been operated by his Caucasian friend during his absence. "But things are not so good on the outside. I don't think everybody should relocate. The centers should be kept open for the duration to take care of those who cannot relocate. For lots of people I will say that they should not relocate."



Interpreting the situation in a slightly different manner, David French, the Community Analyst, made the following observation:

With the exception of a few specific problems, Poston has been exceedingly calm during recent weeks. It is difficult to analyze public opinion on relocation because, on one hand there are crystalized negative opinions which are articulate, and on the other hand, families and individuals have been facing more and more squarely their own particular problems. People realize that it is wise for them to formulate a plan for leaving, but at the same time, they are not at all convinced that WRA policies regarding center closure will not change. If they leave, they want the maximum financial and other aid; nevertheless, many who would leave with such aid continue to hope that this will not be necessary. In other words, many families have two plans; one involving relocation and the other involving staying in the center.

Even with the people French described, their desire for remaining in the center if possible was much greater than their ambition on the outside.)

(Colorado River Relocation Center, Community Analysis Section: Report No. 52, February 19, 1945, Community Analyst Trend Report From February 12 to 18, 1945)

Early in the morning of February 5, Captain Antonio Martin arrived at Poston to make ~~to make~~ a routine inspection of the center representing the Spanish Embassy, which in turn represented the Japanese Government in the United States during the war. On his arrival, he announced that he could stay only one day at Poston, instead of two days as he had planned and had so notified the residents. It had been ~~scheduled~~ <sup>planned</sup>, he explained, to meet one Deckerback, the representative of the State Department, at Parker, but the airplane carrying the official from Washington had been grounded at Memphis, Tenn, and he could not reach Phoenix until February 6. Captain Martin had been requested by Deckerback to meet him in Phoenix on



February 6 to move to Gila.

The Community Council, which had planned the program for the Vice Consul stationed at San Francisco, was compelled to revise the schedule in a hurry. The original plan of having Captain Martin meet the representatives of the residents of the three Units in their respective camps had ~~necessarily~~ to be changed. The representatives from Units II and III were called to Unit I and together with those from Unit I met Martin in the morning. It was told that very little of importance took place during this interview. (One informant who participated in the meeting reported that the same grounds were again covered during the afternoon meeting.) However, the discussions clearly indicated the problem which was paramount to the residents --- the problem of ~~the~~ closing of the center. The Spokesmen from the three Units tried to obtain an assurance unsuccessfully that the Issei could not <sup>be</sup> forcibly relocated from the centers for the duration. They tried in vain to hear from the Spanish Vice Consul that under the international law the United States Government was obligated to provide for the Japanese nationals. Probably the only concession gotten from him was his promise that he would attend the All Center Conference at Salt Lake City if and when invited. The Spokesmen explained the nature and the purpose of the conference and asked him to attend. The Consul then telephoned the Spanish Embassy at Washington and obtained a permission from the Spanish Ambassador. To other questions and requests, it was reported, he refused to give any definite answers.

The meeting of Captain Martin and the evacuee representatives



took place in the Block 32 Mess Hall from 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon. The Block Managers and the Councilmen had been requested by the Community Council to be present. Those of the other two Units had been provided with special transportation and had been brought to the meeting place in time. The Mess Hall was filled with about 300 persons, including a large number of interested laymen without official capacity, by the time Captain Martin appeared in the company of James M. Suzuki, the Spokesman for Unit I, who had been officially appointed by the Local Council for this occasion.

Suzuki first introduced Martin and gave him a welcome speech. Martin then made the following two announcements:

The Issei, when relocated, are asked to register with the Spanish Embassy or any of the Spanish Consulates. The Consulates at San Francisco and New Orleans are available for this service. The Consulate at Chicago does not handle this registration, because its major duty is handling of the problems of war prisoners.

The citizens of Japanese ancestry who had renounced their citizenship are requested to register in the same manner. In this case, however, they are requested to submit the certified copies from the Department of Justice.

It is interesting to note here that these announcements gave an assurance to those present that the Japanese Government had not forgotten to protect the Japanese nationals and that it did not differentiate those remaining in the centers and those that had relocated. Although no longer prevalent, there were still some evacuees who believed that the Japanese Government was willing to protect those in the centers as their "true" nationals, but it regarded those who had relocated as "traitors". In the early days of the relocation program, expressions such as cited below were commonly heard from the older Issei:



"The Japanese Government is advising us through the short wave not to go out of the centers during the wartime. It says that we should remain here if we are loyal to Japan. Those people who relocate will be considered ~~as~~ disloyal to Japan and will be properly dealt with after the war."

It seemed that such a belief as this was discredited by the first announcement, if any of the old believers had not changed their point of view. After the meeting, an old Issei, seemingly a farmer or a farm migratory laborer in the pre-evacuation days, was heard as saying, "The Japanese Government does not make any distinction between the Issei remaining in the centers and those who have relocated. I have said so for a long time, but other fellows used to jump on me for saying so. Now, isn't what the Spanish Consul said backing up my statement?"

The second announcement was also made a subject of conversation among several Issei. It was commonly believed by the more intelligent Issei that the renouncees do not automatically become Japanese citizens by the act of renunciation. They believed that the Japanese Government will pass the eligibility of becoming the Japanese subjects <sup>by</sup> studying the merits of each case. The following expression <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ heard among these people:

"Many of those boys renouncing their citizenship <sup>had gone</sup> ~~went~~ to Tule Lake, because they wanted to evade the Selective Service. They are probably the same people who ~~have~~ fled from Japan in the late thirties, because they were afraid of being taken into the Japanese Army. They are not loyal either to the United States or to Japan. The Japanese Government will not welcome these boys; Japan has no use for these boys too."

It was evident that the second announcement left an impression with many of these believers that the Japanese Government was willing to regard the renouncees as their nationals. An Issei remarked afterwards, "That's a surprise. I didn't think the



Japanese Government will accept them."

After the Vice Consul made the two announcements, Suzuki presented <sup>him</sup> the following twelve questions ~~to him~~. He stated that these questions had been compiled from those from Unit I and those from Unit III. He read them one by one both in English and in Japanese. After each question, Captain Martin invariably replied that he would submit it to the Ambassador. Whenever he was harder pressed ~~for~~ his answer, he replied, "I want you to submit the questions in writing. I cannot give you any answer now. My duty is to hear questions from you and send them to the Ambassador. When the Ambassador receives those questions, he will send you his answers." The questions as read by Suzuki were as follows (not verbatim):

1. We have been evacuated forcibly by the military orders because of military necessity. We, enemy aliens, have lived in the relocation centers for the past two and a half years. Can the American Government force us out of the centers? What is the interpretation of this
  - a. under the international law
  - b. by the Spanish Government
  - c. by the Japanese Government
2. Will you present an official inquiry to the United States Government through the State Department as to the disposition of those evacuees remaining in the centers on January 2, 1946, when the centers close?
  - a. There are many evacuees who cannot relocate, because they are not satisfied with the present relocation policies of the WRA.
  - b. There are many evacuees who do not wish to relocate for the duration.
3. If this center is decided to be closed before January, 1946, is it possible to transfer the remaining evacuees to other centers, which are still maintained at that time? We wish to know the disposition of these remaining people.



4. When you are officially invited to the All Center Conference, which will be held at Salt Lake City, are you or any other representative of your government able to attend?

To this question, Suzuki informed those present that the Spanish representative had consented to attend the meeting when he was invited. He had notified Suzuki that he would be going through Salt Lake City on or about February 20 while making the round of the various relocation centers.

5. Through you or your government, will you notify the Japanese Government that the great majority of the evacuees at Poston desire to remain in the relocation center for the duration?
6. Due to a lack of budget allocation, the WRA has announced that the schools will be closed after this June. We believe, however, that the schools should be maintained while there are school going children here. What is your opinion?
7. On your last visit here, we asked you to negotiate for an improvement of the sewage system. What is the result of your negotiation? We wish the system be improved as soon as possible.
8. Because of the alleged shortage of gasoline allotment, the ambulance service has been curtailed. We ask that the service be restored to the former status. The residents of Unit III are especially concerned with this problem, as the patients must be transported from there to the General Hospital in Unit I.
9. We ask that the clothing allowance grants be increased to seven dollars per person per month irrespective of the employment status of recipients.
10. Three month supply of rice should be stored in the project warehouse at all time. Recently the residents had to suffer from the rice shortage. During the wartime the transportation is undependable.
11. The transferees from the Santa Anita Center wish to have their clothing allowances be paid for the time they were in the center. The WCCA had promised to pay them, but it failed to live up to its promise.
12. The patients who have never <sup>been</sup> inducted into the centers because they were in sanatoriums or in hospitals at the



time of evacuation be permitted to rejoin their families on their recovery.

One Motoki, the Manager of the Red Cross office in his Unit, presented about ten questions to the Spanish representative as the Spokesman for Unit II. It was difficult to understand why the residents of Unit II desired to present their questions separately when the questions did not vary appreciably in substance with those from Units I and III.

After the questions were presented by the Spokesmen, Suzuki announced that those present were allowed to ask questions of their own particular interests, although he warned them that questions which had little bearing on others but to the questioners should be avoided to save time. Those that had individual problems to discuss were instructed to ask for personal interviews which ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> scheduled from 3 o'clock in the same afternoon.

The first questions was asked by an Issei who appeared to be an urban evacuee now residing in Unit III. He stated:

"We have been forcibly evacuated from our homes in California. When we came here, we regarded ourselves as internees. We believed that we were interned because we were enemy aliens. The war is still being waged. Our status of being enemy aliens has not changed. Yet the American Government has told us that we must leave the centers before the end of this year. Can the American Government order us internees to leave the centers?

Captain Martin replied that the closing of the relocation centers was a national policy. It was within the jurisdiction of the American Government to determine what to do with the centers. He promised, however, that he would submit the question to the Spanish Embassy if it were presented to him in writing.

Another Issei asked:

"The WRA has announced to close these centers. If we re-



fused to leave and remained in the center, will we be forced out? We wish to know what will happen to us then."

To this question, Captain Martin refused to give his answer. He merely stated that the question would be submitted to the Spanish Embassy so that the Ambassador might refer it to the State Department. "I don't know," he added.

Another Issei wanted to know from the Spanish representative whether he could apply for a priority on exchange to Japan. Captain Martin replied that the Spanish Embassy had nothing to do with the determination of persons for exchange. The question of who were to be exchanged was determined solely by the Japanese Government and the United States Government. "Even if we send requests to Japan for your preferential consideration, it will not do any good," said he. "That is the reason that we don't accept any request for priority."

An Issei, who had two of his sons awaiting Federal indictments for violation of the Selective Service, asked the Vice Consul whether the requests and questions of evacuees submitted to him on his last visits had been transmitted to the Japanese Government. Captain Martin again replied in his characteristic evasive manner that he did not have anything to do with it. His duty was to meet the representatives of evacuees and receive their requests. His duty was restricted to transmitting the requests and questions to the Spanish Ambassador.

This Issei was not satisfied with the reply. He pursued the line of approach further. He requested the Vice Consul to submit <sup>to the Japanese Government</sup> the detailed report on the new WRA policies through the Spanish Government. He stated that such transmission was



requested as a wish of "the people". This statement, however, created a wide repercussion immediately. Several comments were heard from various corners of the Marge Mess Hall. "That isn't necessary," one man commented audibly. "There isn't any use," another Issei shouted in Japanese. "You can't depend on these people ~~at~~ the Spanish Embassy and the Spanish representative7."

Another Issei remarked in Japanese, "The Japanese Government knows all about it by this time. We don't have to worry about it." (The statement that the Japanese Government was already aware of the details of the new WRA policies is ~~a~~<sup>the</sup> natural reflection of a common belief held ~~among~~<sup>by</sup> the majority of Issei and many Kibei. They firmly believe that the Japanese Government by some unknown method finds out everything that goes on in the United States within a short time inspite of the hostilities. This belief was greatly strengthened immediately after the November (1943) riot of Tule Lake, when the Japanese Government "requested the Spanish Government to investigate" the incident within a few days after the inception. The Japanese representation was widely publicized at the time by both American and vernacular press. Many of these Issei and Kibei believe a popular story that a Japanese submarine is stationed off the Pacific Coast as a listening post for the purpose of relaying information to Japan.)

Inspite of the protests from the floor, Suzuki, who also acted as interpreter, translated the request of the Issei. The Vice Consul, however, gave his stereotyped reply that he would submit it to the Spanish Embassy when it was given to him in writing.



The meeting had already become disorderly and noisy. Another Issei grieved over the fact that the American Government had not provided the relocatees, especially those that had re-sufficient located to the West Coast, with protection for the safety of their lives and their property. He mentioned in abstract that some Japanese had been shot or beaten and that the houses of some Japanese "had almost been burned." Captain Martin replied that he was aware of the few incidents inferred by the Issei. The American authorities were already working on these cases, and he thought that the investigations were adequately handled. He, however, added that he was willing to consult the State Department if specific cases were presented to him in writing where ~~the~~ inadequacy<sup>of</sup> protection could be substantiated against the authorities.

Another Issei followed the same line of questioning. He stated that although the WRA was trying to force ~~the~~ evacuees out of the center, they could not relocate in the light of these incidents that had taken place "due to the lack of adequate protection." He maintained that such protection had been promised by the American Government, particularly by the WRA, again and again, but the evacuees could not consider it adequate. To this the Spanish representative tersely replied that he could not protest to the American Government about inadequate protection when such a charge could not be substantiated by specific instances. He reminded those present that he could not charge the American Government of something that had not taken place and that he could not protest on something by assuming that it would take place. He reiterated that he would be happy



to take the matter of inadequate protection when specific instances could be presented to him in writing. Such information could be sent to him at his San Francisco office ~~at~~ any time, he added.

T. Tanaka, the Councilman of Block 42, who ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> detained here by the office of Immigration and Naturalization Service, asked another question, which had been taken up earlier in the meeting, from a different angle. He wanted to know from Captain Martin how this center was interpreted ~~by~~ (1) by the Japanese Government (2) by the Spanish Government and (3) under the international law. "Is it a relocation center? Or is it an internment camp? Or is it a special kind of camp?" queried Tanaka.

Captain Martin again replied that he did not know. He did not know how the Japanese Government regarded this center. Nor did he know what the Spanish Government thought of the center. Nor was he cognizant of the status of the center under the international law. Tanaka pressed his point further. "What do you think, Captain Martin?"

"I don't know," replied Martin. "I think this is a relocation center."

Captain Martin, however, added that such centers as this were operated in Spain about three hundred years ago. This statement drew a considerable laugh<sup>ter</sup> from the audience. "Three hundred years?" many commented.

Then Captain Martin stated that he had some question he wanted to ask. Through the interpreter, he asked those present how many of them were willing to "go to California" before the



middle of February, when the Salt Lake City conference would be held. The interpreter asked them to stand up. The people looked around the hall and looked at one another. There was no one getting up. They started to laugh loudly.

The Vice Consul then asked another question. "How many of you are willing to go to California?"

"When?" Many in the audience shouted almost simultaneously.

"Oh, any time. In the future," replied Captain Martin.

"What conditions?" shouted many.

"That depends on conditions," others commented.

"You mean with the present WRA assistances?" some others queried.

"Oh, any condition," replied the captain.

"Sure, the whole thing depends on the provisions given by the American Government," several men stated loudly.

"You can say just any condition. That's ambiguous." some others said.

The interpreter came to the rescue of the Spanish Consul. "I think he means that how many are willing to go to California if the condition asked by any one of you is satisfied."

One man stood up. Then another man after the interval of several seconds. Then four or five men together stood up. Several others followed them. There were altogether about twenty-five men standing up. Those standing looked around uncomfortably. Others seated glared at them. At places, there were some men who got up, then sat down, again got up, and finally sat down. The interpreter tried to count<sup>7</sup> these standing men, but he could not make a reliable count, because some men were undecided as to



whether they wanted to remain standing or to sit down. Others standing began to sit down one by one after a minute or two, before the count was completed. Interpreter Suzuki asked them to stand up again, because, he said, he could not count unless they remained standing until he finished counting. Again the same process was repeated; the persons who wanted to signify that they intended to return to California soon stood up hesitantly and uncomfortably, but they seemed to have gained a little more courage than the first time while others glared at them. Many of them were reluctant, however, to remain in the upright position for long. One by one they began to sit down, and the interpreter again failed to count them. The floor was in commotion by this time. Above din and disorderly noise of buzzing, several flippant remarks were heard distinctly. "How much do I get to get out? Ten thousand dollars?" one man was heard as saying.

"Sure, I will go if they give me enough money," another remarked.

"Look at that guy," another said. "He is from Camp II." In a derisive tone, he added, "He is known as an Inu."

"Those guys are loyal guys (Chusei gumi)," another remarked sarcastically.

Suzuki tapped the top of the table and restored some order. From this point on, the original attentiveness and seriousness of the audience were never regained. Finally at the third time, Suzuki succeeded in counting those that signified their intention of return to California. They numbered somewhere between twenty and twenty-five.



The meeting was drawing to the end. At this time, one man started to shout a question to the Spanish representative. He seemed to be an adherent of one Fujisawa of Unit III, who had been promoting within his immediate acquaintances a scheme of establishing a loan corporation for rehabilitation to be jointly financed by the United States Government and the Japanese in America. He had been dreaming of getting a subsidy from the Government to the extent of \$125,000,000. He had appealed to the members of the property owners group in Unit III, which had been loosely organized at the time they were threatened with escheat litigation. He had also appealed to the project officials. Up to this time he had no support ~~for~~ his idea either from the Administration or from the evacuees in Unit III, let alone from those in the other Units. It was obvious that the present speaker wanted to appeal to the Spanish representative as one of the last resorts. He <sup>t</sup>sated that he noticed not enough people signified that they intended to return to California. But, he said, he knew all these people covetely looked their future in America "deep down in their hearts". They all wanted to remain in the United States, but they could not leave the center for the present with the financial provisions available from the WRA. When he came around to make these statements, the Hall was disorderly and noisy again. The rest of his speech was not heard by the majority of the people in the room. It was told later that he had said that he had been sponsoring with his friends a loan corporation with a capital of \$500,000,000 with 20 year amortization plan to be jointly financed by the evacuees and the United States Government. While he was making



this explanation, many discourteous remarks werē shouted at him.

"That's no\ good."

"Who the hell asked you to say those things?"

"We don't want to go out."

"Sit down!"

"Shut up!"

"No ... No ... No!"

It was difficult to determine above these loud hecklings whether he was able to complete his appeal in Japanese. At any rate, Interpreter Suzuki refused to translate this appeal, and soon afterwards he declarēd the meeting adjourned. He advised those that had personal problems to discuss with the Spanish representative to begin their interviews immediately.

Thus, at the beginning of February, the attitude of the residents had not changed appreciably, if not at all; during the past one month and half since the official announcement. The negative and negativistic sentiments of the residents towards the WRA policy of ~~the~~ closing of the center were still remarkably evident. They were not, perhaps, as violent or antagonistically articulate as before. Nevertheless, as clearly indicated by the questions and reactions during the conference with the representative of the Spanish Embassy, they were opposed to the closing of the center. They firmly believed that the center could not be closed, and they tenaciously argued that the center should not be closed. Some of them were willing to classify themselves, as inferred by some of the questions, as enemy aliens interned by the United States Government in order to



remain in the center for the duration.

Against this background and in relation to this frame of reference, the success of the general election, which was held on February 7, 1945, must be appreciated. The Block Managers had to a great extent convinced their respective residents the importance of exercising their franchise --- their votes meant their protests against the closing of the center --- as they had been convinced by Supervisor Nishimoto. From eight o'clock in the morning of the election day, most of the Block Managers opened the election polls in their offices. (There were a few blocks which used a little different election procedures. A notable example of the deviation was that used in Block 38. There the Block Manager distributed ballots to each apartment and asked the occupants of the apartment who were eligible to vote to have them marked and ready within an hour or two. Afterwards, the Manager went around the apartments and collected the ballots. As for another example, the Manager of Block 17 had the election poll in his office. He, however, went around the block carrying blank ballots, and had those that were unwilling to come to the office cast their ballots wherever they were.) Although artificially whipped up to some extent, the residents of the majority of the blocks showed an interest in and an enthusiasm for the election from early in the morning. It soon became evident that voting would continue to be heavy and would surpass the most optimistic estimates. In spite of project holiday, Supervisor Nishimoto had his office open and acted as the central information dispenser. To his office several Managers



sent urgent telephone calls asking for more blank ballots. Nishimoto too contacted several other Managers by telephone to ascertain how voting was carried out. Manager Sasuga of Block 2 reported at 10 A. M. that voting in his block was extremely heavy and would be completed within one hour. He expected ~~the~~ a total of one hundred ballots cast, which was approximately 90 percent of the eligible voters. Manager Kobayashi of Block 4 stated over the telephone that the total number of ballots in his block would exceed one hundred and it was not difficult to expect one hundred percent turn out. "Did you say you wanted only 30 to 35 ballots cast in each block? Will one hundred per cent turn out make you mad?" Kobayashi asked Nishimoto kiddingly without expecting the latter's reply.

The Manager of Block 6 and that of Block 27 also reported that the ballots in their respective blocks had exceeded the estimated 35 ballots per block by 10 A. M.

The Manager of Block 39 was very proud when he reported that he would have "at least one hundred ballots" by the time the poll closed.

Nishimoto, however, received a warning that voting was light in Blocks 17, 18, and 31. He immediately dispatched Unit Administrator Sumida to these blocks in order to warn the Managers that they were falling behind <sup>the</sup> voting trends in other blocks and that they ought to put their extra efforts in bringing the residents to the polls.

The returns from the blocks, which were counted from two o'clock in the afternoon and completed by three o'clock, were as follows:



		Total Ballots	Iseda	Katow	Nagai	Nishimoto	Okamoto	Suzuki	Takahashi
Block	2	94	8	70	10	1	29	41	20
"	3	80	37	27	8	24	21	17	23
"	4	118	20	90	9	1	18	77	21
"	5	60	11	39	9	9	9	0	43
"	6	54	4	40	28	11	9	14	2
"	11	80	1	64	6	11	9	58	9
"	12	63	0	61	4	4	50	1	13
"	13	93	15	62	27	15	49	17	0
"	14	84	1	19	4	70	15	45	14
"	15	58	10	47	4	4	12	37	2
"	16	79	25	31	18	16	39	9	20
"	17	84	0	81	0	54	11	15	7
"	18	117	21	51	11	53	45	22	30
"	19	111	28	63	48	19	30	16	16
"	21	56	8	38	14	11	27	9	5
"	22	39	2	14	22	1	6	4	0
"	26	64	11	36	11	8	22	21	18
"	27	69	13	29	24	31	7	15	18
"	28	51	10	21	14	24	14	13	6
"	30	59	11	18	11	10	44	13	20
"	31	100	6	25	26	62	49	25	7
"	32	106	0	1	17	0	89	102	3
"	35	48	6	33	11	21	7	10	8



		Total Ballots	Iseda	Katow	Nagai	Nishimoto	Okamoto	Suzuki	Takahashi
Block	36	77	6	19	10	31	16	19	53
"	37	79	7	13	54	42	33	3	4
"	38	123	5	78	35	8	36	76	8
"	39	96	1	87	54	3	22	21	3
"	42	78	3	77	1	38	4	1	14
"	43	3	0	2	1	1	0	1	1
"	44	64	10	42	40	17	0	10	3
"	45	110	22	49	1	101	8	24	15
"	46	93	22	25	42	12	28	32	25
"	53	62	5	41	24	11	13	19	7
"	54	107	7	89	76	10	6	8	12
"	59	72	8	46	37	10	17	7	14
"	60	106	23	24	8	72	67	1	17
"	47	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Hospital with two eligible voters									
Total		2839	357	1553	719	816	862	804	482

Thus, by the general election for which more than 2,800 residents cast their ballots, Yoshitaro Katow, the Chairman of the Executive Board, and Minoru Okamoto, the Chairman of the Unit I Local Council and the City Manager, were chosen to attend the All Center Conference as the delegates of Unit I. It is exceedingly important to observe that the community which



had been apathetic to the previous elections cast as many as 2,800 ballots. It is approximately estimated as eight-five percent turn out, an exceptional result, the artificial promotion notwithstanding, clearly indicative of the popular sentiments that the center should not close and the present WRA provisions for relocation assistance were not sufficient. The important role played by the Block Managers in this election cannot be minimized. The Managers for the past several months had reached an undisputable position in exerting their influence in the political and social life of residents in Unit I. They succeeded in achieving the most successful election result in the history of Poston. They succeed in electing Y. Katow with the vast plurality; they succeeded in controlling pro-Nishimoto force in check. In order to penetrate the meaning of the election returns, it will be necessary to give brief accounts of how some of the Managers "advised" their residents in choosing the ~~ca~~ candidates. The ~~Managers~~ Managers cannot deny a charge, if such a charge is made, that they tampered with the election by predisposing the minds of the voters.

In almost all the blocks many of the residents were not familiar with all the candidates. They wanted to cast their ballots, but they were hesitant or ignorant in deciding or determining <sup>for</sup> whom they ought to cast their votes. As a natural consequence, they went to their Block Managers and asked the latter's opinion of the various candidates. In many cases, the Managers directed these inquirers in making their choices. These voters who had consulted the Managers in turn told their friends *for* whom they were voting or had ~~dy~~ voted.



In Block 2, for instance, Manager Sasuga had influenced his block residents ~~in influencing them~~ to vote for Katow and Suzuki. As instructed, he advised them at the same time not to vote for Nishimoto "because he cannot make this trip". As the Manager explained to Nishimoto afterwards, he had a difficult time in keeping them from voting for the Supervisor, for they knew Nishimoto well and wanted to insist in casting their votes for him.

In Block 4, the "pressure" of the Block Manager on his block residents was evident. Both Katow and Suzuki came out as the first and the second highest. The Manager told the Supervisor proudly afterward that he had erased Nishimoto's name off the ballots.

The returns from Block 32 ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> interesting. Here a block meeting was held to determine an official slate of two delegates. At first, the residents decided on Okamoto and Nishimoto, but the Manager succeeded in changing it to Okamoto and Suzuki. It is noteworthy to observe that Suzuki received almost all votes cast, while Okamoto failed to do so.

The result from Block 43 was disappointing. There were only three persons voting, one of them being the Block Manager. Here the block had failed to agree in supporting the All Center Conference. This is an indication that several factions among the residents were present and factional strifes ~~were~~ <sup>had been</sup> intense.

In analyzing the returns, it is important to observe how the various candidates carried their ~~own~~ home blocks. The home blocks of the candidates are given below:

Iseda

Block 3



Katow	Block 42
Nagai	Block 3
Nishimoto	Block 45
Okamoto	Block 30
Suzuki	Now in Block 47, but formerly in Block 35
Takahashi	Block 36

There were two Nsignificant aspects which would have political and sociological bearings on the future course of Poston:

1. By means of a general election, the resistance of the residents against the closing of the center was channeled and diverted. The election served successfully as a cathartic agent.
2. Katow who had been disappointed and discredited as the General Manager of the Cooperative Enterprises received twice as many votes as Okamoto, who regarded himself as the most popular and powerful political figure at Poston. Katow is conservative, constructive, and intelligent. He wishes to divert or avert the political orientation of many evacuees towards Japan. Okamoto, on the other hand, is willing to use any means to promote his selfish ends. He has been known as an obstructionist in the Administration. He has been regarded as anti-relocation, anti-Administration exponent.

By this election Katow became the senior delegate and Okamoto the junior delegate, although there was no such distinction. This is exactly ia reverse of the precedent in the Poston politics.

The latter aspect was already important during the conference of Nishimoto and Katow, which took place secretly in the morning of February 8. Nishimoto and Katow Nagreed that the latter should obstruct any attempt at the conference to rely upon the Spanish representative and that the problem of the center closure should be treated as N domestic, and not international as some evacuees wanted to picture. Katow was confident that he would be able to keep Okamoto in check, who wanted to pool the influence of the Spanish Embassy and the Japanese Government behind the evacuee move, because of the great difference in the number of votes.



Nishimoto obtained an assurance from Katow that he would see to it that nothing in the way of impairing the future of these evacuees in America would be carried out. They agreed that if necessary an open break among the Poston delegates was not undesirable in order to keep the conference from aligning itself with the political orientation <sup>towards</sup> ~~with~~ Japan. There was a good ground to fear for this, for both Okamoto and Takashima had been unscrupulous in utilizing the political orientation for their personal gains. Katow reported at the same time that he had proposed to take a secretary with the delegates. All the delegates had agreed to the plan, and acquiesced to Katow's selection of N. Matsubara, a member of the Unit I Executive Board. Already Katow had succeeded in subduing Okamoto, who had proposed James Yahiro as the secretary.

(The election will be analyzed in detail in a revised report when such is undertaken at a later date. The comments and reactions of residents, which were legion because of the unusual interest and enthusiasm, will be omitted here.)

On the afternoon of February 8, the Community Council met and approved the four delegates as the official representatives of Poston. At the same time, it agreed to allow N. Matsubara accompany the delegation as its official secretary.

In the ensuing days, Matsubara worked on the various requests and appeals of the blocks and compiled them into one document known as "The Proposals of Poston to the Eight Center Conference". (The original in Japanese is appended.) The document was mimeographed and distributed to the blocks. The offi-



cial translation of the document read as follows:

# PROPOSALS TO BE PRESENTED TO INTER-CENTER CONFERENCE

The following proposals represent the voice of the total population of Poston, Arizona, Units I, II and III, numbering approximately 13,000 residents.

- I. Requests of those who cannot either return to restricted zones ~~for~~ relocate elsewhere and their reasons.

Almost all of those with a definite income, or those who have the ability to operate a business, or those with enough confidence in themselves have already relocated, but those who are left would like to have the government continue with the present setup because they cannot relocate for the following reasons:

1. The economic security which has been built by them, during fifty years past, has been destroyed.
2. The majority of the residents have either sold at a sacrifice or leased for the duration their houses, land, ~~at~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> equipment used in farming, industry, business, etc.
3. The majority of the family heads are too old to start anew and their children, upon whom they depended, are in the armed forces of the United States; to relocate with dependents makes it very difficult to insure economic security.
4. Because we lack financial resources, (even if we so desire) we cannot enter farming, industry or commerce. Even though some may have the financial resources, they cannot obtain the high priority necessary to purchase the equipment they need to conduct their business. The insurance companies will not issue policies to Japanese because of the risk involved in case of trouble.

An Issei cannot buy or lease land in certain states due to Alien Land Laws. In some cities, they will not grant business licenses to Japanese. Moreover, the majority of the Isseis do not know enough English to go into business.

5. Due to racial prejudice of some individuals, labor unions, and other organizations, a person who held a position before evacuation will not be able to return to that position or to a simi-



lar one.

6. Due to racial oppression, a person who returns to restricted zones or who relocates elsewhere will have to live in constant fear. Although the army and the government have assured us of protection of life and property, there have been several cases of threats, injury to the few who have relocated or returned to restricted zones. It is very doubtful whether the government and the army can control the emotional feelings of the people at large.
7. The present relocation grant is so small that it is wholly inadequate to start a new life.
8. Religious Freedom would be curtailed because of the fact that the majority of the residents are Buddhists and nearly all the Buddhist priests are excluded from the military zones.
9. Since evacuation, the policies of the WRA have changed a great deal and many promises were not carried out, perhaps, due to changes in conditions. As a result of constant disappointment and fear, the residents have become alarmed. Their minds are in a state of uneasiness and anxiety because the future is so uncertain.

Therefore, we the residents request that the center remain open for the duration guaranteeing security of livelihood, educational facilities, and medical care as agreed before and during evacuation.

## II, Requests of those planning to relocate.

1. In order to guarantee security of life and property, we would like to have the Federal and Local authorities establish the following:
  - a. To establish a special agency to enforce existing laws in order to prevent anti-Japanese movements and to insure security from threats, bodily injuries or damages to property from individuals or organizations.
  - b. To guarantee a reasonable and just compensation in case of bodily injuries or damage to property.
  - c. To give financial assistance as to all the necessities of life until a relocatee becomes self-supporting.
  - d. To give financial aid to relocatees who need it in case of sickness or death.



2. The relocatees who plan to go into farming, industry, commerce, etc., request the following:
  - a. Loans of necessary capital at a low rate of interest.
  - b. To make it possible for all relocatees to buy, sell or lease land in any state.
  - c. To give a priority rating to buy necessary construction materials, fixtures, equipment, etc.
  - d. To make it possible to obtain any and all business licenses.
  - e. To make it possible to buy any and all types of insurance necessary.
3. Relocatees would like to have the same job opportunities as Caucasians.
4. Repeal all wartime restrictions imposed upon the Isseis.
5. Compensation for all losses due to fire or theft of evacuee property while stored in WRA or Government warehouses.

In general, the residents were satisfied with the demands embodied in the document, for after all it contained almost all, if not all, demands discussed during their respective block meetings. As to the prospect of its success, the reactions varied from a pessimistic view to an extremely optimistic view.

One Issei evacuee from Los Angeles commented:

"That's just a means of telling the WRA what we are asking. We shouldn't imagine for a moment that the WRA will listen to our appeals. The WRA will push the relocation program just the same."

Another Issei, a rural evacuee, remarked:

"The WRA might take in some of those demands. Of course, we can't expect that every demand will be conceded, but there is a good chance that some of them might be granted."

A Kibei from Orange County, about twenty-seven years of age, expressed his opinion thus:



"The stand against the closing of the center is the most important part of these demands. We don't care about the other demands as long as the center is not closed. The Spanish representative is coming to the conference, so he will send these demands to the State Department. He will also let the Japanese Government know what we are requesting. By that the WRA will be forced to change its policy. If it does not change its policy, we still have an ace in the hole --- that is, to sit tight and refuse to leave the center."

Among the younger Nisei, however, few reactions were heard. They more or less treated the All Center Conference as if it did not affect them one way or another. This is probably accounted by the fact that information was not fully disseminated in English and publicity for the conference was not adequately given among the younger residents. It is true, on the other hand, that the Nisei perhaps would not have bothered to have themselves interested in the matter of the conference even if such information and publicity were disseminated to them.

Many of the competent observers were of the opinion that the conference could not accomplish anything more than exchanging views of the different delegates from the various centers. They were extremely skeptical of a successful result. One of them expressed thus:

"The delegates can't do much against a national policy. The Government can't change its policy so easy just because 'us Japs' asked. We should expect that none of the demands will be accepted by the WRA. It will be plenty tough for the delegates to come back to Poston, because many residents are too optimistic. They expect that the delegates can pound on the table and make the WRA to change its policy. We must educate them. That's our job. We must convince them that this is just a first step and that they cannot expect too much from the beginning."

Such an opinion as recorded above was shared by many responsible evacuees; they wanted to prevent any criticisms directed against the delegates when they returned for the reason that they could



not obtain the concessions that the residents of Poston had demanded.

Katow expressed thus:

"This is a tough assignment. I don't think we can satisfy these people here. I don't expect the WRA to grant us all these requests. I will do my best. That's all I can say."

Okamoto was likewise skeptical of a success;

"Many of people here expect an awful lot. But I know I won't be able to get any definite commitment from the WRA."

With this pessimistic view on the outcome of the conference, the four delegates left Poston for Salt Lake City on February 14. J. Takashima, the Unit III delegate, left Poston early in the morning via Wickenburg and Flagstaff, because of his status as an excludee. Y. Katow, M. Okamoto, and J. Kubota (Unit II) departed in the evening amid many well wishers. The three delegates were to travel through Las Vegas, where they would board a Union Pacific train.

The End



APPENDIX



# ハセクター会議ポストン提出案

「ポストン提出案は各部落居住民、即ち全ポストン居住民より提出」  
「されたる必然的要求を統合せるものなり」

## ポストン提案第一 歸還又は出所不可能者の要求並にその理由

自活能力ある者又は、獨立事業經營の能力と自信ある者は既に殆んど出所し、現在セクター内に残留して居る者の内、その大多數は下記の諸理由の爲に出所不可能の状態にあり、依つて戦時中現在同様の待遇と保護を要求す。

### 理由

- (一) 過去数十年間に築き上げたる經濟的地盤を根柢より破壊されたる事。
- (二) 戦前に住宅、土地、商店又は農工商業用諸機械を所有せし者も、立退前、それらの物を戦時中の契約を以つて他に移するか、或は既に棄賣して居る者が多數である。
- (三) 家長の最大多數者は既に老境に入り、第二子息の精神的、物質的援助協力を受けずしては自活し得ざる者多く、然もその子息は多く軍務に徵集されて居り、加之、未だ修學養育を必要とする子女を伴つて出所しては絶対自活不可能の状態にあること。
- (四) 農工商業を經營せんとしても、それに必要な資金融通の方法、住宅建築、農業用機具購入のプライアリティーなき事、傷害、自動車、火災等の諸保険に加入し得ざる事、更に土地賣買、貸借及び營業ライセンス下附を一旦に禁止して居る州或は市があること。
- (五) 忠実と勤勉とを以つて保持し來れる職業を立退と同時に失ひ、現在同一種類の職業に復歸せんとしても、人種的偏見の爲に個人、労働組合又は其他の団体より反対を受けて不可能なる状態にある事。
- (六) 人種的排斥迫害等の爲に生活の不安と脅威が除去されてゐない事。軍部及び政府が我々に対して人種的排斥、壓迫或は迫害を極力防止し、歸還者の生命財産を保護する旨を誓約されて居れども、一般民衆の感情的行爲を制圧し得るや否や甚だ疑問であり、之を裏書するもの、如く現在歸還者僅少なるに關らず、既に數回不祥事件發生し、將來が憂慮されること。
- (七) 現在の出所補助金は餘りに僅少にして、全然生活費の補助とするに足らない事。
- (八) 我々は宗教の自由を制限されんとして居る事。何となれば居住民の多數は佛教徒であるが、佛教開教師の殆んど全部は軍に依つて西部沿岸歸還を拒否されてゐるが故である。



(九) 立退以來、政府の轉住所民保護に関する政策、約束、保證等が情勢の変遷と共に屢々変更又は取消されて履行されざりしもの少からず、居住民に與へたる失望、不安、疑惑が頗る深入にして、今後の方針に対しても同一不安が伴ふこと。

以上、事實に基き列挙したる諸理由に依り、現在居住民の最大多数は出所不可能の状態であるが故に、戦時中センターを存置して我等の生命の安全を保證さるべく、又子女の教育及び医療機關をも最後迄存續せられん事を要求す。

## ポストン提案第二

### 歸還又は出所者の要求

(一) 歸還又は出所者の生命及び財産の安全を確保する爲に、中央政府並に地方政府の特別保護を要求す。

(イ) 個人又は集團に依る極端なる排斥、脅迫、襲撃又は殺傷等を未然に防止すべき有効適切なる法の勵行と保護機關の設置。

(ロ) 生命又は財産に損害を受けたる場合は相当なる損害の賠償を保證すること。

(ハ) 自活し得るに到るまで住宅及び生活費を保證すること。

(ニ) 財力乏しき傷病者の療養費及び死亡者の葬儀費の提供。

(二) 歸還又は出所者が農工商業其他諸種の企業に必要な以下の諸項目を要求す。

(イ) 低利資金の貸與。

(ロ) 一畝の土地賣買貸借権。

(ハ) 建築用品及び諸機械購入優先権。  
プライオリティー。

(ニ) 営業ライセンス下附。

(ホ) 傷害自動車火災等の諸保険加入。

(三) 歸還又は出所者に対し日系市民同様就職の機会を與へられん事を要求す。

(四) 一畝に対する禁足令の撤廢を要求す。

(五) W.R.A.及び政府倉庫に保管せる轉住者の動産が火災又は盜難等入爲的或は自然的な方法に依りて蒙りたる損害の賠償を要求す。

(以上はポストン提案案であるが、更に参考の爲に各部落提案案を携帯)