

Robert Spencer

SUPPLEMENT TO INFORMATION ON
REGISTRATION
AT TULE LAKE

It is unfortunate that during a short stay at Tule Lake I was unable to go through the files of the internal security department for additional documentation on registration. In a lengthy conversation with Dr. Jacoby a few items relative to registration were mentioned which bear repetition here. At the time of registration an army official, Major Marshall, who, as proved by letters, became very friendly with project director Coverley, was on the project and concerned himself with close scrutiny of the registration program. None of the project officials, excepting those in higher brackets, such as Hayes, Coverley and O'Brien, were aware of Major Marshall's purpose, whom he represented, or the agency which had sent him. The handling of the registration itself was in the hands of a Lieut. Carroll, who was not in any way associated with Major Marshall. Marshall's arrival, coming as it did just prior to registration, and his stay which lasted through the registration period, make it appear that Marshall was on detail to cover in some way the registration program. His function in the community was never explained to many officials, and Jacoby professes himself to be at a loss to understand why Major Marshall was in the community. The fact that he was there, however, necessitated that Coverley take a definite stand as a strong man who had the community under his control. Two factors brought this about, one

of which was Major Marshall's presence. The other was the fact that Cozzens from the Regional office arrived on the project just as registration was about to begin. It was necessary for him (Coverley) to show himself capable of handling the community under Cozzens' scrutiny. Cozzens had been project director at Gila, and in his opinion had handled so well a group of opposing Japanese that he felt capable of meeting any situation which the evacuee colonists might create. In fact, Cozzens stated publicly and often, not only at Tule Lake at the time but elsewhere, that in dealing with an unpleasant situation at Gila he had listened to the demands of the evacuees and then done exactly the opposite. In a sense this is not true (see accounts of Tada incident). At any rate, Cozzens appeared on the project full of a certain amount of inflated ego, and firm in the belief that the evacuees could be forced into any situation which a project director might impose upon them, if that project director exerted the sheer force of his personality. This left Coverley in a rather embarrassing position. He felt it necessary, in order to justify himself as project director, to appear in Cozzens' and Marshall's eyes, as one who had the situation well in hand. In order to do this, it was necessary for him to take high-handed action and to attempt to complete the registration program as soon as possible with the least amount of apparent dissension in the community and among his staff members. One tends to pity Coverley for his complete lack of understanding of the situation, and his futile attempts at self-justification before Marshall and Cozzens. Almost at once the

situation came out of hand, and Coverley was unable to control it. At the advice of O'Brien, the project attorney, it was felt necessary to take recourse to the FBI and to call in FBI agents to make investigations in the center to ascertain the names of those evacuees who were attempting to curb feeling for registration. Reference is made to the lengthy correspondence between the various FBI agents in San Francisco, Red Bluff, with Coverley, and the letters between Dillon Myer and J. Edgar Hoover. In these letters, Coverley openly criticizes the FBI for their failure to succor him in his hour of need. The whole thing began to revolve around the question as to how much jurisdictionary power the FBI had in handling evacuees in the military zone. It is Jacoby's private belief that Bendetsen, aide to General DeWitt, was opposed to the use of the FBI in the relocation centers in the areas under his jurisdiction, and would have preferred to see the matter fall into the hands of G-2. This may be true, inasmuch as project directors in other states have had no difficulty whatsoever in obtaining the help of the FBI, whereas the projects of Manzanar and Tule Lake have secured FBI aid with difficulty. It is certainly true that at Gila Leroy Bennett has had not the slightest difficulty in securing FBI cooperation. Much of the hysteria which demanded FBI aid, Jacoby attributes to O'Brien, who for some time had been concerned with investigations of his own, aimed at ascertaining the names of subversive characters among the evacuee population. Hayes, furthermore, had completely balled up the instructions on registration, apparently learning nothing from his attending the

Washington conferences for instruction in the procedure of registration. Jacoby remarks also that Lieut. Carroll also was not fully prepared to handle the situation. Hayes came out with a statement that all of those who applied for repatriation need not register. Jacoby, however, showed me a memorandum from Rowalt stating that it was necessary for repatriation applicants to register. This memorandum did not come through until several days ~~prior~~ after the beginning of registration. In the meantime, Jacoby had had considerable disagreement with Marshall, who had demanded that all of those who had applied for repatriation be isolated in some section of the community where they could be kept out of contact with those who had not applied. As the repatriation applications piled up, viewed by the evacuees as a substitution for registration, Marshall demanded of Coverley and Jacoby that they prevent further applications for repatriation. Hayes stuck solidly by his misguided interpretation that repatriation applicants need not register. It was not until Rowalt's memo came too late that the procedure had to be begun again, but by this time the harm was done, and the anti-registration feeling had swept the community, a situation which Coverley was completely incapable of handling.

September 25, 1943