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HISTORY OF POSITION OF SPECIAL RELOCATION OFFICER

NORTH CENTRAL AREA

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

By

Shotaro Hikida  
Special Relocation Officer

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HISTORY OF POSITION OF SPECIAL RELOCATION OFFICER  
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Special Relocation Officer

INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to show the kind of work I have done and what accomplishments, if any, were made by me since I was appointed as Special Relocation Officer in July, 1945, and assigned to the North Central Area of the War Relocation Authority. Having served in this capacity only four and a half months to date, the work done and accomplishment made is very little. The detailed report on the work which I did and accomplished during the past four and a half months can be classified as follows:

1. Survey of business opportunities for resettled Japanese Americans in Chicago.
2. Trips to the district offices and survey on general conditions of business, farming and employment opportunities, housing situation, public acceptance and community adjustment.
3. Survey on employment conditions in Chicago.
4. Miscellaneous work: interview resettlers on business opportunities and on special Issei problems, writing and preparing special bulletins on surveys which are distributed to the centers, and meeting and assisting resettlers at railroad stations.

I. SURVEY OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN CHICAGO

According to the survey which I conducted in August, 1945, and supplemented in December, 1945, the following list are businesses and



professions of Japanese Americans in the city of Chicago:

Hotels, apartments, rooming and boarding houses . . . .	102
Chop suey and Japanese restaurants . . . . .	12
Restaurants . . . . .	17
Oriental foods and fish markets . . . . .	6
Grocery stores . . . . .	4
Cleaners and dyers . . . . .	9
Food manufacturers . . . . .	3
Beauty shops . . . . .	3
Express and transfer companies . . . . .	3
Watch repair shops . . . . .	4
Insurance agents . . . . .	3
Real estate agents. . . . .	2
Photographers . . . . .	7
Radio repair shops . . . . .	3
Gift and art shops . . . . .	10
Barber shop . . . . .	1
Refrigerator repairers . . . . .	2
Toy packing service . . . . .	2
Artificial flower manufacturer . . . . .	1
Gasoline service station . . . . .	1
Art repair shop . . . . .	1
Night club . . . . .	1
Attorney . . . . .	1
Optometrist . . . . .	4
Dentists . . . . .	7
Physicians and surgeons . . . . .	3
Weekly paper . . . . .	1
Total	<u>218</u>



Approximately 85% of these business establishments and professions listed above are owned or operated by those who resettled to this city from various relocation centers during the past few years, and nearly 75% of them started their businesses since the first of this year. It is interesting to note that a majority of these businesses are owned or operated by Issei or by a partnership of an Issei father and a Nisei son or daughter. There are two opinions in regard to the comparatively small number of businesses owned or operated by Nisei and more by Issei: first, that the Nisei are still young and have no financial resources; and second, that the Nisei lack initiative in starting a business.

#### Location and Business Policy

Generally speaking, we find most of the Japanese owned or operated businesses in that section of the city where more Japanese reside and, therefore, it is safe to assume that to a large extent they are still adhering to their old pattern of business which they carried on the West Coast prior to evacuation. In other words, the majority of these business men are primarily engaged in business with their own people. To give a specific example, the population of Japanese Americans in Chicago is mainly located in five distinct sections of the city; namely, Near North, Far North, Central South, Far South, and West. Most of the business establishments of Japanese Americans are also located in these sections except for a few cases.

The Japanese business men on the West Coast prior to evacuation had a bitter experience due to this practice which limited their business activities in a small community of their own people which resulted in out throat competition. I believe that such a tendency among the Japanese businessmen in Chicago need to be corrected. The main reasons for such a



practice can be explained as follows: first, fear of racial discrimination which leads them to do business primarily with their own people; second, language difficulty coupled with a lack of experience in dealing with Caucasians encountered by Issei; third, lack of available housing causing resettlers to congregate in certain sections of the city where their businesses eventually follow. As for the first reason, fear of racial discrimination, it has been proven that there is no racial feeling against Japanese-owned businesses.

The fact that most of the Japanese business establishments in Chicago are located in sections where Japanese are settled in large numbers and that they still maintain their close tie with their own people may lead some student of Social Science to think that a "Little Tokyo" is in the making in Chicago. Survey shows, however, that there is no such indication because of the following conditions: closing of the relocation centers and no further increase of resettlers in Chicago; lack of housing and business premises in the sections mentioned above; fear of postwar depression; return of some resettlers to the West Coast. Considering these facts, I do not believe that a so-called "Little Tokyo" similar to those on the West Coast prior to evacuation and in Denver, Colorado, will ever exist here in Chicago. At the present time, the largest number of Japanese business houses located in a block where large numbers of Japanese reside, such as in the Near North section along Clark and LaSalle Streets, is less than five or six, and even that condition is limited to a few blocks.

#### Methods of Acquiring a Business

Resettlers acquire their businesses by the following methods:



1. Direct negotiation with former owner after becoming acquainted.
2. Through newspaper classified ads.
3. Through real estate agents.
4. Through the aid of WRA.
5. Through the aid of their friends and relatives.

During the survey I was surprised to find that the resettlers acquired these business establishments with comparative ease. Several of them were able to acquire their new business within a week or ten days after their relocation, and others took about two months, but in all cases the transfer proceedings went very smoothly. For example, Mr. Hayashi left Granada Relocation Center on short term leave and went to New York to investigate business opportunities. On his way back he stopped for a few days in Chicago. He went into a grocery store just below the hotel where he was staying and became engaged in a conversation with the owner of the grocery. During the conversation the owner inquired whether or not Mr. Hayashi would be interested in buying the store. Mr. Hayashi was interested and after a few negotiations, the deal was closed and today he is enjoying good business. There are several other cases where businesses were acquired in a similar manner.

As it has been listed, there are more than 102 hotels, apartments, rooming and boarding houses owned or operated by Japanese in Chicago, and there are many more resettlers looking for this type of business. The popularity of this type of business among resettlers can be explained by the fact that their primary objective is none other than securing housing for their families and relatives. Even today there is keen competition among resettlers in buying hotels and apartments and as a result, prices are high for this type of business and property.



### Required Capital and Its Resources

Capital invested by resettlers, except a few hotels and apartments which run as high as \$50,000 to \$75,000, is comparatively small and generally range between \$1,500 and \$5,000. Resources are usually from their own savings, from the sale of their former agricultural and business properties or from an accumulated fund of their salary, loans by their friends and relatives, commercial loans through banks and loan firms. The survey revealed that evacuation and confinement of these people in camps during the war handicapped them financially to such an extent that their funds had been exhausted and many of them will not be able to go into their former business for several years.

### General Business Conditions

General conditions of business owned or operated by the resettlers in Chicago is very satisfactory. It was their unanimous opinion that business is very good and they are enjoying good patronage of both resettlers and Caucasians. No one has ever encountered any unpleasant incidents because of racial discrimination. Some of the Japanese businessmen since starting have increased the volume of their business as much as five or six times more than the former owners. There were also several businessmen who admitted that in the past they had never had such pleasant business experiences on the West Coast and that they thought Chicago offered them the best business opportunities. Most of these businesses are operated on a family basis, thus eliminating the hiring of outside employees, and this is one of the big advantages they will have in time of depression.

### Other Business Opportunities

There are several other businesses with plenty of opportunities which are suited for resettlers. For example, in the category of small



business, laundry shops, flower shops, cleaners, shoe repair shops, barber shops, watch repair shops are suggestions, and the manufacture of such articles such as artificial flowers, woolen goods, garments and toys where resettlers' manpower resources can be profitably employed. As a result of this survey, one of the strongest recommendation I would like to make is the integration of Japanese businessmen into American communities. As I have mentioned before, businesses limited only to their own race is very risky and may lead to eventual failure. It has already been proven by those who are now enjoying a tremendous volume of business in Caucasian and Negro districts.

## II. VISITS TO THE DISTRICT OFFICES

During the months of September and October, I visited all of our district offices and investigated business, farming, employment and job housing opportunities and also met with the Issei as a group and assisted them in organizing into a committee so that they may coordinate with the Nisei and Caucasians to meet their future needs after the closing of WRA. A report on each district is given herewith in the order of my visits.

### Milwaukee District

My first impression of Milwaukee was the clean and healthy condition of the city itself and the beautiful surroundings of the suburban districts. I was also deeply impressed with the fine acceptance of the Japanese Americans in this city. Everything seemed to be just the opposite of what I had once thought of midwestern cities. I had thought that the cities on the West Coast were so much more modern and beautiful that the midwestern cities did not compare with them. After my visit to Milwaukee I realized that many resettlers made a mistake by not knowing more about these midwestern cities. If they did more people would have resettled to these smaller cities rather



than relocating to New York or to Chicago and they might have been happier in their relocated life.

#### Business Opportunities - Milwaukee District

I was surprised to find that in Milwaukee there was not a single Japanese owned business. However, I met two resettlers who were planning to start their own business, one of whom was interested in the manufacture of infant woolen goods and the other in a gift or flower shop. The survey shows that such businesses as gift shops, dress shops, cleaners, grocery and Oriental food markets, shoe repair shops are most prospective. I have been told that if one resettler starts a business then there will be others who follow. I believe that the main reason resettlers have not gone into business in Milwaukee is that most of them have never had any business experience in the past and they are well satisfied with their present jobs. It was generally said that no racial feeling would interfere with businesses of Japanese Americans in Milwaukee.

#### Employment Opportunities - Milwaukee District

Employment opportunities in Milwaukee for Nisei and Issei are normal although it can be said that jobs for Issei are not as well explored as in other districts such as Des Moines and St. Louis. There are very few families in Milwaukee under job housing arrangements. Housing in Milwaukee, of course, is acute as in other cities, but resettlers live in comparatively desirable neighborhoods. The rent seems higher than average compared to Chicago.

#### Visit to Lake Lawn Hotel, Delavan, Wisconsin

One afternoon while in Milwaukee, I visited Lake Lawn Hotel in Delavan which is famous as a scenic summer resort. There were more than



25 resettlers employed at the hotel, most of whom are engaged as kitchen workers. The manager said that they were extremely satisfied by the good work of the Japanese Americans and hopes to be able to get more next season. The resettlers, too, are satisfied because of the fair treatment they receive from the guests and the management. The only complaint of the management and the Japanese steward was the unsettled conditions of some employees who would quit their jobs in a few months. This is largely due to the lack of entertainment and to the isolated location of the hotel. The housing, too, is not very good.

Community Adjustment - Milwaukee District

The community adjustment of Issei in any resettled community is one of the difficult problems which have had to be met by the resettlers themselves as well as by those who are interested in their welfare. In Milwaukee, the Resettlement Association has been very helpful, having opened a hostel which resettlers attend and meet other resettled Issei and Caucasian friends. There are also several Nisei and Kibei women who take Issei women shopping downtown which is deeply appreciated by them.

St. Louis District

My visit to St. Louis was very profitable, having spent a day and a night meeting with resettlers in various types of business and employment, and with local community leaders, as well as assisting the newly arrived resettlers get settled on their first day of relocation in a new community. Through such an experience I was able to observe every angle of the life of relocatees.



Business Opportunities - St. Louis

In St. Louis the following businesses and professions are owned or operated by the Japanese Americans:

- 2 cleaners
- 1 rooming house
- 2 restaurants
- 1 apartment
- 1 dentist

I interviewed all of them and secured the following information on business opportunities:

1. All the businessmen said that their business was successful, but some stated that it was difficult at the start setting up a system, cutting overhead expenses, adjusting with the workers.
2. All said that public reaction toward Japanese owned businesses was good but one businessman said that such favorable public sentiment was due to the fact that the customers did not know whether they were Japanese or other Orientals. When they found out, however, that the owners were Japanese, their attitude changed immediately.
3. I was told that keeping their employees stable is one of their difficult problems. In one establishment during the first few months one resettler owner was threatened with a closed shop by his Negro employees so thereafter, he replaced them with resettlers in key positions and solved this problem.
4. Types of business which are considered most fitted for resettlers in St. Louis are gift and art shops, chop suey and sukiyaki restaurants, cleaners and laundries, fruits and vegetable stands.



Job Housing - St. Louis

The employment situation for both Nisei and Issei in St. Louis seems to be very good. I was surprised to find several Nisei employed in offices as typists, secretaries, and accountants. There seems to be no difficulty for anyone with qualifications in obtaining employment without racial discrimination. I was particularly pleased to find several families comfortably resettled in suburban homes, institutions and in country estates on job housing arrangements.

Housing in St. Louis, the same as in other cities, is very tight but I visited several homes of resettlers and found them to be very satisfactory and desirable and in good neighborhoods. The housing availability in the Powell Terrace Federal Housing Project in St. Charles for the families of Japanese American servicemen is another advantage offered in this district. I accompanied the Arimura family, the first Japanese American family to be admitted to this housing project on their first day, and was deeply impressed with the fine reception given by the officials of the project and by the residents of St. Charles. I thought that resettlers in St. Louis are very fortunate in finding such good housing and employment opportunities.

Community Adjustment - St. Louis

Through the cooperation of Miss Mary Brooks, the Relocation Officer, a meeting of the Issei resettlers in St. Louis was held one evening and a discussion was held on the community adjustment of resettlers. At that time I brought up many ways by which the Issei could make their relocated life pleasant and comfortable. It was also decided to hold an English class for Issei women to meet regularly and have socials, and to select two Issei to represent them at a proposed committee or council to be



organized to meet the continuing needs of the resettlers after WRA closes. The interest shown by community leaders toward the welfare of Japanese Americans is commendable, and several families were given every assistance in making their homes in St. Louis.

#### Des Moines District

Des Moines as a place of relocation is very familiar to the evacuees because Des Moines in the early days of relocation offered every opportunity to the Japanese Americans. In visiting this city and investigating the conditions, this was clearly shown.

Those who resettled to Des Moines were early relocatees, mostly students whose families joined them soon after. Both the Nisei and Issei have integrated well into the American communities.

#### Business Opportunities - Des Moines

In Des Moines there are two Japanese owned businesses, namely:

Oriental Gift Shop owned by Mr. Yamasaki who has been in business in Des Moines since 1932. The store is located in the center of Des Moines' busiest business section.

Harrie Watch Repair Shop owned by Harrie Takayanagi, a Nisei watchmaker. The shop was opened a year ago and is enjoying a tremendous amount of business. According to their experience, public reaction is excellent and both are enjoying good business.

There are two other resettlers who are preparing to start their own businesses, one a cleaner and the other a restaurant. It was very interesting to note that in these smaller cities we find more Nisei interested in business than Issei. I believe this is largely due to the Issei's language difficulty. The types of business recommended by the resettlers in Des Moines are



chop suey restaurants, cleaning shops, sandwich shops, flower shops and dress shops.

Employment Opportunities - Des Moines District

In Des Moines there are several Issei who hold very good jobs. A few examples are Mr. Hieshima who is a steward of the largest night club in the city; Mr. Uchiyama who is a shipping clerk at a large wholesale flower shop; Mr. Nishimoto who is head buyer for a large fruit and vegetable market, Mr. Morishige who is mechanic and assistant manager of a garage. There are several Nisei who hold good and responsible positions such as a member of the editorial staff of a newspaper, line-type operator, high school teacher, dental technician, accountant, engineers, etc. I believe that both the Nisei and Issei in Des Moines are outstanding in holding better types of jobs in comparison with other districts. I do not know whether it means that Des Moines offers resettlers better jobs or if it is the resettlers' ability and qualifications which are acceptable to the employers. At any rate, it can be said without reservation that the Issei in Des Moines are early resettlers and have the qualifications which seems to be lacking among other Issei resettlers.

Housing Condition - Des Moines

The housing conditions in Des Moines are very satisfactory. Most of the resettlers live in fine residential districts of the city and the rent seems to be very reasonable. There are several families who have bought houses in Des Moines and this alone shows that they are well resettled in Des Moines.

Community Adjustment - Des Moines

As I have mentioned before, the Japanese Americans who have resettled in Des Moines possess certain qualifications which resettlers in other



districts lack. This advantage coupled with their early resettlement to Des Moines makes their adjustment in their new communities much easier. I was pleased to find that both the Nisei and Issei in Des Moines associate very closely with each other as well as making friends with Caucasians.

The Issei in Des Moines have organized themselves into a social group and for the past two years have met periodically. When I was in Des Moines a banquet was held at the hostel and the matter of organizing a committee with Nisei and Caucasians to look after their welfare was discussed.

Public acceptance of Japanese Americans in Des Moines is exceptionally good and many of the resettlers have commended very highly on the friendly attitude of the people of Des Moines.

#### Kansas City District Office

Many of the Japanese Americans who have relocated from the centers to Midwestern and Eastern points have gone through Kansas City by train so the name of this city should be very familiar, but very little is known to them in way of relocation opportunities which Kansas City offers. This, I believe, is due to their main interest in Chicago and New York as they are well informed about these cities. I was quite surprised at the many opportunities that Kansas City offers to the resettlers. In the first place, the city is beautiful with many parks and trees in the residential districts, picturesque scenery of suburban districts, comparatively low cost of living, plenty of employment opportunities, and good public sentiment. I thought Kansas City to be a most ideal place for Japanese Americans with children to make their permanent homes.



Business Opportunities - Kansas City

The twin cities of Kansas City in the two states of Missouri and Kansas have more than 350 Japanese Americans of which 50 to 60 are Issei who relocated to this city during recent months to join their sons and daughters.

There are two restaurants, one gift shop, one rooming house, one dressmaker and two dentists of Japanese ancestry. There are also two restaurants operated by an old time resident in Independence. When I interviewed them I secured the following information:

1. As it is common throughout the Midwest, the Japanese-owned businesses are well accepted by the public and are enjoying good business. There has not been a single case where racial discrimination entered into their business. In fact, as it is in Chicago, the Japanese American businessmen are very popular and well patronized by their Caucasian customers.
2. In every city I visited, it was rather encouraging to find some Nisei in business trying hard to make a success out of it. They are on equal basis with other American businessmen in every way. A 23-year-old Nisei in Kansas City is making a good start in the the restaurant business and is planning to open another restaurant.
3. I was told that one of the big problems of resettlers in starting business in Kansas City was finding suitable business establishment in the desired location for a reasonable amount of capital.
4. Several of them said that lack of capital due to evacuation is another reason that Japanese Americans have not been able to go into business. In the past, it was a common practice among Japanese Americans to secure needed capital from friends and



relatives through a pool called "tanomoshi", but this became impossible due to the destruction of financial resources caused by the mass evacuation.

5. There are several Issei in Kansas City who had been in business before and who are still interested in business, but they are not quite settled and cannot decide whether they will live here permanently or go back to the West Coast, and therefore, they are reluctant to invest their savings in a permanent business.

#### Employment Opportunities - Kansas City

Most of the Nisei have good jobs and are well content. The jobs offered for Issei are as custodians, caretakers, gardeners, and domestics. Issei businessmen who have never worked for other people are not interested in domestic jobs and several of them are old and have retired.

#### Visit to Elms Hotel, Excelsior Spring

One afternoon I visited Elms Hotel, an exclusive resort in Excelsior Spring, where more than 25 resettlers are employed as cooks, dishwashers, bartenders, waiters and bell boys. All of them are well satisfied with their good working conditions, fine housing and wages, but one complaint was the lack of entertainment as a result of which younger Nisei did not stay on the jobs very long. Some resettlers left for the West Coast. I interviewed several of them and stressed the point that such an opportunity is very hard to find on the West Coast and advised them to stay and keep their present jobs.

#### Farming Conditions - Kansas City

During my visit to the districts, this was my first opportunity to visit and investigate the farming opportunities in the Midwest. The farm



I visited was the only farm operated by Japanese Americans in the vicinity of Kansas City, and it was the farm of Clarence Kimura, formerly of Woodland, California. According to the Kimuras, they cash rented 160 acres last year and planted tomatoes, spinach, cabbage and sugar beets. I was told that they took in a good crop of spinach and cabbage which brought them enough income to take care of expenses and left a little profit, but the other crops were a complete failure. One of the difficulties is the lack of irrigation system and they had to depend entirely upon the year's rainfall. They were not accustomed to this type of farming and this alone upset their plans.

#### Community Adjustment - Kansas City

In Kansas City there has never been an occasion for the Issei to meet and associate with each other. While I was in Kansas City, I met and talked with several Issei and it was their desire to meet the other Issei and to discuss their problems. Through the kind arrangement of Dr. Furuichi, a long time resident of Kansas City and a dentist, I was able to meet with Issei leaders of the community. At the meeting we discussed the matter of community adjustment and integration of resettlers into the American communities. They also decided to meet regularly and hold social events as well as to formulate a plan to meet with Nisei and Caucasians so that a committee or council would be organized to look after the problems of the resettlers after WRA closes.

#### Minneapolis District Office

##### Business Opportunities

In Minneapolis the following businesses are owned or operated by resettlers:



1 Bean Cake Manufacturer

1 Cleaner

3 Restaurants

1 Beauty Shop

2 Dressmakers

4 Apartment and rooming houses

In St. Paul there are one gift shop and one restaurant.

Most of the restaurants are mainly engaged in business with the servicemen of Japanese Americans from Fort Snelling. Except for a few business establishments such as gift shops and cleaners, the others deal mainly with resettlers. While it is the unanimous opinion of the resettlers in Minneapolis that public acceptance of Japanese Americans is excellent no one has yet taken the initiative to go into business in a Caucasian community. The reason for lack of interest in business seems to be identical to those I have mentioned in connection with visits to other districts.

I believe Minneapolis offers the best business opportunities for resettlers. Despite this fact, however, I have heard resettlers say that they were intending to move to Chicago or to New York so that they could start some kind of a business. The following types of business are considered to be most suitable for resettlers: gift shops, soda fountains, cleaners, apartment and rooming houses, grocery drug stores.

#### Employment - Minneapolis

Issei in Minneapolis are employed in cleaning shops, department stores, photo studios, as dental technicians and custodians of institutions. One Issei resettler told me that any Issei who could speak and understand English and got along with other workers would have no difficulty in obtaining jobs similar to the ones offered to the Nisei. There is no distinction made between the Nisei and the Issei as long as he is qualified for the job. There seems to be plenty of job housing opportunities but resettlers in Minneapolis are not interested in work of this type as it would make it



inconvenient for their sons at Snelling to visit them.

#### Housing - Minneapolis

Housing in Minneapolis seems to be extremely difficult. Several resettlers whom I interviewed said that they have had such difficulties in getting housing that they have had to buy their own houses. Several resettlers made this remark and it indicates the acuteness of housing in Minneapolis. My survey shows that the type of apartments in which resettlers live is not desirable compared to those in other districts. Of course, there are more than 1,500 resettlers in Minneapolis. The whole life of the relocated Japanese Americans in Minneapolis seems to center around the Nisei soldiers at Fort Snelling and this tends to make their life in this resettled community rather temporary.

#### Omaha District Office

The number of resettlers in Omaha is comparatively small, but the majority of them being early resettlers they are well settled into the life of their communities. During my three days stay I met and interviewed more than 50 resettlers.

#### Business Opportunities - Omaha District

The following businesses are operated by Japanese Americans in Omaha:

2 restaurants	2 photo studios
1 watch repair shop	2 gift shops

My investigation reveals that these businesses are not located in good sections of the city and therefore their business is not as good as some of those I have seen in other districts. They are all satisfied and have not experienced any unpleasant incidents.



Employment - Omaha District

Most of the Japanese Americans, both Issei and Nisei, who were early resettlers in Omaha have good paying jobs. There are several Issei employed as photo finishers, watch repairers, and dental technicians. In Boys Town near Omaha there are more than 20 resettlers, more than half of whom are Issei. There are plenty of job housing offers which are never filled.

Housing - Omaha District

The housing situation is tight, too, but several resettlers are living in nice apartments in good neighborhoods. There are several families in Lincoln under job housing arrangements and they all expressed their satisfaction over the fine housing and good working conditions.

Community Adjustment - Omaha District

The Issei in Omaha were invited to a meeting and social at the YWCA which was held in connection with my visit. Discussions were held on community adjustment and future social gatherings as well as plans to set up a committee with the Nisei and Caucasians for future service to the resettlers. It was also decided that they would meet again in November.

SUMMARY OF MY REPORT ON THE DISTRICTS

Public Sentiment

The public acceptance of resettlers in the districts which I visited seemed excellent; resettlers in their daily contacts with neighbors, employers and other employees and customers, as well as pupils in schools, are well accepted. I have never witnessed or heard of a single case of racial discrimination. Reasons for good public acceptance can be attributed to: better understanding of Japanese Americans by the general public; good



public relations work by community leaders and church groups and by some Nisei leaders; generally better class of resettlers in the cities and their integration; no distinction made between Chinese, Filipinos, and Japanese; fine support given by local press.

#### Employment Situation

Employment opportunities for the Nisei are excellent, but not too good for the Issei. This does not mean that Issei are discriminated but that they lack the qualifications. There is no distinction made between the Issei and the Nisei. Of course, different conditions exist in different districts, some having developed good employment opportunities while others have not.

Usually older Nisei and younger Issei are best accepted because of their experience and dependability. Language and attitude toward work seem to be very important in securing jobs. Older Issei who have never worked for other people before and younger Nisei who are not dependable as a rule do not stay long on their jobs.

#### Housing

Generally speaking, housing is very good and in some cases they are far better than those of pre-evacuation days on the West Coast. Resettlers in these districts are free from the unhealthy living conditions of the slum districts. Rents are reasonable, neighborhoods good, and their houses are kept clean. They are well distributed within the city and have not congregated themselves too much.

#### Job Housing

There are plenty of job housing opportunities, but interest among



resettlers is limited due to their background. This type of work is usually best fitted for those who have been employed before as gardeners, domestics, foremen of ranches, and especially those with large families. Resettlers who were farming or had a business of their own and never worked for other people are not happy with this kind of a job.

### Business Opportunities

There are more Nisei businessmen in the smaller cities and more Issei businessmen in the larger city like Chicago. This condition is due to the fact that the Issei lack the experience in dealing with other people and are handicapped by their knowledge of English.

There is no racial feeling in their business and as long as good service and commodity are offered to customers their business should equal others in business.

Japanese-owned businesses, generally, are small and often located in less desirable sections. This is largely due to the lack of capital and the unsettled conditions of resettlers.

Lack of interest in business among the resettlers are due to (1) fear of racial feeling, (2) fear of postwar depression, (3) unsettled living conditions, (4) lack of capital and resources, (5) family circumstances due to dislocation of family members.

I believe that the moral and financial support such as giving leads for new businesses, low interest loans, as well as better community adjustment of the resettlers themselves will gradually encourage them to go into business.



### Farming Opportunities

Although I did not have an opportunity to investigate this matter in detail during my visits to the districts, I gathered the following information through a few contacts I made.

1. Difficulty of acquiring suitable farmland.
2. Difficulty with the lack of irrigation.
3. Climatic conditions which differ from those on the West Coast.
4. Fear of unfavorable public sentiment.
5. Property attachments on the West Coast.
6. Excellent marketing.

### Community Adjustment

Nisei are better adjusted to their communities than are the Issei. The main reasons are the language difficulty, reconstruction of their family life economically and socially, their old pattern of living, the small number of Issei, etc. There are several Issei who cannot make any real adjustment in their newly relocated communities because of lack of religious affiliations, difficulty in obtaining foods which they have been accustomed to for many years, matrimonial problems of their children, severe climatic conditions. These reasons seem very minor, but they have a very important bearing on their lives.

### Community Organization

Most of the Issei realize the importance of community organization and are willing to cooperate to any extent. Plans are underway for organizations of committees or councils, combination of Nisei-Issei-Caucasians, to look after the welfare of resettlers after WRA closes. Some Issei are reluctant to participate in any organization activities due to their bitter experience in the past.



### III. SURVEY ON EMPLOYMENT

During the latter part of November and the first part of December, I conducted an employment survey of the Japanese Americans in Chicago, visiting more than 17 industrial plants and business houses which employ large numbers of resettlers. I have listed below some general information which I gathered from this survey.

1. It was the unanimous opinion of the employees that Japanese Americans are good and steady workers, responsible and obedient.
2. They will continue them in employment and not release them unless there is an acute depression resulting in drastic curtailment, which will not be possible.
3. All the firms and plants which I visited have not curtailed their activities since V-J Day, but have expanded, and therefore no one was released. On the contrary, they are eager to hire more Japanese Americans if available.
4. They have no complaints of any kind against the resettlers, but in the earlier days of their experience of hiring them, they encountered difficulty with some unattached young Nisei who were irresponsible and did not stay on the job very long.
5. Japanese American employees get along very well with other workers and in fact are well liked by fellow employees.
6. Very few Japanese Americans hold supervisory jobs, but that does not reflect upon their ability because such positions are given on a seniority basis and resettlers have been in employment for only a few years. A good percentage of them are doing office work and some are given responsible work.



7. The largest turnover of employees among resettlers have been caused by two reasons; Army induction and returns to the West Coast. They have been replaced continuously by resettlers.
8. As far as Nisei are concerned, they can be placed in any work in any department equal to other employees, but Issei who do not speak or understand English well are placed in special work where language is not essential. This handicap limits the employment opportunities of Issei but does not mean discrimination.
9. There may be several reasons for the companies to employ Japanese Americans such as the acute shortage of labor, etc., but one of the important reasons is the tolerant and understanding attitude of one or more officials of the companies toward the resettlers.

#### IV. MISCELLANEOUS

While in the Area Office, other than those already reported, I also performed the following duties:

1. Meeting and assisting resettlers at stations. - Whenever special coach trains bearing evacuees arrived at the stations in Chicago I met them and assisted them in transferring to other stations and directed them to their destinations in Chicago. I thought that this was one of the very important work of this agency because most of the Issei resettlers arriving in Chicago were completely lost and needed assistance in sending wires to their relatives in other cities informing them of their arrival time, receiving their baggage, and transferring to other stations.
2. Interview work. - I interviewed several Issei who called to



secure certain information on business opportunities, employment and housing conditions, and to secure advice on various matters and regulations effecting parolee and enemy aliens. There were several communications from local Issei businessmen offering vacant apartments whenever available in their apartments and rooming houses and also several requests for employees. All these matters were referred to the proper persons in the office.

3. Translation service - I have translated several Japanese letters received by this office and also helped several Issei by giving them interpreting service.
4. Preparation of reports - I have prepared and distributed through the Reports Officer the following special bulletins and directories:
  - a. "Business Opportunities in Chicago," distributed to the centers and given to resettlers coming to the office.
  - b. "Relocation Opportunities in the Milwaukee District."
  - c. "Relocation Opportunities in St. Louis."
  - d. "Relocation Opportunities in Des Moines."
  - e. Directory of Japanese-owned apartments, hotels, rooming and boarding houses.
  - f. Directory of Japanese American businessmen in Chicago.
5. Work on Community Organizations - In order that resettlers would be able to meet their own problems and to utilize most profitably the existing community resources after WRA closes, I am now working among the Issei in each district to promote



interest in community organizations. In Milwaukee, Des Moines, St. Louis, the Issei have taken the initiative and the plan is well underway, while in Minneapolis and Omaha, the meeting of Issei will be held soon and preparation begun. In Chicago, there are two opinions on the subject of resettlers organizations; one opinion is to strengthen the recently organized Resettlers Committee, and the other opinion is to disband the Resettlers Committee and concentrate on the JAOL or to make the Resettlers Committee a part of the JAOL. Supporters of the first opinion insist that the JAOL will not be able to take care of the ever increasing local needs of resettlers because it is mainly organized on a national basis and is a political organization. Supporters of the second opinion say that establishment of new organization would tend to create feeling between the two organizations which would eventually divide the local Japanese Americans into two groups fighting each other. The Japanese in America in the past, especially the Issei on the West Coast, have had bitter experiences with their organizations. One of the evils was that there were too many organizations in the Japanese community and this divided the whole community into several groups. There has never been a unity among them, and in view of such bitter experience, I am fully convinced that an amicable solution of resettlers organizations in Chicago should be made.

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