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Separation Report for Motor Transport and Maintenance
by

Lt. Col. L. E. Fiero
Transportation Adviser for WRA

Pursuant to Administrative Notice dated January 8, 1945

Dear Mr. Myer:

On June 26, 1942, I was assigned to the San Francisco Office of the War Relocation Authority from the 195th Field Artillery, at Fort Ord, California.

Four other officers were attached to WRA in San Francisco on temporary detail. Within three or four months I was the only officer remaining with the San Francisco Office. As you know the reason for the assignment of Army Officers to WRA, was to assist in setting up practices, procedures, and to establish operating relationships between WRA and the Army services, inasmuch as the original agreement between the War Department and WRA provided that the War Department supply WRA essential needs.

I assumed that, since all phases of camp administration and operation were to be established, the assistance of these officers was necessary in planning and training WRA personnel for field duties.

Mr. Fryer, who was in charge of the Regional Office in San Francisco, did not outline any particular phase for which he wished my assistance, but occasionally he asked me to participate when difficulties arose.

I assisted in the procurement of supplies and materials, maintaining working arrangements with the Quartermaster Depots, negotiating special problems. I also saw that proper records of materials and supplies requisitioned were maintained. My office also recorded all purchase orders and followed through to assure deliveries.

It gradually became apparent to me that there were three groups operating WRA; Washington, San Francisco, and the small group of Army personnel and their appointed employees, who in reality were an auxiliary.

The San Francisco Office had, apparently, been obliged to open and operate the Relocation Centers under whatever methods and procedures they could employ. Camps were necessary to house the evacuees coming from the assembly centers along the coast. The U. S. Engineers built the camps and a schedule of opening each center was developed. We assisted in tracing receipt of supplies.

Mr. Fryer, therefore, made use of the Army personnel in the following activities:

1. Procurement through army supply channels.
2. Mess operations; employing and training stewards, and supervising procurement of food stuffs.
3. Assisting with transportation problems, mostly rail transport and traffic.
4. Finally, assisting in securing cars, trucks, and other types of transport.

The Army group at San Francisco was not, in the early months, at least, included in Staff meetings. Relationship was very poor. It was at such a time that I came to WRA to assist as best I could in its problems. While in San Francisco, my job was never defined, so I made

myself useful as I could in attempting to be of service. I attempted, sincerely, to be of service where action was needed without duplicating someone else's activity.

The activities that I carried on, for a time, with a small number of appointed personnel, were supply, mess operations, phases of procurement, and transportation. Gradually, however, these functions were duplicated by the San Francisco Office, (civilian personnel) and our offices were by-passed and permitted to wither on the vine, without further notice. This, of course, did not make for a happy family spirit and led to a feeling of disgust, and that whatever work had been accomplished by the officers, they did merit being advised of developments.

In August 1942, a considerable portion of my time was taken up in securing motor vehicles for WRA. A survey of needs of the Centers for motor vehicles had been made by Major Darlington. We drafted a letter to the Quartermaster General's office in Washington requesting necessary quantities and types of vehicles with which to supply the Centers' transportation requirements. Action was taken by the Quartermaster General granting the request. Copies of this directive should have been sent to the various Service Commands. However, only the 9th Service Command received the directive. This made it difficult for me to secure the quantities of vehicles needed in the 7th and 8th Corps Areas, especially, when I was restricted as to travel in the area of the Pacific Coast. Later on I was permitted to contact these service commands and iron out the difficulties.

As a result of visiting Ft. Douglas and becoming acquainted with officers there, and also all centers on the Pacific Coast and in Arizona, it became possible to secure several hundred trucks and passenger cars for the camps. These vehicles came from two sources, generally:

1. By purchase of evacuee passenger cars by the Western Defense Command.
2. From former CCC, and WPA surplus. These vehicles were assembled by the Quartermaster offices and drawn by various centers as fast as my office secured release thereof from the service commands.

We also made arrangements with the Quartermaster General to secure repair parts and other services from the army service shops nearest the centers.

Since I was involved with securing necessary motor equipment from the Army, and assisting with establishing procurement and mess operations, it was, therefore, surprising to find that no arrangements had been made for garages, motor pools and other service stations in the centers at the time the U. S. Engineers built the camps. Neither had plans for such facilities been made by WRA, to my knowledge. Finding that most centers were "getting by" with improvised warehouses for makeshift repair garages, and that there was no effort to organize or plan the construction of facilities, or set up the necessary personnel with an understanding of maintenance, I wrote you in October 1942, asking that you give consideration to the appointment of someone to head up these activities. About December 1, 1942, you visited the San Francisco Office and asked me to head up the activity and come to Washington. I had other activities to handle at the time, but had arranged to have all mess stewards from the

centers come into San Francisco to be schooled in procurement of food supplies from Army Depots. I contacted all the depots with which I had been dealing in order to lay the foundation for the projects to proceed under their own initiative without any bottlenecks or chances of misunderstanding.

During the period from July 1942 to February 15, 1943, my activities were of a general trouble shooting nature for WRA, the Army depots being the supply agencies. It is possible that during this time you were unaware that I endeavored to work for WRA's interests as though they were my own.

At one time, there was an acute shortage of coal with which to supply the northern camps. Although I had forewarned all camps of the necessity for getting in coal requisitions, early, three of the northern camps were practically without coal when cold weather arrived. Although contracts had been established late in the season by the army, to fill the delinquent requisitions, such a large volume of coal had been required for the Army and Navy needs that only questionable mining companies were left available for WRA contracts. When these contractors failed to produce the coal which was required for Tule Lake, Central Utah and Minidoka, I made a personal trip of investigation into the state of Utah.

As a result of my trip, I found that the contractors to whom contracts had been awarded were not able to produce the coal. I went through the mines, with the Department of Interior District Mining Engineer. The knowledge gained prevented further delay in waiting for coal and, subsequently, I contacted an Army coal scout in Seattle who promptly found

a source to fulfill the needs. Immediate deliveries were arranged so that coal was laid down in Minidoka within a week of the time the contract was established. The other centers were served in a surprisingly short time. Delinquency in settling accounts, in this above cited case, made it increasingly difficult to secure commodities later on. My insistence on prompt payment may have made for some misunderstanding of our efforts to assist such projects.

Much of my time in the San Francisco Office had been devoted to teaching some of the appointed personnel the procedures of Army procurement. A large part of the work was in editing requisitions and in recording and tracing purchase orders and deliveries. In this process, many hundreds of requisitions were sent back to the projects for correction, and all requisitions were edited for three or four months, to insure prompt handling by the quartermaster depots. Without such editing and preliminary education, much of the supplies needed would have been delayed while requisitions were being redrawn because of faulty composition. It is difficult to imagine the complex problem which does develop for a quartermaster when requisitions come in with various types of goods enumerated on the same requisition.

In September, the Granada and the Heart Mountain Relocation Centers were opened, and I set up quantities and requisitions for all food stuffs for the first forty days and checked the initial receipts to see how they were arriving at the projects to meet the needs. The same service was accomplished for the Centers in Arkansas. In all four centers, I checked the construction and fire hazards with the U. S. Engineers supervising

corrective work. I was complimented on these activities by Mr. E. B. Whitaker who was the Regional Director in Little Rock. I referred all fire protection problems back to Mr. Hoffman.

During the fall of 1942, I was authorized by General Somerville to act as fiscal agent, and to sub-allot funds used by WRA at San Francisco to pay for such procurement as army depots were furnishing. When I left San Francisco in February, there was approximately \$750,000 which had not been sub-allotted to depots.

As of February 15, 1943, I was ordered to Washington, D. C. and assigned to the Director's Office. I reported to Mr. Leland Barrows who stated that the Director desired me to take full responsibility for setting up the Motor Transport and Maintenance Section.

FORMULATION OF MOTOR TRANSPORT AND MAINTENANCE SECTION

It had been my wish to secure an appointed person to head up this activity as soon as possible and to secure a transfer, myself, to a military unit. The difficulty of securing a person of the required background, prevented my transfer, however, so that it became necessary for me to assume the supervision of this section in fact, rather than train in an appointed person and get a transfer to an army unit, as I desired so much to do.

I began my activities by trying to secure an assistant and setting up a plan of operation. This plan was reduced to the following basic requirements:

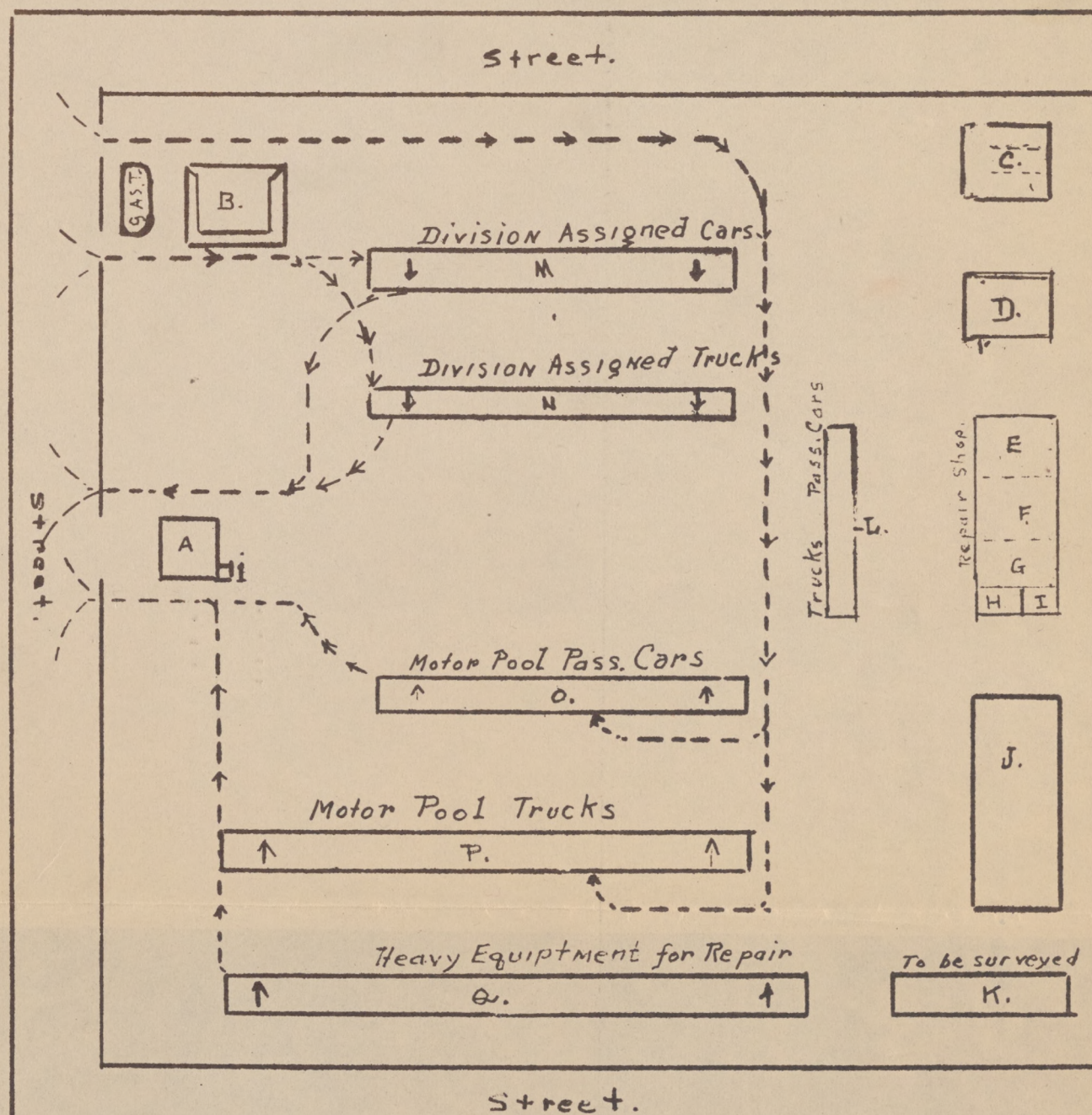
1. Making a fundamental plan for

- Facilities, (buildings, and garage equipment)
- Personnel organization.
- Methods of practice.
- Standards of operation.

A draft of the plan showing the concentration of service units to properly serve the center was laid out and sent to projects to work from. This was accomplished before any assistance had been provided me in Washington.

A copy of this plan is attached as Exhibit 1.

Suggested Automotive Maintenance Area, Motor Park and Traffic flow.



LEGEND

- Control Station
Dispatcher's Office
- Service Station
- Wash and Grease Racks
Paint Room
- Oil and Grease Storage
- Passenger Car Repair
- Truck Repair
- Heavy Equipment Repair
- Maintenance Supt.
- Parts Common
- 1 Gal. Tetrachloride
Fire Extinguisher
- Separate Heavy
Equipment Repair
Shop—in event
inadequate space in F.
- Cars or Trucks to
be surveyed
- Trucks and Cars scheduled
for repair
- Division Assigned Cars
- Division Assigned Trucks
- Motor Pool Pass Cars
- Motor Pool Trucks
- Heavy Equipment for Repair

*Distances between parked vehicles to be approximately six feet and not more than twenty-five vehicles in a line.

Although information and authority for use of funds, and approval of plans had been requested from time to time, little tangible information could be secured. I felt I could have thrown an organization together in a very short time, given adequate personnel and support. However, I asked for personnel several times and could get no action. A needed and practical section for operating and maintaining motor fleets, consisting of approximately two thousand vehicles, could be set up and planned, but it required more than mere influence being vested in the Section head in order to quickly overcome an inertia and handicap of several months of mal-practice. I did the best I could under the circumstances, without regular stenographic help and for four months without any assistance whatsoever. It is possible that other sections in the Washington Office were laboring under the same handicaps.

It was found that the Japanese-American evacuees were, perhaps, the world's worst operators of motor vehicles from the maintenance standpoint. In other words, they could put vehicles in the repair shop faster than a repair crew could fix them.

My method of attacking the general problem was to visit all centers, determine what was available in personnel and physical facilities, and study the needs so as to formulate the simplest workable plan which might be used as a guide in common for all projects. This study was the result of at least two visits to all centers. However, each visit also corrected many difficulties that had heretofore lacked central office or project support, in being remedied.

A blue print of a suggested typical motor maintenance area was taken to all projects from which to plan their facilities. A copy of this diagram, which is attached as Exhibit 1, on the foregoing sheet, indicates a simple plan of concentrating the needed services for automobiles in one area. Previously, segments of motor services were scattered in different places throughout each center.

In May 1943, I had set forth a minimum personnel requirement for each center's Motor Section and secured its general acceptance by the Assistant Director. A parts storekeeper was not approved which was a serious handicap, since the knowledge of the names and nomenclature of parts for vehicles of several year models, makes and types, is experience that can not be gained in a few weeks and in some instances takes many years. The difficulties of buying parts was becoming acute in the army as early as the spring of 1943. The parts storekeeper in a productive garage is a mandatory position. The lack of such an individual did cost the Government many thousands of dollars and many months loss of equipment time. It further resulted in ordering many thousands of parts for which no use could be made, because parts incorrectly numbered or described could not be returned for the correct part, or exchanged.

However, I advised the projects to set up an evacuee as parts man, getting along as best they could until regular parts men were approved. WRA later took the viewpoint that the property section would solve this defect by using one of their storekeepers and taking over the parts warehouse. Our recommendation for appointed

personnel for each Center's Motor Transport Section was sent each project with delineation of duties. Lacking a practical parts man resulted in such high priced men as the Equipment Supervisor spending valuable days soliciting parts in nearby cities, frequently delaying his own work in this attempt.

For the average center, personnel recommended was as follows:

1. Motor Transport and Maintenance Superintendent.
2. Asst. Motor Transport and Maintenance Superintendent.
- 2a. Evacuee Storekeeper
3. Motor Pool Supervisor
4. Foreman Mechanic
5. Foreman Mechanic
6. Heavy duty Foreman Mechanic
7. Heavy duty Truck Driver
8. Evacuee Mechanics (as many as needed)

I described the duties of each and their responsibility for each segment of the work. This information should have been sent out in the summer of 1942 had WRA understood the axiom that as soon as motor vehicles are acquired, service must be established. No doubt I could have arranged to establish such features earlier had WRA asked me to do so.

Having made these initial arrangements, I again went to every center and the Army supply points serving the centers to make sure that all possible assistance from the army was being given the projects. I also went to each service command to make sure they were appraised of their part in the program. The result of this was, that every project that paid attention to our instructions, secured rubber tires, parts, and batteries from the Army without cost until March 1, 1944. Furthermore, the construction of facilities was gotten under way and expedited.

I presume the Director may have felt at times, that I was assuming too much authority. The fact is, things had gone so long without attention and with so little assistance in this field, that I was obliged to more or less plan structures for garages and service buildings and to high pressure their development to get any facilities at all.

In March 1943, I had made an investigation through various Civil Service Offices to try to locate a man with mechanical background and experience in administration and maintenance of motorized equipment to assist the Washington Transportation and Maintenance Section. I found that the heavy demand for this type of personnel for the Army, Navy and Aviation had depleted the market. However, I finally secured the consent of Mr. Fred B. Wutschel to take this position, and after several weeks delay, the personnel unit secured this man. He was qualified more from a technical aspect than from an administrative viewpoint, since he did not have administrative experience other than in private business.

We immediately set out on an indoctrination mission, traveling to four of the centers as a team. My objective was to secure a harmonious working arrangement between Mr. Wutschel and each project. I made the administrative contacts and ironed out administrative problems which arose. These were usually smoothed out with the center staff.

I would survey the physical needs for facilities and personnel, and initiate plans and justifications to get the work developed. Mr. Wutschel, my assistant, spent the majority of his time engaged in technical duties, inspecting condition of the equipment and bringing to my attention, and project personnel's attention, the difficulties

needing action, so that project correction could follow. He also trained many mechanics to use correct practices in repair of automobiles.

This team plan worked excellently and would have been continued had it not been for the Washington Office vetoing my plan of team effort. Prior to starting on this trip Mr. Barrows had advised me verbally, that in order to formulate an organizational chart the Motor Section was to be placed under the Operations Division. However, that it would not in anyway interfere with my handling of the responsibilities. This statement no doubt resulted in some misunderstandings which were difficult to overcome later.

Before I had been in the field very long, however, the Chief of the Operations Division questioned the wisdom of my traveling with Mr. Wutschel as a joint team. I acceded to his desires much against my judgment with the result that Mr. Wutschel traveled to Gila, Colorado River and Manzanar alone and got into some difficulties with project personnel which could have otherwise been avoided. Complete plans were not developed at the last mentioned centers until later because of changing these plans. I had realized initially the inadequacy, administratively, of Mr. Wutschel's abilities but also knew of his value as to mechanical experience.

I was impressed that being assigned to the Director's Office, as my orders read, I was going to fulfill the responsibilities the Director had asked me to handle to the fullest degree and to the best advantage for the Director.

In October 1943, I came back to the Washington Office and on my own initiative, wrote up a Manual and Handbook of instructions for the Motor Transport and Maintenance Section. This was approved by WRA and immediately sent to the field.

Future trips to the field to instruct center employees in the interpretation of this Handbook, revealed that such instructional material was very slow in getting down to the personnel who were supposed to make use of it.

Thousands upon thousands of dollars worth of equipment, supplies, and lost hours could have been salvaged if sufficient travel funds had been set up to permit Mr. Wutschel and I to rotate between the centers continuously. Proper maintenance of fleets require that frequent inspection and instructive coaching be given to Motor Superintendents and other personnel.

A feature of preventive maintenance developed by our office was that which provided the monthly inspection of each vehicle. When vehicles of old models are being maintained, it is well from a safety standpoint as from a repair viewpoint to have each unit inspected every month. This was done by having an inspection bay in each garage supplied with equipment necessary to give each vehicle a complete examination to discover potential failure of parts. Thus many breakdowns of equipment could be avoided and, in some instances, loss of life prevented.

Because of labor shortage, we advocated that a few centers combine the supervision of the inspection bay with the greasing activities.

During the process of inspection we advised having all spark plugs, and distributor points readjusted, and minor repairs made. Any vehicle found to be unsafe or hazardous on the road, was grounded until necessary repair work could be accomplished. We trained a crew at each center to do this work and the shop superintendent to process a job order correcting defective adjustments and parts. In this manner, many accidents were avoided, and thousands of dollars worth of parts were saved that otherwise would have been requisitioned.

VEHICULAR DISPOSITION

In November 1943, I discovered, while in the 7th Service Command Office in Omaha, that a large number of Army trucks and cars were soon to be declared surplus, particularly the 1939 or older models, which the Army felt were too obsolete to maintain.

We at once set up plans to acquire these cars and trucks for WRA without transfer of funds. The transfer was accomplished in a matter of four months and 542 Army vehicles were acquired. At the same time, some 556 WRA vehicles were declared surplus. These vehicles that were declared as surplus were too old to be repaired economically. This transaction alone was worth well over a half million dollars to WRA.

Of the vehicles secured, many required some repairing, but for the most part, were very good, especially, those I had the opportunity to select personally from the 9th Service Command Stations. Mr. Wutschel also assisted in the selection.

At the time that I learned of the surplus vehicles, I also learned of a large accumulation of spare parts located at Ft. Crook, Omaha, Nebraska. I made arrangements with the supply officer there to honor requisitions for WRA projects, with the understanding that there was to be no charge for the parts.

The Army supply station at Ft. Crook had insufficient personnel to price the parts which we knew would be required in large amounts. Several projects secured thousands of dollars worth of parts. Other projects delayed getting their requisitions into headquarters and thereby lost the opportunity of securing them.

There are three objectives still to be met on the projects; first, the declaration of every piece of equipment as fast as it can be dispensed with. Second, the circularization of surplus parts to all projects so that the supplies can be used before the centers are closed. Third, a very strict administration of project motor maintenance must be provided from the Washington Office henceforth to insure the repair and maintenance of all vehicles right up to the time the centers are closed.

This will require Mr. Wutschel's entire time at the projects engaged in the following duties:

1. Converting to use dead lined vehicles by expediting repairs.
2. Insisting upon survey or surplus disposition of vehicles in excess of the need of the projects.
3. Insisting on greater production in repair garages.
4. Cutting down transportation demands where feasible.

The job involved really needs two traveling representatives actively engaged full time as there will be untold waste and loss unless

materials, supplies, and equipment can be constricted as rapidly as possible.

Lack of provision for a definite travel budget for the two members of the Washington staff so that constant rotation to the centers has always been a handicap. The budget for such purposes has never been adequate.

Both Mr. Wutschel and I have had much experience with safeguards in use of government equipment and the means of utilizing methods of preventing losses and waste and theft of government equipment.

Some projects, most wasteful and profligate in use of equipment and supplies, have circulated reports concerning our activities which have led you, no doubt, to feel we must be curtailed in our activities when in reality we have adopted the only means at hand to protect your own interests from unfavorable publicity and criticism.

An instance of this was our effort to institute a mileage administration to carry out the President's request for a 40% reduction in use of government cars. One of the most flagrant users of equipment was the Gila River Project. Mr. Wutschel used a government car to determine that thousands of miles of government car mileage was being used for private purposes. Immediately he was criticized by the project for himself utilizing a government car. The complaint also cited other Washington officials whom the project cited for making demands for their local equipment. The inefficient supervisor was discharged nearly a year later by the project and an earnest operator installed, after much damage had occurred.

Now, it is a well-known fact that there are cars and trucks which gravitate to nearby cities for all imaginable purposes and unless some representative takes steps to identify and handle such cases, nothing but complaints can come from citizens whose own normal rights have been curtailed by war needs. I have personally handled some of the letters initiated by irate citizens, to their representatives, because of the loose handling and use of government vehicles. The wanton abuse of invaluable critical equipment and tires by some projects just had to be corrected, or the Authority be submitted to drastic publicity.

I have personally secured hundreds of dollars worth of critical and almost unobtainable parts and supplies for WRA centers when procurement officers had failed, by having use of a government car. Furthermore, the army furnishes their officers in like positions with cars for transport as a justifiable need.

Inequalities such as denial of use of passenger cars to the Washington Motor Maintenance Officer, at the same time condoning freedom of use of government cars all over the country by relocation officers who have run up thousands of miles per month in the job of relocating evacuees, do not seem consistent.

In the course of the past year, as Mileage Administrator for your agency, I have reported a mileage saving in seven centers of over eight hundred thousand miles and an equivalent of 100,000 gallons of gasoline. This approximates a dollar saving of \$10,000 to \$12,000. This is equal to an amount paid as the salaries to the personnel engaged in the Washington office of the Motor Section. Additional

progress may be shown for the balance of time WRA is in operation.

In recent months, my usefulness to the Motor Transportation Section has been limited by the lack of funds needed to contact the centers. At the beginning of the fiscal year, I was informed by the Operations Division that they were allocating \$2300 for travel of the Transportation Officer and his assistant during the year. The sum was entirely inadequate for our work.

I should like to be of a more complete value to your organization and I shall be glad to assist you in any way I can prior to leaving. Perhaps a suggestion of your appointment of a new mileage administrator is in order.

I do appreciate every courtesy extended me while in the service of your organization, and I wish you and the organization continued success to the end of the problem.

Sincerely yours,

L. E. Fiero
Lt. Col., F. A. USA

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