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CORRESPONDENCE

BY SUBJECT

JAPANESE-AMERICAN RE-EMPLOYMENT

JAN-FEB 1945

C-A
171

WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION

Agricultural Adjustment Agency
P. O. Box 247
Berkeley 1, California
January 30, 1945



Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman, Executive Secretary
Committee on American Principles and Fair Play
2287 Telegraph Ave., Room 215
Berkeley 4, California

Dear Mrs. Kingman:

In response to your telephone request of January 23, I am enclosing copies of two statements addressed to the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play, one indicating the policy of the Agricultural Adjustment Agency in connection with possible discrimination based on race, the other indicating the policy of the California USDA War Board on the same subject.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave Davidson".

Dave Davidson, Chairman
California Agricultural
Conservation Committee
and
Chairman, California USDA
War Board

Enclosure

January 30, 1945

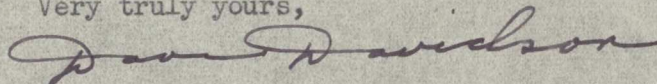
TO:

CALIFORNIA COMMITTEE ON AMERICAN PRINCIPLES AND FAIR PLAY

I have been asked by your representative regarding the policy of the U.S.D.A. War Board in connection with possible discrimination based on race. The regulations prescribed for this organization give no recognition to any difference in treatment because of race.

In connection with special services rendered by the War Board to farm operators, no distinction is made because of race. These special services are all intended to be made available to farmers on the basis of assisting them in making their contribution to this Country's war effort. On that basis we assist any farm operator who can qualify.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dave Davidson".

Dave Davidson, Chairman
California USDA War Board

January 30, 1945

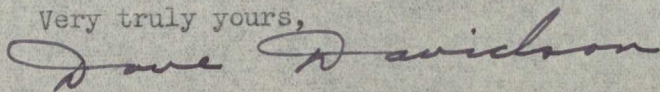
TO:

CALIFORNIA COMMITTEE ON AMERICAN PRINCIPLES AND FAIR PLAY

I have been asked by your representative regarding the policy of the Agricultural Adjustment Agency in connection with possible discrimination based on race. The regulations prescribed for the Agricultural Adjustment Agency give no recognition to any difference in treatment because of race. The regular payment programs of the Triple A recognize as eligible producers any farmers, either tenants or landlords, who are operating farms. Triple A does not even make distinction because of citizenship or the lack thereof although payments are, of course, dependent on Treasury and other Government regulations. Some nationals of other countries have their funds blocked and for those and similar reasons payments occasionally are withheld, turned over to the Alien Property Custodian, or handled as directed by the appropriate agency in control of such matters.

In connection with special services rendered by Triple A to farm operators, no distinction is made in policy because of race. These special services are all intended to be made available to farmers on the basis of assisting them in making their contribution to this Country's war effort. On that basis we assist any farm operator who can qualify.

Very truly yours,



Dave Davidson, Chairman
California Agricultural
Conservation Committee

FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY
SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD

REGIONAL OFFICE—SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

IN REPLY REFER TO
FILE NO. 11, RO: XII

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

February 7, 1945

Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman
Executive Secretary
Committee on American Principles and Fair Play
2234 Telegraph Avenue
Berkeley 4, California

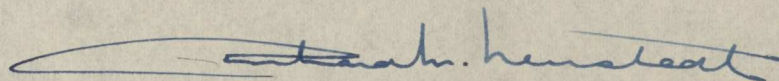
Dear Mrs. Kingman:

It is not clear to me what you desire in the way of statements from the specific governmental organizations that are working with the War Relocation Authority on the problems with which they may be concerned. It would seem that your proper interest in general public education could be served by some over-all statement such as this:

"The Federal Security Agency and all its technical operating organizations, including the Social Security Board, the U. S. Public Health Service, the U. S. Office of Education, and the Office of Community War Services, have gladly pledged their full cooperation to the War Relocation Authority in aiding that responsible organization in its problems of resettling those who were evacuated from their former homes on the West Coast. The provision of financial assistance is being made through the Bureau of Public Assistance of the Social Security Board, which will supervise the distribution of such funds through the State public welfare departments and their constituent units in the counties. Technical and professional advice of all the agencies operating under the Federal Security Agency, and also the Children's Bureau, as well as all other Government departments that in any way deal with the problems of human beings, is available to the War Relocation Authority, which is recognized as the agency having primary responsibility."

If you desire anything further, please feel free to call upon us.

Sincerely yours,



Richard M. Neustadt
Regional Director



CO-OPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
CO-OPERATING

EXTENSION SERVICE
FARM ADVISOR WORK
AGRICULTURE CLUB WORK
HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK

Office of the Director
College of Agriculture
Berkeley 4, California

February 9, 1945

Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman, Executive Secretary
Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play
Room 203, 465 California Street
San Francisco 4, California

Dear Mrs. Kingman:

In reply to your request of January 31, 1945 for a brief statement of the position of the Agricultural Extension Service on the reemployment of Japanese-Americans in California agriculture, we submit the following information.

The California Extension Service operates 130 Farm Labor Offices within this state. One or more of these offices is located in each county of agricultural importance and all offices are prepared to assist job applicants in finding agricultural employment. This service is provided by federal legislation and funds, and is offered free of any charges to the workers or employers. No discrimination against Japanese-Americans or any other race will be permitted in the services performed by the Farm Labor Offices.

The Agricultural Extension Service is required from time to time to certify to the War Food Administration the needs of the state for foreign agricultural labor. Such certifications of need are based on the principle that qualified domestic labor shall not be displaced by the foreign workers. If Japanese-Americans become a part of the agricultural work force in California, that fact will be taken into consideration when certifications for Mexican Nationals are made, and the basic principle referred to above will be observed.

Sincerely yours,

Frank L. Buckner

Frank L. Buckner
Associate State Supervisor
Emergency Farm Labor

FLB:HF

Mr. Frank L. Buchner, Associate State Supervisor, Farm Labor Project; Agricultural Extension Service, University of California

I should like to present a few figures to impress upon you the fact that the problem of crop harvesting at this time is of considerable importance and size, and something which requires careful thinking and planning by a considerable number of people.

In the first place, California agriculture last year represented a monetary return to the State of \$1,600,000,000 (one billion six hundred million dollars.) We raise approximately two hundred commercial crops, and some major crop is harvested during any one of the twelve months of the year. Last year four hundred thousand full-time workers and about half that number of seasonal workers were employed. We produce in some instances one hundred per cent of the United States output of certain crops, such as raisins and dried figs. We produce half of the oranges grown in the nation, and twenty-five per cent of the canning tomatoes.

Let me review some of the circumstances of the evacuation:

In 1942 I was associated with an agency which at that time was interested in the farm labor program. As I recall, we estimated that there were 6,000 Japanese operating farms in the State of California. It was calculated that the evacuation would result in the removal from farm labor of 8,000 to 9,000 workers, so that we had a total vacancy created of 15,000 farm laborers or owners. It was a surprise to everyone to see how quickly their land was taken over by other operators - almost one hundred per cent in a very short period of time. In some crops that was significant. Japanese production of vegetables was an important part of the State production, and Japanese labor was also significant. In one county the fruit grown was packed largely by Japanese labor. New people were trained to fill those jobs, and we must recognize that those same people are still filling the jobs which they learned in 1942.

We had some interesting experiences when we were considering the possible use of Japanese labor during the time when they were in the assembly centers, some of which were located in the center of producing areas. In one county the proposal was made to the farmers of the area that in a situation of serious labor shortage it might be arranged with the Army to use volunteer workers from the assembly centers to harvest the crop. Amazing as it may seem to some of us, the reply was that the crops could remain in the fields and rot before they would use this type of labor. This attitude was expressed in many communities. However, further into the season several counties which had expressed violent opposition seemed to reverse this point of view, and requested that everything possible be done to influence the Army to let them use this labor on a controlled basis, although they might not be interested in using independent workers.

I recall that in the early months of 1942 there were a number of Japanese-Americans from the Hawaiian Islands who were stranded in San Francisco. A representative of that group paid a visit to our office and requested that employment be found for them. (This was of course previous to the evacuation.) We had a group of farmers at that time who were willing and anxious to get this labor, even offering to send the necessary transportation and afford protection for these people. But in spite of every assurance that could be given, they were reluctant to face the American public. It seems to me that we may find something of that reluctance still existing in the relocation centers.

Another thing we must expect is that a number of employers will not take Japanese-Americans into their employment, first on the basis of personal objection and next on

Mr. Frank L. Buchner (Cont.)

the basis of the fear that other labor would object and refuse to work with these people. We must face this possibility whether we think the attitude is right or wrong.

I think the first development when Japanese-Americans return to agriculture will be that Japanese owners will come back to their own farms and will begin to look around for workers. We must expect then that other American citizens will be reluctant to work for Japanese employers, and the Japanese owner will therefore have difficulty in finding labor unless he will offer employment to members of his own race.

With the out-break of war in 1941 we said among ourselves that Japanese would be working for Japanese from here on out, and that was pretty much the case in the early months of 1942. In certain areas of this State Japanese were either forced out of commercial work or other types of industrial work, and sent to work for Japanese farmers in the vicinity of their homes. By March of 1942 only Japanese were on Japanese farms. Perhaps the first step toward the solution of our present problem will be Japanese coming back to their own farms and offering employment to other Japanese. The thing may grow from there, which to what all of us think would be right.

The Agricultural Extension Service operates 130 farm labor offices in the State of California, located from Tulare to San Diego, and financed with public funds. Surely we would take no other position than that of seeing that the farm placement in this State is open to all employers and all workers, without discrimination. A very interesting question was asked yesterday by a large operator in this State. He said, "We are already beginning to hear about the return of Japanese. Will the Extension Service take the position that because these people are available they will not make any attempt to provide other types of labor, but will force us to use Japanese labor?" I answered no, for two reasons: First, that the returning Japanese is a free agent, and no Government agency can tell him where he shall work; second that the agricultural employer is likewise a free agent when it comes to the employment of workmen, and we cannot tell him to use this kind of worker or that.

Our program will be administered without discrimination. It is open and free to every farmer and every worker in the State.

Mr. Dave Davidson, Chairman, State War Board and California Agricultural Adjustment Agency

The Agricultural Adjustment Agency is an agency of the War Food Administration. We are charged with the administration of a number of programs, including that of agricultural conservation. In this connection we encourage farmers by contact and by educational work, and by the making of definite payments, to carry out a conservation program which would not be carried out without this inducement. Funds are available to farmers who indicate a desire to participate in the conservation program simply by signing a document to that effect. Both landlords and tenants are eligible for these payments, and they are made on the basis of having complied with the regulations, not on the basis of citizenship.

The activities of the A.A.A. and the State War Board are not intended to assist farmers to improve their own financial condition, nor to enable them to live in better style or make developments because of the unusual opportunities. The purpose of these public services is to enable farmers to contribute more adequately to the war effort of agriculture, and as such of course these services are available to any operator who qualifies along that line. As the War Board said when I raised the question concerning returning Japanese, "Why does anybody raise the question of racial discrimination? There is none under the policy which we use."

The WFA has been charged with setting up crop goals in 1945, as in other years, and it is up to us to do everything we can to encourage reaching of those goals. In practically no instance is there an attempt made to limit any production. In carrying out this assignment we definitely are interested in the out-put of farmers, and in this connection are concerned with every phase that affects this production; labor, credit, machinery, and so on. We are operating on the basis of obtaining what we have been told to get, and are glad to assist anybody who qualifies as an operator.

The other item I want to mention is this: The A.A.A. is operated in the State by a committee of four farmers and a director. In the counties the administration of the program is under the control of elected committees of five farmers and an appointed farm advisor. This provides for a committee system of operation, and the war committees are elected by their fellow farmers. This committee system has many benefits, and I think highly of it. However, farmers on these committees are human; they are elected by their fellow farmers, and of course reflect the opinions of their fellow farmers. Under that kind of operation it is not possible to have uniform thinking at all times, or uniform treatment of all responsibilities. The State committee must do all in its power to insure uniformity, but there will be variations. It may be that in a very few places there will be some resentment toward Japanese reflected in some of the judgments of these committees. You could hardly expect it to come out otherwise. However, under the policy of the organization, appeal procedure is available to rectify anything which is out of order. I think there is little possibility of anything out of line in the counties on the parts of the war boards, although something may happen. Yet, as I say, appeal procedures are available.

Mr. Willard Ellis, President, Federal Land Bank of Berkeley

The Federal Land Bank has a different set-up from the other Government agencies. The Federal Government furnished the original capital to organize the bank, but now owns no stock in it whatever. All stock is owned by the farmers who use it; that is the borrowers through the National Farm Loan Association.

When the evacuation of Japanese took place, the Land Bank had about four hundred loans out to Japanese-Americans. Requests were sent to the various Farm Loan Associations to assist those who were having trouble in making arrangements for the leasing or selling of their property. We soon found that instead of the Japanese needing assistance, it was some of the people who had dealings with them who needed help, because in most cases I think the Japanese were smarter in making their business arrangements than were those who leased or bought from them. I had only one instance where I found that a Japanese seemed to have been imposed upon.

X When the Japanese come back, they will receive the same kind of treatment that they formerly received. However, the Land Bank cannot make a loan to anyone unless it is first recommended by the local association of farmers. One reason for this is that the local farmers have to become liable for the loans. In the past, there have been a few instances of prejudice against making loans, and there might be some under existing circumstances. I think, however, that there will be a minimum of prejudice, and that most of those who have the necessary security can obtain loans through their local associations. X

Mr. H. A. McFadden, Chairman, State Board of Agriculture