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War Relocation Authority-Vernon R. Kennedy, Supervisor-226 W. Jackson Blvd.-Chicago

NORTH CENTRAL AREA NEWSLETTER

News And Views On Relocation Of Japanese Americans In Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota And North Dakota

Resettlement Progress - The spring and summer seasons have shown some increase in the number of resettlers leaving relocation centers for the north central states, but progress is, in general, less than had been hoped for, and in many sections of the area, we have been particularly disappointed in the number of farmers and farm workers among the new arrivals. A few sizable groups of seasonal workers have arrived for farm work in the area, and it is hoped that many of these temporary workers will accept permanent jobs and stay on with us.

Office And Staff Changes - Recently the relocation offices formerly located in Peoria and Rockford, Illinois, have been merged into one district office which is now called the Greater Illinois District, and which will be located at 226 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, Ill. Milton C. Geuther will continue in charge of resettlement in all of Illinois except Chicago and its adjoining counties which make up the Chicago District Office. A strong resettlement committee in Peoria will continue the work of resettling newcomers there, and in Rockford the YWCA has agreed to act as a liaison between new arrivals and the community, and will cooperate with the Greater Illinois District.

G. Raymond Booth has been named as manager of the Chicago District Office. He has been in charge of the Cincinnati office for the past year and a half, and was the Pacific Coast head of the Friends Service Committee during and after the evacuation from the West Coast.

Earl S. DeSmidt has been added to the area staff as a farm placement specialist. He is currently devoting all of

his time to seasonal farm placements, cooperating with the War Food Administration.

Elmer B. Isaksen, who has been acting relocation officer in charge for Minnesota and North Dakota, has now been named officer in charge for that area. Evelyn Carroll, formerly of the United States Employment Service in St. Paul, and S. Allen Aldrich, who has had a long experience with governmental and cooperative farm agencies in Minnesota, have been recently appointed to assist Mr. Isaksen.

A Plan For Urban Housing - The Chicago District Office has for many months experimented with a plan for securing housing through regular answering of newspaper classified advertisements in selected categories. A form letter is sent to landlords who have advertised those types of housing in which we are interested and careful records are kept of the results of each contact. More than 7% favorable replies have been received and through this source permanent lists have been developed of landlords offering furnished apartments and housekeeping rooms to Japanese Americans without discrimination.

As there is considerable turnover in these classes of housing, the Chicago office can telephone landlords on this list with a fair prospect that there may be vacancies. Ordinarily, the office makes sure there is a vacancy before referring a person new to the city, but frequently simply gives lists of addresses in any particular neighborhood to resettlers who have been here long enough to know the city.

The same letter is never sent twice to

the same advertiser, but a second or follow-up letter is sometimes used. While this plan for securing housing would need to be adapted to various communities, the details of the system used in Chicago may be of interest to various sub-committees on housing or to relocation offices. A full explanation of the plan can be secured by writing to John K. Brenton in the Chicago District office, 226 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Social Welfare Plans - Concern has been expressed in some local communities that resettlers might increase the social and relief problems in the communities in which they resettle. The danger of this is negligible for two reasons: (1) Because Japanese Americans, in general, have always been self-supporting and self-sufficient to a high degree. They were almost unknown to welfare and relief agencies on the Pacific Coast even during the depression of the 1930's; (2) The Federal Government through the Social Security Board has established a fund for the assistance of "persons affected by restrictive action of the Federal Government." Evacuees among others are eligible for such assistance which is administered in each state by a welfare agency designated by the Social Security Board. These welfare agencies have representatives in each county, providing a network of state and local offices staffed and equipped to assist resettlers. Services available are broad in scope and include necessary social services as well as financial assistance.

Agreements have been reached at national and local levels between the WRA and two other groups of social agencies, the Travelers Aid Societies and the Family Welfare Association of America. Travelers Aid will meet newcomers and give certain specific assistance to the resettler, both enroute from the project and on his arrival in the new community. Family Welfare agencies have been helpful in a number of cities not only through case work service to individual resettlers, but also through their knowledge of com-

munity resources and specialized agencies.

Educational Material Available In Each Relocation Office - There is available for distribution considerable quantities of printed and other educational material which can be used effectively by resettlement committees and individuals actively participating in the relocation program. Members of organizations and persons speaking on any phase of the relocation program are invited to ask for quantities of this material for distribution. One or two sample copies of typical releases of this sort are being enclosed with this newsletter.

Poison Pen Letters - There appears to be a regular campaign of letters being sent from antagonistic individuals or groups in the evacuated area of the West Coast to "Letters From The People" columns of Midwestern newspapers. Statements being made in many of these letters are mere vilifications of Americans of Japanese descent. Interested and informed citizens should attempt to counteract any influences these letters may have by answering them as they appear in their local newspapers.

The Children's Crusade - A matter of deep concern to resettlement workers is the fact that the children in the relocation centers are not experiencing contact with normal American life during their formative years. Plans have been worked out for groups of high school age boys and girls to leave the centers for seasonal jobs under the supervision of responsible adults. They will work in both farm and city jobs in groups and it is hoped that before the start of the next school year, they will, in many cases, influence their parents to resettle in the Middle West as family groups. The first such groups, all boys, have arrived and are now working in the vicinity of Chicago.