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226 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago 6, Illinois

December 1, 1945

SUBJECT: A Narrative Report Covering the Activities of the Area
Property Officer During His Assignment in Chicago.

When this employe reported for duty to the Chicago Area Office in February, 1944, he was given the assignment of Area Property Officer.

Under the general supervision of the Area Supervisor, he was instructed to advise and consult with Relocation Officer and resettlers on all problems involving evacuee property, license, taxation, Selective Service, etc. affecting resettlers in this area. It was found that among the supervisory staff and the District Relocation Officers, there existed almost a complete lack of consciousness of the magnitude of the evacuee property owned by resettlers on the West Coast and the multitude of the potential problems existing in connection therewith. This, we believe, was to a certain extent a natural condition that could be expected among those who lacked a comprehensive knowledge of the estimated \$200,000,000 worth of evacuee property and the manner in which it was being handled. As a consequence, resettlers generally were appreciative of the fact that WRA had provided in Chicago a division competent to handling the intricate problems that were confronting them. The office aided in the sale of many thousands of dollars of real property and chattels on the West Coast and frequently succeeded in getting more for the property than expected by the evacuee. We counseled with evacuees on proper steps to be taken to protect their property interest through the

medium of written leases, contracts, management agreements, and availing themselves of services of the Evacuee Property Section both in Chicago and on the West Coast Property Office. Cooperation on the part of the Property Officers on the West Coast was both capable and prompt and many actions followed that were decidedly in the interest of the evacuees.

Thousands of dollars owed to the evacuees by people on the West Coast were collected and paid to them through the effort of this office and the property offices on the West Coast. Assistance of this office was given to approximately three hundred resettlers in buying small business enterprises in Chicago. Assistance was also given to considerable number of these people in buying residential properties. It is now estimated that approximately one million dollars has been invested in Chicago by resettlers who have purchased small businesses or real property. This amount is increasing with additional purchases daily.

This office has maintained, at all times, liaison with U. S. District Attorneys Offices, U. S. Marshals Offices, and the F.B.I's on matters pertaining to Selective Service and on matters affecting movement of enemy aliens. Referral service to attorneys in the cases of those who needed legal advice and legal assistance has been maintained. Some 55 hearings on leave clearance applications were conducted by this office up until the time these hearings were discontinued by orders from the Director's Office. Contacts were maintained with the Aliens Property Custodian, Reconstruction Finance, smaller warplants corporations, Home Owners Loan Corporation, Farm Security Administrations, banks, loan companies, and license bureaus in the city, county, and state where property matters, finances, and licenses were involved.

This office conducted special investigations involving alleged irregularity in the handling of funds by resettlers in the centers and at the time of the

evacuation. Also investigated accidents resulting in death or injury to resettlers and investigations in connection with arrest of resettlers by city police and making court observations in specific cases. The rights of resettlers were in all cases defended through the action of this office in direct negotiations with the police and the courts or through proper legal representatives where such representation was necessary. In the case of deceased resettler, this office assisted in identification and notifying relatives of the deceased and in some cases where valuables or property were concerned, matters were referred to the Public Administrator. This office also had contacts with coroners and morticians in connection with the death of resettlers and secured the aid of doctors in case of emergency illness reported by police or individuals when the matter could not be referred to the welfare worker because of an emergency night-time or other off-duty calls.

Referrals were made to ration boards and in some instance personal contacts with such boards were made by the office in behalf of the evacuees. Referrals were made to real estate brokers where real property was affected and to stock and bond brokers where securities were involved.

This office also handled applications to the Western Defense Command, for permits for evacuees to travel within the excluded area, and for permits to return to Hawaii.

Transportation of household goods and personal property has been the major task of this office during the past three months on shipments both to and from centers and the West Coast. This is a service that has been much appreciated by the resettlers and this office has spared no efforts to facilitate these shipments.

This office has maintained constant correspondence with resettlers within the area, at the centers, and on the West Coast relative to property matters and those with whom the resettlers have had business contacts. A chronological file has been maintained of all outgoing correspondence of this Property Office since this employe took charge. These files are broken down into different categories according to subjects. These will be forwarded to the Washington Office to supplement the property files of Chicago Office that are being prepared for shipment of this date.

This Property Office has advised the relocation officers in the District Offices by mail, telegrams, and telephone on subjects pertaining to the handling of evacuee property at intervals as problems arose.

Personal visits by this employe to the District Offices of the area was made on two occasions; a trip which took in the Milwaukee and the Minneapolis Offices and a subsequent trip to the Minneapolis Office. The other offices were not visited.

A number of escheat cases brought against evacuees owning property on the West Coast were brought to our attention by resettlers in Chicago who sought our advice. In each case they were advised to enlist the services of a competent attorney on the West Coast, and where the names of attorneys were unknown to them, this office requested the names of several attorneys from the West Coast Offices which were submitted to the resettler so that he could select one to represent him.

This office also aided resettlers in the matter of State and Federal Income Tax Returns and frequently assisted resettlers in analyzing the laws of several States of the area relative to the licensing of various professional and semi-professional personnel and assisting qualified persons in securing

the necessary licenses.

Assistance has also been given to resettlers in the matter of warehousing their personal belongings and household goods, arranging for cartage, packing, and in making Pullman reservations for those who have physical or mental disabilities.

The very nature of the service of this office has been so all-inclusive insofar as the worrying and pressing properties of the resettlers were concerned that often they came to us with problems of a very intimate and personal nature---matters unrelated to the duties for which the office was set-up. I think this can be best described in words of one rather prominent resettlers who has consulted this employe on frequent occasions on "off the record" subjects. This man said, "You aided our children when they were in trouble and secured their release from jail. You helped our young men in the Army. You helped to salvage our investments in the West from the wreckage left behind us. You have assisted us in investing wisely in Chicago. You have aided in identifying our dead and making the necessary arrangements for the remains of the deceased. You had aided in the protection of our legal rights and the rights of those who are American citizen and because of those things we call on you to discuss things so intimate that we are reluctant to discuss them with others." That expression on the part of that gentleman may or may not characterize the whole action of the Property Section but it certainly does bespeak the intention with which we constantly sought to give service to those whom we are supposed to counsel and assist.

In the conduct and duties of this office, we are most happy to acknowledge

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the splendid cooperation we received at all times from city, State, and Federal agencies, the legal fraternity of Chicago, the Real Estate Boards, and individual brokers, doctors, transportation companies, the resettlers as a whole, and our fellow employees. I am particularly grateful to Mrs. Tomi Fujimura, Mrs. Yoshiye Tsukuno, Miss Bessie Takaya, and Miss Amy Sugimoto for the high efficiency of their work and their cheerful loyalty in performing arduous and tedious work with such courteous skill and dispatch, and to those other employees who worked under my direction at various times.

Edward M. Joyce
Relocation Officer