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30 CITY MANAGEMENT

4-29-43 S

Interview with Len Nelson by EHS.

Dr. Leighton's office - 3:00 - 4:30 P.M.

Present organization of Unit I Administration

Cross Ref.--EB, LRB, Police Department

I had made a previous appointment with Len to discuss recent developments in Unit I. We met in Dr. Leighton's office where we talked for an hour and a half, Len doing most of the talking. Len struck me as being jittery. He assumed many different positions in his chair cocking his leg over the chair arm, leaning forward on the desk, leaning forward on his knees, moving his hands around, etc. He spoke with a good deal of feeling emphasizing with considerable force statements describing what he had told various evacuees to do.

He opened by saying, "What's on your mind, Ned?" I said I wanted to learn something about what had taken place in Unit I while I was gone and he replied by saying, "I guess you heard that Shig resigned". He elaborated the incident of the resignation of the Police Chief as follows: "I guess they put some pressure on the Chief although he is very happy about it. He is going into the camouflage and says he is pleased to be rid of his job. Now, I wouldn't say for sure what happened there, but it seems as if a lot of people had been connecting Shig with the gambling. I know for a fact that the EB, that is Nagai, has been working pretty hard on that gambling business. I think maybe that had been responsible for rousing the community feeling against it. I wouldn't say for sure, but I think the pressure on Shig came from Nagai. There isn't a thing said about whether he was in on the cut or anything of that sort, but there is no doubt the community feeling wouldn't tolerate Shig as Police Chief any longer.

I asked about the story of the auto repair and Len bunched into a long description. He said with some pride that it had already been settled. Last night the leader of the repairmen came to Len's house with Jim Yahiro. They said they had some grievances and were going to strike the following morning. "I told him



that he picked a bad day to do it. Here it was the Emperor's birthday and a Hearst newspaperman from the L.A. Examiner in the camp at the same time. I told him it was certainly a "hellava" time to pick. Well, the first thing I did was to tell him to go th the LRB and they said they never heard of the LRB. Anyway this morning I got them together with Nakatchi and we got Haverland and told them what a bad time it was to pull a strike and here's what I said to them. I said, "Now, you fellows have done an awful good job. All through the year you have been working hard and I know when I have taken something down there to be repaired it was out and ready for me mighty quick!" Well, I told them things have changed. The other day I took a tire down there to be repaired and you know when I got it back? Well, I took it in the morning and got it back at 5:30 in the afternoon. Now, something had gone haywire down there I said. I want to see you get back on the beam and iron this out and get going again. But I said, "Now, if you don't want to work there, all right. Then quit. But we don't want anybody doing something they don't want to do. So they went back and it is all settled. They are back and working now." (EHS said, "Didn't they have any definite grievances?") "OH, yes, they had definite grievances all right. (1) They didn't have any ice water. (2) They hadn't gotten a \$19 raise. (3) They hadn't gotten their uniforms to work in. They were no grievances at all. All they had to do was to ask for the water. They won't get their \$19 check until the first of the month no matter what they do and the uniforms have been ordered. They are just not ready yet. So I told them all that and they said they are all going back to work. (EHS asked whether there was any demand for a car for their own use.) Oh, yes, they wanted to have a car, but I told them that it was impossible for Haverland to furnish that. If he did it for them then he would have to do it for others and Haverland was just doing his job when he did that. They saw the point.



CEC

I asked what the / was doing and Len corrected me and said there wasn't any CEC, but there is a EB. "Oh, they are doing a lot. I'll tell you how it works. Now, I never say much to Nagai. When I first went in there, I had a long talk with him, tried to, but I realized that was the wrong way to do it. But now, I never have talks with Nagai. I do all my talking with Mas. (Kawashima) I tell Mas what I want and he goes on and tells it to Nagai. In that way we get a lot of things done. Now, let me tell you how this thing goes. We got a Social Relations Committee which is doing a fine job. Anything that the block-managers can't settle, that the people of the block can't settle the committee takes care of. The family disputes, if the block gets notion to kick family out things like that are settled by the Social Relations Committee. It has one member from the Council, one preacher and two lay members. Now, they are appointed by the Council, but they work independently at it and they are keeping things might smooth in the blocks working very hard. The EB is responsible to the Council, too. That is the Council appointed members of it. They have been doing a lot of organization work on gambling. Now, of course they tried me out on a number of things right at the beginning. For instance, Mas came around right at the start and he said that they were having trouble in keeping in contact with the older people. He suggested that the way they could cut down on the lack of understanding would be to establish sub-offices around in the quads in Poston I where the statements and the orders of the EB could be passed on where the people could make contact with what was going on. Well, right off the bat I said, "Mas, here's the answer to that. You can't do it." I told him it was impossible to think of increasing the red tape like that. Well, now, I know just what was in their minds. They wanted to try me out. They wanted to see what I would do. They come around with crazy schemes like that all the time



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just to see what/will say and see what kind of man I am. I expect that and I am on the look out for that. Now, just the other day a blockmanager came in and he said, "I want to resign. I am through." I said that's okay. We certainly don't want anyone working around here on jobs that they don't like; don't want to work on. He looked at me and said, "You are accepting my resignation?" I said, "sure". I wouldn't force anybody to work. He said, "Well, do you mean you don't need me?" I said, "Sure we need you, but we don't want to force anybody into anything." He said, "Well, then, Mr. Nelson, maybe if you really need me." So I said, "As far as I am concerned you have resigned. It is up to Iwao here, (Blockmanager Supervisor) whether he wants you back on. Well, Iwao, how about it?" Well, Iwao studied it a moment and said, "Yes, I think we will let him come back on. We need him." So the blockmanager went back to work. But that's the way they are doing things; testing me out; making all kinds of proposals and I think I knew how to handle them.

Here's the way the EB works. Ham Mathiesen was up against it last week. He had to go ahead with the planting and he didn't have anybody to do it. The fellow he had been counting on had left Poston and he couldn't get anybody else to do it. So he came to me and I asked him what man he wanted. He told me and then I called Mas and said, "Now, look here, Mas, the Agriculture Department is up against it. They can't get any man to do the planting and the planting has to be done now or they won't be any use. I said it's up to you. What are you going to do about it?" Well, Mas went to see Nagai of the EB and they talked it over and said they would get somebody to do the job. I told Mas before, about the man that Ham wanted. So now the EB came up with the proposal that he was just the man that they wanted to do the job and they guaranteed they would get them out to do it and that was done. Now, the planting is going ahead and Ham is satisfied and the EB put it through.



"As I see it I want to bring in more Isseis into this thing. The Niseis are going to go out and it is going to fall on the Isseis' shoulders. I told Iwao that we were going to get an Issei Blockmanager Supervisor to work with him. We are going to do that all the way through. Now, I wish you would tell me whether I am right and one other thing I am doing. I am pushing Roy Furuya. What I mean is this. Every meeting I have with members of the EB and LRB I bring Roy in on it. I have him sit there through it with me. I am doing that so that he will get to know what the details of the set up and know how to handle all the problems and what the problems are. I am pushing Roy for all I am worth. I think he is doing a good job. I told Iwao it didn't matter to me if he and the Issei Blockmanager Supervisor spent all the time just talking. That's what they've got to do. Talk with the various committees; talk with the blockmanagers. He can keep in touch with things and know what's going on. I told him that was the whole business. I didn't care whether they did a "lick" of work in a day besides that."

"Now, there's just one thing that I want to ask about. I want to know what Mitani is doing. Where has he been? He is an honorary member of the LRB, but I haven't seen him around for a long time. I want to know what he is up to. (EHS said that he thought Reverend Mitani had been very busy during the past couple of weeks in his religious activities in connection with the Easter season.) Well, that's fine. That's all right. Now, I know what Mitani has been doing. I just wanted to know. My policy is you have to trust these people absolutely. I have been telling them that I don't know most of them at all. John Evans has been working with them. I haven't been working with them. I don't know them. My policy is what they tell me goes. If I didn't work it that way, if I didn't have complete trust in them I couldn't do anything and I will have trust in them until somebody double crosses me. Now, I wonder what Yahiro is doing. I haven't



seen Jim around much until the other night. I wonder what Jim is up to. I've got him sized up. I do know this, that if you give him a chance to do a job he will do it right. Jim can put something through. But Jim got himself out on a limb when he went up to Heart Mountain and made a lot of speeches. I have seen the transcripts of his speech. He did too much talking about organizing the mess workers. It seems to me that the trouble with Mitani is that he doesn't trust any of us up here any more. He just won't trust anybody. When he is thinking that way, how can we trust him? I don't know whether I am right, but that's the way I've got it sized up. I told Wade when he asked me to take this job, I said, "Wade, I will take it. I will put my faith in these fellows and I will do the job, but I just won't lay awake nights and worry about it. When 5 o'clock comes, I am going to forget about it until the next day." That's what I told Wade and he said, "All right, Len, go ahead. Don't worry about it."

LRB has been doing a fine job. They turn in a report to me every Monday and I have been surprised how much they have been doing. I didn't know there had been that much. But they really have their fingers on things and they are going to town on it. If you really want to know the way this thing runs, here's how I see it. In the first place we have all these committees and they are responsible to the Council. The Council puts them in office. They do their work. But then there are fellows who belong to different committees who do the figuring. Now, I just came from a meeting and in that meeting was Franklyn Sugiyama, Nagai, Mas, Iwao, Mizushima, Nakatchi from all the different committees. And they were figuring out that something had to be done about the problem of the trust fund in keeping the doctors in camp. So they got their heads together and what are they going to do? Well, the Council is going to call a meeting tonight with doctors and that's the way it works. These fellows figure out what should be done and then they do it working through the Council, the EB, and the



IREB. And at the top there is this group of men some Isseis and some Niseis who kept things going in the right direction. They were the ones who worked up these quad meetings. They talked over the manpower question with the Isseis, and the blockcouncils. Now, I went to one of those quad meetings and I sat there and I didn't understand a word of it. Franklyn said something in English and I said something in English, but the rest of it was all in Japanese. I didn't know what had happened. When my wife asked me that night how it went, I said, "I guess it went all right". Well, next morning Franklyn popped into my office first thing and what did he do, but lay on my desk the complete minutes of that meeting so that I know just what happened. Well, that's the way they do things and it looks pretty good to me. (EHS asked about the lumber stealing.) Len was quiet for a while and finally he said, "I have been thinking something over and I am not sure whether I am going to do it or not. It looks to me that we need a police commission. A commission separate from all the others that would run the police department--keep it on the beam and pay attention to these things like lumber stealing and gambling. I have certainly admired the way Dr. Mizushima has been working on this gambling problem. He has already given some good talks on that and I think he is responsible for a lot that has happened. Now this is off the record, I just want to tell you one thing that happened this morning. This was the Emperor's birthday and who should arrive incamp, but a reporter from the Hearst paper and a photographer. I guess they thought they were going to write a story which would be like the one that the Denver Post got from our old Chief Steward Best who was up at Heart Mountain. He showed them great stores of meat and food and they got pictures and then they made a sensational story for the Denver Post about how food was being hoarded in the relocation centers. Well, the reporter and the photographer popped in this morning and said, "I want a picture of your refri-



erator. So we took him down and pulled the door open and there was one very small piece of meat hanging on by itself in the refrigerator. He had his camera all set up to snap the picture when the door was opened, but when he saw that one piece of meat he said, "Is this all you got?" We told him that was all and he said he couldn't take a picture of that. "I can't use that. That would make a story about two lines in the inside page. No use my taking that kind of picture." So then we took him over to the Steward's office and it just happened that Snelson was working on his point rationing and the reporter said, "You don't mean to tell me that you are rationing in this place." Snelson said, "yes". "We have been on/<sup>point</sup>rationing all along." So the reporter was disgusted and said he couldn't get a story in Poston.

Len was rather apologetic about not knowing the names of the various men on the various committees. He knew several first names like Iwao, Blockmanager's Supervisor and Mas, the Nisei Chairman of the EB, and Franklyn, Chairmah of the Council. But he didn't seem to know the last names of any except Nagai. He knew neither their/<sup>last or first</sup>names of most of the others. He apologized for this by saying that he had just come in and was having to get acquainted with everybody. He also said that he was planning to arrange for more systematic reports from the various committees. He said, "You know how it was with John Evans. John used to go a lot on feeling. That didn't get much done on paper. But I want to have this thing on paper and get some regular reports."



54-B High School

Observations by EHS

Talk to High School class on minority problems.

5-17-43

Miss Peterson who has a class of high school juniors in core studies asked me the other day if I would talk to her group on the problem of minorities. A group of four students in the class has been working on minority problems one on negroes, one on Indians, one on Jews, and one on Japanese-Americans. They have been getting a great many detailed facts and have gotten the whole class interested in the subject. The previous Saturday she had sent the boy who was working on problems of the Japanese-Americans to see me and he had come in and talked briefly, although willingly, about his plans and his own past. He struck me as being fresh and hopeful about the future of the Nisei. He said that as he could see it everything would be solved if the Nisei just scattered out everywhere. His father had gone to Denver where he was working in a restaurant and had written that so many Japanese were coming to Denver that people were beginning to talk against them. He advised to move farther east and to scatter out into places where Japanese had not already collected. The boy said that this fitted in with his own past experience. He had grown up in the southeastern part of Los Angeles and had gone to a small high school where he was the only Japanese student. He had never been discriminated against by any Caucasians and all his friends had been Caucasians and he got along with them very well. He could see after the evacuation that the whole trouble was simply that Japanese ganged up in California and the only thing to do now was to scatter out again and everything would be all right.

When I went to the class this afternoon, I talked at length on race and the difference in the problems of racial and cultural minori-



ties. Emphasized the fact that the problem of the Japanese minorities would not be quickly solved. It would go on for a long time and that there were a number of things that could be done which would make it easier for Japanese-Americans. Among other things I mentioned the fun of learning about race and race problems for a better understanding of the Japanese problem itself and I also touched on the activities of national organizations like the NAACP and what they can do for minority groups. It seemed to me that the response was rather apathetic, Although most seemed to be listening attentively while I spoke. When I opened up the meeting up for discussion first there were no questions. I persisted trying to draw persons out and finally the questions began to come. The first one was: Are they really going to close up the relocation centers? When I replied that I didn't think they would be closed out anytime soon, someone asked when I thought that they would be closed out. Then a young girl asked, "Are they going to keep on taking away the citizenship rights of the Niseis?" I replied that I thought the trend was in the opposite direction and that citizenship rights had been steadily given back to the Niseis since the evacuation. Two others then mentioned they had heard that the centers were going to be closed out and finally someone asked whether I thought that the Japanese would be allowed to go back to California. I tried to stimulate a little more discussion by asking the group of four working on minority problems how their studies agreed with things that I had said and the boy spoke up and said that he thought that everything I had said fitted in. The meeting was over and I left. Later Miss Peterson told me that the class had decided to put the talk in the high school



newspaper and when it came out in that form contained only the following points. One: The mistatement that minority groups are not racially different from other people, but only culturally different and two: that minority people should have national organizations to fight for its rights.



54-B HIGH SCHOOL  
Interview with Miss Cushman by EHS  
Pro-Japanese High School Students

4-30-43

Miss Cushman described to me a 13 year old boy who wrote a composition on his ambition. He wrote that he plans to join the Japanese Marine Air Corp and be a Zero fighter. After dwelling on this point he qualified it to say that he will do that if Japan wins the war, but if the U.S. wins the war he will join the U.S. Marine Air Corp. He has frequently defied his teacher in school refusing to do what she tells him to, saying, "I am a Japanese and so I don't have to do that". He also speaks in the same way to his mother. Miss Cushman says that at the time of Pearl Harbor he was extremely-anti-Japanese and talked so strongly in that way at that time that people where he went to school thought he was a Chinese. Then suddenly his father was taken away to an internment camp. From that time on he was a different boy. He has read carefully all the correspondence in regard to his father's case and writes letters constantly to his father. He is aware of the fact that his father was denied a hearing before being sent to internment camp and Miss Cushman thinks probably that he is writing letters to his father with a pro-Japanese slant and this may have something to do with the fact that his father is being held in the camp because there are no other charges against the man. The boy is also influencing his younger sister and the playmate of his own age to call themselves Japanese and defy the authority of teacher and parents on that basis. Although the father is an Issei the mother is an Nisei and seems to be very loyal herself. The boy, Miss Cushman thinks, is identified strongly with his father since the latter's internment and he has become antagonistic toward the people to whom he believes to be responsible for unjust treatment of his father.



## INTERVIEW WITH MR. HAAS ON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

I went to Mr. Haas to ask him for minutes for the first three council meetings which I did not have and we began to talk about the council affairs. Mr. Haas said: "The chairman just told me that he had been told that the council has been going too fast. He was called in by Mr. Head this morning and there he was told to slow the council down a little more." Mr. Haas commented that he had a number of times advised the chairman not to send letters over the head of the Project Director, as you get nothing that way. However, Mr. Haas thought that except for antagonizing the Project Directors sending such letters would do no harm but would simply indicate very quickly to the council which channels must be pursued in the transaction of the business. Mr. Haas thinks that this is a natural result of persons having often been told, "We don't know about that. We'll have to do what W.R.A. says." Mr. Haas said that he has regarded as one of the important matters of policy in connection with the council whether or not there should be separate councils for the separate geographical communities of Poston; that is Poston I, II, and III. Mr. Haas has talked with Burge a number of times about the matter as well as with the citizens of the three communities. He says that he is well aware of the fact that there are many persons in Poston II and III who feel that they will be better represented if they have their own city councils. Mr. Crawford, also Mr. Haas thinks, has encouraged the people of Poston II to think in terms of their



own council. Mr. Burge has from the first felt strongly that there should be three distinct councils. Mr. Haas on the other hand has from the first thought that a single council with representation from all three communities on it would result in a much better job of self-government. Mr. Haas has pointed out, most notably at a meeting in Poston II, the inefficiency involved in a three council system. He asks the question: What matters will the councils of Poston II and III deal with which the council of Poston I will not also deal with? The answer he thinks is "none". All the small local problems will be taken up anyway in block council meetings and will be handled in large part through the block manager system. The three council system therefore will involve duplication of effort not only for the citizens of Poston, but for the administration which will be forced to deal with three separate groups in connection with identical subjects. Mr. Haas thinks that Mr. Burge is interested in separate councils as a matter of experimentation to see how such local governing bodies work differentially in the three communities. Mr. Haas says that although he approves of experimentation to a certain extent he thinks that a point is reached at which one has to consider the general efficiency of the community and put it above such matters. As he explained his views on this subject Mr. Haas recalled the following incident. He said, "I was called one evening to speak before a block manager



meeting to speak on something or other and I remember Moris came along with me. He had been on housing. There had been a discussion of the three-council business and it had been decided that Moris should leave housing and go back into something like what he came here to do, namely, work with the self-government bodies and that evening he came along with me. Even though he wasn't asked, he spoke at the block manager meeting after I spoke. Moris is a good fellow and a hard worker. That was the night that he told me on the way up to the meeting that it had been decided there would be three councils instead of one. We'd talked it over before, but I guess he went to Mr. Head and John Evans and they decided it that way."

Mr. Haas said, "I don't like all this business of working with the council. At least I didn't come to do it. I think Moris is supposed to be doing it. I have plenty to do without it. Now, the chairman of the council doesn't have any office. That's a matter we must take up soon and he comes here to my desk. Well, he has come over with the agenda for the next council meeting and has already gone over with me every point that is to be taken up. I have told him several times that council members are doing a special job; that after all this is a rather unique community and council members and other officers of the community will have to learn that books will be written about the place and that there will have to be a spotlight of publicity. It seems to me that the only group who can decide about community enterprises and whether there is to



be one big cooperative system or a number of small cooperatives should be the elected representatives of the people.

I don't know how else it can be decided. Certainly it should not be decided by this group of cooperatives experts by themselves. Of course it won't be."

(EHS)



✓ 110 COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

4-26-43 S

Interview with Moris Burge by EHS

Management of Unit 3 during the months of Feb. and March

Cross Ref.--31, 114, 180

I went down to Camp 3 for the purpose of finding out about the <sup>organization</sup> ~~relocation~~ of the unit, in connection with our study of possible relocation of Poston as key appointed personnel leave the project. I talked with Moris and other persons in his office during most of the afternoon. Moris began by saying that the major problem on his mind at the moment was in connection with the kibeis in Camp 3. A mail-order-agency has officially been organized in the camp and it turns out that all of the personnel for the agency are kibeis. Moris feels that this has an element of danger in it because these kibeis as well as most of the others in there answered "no" to questions 27 and 28. He says that although that is not absolutely a measure of loyalty, nevertheless, people on the outside will consider it as such and this particular agency will be dealing with outsiders to a large extent. Therefore, he feels that the point should be brought up that it may not be a good idea to have kibeis in the key positions in an organization which will have a great <sup>deal of</sup> ~~many~~ responsibility to an outside group. <sup>He</sup> ~~I~~ thinks that the same thing applies to the Red Cross in Camp 3. Most of the life guards working for the Red Cross are kibeis. The Red Cross is again an outside agency and the same applies in this connection that applies to the mail-order-agency. He plans, therefore, to bring the matter up to the Council at least for discussion.

I asked Moris what important changes there have been in the project set up since January. He seemed to feel that there had been little of importance and so I asked him specifically whether there had been changes in leadership among the evacuees. He said that he felt there had been few significant changes if any. He pointed out that although there have been



some shifts in leadership such as Harvey Iwata losing his place on the Council and taking over the headship of the Department of Industries these shifts have not changed the importance of individuals in the general project set up. He said that the chief changes have been in the Council in which there has been considerable turn over of Nisei membership as a result of relocation. He feels also that the Council has rather decreased in importance over the past two months, largely, as a result of this turn over of members. He said that the Council has been concerning itself only with the broadest general problems in the community and <sup>gave</sup> ~~that~~ as an example, their creation of a merit system board during the past two weeks. This board expects to handle the manpower problem as the Manpower Commission in Unit I is doing. Moris said that he is delighted with the individuals who are elected to the Merit Rating Board and said, "I could not have selected a better group myself. They are the best men in the community." He then mentioned several names on this board: Takashima, Chairman of the Council, Shirōzawa, formerly Issei Advisory Chairjan, Tom Sakamoto, Blockmanager Supervisor, <sup>(1)</sup> and Harvey Iwata, head of Industries. He pointed out that this selection of men indicates the reliability of the Council and also its present tendency to delegate important jobs to the best ~~man~~ in the community regardless whether they are members of the Council or not.

I asked how the blockmanagers were getting along and he said that there has been a change within the past two months, namely, that the blockmanagers are now elected before they are appointed to office by him. He feels that this is a very important and very satisfactory change. He emphasized that it is necessary for a blockmanager in his work to have the unqualified support of his block. Therefore, the election amounts to a sort of certification of the blockmanager. He went on to say that he felt that it would



not be wise to have elected blockmanagers in the early days of the project because at that time there was a need for working rapidly and also so many of the things which the blockmanager had to do would make him unpopular with the people. It has been a good thing to wait for the election of the blockmanagers until the people were entirely familiar with the physical limitations and discomforts of the relocation center. They now know under what difficulties the administration and the blockmanagers must necessarily work. They are ready to accept these and not blame the blockmanager personally for such unremediably circumstances. Now that the people are settled it is perfectly natural that they should be given the chance to "okay" the blockmanager in addition to the administration's "okay". (Later on Watanabe, a blockmanager was in the office and when he found that I had been in Minidoka he asked me with a great deal of interest, "How is it up there? Are the blockmanagers under the control of the people or do they control the people?" I explained that blockmanagers were not elected in Minidoka, <sup>at this</sup> and ~~also~~ I was not sure just what he meant, <sup>then</sup> it seemed to me that he expressed the sentiment that that might be better indicating a certain dissatisfaction with the present set up in Camp 3.)

I asked Moris further what he thought about the present relationship of the blockmanagers ~~and~~ with the blocks. He had little definite to say and seemed to know very little about what the blockmanagers were actually doing in the blocks. At this time he called in Sakamoto and Watanabe and we discussed the matter. Watanabe said that all the blocks have blockcouncils, but that they differ very widely in form. In his own block he and the Issei Advisors call a regular blockcouncil meeting once a month at which they discuss things in general. The Issei Advisors and he work pretty much as joint chairman. The Council itself is composed of every head of



family in the block. In addition to the regular monthly meetings there are mass meetings called as for instance in connection with deciding the question of the trust fund distribution for camouflage. In other blocks there are differences. Issei Advisors are sometimes blockcouncil chairman. Sometimes the chairman is without any other office in the project. Sometimes Council and Issei Advisor and blockmanager all function as leaders of the blockcouncil.

I asked whether there is a regular staff meeting of department heads on the project. Moris said that there is not. That he started out with the idea of having such an arrangement, but decided to drop it because it seemed to mean too much time at meetings. At present ~~no staff~~ there are no staff meetings so far as he knows; no formal get-together ~~with~~ the department heads in the camp. Moris seemed to be a little on the defensive <sup>on</sup> of this lack of staff meetings and suggested that perhaps in the future he would try to work out plans by which they get together.

Moris and Watanabe discussed at length the lack of turn over in leadership in Camp 3. Watanabe was convinced that well-known older men had been selected at the beginning of the project, people <sup>who</sup> had been known in the California community before evacuation. These individuals had served satisfactorily and therefore they were continuing in office. They both mentioned Shirazawa <sup>as</sup> ~~he is~~ an important leader, saying that he had formerly been Issei Advisory chairman then became blockmanager and was also elected to the Judicial Commission. He spoke of him as a person liking meetings and politics. The present Issei Advisory chairman is named Hasegawa and was elected because of his good knowledge of both English and Japanese and also as Watanabe said because he is "conservative and has good judgement".

The Issei Advisors have always worked very closely with the Council.



The Issei representative and Nisei representative from the block always come to the Councilmeeting and the Isseis participate a great deal in the meetings. It is generally known how they would vote on each issue if they were permitted to vote so that their influence is very strongly felt in each Councilmeeting. Occasionally the blockmanager also meet with the Issei Advisory Board and Nisei Council. It was apparent that Moris himself has not been attending the Councilmeetings at all regularly in the past few months, but he has allowed them to go ahead without his presence.

I asked Moris to discuss some of the major problems which had come up in the last couple of months and he began with registration. Nothing was done about volunteering or registering until Lieutenant Bolton arrived and gave his speech as dictated by the War Department. Then a meeting was held in each "Roku" in the morning at which questions regarding volunteering and registration were asked. All the Niseis were asked to attend this meeting, but any other who cared to come were allowed to. Moris said that it was his aim in these meetings not to have them conducted in Japanese. He feels that there were no blockmeetings anywhere during the period at which the matter was discussed in "free for all" discussion. He said that the policy which he tried to maintain was to insist that volunteering was purely an individual affair; up to each Nisei to decide for himself. No effort was made to present the wider issues in a systematic way except as answers to questions as they came up in the meetings in the "Roku". In the afternoon registration of the Niseis was carried on with screened booths where individuals might write their answers to the questions. The whole program was thought by Moris to have gone over very smoothly and he felt that the registration of the Isseis went the smoothest of any. He apparently didn't make use of any Issei leaders as speakers in the program, but practiced a rather



extreme "laissez faire" policy in the whole matter.

Moris spoke a number of times during the afternoon of the agricultural committee as representing the characteristic Mode of government in Poston 3. This committee, which was formed in the early days of the project composed of men ~~deeply~~ experienced in farming has kept itself as independent as possible <sup>from</sup> the Agriculture Department in Poston I. One point of its major triumphs has been the carrying out of the plan for irrigating inter-block areas without ditching and grading those areas. This was carried out in ~~the~~ <sup>spite</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>in</sup> opposition by the Engineering Department, <sup>It</sup> was insisted on by the Agriculture Committee who sold Moris on the idea. He then battled with the Engineering Department and has been successful. The interblock areas have not been ditched and graded as in the manner of Poston I and are at present watered by hoses utilizing the domestic water supply. Moris thinks that the independence shown by this Agriculture Committee and its utilization of older experienced persons is characteristic of the whole set up in Poston III.

Moris outlined what he points out as the two major problems with which the whole camp has been confronted. <sup>at the start too</sup> (1) ~~Throughout this~~ complicating <sup>a</sup> system <sup>of</sup> organization was imposed on the project. This was most noticeable in connection with the elaborate plan for <sup>recreation</sup> ~~organization~~ which John Powell had worked out as early as June. The elaborate Agriculture Department organization is <sup>another</sup> ~~one of the~~ examples. Moris thinks that the recreation program should have been confined at the first to one or two simple needs, namely, the furnishing of good and frequent movies for the Niseis and perhaps shibais for the Isseis. All efforts should have been concentrated on these two simple things at the beginning and then other recreational needs should have been taken care of as they developed in the course of the project. Then at



~~Camp 3~~ the Agriculture Department of Poston I started at the beginning to try to set up Poston <sup>III as a</sup> ~~as a~~ subsidiary, but the Camp 3 Agriculture Committee prevented this and has maintained its independence ever since. <sup>(2) Rivalry between units for supplies</sup>

Moris emphasized a number of times the fact that Gerald Wumino, his executive assistant, is busier than he is and had a much larger correspondence than he does. I didn't get a clear idea as to Wumino's duties or activities, but it appears that Moris leaves everything except the signing of requisitions and leaves to Wumino.

Moris said that he felt that a good bet had been passed up when they failed to build a road to the river at the very beginning and to work out something which would have attracted the people to go there. He wants to get a road built to the river now as quickly as possible.

It is my impression that Moris is somewhat out of touch with the leadership of the community, at least in so far as knowing the <sup>iv</sup> relations with each other goes and knowing how the different groups in the community actually inter-act with each other. It struck me that Moris is concerned with two major types of activities. (1) The minor details such as signing requisitions and <sup>(2) planning of</sup> ~~the other thing about~~ very broad policies such as the advisability of having Kibei in organizations that deal with outside groups. Moris's policy has been and is "laissez faire" in the details of community activities.

I came back to Camp I with John Evans who had come down to say goodbye to the Burges. In the car going home Evans asked me how things are going in 3? I said that I thought that they were going quite smoothly. John then replied in a rather dramatic manner, "It would be a very fine thing if you could study Unit 3 in comparison with Unit 1. I am pretty well aware that they have <sup>taken</sup> different courses, but of course it would be impossible, having started one way, to adopt another plan in Unit I. I am sometimes, perhaps,



unjustifiably worried about Unit 3. I am worried for Moris's sake. One of the things that bothers me is where are the good men down there? It seems to me that Harvey Iwata doesn't amount to anything. I don't think he is a leader at all. I haven't been able to trust Sakamoto and this new Council chairman is just worthless. Now the question I always ask is where are the good men? There must be just as good men down there as we have in Unit I, but they haven't appeared. Now, what are they doing? It seems to me that Moris could come to grief and I would be sorry if that happened. There's always the chance that Moris's way of doing things is the best, but we will never know until it <sup>has</sup> ~~is~~ actually gone through successfully.



5-19-43

Interview with Mr. Nosoff by EHS

Organization of Employment Division

CR: Manpower, Employment, Resettlement

I had asked Nosoff previously for an interview in regard to his division. He explained that he was simply taking over temporarily in Zimmerman's absence, but arranged for a meeting with me in his office. He began the interview by saying that he would like to ask a price for it. He said, "I want you to help us in interviewing some of the candidates for jobs. They are not taking them as they should. I don't think it is justified at all that we get a 70% rejection on the job offers that we have."

I asked him what seemed to be the basis of rejections and he said he didn't know. He felt that possibly people were looking for better jobs than actually existed on the outside.

I asked what the interviewing was that he wanted me to do and intimated that I might be interested in interviewing Isseis. He said that all he wanted was for me to sell a few jobs to people who were qualified, but were not taking jobs offered them. I said that I would consider an interview or two.

He said that he was at a loss to explain the set up of his division. When I asked what sort of relations he had had with the EB, he said that he hadn't had any at all and he didn't think that Zimmerman had much to do with them. "Did you hear about the Manpower meeting yesterday? It is the first one that I sat in on and I tried to put something across, but didn't get very far. In regard to emergency crews, sometime ago the LRB, I guess it was that, sent Zimmerman a memorandum. I think it was Fukuda who initiated that memorandum. They wanted Zimmerman to okay the proposal that emergency crews be established which would work on main-



tenance and steward's division when any trouble came up and of course Zimmerman couldn't sign that and he refused to sign it. Then yesterday it came up in the Manpower meeting and it was discussed. I made a motion that emergency crews not be allowed to intervene when there was any trouble over labor relations, that is, if there was a labor dispute. Well, I got sat on. We voted on it and that Frank Fukuda voted with me, but the others voted against it. Nomura and Yanai, Mathiesen and Parnell all voted against it. I suppose I could have worded the motion differently and they wouldn't have opposed it."

I asked him on what basis they opposed it. He said, well, they just put it on the basis that nobody would really make use of an emergency crew when a strike or labor dispute was on. They just said that that would be understood and we wouldn't have to have any regulations passed to that effect. Just between you and me I feel that the Employment Division is not being considered sufficiently in project policies. It looks to me as if we are not being taken into consideration the way we should. I asked him how, for example, the Employment Division had been left out. He replied, that he couldn't give any specific example, but it was just a feeling that he had and he felt that it was up to him now, as acting chief, to look into the matter and see what could be done about it.

I asked him whether he knew of any dealings that his division had had with the LRB. He said the he couldn't think of any and doubted whether Zimmerman had worked much with them. We then went on into a discussion which indicated a complete lack of the knowledge of the history of the LRB and very little understanding of the relations between evacuee groups now composing Unit I Administration. He kept asking what had happened to the Fair Practice Committee and what the LRB was doing. I



explained some of the work of the LRB and he pointed out that the recent settlement of the mechanic's strike had been carried out without reference to the Employment Division. He seemed to feel that a Fair Practice Committee should be created and that my suggestion that the LRB had assumed the functions of the Fair Practice Committee he said that he guessed that was true that he didn't know for sure. He was obviously unfamiliar with any of the personalities now working on Unit I Administration.

" It looks to me as if the great problem that we have on our hands right now is what we are going to do when our budget gets cut 50%. I mean 50% for evacuee labor in the project. You know the man who is here from WRA investigating budget requirements took the recommendations of the Manpower Commission with the basis of proposing cuts. The Manpower Commission has determined that the essential aspects of the project can be run by two thousand workers. That is half of the number of workers we actually have at present in Unit I. Now, I am sure that they are going to make it so that only two thousand workers can be paid the monthly WRA wage. Others will get subsistence and clothing, but no cash. And if the Manpower Commission is right it will be perfectly possible for the project to operate that way. But I think we ought to do some studying as to what will be the effects of such an announcement and such a policy. Will it speed up relocation? Of course, that's what they would like to do. Seems to me the question is, "Will we operate <sup>or</sup> for the people/for the project? I think we are operating for the people and that means relocation. Now that jobs have been opened up on the outside and people can go to them we don't have the same responsibility to create jobs on the project. That's the way I look at it. But



of course, we have to consider what will be the effects of that policy among the people. Is it going to create a lot of angry feelings or how would they react to it? That is, some way ought to be worked on our getting prepared for right now. I suppose it is our job to work on it, but I think it is a general project problem and it ought to be thought through by somebody.

Now here is a list of what some of the people with special training are doing in the project. I got this list compiled to show what accountants and bookkeepers are doing." He showed me a list which had just been brought in which showed that a large number of bookkeepers or persons with accountancy experience were working as kitchen helpers in the mess halls, in the sewing school, or in jobs completely unrelated to their training such as truck drivers, maintenance men, or other occupations.



5-29-43

Sol and I had been talking during breakfast and afterwards we went over to Ralph Gelvin's house and sat in the living room and talked most of the morning. Sol was trying to pump me about self-government and I was trying to pump him about the WRA Washington office. Sol said, "Myer doesn't understand organization. He has no feeling for it whatsoever. He makes policies, yes. That is his strong point. He can formulate policies, but he doesn't know anything about administration. Anyone will tell you that. He comes from Ohio State where he studied agronomy. At first he was an agricultural extension agent. Then he went into the Department of Agriculture in Washington. He is not like the born administrator who has had experience like Harry Stafford in Minidoka. (I asked whether Sol saw much of John Provinse.) No, I can't say I do. Our offices are about 20 feet apart, but that doesn't mean a thing. I hardly see John. (I said that I thought John looked a little unhappy at Minidoka.) Well, I think that he might look neither happy or unhappy. I think that's the way you might feel about it. All John has time for is administration. I don't mean signing papers although he has plenty of that, but I mean seeing people and that takes a lot out of John. I think he likes it, but I think it is very hard for him and that's really what his job is--seeing all kinds of people at all hours all day long chatting. It is very hard for John to do. It is really John, Barrows, and Glick who constitutes the administration circle of three to whom Myer works. Glick is pretty much like Provinse. He is a liberal and he has a law background. You can always see it in him when he gets under any point he forgets his liberalism and decides it on the fine



points of the law. I have seen that happen again and again in connection with lawyers. They always fall back on it as an easy source of decision. (I said they had not been very impressed with Barrows when he was in Poston.) Well, Barrows knows administration, that is, not the kind of administration you and I have been talking about--relations in the community and that sort of thing, but he knows charts and government set ups and the techniques of the administration. That's the kind of chap he is and I think he is pretty close.

It is interesting to me to find here all this concern over WRA and the Indian Service. I think everybody I have talked to has asked me some such question as--What is going to happen to WRA? It comes as quite a surprise to me. In the first place I can't understand the anxiety over it. I think no office in Washington has built any security around the thing at all. We are ready to pack our bags if it turns out that way. There is real anxiety about that thing here and in the second place the whole controversy is just a sort of a small passing thing in so far as I am aware of the news in Washington. Nobody was doing or bothering much about it. It was minor. But here it seems to be a major concern. It is very interesting to me.

You know, administrators don't know how to administrate. I have been telling Ralph that an administrator, Project Director, shouldn't wait for somebody to come out from Washington. He should make plans and arrange for certain men to come at certain times and have his own staff ready and interested waiting for them showing them just what he wants to show them and send them back to Washington all happy. That way he will get something out of them and the representative will get something out of the trip, too. But administrators don't know how to plan. They don't



know how to work with others. Now take the Community Analysis Department over at Topaz. Ernst was complaining to me that La Barre never comes around. I told him that the way to solve that was to give La Barre something definite to do. Don't expect La Barre to know everything about the project. He has to learn. Ernst had never thought of working out a mutual relationship there and he expected the initiative to come from La Barre instead of himself.

Sometimes I think the Washington organization is peculiar. There is such a variety of strength and weakness. Some of it is due, I guess, to Myer's complete failure to understand administration. I think it is very typical of Myer if we point out what was done at the Salt Lake City conference with Project Directors in November. That was the first really effective attempt to get project directors together. But did Myer learn anything from their experiences? Not at all. Myer simply stood up and told the Project Directors what the WRA policy was and what he wanted them to do. Not one of them had a real chance to get up and tell Myer what they wanted him to do or even to discuss adequately the problems they had at their own particular projects. I am quite sure they came away feeling that they had had no chance really to get together with each other and certainly with no chance to get together with Myer. Now, that is characteristic of the way Myer makes policies and puts it across. The main subject of discussion at Salt Lake City was what a bad Project Director Shirrell of Tule Lake was. I talked a good deal with Shirrell there, but had no chance to present his problem to the group. It is quite obvious that Shirrell was trying to do everything himself instead of building up a Council and relying on a Council. He was admitting all kinds of delegates into his office



seeing everybody, listening to everybody and trying to do everything himself. I don't think the man knew how to delegate anything and so he got himself into an impossible situation one man trying to run the whole relocation project.

When you take the different divisions separately in Washington, it sometimes seems to me that every one of them is weak. It is wholly inadequate. Perhaps, Community Enterprise is really strong although the man at the head of it is rather a strange fellow, but I think he has something on the ball. But, now Community Service, as a whole, I think is weak. Province is a good administrator, but it takes too much out of him for him to be fully effective. The various parts of his organization are weak. Take for instance Dr. Thompson. His division is not actually weak, but Dr. Thompson himself is a trouble maker. He can't do anything without stirring up a mess. It's easy to see one of the reasons for this, too. He treats doctors like sticks of wood that you can pick up throw here and throw there as if they had no human qualities at all. Of course, Law is a strong division. (Sol seemed to know very little about the rest of the set up or else was not in the mood to talk about it and I was very much surprised of the obvious lack of relationship between Sol himself and John Province and between Sol and John Embree.)

Of course, WRA is politically a "hot potatoe". It is so hot that the politicians in Washington actually sympathize with it and that is going some.

My impression of Poston is that we have had no real administrative leadership here except perhaps unsuccessful leadership as in the case of Dr. Powell whose Recreation Department turned on him last fall.



Seems to me that there is nobody here now who would make a crisis. Nobody who would create a problem and yet that is what administrators have to do. They must be creating and focusing problems all the time. Not just drifting along. But here you have never had that kind of leadership. It also strikes me that everyone here would like to get out. I think that's true of Gelvin and Mathiesen and of course you have already lost Cary, Findley, and Evans. It's also quite clear that nobody here really understands how Unit I works. They don't know what the Toseibus is doing and they really don't know who does what.



Interview with Frank Kuwahara by EHS

Issei office holding.

CR: TCC, Blockmanagers

I encountered Frank Kuwahara in the Employment Office where he has been working since he quit as General Manager of the camouflage factory. I asked him what he was doing now and he said, "I am out of politics and I feel very good. It sure feels nice to be a free man without everybody jumping on your neck. Over in my block things have changed a lot since the old days. For the first time the Isseis over there are interested in politics. They have been discussing a lot the last couple of weeks about the new constitution. There is real interest there and there certainly is a change. We never had any Isseis interested in politics before.

I have been telling them that there is no use trying to get any Niseis for blockmanagers or Councilmen or anything else because any Issei that they get is likely to go out in 24 hours. So they have been getting together. They've got an Issei blockmanager and assistant blockmanager and now I am pretty sure they will have an Issei Councilman with the new election since Isseis can hold offices. And I am sure that when these older Isseis get in that <sup>exc</sup> the camp will run along very smoothly. Those old men are easy going, not very aggressive, that is, the older ones. It was the younger Isseis and the Niseis who made the trouble, but with these old fellows who aren't aggressive there won't be a bit of trouble and I know the way things are going in my block that the Isseis are glad to get the responsibility now.

Frank went on to say that he, himself, is planning to leave the center as soon as he can. That he is anxious to get information in regard to Iowa and other middle-western states and with the idea of going into some agricultural pursuit in that region.



## INTERVIEW WITH

Ann Kunitani, Mits Kunitani, Isamu Noguchi

Mr. Noguchi wanted to talk to Dr. Arensberg and had arranged for a meeting with him this evening. He and Mr. and Mrs. Kunitani came over to Barrack A where we encountered them just after returning from a picnic with the Evans family. It was decided after a few minutes of discussion to return to Noguchi's house where he invited us to sit on the stoop. On the way over we stopped for a soft drink, Arensberg and Noguchi talking together; Dr. Leighton and Mr. Kunitani and Mrs. Kunitani and myself. She was bursting with the problems of what she calls the "progressive Japanese-Americans" and talked almost continually in that vein all the way to Block 5 where Mr. Noguchi's house is. She said, "I have been discussing things with the psychology professor at the teachers' institute where I have been studying the last two weeks. He is a very earnest man who wants to understand Japanese problems and we talked a great deal. It seems to me that there is no point in talking about preserving the old Japanese culture. The point is that nothing worth having of old Japanese culture ever reached the United States so there is nothing to preserve. The language which the old people speak is not good Japanese, therefore, why should their children be bothered with learning it. It is a most terrible thing that the old people insist on making their children speak this fragmentary and poor version of the Japanese language. It is a waste of time and has no cultural value for the children whatever."



"There is always this opinion you hear so often which says that the younger generation should maintain respect for the older generation. It may be of some value for them. I have great respect for tradition, but it is very bad for the Japanese people to go on being that way. In the United States you find that they all vote the straight Republican ticket or something like that and they are great Red baiters. You might expect, wouldn't you, that Japanese would be progressive; the Nisei, for instance, as a minority group. You might expect them to be interested in the condition of the country, but instead they have turned out to be the most hide-bound conservatives. It is, of course, a very unfortunate thing and I think it is due to their conservative family tradition. We had only one or two anti-Fascist organizations before Dec. 7. Possibly only one was doing anything and it was young Democratic group. I was working with it in Berkeley. There were very few progressive Japanese associated with it or any other anti-Fascist organization. The J.A.C.L. had been nothing more than a simple social club. It had no political program and did not have really progressive leaders. The testimony of the J.A.C.L. leaders for the Tolan Committee was even more painful to listen to then it is to read afterwards. They put their testimony on a purely personal basis, individuals like Mike Masaoka. That was the only way they could present the case because they had no history as an anti-Fascist organization. They are typical of what the Japanese Americans were like, the Nisei, before December 7th.



About this time we came to Mr. Noguchi's house at the north east corner of Block 5. He ushered us inside and showed us the large collection of ironwood stumps and fragments which he has been working with; a few of which he has been working on in a purely formal sort of sculpture. He showed us some desert shrubs which had been worked on by Noguchi's associate, the flower arrangement man. Noguchi has a collapsible kayak of which he makes use in the stream that flows through Wade Head Park.

Mr . Sugita, a carpenter and the father of Mitzi Sugita of the sewing school, came in and engaged Noguchi in a conversation. Mr. Noguchi greeted Mr. Sugita in Japanese and their conversation continued to be in that language. The rest of us went outside in the darkness and sat on the stoop of Noguchi's house.

The Kunitanis immediately began a discussion of Poston and Japanese American problems. Mrs. Kunitani explained that she had a little teaching experience in Tanforan in the assembly center there and that there for the first time she had realized what a "terrible problem education is". Therefore, she signed up for the teachers' institute to give herself a little basis for teaching here in Poston. Mr. Kunitani indicated that he was working in the Recreation Department with Dr. Powell. Mr. Kunitani said, "One thing that is developing here and that you will have to stop is the feeling about the Indian Service. People hate the idea of having an Indian Service taking care of them at Poston. They say they don't want to be Indians and don't want to have any permanent administration of the Indian Bureau group over them. There is a very strong feel-



ing in that direction. They don't realize of course that the Indian Service is a very high-caliber organization and is very progressive in its point of view." Dr. Leighton explained that the Indian Service had had great experience in the administration of communities as wholes for many years. Therefore, it had been called in this instance. He also pointed out that the Indian Bureau is a stable organization and probably not so likely to be affected by the changing whims of public opinion as is an organization such as the W.R.A.. Mrs Kunitani said that that all might be true, but nevertheless people strongly disliked the idea of being classified with Indians. She said that she herself couldn't see why older elements of Japanese culture should be preserved. She said, "Now there are these various sports and dramas such as sumo, judo, kendo, and shibai performances. They have very informal ritualistic elements such as the ritual acts that go before the wrestling, judo, and similar ritual acts in kendo and of course there is all the ritual of the shibai. Now it seems to me that these rituals are just remnants of old Japanese feudalism. Why should they be encouraged in Poston? It seems to me that it is the wrong point of view to give them encouragement. We are very much in favor of the physical training and discipline which judo and sumo give, but we don't see why anyone should be encouraged to carry on these ritual features of the activity. It seems to me that the administration ought to do something about this and carry out more direction in the fostering of baseball and other American games rather than the Japanese games." Here Mr. Kunitani interrupted saying, "Yes, for example, if it should



come to a decision as to whether a certain Recreation Hall should be used for judo or for an American boxing match, the Recreation Department ought always to decide on the latter. That is one way in which they can act positively in this connection. It also seems to me that they should follow Dr. Powells example made in a speech some days ago to the effect that there is necessity for maintaining the old recreations, but that new ones adapted to the needs of Poston should be developed. All the complicated equipment that is needed for these Japanese sports is not going to be obtainable and I don't see why any great effort should be made to obtain it; and for that matter theres a lot of American sports for which there will not be enough equipment and therefore, it will be necessary that they develop new recreation as Mr. Powell says." It was pointed out by Dr. Arensberg that actually the Japanese sports mentioned are participated in by a rather small number of people, that there were very few organizations practicing them--while there are, for example, nearly 85 baseball teams in Poston. Mr . Kunitani replied that nevertheless there was a very large turn out of older people for the Japanese sports.

The subject of race prejudice came up and the Kunitanis said that the Japanese are strongly anti-semetic; that their dislike for the Jews was quite noticeable before evacuation. A number of the auctioneers and the receivers for Japanese property had Jewish names. It was said, therefore, that the Jews were responsible for the evacuation and a good deal of anti-semetic prejudice collected around these events. This led to a general discussion of the lack of tolerance of any given minority group for any other minority group. Mr. Noguchi came out and said that he



had had a Jewish friend in New York City. When Mr. Noguchi told him he was coming to Poston, the friend said, "That is very foolish. You shouldn't do that. Why don't you join the army? Out there you will get stuck with the minority group label." Arensberg suggested that the only way for the minority group to lose its tag would be to become involved in as many associational relations as possible with members of the majority group. It was pointed out by the Kunitanis, however, that when physical differences are present the group must remain forever as a distinct and identifiable group.

Dr. Leighton asked what the teachers thought of the teachers institute. Mrs. Kunitani said that she thought it was way above their heads; that as she sits listening to a very stimulating lecture, one which is awakening her imagination, she looks about and sees almost everyone else yawning their way through the talk. This is an indication together with what the others say constantly about the courses that they are above their heads. Mr. Noguchi asked about the possibility of trades which could result in immediately securing of jobs when people leave here. He mentioned such trades as welding, body and fender repairing, etc. He thinks very strongly that such trades should be taught here. Dr. Arensberg asked what the people think of the new opportunities which exist in Poston which Japanese Americans never had opportunity to do before, namely, jobs as policemen, members of the fire department and etc. Mr. and Mrs. Kunitani both replied that such jobs have very little meaning for those who hold them down; that Poston is not yet regarded as a very permanent place and that people regard their jobs merely as practice activities and something to fill their time with.



In other words they don't take them seriously as they would a job on the outside. However, Mrs. Kunitani said people would like the community if it would be definitely declared as permanent at least to some extent. That is, they want very much to know what is going to happen to the land. They all think now that it is going back to the Indians and that the clearing, subjugation and development that is going on will result ultimately in the benefit of the Indians and not the Japanese.

The subject of the older peoples interest in Japan came up. Noguchi said, "Oh, the houses of the Japanese in California were terrible. They always furnished them with the most ugly bric-a-brac; nothing very tasteful or beautiful." The Kunitanis joined in saying, "That is very true. The houses were always just little houses. They never fixed up their houses; you could always tell a Japanese house by the fact that flowers were planted and maybe there would be a little rock garden or something like that, but they never fixed them up. That was because on the one hand they expected to go back to Japan someday and on the other they were always forced into the poor neighborhoods where nobody fixed up their houses; in Berkeley the Japanese were in a segregated area along with the Negroes. In other places they were with Filipinos and other minority groups." Dr. Leighton asked what seemed to make them fix up the places here so quickly and Noguchi indicated that already there is growing up a feeling of block pride in Poston. He said, "This pride in the block is just getting developed now. I suppose later on it will develop into pride in the quad too, but it's only got as far as the block now. I feel it very



strongly in my block, Block 5 which I think is the best block in Poston. The Kunitanis came back to the subject of lack of esthetic feeling in the Japanese in the United States. Mr. Kunitani said, "The Nisei are very unimaginative. I think that is generally admitted. They have no interest in finer things or in progressive view point. They are completely without imagination and even without a great deal of intelligence. It seems to me that this is due to the fact that they are so oppressed in their family life, that is, the older generation has kept them so repressed in bringing them up." Dr. Arensberg pointed out the fallacy in this, indicating that in Japan there was an even stronger patriarch system and yet a vigorous artistic and intellectual life. Mrs. Kunitani admitted this. Mr. Noguchi interposed the statement, "You can see the difference in these people. The older people, the Issei, are interested in wood. There will be two or three men, at least three in every block, who are interested in wood and want to do something with it, but you never find that with the Nisei. They don't want to work on wood and they don't have any other comparable interest." Mr. Kunitani interposed, "Yes, and the Nisei are backward in their relations with people. It is not only a lack of imagination, but a lack of initiative in things. I think anyone would admit that the Nisei are like that." Mrs. Kunitani said, "Yes, but among themselves they are very aggressive." Noguchi said that was a part of the same thing. He added, "There are many frustrations here and there really isn't enough for people to do to keep themselves busy. Mrs. Kunitani said, "Well, really these people should have come from an assembly center, then they would know how pleasant



it is here. When you come from an assembly center you know how terrible it can be. There you really have a feeling of being in jail, cooped in a small place with nothing to do all day except sit around and wait for meals. That's the way it was at Tanforan. It was a well organized place and really very pleasant in some ways, but there was always that consciousness of lack of freedom. The airport right beside the assembly center always emphasized the jail--like character of Tanforan." It was about 11:30. We rose to leave and Noguchi invited us to return whenever we wished to "the best stoop in town." We walked home in the darkness.

(EHS)



Interview with Dr. Mizushima by EHS  
CR: Private Enterprise, Block 4<sup>5</sup>, EB, TCC.

Dr. Mizushima came into Dr. Leighton's office with his translation of the History of Poston I. He discussed a few points in connection with the translation with me and it seemed that he wanted to chat so I sat down and we talked. He began by saying that translations had always been very poor in Poston. "I pity Mr. Head sometimes because of what was said in those translations. Sometimes it was almost insulting to the people and that was supposed to have come from the administration. You know what the people were thinking." I said that I thought it would be a good idea if all translations would have a board decide on, at least the difficult passages. He brushed this suggestion aside saying, "Well, if you get people discussing things you never get anywhere. They asked me to help translate the City Charter, the new one. Those boys who translated it did a terrible job. They tried to use high sounding words, but they didn't know what they meant. And so it was a terrible mess. There was no use talking with them so after they had done it I just took the charter and did it the right way. And then I went to the representatives from each camp quickly and said, "Is this all right?" They glanced over it and said it was okay with them. So that was the charter we have now. We never would have gotten anywhere with that charter if I had let them discuss it all over again.

"What do you think will be the result of this new thing in Arizona? I mean not letting people go there?" I said it was being used as a political tool. "Yes, that is what I hear. Only I hear that the governor of Arizona was once a doctor and he had a lot of Japanese pa-



tients. Made a lot of money from them, but now after doing that he wants to kick them out."

"I think maybe we are going to have a little trouble with this new council. There are these two men who are on it, Nakamura and Okamoto. I think maybe they will try to do a little something new. Anyway, there's nothing very bad and Nakamura and Nakaji used to work on my newspaper. They worked for me in Los Angeles. That was what made it hard last winter. I had to make a speech against the Toseibus. I don't think the Toseibus is any good. Well, Mr. Nakamura was speaking for the Toseibus. So before we had to speak I took Mr. Nakamura aside and I said, "Now, we have always been good friends. We have been good friends for a long time. You do the best you can and I will do the best I can. So that's the way we talked and I think I won that talk because that block wanted to kick out the Councilman and they didn't do that after that. So I think I won that. It will be necessary to watch Mr. Nakamura, but I don't think that will be necessary for that Mr. Okamoto."

I was telling them in the Council the other day how good the Bureau of Sociological Research is. I told them that. I said that what the Bureau did during the strike when they kept things smooth and kept the army out; that that was a good thing because there could have been trouble. I told them that since I am going out pretty soon I can say this sincerely because it is clear I don't expect to get anything out of it. I wouldn't gain anything. So I told them what I think.

They are going to have a trial of Niiseki who is in this what you call it lapidary business. He was taking too much away from the people. He was charging \$1 for each stone and I found out that good stones polish-



ers don't charge more than ninety cents. I went to Sugiyama and Isaid, Mr. Sugiyama, you are not moving fast enough on this thing. If you don't do something, I will go to see Dr. Powell myself! Now, I never did things that way before. I never go around Sugiyama that way, but he was going too slow and this was serious. So then I think Mr. Sugiyama acted too quickly. He didn't discuss it back and forth with Niiseki, but one day announced in the Council that the police had been sent down there and closed the place and that Mr. Niiseki was under arrest. No, I never had anything against Mr. Niiseki. I don't know anything about him before, but I find out lots of things since. People everywhere tells me what a bad one he was for squeezing money out of people. You remember that exhibit one Sunday this month? Well, I went over to see that exhibit and I was coming by that stone polishing place and Niiseki had his stones out showing them. I was just looking at this and then Mr. Niiseki burst out and called me all sorts of names saying what a terrible thing it is for the Council to prosecute him just as loud as he could. He didn't care what other people thought. That's the way he is. He doesn't care. So I told him, I said, "Niiseki, stop talking loud. This is no place to call names. We are here to look at things, to see the beautiful stones, But he didn't stop. He kept talking louder and louder so I went close up to him and I took out my pencil from my pocket and all of a sudden I stuck it into his ribs hard like that. I tell you he was scared. He stopped talking right away and looked at me to see what I had so then I walked away. (Dr. Mizushima was smiling very happily all the time he was telling this story and looking into my eyes, watching to see what my reaction was.) So I went on and then in a few minutes two people had come up to me and told me what a bad person Niiseki was.



I never knew anything about it before, but now everybody comes around and says he took money when he could. He came over again after that. He came to my house and he called me "inu". I said to him that is too familiar a word to me to mean anything. I have been accused of being an "inu" ever since the beginning of camp. If I am an "inu", why don't you shoot me? Every dog should be shot if he is a bad dog. But suppose you shoot someone who isn't an "inu"? You can't bring him back alive. Then what are you going to do about it? You must make sure he isn't an "inu" and then treat him as should be treated. So I left it with Mr. Niiseki about this "inu". I have to go on doing what I think is right. I can't change myself. I just go ahead. I am used to being called "inu". So then Niiseki said that he thought I had been opposing him in the Toseibu because I wanted his job. I told him that was a wrong idea because what I think is that the Toseibu is a very bad business. I don't think there should be any Toseibu. When I came here I got a job as census interviewer. I made my mind up that I would stick to that the whole time and I haven't changed. I didn't want Niiseki's job. I wouldn't take Niiseki's job. I wouldn't take any job on the Toseibu. I told him that if he thought I was an "inu" look at the kind of job I have. I am a census interviewer. If I ask you a question, you don't have to tell the answer. That is up to you and if your answer is wrong, who gets blamed? Not you. I get blamed because I am the one who puts it down. So he couldn't get any madder and we didn't have a fight.

Now, they have this young boy. He was a Councilman until the election. He is investigating Niiseki. He went down there and made an investigation. I asked him what he had done. He said that he had investigated and everything looked very fine. He had gone into Niiseki's check stubs and the amounts checked with the amount paid for the



machinery. Everything was in order. So I said to him, "Do you think that is a good investigation? How do you know that he didn't send out for two parts to a machine and due to priority they only had one and they only send out one and then sent his money back. How do you know about that?" The young man who is only 24 years old looked cheap and he said that he guessed there was more to be done. I said to him that he must learn to do these things thoroughly. He is the hope of the new generation, a young man like him. I said that I hoped that he would learn how to act. So now as the investigation goes on every once in a while he comes to me, you know, to find out what would be the next step. Now, I don't have anything against the man in that business. I never did. But I think that they should thank me for keeping the people from getting down on him. If the people should get down on him here, then when they go outside they won't even be able to make a living because no one would trust him. So I think if he would only realize he would see that I am helping him out. I have heard that he has made as much as \$1,000.

Now, I never complain. That is, I don't complain too much. It is against the principles of the Japanese to complain. The principle is never to show it if you are suffering, but people, I feel, forget that here. Sometimes I say to them you should be happy. You couldn't have born this experience for a million dollars. I tell him that I am happy to have had this experience. It is a new one and from which I am learning a great deal. I asked them what they were crying about, then I say there is no one who would have a better reason to cry than I do. Where is my wife? I don't know. She went to Japan. She went to Japan for a visit and to take the younger children. She wrote me



that she didn't care for it there. She couldn't stand it, but I wrote her and told her to stay on a little while longer. Then some of our friends in Japan wrote to me and said that it was a very bad place for my wife to try to live; that she couldn't get along. She was used to America. So finally I said, "All right come back. Maybe the children have been there long enough. So she got on the last boat and then the boat turned around when war began. I guess she is back in Japan. But I haven't heard from her. I don't know where she is. Then am I not the one who should be crying? What is the use to pray for her. Oh, yes, I do pray for her, but what can you do? The only thing to think is some day we will meet again and be happy to see each other, but that's all there is to do about it. So I go on and appreciate this experience money couldn't buy and I tell people that it is against the Japanese principle to complain. (I asked him what people said when he talked in this vain. He replied, "Oh, they sympathize with me.)

Some of these people like Niiseki are mad at me. I don't know why. I suppose I didn't go with them so much before evacuation. I was busy with my newspaper working with Nakamura and Nakaji. I didn't do anything with the Japanese Associations. I paid my dues, but I kept away. I didn't hang around with them. I didn't drink with them and gamble. I was interested in Christian things. Now, most of the men who are good men, they have been taken away. That is what you say in the History. That maybe all right. But I think maybe if you had them here you might have trouble, too. We have left only the second rate and third rate. Here, I don't know why I am here. All my friends are in internment camp in Louisiana. They say that they are very happy there. There are no women and children around and every day they sit in front of the long wave radio and get



news. They are making all the news. They are saying how strong Japan is. They are having a very pleasant time of it. One man who came from there was surprised to see how little people here knew about the news. He was very unhappy because it was so hard to know anything. He could no longer make his own news and say Japan is very strong.

I asked Dr. Mizushima how Dick Nishimoto is getting long in Block 45. He said, "Oh, he is getting along fine. He is a man of very good judgement. He is a very irritable fellow. He is too tight. He is ready to explode most of the time, but I think he is a man of good judgement and he is a man of wide knowledge. Perhaps he knows more than almost anyone in camp. He has a good education. I think he is a good man for the job of block-manager, but he is quick tempered. I always have to get between him and the block people, but he has good judgement. Now, I think it would be better if he would learn to do things smoother. When they had the volunteers to work on the schools, you know the adobe, well they started out with Mr. Nagai's block, chairman of the Toseibu. Nagai knows what I think of him. I have told him many times. I have said to him, "Nagai, you are always up in the air, always very way above things. I don't want to listen to a sermon on the Council floor. I want to hear a practical solution. You are always up in the air, Nagai." I have told him that and he knows what I think. He knows that I think the Toseibus are no good. Well, because Nagai is chairman of the toseibus they started getting the volunteers from his block. Then they went to the block of the vice-chairman and then they came to our block. Nomura, you see, is the chairman of the TCC and I am the chairman of the IAB so they came to our block and we were not getting volunteers so I went to Dick and I said better hold another meeting tonight and tell them what the situa-



tion is. So very quickly he said, "No". "The way I am going to do it when they do not turn out. Their names are posted and they may not like that and will volunteer." Well, I saw how Mr. Nishimoto was on that and so I said simply, "Oh, yes". Well, you see that's the way you have to do with people. That's the way I look at it. First you see them and see what they think and then after a while you go around and you begin to cool him down slowly after a little time. At first you always say, "Yes". Let them talk; then do something yourself. So I said, "Yes, Dick. That's all right. And then I went around the block and I saw everyone of these young men. There were 49 who could work. You see we don't have any workers in our block. Very few. Mostly old people or else very young people. So I went around to them and I said to each one, "This is going to be very bad for you. The people in the block will see your name. The block will be in a bad position in the community and people will be angry with you. Now that's going to hurt you. It doesn't matter what people in other blocks think, but you have to have the people in your own block think well of you. Suppose you go out for outside employment. Suppose you have to leave your children and your wife or both behind? Who's going to take care of them? Suppose you have to leave some of your property behind. Who's going to take care of that? You have to think of what your block people think because that's what your future welfare depends on. Your block people. Now, what will they think if you refuse to volunteer to work on the schools?" So I talked to each of them that way and 41 out of 49 volunteered.

At some time during the course of the interview I mentioned K. Okajima who was chairman of the Organization Committee in Minidoka. Dr. Mizushima knows him and said that he had been in Los Angeles just before



evacuation where he was a lawyer. He went on to say that Okajima had never been successful and had never made much money in anything he had ever done. He had some business relations with Tsukamoto of the IAB and just before evacuation Tsukamoto had given Okajima \$500 as a gift. This had pleased Okajima very much and had gone up to Seattle to visit his daughter. He was caught there in the evacuation and consequently was evacuated to Minidoka instead of to one of the southern centers.



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4-29-43

Interview with Bob Uragami by EHS

Subj.: Council Committee Food Investigation of  
Aug.-Sept. '42

CR: 114-TCC

In trying to find out what really happened in connection with the Council food investigation of last year I got an interview with Bob Uragami of Block 59 who had been on the Council food committee who is now working in the Community Enterprise. I discussed the matter with him in the office of the Community Enterprise. I told him I was interested in straightening the point out in writing the History of Poston and he said that he would like to tell me just exactly what happened. His account is as follows: "First of all and I guess you remember that Mr. Best said the books were opened to anybody. Well, then when we went to see the books they had a meeting about it. Mr. Head was out of the project and we had a meeting with Mr. Gelvin. And Mr. Potter was there and there was this man, I don't remember his name, but he was assistant to Mr. Empie. (I asked him to describe the man and the description was apparently that of Henry Smith.) As I remember Mr. Gelvin said it was okay. We could look at the books if we wanted to. So then this fellow said there was nothing doing. He wouldn't let us see the books. That's the way Mr. Potter said it would be. He said this other fellow had the say. After that Mr. Head came back and he said that it was okay to see the books providing we had an accountant who could understand it. It would have to be the accountant who would look at the books. He wouldn't pay any attention when they told him that I was the bookkeeper. So we discussed



it with him and then he said that he was not denying the books to anybody, but he advised us that we had better get acquainted with Mr. Townsend who came in about then in place of Potter. He said to do the thing slowly. Get Acquainted with the new man, see what kind of fellow he was and then take it up with him.

Well, we knew then the food committee didn't have the authority to inspect anything so we didn't go ahead. And then when the food got better--it got better right away, you know, as soon as Mr. Best left. As soon as Townsend came, we got butter--a lot more butter. That fellow Best was holding back on us. So the food got better and we dropped the matter. I don't know what you think, but I think that it was that investigation that made the food better and got rid of Mr. Best.