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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

CENTRAL UTAH PROJECT

TOPAZ, UTAH

SPANISH VICE-CONSUL'S VISIT TO TOPAZ

by

RUSSELL A. BANKSON

PROJECT REPORTS DIVISION  
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#### SPANISH VICE-CONSUL'S VISIT TO TOPAZ

Captain Antonio Martin, Spanish vice-consul from the San Francisco office visited Topaz, arriving Sunday, December 26 and departing on the afternoon of Monday, December 27. His visit having been anticipated by a telegram from the Washington office, he was received by Mr. James F. Hughes, deputy project director.

Accompanying Captain Martin were Charles Eberhardt of the State Department and Del Sullivan of the Immigration Office in Salt Lake City. Information pertaining to the interests of the Japanese nationals within the center had been assembled for Captain Martin, including a portfolio of general information about Topaz and the Administrative management of the center. This report showed that there were, at the time, 3028 Japanese nationals residing in Topaz.

Information about the climate, the surrounding country, the types of buildings used in the center, housing conditions for the residents, fire protection and hospital facilities, personal services, supplies of food and so forth were provided, together with a great deal of other informations concerning the living conditions and work operations. Also, statistic on deaths and births were supplied with a table of the activities of religious groups and the number of residents participating.

Captain Martin was conducted on a tour of inspection of



the center and its service facilities and visited the hospital and some of the blocks in the center.

Iwao Takahama, councilman from Block 9, who had been the chairman of the Community Council Spanish Consul Committee, had resigned a few days earlier which automatically terminated him as the chairman of the Spanish Consul Committee, and he had been succeeded by Councilman Akimi Sugiyara of Block 36. This Committee was called upon to arrange a meeting with Captain Martin on Sunday afternoon, attended by Japanese nationals who cared to be present, in addition to the Committee members.

Many of the problems of the nationals were discussed and many questions were asked and clarified.

While no Caucasians were present, it was understood that questions chiefly concerned the draft of nisei into the Army, living conditions and the food situation. Captain Martin had been taken on a tour through the warehouses by Mr. Hughes and inspected the quantity of food in storage, so that he had seen with his own eyes what this situation was.

A report from the meeting which Captain Martin held with members of the Committee and other nationals, indicated that the complaints centered, to a great extent, around food. But Captain Martin having ascertained what supplies were on hand and having been provided with copies of menus which have been served in the center over a period of months, questioned them



as to just what shortage of food might have been meant. He asked them if they were receiving plenty of meat and they said that they were. The same applied to vegetables and other foods including fish and rice, so that actually there were no justifiable complaints about food.

In regard to nisei being taken into the Armed Forces, the chairman of the Spanish Consul Committee reported back to the Council that "Japanese Americans could volunteer into the U.S. Army if they desired according to the Spanish Consul's explanation, but have the privilege of refusing such service without any obligation involved. This is as of the present time."

At the conclusion of his visit, Captain Martin sent the following telegraph statement to the Spanish Ambassador in Washington, summarizing conditions as he found them:

"Since my last visit to Topaz Relocation Center on August 11th, conditions regarding all food, except beef and pork, which are improved, living quarters and clothing allowance have deteriorated, as reported by Japanese nationals, giving as their principal reasons the general policy of WRA in reducing evacuee working personnel. My personal impression after inspection of food and vegetable supplies and storage is that general conditions remain the same as during my last visit and the vegetable situation improved over last winter. Other improvements include completion of auditorium with a seating



capacity of fifteen hundred, high school manual training building, remodeling present high school buildings later to be occupied by elementary schools, and installed eight playground areas with playground equipment, enlargement of garage buildings, enlargement of farm facilities to increase production of beef, pork and poultry, also replaced all defective water mains. Report follows. Leaving today for Salt Lake enroute to San Francisco.



December 22, 1943

SUBJECT: Report for Spanish Consulate

For your information, the following may be pertinent when you consult with the Spanish Consulate during his visit to this Center December 27 to 29: FOOD (Article 11):

1. Field Ration Menus. Enclosed are samples of 30-day menus in quantities for 100 persons for the month of November.
  2. Quantity in Pounds. The average quantity of food stuffs in pounds delivered from the Commissary per day is approximately  $3\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. This is raised to about 5 pounds per day when it is considered that water is incorporated in the cooking of gravies, vegetables, rice, cereals, and so forth.
  3. Can Detainees prepare additional national food? Many of the residents of Topaz do additional cooking at their own homes over electric hot plates and coal stoves. Purchases are made from Delta, from Salt Lake, and from outside firms, food being sent in by parcel post. The Cooperative Enterprises at Topaz also carries many articles of Japanese food stuffs and residents take advantage of this.
- Food requisitions are made up 60 days ahead for the Quartermaster Market Center and for the Army Service Forces Depot at Ogden. Advice and recommendations are given by the representative of the Council on food and at a meeting which the general foreman of the Commissary, the Chefs committee, and the food representative of the Council attend.
4. Special Food for ailing and old men. The Chef of each kitchen works in conjunction with the Hospital Unit, and prepares soft diets for elder people who are denture cases. The lack of appointive dietician to definitely supervise these diets might indicate that the operation in this case is not perfect.
  5. Inspection of Kitchen. Kitchen inspections are made by the resident assistant Stewards and by the appointive assistant Steward.
  6. Dish and Pot Washing. There are separate trays for washing of dishes and for the washing of pots. Chlori-



nizing agents are given each kitchen for the sterilization of dining room china, glassware, and silver. Inspections are made under the supervision of the Sanitary Engineer for the sanitary handling of kitchen equipment and the general sanitation of the kitchen.

7. Bakery. There is no Central Bakery in Topaz. Bread is purchased outright through the Quartermaster at Salt Lake City. Each kitchen has one man delegated to do the baking who in many instances is the Chef. Cakes, pies, tarts, biscuits, and muffins are baked at each kitchen.
8. Source of Water (Drinking). Water is pumped from deep wells adjacent to the Project Center, and chlorinated before reaching the large storage tanks.
9. Prisoners Opinion of Food. Since beef and pork has been available from last August 1, I think on the whole, there are no general derogatory remarks against the food. A small percentage of the 35 kitchens due to inexperienced cooks and Chefs might be considered to be less satisfactory than the median or the better kitchen. Japanese type of food stuffs such as Chinese noodles, a better grade of miso, nori-no-tsukudani, Hoshi-Kamaguri, Jamaica ginger, Dried shrimps, etc; five or six varieties of fish from the West Coast, and a rather plentiful supply of fresh vegetables has caused the diet to be quite balanced in variety and sufficiency.
10. Food Storage. Five large food warehouses are very adequate both for ventilation and dryness for the storage of all canned goods, cereals, and some types of perishables. One large refrigerator warehouse has eight compartments; two of which are cold storage being maintained at 2 degrees Fahrenheit. This renders as good food storage for Topaz as can be obtained anywhere. A root cellar in the process of construction will enable the storage of some perishables this summer and will guarantee adequate storage of fall farm root crops for next fall and winter.
11. Number of People employed in:
  - (a) Kitchen--565 people
  - (b) Bakery--35 people
  - (c) Dishwashing--151 people

Including waitress service there is an average of 28 residents employed in every kitchen besides those residents employed in Commissary, Steward's office, Sandwich kitchen, and the Truck Farm kitchen.



12. There are no collective disciplinary measures affecting the quantity or quality of food served to any of the residents. In other words, there is no such thing as a "bread and water" diet to be used as a penalty.

Brandon E. Watson  
Project Steward