

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION MADE BY T. SHIMA

on

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF EVACUEES IN CHICAGO

(May 18 - 29, 1943)

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ON TRAIN

My first impressions were very favorable. There were quite a few wounded and sick soldiers on the same train with me, but all during the trip I experienced no unpleasantness of any kind. I ate my meals with these soldiers with no apparent ill feeling on their part toward me.

I noticed particularly that even on the train they were using very fine coal - the kind of coal that we in the relocation camps, throw away. After coming to Chicago I also noted that the same fine type of coal was being used here.

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY OFFICE IN CHICAGO

I went to the WRA office and met Mr. Elmer L. Shirrell, the Director, who gave me general information on the evacuees who were resettling in Chicago. Also met and talked with Mr. Ben Yoshioka, from whom I received some information on the employment and housing situation of the niseis.

INVESTIGATION AND TALK WITH OLDER ISSEIS IN CHICAGO

I met Reverend Uratani and Reverend Yamazaki and talked with them about the Japanese-Americans in Chicago and the various

problems they faced. I got some good leads from them as to other points of contact for my investigation, i.e., Brethren Hostel and American Friends Hostel, of which I will write further in the following paragraphs.

BRETHREN HOSTEL

I talked with Reverend Smeltzer, the director of the Brethren Hostel and in Reverend Smeltzer's opinion there are three big factors that are holding up the successful resettlement of the nisei evacuees in Chicago:

1. Unwise selection by camp authorities of niseis desiring to resettle. Niseis coming out to Chicago are not representative niseis - the kind that do justice to the great majority of educated, likeable young evacuees.
2. Persons relocated in Chicago have not received the proper instructions while in camp as to behavior, dress, mannerisms, do's and don't's, after resettlement.
3. Many niseis came out of camps to take jobs for which they were not properly qualified - causing disappointment both to employer and to themselves. Careful consideration should be given to determine whether an applicant has the right kind of qualification and the right amount of experience in order to apply for the job.

It was not made clear to the evacuees resettling in

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Chicago, the necessity for "sticking to the job" promised to them. Many often quit their jobs after a few days to seek better paying employment.

I noticed quite a number of Niseis in the downtown business section of the city. One of the most striking of things noticed is the sloppy, careless dress of the young men. Many of them walk about in groups of three's and four's dressed in dirty jeans or cords and no tie or coat....badly in need of both haircut and shave.

The nisei girls are much better in this respect. Their attire is neat and clean and they are, on the whole, much better dressed than the boys.

I learned that the CIO Union had made special arrangements to use a number of Japanese-American young men for the duration as mechanics. After coming out here, it was found that 17 out of the 30 applicants did not have the proper or required knowledge or skill to be employed as mechanics. The Union is very undecided as to how to handle this case. I am citing this as an example of the sort of thing that the young boys are doing to pull down the reputation of the evacuees resettling in Chicago.

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Many of the boys make arrangements to take a job and promise to show up for work but fail to do so.

I have had nothing but favorable reports on the girls working in Chicago; and especially on couples working together as domestics.

GENERAL ATTITUDE OF PUBLIC

In my brief stay in Chicago I traveled practically over all the city. Everywhere I went, I found no discrimination at all. I even went into Chinatown where I was received cordially and even did some shopping there. There was no unpleasantness in my trips throughout the city.

On Sunday, May 23, I visited the Japanese Church of Christ of Chicago. The church holds its meetings at the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago. I learned through the Elders, of which one is a professor at Loyola Medical School where my son is going to school, that the church had donated the use of a chapel for the Japanese to hold their religious meetings. They were having their first anniversary services that day. I met the pastor of the church, Reverend Ai Chi Sai, and also Mr. Shigeta, the chairman of the services. There were approximately 100 people in the congregation that day,

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40% of whom were isseis. I was informed that the second Sunday of each month was set aside for the second generation people and that the attendance on that day reached 200.

AMERICAN FRIENDS HOSTEL

I visited the American Friends Hostel, where I met Mr. Togo Tanaka who gave me just about the same kind of information that I had been hearing since I came here. They stressed the fact that the Niseis needed, not so much a religious worker to help them, as they did an older man of education and responsibility and understanding to advise and help them with their various problems.

HOUSING PROBLEM

Jobs are not so hard to get, but housing seems to be the most pressing problem right now. Of the many that I talked with, it seems that adequate housing cannot be obtained for less than \$45 - \$68 per person.

Girls' clubs and YMCA's and YWCA's are all full and the only thing they can do is to try to find you a place in a private home, which are so often unsatisfactory, because of lack of privacy, or uncleanness.

Mr. Shirrell, Director of the WRA, indicated that the responsibility of the WRA ends when the person being permanently relocated, finds a position. Of course, the WRA have personnel

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available to give counsel and aid in helping find adequate housing and assist with other problems which may come up. But the WRA does not take the responsibility of helping with the numerous social and personal difficulties of each person (recreation, unsuitable jobs, inadequate pay, etc.)

CONCLUSIONS

After careful investigation of the general conditions found here in Chicago, I have come to the following impressions.

1. The young niseis must see the necessity of sticking to their job, and working at it, once they make arrangements to work.
 2. Even in peacetime, but doubly so in wartime, must the niseis be careful of their dress and appearance in public. Sloppy dress, no tie, no coats, unshaven faces and other carelessness in attire will not be tolerated by the public.
 3. In the matter of conduct also niseis must be careful. Avoid traveling together in groups, talking in loud tones in Japanese, drinking, etc.
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Despite unfavorable housing conditions and other factors which make it hard for niseis to resettle, over 95% of those who have come out of camps have located satisfactory employment and are making successful readjustments. Less than 5% of those who have gone out on indefinite leave have failed and returned

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to the Relocation Centers. There are still many social adjustments to be made, but on the whole the majority are successfully meeting it.
