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FIREBREAK GANG

BY

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PREFACE

The mass evacuation and migration of the Japanese were a novel and extraordinary adventure of the American government. The exodus in its scope and its circumstance was unprecedented and was such remarkable and unusual nature as to be recorded on pages of the American political and economical history. It was a compulsory migration against free will, enforced and administered by the governmental agencies. The people, under the extraordinary circumstance and in a new unaccustomed environment, presented an interesting study to many students.

The writer desired to write stories in Japanese, depicting such exodus and life at a relocation camp for his pleasure. The materials used in this report were originally collected and intended for such purposes -- jotted down on little pieces of paper from time to time. Some expressions were kept verbatim in Japanese and filed under the speaker's name. Often the thoughts and the sentiments of the writer were recorded. Therefore, in making this report available for research workers, it was necessary to interview each individual to obtain the statistical information. This report was written by reconstructing the events in chronological order, with which the recorded reactions and the statistical data were correlated.

In translating Japanese expressions, the writer adhered to the technique he used while he was acting as a court interpreter. He attempted to preserve the speaker's intent above all, evaluating the force and strength of the statement -- for example, free translation rather than direct. ✓

To John G. Evans, the writer makes grateful acknowledgment, not only for valuable advice and assistance while he was in charge of the crew, but for his unfailing trust and encouragement.

R. S. N.

Poston, Arizona.
September, 1942.

FIREBREAK GANG

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a report of a group of thirty odd men, commonly referred to as "firebreak gang", who were engaged in cleaning and subjugation work of land in Camp I of the Colorado River War Relocation Project at Poston, Arizona. It is a chronicle of the hectic early days, depicting the confused state of affairs prevailing. The subject covers a period of eighty days, beginning on June 27, 1942, and ending on September 14.

It is a typical group of men who were engaged in the outdoor labor of unskilled variety in this project.² It is my presumption that the characteristics found in the "firebreak gang" were either similar or identical with those of other outdoor labor groups such as the poultry crew, the fish culture crew, the farm gang, etc.

I acted as the foreman of this group of men, supervising and directing them on the field, having full responsibility for maintaining order and harmony among them and keeping in contact with the administrative branches or the Engineering Department for coordination.

I took a part in its organization and was responsible for its disbandment. It is noteworthy that there was neither friction nor quarrel among them. There was neither antagonistic feeling nor open defiance against the foreman, except at its inception. They were willing to cooperate with each other and to be obedient to the leader. There was neither a trace of sentiment nor an occasion to resort to such a concerted collective action as a strike, even at the time when labor disputes were frequent and grievances of the dissatisfied workers were widely discussed and gossiped in the camp.³ They were, indeed, well satisfied and contented in what they were doing as days went on.⁴ The Caucasians who had supervised or who had knowledge of what we were doing were also well satisfied

and expressed their commendation and appreciation.⁵⁾ It is my belief that we had one happy family, having complete harmony and trust among us. I am afraid, therefore, that this report might give the reader an impression of being a "success story." However, I decided to exercise no restraint and to report as I saw, as I heard, and as I felt.

CHAPTER II

MYSELF

At the outset, I believe it is helpful for the reader to understand this report if I presented a brief sketch of my life. I am a male of 38 years of age, born in Tokio, Japan. I married a Nisei girl and have two daughters of ten and eight years old respectively. While in Japan, I entered an elementary school at six and graduated at twelve. At the age of seventeen I completed my education in an intermediate school (chugaku-ko) of American Episcopalian endowment in Tokio. I grew up in a large group of boys of similar age, as I have lived in school dormitories since ten.

At the age of seventeen, I came to the United States to join my parents and entered a high school in San Francisco. At twenty-one I enrolled in Stanford University and five years later I graduated from the School of Engineering. During the summer vacations and one year of leave of absence, I worked on, and later managed, a fruit orchard, about 300 acres in size, in Sacramento Valley, California. There I gained valuable experiences in associating with and handling 30 - 150 resident and migratory farm laborers -- Japanese, Portugese, Spaniards, Filipinos, etc.

After graduation I came to Los Angeles and operated an insurance brokerage firm until 1934. Concurrently, I served in law courts as an interpreter on call, until the civil service status was strictly required. Since then I owned and operated a small retail produce market in the southwestern suburban section of Los Angeles, where Japanese truck gardeners were heavily concentrated. People often wondered why I a college engineering graduate, was in such a "low-down business." To them I used to say, "I learned just the art of 'bull session' at the expense of hard earned \$5,000." Beyond that I had no desire to elaborate.

My friends tell me that I have the appearance of a Nisei and act like one, yet my thoughts and reactions are typically those of intelligent Isseis.¹⁶

CHAPTER III

THE WORK

The work, attended and accomplished by the "firebreak gang" during June 27 - September 14, 1942, is separated into two categories:

- 1. To segregate and clean piles of scrap lumber in various areas in Camp 1, which were remnants of the materials used by a construction company in building barracks for living and other accessory purposes. In other words, segregation and cleaning mean:
 - a. To separate usable lumber from scraps and trash.
 - b. To haul away usable lumber.
 - c. To burn the remaining scraps and trash.

These lumber piles were located in the following areas: ⁷

- a. The Firebreak and Recreational Area between Block 36 and Block 45 on one side and Block 37 and Block 44 on the other -- about 5 acres of ground covered densely with the remnants. At some places the heaps were as high as 4 feet from the ground.
- b. The Firebreak area east of Block 53 and Block 60 -- about 3 acres.
- c. The area immediately west of Block 22 -- about 1 acre.
- d. The Firebreak area between Block 38 and Block 39 -- 3 acres of medium density, about 2 feet deep.
- e. The warehouse area west of "E" Street -- about 3 acres of medium density.
- f. Other small areas.

(The areas are listed in the chronological order.)

- 2. To prepare land preliminary to the leveling by heavy equipments. ⁸
 - a. To assemble and gather into small piles trunks, branches and brushes of mesquites and cottonwood trees, which were previously knocked down or dragged out by heavy duty tractors.

- b. To dig and cut the residual stumps with shovels and axes.
- c. To burn the piles.

The tools and equipment used were as follows:

1. Fordson tractors attached with small Ferguson trailers, which were of stake body type of 2-ton capacity. They were also used in transporting the workers to and from the work. Later, the tractors, detached of the trailers, were chained with heavy cables and were employed in dragging stumps.
2. Axes, shovels, rakes, pitch-forks, etc.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHAOTIC BEGINNING

The request of cleaning the lumber piles was first made by the Engineering Department to John G. Evans.^g It was necessary to remove them so that a lateral system for farm irrigation and for dust control could be constructed. It was originally suggested to employ at least 250 Japanese residents in Camp 1 and clean up the Firebreak and Recreational Area (marked as a and b), where the canal was to run lengthwise, in three or four days. It was suggested and was stressed by Mr. Barbour that this was very important preparatory work which must be undertaken quickly and accomplished in the shortest possible time, as "rigs" were ready to come into the field. The Associate Engineer thought that the recruiting of 250 workers should not be difficult and that with all these men the work would be accomplished in no time, if enough trucks and trailer-tractors were pooled from various departments. But as the thing turned out later, Barbour was over-optimistic and was wishful-thinking, and his desire and expectation were shattered.

According to Evans, the following steps were taken to recruit workers:

1. In their meeting Evans instructed all the Block Managers to get all the idle men out.
2. Block Managers contacted the men without employment and persuaded them. They pointed out as persuasive arguments, I was told, several points such as:
 - a. The whole community would be benefitted by it.
 - b. Sooner we have the canal, quicker we will have water for our vegetable gardens and for dust control.
 - c. If water was brought into Block, it would have cooling effect and we would not be suffering from heat.
 - d. They would be compensated for their public-spirited service.
3. Tomo Ito, Evans' assistant, with whom I was acquainted in my college

days, asked me to "help the country"; and inasmuch as I was unemployed, I should come out and supervise the men.

On the morning of June 27, I reported to the area immediately east of Block 44 -- area (a). The entire place was in a turmoil -- one big mess. One hundred men, almost entirely of elderly Isseis, were excitedly picking up lumber off the ground and were energetically throwing it on trucks and trailers scattered all over. ¹⁰ Loaded tractors were speeding down dusty, dirty roads with droning hums, kicking up smoke high into the air. Tractors were rushing back to the field unloaded, as if they were in a great hurry to get somewhere. Some men were raking up trash into small heaps with great enthusiasm. There was commotion and confusion all over the field. In this atmosphere I was told by F. Evans' other assistant, who had been directing the operations, to take charge of the men and to keep them constantly busy. He said, "Don't let them ease up. Keep 'em busy."

So I kept them busy all the time, keeping the vehicles scattered here, there, and all over, in order to keep all the men busy all the time. Whenever a car was not available to load, I made them clean up the trash into small piles with rakes. The work was progressing fast for about two hours. Then about 10 a.m., I began to hear grumblings and complaints here and there in Japanese. One man said, "How do they expect us to work without any drinking water around."

A few shouted, "Who do they think we are? Hell, we're no slaves. We don't have to work, if we don't want to."

Some in another part were talking aloud, "It's too hot. No use working! We're getting only six cents an hour anyway."

I breathed ominous, ugly air. Some men were leaving the field already for home. I thought that something must be done immediately and quickly, otherwise all of them would quit the work and would go home. Yet the only idea that came to my mind at the moment was to talk to these men. I moved swiftly among them. I said in polite Japanese, "I am sorry. I didn't realize how difficult it is for you to work in this heat. If you would suggest to me what changes can be made,

I am more than willing to listen. I am not here to 'slave drive' you. On the contrary, I am here to serve for you."

My pleading had little effect, although no one has left since. I realized that it was too late to retrieve the situation. The damage was done. They felt and resented that I was trying to get the most out of them in the shortest time. I could sense uneasiness and unrest among the men. I knew that they resented my "slave driving." They hated to be "suckers." They were not like the Isseis I had known before the evacuation. The Isseis I had known were all industrious, diligent, obedient and courteous people. These men were not like them. They were suspicious, ill-humored, discourteous, irritable people. I calculated that they were under severe strain and in abnormal state of mind resulting from the evacuation, as they had not fully conceived the meaning of the war and had not adjusted themselves to the new environment. They were skeptical and suspicious of me, of anything and of everything. They were oversensitive, yet they were inconsiderate of my feeling when they grumbled and complained. I knew that they thought of me as a white-man's "stooge." I also suspected that they were not working there entirely from their free will, but instead, some kind of pressure or coercion was exercised upon them. Consequently, I decided to take some immediate corrective measures:

1. I sent some young boys to the near-by kitchens for pails of drinking water.
2. I ordered the men not to rake the trash and rest between loadings.
3. I ordered them to load in much slower tempo. In other words, I tried to salvage whatever I could out of this "wreckage." I called the noon recess and decided to wait for further development.

After the lunch, I reported to the field at 1 p.m. and saw a few

people coming in slowly from all directions, but I did not see one hundred men coming back. When a roll was called a little later, I found that there were only forty-four men present including ten young truck and tractor drivers. I said to myself, "I knew this would happen. I bet those guys -- meaning those who failed to return -- are sore now. I bet they think I am 'apple polishing' white guys. I must be more careful from now on."

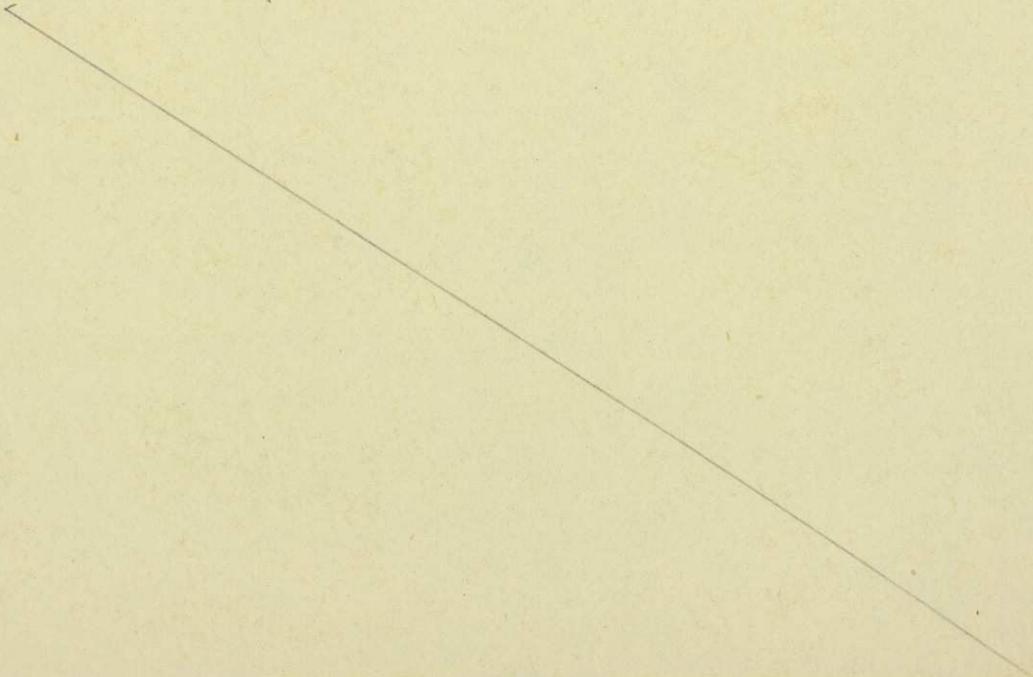
I again instructed the men:

1. To pick up lumber in a more comfortable speed.
2. To sit down and rest while the tractors are away.
3. No raking is necessary

As the result grumblings were less and far in between. I ran to this and that part of the field continually in the afternoon, worried and sick over the dissatisfied men, in order to eliminate complaints entirely.

As I called the recess for the day 4:30, a middle aged man, while walking away from me, said sarcastically and defiantly, "You mean to say we can't go home unless you say so"?

I understood the meaning and I was hurt. I was tired, too. I was so tired



and worried that I did not know whether I wanted to continue on with the job. I was disappointed and disgusted as well. On my way home, I said to myself, "I have two strikes on me, before I even get started. I am having a hell of a time and I don't deserve it."

It was fortunate that the next day was Sunday. The day gave me quiet hours to reflect upon what had taken place. I pondered, "The job is much bigger than I've anticipated. But I can't quit now. I can't fail. If I fail now, I am just rotten and no good."

I kept on in my thought, "These men are sick mentally, because they are in an unusual place under extraordinary circumstances. My past experiences of managing men of an orchard aren't quite enough to cope with the special situation. Something more must be figured. Here is a priceless chance to utilize understanding and knowledge of Isseis. Let's see what I can do."

As a tentative formula in treating the workers, who were almost entirely Isseis, I decided on the following procedures:

1. To show respect and treat them as my superiors. Never to show cockiness or discourtesy. Never to be pedantic. Always to be willing to consult them as if their advices are needed and valued.
2. To increase their faith and trust in Democracy. To help them forget unhappy experiences and unfortunate losses resulted from the evacuation.
3. To increase the spirit of cooperation among themselves and to the community.
4. To equalize by some lawful method on the field the wage differential.

(These men were to receive \$12.00 a month.)

In order to obtain the above objectives, I intended to try out, at first, the following steps;

1. To appoint two assistant foremen who would direct and supervise the operation, so that I might be free to move about among the men.
2. To carry all my conversation in Japanese, strictly in the more polite form. ¹³

3. To disregard the idea of efficiency. To forget about the amount of work to be done in a day. To let them establish their own speed. To make them rest and relax as much as they need.

Thus, on June 30, I started the morning with fresh vigor and new ambition. First, I called on two men at their apartments, who particularly attracted my attention on the first day, and asked them to act as my assistants. One was a Nisei of 22 years of age and the other an Issei of 37. I gave them explicit instructions as to what they were to do and told them what I was intending to do; and we were all set to go. As I look back retrospectively now, the selection was a happy one. They stuck with me to the end and gave me valuable assistance in carrying out all the tedious and routine duties. They were loyal to me throughout placing their faith and confidence in my sincerity and integrity. Indeed, to them much of our success is attributable.

About ten minutes before 8 a.m., two assistants and I reported to the field and waited for the people to arrive. As they began to come, I met them with a smile and "Ohayo gozaimasu". Only a few returned me a greeting friendly. The majority were still antagonistic and sullen. Some ignored me completely. I told myself, "For Christ sake, can't they see that I am trying to be their friend. Can't they see that I am going to do everything possible for their benefit."

The assistants began moving to take charge as the tractors were coming in. I was told that for the day no truck was available and instead seven tractors were assigned. "Good!" I thought, "Now the men can take it easy today."

One Fordson left with three-quarter capacity load. Another followed with a half load. All the drivers were fidgety and did not wait until the trailer was loaded to the capacity. They were anxious to get going and to keep moving. They found great enjoyment and thrill in riding tractors, as if they were newly possessed toys. Two were going down the road with the throttles wide open. They were racing the rough road, bouncing up and down, a part of the load falling

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out, scattering all over. I said to myself, "Bunch of young fools! That's Nisei for you. They are just trying to have a good time. Don't they realize that they are working for money? Why doesn't someone who is in charge of these kids bawl them out? The Fordsons won't last much longer, if they keep on treating them like that."

* * * * *

A roll call that morning revealed that there were 32 men and 7 young drivers. The assistants were busy directing the drivers where to park their vehicles. They were also helping in loading. I walked around the field and tried to be friendly with the men. Here and there I initiated conversation. I felt that I was still avoided. I suspected that they still considered me as a "stooge". When they talked to me their tone was not friendly, but peevish and glum.

Soon a tractor came back unloaded. As soon as the driver backed the trailer into a designated place, he ran to me and reported excitedly, "Hey, those guys are plenty sore."

"What guys?" I asked.

"You know, those guys unloading out there. Only two guys out there this morning!" said he.

"Yeah? I didn't know where you fellows were taking the loads. ^{all} Alright! I will go down there and will find out what the trouble is," I replied.

More trouble! I hopped on the first tractor going out of the field.

This was the first time I learned that the lumber was unloaded west of proposed "L" Street, approximately one quarter of a mile due west of Block 42. ¹⁴ As I arrived there, I saw two men frantically unloading -- perspiration running down their faces and their shirts dripping wet. Moreover, there were two tractors waiting in line for unloading. When I stopped them and asked, they were too eager to expound their grievances. Those were as follows:

1. There were some 15 men working on the first day. They were from Block 43. They believed it was useless to return to the work, as there was no one to take

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their attendance.

2. The pace of the work was too fast. The tractors were coming in too frequently.

3. There was no drinking water available.

As a reply, I informed these men that:

1. I had no idea that I was to take charge of the unloading crew. I was under the impression that I was responsible only for the loading men. In fact, F told me to do just that. From now on, I would be around regularly to check their attendance. I would see to it that the due credit would be given to the men who worked on the first day. I would see the manager of Block 43 and would ask him to get the men back. Meanwhile, they should pass the word around that we need more men.

2. They should set their own pace or speed of work, ignoring the tractors waiting in line.

3. They would be supplied with drinking water immediately.

Accordingly, on the way back, I arranged for more men and drinking water.

When I returned to the loading field, the Boyle Height Isseis of Block 45 about five in number, were complaining that the weather was "Too hot to suit" them and that they had never "intended to stoop down to this low-down labor."

One of them said, "This is a kind of work for the Mexicans."

About 15 men, all elderly Isseis from a "bachelors' barrack" in Block 37, were talking aloud in a group to themselves, working entirely apart from the others. As soon as I approached them, their conversation ceased. I felt insulted; I felt like revolting. Yet I was curious and wanted to find out what they had been discussing. By some roundabout inquiries, I learned from others, who were in the vicinity, that the topics of their conversation were as follows:

1. They were involuntary evacuees. No one could compel them to work.

2. They doubted if they would be paid for their service.

3. Their manager told them that this work was to last only a day or two. On the contrary, they had observed and calculated that they could not possibly finish it even in ten days. They resented the idea that they had been tricked into this work by some premeditated scheming. They expressed that if it was for one day or two, they would not mind, but not for ten days.

4. It was too hot to suit them. (It was about 10:30 A.M. The temperature was about 110° F.) ^{V5}

I knew then that I had lost these men -- the city people and the bachelors. I was disappointed that they would not give me a chance. On the other hand, I was contemptuous and scornful of them. I thought that they were unduly susceptible and provocative. I was determined now to go on without them.

Just before the noon, a Nisei driver reported that a sharply pointed scrap pierced through one of the rear traction tires of his Fordson. As I did not know where to report the puncture, I said to him, "Go and find the fellow who gave the key to you."

In the afternoon only 14 men reported to the work. I wondered if I were to lose everyone of them by the next morning. The Issei assistant was worried, too, and said, "Did you notice few men were resting, although you told them to take it easy? You know what's the trouble? They say that they can't sit down and rest while others are working busily nearby. They feel out of place. They don't feel 'right' to sit down just themselves. Why don't you give all of them rest at the same time. Usually the fellows who don't sit down and keep on working are ones who grumble the most."

"All right. I will try anything once," I said to him, "Give them 15 minutes rest every hour on the hour. Take them to a shady place and let them relax."

We tried the new system and we soon found out that the men liked it. ^{V6}

If it was not one thing, it was always something else. One tractor was disabled on account of distributor trouble caused by excessive dust. Another

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tractor was gone due to a punctured rear tire, again from the same cause.

About 4 o'clock Frasier[✓] drove down to the field and inquired of a man as to the whereabouts of his foreman, who, in turn, pointed me out and called me.

"You have to take care of the tractors more carefully. Each puncture costs the government more than \$60; besides, the tire must be sent all the way to Los Angeles for repair," said he excitedly.

I said, "Who are you anyway? And what do you mean by that I must take care of the tractors. I have no authority over the drivers. They are sent by somebody I don't know."

"I am in charge of all the equipment in the camp and those tractors were assigned to you," said he.

"But I've never seen you before. Why didn't you tell me at the beginning. Then I could have told those boys a few things," I retorted.

After a little consultation over the existing condition, Frasier and I agreed on the following points:

1. The driver is to be warned.
2. If the warning is not heeded, he must be discharged.

I warned all the drivers to handle their tractors more carefully. I warned them that reckless driving would not be tolerated and that the speed limit of 10 miles per hour should be strictly observed. I added that if they should disobey the regulations, they would be placed on the blacklist, which would bar them from any position involving driving of vehicles.

* * * * *

About fifteen minutes later, another Caucasian appeared in a coupe. This time a fat, chubby, red-faced old man. (This was my first meeting with Mr. Barbour.)

"Now, what does he want?" I wondered.

"Well, how many men you got here working?" he asked.

"Nineteen, sir."

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"Nineteen? Why don't you get more men? There are lots of men sitting on their asses all over the camp. Why don't you get 'em? You should have at least a couple of hundred out here," said he optimistically.

"A couple of hundred? Like hell! Just try and get those guys sitting ^{on} their asses, and see how far you can get with that," I thought.

Instead, I said to him, "I certainly would be glad to have more men, but I am kept busy here and can't get around to that. Will you see if you can get some more men for me?"

"All right. I will see what I can do for you." said Mr. Barbour.

I did not know what happened subsequently, but that was the last time the subject of getting more men was brought up by Barbour. I did not get even a single man through his effort.

That night, I met Evans at the intake station and received his assurance that the work was officially recognized and the men would be paid for their service. As to recruiting more men, I was advised to contact various Block Managers.

On June 30, I found a little encouragement in finding 21 men and five drivers. I could sense that the situation was eased on the field. I could hear laughter now and then for the first time. The men were rested on the hour as the day before, as this procedure was bringing in the result desired.

When I went to the unloading ground, there were eight men present, an increase of three. They were busily building a shanty hut under a big mesquite tree, utilizing scrap lumber and torn roofing paper. They told me that they divided themselves into three units; and each unit was to take turn in unloading. They were to rest between the unloading operations under the shade. (The hut was enlarged from time to time, and at the end it was large enough to house forty people.) I was amused to observe the method, which I had tried with the loading crew and failed, was more acceptable here.

I thought this was a good opening to talk to these men. I commended them for

their idea and added, "We don't need to work any more than we are physically able. We don't need to exhaust ourselves. The white men in this project are not our enemies. On the contrary, they are trying everything possible for our benefit. They want to see that we are willing to cooperate with them."

This was one of my favorite themes and was repeated to them often in the ensuing days.

Late in the afternoon, when the men were resting in a shady place, Frasier was coming down the road. They noticed him and began to get up. I said to them, "Never mind the white man. Just keep on resting. I am the one responsible for you people."

When I walked up to him, Frasier asked me, "Say, how come those men are sitting down?"

"Well, they are fagged out. They need rest," I replied.

"Yes, but it doesn't look so good. Looks as if they are on a 'sit-down' strike. Why don't you rest them a few at a time?" said the overseer.

"All right," I answered reluctantly.

And to myself I said, "Hell with looks! Suppose it looks like a sit-down strike. So what?"

This was one of the orders I intentionally disobeyed. I was convinced by this time that it was better to rest the loading crew as a body. Moreover, I wanted to sit with them and talk to them all at one time.

Then Frasier brought up the subject of tractors. He told me that:

1. Two young Niseis of another crew were racing with their tractors and collided with each other. The extent of damage was one smashed radiator, one bent axle and two torn front tires.

2. As soon as my drivers got out of my sight, they were driving too fast and recklessly.

3. The Engineering Department was seriously considering taking all tractors

away from the Japanese, as evidences of careless and negligent handling were mounting and avoidable and unnecessary damages were piling up.

- 4. That some immediate steps should be taken in addition to warnings.

We agreed that the best solution would be to hire a foreman to take charge of the tractors and drivers. I told him that I knew just the man.

That evening, I sought out a Nisei of 22 years of age, who had considerable experience in operating such equipment on his farm and had knowledge of the mechanism, I knew him as a serious minded young man, to whom such responsibilities could be entrusted. After a lengthy discussion on the state of affairs, we decided to take the following steps as remedies:

- 1. To assign a tractor to each driver and to let him be responsible for the same machine every day.
- 2. To order every driver to take the same route between the two points.
- 3. The tractor foreman would ride with different drivers constantly and would check the movements of others.
- 4. We should discharge the boys of ages 15-17 and should substitute with older men. This meant that we must discharge 3 boys.

The young foreman reported to me the next morning and began to put the above steps into practice. Thanks to his ceaseless efforts, we were free from accidents and damages since them, except for three minor repairs.

About two days later, when I met in the Administration Building Mr. Rupkey, Chief Engineer, he threatened vehemently that the department had decided upon taking all equipment away from Japanese and substituting with Caucasian workers. Knowing the alarming condition then existed, I did not think he was bluffing. I thought he meant what he said. I explained to him the measures I had taken and advised him that we should be given a chance to prove that we could cope with it. I recommended to him that the similar steps should be taken with other crews. I told him that we were in the weeding-out process. It was impossible then to distinguish

capable drivers from incapable ones until one actually had seen them in operation. I promised him that we would soon see calmer settled days after this transitional period. Mr. Rupkey was impressed and said that he would wait and see.

Since that day the condition improved gradually. The alarming situation was corrected and all the tractors, including heavy-duty types, are operated by Japanese at present.

On July 4, the Firebreak and Recreational Area (area marked as 'a' on the map) was finally raked up and cleaned. Now it was the question of burning the trash. But it was too dangerous for a small group of men to undertake.

1. Huge quantities of highly inflammable dry trash were scattered all over the area; in some parts densely heaped up, in another part too close (20 feet) to the combustible barracks fabricated with tar paper.

2. Gale and whirl wind, which were of daily occurrence, complicated the question of burning.

I thought, "If we only had the assistance from the boys of the Recreation Department and the firemen. Why not? This area belongs to the Recreation Department, anyway. They have about 150 boys, who aren't doing anything. Firemen? Sure! All they do is play baseball."

CHAPTER V

BUREAUCRACY

The "firebreak gang" dwindled from a group of 109 men at the beginning to that of 25 now. ¹⁸ This was the gang with which I must go on. They completed so far only about 20% of the assignment, which meant there was easily one month's work ahead. I believed that I could not afford to lose any more men if we were to go on. I realized that some stabilizing influence must be exerted upon the men, as it was too easy and too free to come and go; I must make them realize that they were the members of a recognized project. I must make them feel the sense of duty and of obligation to the work. My "talks" were not showing much result; I knew the "education" was a slow process. I thought that the best idea might be to issue work cards to them through the Employment Office. I believed that:

1. It would give the crew an official status.
2. Each man with a card would feel that this was his regular job.

Therefore, I wrote a memorandum addressed to Evans and accompanied with a time sheet of the men for the past seven days. The note set forth the following recommendations:

1. To advise the Recreation Department and the Fire Department to assist in burning the trash on the field.
2. To issue work cards to the members of the crew,
3. To forward the time sheet to the accounting department.

The following points were agreed upon between Evans and Rupkey, who were called into the consultation:

1. The Recreation Department was composed mostly of boys of teen age, who were being accused as irresponsible "smart alecks". However, Evans promised that he would induce Dr. Powell ¹⁹ strongly for the cause. Meantime,
2. I was to see the chief of the Fire Department.
3. The Employment Office would be requested to supply the work cards.

On the way back, I consulted the Japanese Fire Chief, with a letter of introduction from Evans and stressed the importance of assistance from his department. His refusal to my request was disturbing, yet his reasons were amusing. The reasons were as follows:

- 1. His duty to "put fire out", not to "set fire".
- 2. If he had done something besides what his duty called for, he would soon be asked to pick up garbage.
- 3. The department was undermanned.

I was certain that there was no hope of getting his aid and no use of urging further. I thought I would wait until further instruction from the Engineering Department, to which we were officially assigned in the conference.

On July 6, I informed my crew of 25 men the details of the conference. I told them that they were henceforth officially known as the "Fire-break Cleaning" crew. I demanded that if any one had any objection, he should leave right then. Among them a lengthy discussion followed, which might be summarized as follows:

- 1. Their physical condition would not allow them to work full eight hours continuously.
- 2. Yet, they did not wish to work à la "W. P. A."
- 3. They would expend their best efforts, but they should be provided with rest periods, as before.

Questions were asked if some "white guy" were to supervise their work on the field. It was obvious that they were afraid that some Caucasian would come along and would do "slave-driving." This fear and dread were apparent in later developments, treated elsewhere in this report.²⁰ All the men consented to continue with my assurance that I had the full responsibility and that it was I who would set any policy concerning them.

With the crew and the equipment, I moved to the area near block 53 and

block 60. ²¹ Having learned that many persons would not object to working for a short duration and for some purpose which they could believe obviously that it was for their own benefit, I sent my assistants to the Block Managers of Quad 9 ²² to solicit temporary workers. I instructed them to convey the idea that the work would require only three days and that we would move to another field unless they would assist us, which would mean no irrigation water for them. This strategy of duress had a desired effect only in Block 59, which sent 7 men on the first day, 14 on the second and 10 on the third. These volunteers intermingled with the regular men, working at the same comfortable speed and with the frequent rest periods -- radically different from the situation when I undertook the job on the first day. Upon my suggestion, they built a hut, very much like that of the unloading crew, where they could rest. Although thermometer read as high as 125° F., about 10° higher now, ²³ the men showed neither dismay nor dread of the work, except minor, occasional comments about the weather or food, of which I had no control. They were more restful and more satisfied men than the ones who had quit on me in the early days. In fact, after they were excused after three days of work, they came back one by one asking for permanent status. They said that they wanted to work for me, because they liked the way I handled the men and because they liked the way the work was arranged. At the end I had six men from Block 59 working with me on their own accord.

In the afternoon of July 7, a new Caucasian came to see me. He said his name was Meecham, just detailed from San Carlos. He told me that he was to act as a supervisor over us and that he would spend the most of time with us as this was the only assignment he had. This was contrary to what I had promised to the men. Up to this time, there was no Caucasian on the field, except that I talked to Barbour twice and to Frasier three times. I was resentful in my mind, for all this time when I was having troubles, there was no one to help me and now when I have better control over the men and the situation, this man was here to boss me.

Meecham had in his hand the time sheet, which I had handed to Evans. He informed me that it was returned by the time keeper and was not to be honored. He advised me to see Palmer immediately.

When I went to the accounting office and inquired Palmer of the reasons for his decision, he said, "Well, these Japs worked as volunteers, didn't they? That means they didn't have work cards. We can't pay any wages to guys who worked without the cards. That's the rule here and I can't do anything about it."

I was angry. I thought, "My men were tricked into working by a false promise of financial return. Now this guy is refusing to pay the due compensation. That's treachery! They just wanted my men to work for nothing. They just wanted to exploit them without any intention of paying wages."

I said to myself, "God damn it! So we are Japs, are we? Ignorant bastard!"

It was difficult to keep my composure, when I said to him, "Mr. Evans promised us that we are going to be paid for what we were doing, although we don't have work cards."

He replied excitedly, "Mr. Evans doesn't set the policy of this department He can't make promises like that without our knowledge."

I thought there was no use in arguing any further.

I left the building and looked around for Evans, but he was not in his office.

"Something must be done quickly. I must get the work cards right away. Otherwise, they would be working for nothing," I thought.

I walked to the Employment Office. There was no one but an errand boy in the office. He told me that since Miss ²⁴Mahn was absent I should see the Japanese head, T., who was in conference and could not be disturbed. I waited. I waited for 45 minutes. Meanwhile, my anger was aggravated by every minute of waiting, by reflecting the things that had taken place in the afternoon. When I met T. and explained my predicament, he informed me in much aloof and detached manner that

he could issue the cards, but it was necessary to bring the men in for interviews; that he had no authority to honor their time previous to the issuance. I argued with him for sometime. I was losing patience at the same time. Finally he decided to take me to Miss Findley, who had been presiding over the conference just concluded. When I explained the whole thing all over again, she was silent and meditated. Then she turned to T and said, "It is not courteous to order these men to come in the office (for the interview)." Then looking at my time sheet, "Look at the ages of these men! 59! 66! 62! If it is necessary for you to interview them, you must go to them instead. I know that is against the rule here. But, Mr. T. rules are made to be broken."

Then she turned to me and said in a deliberate tone, "You are doing wonderful work. Do you know, Mr. Nishimoto, we are all judged by our deeds, not by our words?" She went on, "Don't be afraid to do anything which you are certain you are right. Keep on with your good work. Don't worry about the time sheet. I'll take care of it for you."

"What encouraging words!" I thought, "What a grand lady! She's got lots of common sense."

Although this was the only occasion to meet her and she may not remember me now, I think dearly of her as a grand lady who gave me kind words when I needed them most. I always talked reverently of her to my men, although I never mentioned this incident, which would have created more distrust toward the administration.

It was the next morning -- the morning of July 8. There was a little excitement, while I was with the unloading crew on the other side of the creek. According to one middle-aged Issei, Meecham came to the field and began instructing the men how to use rakes, how to make small piles of trash, etc. The men resented these elementary instructions and one of them shouted to him, "For Christ sake! What do you think we are? Bunch of kids? You getta hell out of here!"

To this the younger men chimed in and Meecham left.

One Hawaiian Nisei came to me and supplied me with another version. He said, "That son of bitch tried to tell us how to hold a rake. So we told him, 'You want us to clean this field, or don't you? You better shut up and getta hell out of here.' "

That was all I learned about the matter; but, since then, Meecham did not stay on the field any longer than necessary to exchange a few words with me in the morning.

On July 9, an order came from the Engineering Department that we must burn the trash in the areas -- (a) and (b) on the map -- without any aid from other departments. I assembled the crew together and explained the order and the situation. I knew that the task was quite dangerous and must be done early in the morning before the wind came out. Yet, I did not wish to give any definite order to them; instead, I wanted them to say from their own initiative that they would come out early in the morning and would undertake the task. So I emphasized the danger involved and lack of outside assistance and told them that it was not necessary for them to do it, if they thought it was beyond their capacity. Without hesitation after my discourse, some of them offered their service and promised me that they would report to work at 4 o'clock in the morning. I was elated that they started "the ball rolling." The rest all agreed willingly to the suggestion and they accomplished the assignment the next morning, firmly believing that they were doing something of their own accord.

The fire was so extensive, so fierce, and so tense that some soldiers rushed down from Camp II. Some residents of Block 36 came out in pajamas and nightgowns and complained that they were being "roasted." I remember a worried look on Evans' face, who had been awakened by the crimson sky and the crackling sounds and ran down to the field. He stood with me for a long time, murmuring anxiously to the fire, "Woa! Take it easy! Take it easy, will you?"

While I was conversing with him, I said unintentionally, "The code of conduct at Poston -- No. 1 -- the path of the least resistance is to do nothing yourself and to expect nobody to do anything for you."

He was, no doubt, irritated by this statement, as he reminded me of it on two subsequent occasions. However, it represented my sentiment at the time, because every person I came in contact officially lacked the spirit of cooperation and was doing the least that his duty called for and no more.

When we were getting off duty at noon that day, Frasier came and asked me if I could take care of a little field near Block 22 next morning, as it would require only a day and lumber piles were in the way of Caterpillars leveling nearby. It so happened that this was another occasion to learn another lesson regarding the administrative set-up at Poston. It was the first time that I discovered an evidence of friction and jealousy existing among the Caucasian staff.

In the morning of July 11, when we began working on the field -- the area (c) -- Meecham came to see me. I could observe that he was cross and angry. I failed to ascertain why. "Who told you to work out here?" he said in an unfriendly, ugly tone.

"Frasier asked me yesterday to come over here," I replied.

"You can't do that. I am your boss; Frasier's got nothing to do with you," he retorted.

I was offended by his statement and his tone. I replied, "Hell, no one is my boss. If anyone were my boss, that's Evans."

Soon afterward, Meecham drove away in flurry; and entered on the scene Frasier, to whom I explained what had happened. While we were still talking, Meecham reappeared from nowhere and began addressing Frasier. Meecham was indignant and raging with anger; Frasier was anticipating what to come. "Well, there's no use of both of us taking charge of this crew, is there?" he opened with biting, sarcastic vein.

I walked away in a hurry, but it was apparent that heated arguments followed. I shall not go into the details of their conversation or of their previous relationship. I merely wish to add that I am informed on a good authority that this was not an isolated case of the kind.

There was another occasion on which Miss Mahn and I disagreed sharply as to the authority of my hiring and discharging of men. However, it is another repetitious example of bureaucratic incompetency and it is, therefore, omitted here.

As days passed, the crew began to show a sign of unity and cohesion. Seven men from Block 59 were added to the regular staff and were assimilated. Meanwhile, I continued with my "lecture" which was not a formal speech but common gossip tinted with a theme or themes of some ultimate purpose. I was always careful to avoid the form of "sermon." I was always anxious and cautious to attain the highest degree of casualness, so that the men would not suspect me of my ulterior motive, because I was certain that they would be resistant to lectures and sermons in their pure and naked form. Hence, my favorite medium was recounting of my personal experiences, true or fictitious. In addition to the theme on the cooperative spirit, described previously, I had another topic among my repertoire. This was, "There is so much talk going on in the camp about our status under the international law. After all, we are the subjects of an enemy nation. However, much we agitate and complain under the code, we would not find ourselves back in California right now. Let's try to be happy here. And that happiness is attained by keeping ourselves busy in some gainful work and by doing the work well."

This theme was most effective when the men were talking about a certain N (N = Nagai) in Block 3, who was known as an avowed "agitator" and a "soap-box" orator of the first magnitude. This was at the time when they were arguing pro and con on the question of the attempted eviction of N from the block and of the petition circulated/signed by his co-residents for the purpose.

Another topic was like this: "The American government is spending an enormous amount of money for the project. But they are doing it for our protection and for

our benefit. Suppose they said, 'Get out of California. Do as you please in other states. We can't look after you.' Then, where would we have been?

Toward the end of July, it was getting noticeable that the men developed some sense of obligation to this community and willingness to serve for its welfare and benefit, due either to the changing trend of the general sentiment or to my effort. It was about this time that we were called upon to collect rubbish in order to relieve then existing alarming condition. Subsequently, after the regular hour as an emergency duty, we were called three times in rubbish service and once for collecting 3 - 5 days old garbage. Even on these occasions, I had the least difficulty in soliciting volunteers among ourselves. They were not only anxious to serve, but also eager to do the work well. It was a remarkable change in their mental attitude in contrast to that of the days gone by.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEN

At this point, it may be well to discuss some characteristics of the men who comprised the "firebreak gang."

Two days after my meeting with Miss Findley at the Employment Office, I brought the work cards to the field and with much dignified and histrionic air, he distributed them. He emphasized that he was taking this "very unusual and irregular" procedure in recognition and in appreciation of their "meritorious" spirit and service. There was no doubt that the men were greatly impressed by his words and felt flattered. And I was appreciative of his theatrical gestures, too.

With said addition of men from Block 59, the crew expanded to that of 33 men. It is this group of 33 men, of which the following statistical studies were made. It is also mentioned, in passing, that the identical characteristics and proportionate distributions would have been discovered and prevailed if the original group of 109 men were subjected to the same studies. There was, of course, a minor fluctuation in the enrollment later which, however, was of an inconsequential nature.

As shown in Table II, two thirds of the crew were Isseis -- those who had spent their younger days in Japan, and since then migrated to this country. The age distribution of the Isseis was 37 - 66, which represents about 90% of the age group 30 - 66. That is to say, all men older than 30 were Isseis, except three. They comprised the groups 40 - 49, 50 - 59, and over 60. The educational background of the Isseis, however, was much lower than those of the other groups -- two university graduates, one "Chugaku"²⁵ educated, and the rest only with the elementary school diplomas. Thus, in Table V, all of 19 men listed as "Elementary School Graduates" were Isseis. In Table VI, all, except one, listed under "Farmer", "Farm Migratory Laborer", and "Gardener" were Isseis. One could say, therefore, that they lived among themselves in the rural district and had had very little

TABLE I

Distribution by Residence

Block	No.
2	2
12	7
37	2
43	12
45	3
54	1
59	<u>6</u>
Total	33

TABLE II

Distribution by Intraracial Classification

Classification	No.	Percentage
Issei	22	67%
Kibei	3	9%
Hawaiian Nisei.....	3	9%
Continental Nisei.....	<u>5</u>	15%
Total	33	

TABLE III

Distribution by Former Residence

District	No.	Percentage
Urban	9	27%
Rural	<u>24</u>	73%
Total	33	

TABLE IV

Distribution by Age

Age Group	No.	Percentage
19 or younger.....	2.....	6%
20 - 29.....	6.....	18%
30 - 39.....	6.....	18%
40 - 49.....	4.....	12%
50 - 59.....	9.....	28%
Over 60.....	<u>6</u>	18%
Total.....	33	

The youngest 17
 The oldest 66
 The average age ... 44

TABLE V

Distribution by Education

School	No.	Percentage
College Graduate or Education	4	12%
High School (or Jap. Equiv.) Grad.....	10	30%
Elementary School (or Jap. Equiv.) Grad.....	<u>19</u>	58%
Total	33	

TABLE VI

Distribution by Former Occupation

Occupation	No.	Percentage
Merchant	4	12%
Commercial Employee	4	12%
Farmers	12	37%
Farm Migratory Laborer.....	8	24%
Gardener.....	2	6%
Resident Farm Laborer	<u>3</u>	9%
Total.....	33	

contact with the white Americans and the American culture. Only four of all the Isseis showed any ability to carry daily conversation in English to some degree. The rest of them were unable to either understand or make themselves understood in English. In other words, they were illiterate with respect to English -- although they had fair command of Japanese in reading and writing. In their speech in Japanese, the majority used their respective dialect with their provincial enunciation and intonation -- the standard form of Japanese being entirely absent except in two.

Three men listed under "Kibei" column, in Table II, were those who spent 5 - 10 years of their adolescent age in Japan. They had been subjected to the Japanese culture and had been trained in the Japanese habits and customs. Their records invariably revealed that, although they did not attend school in the United States, they had 1 - 3 years of "Chugaku" education. Therefore, their knowledge of English was limited and their vocabulary was of daily conversational variety. They had strong accent in them and were hesistant to speak English. Previous to the evacuation, they were employed by the Japanese and lived among the Japanese. That is to say, they had little contact with Americans and American ways of life. Their reading matters were in Japanese and their thinking was done in Japanese; eg. when they do a mental caluclation, they do it in terms of "ichi, ni, san" instead of "one, two, three." It is interesting to note that they spoke better Japanese than the farmers or the farm migratory laborers -- better in form and freer from dialect or provincial intonation. They had inclination to respect and to be considerate of the older people. They addressed them in the polite, reverential form of the language irrespective of the appearance, the cultural background, or the station of life. ²⁶

Three American-Japanese, born in the Hawaiian Islands, were reared in the vicinity of Hilo, T. H., where the Japanese culture is prevalent. In the early twenties, they had migrated to the continental United States and found themselves again among the Japanese. Their ages were 34, 38, and 39 respectively. Their characteristics were similar to those of the Kibeis, but milder and less accentuated. Their education

varied from 2 years in high school to one year in a university. They spoke more fluent English with wider vocabulary, although with the accent typical of the people. They have had more contacts with the white Americans and were more appreciative of the American civilization. They spoke Japanese well without any trace of accent, although their form was crude and rough and their vocabulary was limited.

The Niseis, five in number, were high school graduates, without exception -- one with one year of Junior College training. The age distribution was 17 - 23. They were all evacuees from the rural district, where they had been helping on the farms, which their family owned. They had lived outside of the school hours, entirely with their family or with the older Japanese. Although the exact data are not available, it was evident that they had some systematic Japanese training, through a Japanese language school or otherwise. They were able to converse freely with the older Isseis and to intermingle with them, although at the early stage of our work, they formed a clique with themselves. They gathered apart from the others and conversed entirely in English, as their duty was distinct from that of the Isseis. Later, however, as they handled axes and shovels in a group with the Isseis, they developed comradeship with them and the trace of clique disappeared. It is interesting to note that this comradeship was imbued in some degree with the Japanese patriarchal conception. The young boys were considerate of the older men; always willing to go out of their way to assist them. They were often the target of "joshings" and "kiddings," some of them, I thought were crude and sarcastic, but they took them in good humor and responded in friendly retorts. Even in a friendly argument on such a timely topic as the cooperative store, they were willing to argue to a certain limit and no more, beyond which they did not stick to their point doggedly and stubbornly. Their friendship with the other groups developed to such an extent that they were together on numerous weekend fishing trips. It is my observation that the characteristics found in the Niseis were more similar to those of the Isseis and their background was under greater Japanese

influence than that of the urban Niseis whom I knew. This simplified the matter of breaking down the barrier between the two generations.

It is not difficult, therefore, to understand that the crew developed into a solid, homogeneous, and congenial group. Their ties were strong, irrespective of whether they were from urban or rural district and of whether young or old. During eighty days together, there was not even a trace of friction nor any occasion for quarrel among themselves. As far as I could ascertain from different members, there was no ill feeling between any two of them. Even the men²⁸ who joined the crew after they had had quarrels or disputes elsewhere, were easily assimilated and stuck to the end. They worked hard and enthusiastically. They did not create any problem that I was forewarned.

The satisfactory relationship was general. They were so well satisfied with each other that they were greatly disappointed, when the disbanding of the crew was announced in September. I believe that the high attendance record²⁹ and the commendable accomplishment attained by the crew, despite the extreme heat, was largely attributable to this congenial friendship.

Due to the dominance of the Issei elements, the crew as a whole displayed "Japanesey" characteristics collectively. They worked hard, intermingled with short rest periods at frequent intervals. They wanted to relax completely during the rest periods. They resumed the work after the period without any external coercion or persuasion, which they detested. They wanted to be told only what was to be done and what purpose was to be served therefrom. They wanted to use their own initiatives and experiences to determine what method or procedure was to be taken in order to accomplish the assignment. They were obedient, yet they resented to be told how to work in minute details. This was the aspect of which Meecham was ignorant and which resulted in the abusive remarks to him. In other words, they were hateful of any "nosey, meddling, overbearing boss." They were sensitive about their belief that their intelligence, ability, and experience were as good as those of any other race.

They were proud in the belief that they were the most industrious and diligent people as a race, or as a generation.

Once when we were discussing the shortage of green vegetables in our kitchens, many of the men remarked, "With the Japanese gone, that is to be expected. That's what happens when they have kicked the Japanese farmers out."

On another occasion, when I mentioned that the Mexican labor was to be imported into California, they expressed, "Those guys can't take our place. They don't work as hard as we do. They don't know how to raise vegetables."

At another time, when we were discussing the shortage of farm labor everywhere, some said, "War or not war, we'll be back in California next year. They need us there."

It is true that I took the advantage of these "weaknesses" and exploited them to the full extent to obtain the result.

It was apparent, as the reader would have foreseen, that the group was backward in understanding and appreciation of the American government and the principles, yet they were neither defiant nor antagonistic. They were simply ignorant. Only two of the Isseis had any faint idea of what the Bill of Rights is. Even though there was neither restraint nor restriction as to the topic of their conversation, there was not even one utterance which might be deemed detrimental or disloyal to the American government. It was a consensus of their opinions that this was the best country to live in and that they were thankful for comfortable life and living which they had been provided with in America. They were, in other words, appreciative of their material gains in America. They did not possess the capacity to appreciate the abstract phase of Americanism.

On the other hand, they were critical and suspicious toward the administration and the staff at Poston. They placed credence without any examination in the story of alleged graft by Mr. Best. They did not doubt that the hospital was killing the Japanese. They thought that they were discriminated by them in favor of the Niseis in the Administration Buildings. They thought that the white men

were "slave drivers."³⁰ This was the problem which I endeavored to combat most vigorously. I expended every effort and every mean to alleviate the skepticism and the suspicion. I believed that I was successful in my attempt until When my crew failed to receive their wages which were due to them, they were again outspokenly suspicious and resentful (discussed in the succeeding chapter). They suspected that somebody in the accounting department was manipulating the books and was embezzling the wage payments due to them. I felt as if I lost all the ground which I had gained, and I was disillusioned that my efforts were all in vain due to the counteractive and destructive effect of the administrative carelessness and inefficiency.

The Isseis were inherently gentle people -- mature in their thought and conservative in their reaction. These qualities were manifested collectively, too, as a crew. Yet they have shown tendency to be provoked by such an inconsequential pretext as by some person showing overbearing authority. This defect was more remarkable among the urban evacuees, especially ones with higher education. Yet, this excitement was of short duration; they cooled off and became gentle quickly. It is also interesting to add that it was the Isseis of the migratory farm group with the least education who exerted a soothing and counterbalancing effect upon these men.

It was the morning of July 20, when we set fire on the field adjoining Block 43 (area d). The Japanese Fire Chief, N., came running down and questioned me if I had a permit to burn. Knowing that this was a part of our regular routine, I did not feel necessary to go through the "red tape" and told him so. N. began to scold and chide me, which I felt was obnoxiously arrogant. Meantime, Frank M., a Block Manager, appeared on the field hanging on to a dump truck with heaping load of papers and trash, which was driven by a boy of small frail stature, who appeared to be about 15. I understood that at the time the rubbish collection service was suspended and the accumulated trash created a serious problem to the Blocks. In order to relieve the problem, M, had borrowed the truck and loaded the trash with

his block residents' aid. He intended to burn them where we were working.

Just as soon as the chief noticed M. with his load, he stormed down to him. "You can't dump 'em here!" the chief shouted.

"What'ya mean I can't dump 'em here?" M. returned angrily.

The rage and excitedness between the two gained momentum.

The chief's argument was There was a place provided in camp for burning trash. Any burning was prohibited without a permit. All the rules must be strictly observed.

The manager's point was The rubbish situation was dangerously menacing the sanitary welfare. It was safe, as thirty odd men were working in the field.

M. shouted to the little driver, "Dump it! Go ahead! Dump it!"

N. yelled with rage, "Go on! Drive on!"

These contrary orders were screamed to the boy continuously. Poor kid! The little boy did not know what to do and sat in the cab "dumb-struck" and "punch-drunk."

Simultaneously, my crew was gathering around and was getting nervous and excited themselves. They began to involve themselves in the heated argument on the manager's side. Someone shrieked in Japanese, "God damn it! The young punk's cocky, He's arrogant! Let's beat him up. That's the only way to teach him. Come on, let's beat him up."

Others took up the chant, "Let's beat him up!"

I was convinced that a mob violence would have resulted if the chief had not sensed the tenseness and had not driven away with the boy in the dump truck. I knew that I would not have done anything to prevent it in view of my previous experiences with the chief. It was fortunate that he could sense the ugly atmosphere, as I was informed later that he could not understand Japanese beyond "nagure!" Subsequently, I inquired my men if they understood what the chief said, as he spoke in English so fast and so nervously. They informed that they did not understand much

more than "drive on." They resented his arrogant and overbearing manner. Soon afterward, some Isseis ... farm migratory laborers ... began to imitate comically the perplexity and bewilderment of the little driver in the dilemma; and others joined in laughter. Thus the crew regained calmness and composure.

Events must have taken place fast later in the day. A new order was announced by the administration in the same day to the effect that it would be permissible henceforth to burn trash before 10 a.m. and 150 feet clear of any object.

The men were steady and persistent, once they had started. They showed unusual stamina and perseverance in the heat of 120° - 128° F. (An unofficial temperature reading was as high as 145° in the open.) Even though they were benefited with frequent rests, the work required tenacious determination mentally and exhaustive effort physically. Yet all the members, except five, once they had joined the crew, remained to the end. One left to take charge of the sanitary detail. Two men were transferred, by the request of their managers, to the farming in their respective Block. Two young Niseis went to operate Caterpillars after the tractors for our use had been reduced to two and their service was no longer needed.

The record of attendance was excellent, as a study of the graph, attached elsewhere, would indicate. On the same chart, it is reported that on any one day there were no more than three absentees, the lowest point of the percentage curve being 90%. For 30 days out of 59, the record was perfect; that is, without an absentee. It is also noted therein that the frequency of the curve increases after August 11. This is explained by the fact that cases of illness or of illness in their family were reported. Another interesting fact is that the low points on the percentage curve occur on Thursdays at the earlier period and on Mondays later. I failed to discover any explanation beyond a statement by some ... "That's about the time you get a little tired and feel like taking a day off." The latter feature, especially for the last two weeks is accounted by the fact that the cooler weather was conducive to more vigorous outdoor activities on the week-ends.

It is my belief that the rate or the amount of compensation, that is, \$12.00 per month, did not have any effect upon them. They thought they were compensated for the wage differential by my special treatments such as providing the rest periods, supplying sandwiches, etc. The people, of course, commented on the low wages, but in good humor and jokingly. The following expressions were common among them:

"Say, you are working at one-dollar-an-hour speed." Or at the end of a day, "Well, I've earned fifty cents today."

The only time a monetary matter might have had some effect upon the men was an incident when the majority of the crew failed to receive the correct wage payments for the month of July and expressed their disgust and dissatisfaction on the field. One extremist said, "What's the use of working steady? Even if you work a full month, they won't pay a full wage anyway."

One could say, therefore, that the fluctuations of the curve for August 27 - September 3 are probably accounted by the resultant reactions from this administrative incompetency, although I am inclined to minimize such effort, judging from my own sentiment and experience under a similar circumstance.³¹

The people in my charge spoke of the Niseis hatefully, belittlingly, and abusively, whenever some young men were passing in shiny sedans. Some expressed their displeasure, "The young punk is acting important."

One well-educated Issei was more emphatic, "They are getting cocky, just because they are being patronized by the 'Ketoos'."³²

The vexation was more widespread, pungent, and serious, when a car was kicking up dust so badly as to envelope the workers with its smoke. It found expressions in more pugnacious form: "Let's drag him out! Let's beat him up!" Yet the tone was of reproachfulness and condemnation, rather than of criminal premeditation.³³

A few found a source of irritation in the trousers some Niseis were wearing --

they were odious of any other kind of trousers but "blue jeans."

These hateful feelings were general, in more or less degree, among the Isseis, Kibeis and the Hawaiian Japanese. They were stronger, however, among the age group 35 - 55 and more outspoken among the men of higher educational background and of urban extraction. Even my Niseis occasionally shared the sentiment and were critical of their contemporaries. It is interesting to add that even the Isseis -- fathers of Niseis of the late teen age and of the early twenties -- were contemptuous of the Niseis other than their own.

However, upon a more detailed individual check, it was found that their reasons for the irritation and resentment were superficial and not deep-rooted. They gave their reasons such as:

"They are cocky."

"They want to show authority and want to act important, just because they are patronized and are in the favor of the administration."

"They are discourteous."

"They don't know how to talk."

"They sold their fathers 'down the river!'."

It is my contention that although the reasons being superficial as they are at present, the breach shall develop into a serious problem in the future unless corrective and preventive measures are applied soon.

Before closing this chapter, I shall add the following datum without detailed interpretations. It attracted my attention as the differences existed between the generations were sharp and remarkable.

TABLE VI
Period of Inactivity

No. of days elapsed from the time of arrival at Poston to the time of obtaining their first employment.

No. of Days	No.	Percentage
1 - 9 days	4	12%
10 - 19 days	2	6%
20 - 29 days	1	3%
30 - 39 days	1	3%
40 - 49 days	25	76%
Total	33	

That is to say, three fourths of the men were idle for 40 days or more since they arrived in the camp. Four men listed in the group 1 - 9 days were three Niseis and myself.

A further check with the men listed under the 40 - 49 days group, 76% of the entire crew, revealed that only two made any attempt to seek a position by inquiring at the Employment Office during the inactive period. In other words, 23 men were idle without making any attempt or indicating any intention to obtain an employment.

To make a contrasting study, I interviewed 20 young Niseis at random in the camp and obtained the following result:

1 - 9 days	.....	17	.....	85%
10 -19 days	.....	1	.....	5%
20 -29 days	.....	2	.....	10%
Total	.....	20		

That is to say, the Niseis obtained their positions as soon as they had arrived in the camp. It is another evidence to prove my contention further that the Niseis are more aggressive and "go getters."

As a supplementary study of my men in relation to the general sentiment of the camp, the following observation is presented herewith. ~~The observa-~~
~~tion is presented herewith.~~ The observation was made when the War Relocation Authority announced the following regulation:

"..... each person who is offered employment and who refuses to work will be charged at the rate of \$20 per month for himself and each dependent. such charges if not paid immediately will accrue against the enlistee and a deduction will be made from his salary when he does work, to cover the amount due the United States." *Se*

The notice was posted at the Block Manager's office on or about July 11 and created widespread discussions pro and con.

I was curious at the time how much effect the regulations had on my men and inquired of them on the subject. The following question was asked of them individually on or about July 20:

"Do you believe that the administration shall charge \$20 a month to a

person who does not work?"

The result compiled from 25 men of the crew was as follows:

"Yes"	8	32%
"No"	17	68%

Some comments to their "no" answers were amusing. They varied from, "Try and get it," to, "That's a Nisei big shot's scheme to get the men out to work."

On the other hand, the records in the Employment Office for the period indicate that there was some increase in the interest on the part of the residents to obtain employments, due to this announcement or otherwise. 37 ✓

CHAPTER VII

THE PROGRESS OF WORK

The work was progressing well and the crew was working together smoothly. By July 20, we moved into the field near the warehouses (area e). By then I was getting free from the departmental interference; and I had the complete responsibility for and authority over the crew, which they sensed and were convinced. Meecham disappeared from the picture entirely. Frasier came to see me for a short chat now and then -- about twice a week -- and the conversation was limited to gossiping.

It was on July 21, when we were working in that field. It was extremely hot humid day. About 2 p.m. a man came to me and complained of dizziness. I carried him to the hut, which we had built in the middle, and instructed him to lie down and relax. I was alarmed and began to inquire around. Two reported that they had a nauseating feeling. One said that he did not feel "just right." I myself did not feel "just right," although I never picked up even a piece of scrap lumber. I immediately suspended the operations and loaded them on a trailer to join the unloading crew in their larger hut on the other side of the creek, where it was much cooler. There I ordered them to lie down and to go to sleep. I lay down myself, too, among them, so that they would feel that I was one of them.

Around 3 p.m. when I heard a car approaching, I acted as if I were dozing. Soon there was a little commotion among the men. I could hear one say in a low tone, "There's that white guy."

"Hey, better wake 'boss' up," another said.

Then someone shook me and said, "'Boss,' get up! The white guy is here."

I got up sleepily and with a deliberate slow pace, walked to the car, which was parked some 50 feet away. Frasier was there and wanted to know what was the meaning of all this. After my explanation, he agreed that my procedure

was proper, half skeptically, and drove away.

As I re-entered the hut many of them began to speak all at once. They said, "What did he say?"

"Was he sore?"

"Did he scold you?"

I answered them calmly, "No, he just wanted to know where he could find a certain tractor."

They were very much concerned as to what the white "slave driver" would have said. After this incident, they erased the last doubt from their mind that I was a white-man's "stooge" and they felt stronger than ever that I was their friend and was anxious to protect them. If I had reported to them that he was "sore," they would have flared up.

On or about July 31, I sent in the morning a gang of 8 men to clean up some brush and trash scattered around near the Post Office and along Block 34, in charge of the Nisei assistant. I expected them to finish the work in one hour or one hour and a half. When I went there about 10 a.m., they were all sitting around the small canteen. When I asked the assistant what had happened, he told me that they did not like to work there and that he did not coerce them, as "no coercion" was my standing order to him.

One Kibei said on my questioning, "Oh, these Nisei punks make me sick."

Another reply from a farmer evacuee was milder, "It's too dusty and noisy."

To all I said, "Come on! Come on! There is only a little more work left. Let's get it over quick and join the rest of the gang."

They went back to the work without any trace of defiance. I stayed with them another half-hour and returned to the rest together.

This abhorrence of working around the Administration Buildings had an important bearing on two decisions we had to make later on.

One of the occasions was like this. On August 4, Frasier brought two

propositions between which we were to pick one, as we were completing the firebreak cleaning work.

1. To construct raised walks, ditches for electric cooler drains, and do other dust control work around the Administration Buildings.

2. To subjugate high school and farm grounds. ³⁹

Without hesitation, I knew which work we would doing next. However, as a matter of procedure, I assembled the men and consulted them. Before I could finish with the presentation of the former proposal, I was overwhelmed with objections. Comments started to fly thick and fast from all directions:

"Not around there."

"I hate the sight of Niseis and 'Ketos' around the Administration Buildings."

"Too many cars go by."

"It's too noisy and too dusty around there."

Some had more sincere tone and said, "It doesn't look nice to be sitting down and resting out there. And I can't work without a rest now and then."

One extremist said, "We fixed our Blocks ourselves. Hell! I don't see why those guys -- meaning the employees in the administration -- can't do the same. It's good for them to do a little outdoor work. Besides, the place doesn't look any worse than our own." And I knew there were two others who shared the same view.

Thus, the proposal was snowed under, However, I noticed particularly that the migratory laborers did not offer any comment. I was curious. When I questioned them later on the subject individually, they invariably replied, "I didn't mind working there, but I just wanted to 'string along' with the rest."

So the second proposal was adopted although it meant also two days of working around the Post Office and the canteen area at the start. They said laughingly, "Well, that's all right. We will just walk through, out there."

And they did walk through. The neatness and thoroughness of their work in that area were much below their standard.

With the start of this work I discarded the idea of giving 15 minutes rest every hour on the hour. Instead, I gave them 15-20 minutes once in the morning and 30-45 minutes once in the afternoon. They always rested in a single group, which fact made it easy for me to talk with all the men.

The length of the rest varied as there was no one to coerce them to resume the work. They must get up from their own volition. On two occasions, I made them lie down and sleep -- the majority dozed and some snored. The result was, however, disappointing to me, as the men failed to get up for 45 minutes and worked without "pep" or enthusiasm afterward. Henceforth, the relaxation of this form was avoided unless it was necessary.

Once someone started a conversation on the "Battle of Midway," which was currently all over the newspapers. From this, a discussion of the duration of the war ensued. Their estimates, as I remember, varied from 4 months to 3 years. Many of them could not agree and it resulted in an argument; especially, between two men -- one a Kibei, and the other a younger Issei. They exchanged words heatedly. I interceded and brought the discussion to a close in time with, "After all we are in America. However long and the war may last, we are protected and safe here."

The two men kept on arguing while they worked with an axe and a shovel. Contrary to my fear that this would result in some ill-feeling, they were working happily together in a group the next morning. Since then I avoided talks on the war, and so did the men.

It was about this time the lectures on the "co-op" principles were held in various Quads. Some man mentioned that he attended one of these meetings and repeated what he had learned. Few showed any interest. However, as soon as one Issei began attacking the present community store, the interest of the men greatly increased. The sentiments were expressed in such statements as:

"They are robbing the people."

"Some white 'go-betweens' are pocketing a big profit."

"O is making side-money."

"The employees are dividing among themselves the \$20.00 per week rebate from a ice cream company."

On other occasions, the "co-op" was mentioned, but it always ended happily and joyfully in scathing harsh accusations of the present store.

Once in a while we spent the time gossiping about women in the camp. Beauty of this or that person and shape and figure of this or that girl drew many laughs and light air prevailed among them even after they had resumed the work.

As the weather became cooler, after the middle of August, the crew was working with better speed and steadier constancy in swinging axes and digging with shovels. I was satisfied with and thankful of the manner they worked and the acreage they covered (5-7 acres per day). I was certain that their efficiency during the last few weeks of the assignment, would have compared favorably, if not better, with that of any group of men employed elsewhere in the country at higher wartime wages.

It was announced by the paymaster that Aug. 27 was the pay day for Block 12. It was a great event for all of them, as all except a few had never received wages in the camp. This was to be the occasion to receive cash for the first time since the evacuation. I informed seven men from Block 12 the night before that they would be excused for the morning and kidded them, "What are you going to do with all the dough?"

And, "Let's see what the government money looks like when you get it."

They beamed. Yet when they returned the next afternoon, they were furious and disappointed men. Two men reported that they received only \$7.83 for 196 hours of work in the month of July. Another said that he was paid \$10.81 for 180 hours. Two complained that their names were not listed on the payroll.

"Of all the people! The one who needed the cash most failed to get his pay," I said to myself, thinking of one of the men who did not receive the

payment. As he was indigent and destitute, I had asked Evans for a personal loan.⁴⁰

"That means another begging trip to Evans for a few more dollars," I thought.

Others gathered around and began commenting, "They are a bunch of imbeciles," they said, meaning the people in the accounting department.

"They should all be fired."

Another one suspected and said knowingly, "I bet they are manipulating their books. I bet some guys there are putting the money in their pocket. That's easily done, you know."

"There they go again," I thought. I was afraid that these mistakes caused a disturbing effect upon the state of mind of my crew. I felt as if all my effort to create more confidence and trust in the administrative people was destroyed by a single stroke of carelessness and inefficiency of its department. I did not want to argue with the men, because I thought that they were rightfully indignant after they had worked so hard in the scorching sun.

A few days later, I received \$9.28 for about 220 hours of work. And similar mistakes were reported one after another, as the Paymaster moved on. They were hurt; they were more indignant. One Nisei tractor driver came up to me and complained, "I only got \$12.00 whereas I should be getting \$16.00.

I replied to him, "You know, I am your foreman, yet I was paid at \$12.00 per month rate."

"Yeah, but that doesn't do me any good. We ought to go and fight," he said.

"Fight? Why not?" I said with determination.

I went to see Palmer and presented the fact to him. He did not repent his mistakes beyond saying nonchalantly and mockingly, "We should be doing a little better than that, shouldn't we?"

As to my request that the foreman, the assistant foremen, and the tractor operators should be paid at the rate of \$16.00 per month, he said that after all

they were "just common laborers pulling stumps out." I was refused and I was angry.

I walked out of the office with rage, saying to myself, "Bastard! So we are common laborers, eh? I'll get him yet."

Afterwards, upon Evans' advice, I wrote a report on the situation. with which I attached the composite time sheets of the entire crew for the months of June, July, and August. ⁴¹ I worked on the report many hours, setting forth arguments and accusations. When I finished it, I was relieved and satisfied with the feeling that I "got even" with Palmer. Yet my thought was, "This is the last straw. I've had enough of it. Hell with the administration people for all I care."

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE ROAD

We were in sight of the end of our assignment. I wondered what sort of work would be assigned to us next. The men were curious and inquisitive too. Among themselves, they discussed what they wanted to do. Some expressed the desire to take up the subjugation and construction of the Poston Memorial Park, which had been abandoned.⁴² The rest agreed that they were willing to "go along." It was evident that their primary desire was to be together; their utmost concern was to be separated from each other.

On September 10, Thursday, Frasier came to see me for the first time in the week. He informed me that we were to be transferred to the Agricultural Department and that for further detail I must see Sharp.⁴³ When I met Sharp, he was busy conversing with other officials and said, "You just report to me Monday morning. I will tell you then what you are going to do."

When I returned to the field, the men were more inquisitive. As I could not answer most of their questions, I promised them that I would make further inquiries. Meanwhile, Sharp was gone for the week and the staff of the Agricultural Department could offer little information except: "Hell! we just want the two tractors you got." K, the Farm Manager, said.

"So that's it!"

I wondered what would become of the crew when the work was completed Saturday per schedule and we did not know what to do next. A few more queries on Saturday afternoon brought out that we were to be merged with "Yakura's gang"--- the crew engaged in the landscaping work around the Administration Buildings. "What? Again?" I was bewildered.

I knew that if they reported Monday morning and were told to work around here, the men would balk and revolt. That would mean "showing up" Sharp and would be injurious to the reputation of the "gang" or to the dignity of the

administration. I decided, hence, to call a holiday on Monday and passed the word around to the effect among the men.

That Monday morning, I consulted with Evans and Sharp and reached a compromise: That we were to take up a municipal park project, but no tractors.

Subsequently, all the members of the "firebreak gang" met in a recreation hall and to them I reported what had taken place and presented the park proposal, which was duly accepted. I added, then, the two following points:

1. That no transportation is provided to and from the work.
2. That I am relinquishing the foremanship.

A young Nisei driver got up and commented, "Last night K said, 'I just want the tractors and hell with you guys.'"

I elaborated on the situation that the Agricultural Department had only two tractors for their farm use and was in great need of more. And no trucks were available for us on account of the tire conservation restrictions. They were not satisfied with these explanations and expressed their resentful reactions, "Hell, I see lots of guys riding," one Nisei said. "If that's the case why don't they take the cars away from the Nisei 'big shots'?" one Hawaiian born Japanese inquired irritably.

"I don't think they appreciate what we have been doing. We worked so hard, yet they don't give a damn about us," an Issei farmer commented.

As the arguments were not leading to a conclusion, I proposed to send a delegation to see Evans and Sharp on the transportation question.

With a sigh, I said to myself, "I knew they would be sore."

Then, they demanded an explanation for my action of retiring from the crew. I told them:

1. I had no complaints against the men. My feelings toward them were all in appreciation and admiration.
2. I was tired of "red-tape" and departmental inefficiency.

3. I was afraid that I must fight through the "bureaucracy" again to regain a "free hand" in a new department. I had exhausted courage and patience to go on.

4. "I am getting to like this dump. That means I am deteriorating mentally. I must find some job in which I can do a clear and constructive thinking."

One Hawaiian-born Japanese stood up and said, "I was working just because you are the foreman."

"I don't want to work for anybody else," a Kibei followed.

"We are appreciative of what you have been doing. You know that we are getting along fine. Why can't you reconsider your decision and stay with us?" an elderly farmer said.

It was difficult for me to turn down these kind sentiments, so I offered as a compromise, "All right. If you can get transportation for yourselves, I will stay on." But I was absolutely certain that they would not get it.

The delegation was chosen and was instructed without any alternative that the crew would disband, if they failed to get either an automobile or a tractor to transport them to and from the work.

Thus, the "firebreak gang" breathed the last knell, as their request was refused.

* * * * *

The War Relocation Project is an extremely novel and extraordinary enterprise, on which the American government embarked as an emergency measure. By the necessity and the circumstance, it was conceived and was put into operation in the shortest possible time. It is so novel that the government lacked the concrete data and precedents to base their plannings in advance. The authority at Poston, therefore, was unable to formulate definite theories or principles in regard to the problem of the Japanese evacuees. Their orders and regulations

varied from time to time as a situation demanded. It was inevitable that the chaos and confusion existed at the early stage.

They lacked the complete understanding of the Japanese and the Japanese ways, which resulted in many misunderstandings between them. The fact that its staff was manned on a short notice and the departments were set up hurriedly resulted in lack of coordination and cooperation between the departments. It was unfortunate that, as the consequence, incompetency and inefficiency were noticeable. They, in turn, created necessarily distrust and skepticism on the part of the evacuees toward the staff.

With better planning and understanding, I, too, could have done a better job. I would not have lost those 109 men assigned to me at the outset. With better cooperation from other departments, I would have carried out my duties with more contentedness and happiness.

However, I am happy to note that at this writing these defects are corrected one by one by the courageous and tireless officials. I am grateful to note that the whole picture at Poston is improving in every aspect.

The men of the "firebreak gang" were diligent and obedient people of good stock. Although they worked under abnormal strain and extraordinary circumstance, they were friendly and cooperative people; their association resulted in warm lasting friendship among themselves. They were industrious people, who would be of great value to the American agriculture and industry after the duration. These men, especially the Isseis, would have enjoyed the American ways of life, if they had had closer association and contact with the Caucasian Americans. It is, indeed, unfortunate that the financial and environmental requirements had made it impossible or impractical for them to appreciate the American civilization. It is regrettable that they had kept themselves in a circle of their own people where the old Japanese habits and customs predominated. They retained the Japanese ways of reacting, with which they had been imbued in their

adolescent days. This is the aspect which gives the Caucasian people the impression that the Japanese are difficult to understand and hard to associate with. It is my belief, however, that with thorough understanding and better appreciation of their ways, the Caucasians would find the Japanese easy to intermingle.

In managing the Isseis and others, I believe as a labor policy at Poston that it is impractical to enforce the continual labor for 8 hours a day for the summer months. It is absolutely necessary to provide them with rests at frequent intervals. It is my observation that they were accustomed to the faster pace of working than that one would find in a non-Japanese labor group; and they are ignorant of how to conserve their energy.

In closing, I wish to add that Evans was always anxious to give me valuable advice and encouragement. I am thankful and proud that I have found a great friend in John G. Evans. With utmost sincerity, I say to my men, "Thank you, fellows," and to him, "Thank you, Mr. Evans."

NOTES

1.

I had greater difficulty in translating Japanese slang. I used the same technique and I believe that better results were obtained. The following examples may be of value to a reader:

"Nanda kono bakayaro" -- ナンゾ! 此、馬鹿野郎 -- in the direct translation means, "What? This foolish servant," which fails to indicate what the speaker intended. There are two common inflections in enunciating the words. One denotes a highly excited emotional pitch or a fighting mood; this, depending on its context, I translated as, "God damn it!" and "You, bastard!" The other inflection denotes a mood mingled with ridicule. I translated this into "Hell with you!" or "You sap!"

The phrase, "shima nagashi ni suru" -- 島に流す -- is translated directly as "to let one drift to an island," meaning "to send one to a distant prison" or "to send one to a distant place." As the phrase contains a little of the punitive intent and betrayal, I thought it appropriate to translate into "to sell one down the river."

I translated "hakujin ni peko-peko suru" -- 白人を叩く -- mildly into "to apple polish," although it has a vulgar tone.

2.

There were 357 Japanese engaged in the outdoor projects, as of June 30, 1942. The Colorado River War Relocation Project: "Employment Report, June 30, 1942"; p. 3.

3.

During the months of July and August, 1942, the following incidents were reported and were widely discussed:

1. The crews in the kitchens and mess-halls left their work in bodies at different times.
2. Complaints against the Japanese foreman in the Adobe Manufacturing plant in Camp I.

3. Complaints against the Japanese foreman and the timekeeper in the Guayule Division.

4. The Fish Culture crew called their meeting and demanded the change of their foreman.

5. The strike of the Dust Control crew in Camp I.

6. The strike of the Dust Control crew in Camp II.

7. The Sanitary Details had their difficulty with the personnel.

8. The strike of the Adobe workers in Camp II.

4.

The following question was put individually on September 16 - September 19, a few days after the disbandment:

"Were you satisfied while you were working with us? Was there any dissatisfaction against the foreman or any member of the crew?"

Without an exception, they expressed their satisfaction and their great disappointment in the disbandment. They strongly urged me to reorganize a crew with the same personnel.

5.

Evans, Rupkey, and Frasier expressed the views.

6.

Frank and candid opinions of each other were exchanged from time to time between myself and

a male, Japanese, Ph. D. in History, Stanford University:
Professor of History, UCLA.

a male, Japanese, M. A. in Psychology, University of Southern California:
The Principal of a Japanese Language School.

a male, Japanese, A. B. in Political Science, University of Southern California.

7.

See the map attached in the Appendix: "Location of Wood Piles."

8.

The chronological progress is indicated by the lines with arrows on the map in the Appendix -- "The Progress of the Subjugation Work."

9.

John G. Evans: Assistant Director, the Colorado River War Relocation Project.

10.

Number of the men working -- 109.

Of these, about 25 were Niseis.

Number of Fordson tractors with trailers ----- 7

Number of trucks ----- 3

11.

At the time, the conception that they were the prisoners of war was prevalent all over the camp among the Isseis. The provisions in the international law and of the Covenants of 1928 at Geneva pertaining to the status and the treatment of such prisoners of war were the most popular and widely discussed subject among them. In every meeting I attended the Isseis always brought out discussions upon the subject. They strongly expressed openly that neither the American government nor the administration here could compel them to work in this project. Some of them either frowned upon or criticized the men who were employed. Idle Isseis were conspicuous everywhere then. (They, however, looked upon the people employed in the kitchens and the messhalls in ^amore friendly and favorable light as their benefactors.)

12.

The following question was asked of 23 men remaining out of this original group on July 28.

"What made you come out and work with us?"

All but two answered in substance like this: "My block manager told me to get out and work. I didn't want to refuse him, because I was afraid that

57

the people in the block might think me lazy. Besides, I was getting tired of being cooped up in the small apartment."

The other two men answered that they were interested in the financial return therefrom, that is, \$1200 per month.

The fine difference between this sentiment and the one set forth in Note No. 11 must be appreciated. Their resistance to the idea of working was milder when they were approached individually than when they were in a group.

13.

Wichware, Francis Sill: "The Japanese Language" -- "Life" magazine, September 7, 1942; pp. 58-67, especially, the pictorial graph -- *ibid.* p. 58.

It is the most concise and accurate sketch that I have seen in the recent months. The effect of use of improper or mistaken form upon a person addressed is so great that it is beyond the imagination of the western mind. It is my belief that a great part of the friction between the Isseis and the Niseis at Poston is resultant of the improper usage of Japanese by the Niseis. For instance, if a young Nisei should say to me, "Te o arae" for "Wash your hands" or "Do ka?" for "How are you?", I would be provoked. Proper forms for him to use are, "Te o aratte kudasai" and "Ikaga desuka?" respectively.

14.

See "Map I"

15.

Officially, 108° F in the shade at noon.

Engineer Dept., U.S. Army, Parker Reception Center,
Poston, Arizona: "The Weather Report."

16.

About two weeks later, many of them told me that when they were leaving for lunch at noon they discussed and decided to quit at the end of the day. They said that they were as sour as the others. But for the break in the routine and

and in realizing that I was doing everything possible to make the work bearable, they changed their mind and stayed on. 17.

L. B. Frasier: Foreman, Engineering Dept. The Colorado River War Relocation Project. 18.

On July 4 there were 38 men working, of which 13 were temporary workers just for one day.

19.

Director of the Recreation Dept., The Colorado River War Relocation Project.

20.

On July 28 the following question was asked of the 27 members of the crew.

"Do you object to working under a Caucasian Foreman?"

The result was as follows:

Group I	Yes	8
Group II	No	7
Group III	"It depends on the foreman. If he is good, I don't mind."	12

The cleavage of the men with respect to the answers was sharp. The characteristics of each group are described as follows:

Group I Men of higher educational background (University graduates, college men, high school graduates).

Group II Farm migratory laborers.

Group III Farmers and resident farm hands.

The reasons given by them for their objections were as follows:

- "They are dumb and incompetent."
- "They want to act superior."
- "They don't understand the habits and customs of the Japanese workers."
- "They make us work too hard."

21.

See "Map I."

22.

Block 53, Block 54, Block 59, and Block 60.

23.

See "Record of Attendance" in the Appendix.

24.

The Director, The Employment Office, The Colorado River War Relocation Project.

25.

Shogaku-ko ----- Elementary School
 Chugaku ----- Intermediate School or High School
 Koto Gakuko ----- Junior College
 Daigaku ----- University

26.

See Note No. 13

27.

Piety for the parents and respect for the elders are the ideas pounded into one since one's first school year in Japan.

28.

Two men quarreled and disagreed with their respective foreman, while they were working elsewhere.

Three men -- an Issei, a Kibei, and a Hawaii born Japanese -- quarreled and left their kitchens. One of them was described to me as a "trouble maker" and an "agitator for a strike."

29.

See "Record of Attendance" in the Appendix.

30.

See Note No. 20.

31.

For the month of July I work approximately 220 hours and expected to be paid at the wage rate of \$16.00 per month. When I walked up to the Paymaster and received only \$9.28, I felt I was insulted and was furious. I thought irrationally at the time that they did not appreciate my work in which I had

put all the best in me. Yet, I had no thought of staying off the work. (Discussed in Chapter VII also)

32.

"Keto" is a derisive term for "white man" and corresponds to "Dago" or "Wop" for "Italian" and "Chink" for "Chinese."

33.

In Chugaku and Koto Gakuko, it was common for a mob of 3 - 10 upper-class men to subject younger boys to some form of physical violence, the use of fists most prevalent. Their motives were simple and superficial, never involving any intention of serious bodily harm. It was their way of reproaching and chiding.

While I was in Chugaku in Japan, I was a victim of such violences, at least on three separate occasions, by such self-styled "vigilantes." Once, I was "beaten up," because I failed to kowtow and offer words of greeting when I met an upperclassman on a street earlier in the day. At another time, they did the mob act, because they thought I was cocky. Thinking retrospectively now, I believe that it was beneficial in teaching me to be more considerate of others' feeling.

34.

Again see Note No. 13

35.

Between September 16 and September 19, I attempted to determine the reasons for such long period of inactivity. The answers given were all attributable to the excessive heat and lack of acclimatization, for example, "It was too hot and I wasn't used to the weather." Knowing these men for the past three months, I could not believe that that was the only reason for their inactivity. Hence, I attempted further to determine their opinions as to the evacuation at that time. They invariably answered in this form:

6

"We, being enemy aliens, felt that we must accept such destiny and must be reconciled to the idea of the evacuation. We were thankful that we were to be protected and provided for by the government."

I could not believe the veracity of the men, except of two or three. The answer showed too much of influence of my idea and my conversation. I was certain that it was not a true indicative of their sentiment at that time. Therefore, I abandoned my inquiries along this line,

36.

The Colorado River War Relocation Project: "Circular No. 5, Amendment No. 1" - Lines 31-36.

37.

In order to determine the intensity of the interest or the desire, for the period June 29 - July 25, on the part of the residents in Camp I to seek employment in this project, I experimented with the following tabulations:

1. For determination of the interest in the camp, I calculated the number of the inquiries made at the Employment Office per person; that is,

$$\frac{\text{Inquiries}}{\text{Population}}$$

2. For determination of the interest for a unit job available in the camp, I obtained the quotients

$$\frac{\text{Inquiries}}{\text{Positions Open for the Day}}$$

Then, these figures were plotted on a coordinate paper and the graph, attached in the Appendix, was obtained.

It is noted therein that for June 29 - July 2, the period of the arrival of the evacuees from the Salinas Assembly Center, the activities were very lively in the office, due partly to the opening of the new Block Manager's offices, new kitchens, etc. Then the curves indicate a lull period for July 3 - July 11. For the subsequent period, July 13 - July 21, the curves fluctuate at the higher

level, that is, more activities in the Employment Office for inquiries and placements of jobs and more interest to obtain employments on the part of the residents.

38.

About this time, the farmers and the farm migratory laborers began to call me in this term reverently.

39.

See "Map II" -- "The Progress of the Subjugation Work" in the Appendix.

40.

The Social Welfare Department was without a fund and could not take care of the needy people.

41.

At this writing, no wage payments for the months of June and August have been made to the "firebreak gang."

42.

I was interested to find why they wanted to work on the cemetery project and inquired of them. The answer was generally in this form -- the sentiment a little stronger with the men who had been to funeral services there:

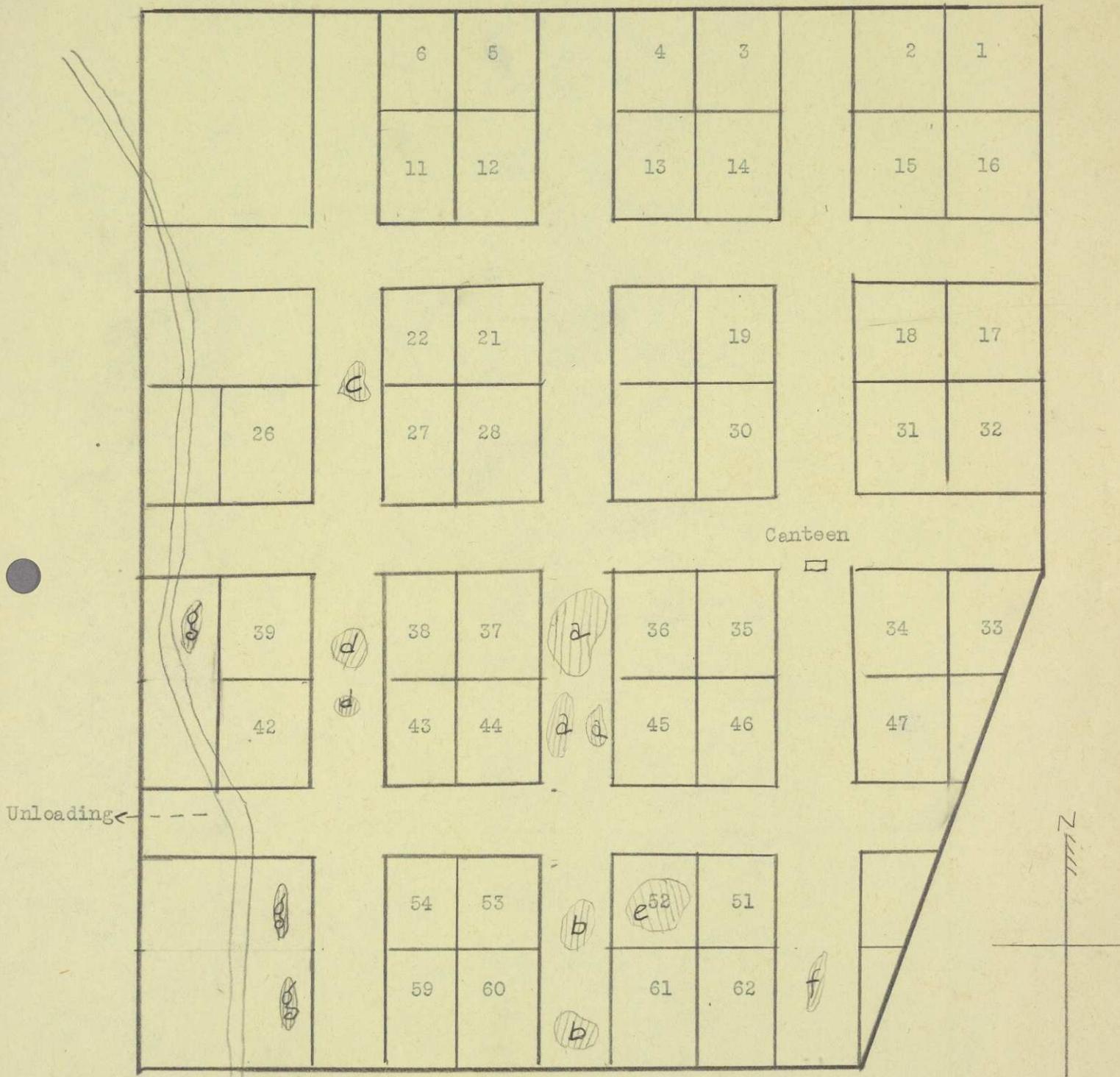
"The cemetery looks too dilapidated. We must pay more respect and reverence to the deceased."

I wondered if this reply had any connection with their religious concept or belief. As soon as I attempted to inquire along this line, I noticed that they were reluctant and hesitant to answer. Therefore, I abandoned the inquiries, as I did not wish to antagonize them unnecessarily.

43.

Acting Director, The Department of Agriculture and Industry, The Colorado River War Relocation Project.

APPENDIX



MAP I

Location of Wood piles
Camp I, Poston, Arizona.

No. of Persons Enrolled in
 "Firebreak Cleaning" Work
 June 27 - July 4, 1942

The Temperature Readings

Date	Time	Loading	Unloading	Driver	Total	Temperature*		
						8 a.m.	Noon	5 p.m.
June 27	A.M.	99	?	10	109	68	99	101
	P.M.	34	?	10	44			
June 29	A.M.	32	5	7	44	72	108	109
	P.M.	14	5	5	24			
June 30	A.M.	21	8	5	34	76	101	112
	P.M.	14	8	5	27			
July 1	A.M.	14	9	5	28	82	114	114
	P.M.	12	7	4	23			
July 2	A.M.	15	10	4	29	82	116	114
	P.M.	14	9	4	27			
July 3	A.M.	11	11	4	26	84	110	112
	P.M.	11	10	4	25			
July 4	A.M.	23	11	4	38	84	106	112
	P.M.	23	11	4	38			

*Engineer Dept., U.S. Army, Parker Reception Center,
 Poston, Arizona: "The Weather Report"
 The readings were made in the shade, about two feet below the roof,
 outside of their building, near the entrance.

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

"Firebreak Gang"

July 6 -- September 12, 1942

Date	Enlistment	No. of Men worked	Percentage	Temperature* 5 P.M.
July	6	25	100%	120° F
	7	25	100%	118
	8	25	96%	114
	9	25	96%	110
	10	24	96%	112
	11	26	100%	109
	13	26	96%	116
	14	26	96%	106
	15	26	96%	108
	16	26	96%	98
	17	27	100%	106
	18	28	100%	110
	20	31	100%	114
	21	33	100%	116
	22	33	97%	113
	23	Muddy Field		117
	24	33	100%	110
	25	33	100%	112
	27	33	100%	112
	28	33	100%	116
	29	33	100%	116
	30	33	100%	118
	31	33	100%	116
August	1	33	97%	124
	3	33	97%	128
	4	33	97%	118
	5	33	100%	116
	6	33	97%	124
	7	33	100%	126
	8	33	100%	118
	10	33	97%	98
	11	32	97%	102
	12	32	94%	112
	13	32	90%	108
	14	32	94%	108
	15	32	94%	112
	17	32	97%	108
	18	32	100%	106
	19	32	100%	106
	20	32	94%	110
	21	31	100%	112
	22	31	100%	108
	24	31	97%	112
	25	31	94%	106

Date	Enlistment	No. of Men worked	Percentage	Temperature * 5 P.M.
August	26	30	100%	101°F
	27	30	90%	102
	28	30	100%	100
	29	30	97%	98
	31	30	27	90%	100
September	1	30	29	97%
	2	30	28	94%
	3	30	30	100%
	4	30	30	100%
	5	30	30	100%
	7	30	27	90%
	8	30	30	100%
	9	30	29	97%
	10	30	30	100%
	11	30	30	100%
	12	30	30	100%

*Engineer Dept.: "The Weather Report"

RECORD OF EMPLOYMENT

Camp I
The Colorado River War Relocation Project
Poston, Arizona

Date	Popu- lation	Inquiries	Place- ments	Unfilled opening at the end of day	Positions open dur- ing day	Inquiries per position available	Inquiries per person in Camp I in %
June							
29	8273*	217**	89**	5**	94	2.3	26
30	8756	293	101	2	103	2.9	34
July							
1	9274	283	115	0	115	2.5	31
2	9727	395	141	?	141	2.8	41
3	9726	163	45	2	47	3.5	17
4	9727	222	105	3	108	2.1	23
6	9736	219	29	20	49	5.4	23 M
7	9758	186	60	23	83	2.1	19
8	9489	204	82	22	104	2.0	21
9	9299	202	59	26	85	2.4	22
10	9330	181	62	18	80	2.3	19
11	9338	145	69	18	87	1.7	16
13	9343	239	75	15	90	2.6	26 M
14	9342	265	86	17	103	2.6	28
15	9348	228	58	24	82	2.8	24
16	9357	255	90	25	115	2.2	27
17	9379	250	74	33	107	2.3	27
18	9383	200	53	33	86	2.3	21
20	9385	330	85	21	106	3.1	35 M
21	9380	215	50	19	69	3.1	23
22	9398	175	47	17	64	2.7	19
23	9397	173	44	16	60	2.9	18
24	9400	132	36	26	72	1.8	14
25	940	89	26	23	59	1.5	9

* From the files in the Registration Department

** From the files in the Employment Office

M Monday