

SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION IN WESTERN STATES ON JAPANESE EVACUATION

NEVADA

Period: March 16 to April 21, 1942

Source: Reno Evening Gazette

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April 25, 1942

SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION IN WESTERN STATES ON JAPANESE EVACUATION

NEVADA

Reno Evening Gazette, March 16 to April 21, 1942

A. SUMMARY

I. Press attitude follows general state-wide opposition to any form of relocation except in "concentration camps". Apparently fears "entrenchment" of Japanese population. Urges no mistreatment of Japs in state. Watches coastal developments carefully.

II. State Officials, primarily governor, carrying on strong campaign to keep out any Japanese colonization. Migrant Japanese watched with suspicion.

Local police, other officials appear to follow strong stand made by governor. No violence reported during check period.

Educational authorities oppose entry of Jap student evacuees from coastal universities into Nevada University. Bar Ass'n., Alumni Ass'n. back this.

III. Civic groups, farm organizations, not vociferous. American Legion Post backs governor. "General disapproval" of colonization and use of Japs for farm labor reported.

IV. Individual opinions did not appear in newspapers during survey period except by men identified with organized groups.

Prepared by L. H. ...

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B. SURVEY ANALYSIS

I. Pattern of Press Opinion

Nevada, with a pre-war history of a Japanese population of about 470, and with large but extremely sparsely settled land areas, entered into the Japanese evacuation discussions with a vigorous stand that Japs should not be relocated in the state except in what was consistently termed "concentration camps".

The editorial attitude in the state during the survey period reflects this attitude, and consistently reiterated the stand of state officials. Fear of entrenchment of Jap population in the state and recommendations that they move farther inland form the substance of editorials through the period.

One note of moderation appears in an editorial on March 30, which comments on the fact that large numbers of Japanese evacuees are traveling through the state and expresses the hope that residents will not mistreat them.

Treatment in the news columns indicates that the Nevada press was watching California developments closely. Nearly one-third of the references to the Japanese problem during this period were released from San Francisco or Los Angeles quoting relocation officials. Page one prominence, for example, was given to an AP release on March 20 which described the "boom town" being built to house 10,000 Jap evacuees in

the Owens Valley. A local man was quoted as saying that much of the opposition has faded because "we are determined to cooperate".

During the survey period three NEA or AP photos on one phase or another of the Jap relocation program were used. On April 16, the Gazette in its editorial columns, reported on a statement by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco which said that Japs have farmed about 1/3 of the truck crop acreage although they have accounted for only about 2% of all coast farming activity. Increased prices on fruits and vegetables, formerly produced by "cheap, Japanese stoop labor" were predicted.

Semi-editorial treatment was given a news story on April 6 concerning six Japanese hired as gardeners by a Winnemucca rancher. These Japanese were checked by state officers and had proper credentials. The writer, without explanatory comment, added that the ranch on which these Japs were working was located four miles from Nevada's most productive quicksilver district.

In general, however, it cannot be said that the Gazette devoted much editorial attention to the Japanese problem. In some 34 Japanese relocation references over a 35-day period, only three editorials referred to the matter. These reflected the vigorous opposition of the governor and other state groups, but tempered this opposition by urging orderly treatment of the situation. In news treatment, the Gazette gave considerable prominence to the controversy over Japanese students, a matter which will be discussed more fully in the following section.

II. Attitude of Official Political Groups.

At the state level, Governor E. P. Carville was in the limelight in all opposition and lent his name to vigorous protests to General Dewitt

concerning possible Japanese relocation in Nevada.

Like other western governors, he was invited by Senator Stewart to study a Japanese detention bill which would regard all American born Japanese as subjects of the Japanese empire. He frequently was quoted as saying that if Nevada must have Japs at all they must be in "concentration camps and that the Federal government must take responsibility for control. Later, after the Salt Lake conference and after a conference with General DeWitt in which the latter assured him that the evacuation would be orderly and under Army control, Governor Carville announced that he would create a special committee in the state to help him keep careful watch of the situation.

State and local police were given orders to check the credentials of all Japanese found traveling through the State. The curfew law was strictly enforced, apparently, since a Japanese found on the streets of Reno 30 minutes after the curfew limit of 8:00 p.m. was promptly sentenced to one year in jail by a Federal judge. In one issue, the Gazette ran a photo of an Oregon Japanese attorney who was reported to have violated the curfew law and surrendered to police in order to create a test case.

Migrant Japanese were frequently mentioned. In one case an auto accident investigated by police was said to have brought to light the fact that small groups of Japanese were traveling by auto in the state.

Of particular interest in Nevada during this period was the matter of whether or not Japanese students forced to leave coastal universities would be permitted to enter the University of Nevada. On March 30, Dr. Leon Hartman, president of the university, said Jap students might be excluded,

and stated that even if the Army ruled it permissible, the Board of Regents would still have to approve any such entries.

Following this statement, the Bar Association and then the Alumni Association took up the question. The Bar Association issued a statement which read in part:

"We feel that if Japs are dangerous in Berkeley, Calif., they are likewise dangerous in the State of Nevada.... "If Japanese students ... are loyal to the United States, they should be in the Army or in defense work".

The Alumni Association later backed up this stand, and went further to point to the record of Jap aliens who were educated in American colleges and who now are fighting the United States. If American students are having their education interrupted by war, why should Japanese students be allowed to take their places, the group asked.

III. Private Organization Attitudes.

The only organizations heard from below the state level were the American Legion and a few unidentified farm groups. The Ely post of the first named organization on March 27 passed resolutions backing Governor Carville's stand against relocation except in concentration camps.

A single release from Gardnerville cited "general disapproval" of bringing Japs into the state to alleviate farm labor shortage in Douglas and Lyon counties. This was qualified by saying that such a plan would be considered only in event of extreme emergency. Governor Carville was quoted on March 31 as saying that conditions and seasons in Nevada make Jap labor not feasible except for short periods.

IV. Private Individuals

Although the Gazette occasionally carries forum letters, not one was

used during the survey period and no individual statements, except from men identified with organized groups, appeared in print.

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(see following page for LISTING OF PRESS CLIPPINGS)

G. LISTING OF PRESS CLIPPINGS

Reno Evening Gazette, March 16 to April 21, 1942.

- 3/16 p-14 Gov. E. P. Carville invited by Senator Stewart of Tennessee to testify in Washington, D. C. on a Japanese detention bill which would regard all American born Japanese as subjects of the Japanese Empire.
- 3/17 p-1 AP, San Francisco--Wartime farm adjustment program of Farm Security Administration undertakes job of continuing production on Jap farm lands in coastal areas.
- p-16 Nevada areas included in alien control program as General DeWitt sets up prohibited zones.
- 3/19 p-1 AP, San Francisco--Mass Jap evacuation, headed by 1000 volunteers, to begin early next week, DeWitt announces.
- 3/20 p-1 AP, Manzanar--Boom town being constructed in Owens Valley to house 10,000 Jap evacuees. Quotes local man as saying much of opposition has faded because "we are determined to cooperate".
- 3/21 p-1 AP, Los Angeles--First of an estimated 35,000 Japs begin their trip to Manzanar.
- p-18 Gardnerville--(Special) General disapproval of bringing in Japs to alleviate farm labor shortage in Douglas and Lyon counties reported. Only extreme emergency will cause consideration of plan.
- 3/23 p-1 AP Los Angeles--Jap caravan heads for Manzanar. Advance group of about 1,000 to help prepare camp for other thousands.
- 3/24 p-2 (Special) Carson- Gov. E. P. Carville strenuously opposes removal of Japs to Nevada. Says if they come they will be in "concentration" camps. Intends to confer with DeWitt.
- p-2 Auto accident brings to light fact that small groups of Japanese were investigating purchase or lease of lands in Nevada. Also announces that curfew is in effect for aliens in the state.

3/24 p-4

Ed. Reiterates that Nevada wants no Japs unless in concentration camps. Fears entrenchment of Jap population. Recommends they be moved farther inland.

3/25 p--

AP Los Angeles--Inyo County faces political problem as thousands of Japs move into Owens Valley. Will outnumber registered voters of the sparsely settled county.

p-7

AP photo of Japs entraining for Owens Valley center.

3/26 p-1

Photo of Jap caravan from L.A. to Owens Valley.

3/27 p-6

Ely--American Legion resolution backs Governor Carville's stand against relocation except in concentration camps.

3/30 p-4

Ed. Comments on large numbers of Jap evacuees traveling through State. Expresses hope that people in Nevada will not mistreat Japs. Assumes that they are going farther east because of Governor's request to DeWitt that no permits will be issued for Japs to settle in Nevada until the matter has been discussed thoroughly.

3/30 p-4

Local peace officers watch carefully many migratory Japs who left coast before freezing order was issued.

p-14

U of Nevada may exclude Jap students who are forced to leave California schools, according to Dr. Leon W. Hartman, president. Reason, Nevada is termed critical area. If military rules it possible for Japs to enter Nevada University, Board of Regents will still have to approve entry, Hartman said.

3/31 p-6

AP, Los Angeles--Second proclamation by Army requires evacuation of some 3,000 Japs in Los Angeles harbor district.

p-14

Carson--Conditions and seasons in Nevada make Jap labor not feasible except for short periods, says governor. He had discussed matter with DeWitt and pointed out that it would be difficult to police aliens properly in the sparsely settled state. DeWitt has assured governor that evacuation will be orderly and under Army direction.

4/1 p-1

AP, Los Angeles--500 more Japs leave for Manzanar. "without exception, evacuees seemed philosophically happy".

4/2 p-2

Governor and other officials invited to attend April 7 conference in Salt Lake City to discuss Jap problem.

- 4/2 p-13 NEA photo of Jap-American attorney, Minoru Yasui, Hood River, Oregon, who violated alien curfew law in Portland and surrendered to police in order to create a test case.
- 4/3 p-1 AP, San Francisco--WRA announces a work program for Jap evacuees. Says about 6,000 farms will have to have new operators. In relocation centers public works, agriculture, war manufacture and private employment were possible make up outlook for evacuee employment.
- p-20 Bar Association disapproves proposal to transfer Jap students from University of California to Nevada University. "We feel that if Japs are dangerous in Berkeley, California, they are likewise dangerous in the State of Nevada..... If Japanese students...are loyal to the United States, they should be in the Army or in defense work".
- 4/4 p-6 Jap held by Reno police as violator of enemy curfew law. Was found on street at 3:30 p.m. Curfew at 8:00 p.m.
- 4/6 p-6 Six California Japs employed as gardeners by ranch owner at Winnemucca. Checked by state officers and had proper credentials. Owner said to be unable to secure other help. Story includes mention that the ranch is located four miles from Nevada's most productive quicksilver district. (No further comment as to significance of this).
- 4/9 p-14 (Special) Las Vegas--Governor says if Nevada must take aliens, he is organizing to control them properly. He will name a special committee to assist him in keeping watch over aliens.
- 4/7 p-13 Japanese evacuation problems discussed by western officials in Salt Lake City.
- p-7 AP, Santa Fe, N.M.--New Mexicans advised to curb land sales to Japanese.
- 4/9 p-14 Governor Carville says he will insist on Federal control of Japs.
- 4/16 p-4 Ed. quotes Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. Japs have farmed about 1/3 of truck crop acreage although accounting for only about 2% of all coast farming activity. Predicts increased prices on fruits and vegetables that have been produced by "cheap Japanese 'stoop labor'".
- 4/17 p-18 Nevada University Alumni Association objects to admitting Jap students who are forced to leave coastal area schools. Points to record of Jap aliens educated in American colleges now fighting U.S. Says danger of concentrating large numbers of Japs in this area, and the fact that

- 4/17 p-18 American students are having their education interrupted by war. why should Jap students take their place, editorial asks.
- 4/21 p-14 Jap curfew violator in Reno sentenced to 1 year in jail by Federal judge.

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Prepared by D. Harper Simms, Information Service Staff, ~~WRA~~ WRA
Briefed by Grodzins with additional data from file of clippings.

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I. PATTERN OF PRESS OPINION

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The editorial attitude during the survey period reflects this attitude and consistently reiterated the stand of state officials. Fear of intrenchment of Jap population in the state and recommendations that they be moved farther inland form the substance of editorials throughout the period.

One note of moderation appears in an editorial on March 30, which comments on the fact that large numbers of Japanese evacuees are travelling through the state and expresses the hope that residents will not mistreat them.

Treatment in news columns indicates that Nevada ~~xxxx~~press was watching California closely. Nearly one-third of the references to the Japanese problem during this period were released from S. F. or L. A., they being stories mostly from relocation officials. In general, the Gazette did not devote much editorial space to the Japanese problem. In some 34 Japanese relocation references over a 35 day period, only three editorials referred to the matter. These reflected the vigorous opposition of the gov. and state groups but tempered the opposition by urging orderly treatment of the situation. In news treatment, the Gazette gave considerable space to the controversy over students.

ATTITUDE OF OFFICIAL POLITICAL GROUPS

At the state level, Gov. E. P. Carville was in the limelight in all opposition and lent his name to vigorous protests to General DeWitt concerning possible Japanese relocation in Nevada.

Like other western governors, he was invited by Senator Stewart to study a Japanese detention bill which would regard all American born Japanese as subjects of the Japanese Emperor. He frequently was quoted as saying that if Nevada must have the Japs at all they must be in "concentration camps." and that the Federal Government had to take responsibility for controlling the evacuees. Later, after the Salt Lake conference and after a conference with General DeWitt in which the latter had assured him that the evacuation would be orderly and under Army control, Gov. Carville announced that he would create a special committee in the state to help him keep a careful watch of the situation. *and insist on Fed. control*

March 24, p. 2 - 8 col. streamer - "Removal will be opposed"

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*Apr. 9 -
p. 14
Apr. 14 -
p. 6*

March 16, p. 14

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"We feel if Japs are dangerous in Berkeley, Calif., they are likewise dangerous in the state of Nevada If Japanese students ~~are~~ . . . are loyal to the United States, they should be in the army or defense work."

April 7, p. 18

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PRIVATE ORGANIZATION ATTITUDES

The only ~~one~~ private organizations heard from were the AMERICAN LEGION and a few unidentified farm groups. The Ely post of the Legion passed resolutions on March 27 backing Governor Carville's stand against relocation except in concentration camps. *Prompted by rumor or that Japs trying to buy land in vicinity*

March 21, p. 18

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PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS.

Although the Gazette occasionally carries forum letters, not one was used during the survey period and no individual statements, except for those people (above) identified with organized groups, appeared in print.

Rebo Evening Gazette
March 25, 1942, p. 1

Problem of Japanese voters in Manzanar might allow Jap-Americans to control county of Inyo politically. Inyo's registration as of November, 1940, was 4511. Will be ~~xxx~~ from 5 to 10,000 Japanese-American voters at Manzanar. If can legally register after 90 days Japs have Inyo County in their~~xxx~~ hands. Issue will require an attorney general's ~~xxxx~~ ruling.

