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WRA: COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT TRANSCRIBED  
TO CHAPTER 6

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CHAPTER 6

THE TEMPORARY GOVERNMENT TAPERS OFF

I ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION NO. 34 IS ANNOUNCED

Administrative Instruction No. 34, which carried the regulations for setting up a permanent self-government program, arrived in Manzanar on September 1, and its import<sup>was</sup> promptly announced by the Project Director. The new policy carried with it certain far-reaching changes which would bring their own consternation to the residents. The plan was to present the new procedure to the evacuees for their approval and when a majority of residents voted in favor of it, to make it effective as a working instrument. Once approved, changes could be introduced only after they were initiated by a two-thirds vote of the council or by a signed petition of one-fourth of the qualified voters. Amendments would become effective only when approved by majority vote at a general or special election.

The major change introduced by the new procedure was that all elective officers were to be limited to American citizens, with the voting age at 18 years instead of 21 as before. Issei would be eligible, however, to hold positions on appointive committees, commissions, boards, and so on.

Besides outlining the establishment of a Community Council and defining its powers, the procedure provided for setting up a Judicial Committee/ to handle cases of minor violations of laws. In cases involving felony the Project Director would turn over the defendant to state and local officials for prosecution. Final veto power on any regulation made by the Council was to be vested in the Project Director. The procedure provided also for an Organization Commission,

a Temporary Community Council, and an Arbitration Commission. (F.P. 2, 19 9/2/4)

With the arrival of these preliminary instructions from Washington, activities in Town Hall came temporarily to an end and further clarification was awaited. Plans were set into motion for the election of the <sup>c</sup>Chairman of the Community Council. Many Block Leaders were non-citizens and some had held office less than 2 weeks. These would have to be replaced on the Council by citizens.

#### A Reactions to Ruling on Citizenship

##### 1 General Reactions

The discussions which followed the disclosure of the new regulations for the self-government program were heated and many, and in general they could be divided into two opposing groups: The regulation limiting elective office to citizens <sup>was</sup> supported by ~~the~~ arguments that the ruling would give the Nisei an interest and experience in participating in self-government; that discussions at Town Hall could henceforth be conducted solely <sup>l</sup> in English and the dispatch of business would thereby be facilitated; that the American government was for the first time, although belatedly, recognizing citizenship; that the ruling would obviate certain problems which might arise,--such as those which had occurred in August--from the use of Japanese words which are subject to various interpretations when translated into English.

Arguments against the regulation were that confidence would not be placed in the Nisei for most of them were too young and too inexperienced to be placed in a position of such responsibility as Council membership would entail; that respect was lacking among Japanese people for younger people; that <sup>the</sup> Manzanar should not be a training ground for Nisei, nor should <sup>l</sup> its citizens be made <sup>into</sup> ~~who~~ experimental guinea pigs; that the average Nisei did not have <sup>o</sup>athrough knowledge of

the Japanese language and could not serve the Issei on that account; and that since the new proposals for government did not actually offer a truly representative form of self-government, distinctions between citizens and non-citizens should not be drawn. (Rep no 45, 9/3/42)

72 Block Leaders Council Reaction

(At the meeting of the Block Leaders Council, held on September 4, discussion of the new administrative procedure on self-government was taken up in an unofficial way since the paper itself had not yet arrived officially. Present at the meeting was a professor of anthropology from the University of Chicago (Dr. Redfield) who had been asked by the WRA to act as a <sup>in</sup> third party to study the reactions of the Japanese. The burden of the discussion between the Block Leaders and the anthropologist was that no distinctions should be made between the Issei and the Nisei within the Center. If a representative government was contemplated by WRA <sup>2</sup> than it should operate truly democratically. In actuality the camps had been founded on account of the Issei more than the Nisei. The Issei were more concerned with harmony within the Center while the Nisei were more concerned with participation in affairs of the nation as a whole. Japanese-Americans <sup>a</sup> wished to be free, to take part in the war effort, to serve in the <sup>Army</sup> ~~Army~~ Recognition of citizenship should be made to cover such services, rather than being handed out as <sup>a</sup> sop to the Nisei in the Center. Insofar as a solid Japanese group was concerned, such as was to be found in a relocation Center, the Issei could be expected to take leadership. All restrictions on elective office-holding should be set aside and people should be allowed to vote for the nominees of their choice, regardless of citizenship. A truly representative government means government according to the wishes of

the majority. Nisei as well as Issei might wish to nominate and vote for Issei representatives on the Council in <sup>T</sup>future, just as they had done in the past when Block Leaders <sup>had</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>the</sup> provided ~~to~~ nucleus for members of Manzanar's Executive Council. (Act of T H, Rep no 46, Sept. 4, 1942)

The Issei deplored the new ruling on citizenship largely because, being discriminative, it would tend to emphasize the division which was already manifesting itself between Issei and Nisei. Although it was the purpose of the visiting anthropologist to discuss with the Block Leaders how the government could best get the cooperation of the evacuees in putting the new program into effect, the professor found himself <sup>D</sup>accupied in being charged with messages to carry back to Washington. These were chiefly protests and opinions which the evacuees presented on how government could best cooperate with them in bringing about a more representative form of government, ~~for the evacuees~~. The Issei reminded the professor that for 30 and 40 years they had been law-abiding residents in America, that during that time they had worked hard, not only for themselves, but for the Nisei, and that the government should continue to trust them to do so. In the country at large, among the 1,200 convicted saboteurs, not one had been Japanese. On the other hand the patriotic Nisei <sup>afforded</sup> ~~afforded~~ a large reservoir of man<sup>power</sup> <sup>into</sup> which the government might well dip ~~into~~, since it so badly needed <sup>so</sup> man<sup>power</sup> and the Nisei were <sup>so</sup> eager to serve. As for possible subversive elements, that matter could be handled by a review board who might interview all persons planning to go out of camp. They predicted that from 95 to 99 percent of the residents would pass this board.

The government had made a mistake in not consulting the Block Leaders before issuing the new regulation on self-government. It would be well for officials to study Japanese psychology. They would know then that it was not feasible for 10,000 people in a camp to be governed by Nisei.

The professor in turn tried to show the Block Leaders that they must think less of their own hurt feelings and the immediate situation in camp, and direct their attention more toward a long-range view of future Nisei position in America. The government's regulations were formed with their future adjustment especially in mind.

73 Effect on Issei-Nisei Reactions

( Issei feelings against Administrative Instruction No. 34 were so strong that in their train they awakened suspicion against the Nisei. Rumors went around the Center to the effect that the Nisei <sup>c</sup> Councils-- in other words the Manzanar Citizens Federation--were responsible for the change in governmental policy. This rumor was so strong that the Chairman of the Block Leaders Council in a meeting at Town Hall felt compelled to ask the Project Director to make it clear, by inserting a statement in the FREE PRESS, that the policy had come from Washington D. C., and that the Nisei in the Centers had had <sup>d</sup> no hand in it. (BLC Minutes 9/4/42)

74 Reactions of the FREE PRESS (2,20, 9/4/42)

( In its next issue, Manzanar's newspaper commented on the new regulations, and pointed out that while positions on the Council would be limited to Nisei, berths on the judiciary and advisory committees would be open to Issei. Also, Issei would have full voting power in their block and other elections, and through these channels they could express their opinions. While the loss of many able Issei Block Leaders was to be deplored, nevertheless the point should not be overlooked that the new regulations were a recognition that the Nisei were coming of age, and this recognition of citizenship, though tacit, was an indication of how the Japanese in America were to find their places in civic life.

75 Block Leaders Council Continue<sup>s</sup> During September

( Until the new plan for self-government could be set up, the life

of the Center would still be presided over by the Block Leaders, and the regular functions of ~~the~~ <sup>their</sup> offices would continue. At the opening Block Leaders Council meeting in September, the first action taken was to elect a Temporary Chairman to replace the one who had recently resigned. At this meeting, also, the duties of the Block Leaders were outlined again, the purpose being to acquaint the newly elected Block Leaders with their work. Stress<sup>s</sup> was placed on the need to keep harmony and preserve the welfare ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> the block; on being responsible for government issues; <sup>o</sup> ~~in~~ answering questions of residents, and <sup>o</sup> ~~in~~ bringing to Town Hall for clarification such questions as the Block Leaders could not themselves answer; on working with the night checker and the housing department in coordinating housing for the residents; on being responsible for maintenance, even going to the <sup>o</sup> ~~w~~arehouse in person; on bringing in an administrative official if cement or lumber was required; on keeping up laws and obtaining fertilizer from the proper officials; or bringing to Town Hall any matter of special importance which came up in the block; <sup>o</sup> ~~in~~ making a daily report in writing by 2 o'clock which would be sent to the San Francisco office; on requisit<sup>ion</sup>ing all supplies on the appropriate forms.

On September 24, elections were held--for the last time--to elect a Leader for the last remaining leaderless block. This election was conducted with due formality and all the requirements observed in spite of the fact that within a week the whole Block Leader system would be replaced by a Block Managers System, ~~on October 1.~~

A large volume of work was currently handled by Block Leaders, either through their own efforts, or through Town Hall. The proportion for Town Hall was 392 services per month out of a grand total of 2,335 rendered. This indicated that Town Hall's share was dropping off and that the Leaders were developing more individual self-sufficiency in handling

their responsibilities. From 20 percent of the total in July, Town Hall handled only 6 percent of the total for August.

A list of 18 different kinds of services, ranging from inquiries, to writing letters for Issei, to looking after lost and found articles, was drawn up for the Inter at it held. The results show that the Block Leaders were learning to take care of the majority of the problems of the residents, <sup>c</sup> exclusive of those ~~to take care of the majority of the problems of the residents, exclusive of those~~ which were being handled by the Service Division. Yet pessimists were asserting that if the residents really had ~~the~~ respect and faith in the ability of the Block Leaders, many more than the 2,535 services could be rendered by the block offices. They indicated that a "large part of the residents simply did not come to the block offices for help. Some people depended on individual Caucasians, some on night checkers, and some on other 'incidental' individuals."

It was expected that with the operation of the new self-government, the total number of services would increase. (Pro Dir to Reg Dir, 9/18/42)

At his administrative best, the Block Leader was often just an errand boy for his block or a messenger boy for the Administration. He had plenty of responsibility, but no clearly defined authority to act for the residents. Too often he was called upon to smooth out difficulties between management and residents, particularly after the Administration had pulled a "boner." Trouble-weary and often <sup>R</sup>frustrated easily the Block Leader sought a scapegoat on whom to vent his frustration. This often was the Administration. It was easier to <sup>blame</sup> ~~become~~ its inefficiencies and its officials than to develop the patience needed to handle the infinite details involved in leadership. (Pro Rep, 9/14/42)

## II RELOCATION

Early in September, the WRA Chief of Employment visited the Center

for the purpose of interviewing applicants for permanent outside jobs. Although many of the employment opportunities open to Japanese were agricultural, nevertheless secretarial, hotel, teaching, and domestic ~~work~~ <sup>jobs</sup> were also included in the offerings. The Chief of Employment was on hand for the better part of a week, clearing the records and opening the way for the eventual relocation of evacuees who had definite employment offers and others who desired such. The proceedings did not cover the 300 evacuees who were to leave for temporary harvest work, although the latter were not excluded from applying for permanent work. Existing regulations limited relocation to citizens, but these regulations were expected to be temporary and it was anticipated that future regulations would become more liberal.

The <sup>p</sup> Procedure so far worked out was applicable only to one classification. After an individual filed his application, his record was checked with his project head, and then sent to the CBI for clearance. When assurances were received from the prospective employer and other citizens in the new community, a pass to leave for the job was issued. If conditions did not turn out satisfactory, the individual was free to return to the relocation center.

### III ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION NO. 34 IS EXPLAINED

At a special meeting of the Block Leaders Council, held on September 9, the Chief of Community Government from WRA in Washington was present to explain the new policy and to discuss plans for setting up internal government in all the Centers. He proceeded to outline the 4 divisions of the proposed permanent setup. Also, he made clear that the new arrangement would cancel the legislative end of the Block Leaders duties. In future, Block Managers would be appointed who would be paid and who would be directly responsible to the Project Director. Their services as block administrators would be an

extension of the arm of general Administration and would cease to embody legislative responsibilities. Block Managers would not have power to overrule the Community Council. The existing Block Leaders Council was to go and in its place a Community Council would be set up which would be composed entirely of Nisei over 21 years. This was the type of government already operating at the Tule Lake Center.

The Block Leaders Council, as it had been organized at Manzanar, had not been duplicated in any of the other Centers, for only at Manzanar had block administrators been concerned with legislation and policy-making. The new plan was for the Block Leaders to give up the Council <sup>plans</sup> ~~plans~~ of their work.

A Analysis of Instruction No. 54

1. Organization Commission

Chief features of the new policy were that the Project Director would establish a temporary commission, to be known as an Organization Commission, which would draw up the whole plan of government for the Center. This would be comparable to a constitutional convention and <sup>it</sup> would draft the new Constitution. The plan the Commission developed would be submitted to the Project Director who would see that it was consistent with WRA policy, and who would then submit it to the community in special referendum. If approved by the Project Director and the majority of qualified voters, it would become the official charter for the community government and could then be amended only by majority vote of the <sup>residents</sup> ~~voters~~. On this Organization Commission older and experienced aliens as well as the younger American citizens, could serve.

2. Temporary Community Council →

The Temporary Community Council would provide for contact between WRA staff and the evacuee residents during the time when the community was getting settled. All residents 18 years or over were eligible to vote in the election for members of this Council, but only American citizens 21 years or over could be members of the Temporary Council. Its functions would be to advise with and make recommendations to the Project Director.

73 The Community Council

The Community Council would be the legislative and policy-forming body of the long-range governmental set<sup>u</sup>p. Under Administrative In-  
struction <sup>No.</sup> #54, the basis of representation and the metho~~d~~ of selection of the Community Council, were to be decided by the Organization Commission. Membership on the Community Council would be limited to citizen evacuees 21 years of age or over. All residents, 18 years or over regardless of citizenship, were entitled to vote, to hold non-elective offices in the community, and to serve on committees of the Community Council.

<sup>the</sup> (Principal functions of the Community Council were: to enact regulations for community welfare and security and to prescribe penalties for their violation; to present resolutions to the Project Director; to solicit, receive, and administer funds and property for community purposes; and to license and require reasonable license fees from evacuee-operated enterprises. The policy-forming functions of the Community Council were to supplement, not supplant, those exercised by the Project Director and the WRA administrative staff.

74 The Judicial Commission

The Judicial Commission would be composed of 5 to 9 evacuee members and would try evacuees who were arrested for alleged violation of the

be submitted to the Project Director for review. If <sup>T</sup>he Project Director did not overrule <sup>a</sup>decision/ within 24 hours, it would become final. Actually, the Judicial Commission would not be a court, but would be an administrative body making recommendations to the Project Director.

#### 75 The Arbitration Commission

The Arbitration Commission would serve as a sort of civil court and hear disputes of a civil nature between residents, and would recommend a method of settlement to the Project Director. The make<sup>e</sup>up of this commission and the method of selecting its members would be decided by the Organization Commission and would be covered in the Community Charter.

#### 76 The Block Managers

The position of Block Managers which was being established at the same time would be distinct from membership on the Community Council. In contrast to council members who would be elected, <sup>the Block Managers would be administrative officers who</sup> appointed by the <sup>would be</sup> Project Director, and who would serve as a contact between him and the residents of the blocks. Block Managers could be young American citizens or they could be men of maturity and alien-born. The duties of Block Manager would include: keeping the residents in his block informed of official rules and policies as announced by the Project Director; seeing to it that properties were kept in good repair; collecting and distributing mail; distributing supplies such as brooms, soap, blankets; and assisting residents in emergencies such as serious illness.

The position of Block Manager carried prevailing rates of pay for services rendered. Thus the role of Block Manager was an employment rather than an honorary position. (Taken from the SECOND QUARTERLY REPORT, July to September 30, 1942, WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY)

#### C Discussion of New Regulations

The chief of Community Government from Washington was asked the reason for the limitation of Community Council membership to citizens. His reply was that, as a basic principle, WRA was acting in behalf of evacuees and was working toward their permanent relocation outside the military area. This emphasis on citizenship in the Council would give young citizens a chance to gain experience in the management of governmental affairs. The Issei should welcome this opportunity for their sons and daughters for it would not be long before the full responsibility for leadership would fall on them, not only for themselves but for their parents as well.

On the whole, the Issei Block Leaders seemed to accept the explanation of the new policy as given by the representative from Washington.

Every effort was made by those who understood the new regulations to explain that the new Community Council would be something entirely separate from the block administrators' work, but this <sup>point</sup> was not easily grasped by the community as a whole.

In an effort to undo some of the confusion which gripped the people who tried to understand the new regulations, the Free Press carried another story, explaining that the ~~Block~~ <sup>Block</sup> ~~Chiefs~~ <sup>Chiefs</sup> were to remain as administrators, although they would be called Block Managers instead of Block Leaders. They would continue to look after the welfare of the people and would be directly under the Project Director. In contrast, the new Community Council, composed of citizens to be elected by the people, would be vested with legislative power, and would be directly responsible to the residents instead of <sup>to</sup> the administration.

#### D Steps in Setting up New Plans

1 Organization Commission is Set Up (FP 9/14/42)

Conspicuously absent from the Organization Commission's list of

members were the names of Kibeis. Yet the 17 able men and women on it had been appointed by the Project Director on the bases of recommendations submitted by leading evacuees. The Director himself was not unaware of the significance of <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ omission for he issued a note of caution that, unless the Commission at large secured a better and more representative participation of community residents, trouble might ensue. (Pro Rep No 52 9/17/42)

The Commission of ~~17 men and women~~ was established to draw up the framework of the permanent community government. With the help of the Project Director and the Chief of Community Organization, it immediately swung into its task of drafting a constitution. As a first step, it divided itself into a series of smaller working committees who were empowered to allow qualified people from the community at large to serve with them as members. In this selection, the commission would draw heavily on the Block Leaders. Also 3 men were entrusted with the dissemination of publicity for the new proceedings.

Soon it was announced that the Community Council--the representative legislative body--was to <sup>o</sup> provide, in addition to the required Judicial and Arbitration Commissions, other committees on publicity, phraseology and style, and so on, and that such supplementary committees would be created from time to time. On all of these, non-citizens might serve. (Pro Rep No 50, 9/17/42)

IV OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

A New Project Director Arrives

On September 25, a new <sup>acting</sup> Project Director was introduced to the Block Leaders at their Council meeting. The position of this new <sup>a</sup> Director was indefinite for his stay in Manzanar was not to be permanent. The first

question the Block Leaders put to him was whether their elections should be held, as a number of blocks were without leaders owing to resignations on account of furlough work, ill health, and so on. Among other things, the new Acting Project Director pointed out that a Community Council would soon be elected, based on the latest governmental regulations. It was more than likely that the existing Block Leaders would continue to serve as Block Managers under the new plan, but that decision would have to be left to the Project Director who was to appoint all Block Managers. The main thing was to find who were the best men among the Issei and the Nisei, and to appoint them to serve with the Administration.

In the week following, a formal declaration of policy would be made public, in which the duties and qualifications of Block Managers would be outlined in detail. The Head of the Housing and Employment Department would be the official designated to be in charge of the Block Managers and whenever the Community Council or Organization Commission drew up regulations and policies, the Block Managers would be the first to be consulted. They would have the first opportunity to make criticisms and give approval. Then the proposal would go to other bodies for similar examination, and later it would be submitted to the people.

The Block Manager would hold his position as long as he was qualified and capable. Existing Block Leaders could play an important part in interpreting the new policy to the people.

#### B Block Managers Posts are Filled

As permanent self-government rapidly began to take shape, the status and duties of the new Block Managers became clarified by the new Acting Project Director. Beginning October 1, he stated, the new positions of Block Manager would be created to serve as a direct branch

of Administration. The Block Managers would be charged with looking after the general welfare of the block residents. Positions would be full-time and paid, and would be filled by appointment by the Project Director. All existing Block Leaders would be reappointed to the positions of Block Managers. For blocks without leaders, Block Managers would soon be appointed by the Project Director.

The Block Managers were to shoulder heavy responsibilities, including the supervision of employees, care of government property, dissemination and collection of information, distribution of supplies, and daily roll call. They were also to act as a relay agent for reporting maintenance and repair needs.

On September 28, the following letter was sent, individually addressed to some 30 Block Leaders:

MANZANAR WAR RELOCATION AREA  
Manzanar, California

September 28, 1942

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ :

Will you please accept this letter as confirmation of your appointment as Block Manager for Block           ? I hope that you will find it possible to accept this position since the welfare of the residents depends in large measure on having persons with experience do this important administrative work.

Sincerely,

C Farewell Meeting of Block Leaders Council

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SS

On September 30, a special meeting was called of the Block Leaders Council, the last ever to be called for that pioneer legislative group. From the next day on there would be, not Block Leaders, but Block Managers, and these would be under the head of an Administrative official. *The* Block Managers would not meet in Council as the Block Leaders had been in the habit of doing. Instead they would be called together only upon the demand of their Administrative head. Block Managers would not be concerned with legislative functions. Another Council, the New Community Council, would take care of all legislation.

The administrative official who would be over the Block Managers would be the Head of Housing and Employment in the Center. He addressed them and once again explained the new system. He assured them of the cooperation of Housing, Recreation, Education, and other administrative departments. He reminded them that their one concern thereafter was to be the welfare of their blocks. The Block Managers would meet weekly on Friday Mornings, just as the Leaders had been in the habit of meeting. To these meetings, the Block Managers were to bring their troubles, problems, and questions for the attention of their Head. Also in daily reports they were to send in writing, expressing the sentiments of the people.

The appointments of new Block Managers would be based upon recommendations from block residents to the Head, who in turn would recommend the appointees to the Project Director, who finally would make the appointments.

Chief concrete change to be accepted by the men present was the need to give up Town Hall to the Community Council which was in the process of being set up. A charter for the new government already prepared by the Organization Commission was read by the Secretary to the retiring Block Leaders.

Since the Block Leaders were holding their positions on an elective

basis, it was necessary for them to resign. A motion was made that they do so as a body. This carried and the total resignations became effective as of that date. (Block Leaders Council Minutes September 30, 1942, Special Minutes.)

CHAPTER 7 THE NEW SELF GOVERNMENT PROGRAM GETS UNDER WAY

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## CHAPTER 7

## THE NEW SELF-GOVERNMENT PROGRAM GETS UNDER WAY

## I GENERAL CONDITIONS IN CAMP

## A. Here and There

No untoward events, fears, or worries occurred to disturb the even keep<sup>l</sup> on which Manzanar was settling during the month of October. Both the Block Leaders and the residents accepted the change in Administration without protest. Apparently, too, they sought earnestly to find their places in the new governmental setup. The Block Managers cooperated by lending their offices for election purposes. They conducted the registry of voters. They led in calling meetings to explain the principles of the new Charter. They assumed their administrative<sup>the</sup> duties with right goodwill, even though their new position of Block Manager was shorn of the legislative prestige which had adorned the position of Block Leader. Except for 2 men, the former Block Leaders accepted the new positions of Block Manager offered to them, on October 1 which ~~was~~<sup>left</sup> thus ~~leaving~~<sup>the</sup> to others responsibility for the planned self-governmental setup.

1. Camouflage Net Project The work at the camouflage factory progressed smoothly/also/ and was not marred by mishap<sup>r</sup> or protest. With the opening of school/ and the consequent loss of many boy workers, there were but 20 to 25 men left in the factory to work on the nets. This dearth of male workers led the Head of the Employment Division to make a special appeal to the women residents, of whom statistics showed 600 eligible and able to work. To these women the proposal was made that they should work half a day and be freed for the other part of the day for their household duties. Transportation was provided for those living at the far end of camp. Attempts were even made to

arrange that non-citizens also might work on the nets.

2 Japanese Edition of FREE PRESS Upon receipt of special permission from the national Director of WRA, the Japanese edition of the FREE PRESS assumed the status of a full-fledged publication, ceasing to be only a translated appendage of its English counterpart. Needless to say, the new publication was warmly welcomed by the Japanese at Manzanar. Dressed up in 4 pages, full of news, comments, and evacuee literary outpourings, the paper made its debut on September 29, with its editors fully conscious of their responsibilities.

3 Rumors Two rumors floated throughout the Center to ruffle the security of the residents: One was that the <sup>whole</sup> ~~relocation~~ Center ~~at Manzanar~~ was moving to the hinterland, and the other was that Congress had "passed a bill depriving Japanese-Americans of their citizenship." Promptly on the heels of this announcement was issued a stirring evacuee indictment of "those who conspire to rob the Nisei of their rights." Citizens became unduly excited as the objectionable news filtered into their haven from Tule Lake. As usual, however, there was more smoke than fire at its roots.

Actually, the WRA authorities had no intention to move <sup>the Center</sup> ~~Manzanar~~ and officials sought to reassure residents on that point. As far the bill before Congress, it, too, had but the slightest chance of becoming an act. This was the Holman Bill which had been introduced into the Senate and then been referred to <sup>the</sup> committee. The bill did not call for rescinding of citizenship of Japanese-Americans, but rather for amendment to the Federal Constitution which would permit Congress to regulate conditions under which persons subject to <sup>a</sup> ~~du~~ citizenship might become citizens of the United States.

Since the proposal, like all proposed amendments to the Constitution,

would require a two-thirds vote in each House, together with a ratification by three-fourths of the State Legislatures before it could become an act, there was no need for concern. However, that did not mean that general watchfulness should be relaxed in the interest of protecting the rights of the Nisei.

4 Absentee Voting in November Elections All evacuees with registered as having the right to vote in their communities were urged to send for their absentee ballots if they wished to participate in the national elections. The Manzanar FREE PRESS undertook to print an application blank in its next issue to guide the applicants.

## II THE NEW OFFICE OF BLOCK MANAGER

### A The Block Managers Take Office

At the final meeting of the Block Leaders Council, the decision ~~was~~ <sup>had been</sup> made that the Block Leaders should resign as a body. Under the policies that were to govern the new system of internal government, the office of Block Leader was being abolished and the office of Block Manager was taking its place. But the role of Block Manager was to be different from that of Block Leader. Block Leaders were elected by popular vote of their blocks; Block Managers were to be appointed by the Administration. The legislative functions which had been covered by the Block Leaders' Council were being taken over by a <sup>NEW</sup> Community Council, which would be made up of representatives from the blocks other than Block Managers. These representatives were to be chosen by election, on a basis yet to be determined. For this reason, it was important that the Charter or Constitution which was to be the framework of regulations governing the internal government program should be set up in as short a time as possible. In the meantime, a temporary Community Council was being set up, while an

Organization Committee was drawing plans and setting the machinery in motion for establishing the permanent government.

The office of Block Manager, since it would no longer be concerned with legislation was easily set into action, for in almost all cases it simply meant reappointing the former Block Leader to the succeeding position of Block Manager. In his letter to the Temporary Executive Secretary of the Block Leaders Council, accepting the resignations of the Block Leaders as a body, the Acting Project Director mentions that all of the ex-Block Leaders were receiving formal invitations to become Block Managers. By the following day, all but two accepted the new appointment. ~~The Block Managers were to be under the direct supervision of the Head of the Housing and Employment Division (Mr. Miller) who would make out their work slips. Block Managers would turn in daily reports as before.~~

#### B Difference Between Block Managers and Block Leaders

The duties of the Block Managers, as stated at the time ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> to include "the betterment of the blocks, promoting housing harmony, recreational activities, schooling, dispensing useful information, obtaining needed repairs, cooperating with other departments in maintaining law and order, minimizing fire hazards and other detailed duties." The managers would meet weekly on Fridays at 9<sup>00</sup>/<sub>a</sub>. m. to talk over their problems, receive administrative announcements, and confer in general on matters of Center welfare.

Most of the duties and responsibilities of the Block Managers were what <sup>the</sup> Block Leaders had given up on October 1<sup>st</sup>, <sup>H</sup> however, <sup>a difference</sup> lay in the fact that the Managers, not being elected representatives of the residents, were not to be held <sup>directly</sup> responsible to residents as the Leaders had been. The Managers were now direct employees of the Administration and <sup>a</sup> such were to represent the Administration to the people. If they could at

the same time satisfy some of the desires of the residents, they would be credited with taking initiative and their prestige would go up. As Block Leaders they had been expected to "fight" for the people all the time<sup>9</sup>, and when they had not gotten what the people wanted, they had been blamed for not fighting hard enough. (Actually there were not many things which could be obtained by "fighting" since whatever the Leaders were able to get could be gotten without that kind of an approach to the Administration.)

A second difference to be noted between the office of Block Manager and Block Leader was that the Manager was to be given more tasks by the Administration. As the days passed his job was to be busier than the one he had held as a Leader. In the Project Director's report, (dated October 12, (No 61) a detailed list of the new duties was set down. These were classified in two parts, namely, services rendered to the residents<sup>9</sup>, and services required by the Administration. Following is the list:

C Services Rendered by Block Managers

1 For the Residents

- a Notify the Maintenance<sup>H</sup> Division<sup>D</sup> of complaints on electricity, stove, roofing, plumbing. Sometimes, visit warehouse 35 to urge speedy action.
- b Distribution of soap, mops, and brooms upon request.
- c Organize voluntary<sup>EW</sup> carpenters to work on insulation of barracks. In most cases, managers themselves can help as carpenters.
- d Post bulletins issued by the Administration on the outside walls of the block office and of the mess hall.
- e Call block meeting (general meetings or barrack leaders' meeting) to inform the residents of latest change in administrative policies such as transition from Block Leader to Block Manager<sup>9</sup>.
- f Distribution of FREE PRESS Managers' assistance<sup>ts</sup> to distribute Free Press. (3 English copies and 3 Japanese copies each week.)
- g Answer<sup>9</sup> general inquiries for the residents. In order to give correct answers, managers sometimes have to go to the Administration Building

or Warehouse to contact the right party.

- h Write English letters for those having difficulty in writing and fill in selective service questionnaires.
- i Maintain harmonious contact and cooperation with the mess hall, housing deputies, and social workers so as to correlate their functions.
- j Distribution of Sunday papers in order to save the residents the trouble of going down to the canteen for Sunday papers. Manager will make survey of those who buy Sunday papers, and make an order to the canteen and sell them at this residence on Sunday morning.
- k In case of death of a resident, the Manager would tender condolence to the family and help with funeral arrangements. Sometimes ~~he should~~, after consultation with influential residents, he should go around and collect donations from the block residents.
- l Conduct various entertainment or lecture programs in conjunction with other departments in order to afford wholesome pastime to the residents. For

Example:

Celebration of the opening of mess hall; recorded Japanese music; community variety show; religious lecture; Town Hall forum ~~every~~ other Saturday afternoon.

- m Renting block office to various activities:
    - \* Branch library at block 2, 3, 29, and 33;
    - \* Goh Club at block 26;
    - \* Flower-making class and knitting class for women at Blocks 29 and 34.
  - n Renting sewing-machines to women. One machine was provided <sup>for</sup> each block office by the management and many women ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> daily taking ~~advantage~~ <sup>advantage</sup> of this facility.
  - o Collect donations to erect a basketball court in the block ground. For
- Example:  
Block 16 collected ~~\$23.00~~ <sup>dollars</sup> to buy lumber for the court.

## 2 For the Management

- a Attend weekly conference of Block Managers at Town Hall to receive instructions, obtain answers to questions asked by residents, and to inform the management of the sentiments of the people.
- b Hand in daily reports enumerating duties performed and indicating trend of the sentiments of the people.
- c Notify the residents of announcements or instructions from the management; disseminate correct information on various administrative matters.
- d Recommendation of a Fire Marshall for every 4 blocks.
- e Conduct survey on employment situation and urge those who are not

employed to help fill vacancies. Recently managers tried to find men for rubbish crew and the food warehouse crew.

- f Register eligible voters in their respective blocks to prepare for the coming election of community councilmen. Tell the residents of importance of the self-government program.
- g Make a survey of stoves missing from apartments and report to the Housing Division.
- h Make a survey of cracks in linoleum floors in the blocks and report to the Housing Division.
- i Assist the Housing Division in making a survey of the housing situation and see to it that a suitable distribution of living space is maintained.
- j Listen to complaints, suggestions and opinions of the residents and keep the management informed of the trend of people's sentiments by presenting interpretive reports. Advise the residents of general information and try to minimize complaints, rumors and quarrels among the residents. This saves the management the trouble of meeting many individual complaints.
- k Cooperate with Fire Marshall in organizing a fire fighters' brigade in each block.

D Daily Reports

Following is the suggested formula for the daily reports which were to be made out by the Block Managers:

1 Activities of the Manager What did you do today? Was there any assignment from the Administration, and if there was, how was it carried out? Did you contact any administrative department today? What was the result?

2 Activities and Conditions of the Block Is anything new going on today? Any change? What are the residents talking about? Tell us how the residents are conducting themselves: Any family problem or quarrel? How was it solved? Are there any complaints? What are they complaining about? What <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ being done about them?

3 Meetings If there was a block meeting, what were the opinions expressed by the residents?

4 Services How many services were rendered to the residents by

9

your office? Number of duties performed with notation on nature of the services?

5 Recreation What is going on at the recreation hall? Any special event held at the block mess hall?

6 Announcements How did you inform the residents about what was discussed at the latest managers' conference?

7 General Condition What is your opinion on the general condition of the Center? What do you think should be done to improve the morale?

8 Suggestions What suggestions were found in your suggestion box today?

a. Block managers will benefit the residents if they keep a file of the Mansanar FREE PRESS and keep themselves informed of all administrative and other activities. Also they would do well to make an index file of all Caucasian staff members and of Japanese workers holding executive positions in various departments.

b. When you hear rumors of doubtful origin, be sure to inform the Administration through your daily reports.

c. When you hear complaints, be sure to state the complaints in your report and give suggestion as to how the complaint could be handled.

(Page 1-2  
October 12, 1942 Subject: Suggested Improvement on Block Managers' Reports.)

E A Typical Block Meeting

A typical block meeting, based on what went on at some 15 different blocks meeting throughout the Center, in October might be summed up about as follows:

The Meeting, scheduled for 7:30, would start at 8<sup>10</sup> p.m., half an hour late. The Block Manager would open the meeting by thanking the residents for turning out in the cold night. The chief cook would announce hot coffee for warming everyone up. This announcement would be followed by

applause.

Discussion of the business of the evening begins. Tonight it will be concerned with the shortage of workers for the fundamental work of the Center.

"You know that 1,000 of our young men have gone to Idaho and Montana for the beet crops," the Chairman begins, "and that this has left our crew in the Center short-handed. Rubbish has begun to pile up everywhere, and there are not enough collectors to pick it up. We have been asked to volunteer to pile trash on the trucks until regular workers can be employed. Who will volunteer?"

Before anyone has time to raise his hand, a man stands up: "Isn't it about time to put an end to this volunteer spirit?" he asks. "It sets a bad precedent. Pretty soon, they'll be having everything done by volunteers. These are jobs that are supposed to be paid for."

Active and energetic discussion follows this protest. In the end, 4 men volunteer to work "for a little while." It developed that the voice of dissension was from a resident <sup>is</sup> who ~~was~~ unemployed.

The cook is next called upon for a report. This report, too, has to do with the shortage of workers. Idaho and Montana have made inroads on the kitchen crew. "This is not volunteer work," the cook reminds his listeners encouragingly. "You will get your <sup>dollars</sup> \$16.00 a month." His statement is followed by an appeal: "If all the residents of the block will make it a regular habit to eat in their own mess hall instead of going to the next block kitchen, it will be possible to get a steady amount of supplies, and to provide better meals. As it is now, sometimes 250 people will show up for dinner, sometimes 320, and then maybe the number will drop down the next day to 210. When we are to have, let us say, steak and cake, the world gets around like wireless telegraph, and we have an overflow. When it is to be stew, word also gets around,

and only 210 people will show up. The mess hall would appreciate it if everyone would be more regular."

Chuckles and smiles follow. Half-jokingly, a resident, gray-haired and grizzled, remarks: "Maybe we ought to keep it a military secret when it is steak and cake."

However, undismayed at the levity, the cook continues: "Winter is coming, and we want to have a good supply of tsukemono (pickled radishes, turnips and other vegetables.) We would like to use the ironing-room, but I understand it is going to be used for a children's playroom. The next thing we thought of was to dig a cellar. We need the help of husky young men to dig that cellar. Can we get it?"

Five hands are instantly raised. Cracks one: "You had better feed us good stuff, now that we are going to dig a nice deep <sup>e</sup> cellar for you."

The Chairman introduces a new topic for discussion.

"You all know of the terrible tragedy that occurred here recently (referring to a suicide and murder). The children who <sup>have</sup> survived <sup>d</sup> this tragedy are innocent <sup>victims</sup> ~~victims~~. The Social Welfare Department is taking up a collection for them, but I would like to ask the residents if they are willing to be included, no matter how large or small the amount will be."

A hand goes up. "I don't know if it is true or not--it may be just a rumor--but I understand <sup>that</sup> the parents were very wealthy."

The Chair<sup>a</sup>man replies that he has not heard that, but that he wouldn't know. Another hand goes up. "The police report that they were not wealthy."y."

This is interrupted by still another resident: "I don't think the wealth or <sup>p</sup>roverty of the parents should have anything to do with our giving. If we feel sympathetic and wish to express our sorrow and sympathy, that should have nothing to do with our giving."

At this point, the resident who had protested against asking for volunteers for rubbish collection, rises: "I would like to be informed what the money is to be used for."

At this, the Chairman scratches his head and admits that he does not know. The inquirer goes on: "I felt terrible when the tragedy happened. I happen to be from the same gun (country) and same ken (prefecture) in Japan as the dead man. I would do everything in the world for the children who are innocent victims. I would even give them half of everything I have to eat. I would share all my things. That is just the way my wife feels, too. If some people would donate two dollars for this fund, I would gladly donate four dollars. But what I would like to know is: How is this money going to be handled? Who is going to handle it? And what is it going to be spent for?"

The man who had asked if the parents had been wealthy people rises and taking a dollar from his pocket, hands it to the Chairman saying, "I would like to start our block's fund. Please take this."

The man who had made the long discourse remains motionless.

A person in the audience suggests that, instead of taking up the collection then the Block Manager should go individually to each home. This is agreed to by all.

A new subject is brought up. The Chair asks, "Will all who want Sunday papers raise their hands? The canteen management informs us that the Sunday newspapers can be delivered to our block without our having to go all the way down there."

Some 30 hands go up. Of these, 25 want the Los Angeles Examiner, 10 wanted the Los Angeles Times, Comments one, "Just think, we have to pay 15 cents for a single copy now. Prices sure must be going up on everything."

It is already 9:30 p.m. Some one in the rear suggests that the

all  
copy

meeting adjourn. "It's awfully cold in here," he adds.

The Chairman <sup>INQUIRES</sup> ~~ask~~ if there is any other business.

A man rises. "I would like to suggest that we assign a table in the mess hall to each family. That is, we ought to have a place, a permanent place, for each of us. In this way, a family unit can be kept together at mealtimes. Parents can teach their children good table manners and see that they do not leave so much food on their plates. You know, that is one of the things we have missed most in here--family meals. If we had assigned tables for every one, it would not be necessary for all of us to line up as we have been doing. The days are getting very cold now, too. What do you think of the idea?"

Heads nod in general agreement. The cook wished <sup>s</sup> he had thought of that before.

Before the Chairman can take the matter up, a woman rises. She looks about uneasily and comments: "I think we should thank the man who helped build that very <sup>artistic</sup> ~~artistic~~ and beautiful pond which we have on our block. It isn't every block that has such a <sup>N</sup> enjoyable sight. Visitors who come here say it is the most beautiful thing in this country." Applause follows her as she sits down.

The Chairman thanks her, asks if there is any other business, and pauses. No one rises. The meeting is adjourned. In 5 minutes, the hall is empty. (Proj. Rep. No 65, October 14, 1942)

#### F Summary on Block Manager's Duties

As can be seen from the foregoing ~~list~~, the job of Block Manager was no "dream job." A Manager's duties ranged from that of errand boy to that of counselor. Often he was called upon to settle family disputes. Complaints about slow water ~~d~~rains, broken doorsteps, torn tar paper, leaking roofs, blown-out fuses, and used-up light globes were brought to him. He was continually having to attend meeting<sup>s</sup> in Town

Hall, at the Coop Congress, committees on this and that <sup>all of</sup> ~~which~~ could easily consume 2 and 3 hours at a time. He was on duty 24 hours a day, for it was not uncommon for him to be awakened at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning by some worried resident asking to be rushed to the hospital in an <sup>m</sup> ambulance.

In the discharge of these small routine obligations, he generally wore an air of unconcern, such that the people <sup>rarely</sup> realized that he had <sup>greater</sup> responsibilities which were not so visible. He had an "education" task to perform for it was his job to see that the residents were kept informed of all the <sup>times</sup> ~~police~~ and instructions which emanated from the Administration and at the same time to keep the Administration aware of the thoughts and attitudes and wishes <sup>s</sup> of the people. He was the tiny cog which geared the wheels of the WRA with those of the evacuees group.

#### C Block Managers Hold Initial Meeting

On October 5, the Block Managers met and chose a chairman for their Assembly. Present at this meeting was their new supervisor, the Head of the Employment and Housing Section, as well as the Head of the Public Relations Section, <sup>the latter</sup> ~~who~~ explained how important it was for the managers to cooperate with him in the matter of reports.

Also taken up at this meeting were the selection of a fire marshal for each district under a plan advanced by the Fire Chief, recommendations for the early opening of school, and difficulties connected with housing, cots, mattresses and blankets. The Block Manager launched into his new job quickly.

#### III RAPPROACHMENT BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND EVACUEES

A proposal was made by the ~~Publications~~ Office that a series of informal meetings be held in the blocks with some of the Caucasian staff members. The Project Director and other administrative heads were to be invited to attend block meetings, particularly in discussing community

problems. When the suggestion was presented to the Administration at one of its staff meetings, the response was favorable. If held once a week, at least <sup>10</sup> ten or more such gatherings could be planned for, at which the division heads would be present to give opinions, information, and to listen to what the evacuees had to say.

There were many evacuees, particularly among the Issei men and women, who had never seen the Director in person, nor other division heads. It would be a good thing for all residents to understand how administrative heads were conducting their daily duties and for them to get a better grasp of what the WRA was trying to do for them. They should understand that the Caucasian personnel were not in the Center to regiment or control the Japanese but as consultants and guardians. ~~they were there~~ to help and guide. Not too many of the evacuees had this point of view for many held that the WRA was trying to exploit and oppress the Japanese.

Since the ultimate goal for all evacuees was return to American communities, it was important that they should get to know the Caucasians as neighbors and friends.

#### VI PLAN FOR A PERMANENT SELF-GOVERNMENT

(Oct 12, 1942: Opinion No 32, WRA, Washington) (From the Solicitor)

The temporary government, called for in Director Eisenhower's memo of June 5, was empowered only to make recommendations to the Project Director. Ultimate authority was vested in him.

A permanent government plan, formulated by the evacuees, and made subject to a controlling outline contained in Administration Instruction 34 as well as to review by the Project Director, was projected on October 1, 1942. <sup>W</sup> Within this framework, two agencies, <sup>2</sup> the Community Council and the Judicial Commission (or Committee), were to be set up.

The Community Council was to be the legislative agency, authorized to make regulations which would not be in conflict with administrative<sup>vs</sup> orders or existing law.

The Judicial Commission was to be authorized to hold hearings for evacuees charged with violation of such regulations, and to render decisions which would be reviewed by the Project Director, who in turn could remand any case for the further consideration of the Judicial Commission.

Criminal cases, involving felonies, would not come within the jurisdiction of the Commission, but would be referred to state and local officials for prosecution. For civil disputes, a system of arbitration was to be set up in accord with state law, with cases not susceptible to arbitration referred to outside courts.

Close cooperation and collaboration between all of these agencies within the self-government plan and the Project Director was called for.

#### A Steps in Setting Up the New Program

##### 1. The Registration of Voters

It was not easy for the Block Managers to accept the requirement, laid out in Administrative Notice No 34, to give up their legislative responsibilities. The role of governing was henceforth to be placed in other hands and it devolved upon the ~~Block Administrators~~ to prepare the way for the new governing board. With their help a ~~register of voters~~ was to be drawn up and these voters were to elect the representatives in government. All persons, whether alien or citizens, 18 years of age and over, were eligible to vote and only registered voters could nominate candidates for councilmen, propositions, referenda, recalls, amendments, and then matters pertaining to community government. A 100 percent registration was called for, with the list to be completed by October

10. Furlough workers would be registered as they returned to the Center. After the Community Council was set up, the Block Managers would no longer need to be responsible for the voters.

## 2. Drawing up the Constitution and Other Documents

~~The 11-~~  
~~A 20-man~~ commission had been appointed to draw up the Constitution (or Charter) <sup>was augmented by four new members to cover absences or leaves of regular members. This</sup> upon which the powers of the ~~Manzanar Community Council~~ would rest. <sup>its</sup> The Commission, after working on ~~their~~ <sup>its</sup> assignment for about a month, <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ ready to present <sup>its</sup> their document for approval by the second week in October. Approval of the Commission's work by the Project Director (given on October 3) <sup>I</sup> would make it ready for submission to the people. Headquarters for the new Council would be Town Hall and the <sup>C</sup> Commission would be under the supervision of the Head of the Community Services Division.

A manual for the <sup>J</sup> Judiciary and <sup>A</sup> Arbitration <sup>C</sup> Committees was prepared by members assigned to the task and was ready for submission early in October.

Ratification of the Charter and the election of officers was to follow as soon as possible after registration. In the meantime, block meetings were being organized for the purpose of introducing and explaining the provisions of the new Charter.

## 3. Functions of the Council

### 1. The First Council Meeting

The first meeting of the Community Council was attended by the Acting Project Director <sup>I</sup> who stressed the importance of some of the functions which the Council would have to perform. <sup>H</sup> He pointed out that a number of activities already projected for Manzanar awaited the election of the Council, among them being the ~~Merit Rating Board~~ which were to be appointed and set up by the Council. Also, the Council would have to be responsible for making recommendations as to whether

private industries were to be set up, whether employees should keep all of their wages or be paid at the outside prevailing rates, or whether the surplus beyond WRA scales was to go into a community fund.

At this meeting, the Commission received the report from the Chairman of the registration committee that nearly all of the eligible voters of the Center had been listed and that the stage was set for the Charter election. A preliminary estimate placed <sup>at</sup> this number of eligible voters at 6,000.

Mimeographed copies of the Charter were translated in Nihongo for distribution to every apartment in the Center. English copies were also prepared although the complete text of the Charter had already appeared in the FREE PRESS. Questions and answers in Nihongo, to explain the self-government plan, were drawn up by a committee.

A meeting was held jointly with the Block Managers on October 31 to discuss *the whole plan*

## 2. Election Commission Meets Delegates in Open Forum

An open forum, sponsored by the Commission, was scheduled for October 31, in one of the mess halls at which Block Managers, with 4 or 5 representatives from each block were asked to attend. Full participation in discussion was invited.

## C. The Director Visits Manzanar

On the afternoon of October 7, the national <sup>D</sup> Director of WRA placed his official stamp of approval on the government Charter which had been drawn up by the Commission on Community Government. This completed the several weeks of hard work done by the members of the <sup>Commission</sup> ~~committee~~ who had been appointed by the Administration. The next step was to familiarize the residents of the Center with the provisions of the Charter and to submit the document to a general referendum for acceptance. The plan was to publish the Constitution in the FREE PRESS and then to hold

a series of meetings so that there would be no misunderstanding as to its provisions.

The national <sup>D</sup>Director expressed his admiration for the Commission's "fine work", and claimed that several of the provisions for the judicial procedures might well be adopted by outside courts.

Manzanar had made many unavoidable mistakes in its early days, he said, mistakes which were understandable since it was the first of the relocation centers. These mistakes had not been repeated and they all had helped to produce a more efficient administration for the other centers which could profit by them.

CHAPTER 8 TROUBLE BREWS

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CHAPTER 8

TROUBLE BREWS

I CAMP PROBLEMS

During the month of November, the Administration encountered a number of problems--some old, some new--which it attempted to solve with varying degrees of success. Difficulties with employment classifications and wages, kitchen workers, cooperatives, supplies and equipment, self-govern~~ment~~ment, occupied the attention of the Block Managers and tried the patience of the Administration. In nearly all cases, these protests were expressions of the underlying feelings of insecurity and anxiety felt by all evacuees in regard to their future, reactions to the frustration imposed upon them by evacuation, and to some extent a growing boldness which paralleled the progress of Japanese winnings in the Pacific.

The WRA was not unaware of the tensions and the general basis of the problems and it revealed its understanding in several penetrating analyses of the evacuee attitudes and outbursts. Its solution lay in a relocation plan which would place at least the younger evacuees in securer and more permanent jobs on the outside. But this plan did not appeal to many of the older people who knew they would carry their apprehensions and worries with them if they were to leave camp. Even though permission had not yet been officially given for the Issei to relocate, many of them were far from ready even to consider relocating. Instead they adopted an attitude of "diggin' in" for the duration, an attitude which led to a very great concentration<sup>of</sup> attention on matters of moment to them in the immediate present. Hence a current shortage of sugar, or an impending shortage of oil, or a more-or-less based suspicion of administrative motives and objectives, became to them a matter of all-consuming concern.

It did not make for improvement in stability when other--and perhaps

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unavoidable--matters came up, such as a change in the directorship of the P project, or a new ruling from the WRA Washington office reversing itself on some policy. On November 5, the Acting Project Director who had won the confidence of the residents was called back to the WRA R regional O office to resume his duties there. Replacing him, and again in a temporary capacity, came the man who, as Chief of the Community Government Division of WRA, had earlier set up the Manzanar Charter.

The new Acting Project Director was introduced to the Block Managers at their assembly on the day following his arrival. Evacuee questions and comments at this meeting centered chiefly around the creature comforts of living rather than around political forms or abstract principles. The national Election Day had been held only two days previously, but it had come and gone in Manzanar as "just another day." A goodly number of Nisei and Kibei had voted at the last primaries, perhaps because it had been the first election since the evacuation, or perhaps because the outside world still seemed close to them and the national issues real. But as apathy overtook the young citizens compelled to live in an enclosed compound, fewer absentee votes were cast on November 3. Time and the High Sierras, as well as barbed wire and the war, were adding to the insulating effect against a <sup>t</sup>urbulent world.

"There's not much to choose between, anyway; it is just a matter of the lesser of two evils..." or "Well, no matter who is elected, it doesn't <sup>make much difference to us, they're shut up in camp and it won't</sup> effect us," were the time-worn phrases used to sum up the situation of the evacuees.

Undoubtedly, many of the more progressive citizen Nisei were not represented in this negativism, for the beet crops had taken away many of the voters from the Center on furlough work. Undoubtedly, too, many were present in the Center who had a real stake in California's gubernatorial

elections, and these were taking no part in keeping their stake strong and sharp.

A Rumors

Rumors of impending woes continued to catch the imagination of the evacuees, not the least of which, during November, was an outcome of the elections for voters had placed in the office of governor of California, a man who had made some unfavorable statements regarding the Japanese in California. The governor's installation was the cue for a new crop of rumors to the effect that Manzanar's relocation project would be moved to the <sup>h</sup> hinterland. That this rumor was not confirmed <sup>N</sup> to Manzanar itself can be detected from the flood of letters which came in from other <sup>c</sup> Centers asking when the change would take place. Rumor added embellishments, too, in that it soon set a date for the move as <sup>of</sup> the following February; and a reason, namely, that people evacuating from Hawaii would be placed in Manzanar. The fact that the school buildings were not yet started added fuel to the rumor and it assumed such dimensions that the new Acting Project Director took up the question <sup>in</sup> the Block Managers Assembly.

The administrative official explained that the school buildings were being held up because the materials had not yet arrived, even though priority was being given them by the War Production Board. The Block Managers, he cautioned, should keep a level head and try to have the people appraised of, the <sup>r</sup> true facts in the case. He was answered that one way to kill this particular rumor was to draft a blueprint of the camp, showing where the schools were to be built, and so on.

B Complaints

1. Screen Doors Although it was November, residents were still disturbed because some of them did not have screen doors for their apartments. It

was not so much the need for a door as for the concrete evidence that all residents were being treated alike. Signs of "unfairness," when some had screens and some did not, when some apartment doors boasted of door handles and some did not, brought protests and requests that the new Project Director do something to remedy the situation.

2 Oil The oil situation, too, was getting serious. In the criticism leveled by one Block Manager, a crisis was being created because the WRA had switched the oil contract from a large reliable firm to a small concern, which could neither take care of the needs at Manzanar nor be responsible for covering them, all it seems, "just to save a few dollars." Cold days were coming--indeed they were already on hand--yet the residents were being asked to burn not more than one gallon of oil per day. This, they maintained, was playing with their comfort and health. They blamed the Administration for getting them into this predicament and demanded that something be done about it right away. Repetition of that sort of thing would mean inevitable loss of confidence in the Administration.

3 Clothing Meanwhile the oil-crew boys were expressing their particular dissatisfaction because their clothes were wearing out in the rough work of distributing oil. Constant complaints were reaching Town Hall that clothing replacements were not being distributed to them from the warehouse. Yet subsequent investigation by the Block Managers could show no deeper cause for the delay than the fact that the warehouse needed <sup>ed</sup> time to make up a list of oil-crew workers.

4 Blankets It became necessary to make an inventory of government-issued blankets and cots throughout the blocks. For this purpose, the Housing Section sent out deputies to the apartments. But at the barracks the deputies were met with suspicion and resentment, particularly when the residents <sup>were</sup> asked to sign their names more than once. A repeat request

for their signatures, they held, should mean a return to them of the first forms they had signed. They did not want to take a chance on being held accountable for twice as many property items as they had actually been given. They were becoming very suspicious of the Administration.

5 Blame on Terminal Islanders When incidents took place almost always the scapegoats turned out to be the Terminal Islanders. Major and minor offenses were lightly attributed to them, often without investigation or proof. At least, this was the complaint of a girl who brought her charge directly to Town Hall. She pointed out, rightly enough, that the Terminal Island boys had always to be on the defensive, and that that was bad for their morale.

"I think they should be given a chance to prove themselves worthy," she declared.

C Private Enterprise vs Community Enterprise

Japanese celebrate New Years with "mochi" a concoction which is made from sweet rice. Consequently, with New ~~Year~~<sup>Year</sup> in the offering and with no ready access to other markets, the appearance of an offering of sweet rice in Manzanar naturally proved most welcome. Much as the evacuees appreciated the presence of the commodity, however, they considerably disapproved of the high price which the ex-merchants were asking for it. As public sentiment found still one more cause for resentment, the residents turned again to the Administration in the hope that the private profiteering could be offset by the Administration's supply<sup>ing</sup> them with the sweet rice necessary for the manufacture of the cake.

This trading in rice was not the only instance of small-scale enterprise cropping out within the Center. Such goods and services were being supplied as rice, noodles,

Christmas cards, barber and beauty-shop treatments, all indirect violation of Administrative Instruction No. 26 which stated that private enterprises engaged in retail sale of consumer goods and services should not be permitted in the Center.

The Cooperative Enterprises Division fought this competition and tried to make the people see that all goods and services should be supplied through the cooperative association, "in order that all may benefit and share equally."

But the residents did not have too kindly a feeling towards the cooperative. At the moment, they were especially incensed because of talk of having to pay a large income tax, which would make direct inroads into the fund to be distributed to Co-op customers. The gains and benefits which they had been told about thus threatened to dissolve into thin air.

D The Cooperative Store is the Object of Arson

On Friday evening, November 27, a near catastrophe was headed off when a fire was discovered at the general store and extinguished before it could gain any damaging headway. All the evidence pointed unmistakably to attempted arson. An empty fruit can containing oil-soaked strips of underwear was found under the west side, approximately 20 feet from the north end of the building. To enable the blaze to start unnoticed, an empty paper carton had been employed to shield the flames.

Residents watched around the store all night. In the morning, they suggested that the store be moved out of the block and nearer to the Board of Directors or the Project Director.

Residents of the block in which the store was situated decided that some action must be taken to remove a "menace" from their homes. If not official action were taken, they stated, they themselves would do something

about it. Meetings were held in the afternoon and evening to discuss the arson and the demand for removal of the store. Unable to cope with the situation, <sup>the</sup> members of the Board of Directors resigned as a body. Since no decision could be reached as to a new location, it was agreed that the store should be closed until another and more acceptable spot could be found for it.

E The Sugar Situation

Early in November, evacuee concern in regard to sugar flared up again. One of the Block Managers, who entered a note in his daily report <sup>that</sup> *"rumor concerning the sugar supply are rampant"* reported that he went to see the Chief Steward of the camp as a member of a special committee appointed by the Block Managers Assembly to inquire into the sugar situation.

Three days later, the sugar committee was given a written statement from the steward, through the Assistant Project Director, outlining how the sugar was being used. A copy of this statement was to be given to each Block Manager since the sugar situation was already "camp-wide talk."

On November 12, the sugar report was delivered to the Block Managers Assembly by the committee's chairman. In addition to supplying the mess halls, the steward stated that his department was supplying sugar for the hospital and was also building up a surplus for the shoyu sauce factory, and the shoyu and miso plants. These enterprises were using approximately 750 to 900 pounds per month. On hearing this, a member of the Production Division who was present objected that only <sup>three</sup> sacks had been received for the purpose of making shoyu and miso.

Apparently, some degree of success was felt as a result of the sugar committee's investigation for "it was reported that the kitchen received more sugar after this incident." However, a roll call was taken to see which kitchens were receiving enough sugar and the general reply was

"not enough." In several mess halls, "grapefruit was served without sugar, bitter chocolate and even tea."

Not satisfied with the answer given in the Chief Steward's memorandum, the Chairman and Secretary of the Block Managers Assembly, decided to take up the matter with the Project Director and for this action a new sugar committee was appointed.

On November 18, the Acting Project Director appeared before the Block Managers Assembly in person and gave a detailed report as to how the sugar was being distributed, the various purposes for which it was needed, the legal requirements for giving up sugar ration coupons, and so on.

Reviewing the whole matter, the Project Director pointed out that the problem had been first taken up on August 8, when the head of the hospital had sent a memo to the Chief Steward stating that a larger sugar allotment was needed for the hospital to take care of the needs of high caloric and carbonic diets and to provide sufficient sugar for the Children's Village whose occupants needed it for their fruit juices. The Chief Steward had taken up the request with the Regional Office but had been told that no change could be made for either institution. Both would have to abide by the <sup>six</sup> 8-ounce allotment per person.

As shoyu sauce was being manufactured in Manzanar not only for one but for all relocation centers, its production made inroads into the general sugar supply and this at times reduced the normal per-person allotment. This had happened during September and October when the amount had dropped to <sup>seven</sup> 7 ounces. Detailed figures were given as to the amount of sugar distributed to the shoyu sauce factory. An industrial permit for sugar was being sought, the director said.

In addition to this drain, an effort was being made to set aside some <sup>(in baking cakes, pastries, and the like for Thanksgiving</sup> sugar for use <sup>at</sup> Christmas and New Year's. Surpluses in one kitchen

were being redistributed to make up for shortages in other kitchens where attendance at meals had been especially heavy. Returned furlough workers with ration books, and Caucasian personnel who dined regularly at mess halls, were required to turn in their ration books. A new method of determining the amount of sugar needed was being worked out, with the sugar to be distributed not by meal counts but according to population <sup>N</sup> per ~~area~~ <sup>Per</sup> block.

From sugar, the Acting Project Director went on to outline the situation with regard to oil, coffee, soap, lumber, and <sup>the</sup> like. His careful analysis and presentation impressed the Block Managers so much that they were more than satisfied that an equitable distribution of all the commodities had been made. However, in justification to themselves, they pointed out to the Administration that "the Block Managers do not wish to make a fuss, but unless they do, no action is taken or explanations given." (Bl Mgr Ass, Nov 18, 1942) (See Appendix to Chapter 8)

F Complaints from the Kitchen

The head of the Kitchen Workers Union attended a meeting of the Block Managers Assembly on November 27, in an effort to get a better plan for estimating the quantity of food supplies to be delivered to the various mess halls. Supplies had been allocated according to the checker's accounts of meals eaten in the various mess halls but since the checkers obtained totals running up to 11,000 meal takers --and there were not more than 10,000 people in camp--the counts were obviously inaccurate. The reckoning problem was complicated since people did not always eat at the mess halls to which they were assigned. This resulted in a condition in which some kitchens were being patronized by more diners than they had budgeted for, and some kitchens were emerging with more supplies than they had expected to use. The condition had been particularly aggravated on

Thanksgiving dinner, when there had been an unusual degree of redistribution of diners. If food supplies could be allocated according to population per block this unevenness in drain could be ironed out. The assistance of the Block Managers Assembly was requested to bring <sup>it</sup> about a better arrangement.

A Block Manager asked the head of the Kitchen Workers Union why he did not bring the matter up before the Manzanar Work Corps, an organization which was set up to help all the workers in Manzanar. To this, the speaker replied that the Work Corps had not given <sup>in</sup> quick enough attention to the problems which had been brought up by workers. After a little discussion, a Block Managers' committee was appointed to cooperate with the mess hall group to study the matter. Also, a committee was drawn up to meet with the Work Corps on the same point.

G A Policeman is "Beat<sup>u</sup>ten Up"

On November 10, a new expression of violence flared up in the Center. That was the date on which the first of the furlough workers returned from the beet harvesting. In the group were many young men from Terminal Island to share the thrill of being welcomed at the gate by the throng of evacuees who gathered to meet the buses. Members of the internal security force were also on hand to inspect baggage for contraband. A Terminal Island youth proceeded to hand his jacket to a girl on the inside of the fence, but his attempt was noticed and forbidden by a police officer. In the action that followed, the jacket fell to the <sup>u</sup>ground and a bottle of liquor in its pocket was smashed, spilling its contents on the ground.

Immediately, protective action was taken by the internal security men to prevent any more smuggling of the forbidden liquor. Ropes were thrown around the buses, the crowd was ordered back, and the returnees were given a careful individual inspection. All liquor found was confiscated. In other words, what had promised to be a celebration of the workers'

homecoming turned instead into another government<sup>al</sup> inspection.

The sympathy of the crowd was definitely on the side of the returned furlough worker<sup>f</sup> and against the security officer who had apprehended him. Murmurs of "dog," "stooge," and "informer" were uttered by the angry on-lookers, frustrated once more in the face of this evidence of governmental authority.

But the protests did not stop with the crowd's murmurs of anger. That same evening at <sup>eight</sup> 8 o'clock, the unfortunate police officer was attacked by some 15 Terminal Island youths as he was leaving his home. Had it not been for his wife's screams, which summoned the help of a passing truck, the victim might have been seriously injured. As it was, he was badly bruised and required hospitalization.

While no official reason for the assault could be assigned by the investigating police since the assailants made good their escape--nevertheless the fact could not be overlooked that the injured policeman had been formerly active in the much disliked Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and that in the Center he was a strong supporter of the Administration and a member of the commission which drew up the Charter on self-government.

## II THE MANZANAR CHARTER

On October 31, the commissioners assigned to draw up the Charter submitted a report of their two months<sup>3</sup> work, preparatory to the election which would be held on November 9<sup>4</sup> for the electorate to pass upon it. In addition to the discussions at the mess hall meeting where the Charter was submitted at the end of October, an appeal was issued by the Education committee of the Commission to the people<sup>to</sup> to support the Charter. It was explained that the Commission had attempted to embody in the document both the instructions laid down in the administrative instructions from Washington and also to <sup>include</sup> ~~induce~~ "the maximum amount of rights and privileges for the

people of Manzanar."

Considerable criticism was raised at this October meeting over the discriminatory provision in the Charter which excluded the first-generation, non-citizens from holding elective office in the Council. Defense was offered by the Acting Project Director to the effect that this restriction was a provision, laid out by Washington after due deliberations, and one which recognized the status of American citizenship. It was really an extension of the democratic right to vote which was accorded to American-born Japanese on the outside and denied to the alien-born. The director pointed out, furthermore, that the non-citizen was eligible for appointment to the commissions and bodies to be created by the Council, even though he could not sit on the Council itself.

Another point under attack was the way in which the Commission on Self-government itself had been appointed. Some one objected because the commissioners had not been elected from throughout the Center instead of being appointed. The Commission scheduled to dissolve, once the Charter was approved and the Council elected.

#### A Education Meetings are Held on the Charter

At the Block Managers Assembly meeting on November 6, the Chairman of the commission's education committee explained certain aspects of the Charter which were not clear to the people who were nursing grievances. Some of these grievances were expressed toward the people who wrote the Charter, some toward the restrictive clause against non-citizens, which they felt might create and aggravate factions between the two groups, and some toward the section concerned with the Cooperative Enterprises. Some even indicated that peace negotiations might be effected by the existence of a self-government program in the relocation Center.

One Block Manager later intelligently summed up the opposition to the Charter in the following statement: "Many of the attacks, I believe, are purely imaginative or created by individuals, not to further their own aims or ambitions, but to do something in opposition to the governing bodies here. As long as this originated from the WRA, then it is felt that it does not mean any good to the Japanese." (Block Leaders Assembly Minutes, November 6)

After answering questions from the floor, the chairman of the education committee left the room. A suggestion was then made by a Block Manager that representatives for the Charter be sent through the Center who were well liked and who knew the Charter well in order to draw people to the education meetings.

Also, in order to give an opportunity to the 1,000 furlough workers, still absent in Idaho and Montana, to pass upon the Charter, the election date ratifying it was postponed to November 30. Registration of voters would be held open until <sup>three</sup> X days before the new election date to allow the returned furlough workers to register.

1 The Editor Speaks In the November 7th issue of the FREE PRESS, a strong editorial appeared in support of the Charter and the residents were called upon to vote for it in the forthcoming election.

2 The People Speak Following the publication of the FREE PRESS' supporting editorial, many arguments both for and against the Charter were heard throughout the Center. These the FREE PRESS summed up in its next issue:

"I'm against the Charter. We don't need self-government here. This is a prison camp and should be run by the Army."

"I'm for the Charter. If this is a prison camp, self-government will help change it. Do you want this to be a prison camp?"

"Vote 'no' on the Charter? What do you mean by putting a noose around

our own necks? The sweet words of the government are just to fool people who can be used."

"Vote 'yes' on the Charter. What do you mean by putting a noose around our own necks? Representative government allows us to say what we want. We prefer our own representatives, those whom we can elect ourselves."

"We don't need a Charter. The government is trying to cram something down our throats again. Self-government isn't necessary because there isn't anything for the Council to do that couldn't be done by the Army or the Administration."

"We need a Charter. If something were being crammed down our throats by the government, we wouldn't even have a chance to vote on it. Furthermore, neither the Army nor the Administration can understand fully the issues which affect us. Our own representatives can. Which do you prefer?"

"Vote 'no' on November 30. We don't like some provisions in the Charter. They could be changed; so vote against the Charter."

"Vote 'yes' on November 30. It says in the Charter that changes can be made. Unless there is a Charter, all talk is useless. Let's pass it first, then improve it to suit the people's needs."

"Vote against the Charter because it allows private business. Some individuals will make a lot of money. There will be favoritism."

"Vote for the Charter. It does not allow private business. That charge is false. Only cooperative enterprises are allowed in the Center."

"I'm against the Charter and self-government because it helps the government claim it treated us Japanese well. Many of us are aliens, ineligible to American citizenship. Some day we may have to answer to Japan."

"I'm for the Charter and self-government. It doesn't have anything to do with the war. If we don't help ourselves, who is going to? Don't you want to improve conditions for everyone? Or do you want to keep things

3 Reaction to Editorial The next issue of the FREE PRESS carried an answer to the editorial in the form of a letter to the editor. The writer of the letter protested the position the newspaper had taken in launching "a campaign to form our opinions," and in pressing the public for haste in accepting the Charter. It was all right, the writer said, to educate the people of Manzanar in regard to the WRA rulings and the contents of the Charter, but the people were to be allowed to form their own opinions.

Subsided to this letter was an editorial note commenting not only on the newspaper's right to take a stand in support of the Charter, but again stressing the need for public speed in giving it immediate approval so that pressing matters could be turned over to a Council whose formation depended upon the preliminary acceptance of a Charter.

Decisions affecting the welfare of all the residents had soon to be made: how defense work wages in the private industries planned should be scaled and distributed, how lawlessness should be curbed, the setting up of Merit Rating Boards, and other issues.

so that everyone will get ill treatment?" (Free Press, November 9, 1942)

#### B Committee of 72 Representatives from Blocks to Study Charter

On November 18, an administrative official met with the Block Managers Assembly to give further explanations in regard to the origin and make-up of the Charter. The members of the Commission, he reported, had been selected by the Project Director from a list of nominees proposed by the Block Leaders and the people. The commissioners had done a fine job, but there were some finishing touches which were to be turned over to the people for which purpose two representatives were requested from each block. Elections for these 72 representatives would be held the following Sunday under the auspices of the Block Managers. This committee of 72 would have the opportunity to study needed changes in the Charter as drawn up by the Commission. Possibly, for example, they might care to include an Advisory Board of Issei to offset the WRA clause restricting non-citizens from a place on the Council itself.

Although some people expressed themselves against the Charter each block held an election on November 22, to select two members to sit with the committee to prepare <sup>the charter</sup> for final submission to the voters. This date for the public to pass on the Charter itself was set for November 30 or December 1.

#### III "UNDERGROUND" ACTIVITIES

The discontent in Manzanar was not without its dramatic flares, however, for during the month of November there cropped out an eruption of protest which savored of an organized "underground" movement. The work of this group was calculated to <sup>raise</sup> the public to organized resistance to the WRA program and its method was to instil fear of its own might. Anonymous messages were issued, threats were made, and power was implied in its self-appointed leadership. However, there is no evidence to indicate

that it was in any way supported by bodies larger than itself or by groups on the outside.

#### A Protest in Public Places

1. Posters As early as October 31, bulletins began to appear in mess halls and latrines protesting against the proposed self-government program. These bulletins were written in Japanese, sometimes with pen, sometimes with brush, and were posted in the dead of night in defiance of administrative orders which required prior approval of every poster that was posted up in a public place. Translated, the first of such bulletins read as follows;

"Attention! We do not recognize any necessity for a self-government system. We should oppose anything like this as drawing a rope around our necks. Let the Army take care of everything. Stop taking action which might bring trouble to our fellow people."

(Signed) Blood Brothers Corps Concerned about the People

2. Letters On Friday and Saturday nights following (November 6 and 7), letters of a similar caliber were sent through the mail to the 17 members of the Commission on Self-government. There were two sets of these letters, both written in Japanese but apparently by two different persons, and both signed "Blood Brothers." The members of the Commission expressed the opinion that the serious tone of both letters was lost when translations were made into English. However, for what they can convey, the translations are herewith included: The literal translation of the shorter of the two is as follows:

"Think of the shame the American government has put us into!  
Think of the disruption of properties, and the imprisonment of the Nisei!

To start a self-government system now is nothing but a dirty, selfish scheme. As the Army put us in here without regard to our own will, we should leave everything up to the Army, whether they want to kill us or eat us.

Because this is the only way the American government can think of as a means of absolving itself from the blame of misconducting its affairs, the government thought of a bad scheme; that is, the

the formation of the self-government system.

The hairy beasts (whites) are out to actually run the government while using you people who can be used. It is evident if you read Article I of the Charter and can be proved by the facts of the past. You fellows who are acting blindly are big fools.

If you do such things as those, which tighten the noose around the necks of your fellow people, some day you will receive punishment from Heaven. So beware!

(Signed) Blood Brothers Corps with Worry for their Fellow People."

The literal translation of the longer of the two letters sent to the members of the Self-government Commission is as follows:

"Calling you fools who are running around trying to set up a self-government system.

Think back! The fact that the positions, the properties, and the honor which our fellow Japanese built up and won by blood and sweat during the past 50 years have all been stamped and sacrificed by the arrogant and insulting American government after we have been put into this isolated spot.

For what are you beating around? What use is there for establishing self-government? Especially with such a Charter so full of contradictions? Although we are ignorant people, we can foresee the tragic results which will come out of this self-government.

Remember that the majority of our people are absolutely against the self-government system. What do you think of the fact that <sup>only</sup> months ago, in Santa Anita, the same attempt which you are now trying was made to organize a self-government. But it broke down before it materialized.

Leave <sup>every</sup> everything completely as the Army pleases. If you nincompoops realize the fact that you are Japanese, why don't you assume the honorable attitude which is typical of Japanese? What a shameful sight you are about to present by being fooled by the sweet words of the government! By so doing, you are inviting suffering to your fellow Japanese.

We fellow Japanese are all ~~like~~ like fish laid on the cutting board, about to be sliced. To jump around at this stage is a cowardly thing to do. Better lie down and let the government do as it <sup>is</sup> pleases, either cook or fry us.

You should remain calm and conduct yourselves like nationals of a first-class power. Give more thoughts and deep reflections as to your attitude.

(Signed) Blood Brothers Corps <sup>is</sup> which is Concerned

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over Fellow Nations"

3 More Posters During November, additional posters were tacked on mess hall bulletins, the later ones denouncing the people who had torn down the earlier ones. One, signed by the "Southern California Justice Group" demanded that several Caucasian officials be ousted and also it made threatening statements to certain Japanese.

The writers could not be identified, although particular individuals came under suspicion because of their past activities and public utterances. Investigators thought they recognized similarities in the use of certain phrases and statements. Also, they attribute the poster-posting to people who were older than the "gangs" previously referred to. The perpetrators were most active in, and indeed appeared to have control of the mess halls. Their technique was "typically Japanese," their procedure being to give one warning in advance as if to salve their conscience, and then to attack.

B Project Director's Report on Poster Activities

The activities of the poster-posters became so pronounced that they were made the subject of a special project report to the Regional Office of WRA. The findings of the investigators are briefly reviewed here:

Two signatures appeared with greatest regularity on the posters: a "Southern California Blood Brothers Groups," and b "Manzanar Black Dragon Society." Almost without exception, they appeared in all 38 blocks of the Center simultaneously. They were written in intelligible, coherent statements, almost always with a closing editorial note. Frequently they carried the warning, "Any one who tears this down is a dirty dog of a stooge."

The first attacks were leveled against the self-government program, especially the Charter. Then they were switched to heated tirades against the proposed new camouflage net factory which called for some 650 full-time

workers. Other targets of the Blood Brothers and Black Dragons were: the Community Cooperative stores ("An obvious plot to impoverish us Japanese!"); the Education program ("We don't need a useless American education!"); Since this sentiment was not shared by the greatest majority of evacuees, the "underground" dropped it as quickly as it had taken it up and concentrated on still another objective, namely furlough work. ("The white man had reduced us all to poverty, destroying 50 years of work built up by the blood and sweat of our elders. They told us to get out of California because we weren't needed. Now they want to use us again as economic serfs. Do not go out on furlough!") When over 1,000 left Manzanar on furlough, the subject was switched back to attacks on local conditions.

Apparently, as judged by writing similarities and Center rumors, the Blood Brothers and the Black Dragons were one and the same group, but the individuals who were engaged in the "underground" activity managed to preserve their anonymity. At least half a dozen different kinds of handwriting could be distinguished.

C. Reactions to Poster Activity

The consensus of resident opinion was that less than 20 persons were responsible for actually performing the mechanics of the "underground" work. Some of the onlookers, though disapproving of the illegal methods, it employed sympathized with the point of view expressed by the "underground." Some were most apprehensive lest its activity lead the whole Center into trouble. Some considered it to be the work of "fanatics." Some maintained that it was a protest against editorial negligence of the Japanese edition of the camp newspaper to discuss a basic issue for which Japan was fighting: <sup>N</sup>amely, race equality.

Whatever their attitude, there was no doubt but that the "Blood Brothers" commanded the interest of Manzanar's Japanese-speaking population. The

people contended that the atmosphere of "suppression and repression" which accompanied life behind barbed wires was only too conducive to just this kind of "underground" activity. No incentives ~~was~~ were offered to aliens to resist their propaganda that were strong enough to offset the feeling that the Blood Brothers were voicing a view which the majority shared. ~~Factors~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~Project Director~~ <sup>Project Director</sup> behind ~~Poster Activity~~ was doubtless correct in his view that the activities of the Blood Brothers were "symptoms of ills besetting all relocation centers as the result of failure to make a just and necessary separation of evacuees based on attitudes and loyalties in the war." (Project Report, November 18, 1943)

IV  
~~III~~ RESISTANCE TO THE ADMINISTRATION

Rumors and misunderstandings which were not cleared up afforded fertile soil for the development of resentment and protest against administrative officials. The bulletins were as much a defiance of the Administration as of the Japanese whom they attacked more directly by name and title. After the "Southern California Justice Group" demanded the ouster of several Caucasian officials, a Block Manager at an Assembly meeting proposed that "an amendment be made to the Manzanar Charter, stating that the people be allowed to oust Caucasian officials in the same manner as Councilmen were ~~rejected~~ by vote." The Block Managers' suggestion was put to a motion, duly seconded, and carried without objection.

A Requests for Ouster of Administrative Officials.

Following this action, a letter was sent from Town Hall to the Acting Project Director:



and punish the Caucasians.

By November 20, a Block Managers Assembly entertained for discussion the proposal that a delegate or delegates be sent to the Administration staff meetings to represent the evacuees. Three such representatives and two alternates were named, but their actual delegation was held up until a permanent Project Director arrived. (Block Leaders Assembly Nov. 20, 1942)

B Request for Financial Statement of Administration

A week later, the man who had made the proposal for evacuee representation at the Administration staff meeting suggested at the Block Managers Assembly meeting that the Administration be asked to give a "financial statement each month to avoid rumors. We would like to know how much is received and how much is spent and so on."

Further discussion of this as a beginning produced the motion that the Chief Administrative Officer be asked to attend the next meeting of the Block Managers Assembly and present the "financial status and explain the situation." A finance committee of the Block Managers Assembly was to be appointed to work on the suggestion of buying foods not on the ration list with any unexpended monies from the food account. It was proposed that in future when the cost accounting department of the Mess Division gave its statement to Town Hall, it should be referred to the Kitchen Workers Union who "will order supplies with the surplus amount." (Block Managers Assembly Minutes Nov. 27, 1945)

V Re-V RECRUITMENT FOR ARMY LANGUAGE SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS

Late in November, a representative of the Savage School in Minnesota arrived in the Center to recruit instructors of the Japanese language for soldiers planning to go to the Orient. He made it clear that the Army work would in no sense call for espionage activities. Enlistees would be inducted as privates, would after four months of training be promoted to

privates first class, and at the end of a <sup>six</sup>-months course would be graduated as non-commissioned officers. They would be trained to be interrogators and translators.

Interviews with interested applicants were scheduled and Town Hall was set aside for three days for this purpose. A special meeting of the Block Managers Assembly was called, also, to consider this matter of recruitment. As with most controversial issues especially where national loyalties were involved, feeling ran high on both sides.

VI A NEW PROJECT DIRECTOR COMES TO MANZANAR

On November 21, a Project Director was named to take over the chief administrative duties from the Acting Project Director. The new director was presented to the Block Managers Assembly at its weekly meeting on November 27. The impression he made was a most favorable one and one to inspire confidence among the evacuees who had already been subjected to so many changes in Administrative leadership. The new director's democratic attitude, his vigorous speech, and his forceful personality proved <sup>h</sup>ighly effective in stabilizing some of the unrest and ferment in which the camp was already beginning to seethe.

November 12, 1942

Memorandum to: Acting Project Director

Subject: Recap of receipt and issuance of sugar.

This report covers the period from September 1, to date.

## September

We requisitioned	31,138 lbs.
Requisition adjusted by Regional Office to	18,298 "
Actually received	23,998 "

## Average Center enrollment during September

Evacuees	9,886
Administration	<u>86</u>
Total	9,972

On basis of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb per person per week, 2-1/7 lbs. per person would have been the allotment for the month. Therefore, we were eligible for 21,368 lbs. We received, accordingly, 2,630 lbs. more than needed.

## October

We requisitioned	23,750 lbs.
Requisition adjusted by Regional Office to	20,392 "
Actually received	14,230 "

## Average Center enrollment during October

Evacuees	9,043
Administration	<u>100</u>
Total	9,143

On basis of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb per person per week, 2-3/14 lbs. per person would have been the allotment for the month. Therefore, we were eligible for 20,245 lbs. Accordingly, we were 5,955 lbs. short for the month.

There existed a total shortage as of November 1, of 3,325 lbs.

## November

We requisitioned	22,750 lbs.
Requisition adjusted by Regional Office	20,700 "
Actually received	20,700 "

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With the return of the best field workers and with the arrival of additional members of the administrative staff, it is evident that our total feeding load will be considerably larger than ~~than~~ October when we were eligible for 20,245 lbs. In other words, we will probably close the month of November with an added shortage.

#### December

We requisitioned 22,500 lbs.  
 Requisition adjusted by Regional Office 20,020 "

On November 1, we had a total of 26,325 lbs. of sugar in the warehouse. The following issues have been made:

Nov. 3	4,057 lbs.	(basis 7 ounces)
10	4,589 "	(basis 8 ounces)
7	30 "	(To kitchen 18 (fed 600 extra due to oil shortage in other kitchens)
4	20 "	To hospital pharmacy
5	300 "	Shoyu
Total	8,996	

Estimated issues remainder November (basis 7 ounces)	9,200 lbs.
Estimated warehouse supply November 30	8,129 "

Special bonus issues are planned for Thanksgiving and Christmas for pastries, cake, etc. in addition to above.

It is evident from information reviewed here that it is essential we maintain a stock of sugar on hand to cover shortages, emergencies, and to meet special issues for holidays. The basis of 7 ounces per person per week seems to be a logical and advisable procedure. If the stocks that accumulate in the warehouse by this method become large enough, special bonus issues would of course be made.

It would be interesting to know the basis on which the Regional Office is adjusting our requisitions. Certainly with the knowledge of population fluctuations, such as workers leaving and returning, accurate

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figures are more readily available at the Project than at the Regional Office.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Project Director