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by S. Cahn
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FINAL REPORT OF THE FIELD EXAMINATION & INVESTIGATIONS SECTION
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT DIVISION
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Washington, D. C.

The Examination Section's work was originally inaugurated in December of 1942 as a unit of the Finance Section, under the supervision of the Assistant Finance Officer. The personnel was comprised of six auditors. The work primarily involved the auditing of finance records. However, because of the intricate cost systems which were a part of the finance records, the audits continued into the records of the operating units. This organization remained as such for approximately six months.

After the initial audits it was soon learned that the records were in very poor condition. The personnel was then enlarged to twelve auditors and the purpose was not only to audit but put the records into adequate condition. This may have been sound theoretically but in actual practice there was a great deal of resentment on the part of the field personnel, their feeling apparently being that they did not cherish the dictates of the Washington representatives. A great deal of animosity became evident, especially since the work of the auditors was enlarged to comprise all official records of the operating units.

In December of 1943 it was decided to create an Examination and Investigations Section in the Administrative Management Division which had for personnel twelve examiners ranging from

Final Report of Examination & Investigations Section -2- 9/28/45

CAF-9 to CAF-12, one section head and one secretary. This organizational change was primarily based on the many claims made by the press and congressional representatives as to the honesty of the WRA employees in the field and the soundness of WRA operating procedures. It was determined that all records and activities of the WRA Centers and Offices should be subject to analysis and examination by the Field Examination and Investigations Section. Whenever fraud, malfeasance or malpractice was detected by the auditors, the Section was to investigate the charges and prepare the necessary evidence or prove the supposed charges incorrect.

In May of 1944 it was decided that the working of the Section would be more adequate if no attempt were made in the field by the auditors to rectify discrepancies or inadequacies.

From the very beginning of the Section, the auditors were given a handbook guide to the type of auditing they were to do. They were schooled in the administrative operations of WRA and were carefully cautioned as to the scope of their authority. However, even with the intense schooling and training given to the auditors, there was a great deal of friction between the field personnel and the Washington staff. Part of this was attributable to the natural animosity for audits or for any person who checks the work of those who are "doing" it and part was the incompetent auditors, either technically or in personal behavior. Lack of understanding by the auditors ^{of} the many problems in the field also attributed to the friction. One of the major reasons for the intense fight against the auditors by the field

staff lay in the fact that the field was allowed to go for more than a year without scrutiny or systematic audits or checks.

As the auditing program developed, it took in all operating records as well as administrative records of a Center. The time required for a simple audit that covered the operations of a Center took from three to four months by a group of three to four men.

Several of the Centers and Offices made excellent use of the reports rendered by the auditors and in several cases the audits revealed that certain WRA employees were definitely engaging in fraud, conspiracy or embezzlement. These cases were handled as special investigations which resulted in some dismissals and one criminal case. There was every indication from the audits that numerous other infractions and irregularities had occurred and that possible other WRA employees had personally gained beyond the realm of accepted remuneration for their work. However, because of the large turnover of personnel in WRA, it was not always possible to be timely in these audits. In several cases funds which had been improperly taken from evacuees were returned through the efforts of the Examination and Investigations Section. The total value of the Examination and Investigations Section could not be judged in factual or material accomplishments since it was very obvious through the change of attitude and activities of some of the appointed personnel and much of the

Final Report of Examination & Investigations Section - 4 - 9/28/45

voluntary improvements of records were a direct result of the existence of the Section. It was natural for much of the field staff to attempt to put their books in order prior to an examination in order that they would receive a good report. This, of course, is a normal result of any policing activity.

"It is not in the number of criminals apprehended but rather in ^{those} ~~that~~ who may have weaknesses who do not become criminals because of the fear of the law."

This adage certainly proved a truth in WRA.

It was unfortunate that the Examination and Investigations Section was not created and accepted at the very outset of the WRA. However, with the many, many problems that existed at that time, it is certainly understandable how the organization of a non-constructive unit could be delayed until time and facilities permitted.

The last audit undertaken by the Examination and Investigations Section was of the Evacuee Property Division on the West Coast. Each case file of each office of the Centers closest to the West Coast, namely, Gila River, Manzanar, Colorado River and Tule Lake, were examined. The West Coast Offices examined were Los Angeles, Fresno, Sacramento, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle and branch offices.

Final Report of Examination & Investigations Section - 5 - 9/28/45

There was a total of approximately 30,000 case files and a comprehensive report was written on the findings of each office.

It was decided to suspend the auditing activities of the Section as of the end of September, 1945. This decision was based upon the reasoning that the Centers were liquidating and the audits were untimely. Personnel was scarce at the Centers and work was extremely heavy and the auditors were obviously impeding the work of the Evacuee Property Offices who had a large amount of work to do in the liquidation of the Centers. It was the feeling that most of the work of the WRA had been audited once or more and that the major portion of the Evacuee Property activities had been carefully examined.

In approximately two years there were about forty audits completed. Some were done constructively and comprehensively; others were not. Most audits were used to advantage by either the Washington staff personnel or the field personnel. In some cases the audit reports were read aloud to a "round table" of staff personnel who were directly interested in the various phases of the audit. Many procedural changes and administrative operations became effective as a direct result of the auditors' recommendations. To even go further, the Examination and Investigations Section directly assisted with the procedural reorganizations in November and December of 1944.

Final Report of Examination & Investigations Section - 6 - 9/28/45

I should like to add that the work was impeded in part because of the lack of personnel ^{for} but not once in the two years' existence did the Section enjoy the efforts of a full staff.

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