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Statistics Section

About a year ago, early in 1943, the individual census forms, leave clearance applications, Social Data Registration forms, and other leave records, were centralized in the files of the Census, Population, and Master File Sections. These three units constitute the present Statistics Section. The major function of the Statistics Section is to keep these records up to date as the population changes, and to answer questions and make periodic reports from these records.

The Social Data Registration form was made out for each family just prior to evacuation. It is the basic record in the Statistics Section files and gives complete family data. Many inquiries are made concerning family relationships and this is our most valuable source of information on this subject. (There has been no systematic verification of the birth date. We often get requests for changes by evacuees, because age in Japan is counted differently than here. We could require birth certificates of citizens but so far that has not been done. By and large there has been no attempt to verify any of the data.)

The census record (Form WRA-26) shows, for each individual, the names of parents, address prior to evacuation, major physical and health disabilities, date and place of birth, alien registration number, hobbies, religion, and education and employment record.

The leave clearance form (WRA-126) includes, in addition to the usual identifying information, questions concerning loyalty and adherence to the laws of the United States, expatriation and registration with the Japanese government. These forms were made out for every adult at the center during February and March of last year. Copies were sent to

Washington, together with the recommendations of the Project Director as to approval for leave clearance. Many applications are approved both locally and in Washington. Only in questionable cases is a leave clearance hearing necessary.

For every individual who has ever been a resident at Poston, there is a folder in the Master Files Section containing a copy of the Leave Clearance Application, the Individual Census Form, and correspondence concerning leave. The forms show many minor discrepancies because of faulty memory, because of the tendency among the workers to fill out the forms from their own knowledge of the person, and because of carelessness in checking copy work.

The Leave Clearance Application is required of each individual as he becomes eighteen years of age. At present the Leave Clearance interview is held in the Statistics Section. There is some question as to whether it should not be conducted by some section better qualified to interpret the loyalty questions.

Little has been done as yet to collect information concerning the individual into one compact centralized record. At present a card file is being set up showing a variety of characteristics for each individual and making it much easier to study population characteristics.

Employment, education, medical and other records are not included in the Statistics Section files. Instead they are retained in the employment and education offices and at the hospital. The only medical records available from our files are those which appear on the Social Data Registration form. It is, of course, superficial and out of date.

The daily population count has been secured by adding and subtracting for those who come and go with the result that any errors made are cumulative. The base count has not been checked for more than a

year. Daily adjustments are never entirely accurate. They are based on records of the leave office and gate lists from the M. P. checking station, neither of which is complete. Nor do the two sources together give a complete picture. It is hoped that the establishment of a twenty-four hour gate clerk service will make possible an accurate record of daily changes. Usually errors of this type tend to be compensating errors, but in this instance the errors tend to reduce the population count.

Not long ago instructions were issued requiring a quarterly head count beginning April 1, in order to check the center population total. Instructions were issued accordingly, and completed lists were submitted by the block managers. However, there is some doubt that an actual head count was conducted in all of the blocks. Many people failed to remain in their apartments as instructed, and the Block Managers maintained that there were so many activities which could not be interrupted that an actual count was not feasible and that lists based on their office records were adequate.

The sudden request to the block managers for a block count made necessary by last minute instructions from Washington, was met with considerable suspicion. Fears were expressed that another cut in employment was impending. There was another rumor to the effect that two hundred people had left the center without proper clearance and that the head count was a device to find out who the missing people were. Careful preliminary interpretation might have reduced these misinterpretations somewhat.

Discrepancies in the records compiled over the past two years are numerous; and they are to be expected if one considers the lack of written procedure, the inadequate staff and facilities, and the many and

unforeseen changes during this period. Keeping records has always been, necessarily, a secondary function at the center. The first job was to meet the day to day needs of the people in the relocation center and to stimulate relocation.

The justification for a statistics section is often questioned on the ground that what the statistics section reports after a great deal of preliminary work, any observant person could tell on the spur of the moment. Actually quantitative measures are needed to back up even those premises that "everybody knows are true." Especially when the agency requests funds, or has to defend itself against the attacks of unsympathetic pressure groups, accurate figures are a necessary part of the argument.