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On Friday evening, February 5, Captain Norman R. Thompson accompanied by Staff Sergeant John Connolly, Sergeant John A. Gillotti, and Technical Sergeant 4th class Aburamen arrived from Washington, D. C. on assignment to register men and women of military age in this center.

On Saturday, February 6 at 1:30 p.m., the Project Director called a meeting of all Division and Section Heads at which time Captain Thompson and his staff were introduced. Captain Thompson explained the purpose of his mission and read his instructions of the War Department pertaining to the registration and the manner in which it was to be accomplished. The Project Director called the attention of the staff to the importance of each to exert the utmost effort in assisting the program. The Gila News Courier issued a special edition carrying the President's letter to the Secretary of War and War Department instruction, copies of which accompany this report.

On Monday afternoon, a meeting was held with the Block Managers, Block Council Chairman and the Temporary Councilmen in Canal Community. On Monday evening, a meeting was held in Butte Community with a like group. Both meetings were presided over by Captain Thompson. Detailed instructions were given to these representatives of the evacuees on the purpose of the military mission and the manner in which it was to be accomplished.

On Tuesday evening, a mass meeting sponsored by the J.A.C.L. was held in the Butte Community presided over by Captain Thompson, at which time questions were solicited and answers were given.

On Wednesday, February 10, actual registration began in both Butte and Canal Communities and has proceeded in an orderly manner since that date.

Misinterpretation on the part of the evacuees of Questions 27 and 28 caused considerable confusion until fully explained by Director Bennett and Captain Thompson in a meeting held Thursday evening, February 11. Evacuees were under the impression that answering of "Yes" to Questions 27 and 28 was tantamount to volunteering for immediate induction to the armed forces. However, after the explanation was given as stated above, this misapprehension was cleared and those who had answered "No" to the above questions were allowed to make the necessary corrections.

While the Reports Officer has not sat in conference with the Administration and the Military Mission on all matters, the evacuees reactions, as noted from a rather complete coverage of the Center established by this office, indicates a growing appreciation on the part of the evacuees of the opportunities afforded them by the change of military status. It is obvious that Captain Thompson and his Staff are performing their mission in the outstanding manner. While it is too early to predict the success of the voluntary enlistment, there is no question; but that all the evacuees thoroughly understand their positions in this matter and the results which will inevitably accrue to them from whatever action they take. An intense informative program using all available avenues of dissemination is being continued.

Robert A. Le Baron  
Reports Officer

Weekly Report-  
Week Ending Feb. 20, 1943

GILA RIVER PROJECT

This has been a most discouraging, but probably the most interesting week this Center has experienced.

Loyal Japanese Americans as well as our Administrative staff have been badly disappointed with the results of our registration program. The following paragraphs will indicate the trend as we wrote you after discussions by Colonel Scobey, Captain Thompson, and the writer. On February 12, we discontinued registration until Monday, February 15, to give the two communities an opportunity to discuss the registration and change their way of thinking. They also were given an opportunity to change their answers to questions 28 and 27 from "No" to "Yes". The percentage of "No" increased and the attitude of the communities was more adverse than during the first week; during Monday we received many reports of pressure which led us to immediately call upon the U.S. Attorney and Department of Justice as reported. On Tuesday we removed those we believed to be leaders and on Wednesday there was a shift in favor of loyalty. However, the percentage of persons who changed their statements from "No" to "Yes" on questions 27 and 28 was only 7 percent.

On Thursday a committee of the Kibei met with us, including Mr. Cozzens, and they frankly admitted they were not going to answer "Yes". Prior to the meeting we had information from the Army that 90 percent of the Kibei were registering "No". Mr. Cozzens forcefully told the Kibei that they were committing suicide for both themselves, and, through their influence, for a majority of the residents of the communities.

Following this meeting a group of loyal Issei met with us and later by themselves and worked out a plan whereby they would talk to the parents of persons of military age and explain how serious the situation was. From the standpoint of everyone in the communities they were successful in some blocks and as you have noted the percentage answering "Yes" increased to a point where the average was about 50 percent. Later we learned that the Veterans had gone "all out" for the answering by everyone to the questions "Yes"; this we believed was a pressure group and just as unfavorable as the pro-Japanese group. Our decision was that the questions should be answered not by pressure, but after careful consideration and thought. We, therefore, asked the Veterans to stop their pressure program.

This all adds up to one thing -- the fact that we will be faced with several thousand persons who will be definitely disloyal and a very great increase in requests for repatriation. We believe most of the Kibei will request repatriation anticipating that we will not return them to Japan during the war. Our investigation indicates that most of the Kibei left Japan after the Japanese-Chinese war began; that they were slackers and still are. They also hoped that by asking for repatriation they will be permitted to remain in the concentration camps until after the war and not have to fight. During the week there was no "Incident" in either community. Registration is proceeding in an orderly manner and such subversive activities as are being conducted are very much on the quiet. Evidence is being collected which will probably lead to the removal of several persons next week. The FBI is sending a new man here to assist us.

S U M M A R Y

During the week ending February 20, the Reports Office has cooperated with the Project Director and the Army Team in devoting necessary space in the Center newspaper to informative articles pertaining to registration. We have also issued two extra editions as well as one supplement, copies of which were forwarded to the Washington Office through regular channels.

During this period, twenty-seven persons found incompatible to a majority of the community were removed. No doubt the Project Director will, in his comments, treat more fully on this matter. The work of registering evacuees of military age has occupied the major efforts of those of the Administrative Staff assigned to this duty. Every effort has been made to fully acquaint those of military age, of the importance of the registration and the effect it will have on their future. It is obvious that despite our best efforts a large number of those registering have failed to declare their loyalty. No disturbances have marred the registration. This office would be remiss if it failed to comment on the efficient manner in which the Project Director carried out the removal of the above referred to persons. Immediate release of this action was made to O.W.I. and was so handled that no adverse publicity or comments accrued either to the W.R.A. or this center. Copies of local press releases as well as press comment by the Metropolitan Paper in Los Angeles will be furnished Washington Office of the W.R.A. if requested.

/s/ Robert A. LeBaron  
Robert A. Le Baron  
Reports Officer

March 6, 1943

GILA RIVER PROJECT

S U M M A R Y

Public sentiment in Southern Arizona already unfavorable towards evacuees, has been aggravated by published statements of Senator Chandler and Governor Osborn.

The attached copy of letter received by the Employment Division, written after the Senatorial Sub-committee hearing in Phoenix, illuminates the existing situation. Very active and sustained public relations work is necessary if a more favorable attitude on the part of the people of this section is to be attained.

There is a real need for the type of labor evacuees are able to furnish if the public accepts it.

Robert Le Baron  
Reports Officer

[letter not attached]

This has been a hectic week. After calling upon the Governor and State Corporation Commissioners Betts and Peterson in an attempt to have the Commission's order cancelling the permit of the Gila Cooperative Enterprises rescinded, we requested them to delay action on the order upon the ground that the order had been issued ex parte by radio and press without inquiry or notification to the Cooperative or the Government; that at the time of press release the order had not been signed; that the commissioners left Phoenix for several days and instructed their secretary that there was no hurry in preparing copies of the order. We secured the agreement of the Commission to withhold the effective date of the order until 10 days after public hearings were completed and their opinion rendered. We also secured an agreement from the Commission that they were to permit their witnesses to be called first and also that we might cross-examine any person in the hearing room. Without this agreement we would not have attended the hearing. The Commission agreed to our request.

Hearings began on Monday, June 14, and continued through Tuesday and all of Wednesday. The commission's witnesses were all biased, none were familiar with Gila or the Cooperative, and the entire hearing looked like a staged deflamation of WRA, Director Myer, and last the Cooperative.

Mr. Terry upon cross examination of each witness proved prejudice, bigotry, and a complete lack of understanding of the interest and intent of the Cooperative, as well as the policies of WRA and the operation of the Rivers Center. Chairman Betts was very fair in his conducting of the hearing and permitted his own cross examination. Until 4:30 P.M. on Wednesday the hearing was a grand circus for the vegetable growers and truckers of Arizona. After all of the evidence was presented Mr. Terry read his summary which, to my opinion, skillfully denounced the witnesses of the Commission for illegal action and irresponsible opinion. This made everyone angry and was a complete anti-climax to a scathing denouncement ~~tax~~ of the WRA which had been written by Mr. Petts and which he then finally read.

The hearing was followed by charges of all sorts by the Commission and some of the witnesses and has led to great newspaper publicity.

The two conservative papers of the State have been very fair, but the two more radical papers have fanned the flames of ill feeling.

Indications are that the Commission will accept a compromise. The hearing brought out very definitely the antagonism of a large number of Arizonians towards all Japanese in Arizona. For this reason we feel that until the attitude changes it is necessary that we restricted passes and under no circumstances relocation anyone else in Arizona.

~~Senator McFarland and Mr. Torrey, State Commander of the Region, were here and both took a very fair attitude. We believe that to some extent~~

Senator McFarland and Mr. Tormey, State Commander of the Legion, were here and both took a very fair attitude. We believe that to some extent they realized our position. Senator McFarland is quite insistent that we increase our vegetable production for the army and Lend-Lease purposes, although it requires the subjugation of more land than we now have available. I believe he will discuss this matter with Mr. Myer and Senator Hayden.

Captain Honeywell of the Quartermaster Market Center Depot in Phoenix will visit here this week end, if possible, arrange for the production of vegetables for the army.

This week we were visited by the publisher and feature writers of the two Phoenix papers, the Governor's investigating committee accompanied by Pauline Bates Brown.