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REPORT ON ALL-CENTER CONFERENCE

3/10/45  
J.T. Kimball

The first all-center conference of evacuees was held in Salt Lake City, February 16-24. It was attended by 30 delegates from seven centers. Only Manzanar of the relocation centers did not send representatives. The New Grand Hotel provided space accommodations and the meetings were held at the YMCA.

Selection of delegates and financing of expenses was arranged differently at various centers. However, the Community Councils provided the impetus to solving this problem as well as determining the instructions which the delegates should take with them. Poston and Gila held center-wide elections. The Community Councils or a committee appointed by this body determined delegate selection at other centers. There were several centers, such as Minidoka, Granada, and Gila, where funds were collected in the blocks.

In general, the delegates came to the meeting with agreement on certain basic issues. There was agreement that the people in the centers wanted a determined expression that the WRA should keep the centers open beyond the announced period, and that there should be liberalized and increased incentives for relocation. These latter were visualized in terms of outright grants and easy arrangements to secure loans.

The attitude of the delegates, not only as individuals but from different centers varied widely. There were some who were extremely bitter at what they considered to be the coercive tactics of the WRA and the niggardliness of relocation assistance in the light of demands that people leave. This group was in a mood to make a strong statement of wrongs, and prepare an ultimatum or demand to the WRA which would include a promise to keep the centers operating.

There were other delegates who felt that a constructive approach to the problem which would enlist the support of various public and private agencies would be more effective. This group took the position that if the facts could be known and understood, then it would be possible to get sufficient relief to make possible a relatively satisfactory solution to the problem. This group also felt that the facts would warrant them asking that the centers be kept open since there were many whom they believed could not under any circumstances leave them.

It was apparent from the very beginning of the meeting that the delegates were preoccupied with the possible reaction of the residents to their deliberations and such success or failure as might be achieved. This concern with center approval or disapproval outweighed the consideration of the possible effect of any conference declaration on the American public, Congress, or the WRA. Even those who took a moderate view accepted that whatever decision was reached would first of all have to be acceptable to the majority of the residents, and that the problem of its acceptability elsewhere would be in the spirit and wording.



The more reactionary group were apparently little concerned with the effect elsewhere.

This lack of concern for public relations, other than the center residents, was emphasized several times in the course of the meeting.

#### Chronology:

It is difficult to report except in the most general manner what transpired at the meetings. The first two days were officially set aside for the preparation of an agenda, although actually much more transpired. The officers were elected at the first session and included Masaru Narahara of Topaz, chairman, and Genji Mihara of Minidoka, and Munejiro Hayashida of Heart Mountain as vice-chairman. The agenda set aside Monday and Tuesday for discussion of the official proposals of the conference. Wednesday, was to be a closed meeting with Dillon Myer in the morning and an open meeting in the afternoon. Thursday was to be devoted to a comparison of policy variations at the different centers and the establishing of an over-all organization.

It is presumed that the discussion the first two days revealed the basic agreement between the centers as well as the great differences between delegates in the attitude and method of approach. The conference appointed a public relations committee to work with the chairman on press releases. The instructions given to this group were so rigid, however, that very little of news interest was available, and the chairman had great difficulty in supplying information to the press.

It was also evident that during the first two days those favoring a constructive approach were at a disadvantage. There were comments that the reactionary were always the ones who talked the loudest, and although the more liberal did not agree, they hesitated to take a positive stand. Reference was made to the liberal and the reactionary group, and the feeling was that rather than let the conference take a negative position the liberal group would attempt to prevent any specific proposals from being adopted, but would let the delegates take the recommendations back to the centers for resident approval. It was felt that this strategy would permit all delegates to avoid the expected criticism of their position if a moderate course were pursued.

The meetings Monday and Tuesday, however, developed quite differently, and some of the liberal delegates were able to get their point of view accepted so that by the time of the meeting with Director Myer, and of the final determination of recommendations, the results of their efforts were clearly seen. This was accomplished by the efforts of two delegates (apparently without contradiction) that one basic consideration was that the residents of the centers were committed to remain in the United States. The argument was that by reason of not asking for repatriation, and by reason of being in a relocation center rather than Tule Lake, it must be assumed that the decision had been reached to remain in this country. That being so, any action or recommendation must be made



with a realization of the probable effects on the total group. Through this argument, there was developed a better understanding of the relation of the delegates to the country at large.

Related to this question, was the form in which the deliberations of the conference should appear. It was hinted that there were a few who wanted to phrase the conference work as an ultimatum. Most of the discussion was whether the proposals should be presented as demands, or in a less forceful manner. It was on this point that the liberal group took the position that the conference should phrase the proposals as a petition, a request, or as recommendations. (It was subsequently decided that they should appear as the latter.) It was on this point rather than the specific content of conference work that the issue between the liberal and reactionary element was most clearly drawn, since most delegates were agreed on what needed to be accomplished. By what strategy the decision to make the proposals in the form of recommendations, was reached is not known, nor the actual voting division.

Allied with this problem was the one of the manner in which the objectives of the delegates could be brought to the Director at his meeting with them on Wednesday. It was agreed, and probably the same forces were in control on this decision, that nothing should be said that would precipitate an issue. The strategy seems to have been to have the chairman present the basic facts in relation to relocation, the objectives of the conference, and following the address by Mr. Myer, to have designated people ask specific questions. (This plan did not work out exactly as planned.)

The meeting Wednesday morning was a closed session between the National Director and the conference with Mr. L.T. Hoffman, Project Director of Topaz, and Mr. S. T. Kimball of the Washington office present. The Chairman, stated that the conference had been called to consider serious problems which faced center residents as a result of West Coast opening and the announcement of the closing of the center. He stated that the delegates believed that center residents could be divided into three groups; those who could and intended to relocate, those who wished to relocate, but who for various reasons, real and imagined, felt that additional assistance was necessary, and those who for various reasons saw no hope of leaving the centers. The Chairman said that of these three groups the first and third were small, but that the second group was a large one, and it was with the people of this group that the delegates were most concerned. The Director, in his original and subsequent remarks, reviewed the history of evacuation and the WRA; the relocation program; the attacks by selfish and self-seeking interests on the West Coast and elsewhere, and the steps taken to combat accusations and propaganda. He explained the reasons for the decision to close the centers, and the necessity for people to seek homes now, rather than later. He explained that there were no plans after January 2, 1946. From the questions asked, it was apparent, that it was the intention to impress on the Director, that the big problem was to



secure understanding from the center people, and that the problem was "how" could this be accomplished.

The conference delegates asked for no concessions, they did ask for explanation of policy. They did not raise specific points on which there could be disagreement. It is probably correct, that this strategy, favored by the liberals, was to prevent the reactionary group from getting ammunition which might lead to radical action.

The meeting with Director Myer had several effects, all of them satisfactory. It renewed and restored the confidence of some who were questioning, in the continued full support of the evacuees by Director Myer and by the WRA. It also gave some an understanding of the limitations within which any concessions could be secured, and that it was not a simple matter to secure all the funds and facilities that some believed desirable. The most important result, however, was a feeling on the part of the delegates, that the Director and the WRA were aware of their problems and that sincere and honest attention would be given to every recommendation. The delegates felt that the Director had moved, perhaps slightly, but nevertheless moved in the direction of a greater understanding of what they were up against. It was this renewed confidence that did much to strengthen the position which the liberal group had fought for from the beginning.

The afternoon session on Wednesday was an open meeting with representatives from several organizations invited to send representatives. Groups invited included the American Red Cross, ACLU, Committee on American Principles and Fair Play, Protestant Japanese-American Commission, Maryknoll Mission, YWCA, Friends of the American Way, JACL, Buddhist Church of America, and several others. Those attending included Utah State Supreme Judge Wolf, Rev. Nugent and Chapman from Topaz and Ogden, Miss Pierce of the YWCA and representatives of a woman's Hebrew group, JACL, Buddhist church, and perhaps others. Mr. Myer spoke of the work done by a great many different organizations in aiding the cause of the evacuees. Some of the others also made short speeches.

The Chairman of the Conference prefaced the introduction of guests by a short speech. It is of interest because it was a summary review of the history of the Issei in the United States referring to their record as pioneers in building the industrial and agricultural west. It mentioned the scholastic attainments of their children, and the record of the sons in the United States army. It mentioned the fact of evacuation and the economic distress resulting from this. It asked for no special consideration, but an understanding of the problem faced by the evacuees to reintegrate themselves and cooperation in this process. It also referred to the three major groups in the centers and the group with which the delegates were most concerned.

The conference was scheduled to conclude Thursday and the agenda provided for discussion of an inter-center organization and for noting differences in administration and policy as between the centers. The conference actually continued until Saturday.



During this period it was voted that Topaz would be the headquarters for the all-center organization. Other details of organization are not known. The executive committee prepared a letter with facts and recommendations to the National Director. It is interesting that considerable discussion went into the actual phrasing of the recommendations in Japanese, and that once this was decided upon, it was the responsibility of the secretary to translate into English.

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There is reference in this report to a division of the delegates into liberal and reactionary. This distinction was made by some of those who counted themselves as liberal. There is another division which can be made. This is representative of attitudes toward relocation, the WRA, and the future.

1. The Hopefuls: This group was composed largely of the Nisei and young Issei who had made up their minds that they should relocate and soon. They already had more or less definite plans as to what they should do. They were convinced that there was a future for them in this country, and that they had the ability and the courage to make a living for themselves and their families. This group was also largely the group of vocal liberals which shaped the thinking and direction of the conference in a constructive direction.

2. The Desperates: This group was composed largely of late middle-aged Issei. They were men who in their pre-evacuation communities were the middle-class respectable small business men and farmers. They had insurance and real estate agencies, or businesses that catered to a Japanese urban and rural population. Their success had depended upon a Japanese community. They were men with obligations of family, who felt themselves too old to start at the bottom of the ladder with physical labor, and whose small savings were insufficient to carry them through an uncertain period of reestablishing businesses that would have to depend upon non-Japanese customers.

This group was basically cooperative. Its members see a home for themselves and their children in this country, but it feels that there is an obligation on the part of the government to provide some special help, or restitution or guarantee, to help them reestablish themselves.

This group gave assent to the proposals of the liberal and hopeful group and thus provided the weight of delegate strength toward a conciliatory and cooperative attitude.

3. The resentful and reactionary. This group includes two elements--those who are potentially cooperative and those who are completely negative. Circumstances could shift most of its members in either one direction or the other. It was composed of both Issei and Nisei. Its members expressed themselves as bitter at the treatment of the Japanese in America. They were bitter about their treatment by the WRA and particularly about the intention to close the centers. One member expressed himself as saying that the WRA



treated the evacuees like children. A Kibei was resentful that he had been on the WRA stop list, and now excluded by the army. The reactionaries combined all these feelings plus a probable strong feeling of Japanese nationalism. I hazard the guess that they were not particularly respected members of the Japanese community before evacuation and had achieved some status in the relocation centers. It is unlikely that this group will be cooperative either now or in the future.

It was this group which argued that the proposals of the conference should be worded as either demands or ultimatums. It was also the group which in terms of the entire population was most inward looking in that the effect of their action on public opinion and the amount of cooperation from public and private agencies was a matter with which they were not concerned. It was the group which would have favored the attendance of the Spanish Consul and sought recognition entirely as Japanese nationals.

The extending of invitations to representatives of outside groups was part of the strategy of the conference leaders. On various occasions the opinion was expressed that the WRA had not done much as it should to enable the evacuees to relocate. It was generally believed that this failure was due to the lack of understanding of the basic problems, or to the inability of the WRA to secure sympathetic action from Congress or other government agencies, or both. The liberal group were inclined to the belief that the WRA had tried, but was unable to get acceptance for what they considered an equitable provision of funds and facilities. The reactionary group had no confidence that any real effort had been made. Since it was agreed by all delegates that more liberal relocation aid was necessary, the issue, if there was one, was what steps should be taken.

The liberal group took the position that the evacuees must cooperate with the WRA, but that in addition to this expression of confidence, there should be an attempt to present the facts to public and private agencies which had been friendly in the past. They were hopeful that with sympathetic understanding of what the evacuees had to face that pressures could be brought to bear to secure modification of policy. The modification which both groups sought was in the extent of relocation aid and center closing policy. It was proposed that in the larger strategy of achieving these objectives, that the facts and suggested remedies be presented first to WRA, and then if no relief was forthcoming, that aid from other sources be sought. Early in the conference there was mention of securing the services of some nationally known organization to act as a go-between with the WRA, but it is not known whether there was further discussion on this point.

One additional line of reasoning should be recorded as having some influence on at least some of those in the liberal group. The belief was expressed that even with the best combination of circumstances there would be several thousand people left in the relocation centers at the end of the year. If things went badly there would be many more. The fear was expressed



that this remaining group would become a target for attacks from all sides. The anti-Japanese agitators in the country would not hesitate to link the relocated group with those who remained behind in order to attack both. The fear expressed that there would be a new registration. It was felt that the WRA would also be subject to attacks, and attempts to secure funds to care for the remaining would be extremely difficult. It was necessary, therefore, to get as many people as possible interested and acquainted with the difficulties which the evacuees had to face in relocating. If it was understood that the residue was composed largely of the aged and indigent, then there would be an opportunity for a more sympathetic handling of their problems, and this group would not be driven into a reactionary and negative position from which it would be impossible for them to return.

The conclusion toward which this reasoning led was that we must get WRA to understand our problems, but that we must also get understanding and sympathy from the American public.

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It is purely speculative, but it is my thought that the viewpoints of all delegates were modified by the experience of meeting outside a relocation center. There was complete freedom of movement. There were no incidents. They saw other Japanese people who had been living on the outside for varying periods of time and who had attitudes different than their own.

The reaction of some delegates to the speeches given at dinner held for them by the Japanese community was that the resettled Japanese talked just like the WRA. Certainly, the composite effect of all these experiences, must have modified the thinking as to their ability to move in the outside world with safety of person and with limited discrimination.

S. T. Kimball  
3/10/45



Delegates Attending All-Center Conference  
Salt Lake City, February 16-24, 1945

Poston:

Takashima	Katsumi	-	N
Okamoto	Minoru	-	C
Kato	Gitaro		
Kubota	Minoru	-	N
Matsubara	Nobuo		

Rohwer:

Fujino	Chester	-	C
Shingu	Lloyd		
Ito	S.		

Topaz:

Narahara	Masaru	-	N - C
Nodohara	Kiichi		
Sugiyama	Ichiji		
Watanabe	Isuma		
Sasaki	Shizior	-	N
Yumashita			
Murakami			

Gila:

Fukuzawa	Ben	-	N - C
Mitsuyoshi	Sam		C
Nishimura	Harry		
Sato	Y.		

Granada:

Kawashiri	Sakae
Furuya	S.
Uragami	Roy

Heart Mountain:

Hayashida	Munejiro
Tsunokai	Minokichi
Hachimonji	Kumezo
Kawano	Shigeichi
Akashi	Kaoru

Minidoka:

Mihara	Genji
Oyama	Iwa
Ogawa	Tom

Yamamoto	Mary	} Secretaries
Endo	Mitsuye	



1 Mr. Stauder  
2 Mr. [unclear]  
3 [unclear]  
4 Comm. Analysis

File  
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MEMORANDUM

TO: H. Rex Lee, Acting Chief, Relocation Division  
FROM: Hugo W. Wolter, Head, Center Liaison Section  
SUBJECT: Report of Field Trip

I. All-center Conference.

At each of the four projects visited, attention seemed to center on the forthcoming all-center conference to be held at Salt Lake. It is evident from all reports that the focusing of attention on this conference has and is retarding the relocation program. It has formed a so-called focal point for the anti-relocation groups. It has been said that through demands made at this conference, there will be increases in grants, there will be demands for the continuation of the center operations, there will be demands for reparations and other similar statements.

At Granada, the group had not crystalized during my visit. The letters concerning the conference had been directed to the Project Director who refused to transmit them to the chairman of the Council. When the correspondence had been rerouted, interest developed. There was some criticism in some of the other centers on the action of the Project Director.

At Topaz, the originator of the idea, the sentiment was definitely divided. A group that had been grouping with the administration felt that the all-center conference should be directed toward constructive measures. A negative group centering around segregation appears to have the idea that demands should be the focus of attention.

Manzanar town hall reported to Mr. Merritt that they were not interested in sending a representative.

The development at Gila may characterize some of the thinking in regard to the conference. In trying to decide upon representatives to send, the Gila group held an election in which 46 representatives were appointed. They were requested to nominate a group of people from whom one would then be elected to send to the conference. The majority of the people were not interested but since the general idea was sponsored



by Mr. Ben Fukuzawa, the chairman of the Council, they carried out the recommendation. The anti-relocation group and the stay-in-camp group crystalized and took the lead. Mr. Fukuzawa was elected. A recommendation made by the block managers from each block indicated that from 70 to 90% of the residents contacted wanted to stay within the camp. Mr. Fukuzawa interpreted this that his attendance at the conference meant that he would have to represent this group. (Ben Fukuzawa is a politician. He told the Project Director that of course he, himself, was interested in relocation and that he wanted to do what he could for it but since he had been elected to represent the people, he would have to take the view of the people who elected him to the conference.)

At a meeting of block representatives, approximately five from each block, I had the opportunity of explaining the entire resettlement program to them. Mr. Fukuzawa was chairman of the meeting. He refused to interpret since the talk did definitely take away much of the lack of knowledge responsible for the interest in the all-center conference. One of the clergy, a fairly good personal friend and one in favor of the relocation program, arose after part of my talk and asked the chairman, Mr. Fukuzawa, whether or not he was going to interpret. He said, "The things Mr. Walter has told us is very important for every person. We want them said so that every person here can bring the message back." I had been forewarned to this situation and played my cards accordingly. Most of the group could understand English. Mr. Fukuzawa was forced by the public sentiment in the group and although he squirmed and wiggled and tried to avoid a too positive interpretation of the resettlement assistance program, he did carry it out. Since some of the people at the meeting were definitely of the anti-relocation group, I thought it opportune to mention the all-center conference and to point out how it might be constructive. I pointed out that the definite time for the closing of the centers was set and that no variation was possible. I pointed out that the demands for increased grants were not intelligent and that the resettlement assistance program would do much for them than could possibly be done by straight financial aid. I then charged them with the responsibility to see to it that the all-center conference would carry on constructive suggestions rather than make impossible demands, and that we would welcome suggestions which would assist relocation. Mr. Fukuzawa was definitely on the spot. I then asked him directly to represent the majority of the people. I hoped to hedge him in in such a way that the political outlook would be directed by constructive groups.

This type of thing showed itself in each of the projects. The report from Poston inviting the representatives of the Spanish government to the conference, you have already had. Mr. Eberhart explained to



them at Gila that this was purely an American situation and had nothing to do with the Japanese government. Other indications point to the fact that the segregated group would do everything in their power to control the representative sent to the conference in order to give them status and to gain recognition by demanding certain things of the United States government either to remain in the centers or to relocate under very advantageous circumstances.

It is my recommendation that we take the ground right from under any anti-relocation group; first, by recognizing the principle of equal opportunity which the raising of the exclusion order has again made possible. I would particularly recommend the elimination of formality connected with daily passes except for detainees (much resentment is felt because the raising of the exclusion order has in the minds of the evacuees created further restrictions at the projects). I would further recommend the elimination of the Advance Approval idea for relocation anywhere. The frame of reference in regard to the relocation procedure now is similar to that following military registration where further restrictions are considered to have been made rather than opportunities offered.

The group that seems most interested in making demands is actually or closely correlated with the bachelor groups in the centers. They are fighting for a means of security for themselves. They are not satisfied with the plan of permanent welfare assistance. In order to take the force out of their arguments and to beat them to the draw, I would suggest the establishment of the idea of an old folks home for those older men who are not eligible for any old age assistance in their pre-evacuation state of residence. This home could be set up in the south, away from a relocation center and viewed merely as an extension of welfare services to those people who have no other resources and who have suffered because of the restrictive action of the government. This home should be operated by some other governmental agency although its immediate development would take away the support of this old age group and eliminate the criticism of the closing of the centers.

(I spoke of this matter to Mr. Lewis and to Mr. Arne. There is an area about sixty miles north of New Orleans about 170 acres containing 24 buildings capable of housing about 600 to 700 people. It is called Convent, Louisiana. It was formerly a large Catholic institution but has since been abandoned. It was used as a NYA training center. It is now immediately available either by sale or lease. I would recommend that this place be leased and that a group of the older men who are still capable of some work but not sufficient of self support be sent there to do the necessary reclamation. I would then suggest that a Buddhist priest be attached to the group in order to provide religious leadership which we have not considered for the older people. The presence of this



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priest in this area would serve also as a psychological factor in developing further relocation in the south. The old group might be able to a few hours of labor on the farms of the nearby area when those are established. It would appear to me to be a slight expenditure of funds to do this immediately and to focus the religious thinking outside of a relocation center. This program would correlate with the development of agriculture in the south.)

The second group representative of Gila will probably be Mr. Harold Asami. Mr. Asami is an outstanding American with an excellent flow of language in both English and Japanese. He is not afraid to be positive. If preparations are needed for leadership in discussion, I would recommend Mr. Asami as a strong person to work with the Director in constructive influences at the all-center conference.

## II. Relocation Outlook

A person might be discouraged or enthused about the relocation outlook depending upon the people contacted. I personally do not see the aggressiveness and dynamic leadership at all of the centers and feel that much leadership should have to be furnished by the Center Liaison Section. The organization in each of the centers is beginning to shape up after the visits of last fall, but there is still much doubt as to how to proceed. The idea that it is our responsibility to move every family on a voluntary basis before the end of the year has not soaked in. The main question that I was asked in every center both by the staff and by the people was, "Are the centers really going to close?" The people seemed to grasp it more thoroughly. The staff gave intellectual acquiescence but did not transmit that into action. Procrastination seemed to rule.

The situation at Granada is good with considerable disorganized organization. There still must be developed a great deal of coordination among all parts of the project, administration and the people in order to gain the greatest and speediest results. Both the staff and the people in general are considering relocation but their horses are not hitched to the same wagon. During the course of my visits, I believe we pulled through together many of the loose ends. Additional visits will be necessary in the near future. Leadership is not strong nor does it have vision. An excellent plan of action has been worked out independently by the relocation and welfare sections and will need the cooperation of the community. This plan involves a detailed chart on the wall of every family in the center and marking it with colored pins according to the progress of their relocation plan. If this were combined with the work of the Relocation Planning Commission and definite assignments be made, I believe that Granada would step forward. As I see it, the problem is largely one of aggressive human understanding.



Topaz. A positive direction of work at Topaz is evident. The people themselves are beginning to get relocation information which they should have had a year ago. Discussion is going on and the gradual process of informing and reading is developing. In general, the spirit is good. The relocation staff in spite of the leadership of Miss Dickinson is weak. There is a large amount of stability but very little dynamic force. This may be due to the fact that there is no Assistant Program Officer, and no relocation adviser. I have made arrangements to secure Mr. Mario Vecchio from Granada to go there. I have left the responsibility in the hands of Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Lindley to carry through this suggestion. I believe Mr. Vecchio would add the spark which would help the program. Additional staff is definitely needed although Miss Dickinson was fully aware of the job which lies ahead. By that, I mean that she has an intellectual understanding of it but had not gone ahead in making definite plans in covering every family in a constructive way. She is agreeable to all suggestions and I am sure will go ahead as soon as additional help is secured. The Community Management Division with the exception of welfare has not been helpful. Mr. Sanford is weak, has no particular interest in relocation but evidently seems more interested in shooting deer and trapping coyotes. The responsibility for meeting with the community falls largely upon the Project Director himself and upon Miss Dickinson. Mr. Hoffman is going to need considerable assistance from our office in correlating the entire program and furnishing him with the aggressive help necessary to put it over.

Manzanar. My first impressions of Manzanar are definitely negative. I spent about an hour with the Project Director and learned all of the reasons why the program did not work with no suggestions as to how it might be done. The psychology is definitely on the side of continuing the centers. The criticism for not having a completely free program set up with the FBI, the Department of Justice, and the Army before the closing of the centers was announced. I left Mr. Derrickson there in order to get a detailed report of the entire situation and therefore hesitate to state further details now. I missed entirely the constructive thinking of the people and felt that there was something holding them back from an early consideration of the problems of their own future. There seemed to be a feeling in the air that the great white father of the WRA could not and would not let them down. Mr. Derrickson was to bring them the details of the relocation assistance program and to try to swing some of this negative thinking.

Gila. In writing this report about Gila, I shall try to be as objective as possible although much of my personal work is involved in

meaning  
not clear

*PKS*



the progress of the program. It should be remembered that the Relocation Planning Commission was organized as early as May of 1943, and that the process of drawing out the disorganized and better groups had gone on through Community Government for almost two years. The composition of the Relocation Planning Commission alone is a guarantee of the effectiveness of the early cooperative work. I hope that the praise I will have to give Gila will not be interpreted as self emulation but the contrast is so outstanding that I can not help but enlarge on it. In general, the staff and the people are relocation minded. There are no specific points of differences. All constructive suggestions have been made by the people through the Relocation Planning Commission through the Community Council or through the Executive Board and through the block managers. For example, in discussing the welfare cases and the difficulty which we expect in trying to meet the needs of the welfare cases, the block managers themselves willingly grouped in securing the family summaries from five families in each block. This was their suggestion. The block managers themselves have recommended to the Executive Board that they be given additional help on their regular work so that either they or someone else might act as a relocation information expert and family adviser in each block. They stated that the people were interested in doing a good day's work but that if they did it, they couldn't sit down and talk relocation because the offices were then closed. Even the Mess Supervisors and Farm Supervisors met to discuss relocation plans.

In a three hour meeting with the Planning Commission, not one negative word was said. The entire time was given over to the discussion of methods of completing the task. This was such a contrast to other meetings that I was flabbergasted. They felt that the resettlement assistance program was so important that at least fifteen people from every block should have the first-hand information. The group, block managers, Council, Planning Commission, called the meeting in a high school assembly. This meeting was attended by more than 700 people and lasted from 7:30 pm to 11:30 pm. Interpretation was carried on by two members of the group. Only one heckling question was raised and that was, "Which is more important in the eyes of WRA, resettlement or closing of the centers?" Another indication of the spirit of relocation was evidenced by the continual, constant flow of requests to meet with groups from 8:00 am in the morning until midnight. Individuals, groups of families took other time. There was free discussions publicly and privately. A general plan of organization finally evolved from all the conferences and meetings was recommended by the Project Director.

First, that he accede to the request of the Relocation Planning Commission for a ~~trial~~ relocation person in every block, that the Relocation Program Officer be instructed to train these people to their jobs. Secondly, that the advising staff together with welfare and



and relocation be assigned to work certain hours in definite spots within the camp to take up problems which the advisers bring to them. Thirdly, that every family of the entire camp be charted according to its progress similar to the Granada plan. The fourth, that all people on the staff be drawn into the relocation advising program. Fifth, that they establish immediately an extension of their central files to include all the files of the projects concerning individuals.

An outstanding bit of cooperation is being carried on between welfare and relocation. The operation is practically that of one division. There are many conferences, there is a free exchange of ideas and remarkable cooperation. There is no particular difficulty with any staff member although there should be greater coordination in the supplying of information by other sections. The evacuee property staff was understaffed until Mr. Reynolds was assigned to it. Legal matters outside of relocation are taking up the attention of the Project Attorney. The one difficult spot in the relocation program is the difficulty of securing daily passes in leaving the center. This procedure is as same as it has been. The reasoning behind it, based on transportation has not been explained to the people. I feel that at Gila, the restrictive action could easily be removed and relocation would continue to increase. The all-center conference retarded things for perhaps three weeks. Following my appearance there, an explanation of the resettlement assistance program was given. There was an immediate pick up in terminal leave. I would say that Gila could be closed by September 1 if the recommendations concerning the old age homes for the bachelors could be followed.

In general, the outlook is very good. I am very much encouraged that the thought of the people has shifted and they are now seeing relocation as something of benefit to them. Where this thought does not exist, the Center Liaison Section still has a big task to do. As long as there are segregoes in the camps and as long as there are possible focal points, we will have to wrestle with this problem instead of devoting our time to development of methods within the centers. It is almost necessary for someone of the Washington staff who has the overall picture to be present 50% of the time. The staff within the centers has a definitely restricted viewpoint and unfortunately reluctantly face their own relocation. They themselves do not know what the outside world is like. They do not see the coordination required and the visionary thinking that goes into the total relocation. The Center Liaison staff will have to work with Project Directors, Asst. Project Directors and other top staff members to continually show the opportunities of the outside to them and to the leaders of the people. We would have to furnish the spark while they are still concerned with the internal operations.



### III. Excluees and Parolees.

Technically, we can forget about the presence of segregates within the center until the Department of Justice takes action. Actually, their presence in the center retards relocation in reverse proportion to the degree of cooperation which exists between the staff and the people on the general relocation problems. Excluees and parolees are a repetition of the problems which military registration brought about in 1943. It is again a question of status. Psychologically, that group may swing for or against relocation depending upon the care with which it is handled at the centers. Since the parolee group which was previously the outstanding group of Japanese merchants, produce men and community leaders delays in granting them releasee status creates an active negative group which exerts influence on people who still look to them for leadership. The less said about the excluee program the better. The inequalities and capriciousness are known better to the people in the centers than to us. Outstanding negative minds have been freed and outstanding cooperative minds have been excluded. Appeals are being made but the time for hearings has not arrived at the centers. It is only because of the calm sense that there hasn't been more difficulty about this situation.

It bears a great relationship to the all-center conference. It has swung public sentiment among some toward the Japanese government, not on a political basis but just as something definite. The question in regard to excluded areas is also very important. The military police at Gila have received orders not to release excluees whose destination was in the eastern or southern defense command. One gentleman had relocated to the excluded area and returned to the center to relocate his family. The military police would not permit him to leave the center. Since he was an actual legal visitor, as far as the project was concerned, great anxiety was felt concerning methods of solving his problem. I did not meet the situation in any other center. Evidently orders had not gone to the military police in line with Post-Exclusion Bulletin No. 4.

### IV. Cooperation with Other Sections

Although Mrs. Lane and I had planned to have members of our staff team up in visiting the centers, it was impossible for our section to meet the schedule. We did meet with Miss McCord at Topaz and Mr. Derrickson met with her at Mansanar. Previously we had discussed with both of our staffs the general plan for cooperation. At no center that I visited was there any difficulty. The Joint Case Review Committees were working quite well and with the exception of Topaz, material was being sent out promptly. At Topaz I ran into the difficulty of having



the Assistant Project Director, Community Management, wanting to review all welfare cases that were passed on to relocation. This resulted in about a week's delay.

The Evacuee Property sections were cooperating very well. Some were further advanced and were handling more problems than others. Some had been taken into the confidence of the residents and were really being overworked in trying to take care of the many demands made upon them. At Granada a possible bottleneck may result because of the painstaking care of the Evacuee Property Officer. Topaz was conservative; Gila, enthusiastic.

The Legal Divisions at all projects were very cooperative. The interesting solution for the problem of securing liability insurance was offered at Gila by the Evacuee Property Officer. A company at Denver, Pioneer Mutual Comprehensive Company, J. E. Henry, Manager, although small is reinsured 80 per cent with Lloyds. He also suggested that the Power of Attorney might be given to a Caucasian to handle the insurance on evacuee property. In this way, the Caucasian would be empowered to appear in court for any suits and to handle all insurance matters.

The Reports Officers are cooperating very well in the program. Through the papers, information is being offered to the people. Topaz was devoting almost the entire space to relocation information. With this cooperation, it would seem unnecessary to develop any further project information bulletins.

Community Activities Supervisors responded very well to the suggestion of incorporating travelogues, historical films and similar relocation aids as shorts in the regular movie program.

Statistical Sections were very willing to develop the central file on individuals and requested that an Administrative Notice be sent out to cover this. I understand this was done during my absence.

At no other projects except Gila did Mess Supervisors and Farm Supervisors meet to discuss with me their relocation plans on a constructive bases. These are usually considered to be the most anti groups.

In general the staffs cooperated very well with the relocation program although they themselves did not know what they might do to be of the most value. They lacked information on the total program. More concise and simply written information on the Post-Exclusion program is indicated.

*Admin Dist  
now in final  
stage ✓*  
FEB 24 '45



## V. Community Cooperation

In general, the cooperation of the people has been excellent. I indicated previously that there were certain resistance groups. Resistance was developed gradually around lack of information concerning the handling of categorical and dependency cases and fear of the outside. The teletype on the handling of the Doi case was very effective in dispelling some of the fear. Personal reports by people who had gone to California were very effective. The report of Mr. Myer's reaction to coast attitudes was also effective. An explanation of the resettlement assistance program melted much of the resistance which some had felt. At Granada, I was more or less put on the spot by the Community Council which had gathered questions from all the blocks to be presented to Washington as a protest. A copy of the list given me is attached. The final list as developed in the meeting contained 19 \$64 questions. The only one to which I could not give an answer was the following, "What will happen to the land now operated by an Issei for his son serving in the Army if there are no other children and if the son is killed in action?"

The group at Granada seemed to feel that the Washington staff had not considered the human side of their problems and were convinced that the questions submitted could not be answered by the project and probably could not be answered by Washington. An explanation of the resettlement assistance program, the agreements reached by the various cooperating governmental agencies and the methods of procedure satisfied them although they requested that the answers I gave them be later submitted in writing. Since I had no secretarial help to take down the questions and they did, I asked that I might be kept informed of further problems.

The question of farm loans by the Farm Security agency was faced squarely. Mr. Floyd Rigby happened to be at the project at that time and stated that there was a tremendous backlog of applications totaling nearly \$6,500,000. He recommended to me at the project that a similar arrangement with the Farm Security be made as had been made by the Social Security Board, that a farm resettlement program be developed similar to the resettlement assistance program. Undoubtedly in the meeting of the Council, there were people present who had a final rationalization for not closing the centers in appeal to the penal code of Japan. When such an attitude was indicated, I read the code and gave a straight forward statement of our American attitude. A general feeling of surprise swept over some of the faces and no question was thereafter raised.

## VI. Summary

It is my opinion that relocation is preceeding very well at



Granada. If welfare summaries could be developed and handled, I have no doubt that the center can be one of the first to be liquidated.

Topaz is considerably behind time in its general development. Much ground work has to be done before relocation will be speeded up to a point where voluntary center closure will be indicated. The relocation staff needs strengthening although the program officer is a very capable, self-assured person. She has not reached groups to which a man in the organization might appeal.

Manzanar is a big question mark in my mind. The thinking is not correct and is not progressive. At present I am not hopeful of any favorable results that we might be able to predict.

At Gila the general situation is excellent, especially in the Butte camp. The staff is working excellently with the people and the Relocation Commission is taking the lead and ~~substantially~~ directing the relocation program and policy. One stumbling block is the very conserved attitude toward daily passes and visits to Phoenix. The general philosophy of the return of personal liberty is evident with the general run of the staff but has not become evident with the Director as yet. Because the lead is being taken by the people and since they understand his attitude, there are no detrimental effects present. If all things proceed as indicated, Gila will be able to close its gate on a voluntary basis before any of the other camps.

## VII. Group Relocation

After a meeting with Mr. Jesse Lewis, at Granada, and discussing detailed plans of moving groups into the southern area, I made it a point to be an ambassador of the South at the other centers. A tremendous interest was shown by groups at Manzanar, Topaz and more particularly Gila. The group at Granada have agreed to go down to the Crystal Spring area at Mississippi. I am not too hopeful of this group because the leader, a Mr. Sugita is merely awaiting the time to return to his holdings in California. After hours of discussion and explanation of the resettlement assistance program, we learned that he was actually a wealthy man and had approximately \$150,000 in cash available. He also owns forty acres of land and was leasing 400 additional in California. A group at Gila including the son of the lettuce king, Minami, and the Aratani group is very much interested in securing big holdings in the South. They are making special arrangements with Mr. Lewis to come down and secure either by rental or purchase an area approximating 10,000 acres. They are picking best farmers of Gila and will offer them the proposition of going with them into the south. They are interested mainly of managing their farm. They do not lack in capital or ability. I discussed this group with Dr. Koh Murai at New Orleans in whom they have great confidence.



He, in turn, expressed a confidence in them, and will make his research knowledge of the South available to them. Manzanar was interested in the West Feliciana Parish but the thought of moving to the South seemed new to them and they were not ready to move immediately. It is very possible that a group can be developed in six weeks if constructive attitude is maintained at the center.

15/  
Hugo W. Wolter  
Head, Center Liaison Section

2/16/45

P. S. This report is by no means a complete summary of all discussion, etc. Each minute brings additional points to mind. If there are questions on specific points, I'd be happy to discuss them with anyone.