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Takeuchi, Jack

longitudinal oral history

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Tsuruda - September, 1943, February 2, 1944

BOB TSURUDA AND FAMILY

During my visits with Bob Tsuruda in Tule Lake, some member or members of his family were almost always present and usually they joined in the conversation. I have therefore titled this longitudinal oral history "Bob Tsuruda and family". The participants include Bob's wife, his two sisters, Noriko and Mrs. Sato, his brother Bill, Bill's wife, Mr. Sato, and, on a few occasions, Bob's five or six year old son. Bob relocated in September of 1944 and in November his wife was sent to the Rower Center. But I continued to visit his sisters and in-laws until May of 1945.

BOB TSURUDA IN GILA - 1943

Bob Tsuruda was a cocky, shrewd, loquacious and very intelligent Nisei, born in Sacramento, California, in 1914. He was married and had one child. He had graduated from junior college and, at the time of the evacuation, he was employed in a drugstore.

In February of 1943 he had answered the military questionnaire in the negative. When I met him in September of that year, he was scheduled to be segregated to Tule Lake in about a month. At our first meeting Bob told me frankly:

"You know, what I'd really like to see Japan win the war and then call it a draw. Just so that the Caucasians get knocked out of them that they're not so damned superior as they think they are." Accustomed to talking to the cautious and circumspect "loyal" evacuees, I looked somewhat surprised at this bold statement. Bob noticed this, laughed, and said, *"What the hell. I'm going to Tule Lake. I can speak my mind. What have I got to be afraid of?"* (Fieldnotes, September 2, 1943.)

He then changed his tone and explained that he was the sole support of his aged parents, wife, and child, and, after the unfair way he and the other Japanese Americans had been treated, he figured that the most sensible thing to do was to avoid military service, go to Tule Lake, and see what the future held. He also suggested that I visit his sister, Mrs. Sato, who, though "disloyal" was to remain in Gila for several months.¹ I followed this suggestion and had a number of interesting visits with Mrs. Sato. She was a remarkably independent and outspoken person.

After the segregation (October of 1943) I corresponded with Bob and with other segregants who had talked to me. In December Bob wrote me that the WRA had announced that the widow and son of the Japanese who had been killed at Tule Lake in the farm accident of October 15, *"are entitled to the grand sum of sixty per cent of whatever he is making in a month, namely, sixty per cent of the kingly wage of sixteen big dollars."*

BOB TSURUDA IN TULE LAKE

In February of 1944, I was permitted to make a two day visit to Tule Lake. I wrote to Bob Tsuruda, telling him when I was coming. When I arrived at Tule Lake I was told by Mr. Black and Mr. Best, that I would not be permitted to enter the "colony" unless I was accompanied by an armed soldier. But, with Mr. Robertson's assistance, I was able to get the military guard changed to a member of the Internal Security, who I asked to stay in his car while I visited my Japanese friends alone. He was

¹. For a case history of Mrs. Sato, see "Doing Fieldwork", pp. 84-87. I was told by another respondent that Mrs. Sato's Issei husband had been interned because he had been accused of singing the Japanese national anthem in the block mess hall.

agreeable. (See Fieldnotes, February 1944, pp. 1-3.)

I found Bob living in a large barrack room with his wife, son, mother, an old partially paralysed man whom I took to be his father, and a younger sister. He and his family had defined my visit as a social occasion, and his wife served us excellent tea and a delicious chocolate cake which they somehow had procured from Klamath Falls.¹

1. At that time I was not aware that this meant that Bob had prevailed upon some member of the administrative staff to purchase and bring the cake to him./

His wife sent out her little son with some tea and cake for my Internal Security escort. The little boy came back and showed Bob four pennies given him by my escort. Bob laughed.

Bob impressed me as having lost a good deal of his pre-segregation cockiness. He talked to me in a soft half-whisper, whereas at Gila he had spoken boldly and in a loud voice.² He had also gained about fifteen pounds, "from not working," he said.

2. I did not at this time realize that my visit put him in danger of being called an inu./

After we had exchanged amenities, and gossiped about what was going on in the Gila Center, Bob asked me whether it was true that Gila was going to close soon. I said I did not know. He told me that his sister, whom I had visited frequently, was soon coming to Tule Lake. I then began to do my job as a field worker and told him that one of the chief points I would like to get straight was whether the first negotiating committee (of the Daihyo Sha Kai) had been regarded by the people as their legitimate representatives. He replied:

"That was one of the things that got the Japanese in an uproar. All of the respective people in the block elected them. When the Spanish Consul was here they went and made their requests. But there weren't any representatives who spoke real good English - their terminology sounded more like a demand. It made a misunderstanding. Some allowance should be made for this lack of education in the English language. The army flatly refused to recognize the representatives."

He then described and commented on particular events as they occurred to him.

"After every meeting the representatives always came back and at supper called for silence. They'd get up in front of the mess hall and give a brief summary of what went on before the meeting. They'd take Ayes and Nos for any question then. If there was no time in mess they'd call a special meeting at night."

"Of course, a lot of their requests as far as I'm concerned is purely nonsense. They asked for porches for all the apartments. WRA had promised lumber for all the porches. It was never supplied. That's where that request came in. We were promised. That's inefficiency as far as I'm concerned."

"The only thing everybody in camp absolutely endorsed was the dismissal of Dr. Pedicord, and more care in placement of drivers and an improvement of food, and I think, the request for an investigation of grafting."

"Some of the representatives weren't exactly the people who ought to be acting as representatives. You can understand that trouble can arise from a fanatical Kibei being a representative."

I asked Bob whether the requests of the Negotiating Committee had been presented to the Administration as demands. He replied:

"The requests might have been couched in dictatorial terms."

(I questioned him as to whether Best had actually promised the people that he would not call in anyone to break the strike without notifying them.)

"Best said he'd stand pat until the people went to work. He just called them (the harvesters) with no warning."

I asked about Dillon Myer's speech to the residents on November 1, and whether some of the Japanese American enthusiasts had used force:

"When this came about it so happened the goon-squad went on the war path. They took Dr. Pedicord in hand. He admits he struck one of the fellows."

"The people gathered in some blocks. In some blocks the representatives asked the people to come because Myer was going to give a speech. Then, when there wasn't enough people there, a few members of the goon-squad got cars. They said it wasn't safe to remain in the barracks and asked the people to head for the Administration area. I sat tight. I figured if I'm going to get shot I can get shot here in this barrack. They talked to the people trying to make them go, saying, 'Are you a Japanese or not?'"

"There was a very small minority group of young radicals. They took it upon themselves to do things for the people in camp, without the peoples' permission. It was this group who first went around demanding the removal of the American flag, and also demanded that the Co-op stop selling newspapers. They were all for Japanese stoicism. Nobody paid any attention to them. They were not real representatives. Quite a few were Hawaiians. There were many Hawaiians in the trouble-making group."

(I asked whether Myer and Best had made promises to the people when they gathered around the Administration Building. Bob related what he had heard from friends.)

"Then Myer and Best came out. Myer got up and talked to the people in public over the public address system. He promised the people the dismissal of Dr. Pedicord. As far as the dismissal of Best, Myer was against that. Myer said Best had done all right."

Bob then made a few remarks about the period of Army control:

"Then, the first thing that happened, the Army started to put people in the stockade. At one time I imagine there must have been from 125 to 150. That is a small estimate. In this block about six out of the block were taken. They weren't any of the block representatives, it so happened. The boys yanked from here happened to be Hawaiian born. They suspected the Hawaiians because the ringleader came from Hawaii. That was Abe. (Chairman of the Daihyo Sha Kai.)"

"The people hiding out had information that was vital for maintaining peace and normalcy in the center. But if they showed their face outside they would be put in the stockade. And, so, naturally, the only thing they could do was hide out."

"The Army had a house to house search. They said it was to get contraband. They were saying too much in the newspapers about weapons. Personally I think it was to locate these four boys."¹

1. Abe, Kunitani, Kagawa, and ? .

Later Developments during Strike

Bob then told me about a secret vote held on December 4, which no other respondent ever mentioned to me:¹

"There was one vote that the Army wasn't supposed to know anything about. All the Japanese met in their representative blocks and voted whether to go back to normalcy or adopt the status quo permanently or call a general strike. All the time this status quo was on, the coal crew, the hospital bunch, the garbage and the mess halls were still working. At that time the vote came out that they should adopt the status quo instead of a general strike. They went against the return to normalcy because that would be an insult to the representatives barricaded in the stockade. All their work would be for nothing."

/1. The account of this event in "The Spoilage," Thomas and Nishimoto, pp. 166-7, comes from the minutes of the meeting of the Daihyo Sha Kai, December 4, which were given to me later./

He added:

"Then also at that time they had a second negotiating committee that wanted to go on a hunger strike. That didn't last long. Everybody ignored it altogether. They sent people to the block representatives to try to influence people. The blocks were to go on a hunger strike. The people ignored this second negotiating committee."

I asked Bob about the popular referendum vote of January 11, in which the residents had voted to abandon the strike or "status quo".

"This other referendum vote - (of January 11) the Army more or less called that one. They were supposed to have united the people for the psychological moment to spring that question; whether they wanted to discard the status quo or continue. To help out, the bunch who wanted to discard the status quo kept pulling the people right and left. They said that anybody who was inciting the Japanese to continue the status quo strike - and that more or less damned a large majority - were only hurting themselves."

"Anyway, people got wise that the longer they maintained the status quo they were going to yank them and stick them in the stockade. Besides their finances were petering out. Here - they're still paying off on the October checks. These fellows who were not working got no clothing allowance, no welfare, no income."

"Another point of view: the people here are supposed to be loyal to Japan now. Here's an argument some of the bright boys advanced. (These were members of the group who wished to abandon status quo.) They said, in returning to normalcy we'll be drawing salaries. Then on top of that the government will have to pay us clothing allowance. That's just that much less money that the U.S. government is going to have to manufacture armaments to beat Japan. I couldn't see it. I know myself that regardless if the Japanese draw this monthly stipend, they'd not make much difference to the U.S. treasury. But it sounds good on the surface and it swayed some of the stubborn people."

"They had a referendum vote. Two soldiers were present. They took a vote of all persons over eighteen. The soldiers with one Japanese present counted and tallied the votes. There was a majority over 400 /actually 473/ voted to return to normalcy."

I remarked that a member of the Administration had told me that the decision to return to work had been made on a majority of 800 votes. Bob snorted:

"Eight hundred my foot! One block didn't even vote. There were quite a few blank ballots too."

"I spoke to a soldier here when they were making the house to house search. He was a sergeant from Idaho. He had a very low opinion of the WRA. WRA is always pulling boners. They got themselves in hot water and had to call the Army."

"A couple of days after that all those desiring of work could report to a place. The only trouble with this is they don't have enough work to go round. So many with large families have no way to get money. Under WRA arrangement, if you won't work, you can't get clothing allowance."

I asked about the rumors that the Co-op had influenced the selection of the Coordinating Committee:

"I don't think the Co-op itself had much influence. I don't think the Co-op had anything to do with forming a committee to bring back normalcy. It was essentially an organization to serve the people in camp. There were no political officials in it at all."

"The first I heard of going back to normalcy, the heads and the former employees of some of the divisions called a meeting. That was the first trend toward normalcy. They held elections for this committee January 11. The committee - they are so called men with ability. Akitsuki was an official of the Co-op here. I don't think they want political power. They were elected by the wards.¹ Each fellow was elected from a ward. There are seven wards each with ten blocks."

1. Bob is mistaken. The Coordinating Committee was not elected.

I asked Bob what he expected would happen in the near future:

"I look forward to the end of the war. That's me. There's no future until I see what happens after it ends."

"In camp here, I believe I can truthfully say there will be one of two things."

"'One' they'll either continue going back to normal and naturally, eventually the Army will relinquish control - or there's only 400 people difference for status quo than against."

"When I say something's liable to pop, I mean the newspaper account of the War Department Release saying that Nisei are again eligible for selective service. And that report called for ten centers. That includes this one. But, if and when they start to draft the avowedly disloyal group in camp that is going to be the psychological moment for the next riot. That really is going to be a riot if it ever happened."

"The majority of the people want to be left alone till after the war. They want to be left alone to be dealt with under any circumstances."

"Another thing that gets my goat is the propaganda of the American Legion, especially in Klamath Falls. They want the Army to take over. The Army doesn't want it. The American Legion has practically terrorized the people of Klamath Falls, warning them to arm themselves to get ready for any emergency. If the people wanted to get out of this place they'd have done so by stating they were loyal and going outside."

"Putting up all these barbed wire fences and watch towers - that's all a lot of bunk. They're not going to go out and kill anybody. They want to go back to California and temporarily this is home."

"I came here to be left in peace. If they leave me alone I'll leave them alone."

VISITS OF MARCH 1944

On this visit - from March 14 to March 24 I talked first with Mr. Robertson, Assistant Project Director in charge of Operations Division. I asked him what progress had been made in improving the relations between the evacuees and the Administration. He said, "Not very much," and added that over 120 people were still in the stockade, which, in his opinion, was 120 too many. He then asked me if I would do one thing for him -- try to find out what could possibly be done to improve relations between the Administration and the evacuees to mitigate the present atmosphere of suspicion. I promised to do what I could.

On the whole, however, I found my Japanese American friends and acquaintances somewhat less anxious and tense than they had been at my February visit.

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA'S YOUNGER BROTHER, BILL TSURUDA

When I called at the Tsurudas' quarters his wife invited me in but told me that Bob was away at work at the mess "as he has always wanted to do." She suggested that if I wanted to talk to Bob I might return that evening or on Saturday or Sunday. I decided on Saturday.

I decided on Saturday, because I knew that the Administration would probably not permit me to enter "the colony" at night, even with an armed escort. But Bob's younger brother clearly wanted to talk to me, so I went in and sat down. We talked first about Gila and I remarked that Dr. Pedicord had been transferred there. Bob's brother responded, "Even the way he talks, curls his lips, I don't like. It's like he was snarling at you. He's sure going to get his bald head sunburnt in Gila."

I then asked what possible hope there was for bettering the conditions at Tule Lake:

"I don't see a single thing that could be done. The peoples' confidence is gone. You get one guy like that in WRA. It doesn't make people hate just him; it's a reflection on all WRA (referring to Best). The guys from Leupp liked Best. They said he was understanding and would make a good Project Director. They said he was Best, the best. Now they say, 'Best, my foot!'"

Daihyo Sha Kai

"At first there was a group that went up to see Mr. Best. They were refused; the Army told them they weren't representatives."

Public Funeral

"That was the Kibei and the Hawaiian boys. I don't think that was the Representative Committee. They didn't go just to ask to be allowed to use the auditorium. They just demanded and rubbed Best the wrong way."

Representatives

"The representatives were elected for the block at the beginning of the year. They met together and talked things over. They went up to try to negotiate with the Army. But the Army wouldn't recognize them as block representatives. So the representatives made up a petition and had all of the people in the blocks, all 18 of them, to state that he was a real block representative. This was done after November 1."

"Then they took the petition with all the names signed. Then they went to talk to Austin.¹ But they didn't get any place. Some guys went and hollered louder. They got picked up. The loudest ones just got yanked, that's all."

"After November 4 - that's when all the people started hollering about the Daihyo Sha and block representatives, etc. The funny part of it is, in January, right after New Year, they're going to elect new representatives. They had about six or seven nominees. Finally one was elected; he absolutely refused to be a representative in this block. He's really a stubborn man. Here it is March and he hasn't represented anything yet."

1. Lieutenant Colonel Austin, Commanding Officer of the Army unit at Tule Lake.

I now asked this voluble young man how the Coordinating Committee was making out. The vehemence of his answer surprised me, because he and his family were what I then considered "conservative" rather than "radical".

"That bunch is a bunch of inus, and Sasaki /the chairman/ is the biggest inu of them all. He'll probably get his brains beat out one of these days. That Coordinating Committee - I don't know who elected them or not. Sasaki - people around here know about him. He used to head the Co-op during the trouble. WRA took rice here - prior to the search Sasaki and the big shots got together and sold the WRA rice in the canteen to the people. They did this with rice and oranges. The money they got from that they divided among themselves."

"They send out pamphlets. It's just a lot of bolony."

"I know of a group that has been trying to get a lawyer or a bookkeeper to audit the Co-op books and investigate into it. We know graft like that is going on. Sasaki probably got word of it. It was getting hot under the seat, so he quit the Co-op now."

I then asked whether a genuine election for representatives (which the Coordinating Committee was now proposing) might now improve the situation. Bob's brother Bill said:

"I don't think an election would do any good anyhow. What do we want representatives for? They don't do any good. Let us roam around here and feed us three times a day. We'll wait until the war lasts. Nobody likes trouble. If they'll treat us like human beings and not like dogs, nobody starts kicking."

"If they had had enough brains to kick aside the unreasonable requests and settle the reasonable ones, everybody would have been satisfied."

He then gave me a copy of a statement by Mr. Sasaki welcoming the contingent of 1,876 segregees from Manzanar who had arrived at Tule Lake in late February,² and said:

2. For a copy of this statement, see p. 6 of March fieldnotes.

"That's the kind of thing an inu would write. That's really soft-soaping the people."

Bob's wife and his brother's wife, who had said little during the young man's speech, now joined in:

Bob's wife: "When Manzanar came in, gee, they were treated good."

Bill's wife: "They got everything!"

Bob's wife: "My sister tells me, 'Gosh, they got treated so good they thought something was fishy.'"

Bill: "That paper ought to be signed, 'Inu Sasaki.'"¹

1. It is interesting that though I talked to the Tsuruda's frequently, no one told me that Bill had joined the Resegregation Group. I am not sure when he joined, but on March 1, 1945, his sister told me that he had left the group. She also told me on that date that he had applied for renunciation of citizenship.

MARCH 18, 1944

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA

On March 16 I had a talk with Mr. Sasaki, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee in which he appeared very anxious and depressed and told me that in the past month, the Committee had accomplished "nothing whatever". I therefore opened my talk with Bob by asking him what he thought of Mr. Sasaki. Bob avoided my question and told me:

"He's more or less the guiding hand in the Coordinating Committee business. William Tayama is head of Civic Organization; he lives in 32 block and there's Frank Naido here, of Housing. They're all placed in strategic positions here. They've always been here. All these fellows are not on the Coordinating Committee. But I'm absolutely positive they belong to that group. Joe Okada, the one who is supposed to be the Senior Steward of the camp; Sej Fukuhara, a sullen type of man - he seems to be Hawaiian born."

He then spontaneously gave me a detailed account of the irregularities he had discovered as a worker in the mess division. Most of these involved what he considered evidence that the WRA personnel were being fed far better and more expensive food than the Japanese Americans. "It's pretty disgusting to sit in that damn office and hear them talk about chicken and turkey and we walk back to work ten blocks and sit down to corned beef and salt pork." He had little use for most of the Caucasians employed in the mess division except for Joe Bellow, who was leaving Tule Lake and Mr. Hayward, Bob's boss. "All the rest of them," he said "have very definite anti-Japanese feelings. ...They got the attitude here; we just hand out food because we can't starve them."

He added: "The main reason I'm working where I am is I want to find out exactly what is going on in the food situation, what the Caucasians eat, where it comes from and what's paid for it. I want to compare that with the measly 20 cents the Japanese are getting in here."

"Personally, I think if Best (the Project Director) was kicked out and Robertson (Assistant Project Director in charge of Operations Division) got it, (Best's job), it would be the best thing."

"If they tear down the fence, not a person would wander away. This is home, such as it is. It's all we've known since evacuation."

"Feeling toward the Administration hasn't changed at all. The only thing that has changed is that people in the center have more or less realized that to try to go against the Administration would be hurting themselves. They're getting smarter."

Since a number of other respondents had complained about the "loyal" people who had refused to leave Tule Lake, I asked Bob about them. His response surprised me, because we had not been talking about inu:

"100% of the inu are of the loyal bunch. I wouldn't be surprised if Sasaki and that bunch are all loyal. There is a girl who works at my office. She acts like an inu. This is how I suspect. I told her, 'You know, there are a lot of inu in camp.' And she said, 'Is that so, but it's better not to say anything.' That's how I know. Now the natural reaction would be, 'Who are they?'"

He then, like other respondents, complained about the favorable treatment given to the recent arrivals from the Manzanar Center:

"The facilities in the new area, they have everything. Porcelain and mirrors over every porcelain fixture. In this area the men's latrine is nothing but a trough; they leak on the floor and the stench is terrific. The sinks are leaking. The plumbing is so bad they're always plugged up."

Since I still had so little information on the complex political activities of October and November 1943, I asked Bob about the block representatives and the Daihyo Sha Kai. He explained:

"What you call block representatives always existed even previous to the trouble (that is, prior to the segregation).¹"

/1. Bob was referring to the block managers and, probably, to the members of the Community Council. (See Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 114.)/

"Out of those that were representatives, a lot relocated and newcomers were elected to take their place. It's quite possible that at the time of the trouble men were elected. But there were quite a few old ones and that's one of the reasons why the people got so burnt up. The name Daihyo Sha Kai was first heard after the trouble (farm incident)."

"In the beginning the Daihyo Sha Kai was the literal Japanese translation of the Negotiating Committee which the representatives called themselves. I'm quite sure they took on the name immediately after the farm incident. Under that title they tried to carry on the first negotiations."

"It was definitely decided by block consent to attend the funeral and make it a regular project-wide affair, by the Negotiating Committee. This was before the nine were selected. They were probably from the newly elected bunch from other centers. They might have been goon-squads but they were representatives."

Second Negotiating Committee

"They put in their bid after they yanked (arrested) the first representatives after November 4, but before the important four had given themselves up. They were very radical. That same group went to see the Tule Lake Co-op. By December 6, the original Daihyo Sha was just about shot."

Selective Service Notification

Bob then told me:

"I got a notice from my selective service. They wanted to know my address and my present draft board. I filled it in. That's what all of us fellows are going to do. We'll fill in everything we get until they tell us to come for a physical. Then we won't report. I figure on staying here as long as I can. There are a few fellows in our camp (Gila) who were yanked during registration trouble. They were sent here. They actually didn't have time to register for repatriation until after the 20th of January."

"A good ninety percent of the fellows I've talked to here, they say they'll string along with the Selective Service Board until they get their notice for physical examination. Then they won't appear. That's how I feel. If I'm going to get yanked I'm going to string it out as long as I can."

APRIL 19, 1944

In April of 1944 I visited Tule Lake from April 12 to April 17. On my arrival I found the members of the appointed staff in a state of extreme apprehension. The general attitude is best conveyed by my talk with Mr. Robertson.

Robertson was greatly concerned over the present camp situation. He said he had been debating whether to telegraph me. I asked for details.

"A group (of segregants) wrote to the Spanish Embassy and the Department of Interior asking what they thought about further segregation. The matter was referred back to the camp officials. Permission was given this group by the Administration (Harry Black)¹ to find out the colony reaction to further segregation. They went about it by circulating a memorandum through the colony asking the people who wanted to be segregated and return to Japan on the first boat to sign here. It was circulated last week, ending Saturday the 8th. It was apparently an opposition group that passed the petition around. Toyfuku told me that the group was composed to super-super-patriotic people who didn't have enough sense to know when they were well off."²

"Some people had suggested that the colony was right on the verge of another incident. Others said they didn't think anything would happen."

"Several other things are tending to start up. There is a rumor that the stockade people are being moved away. Some (Robertson thought four) were moved out yesterday; they were Issei sent to Santa Fe. There is a rumor now that the rest will be moved. Some say there'll be a blow up on account of that. They are still urging the release of everybody there. I find the whole colony very tense."

"Mrs. Tsuchikawa is behind this movement for further segregation."

"The Coordinating Committee resigned last Saturday (the 8th). They have not agreed that they will continue until another representative body is prepared to take their place." (Robertson said that the Administration had taken no steps to initiate this action. Permission is still awaited from Washington.)

"Best is not here. He won't be back till the end of the month. And the present feeling among the Administration is that there will be no further segregation."

"There were over 5,000 names on this petition."

1. Mr. Best had left the project on official business and Mr. Black was functioning as Project Director in his absence.

2. For a detailed description of these events see Thomas and Nishimoto (1946:230-5, 306-7).

/So great was the confusion that I was permitted to go into the "colony" without a police escort. I visited five Japanese American friends and acquaintances and found none of them in a state of tension. The contrast between their nonchalance and the anxiety of the WRA staff was striking.

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA

/Bob talked a blue streak and I was able to ask only a few questions./

Resignation of the Coordinating Committee

"Personally, I think the resignation of the Coordinating Committee is just the result of the Life photographer being here. Now this center hasn't returned to any more normalcy than it had then. These poor saps got their faces in the magazine. There seemed to be quite an outcry about inu and stoolies. Then Life came out. I think

that was the primary factor, I saw two by fours coming. It came to a head when the pictures came out in Life."¹

/1. I doubt that the publicity given the Coordinating Committee by Life magazine had anything to do with the resignation. As my notes demonstrate, the members of the committee knew from the moment they took office that many residents would brand them as inu or stool pigeons./

The Petition

"The guys believe the petition is a radical goon-squad business. The group behind the petition was more or less responsible for the incident that happened in November.² They proposed the general strike and the hunger strike. They are just a minority who feel that they have to make a name for themselves so they'll be honored when they get back to the old country."

/2. Bob was mistaken here. The leaders of November and December were not responsible for the petition for resegregation./

"When this petition was circulated in this block, the first thing I looked for was official approval. Although Black's name was typewritten on the sheet, there was no signature. So personally, I ignored it. I haven't signed anything."

"Personally, I think many people confused this petition with an announcement that came out through the Spanish embassy, which announced that all people who had applied for repatriation had to fill out a duplicate form.³ It seems that the committee just picked the right moment to send out the petition just so people would be muddled up. If that hadn't been done, they wouldn't have gotten half the signatures they did."

/3. I have found no other reference to such an announcement made by the Spanish consul at this time./

"The only segregation the colonists are in favor of is the segregation of the Yes-Yes from the No-Nos. The majority don't care if there's any distinction made at all between the No-Nos and the repatriates."

Mess Scandal

"They changed crews in Mess 9. It seems the new crew that moved in ate up or cleaned out everything in the mess including four pairs of shoes for the crew's use. Over a period of three weeks they had on hand 24 sacks of rice. (The population of block 9 is 127 people.) In three weeks this rice disappeared. Some poor guy (a Japanese warden) thought he'd be a detective and got in cahoots with the guilty party and since he held the respectable position of detective he was supposed to find the guilty culprits. So he reported people to Internal Security and Internal Security yanked five guys who didn't know what the score was. They are in the stockade now. They are just saints. They don't know anything."

Rationing in Mess

"Hayward gave us permission to institute rationing.⁴ It was that damned moron Peterson who fathered the blanket system (the former system) when all the mess halls

/4. Robertson informed me that the institution of this rationing system was the work of a new man, Mr. Wells; Hayward, whom Bob likes very much, is probably getting credit for Well's action./

got the same amount of food. It facilitated delivery, but it was not equal. He was against rationing; it was a little over his head. But he was back in this office three weeks after rationing was under way. He thought he'd run the works to suit himself. I explained everything to him and showed him it was a damned good system under which we would eliminate 85% of the menu changes which had been going on every day. He said condescendingly, 'Well, Bob, we'll have to leave everything ride for a few weeks. Then we'll try to tear your system apart.' I hit the ceiling but put on a blank stare - I went to see Hayward. I explained. By gosh, he hit the top. The next day Peterson was moved out of my office to the warehouse. At the end of the month, Peterson took a trip. Now he's friendly and willing to cooperate."

Troublemakers

"There's still a few people in this camp who don't seem to realize that things are on the upward trend and it might be a good thing if they let well enough alone. I ran into this guy (a Japanese) the other day, who works in the hospital. He said the children from two to ten were badly malnourished. He came to the mess and demanded that the kids get more fruit. We're issuing fruit three times a week. Eighty percent of the kids don't eat all the fruit they get. Yet he wanted us to increase it by two times. He demanded. I suggested he strike up the hospital for a big supply of vitamin pills, since I don't think just issuing more fruit would greatly assist the malnourishment."

I then asked what might happen if the men confined in the stockade were taken to the Leupp Isolation Center:

"I couldn't say what would happen, if there would actually be any trouble. In a way, I think the large majority of the colonists would be glad that they weren't turned loose in camp again. On the other hand there are quite a few decent fellows in the stockade. If the Internal Security had a particle of intelligence, they should be able to sort out the innocent from the actual agitators. They could take out the innocent and throw out the agitators and send them to another camp. Personally, I think it would be a damn poor thing to turn them back into the colony. It would start another ruckus. What do I care about Dai Nippon? I came here to lead a peaceful life until the war's over."

Physical Examination for Selective Service

"One of two things is going to happen. I think there are three groups. The gutless ones will be taken first. I still believe there's quite a few of them left. They'll show up at their physicals and for actual induction. Then there's another group who are going to try to take advantage of the new Supreme Court ruling. The gist of it is: if a potential inductee refuses to appear for his physical examination he can be classified as a draft evader, whereas, if he should appear for his examination and should be classified 1A and then at the time for actual induction refuses to comply, he could not be called a draft resister. Some will refuse to appear for their physicals and be draft resisters. But the other group is going to appear mainly for their physicals and then if they're accepted they'll kick them (the authorities) in the face."

I asked what Bob thought about the prospects of electing representatives to the Coordinating Committee:

"I don't think the people would go for an election right now. The minute you get a bunch of representatives, you're going to get in a few radicals. They're going to bring up proposals that are downright unreasonable. They will have to bring it up to the Administration and it will cause trouble. Why not let things ride and see what will come of it for a while. If things are let alone they might improve a little more."

I then asked Bob to tell me more about what had happened in October and November. It will be noted that he told me a great deal more than in his first account.

Reactions to Farm Strike (October, 1943)

"I felt that the people on the farm at that time were more or less unreasonable in striking, because they could have kept on working and watched a satisfactory negotiations to be put through before striking. They jumped the gun. It was brought on by high pressure speakers."

Bringing in Harvesters

"At that time I thought considering what Best had promised that he'd notify the colonists of any sudden decision. Then he brought in the farm workers from other centers - I thought it was kind of a dirty trick, putting it mildly."

Reaction to Funeral

"My opinion might be colored. I believe my disfavor to the stand taken by the Administration was because of their refusal to allow the people to use the gymnasium. It was generally publicised that it would be a camp-wide affair. The funeral was on a cloudy, windy day. Just the kind of day that would put the people in mind for a little radical propoganda to be spread. Standing out in the cold, shivering, with the corpse in front and the goon squad patrolling behind - it was just right for propoganda."

"The goon squad was just a radical unit - young radicals from Jerome. The Administration made a mistake refusing the gymnasium to be used. Had they permitted the gym to be used, they could have put down a ruling and limited the number of people attending the funeral. Had that happened there would have been a lot less people infected with the spirit of to heck with the Administration, and what not."

Breakdown of Status Quo

"You'd be surprised how many people voted for status quo. They were still gluttonous for punishment - or they had voted for it in the beginning. It was my opinion that status quo wouldn't accomplish a darn thing but would only increase the peoples' sufferings. You can't have status quo and expect things to improve. It just means taking a stand-offish attitude, not having a darn thing to do with the Administration, just letting them do their worst."

"I voted for the general strike! I went radical that once. I was against status quo the latter part of November. Inasmuch as status quo meant standing pat - they were still going on with the coal crew, and garbage, mess and hospital, all the janitors and boiler men were working - well, under these conditions status quo could be maintained indefinitely but being very harmful to the colonists. For that reason I voted for the general strike to bring things to a head right away fast. I knew the status quo would be a lingering suffering for the whole damn colony. These elections and meetings were held behind locked doors. The general strike was defeated. Sixty-four mess halls voted and there was a majority of 13 mess halls for status quo. So we had status quo. They got to thinking about the women and children, and that's why so many were in favor of status quo. They figured it would be awful to have to stand around and watch the kids cry."

Inu

And as I was preparing to leave, he remarked:

"This last week there's been a lot of talk about dog (inu) hunting with baseball bats. If there's any trouble here in the next five or six months, it's going to be because of keeping the Yes-Yes in the camp."

MAY 13, 1944

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA

On May 13 I took up permanent residence at Tule Lake. It is indicative of my regard for Bob that he was the first Japanese American on whom I called.

I found Bob having his Saturday afternoon snooze. He received me quite cordially considering the inconvenient interruption, and was soon speaking with his usual volubility.

Mess Trouble with Segregees

"We're just going crazy with the new segregees. Day before yesterday they told us a bunch were coming in Friday evening. Next they told us Saturday and then Monday. Everybody in mess got busy and figured out what they should send to the new blocks. Then the first thing that happened they said they were really coming in Saturday evening. That was at 11 a.m. Friday morning. So we started sending everything out. Then at 3:30 yesterday afternoon (Friday) another teletype came saying they weren't going to come in."

"It was the same thing this morning. They claimed there would be a bunch in today. So we went to work. Then at 10:30 we got a teletype that they wouldn't be in till tomorrow morning."

New Identification Requirements

"This new business about getting off the colony is a pain in the back. First they give you a little piece of paper with your name, age, etc. on it. Now they picked these up and give you another paper with a number on it. On Monday everybody will have to go through a turnstile and they'll give you a little button which matches the number on your little piece of blue paper. They'll probably try to stop you and see if your button matches the number."

"It's just downright silly. If a man is going to swipe your button, he'll swipe the paper too. I could forge one of these in five minutes anyway."

(Bob showed me his paper and it did appear very easy to forge. However, I'm sure it would take more than five minutes.)

Possibility of "Trouble" on Draft

"I don't think there's going to be anyone here who'll be taken, providing he's a repatriate. Of course the Yes-Yes boys showed up. I think they sent out 82 notices and 17 boys, all Yes-Yes, showed up for their examinations. One No-No boy showed up too, but he knew his own physical condition and knew he'd be refused."

"All they did was come around and pull you in for a couple of hours of routine questioning. Some boys had their suitcases all packed. They asked, 'Where do we go from here?' They said, 'You can go home now.'"

"One of the kids in in our division: he got pulled in and asked the same questions as he was asked in his military questionnaire. He said, 'I'm a Jap and a repatriate and disloyal.' He signed a statement then to back up what he said and they turned him loose. He thought sure he'd be sent to Leupp."

"The only guys they are going to send to Leupp are the guys in the stockade and I think they ought to go anyway."

I interrupted Bob's spontaneous speech by asking him whether he thought there might be an explosion if the men confined in the stockade were sent to Leupp.

"There's no undercurrent of a coming explosion. They ought to know better than that. The Japanese don't work like that. When the Japanese get really started to boil over you don't see the warning signs."

"Besides the food has really improved. We have 48,000 lbs. of cured ham sitting there in cold storage. (Here Bob suddenly changed his habitual somewhat cynical expression to one of playful ecstasy.) In the coming month we are going to average 8 eggs per person per week. That's an egg a day!"

44 hr. Week at Tule

"They tried to enforce a 44 hr. week about the middle of March. Somebody got a bright idea and said we were to go to work at 8:30 and quit at 11:30 and also from 1:30 to 5:30. It lasted about two days. Then they went back from 8:00 to 12:00 and 1:15 to 5:30. It doesn't make a damn bit of difference to me as far as I'm concerned. Why should the Japanese work eight hours just to wind up with the magnificent salary of 16 dollars a month?"

Rumor about Exchange Ship

"There's a rumor that there's another exchange ship on the way. I won't believe that till I hear it on the radio. If it were true, it would be good for the morale of both sides."

I interrupted again and asked what people were thinking about resegregation. He answered in one sentence and immediately changed the subject:

"People feel just about the same on resegregation, but they figure the draft will take care of that pretty nicely (by automatically removing Yes-Yes people from camp)."

"Inu hate has died down. Things are quieting down. People are forgetting Sasaki. He stays in the background. As long as you don't keep floating something in front of peoples' faces, they forget about it."

Improvement in Food

"The food improvement is remarkable. Up until the end of March all we ever had was corned beef, salt pork and cabbage; and then repeat it. Besides that all we had was weiners, baloney and eggs. There was very little other vegetable except cabbage. But from the beginning of April, things have started to come in. Now we get lettuce, spinach, asparagus. We still get frankfurters and baloney, but we also get beef and veal occasionally, lamb and mutton more than beef though."

"Our only squawk is our difficulty in getting pork. I think that's because the quartermaster refuses to send us pork because we have a big hog farm here. And they'll only kill the damn hogs when we're out of all other meat. We don't even get it once a week."

Prejudice of Tule Lake Town¹ against WRA Appointed Personnel

"The residents of Tule Lake seem to be holding the appointed personnel here in an unfavorable light. They suspect the feeling of the appointed personnel here is anti-American and pro-Japanese. So when some of the appointed personnel happen to wander out to Tule and get caught without gasoline, they just won't sell it to them. There has been talk of bringing a party here and having some Japanese citizens and people from Tule Lake there to impress upon them that the people here weren't so bad at all."

1. Mr. Tsuruda here refers to the small town of Tule Lake near which Tule Lake Segregation Center was constructed.

Concern over Crowding and Large Number of Segregants Yet to Come

"I wonder what's going to happen when all the rest get here. They've got just three blocks and then the vacancies. I think they're going to try to squeeze in 2,000 people. When they start putting them into Recreation Halls and start partitioning off, I wonder what's going to happen."

Much Complaint over Sanitary Facilities

"There are a lot of complaints over the sanitary facilities. There are lots of complaints over the duckboards in the shower room. They are very slippery and are dangerous. Also there is no place to wash out urinals. In any of the latrines there is no such place. They're squawking like everything."

"It's not a very pleasant thing to be brushing your teeth in the morning and have somebody come along and wash out a urinal beside you."

"There doesn't seem to be any such thing as a sanitation committee here. At least we ought to have something for the mess hall employees and things like that."

I interrupted again and asked Bob how people would feel now about voting for a genuine representative body.

Representative Body

"Nobody cares a thing about having a representative government. So far as I can see, nobody is going to break their neck trying to work up a few representatives for the block. They just don't care. Things are going along pretty good, so leave well enough alone."

"We haven't any block representative now, just a ward representative. But he's always been in existence. I don't see any call for them (representatives) at all."

"My idea is this: if there's a representative from each ward, that's eight people. Then, if any problem or complaint is important enough to merit bringing before the attention of the higher-ups, whoever was interested enough to do so could look up the ward representatives and present his case. But if there is a representative in every block it would be a simple matter to bring up minor items and cause confusion. I think they should leave it that way and save a lot of trouble, listening to minor complaints. Things will smooth themselves out. I think having a representative in each block makes it too damn easy for anybody to put up silly complaints."

Best's Activities

"Best has brought up a proposal to bring up the food costs. I had this from Hayward himself that Mr. Best called him in and suggested quietly that we have an allowance of 45 cents a meal and so wouldn't it be a good idea to keep the meal costs in the 40 bracket rather than the 30."

"Maybe he feels like he's getting pretty stiff competition for his job. In WRA the way it seems to me, every man below is always trying to do something to get the job of the man above. That is one of the reasons the appointed personnel rarely gets to cooperating with each other. Black is trying to get Best's place; Singer would like to get Hayward's job."

"Hayward is trying to start a cooking and baking school. So if the mess hall personnel could attend schools it would contribute to the welfare of the whole block."

"When they sent out 6,000 lbs. of ham, the other day, they had about every damn Caucasian in the place standing around watching the poor guys weighing out the stuff. I guess they were afraid somebody was going to walk off with it." (Bob described with relish how he had walked in and cut himself off a good-sized slice of ham and eaten it in the presence of the astonished Caucasians.)

TALK WITH MRS. TSURUDA

/From May 13 to May 25 most of my respondents were happier and more relaxed than I had ever seen them. They felt that their situation has significantly improved and they hoped for better things. By May 18, 264 of the men detained in the stockade had been released, and, according to an administrative announcement, "releases of from 2 to 5 persons are being made almost daily." (Newell Star, May 18, 1944). The Administration's attempt to get the people to elect a committee to nominate candidates for a representative body developed into a ludicrous failure. Out of the 74 blocks in the center, only 15 nominated representatives. When I discussed this phenomenon with my friends, they smiled and responded with expressions of oblique or ironic satisfaction. They seemed to feel that they had really put the Administration down.

On May 24, however, this atmosphere of apathetic relaxation was shattered by a tragic event. Mr. Okamoto, a Japanese American construction worker, returning from an assignment outside the area was shot at close range by an Army sentry. He died on the following day. When I visited my friends I found them shocked, angry, and afraid -- afraid that on the slightest provocation the soldiers might shoot them. Most of them appreciated my visits but preferred to say little. I tried to visit Bob on May 25, the day of Mr. Okamoto's death, but found only his wife at home. She appeared angry and upset./

MRS. TSURUDA - May 25, 1944

"The people are angry about it. But we heard over the radio that Secretary Ickes said that it was the soldier's fault, that he (the soldier) was going to hit him (the Japanese) on the head. That (Ickes' statement) made the people feel better."

"They were all angry around here but nobody knew what it was all about. Some were saying, 'Well, maybe he got fresh.' But now even Secretary Ickes blames the M.P."

MAY 27, 1944

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA

/In contrast to other respondents, Bob was even more friendly than at my previous visits. Indeed, he talked so fast and so much that I could do little but listen and write down what he said. His sister, Mrs. Sato, with whom I had become friendly at Gila, had just arrived at Tule Lake and our first exchanges were social./

She said she had had a pleasant trip. The WRA escort, Mr. Martin and the soldiers had been very nice to her. The only difference I noted in Bob since the shooting was a tendency to make wry jokes and laugh loudly over them, laughter in which I, in my not entirely unnervous state, was glad to join.

"Best has called a center-wide holiday on the day of the funeral (day not decided yet). They are also going to have a wake at the High School. That's a darn good idea. It would be more or less ironical to give the fellow a military burial - being as he's a repatriate and a No-No." (laughter)

"A lot of how this goes is going to depend on how WRA handles it between now and the time the verdict is released. If WRA can prove to the people that they are sincere in their belief that the man who was shot was of no fault, and that they did their best to get justice, then things might quiet down. But if they exonerate the man completely, there's going to be a blow-off. They'll have to build a double fence around the Administration section."

"The smartest thing that WRA could do is to start impressing the people now that the military is more concerned /responsible/ than WRA. After all, the man was a soldier. Under these conditions it comes under the jurisdiction of the War Department."

"When the announcement was made in our mess everybody took it as a matter of course."

Knowing the military of Japan, they know how it was. The local and civilian authorities have to step into the background."

"The smartest thing to do would be to give the man twenty years and send him to jail. Send him to jail anyway and pardon him after three or four years."

"After all, he (the evacuee) was unarmed. If I were the sentry and had two rifles and automatic pistols I wouldn't shoot him. I'd bat him on the head with the rifle."

"Best has learned a lot. He had to. He's more sensible with the people now. The Japanese people are appreciative of that (the center-wide holiday called for Mr. Okamoto's funeral) especially when it is an order given by the Project Director. It will mean more than any 500 or 600 words he can say."

"On the other hand, there are people who talk like this: Well, we can't expect justice from the Army here inasmuch as we are disloyal Japs and their enemies. If that's the case and the man is exonerated, all we can do is learn his name (the soldier's name) and remember it until after the war and see which side wins. They want to bring it up at the peace conference."

"Another faction says: You won't hear anymore about this until after the war. By that time they hope the people will have forgotten about it. Personally, I think if they drag it out and hope people will forget -- I think there will be a lot less ruckus if they just come right out with it - even if he is exonerated."

"You look at it this way. This is what affects the people now. If that can happen and the man is exonerated, that will give the M.P.'s the impression that the lives of the Japs in here are not worth a hell of a lot. That's just asking for more shooting. Heck, I might walk through that gate next morning and the guy will take a shot at me. I'm dead. That's not going to help me any."

"I feel this way. He's gone. I can't bring him back to life."

"I heard that Austin had sent a special car to Heart Mountain to bring his (Okamoto's) relatives in for the funeral. That's the least they could do. It all depends on what the verdict is."

"The newspaper stories try to give the impression that the man misinterpreted the sentry's orders."

"There's one thing they're going to have to look out for. What will Japan do about this? They're liable to figure that 10 Americans are worth one Jap. Pretty soon each side will be seeing who can kill them off faster."

Meeting for Nomination of Representatives

"I didn't even go to the meeting. Everything just slid. Nobody was nominated."

(Here Mrs. Sato, Bob's older sister /recently arrived from Gila/ interrupted violently: "What's that? senjin (representatives) - Hell, the senjin are good for nothing!")

Bob continued: "Here's what happens when you get representatives. They have to listen to a lot of small complaints from various people. Then when the representatives get called in on something big, they take it up before the board. Their English isn't so good as the people on the board and they get argued out of it. So they have to go back to the people and report a failure. They (the people) get hot and are liable to incite anything from a friendly feeling to a riot. Then people get stuck in the stockade."

"The people are getting smart now. They've got a block manager appointed by the WRA as a liaison officer between the people and the Administration. Well, he's beyond being yanked into the stockade. You can't yank a liaison man for anything he reports. The people are starting to realize it would be a smart thing to have a good block manager and let them do all the representing because they can't be yanked."

"With the Block Managers, there's less danger of filling the stockade. One thing didn't hit me right about this representative business. The suggestion came from the

other end (WRA). Just that mere fact that the suggestion came from the WRA offices; it had a rank odor, that's all. It's too much for the WRA to try to be helpful."

"The only way the WRA is going to be able to dispel the feeling (of hostility) is to show somehow that WRA is able to trust the people and to make it as easy as possible in here, which is what Best says he's trying to do but there's a lot of difference between what he says and what he does."

"I'd like to see the damn fence torn down, and remove the damn guards from the gate. Nothing will happen. It's just human nature. If you know you're trusted you don't want to double-cross anybody. Let them go on picnics too."

On Mr. Sachs, Head of Police

"I saw Sachs for the first time today. He impressed me as a man of not too much intelligence. I got the impression he wasn't too bright in the head but he did have some knowledge in a limited field, that connected with physical prowess. If he picked anybody on his staff with much sense he wouldn't be able to handle him."

I asked Bob how he felt about the men still confined in the stockade, in particular Reverend Abe and George Kunitani.

"I don't think they should be let out of the stockade. Those fellows don't care whether they live or die. If they're let out they'll certainly start another ruckus. Especially if the fellows who were gone over /beaten by the WRA police/ are let out. Do you think they'll hesitate to get back?"

"There's some guys in there I wouldn't like to see let out. You look at it my way, they're out of circulation."

As I left, Bob remarked that the lid might blow off the camp in two hours and if that happened Mr. Robertson, Mr. Hayward and myself should come to his barrack, which would be the safest place for us.

JUNE 4, 1944

VISIT AT BOB TSURUDA'S HOUSE

Bob was taking a nap when I arrived so I talked for about a half hour with his wife and her sister. The conversation for some reason turned to inus. They had thought that when they came to Tule Lake they would be through with inus, but had found here that there were more of them than ever. Every place you look you can see one. Bob's sister-in-law remarked that you couldn't even have a small meeting anywhere but what some inu would go and report it to the Administration. Mrs. Sato, Bob's older sister, came in. She made no bones about stressing how bored and disappointed she was in Tule Lake. She had been here 10 days. There is nothing at all doing here. She had thought that there were some people of backbone here, but now she finds they're all washrags. She talked wildly about getting herself put in the stockade "*just so she could see what was going on there*", a remark which embarrassed the other women. They kept glancing at me to see if I were taking it badly. Then she shifted to talking about going out to the free zone and keeping tabs on the "strange things" that Japanese were doing there. She was very well dressed, as usual, and said that she was planning to see some friends and find out if she could find anybody with backbone.¹ Mr. Tsuruda now woke up and came out of the other room to join us. He immediately gave with the latest Mess Division gossip.

1. See R. Wax, DOING FIELDWORK, (84-87) for a case history of Mrs. Sato. She was the first "liberated" Japanese woman I encountered.

Mr. Sills

Bob asked me what I thought of Mr. Sills, the Assistant Project Director in charge of Project Management(?). I said I did not know him well enough to make up my mind. Bob didn't like him:

"Sills impressed me as a sort of weasley kind of fellow. Here's why. We're constructing a baking factory here. He has a grand vision of eliminating getting bread from the outside after this baking factory goes into action. When the bakery is under way they'll make two hundred loaves of bread a day. That ought to be sufficient for the needs of the project he said. I said to myself, 'Man, what kind of a brain has that guy got?' We're using 4,000 to 4,500 loaves of bread a day now. But I didn't say anything; let him try it."

Those present indulged in a little mental arithmetic and decided that if Sills' project were followed it would give each evacuee roughly 1/100 of a loaf of bread a day. Mrs. Sato said that if this happened she was going to start trouble. She couldn't eat rice and had to have bread. She would go to Social Welfare and demand bread. (I controlled a small impulse to ask her what she intended to do when she got to Japan.)

Mr. Singer and the Spoiling Ham and Bacon

"We have a fine hog farm here. They bring them up right, feed them well and then slaughter them. Then they make bacon - but they don't know how. They put it in a little room and build a little fire there, made out of garbage for all I know, and all it does is just burn it black on the outside. Then Singer has the boys hang it on hooks. Everybody knows that the protection bacon has is the rind on one side and the fat on the other. When it's hung on hooks it's open to contamination. There it hangs and it's so well smoked it just oozes. Then they put it in the icebox and it contaminates all the fresh beef."

"I got hold of a major from the Army the other day. I got him to go and look at the smoke house. He went and looked at it. So they closed up the smoke house and the slaughter house too. I cut my own throat I guess. We won't get any pork now. But it'd be better to give us fresh pork than that lousy bacon."

(Bob's sister-in-law added here that they had been served sour bacon in the mess and that everyone refused to eat it.)

"Last month we had 3,500 lbs. of pork. I knew it was about to go bad and suggested that we issue it. No, says Singer, let's wait till we get a little more and make a complete issue. We waited and we had to dump 18,000 lbs. of pork."

(Later I asked Dr. Osler, the Community Analyst, about this and he said that a great deal of prok had to be thrown out recently.)

"I figure that Singer must know somebody high up in the Administration. I've put the skids under him twice and each time nothing happened."

Best's Speech at Funeral of Mr. Okamoto

"I will have to give the man credit. He really has done his best. I didn't go to the funeral myself. But he attended the funeral and called the half holiday. Reading the speech it didn't seem much different than the notice he sent to the mess halls. I thought it was a darn good idea as far as he is concerned. If that was the full text of his speech I think he's pretty smart. He said just enough, no more. He didn't lay it on too thick."

"He's more popular now than he has been since the beginning of the camp."

"Regardless of why he did it, the fact stands that he did do it. That's what you have to give the man credit for. It couldn't all have been prompted through selfishness. I don't believe a man who wrote that speech could be entirely selfish. He could have stayed at home and let one of his stooges come down."

Soldiers at the Gate

"We've got some nice boys at the gate now. There used to be some guys who'd make you step out, drive the truck through the gate and then get back in. They're getting pretty good now."

Stockade and Mess

"I got Hayward to crack down on the stockade boys the other day. They thought they were going to run Mess Operations. They wanted us to give them their ration daily instead of weekly. I'll be damned if I'll weight out 37 pounds of rice every day and 4½ pounds of sugar."

"Ichiba, one of the public agitators number 1, sent a letter to the Spanish Consul, telling him the boys in the stockade were getting only 14¢ a day for food. I told Hayward to tell Best that the stockade is getting food on the same scale as the colony. If the Spanish Consul thinks that's not food enough, have him come in and look at the books."

"Confidentially, I've been giving those boys a break. I know the only pleasure they had was eating so I've even advanced them sugar on their next week ration. But not anymore. Since Ichiba started to make trouble, I've not advanced, and they've been without sugar since Thursday and won't get any till Tuesday."

The Jam Agitator

"There's a guy in block 42 who's really a chest beating agitator. He keeps demanding more jam for his mess, when he knows damn well there's no more jam in the warehouse. He insists it's put on the menu. Then when the people don't get their jam, he makes speeches telling them all he's trying to do for them."

Trouble over Shooting

Bob does not believe there is going to be any big trouble over the shooting. "All the goon-squad members are resting peacefully in the stockade. If the verdict is bad, things may change."

JUNE 10, 1944

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA

Bob was sleepy. Moreover, we gorged on so much cheese and bread which he had purloined from the mess that not much was said.

Hayward's New Policy for Stewards

"Hayward has started a policy of having the (Caucasian) stewards go in and have one meal a day in the colony mess halls. Singer has skinned out of this by claiming that his stomach has been bothering him. Hayward says he's going to have to think up a better one than that next week. Naturally, Singer knows he's unpopular in the colony. They have to eat lunch in the colony every day except Saturday or Sunday."

"In the new mess office Hayward hasn't given any of them separate offices. He says he doesn't want to give them offices or they'll just be sitting around all day. He says the place for a steward is out in the colony where he can keep in contact with the colony mess."

Since several of my respondents had used the term giri to explain their support of the men detained in the stockade, I asked Bob how he would translate the term.

"The best translation I can think of is: moral obligations, to men or to the committee. We sent them up there for an actual purpose and since they did that we feel we should give them our undivided support. It's 90% up here (here Bob tapped his forehead)."

WRA change in Policy

"I've been wondering how WRA has come to change so much. They've been at it for the last month and a half now. Always before it was the iron fist within the kid glove. If anything, instead of going back to the old 'do what you like and let 'em take it,' they better just pull on another pair of kid gloves."

Treatment at Gate

"In this respect they're becoming quite reasonable. In fact, they're lax. You'd be surprised how people appreciate it. It makes them feel half way decent. They don't feel like animals anymore."

Mrs. Sato now came in and asked Bob in Japanese whether he had gone to the meeting where the possibility of bringing the Okamoto case before the Spanish Consul was to be discussed. Bob replied, "No, I don't go to any of those meetings." He then went on to

explain that his block (34) was one of the strong status quo /or pro-strike/ blocks - one of the genjoo-iji blocks. However, because of the baseball game this afternoon, very few people had attended the meeting. What made him laugh, said he, was that when the status quo broke, these genjoo-iji guys had been the first to go back to work. Returning to the topic of the gates he said:

"I think if it could be possible it might be a darned good idea to get the Army away from the gates entirely and put decent Internal Security men there, unarmed."

Sills' Idea on Mess

"Sills wants to have each block mess staffed only by people who live in the block. That's not a good idea. Whenever you have people in your own block in the mess halls it's very difficult to lodge a complaint. You can't complain about people when you come face to face with them every day. Another thing, when the mess halls are staffed by people in the block there's always a lot of food that doesn't get to the people in the block. It's too close to home. Especially they can sneak things out on the early morning crew when they get there at 4:30 a.m."

JUNE 25, 1944

CALL AT THE TSURUDAS'

/In the interval between my visit of June 20 and this visit of June 25 two men, stigmatized as inu (informer) had been severely beaten and several had been threatened. Bob appeared very disturbed during this visit of June 25 and I, at this time, could not understand why this should be so.¹

Attitude of People in Tule Lake - the Co-op

Bob: "I'm getting sick of the attitude of the people. They are always cutting each others' throats. Take the 'well organized Co-op' for instance. Heretofore there has been a rumor that quite a few of the boys high up in the Co-op very nicely relocated with a big wad of dough. That's a very nice thing to do to the poor Japs in here."

"They claim it is the policy of all good Co-ops only to pay off when their working capital is tripled - then the dividend can be paid. But inasmuch as the people are stuck here for the duration, I don't think that's necessary. Instead of paying off, what do they do? Build a new soda water factory and other things, and you can't tell me they're going to be able to pay that off in one summer."

ACT: "The Co-op also has from 180 to 200 cases of Troco Margarine. I'd like to know where they got it because that stuff is on the point list." (I heard another accusation of the Co-op getting produce on the black market yesterday, this time the items were hot plates.)

/1. Bob was permitted to relocate in September, and on October 25, Sally Wakida, a mutual friend from Gila, told me that Bob had relocated because his life had been threatened.

"Bob Tsuruda went out (of Tule Lake) because he was threatened by the Manzanar group. The Manzanar group told him to bring them sugar from the warehouse. He refused. They told him they'd get him something when he was going home from work. He said he might as well get out of camp if they were going to kill him."

I wrote to Bob, who was at that time in the Topaz Center and asked him if he cared to tell me about this. He did not answer my letter./

Noriko: (Bob's sister-in-law) "I was in the Co-op yesterday when Sasaki came in. You know, we all turned the back to him. Everyone of us. You could see how it was - public inu number 1."

Bob: "Murakami (ex-Coordinating Committee member) tried to gyp us out of about 100 cakes of tofu the other day. The tofu is sent to the messes in tubs of about 50 cakes each. Each mess called up and complained that they were from five to ten cakes short. I went to see Murakami about it. He said, 'Of course, it's possible that the fellows in the mess took them home with them.' He finally promised that the Co-op would make the loss good."

Job for Mr. Best's Son

"Did you know that in order to create a job for Best's son (as messenger), they fired four or five of the Japanese messengers?"

Bob's Current Disgust with Camp

"When I came here I expected to find quite a different atmosphere. When the people realized they were here for the same reason, I expected that they would be willing to help a guy when he needed it. Instead, now if you've got five dollars they'll think of how they can get it away from you."

"Some of the smartest people I know are getting disgusted. These are real intelligent people. They came here and expected to find a cooperative atmosphere and they're pretty well disgusted. Their remarks add up to something like this: 'It's not a case now of whether I want to go back to the old country. It's a case of whether I can stay here long enough to go back to the old country and still retain my self-respect.'"

"The trouble is they expect you to act like a damn radical and go out and kill every hakujin /Caucasian/ on the other side of the fence and when you don't act like that you are an inu."

Bob is Considering Relocation

"The only reason I'd consider relocation is that I've got a pretty good thing coming up. As you should know by this time, the majority of Nisei came in here because they didn't want to go into the Army. That's one of the main reasons why the Nisei are here, 98% of them, myself included. I couldn't see fit to pack a gun for something I didn't see my way clear to. If they had treated us differently, I would have volunteered. Now, seeing as how they're deferring people over 26, I think I might take a chance."

"You see, if the war lasts three more years, I'll be 33. Then I get deported to Japan. It'll take me ten years to get on my feet. It seems to me Germany is going to pull a flopperoo. I wouldn't want to be here when that happens. I don't care if Japan has 17 kinds of Yamato Damashii, she isn't going to be able to buck fighting three big nations."

(Bob then told me that he had been offered a pretty good job in the Washington office by Hayward. He figured that if he took this, even if he were drafted, the war would probably be over before he got sent overseas.)

Power of Colonists' belief in Japanese Victory

"Believe it or not a fellow told me the other day that Japan was going to have a decisive victory and that the war would be over in seven days! A girl told me the other day, 'You're so thoroughly Americanized, I don't believe you belong here.'"

Bob's Self Analysis

"My coming here was in itself a defense mechanism. It was another retaliatory action to get even with the way I'd been treated previously. On the other hand, I feel that in retaliating I not only hurt the government, but eventually I'll hurt myself more."

"The only people Japan actually wants are those she can use immediately after the war, diplomats and persons with Engineering degrees. I've been telling people, if Japan should lose the war, which there's a very good chance of her doing right now, and if we were to relocate and were placed on the same standard of living as the Negro in this country, we'd still be able to have a better standard of living than as poor people in Japan. Besides, when the Japanese went to the south, they were never treated as the Negroes were."

Demoralization of Old Men

"A lot of the old men are getting goofier and goofier. They stand around in the latrines and mutter to themselves. I think they're losing their minds."

I asked Bob what he thought might happen in the center if there were a Japanese victory in the Pacific.

"I'd hate to see it happen. In spite of the fact that the Internal Security is on the lookout for short wave receivers, if the local broadcasts were to confirm the victory and the short wave broadcasts were to exaggerate it, I don't think there'd be no holding the pressure gang (Resegregation Group) in here."

I then asked about a decisive American victory.

"I've often wondered. If there were a very decisive victory, I think there'd be a great breakdown in morale. Especially among certain people who have decided that Japan couldn't lose. With the breakdown in morale there would come a time when some of them would try in some way to avenge the defeat of Japan. When that happens, they'd better start building more fences."

I asked about the new Police Commission being contemplated by the Administration.

"I don't know. I don't think it's going to be such a hot idea. The people aren't going to like it, I think. It's giving the people the impression that they're putting them under additional surveillance."

Co-op

"It wouldn't surprise me a bit if Mr. Best wasn't getting a little from the Co-op. Inasmuch as there have been three dividends passed up for lack of funds. That starts to smell."

Appointed Personnel Misdeeds

"Private Woodward is the vet here. He and the storekeeper for the butcher shop (Caucasian) got to feeling good one night. The private had a WRA car and WRA gas, which he was to turn in at six o'clock in the evening. But they decided to take a trip to Alturas. They got bottles, picked up some minor girls, all partook of the bottle, the little girl wanted to drive, 45, 50, 55 - CRASH - no car. The WRA was able to hush hush the local papers but it got into the Eastern papers and got to the ears of Dillon S. Myer. Myer, not being connected with the Army, couldn't do anything to the soldier, but the other guy got his throat cut from ear to ear (figuratively speaking). His name was Harold Post."

Tsuruda - June 25, 1944, July 17, 1944, -26-
August 19, 1944

"About Lake, head of Procurement - it seems he and Mr. Hayward applied for gas rationing coupons at the same time. Hayward asked for 400 miles a month. Lake, thinking he's a pretty big shot, asked for 800 miles. Hayward got his gas, but they put a spotter on Lake to see why he needed so much gas. They followed Mrs. Lake out to Tule and Klamath, where she likes to go to get her hair fixed. So they said, 'Sorry, no gas.' Now he's got to appeal to Sacramento. And he's the guy who screamed like hell when mess operations went over the budget a couple of thousand dollars."

* * * * *

/After the murder of Mr. Noma on July 3, I did not go into the "Japanese" section to visit people until they invited me. (I made my first visit on July 18.) I did, however, manage to have a short visit with Bob on July 17 in a warehouse in the Administrative section where he was employed./

JULY 17, 1944

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA

Went to Bob's workplace (in the Administrative section) today to give him the sausage he had asked me to get for him in Berkeley. He said he would like to have me come to see him, but says that since he has been seen a lot with Hayward, his boss, he fears he is developing some slight reputation as an inu. We will try to meet someplace this side of the fence and I anticipate a considerable amount of information. In hurried asides, Bob told me that what surprised him most of all in the last two weeks is the quiet way most people took the acquittal of the soldier. No protest was made. He had expected something. He added that "you never saw such a mess as the murder." He visited the scene later and found an enormous pool of blood. "The funny thing is," he continued "that the murder has split the camp into two parts. Half feel sorry for the guy and the other half are glad. Of course they say he was killed for embezzling Co-op funds, but that was just talk. Nobody could prove it." Jim is following out his plan as he told me in June and has asked for leave clearance. His hearing is on the 19th.

He remarked that he thought that the Administration was deliberately not making serious efforts to find the murderer. "If the people think that the murderer is loose in camp, more of them will want to relocate. I was in Lechliter's office the other day and saw a tremendous sheet of applications for leave clearance."

* * * * *

My notes for August are lost. It may be that because of his warnings about being called an inu I did not visit Bob again until August 19. I have one statement from him on that date, made a few days after the men in the stockade had stopped their hunger strike.

BOB TSURUDA - August 19, 1944

Hunger Strike in Stockade

"I don't see why they went on a hunger strike. They weren't doing the WRA any harm. They were just harming themselves. It made us sad though. I kind of pitied them."

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 17, 1944

VISIT WITH BOB TSURUDA

Knowing that Bob is leaving Tule Lake within a few days to take up residence in Topaz preliminary to relocating, I thought it well to get a last interview. Having known Bob since before segregation and having received a long statement on his reasons for coming to Tule Lake and many statements on his reactions to Tule events, I was anxious to get his "last words."

Current Rumors

"I've heard from a Caucasian (Sills) that eventually, should some pronounced victory come in the South Pacific, they are going to close down all leave clearance here."

"Also I've heard that what with Best visiting Minidoka and Topaz, the rumor is they might try to concentrate one of those centers by making them into another center. It isn't very economical to keep them all open."

Noma Murder Investigation

"I haven't heard a thing about the murder investigation except that somebody has been picking up some of the stockade people."

Present Opinion of Daihyo Sha Kai

"My idea - the things they demanded for the residents in camp were a little far fetched, but I still think that on the whole they were a pretty decent lot."

(We now began to talk about the "big shot agitators" of the Manzanar section and the Black Tigers.)

/It is unfortunate but significant that I did not record any part of this conversation. Bob did not tell me that he had been threatened, but he probably told me something that might have caused trouble for either of us, had my notes been "confiscated" by some member of the Administration./

(I then asked Bob for his opinion of the state of mind of the transferees when they entered Tule and was impressed by his insight.)

"When they came here they thought it was going to be a Japanese Utopia. The resentment that arose was brought on by their feeling of frustration."

Defense of the Nisei

(Perhaps because he knew that this was the last time we would probably talk together, Bob turned the conversation to the draft dodgers (he has told me he is one) and to an explanation of their action.)

"In Japan, when a son is drafted into the Army he is considered as having made a success in his life so far. I admit it's a militaristic attitude, but that's how it is."

"If you had been in Stockton before evacuation, you would not have heard anything about not wanting to go to war. The first generation in this country carried that viewpoint up till the very time of their evacuation."

"I've seen fellows drafted in Stockton and practically the whole population of the town turned out to see them off at the train. There's a very deep feeling behind it."

"In Japan when a man goes into the Army in war time, nobody expects him to come back. That's why there's such a large turnout of friends. When a soldier goes there's no such word as 'when you come back'. That's something that a Caucasian never understands."

"The Japanese feel that a soldier cannot do his best work if he has his mind on preserving his safety and getting back to his friends and family."

"In Stockton when there were 20 or 25 people seeing off a Negro or a Caucasian there were 300 to 400 seeing off a Japanese. Every time a young fellow was drafted it was just a town affair."

"When the people were feeling like that DeWitt should have left them alone. Because if he had, he'd have gotten as good a bunch of soldiers as he could have gotten any place else in the world."

I asked about: Resegregation Rumors:

"They have died down."

Number of Sincere Resegregationists

"Sills told me they had 3,000. But you must remember that that was when they had that petition when they asked them who wanted to go back (to Japan) on the first boat."

"I think that there are about 1,000 now who really want to go back and there might not be that many."

I asked about present feeling toward new Co-op Board:

"There is no feeling against the new Co-op Board. It seems as though the majority of the people feel that the present directors of the Co-op are making a sincere effort to do their best. Their viewpoint is substantiated by the fact that the Co-op paper is making very deep explanations as to how the stock is brought in, their sales, their rebates, etc. It seems to be they're trying to explain that. On the whole it makes a good impression. It gives the people the idea that the Co-op wants them to know what's going on instead of trying to keep everything a secret so they can snitch on the side."

I asked about attitudes toward war news:

"There are two schools of thought right now. One is that Japan is taking an awful beating and we better get out /of camp/ while the getting is good. And you'd be surprised how many of these there are!"

"The other is a more or less hard-headed view which is that all the losses and all the defeats that Japan is suffering is all military strategy. You'd be surprised how hard-headed some of these people are."

"I had one fellow come out and tell me no matter how long the war lasts, Japan is bound to win. Of course, what I thought I didn't tell him."

(I asked Jim just about how many people he thought belonged to each group. He remarked on the unreliability of the statement he was about to make but took a stab at it.)

"As far as I know, I would say that a good 70% are now having their doubts about a victorious country back home. The other 30% are the ones who insist that they're going to go back there regardless of which side is victorious."

"And among that 70%, you'd be surprised how many are repatriates and expatriates."

"A bunch of Kibeis were talking the other day about going back to Japan during the war. When you consider that they were all young fellows who came from back there within the last seven to ten years, and some more recently, ... (there were 7 or 8 of them

Tsuruda - September 17, 1944,
September 26, 1944

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talking) ... the question was, 'If they have to go back during the war and go into the Army and give their life for their country, would they still be as anxious to go back right now, as after the war.' And I'm telling you, not a damn one of them answered. There's a lot of them like that."

"If an exchange boat came right now there would be very few of them of Army age on it."

Bob Analyzes Himself

"Sometimes I wonder at my own change of attitude. I didn't come here with the feeling that I absolutely wanted to go back. The one thing that decided me on going out (relocating) was the attitude of the people in the camp. They're not my idea of what I thought a Japanese should be. I'm very disappointed."

"This business of dog eat dog and if they don't get what they want, all they know what to do is agitate for it."

"As far as I can remember, I've had a half way sort of pride in the fact that the Japanese people were more or less of an intellectual group. When they start to conduct themselves like skid-row bums, that's too bad. Just because they became repatriates and were in a camp that was basically Japanese, they didn't have to get all uppish and conduct themselves in the manner that they did."

Bob then told me with pride that he had been given a swell farewell party by the Mess Division. They had about three cases of pop and a tremendous cake, baked in individual sections "and each section individually decorated." He really thought that was swell. I asked if no one in the division had appeared to resent his leaving. He said only one fellow had.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 26, 1944

TSURUDA

After the second resegregation petition was brought forward on September 24, I visited as many of my respondents as I could so as to obtain their reactions. One of the people I visited was Bob's wife, who, with Bob's family, was still in Tule Lake.

TALK WITH MRS. TSURUDA

Mrs. Tsuruda, a young Nisei woman, had no higher opinion of the petition than any of my previous informants. Said she:

"It was written in such awful English. When I saw it, I said, 'What kind of English is this?' I couldn't make head or tail out of it. I thought, 'It couldn't be WRA. Not with that English.'"

"I don't know who we are supposed to give it back to. You're just supposed to pass it on to somebody else."

"It's to separate the people who are here from the 'real Japanese.'"

"I read it, but I don't know what it's all about. They want to be separated and follow the ideas of the old country. I guess the people with the idea that they want to go back to Japan - they might sign it."

NOVEMBER 1, 1944

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA'S WIFE, SISTER, AND SISTER-IN-LAW

During October and November a number of respected mature men developed informal group networks to combat the pressure of the Resegregation Groups. Some older men, I was told, openly criticized the Resegregationists and advised young men whom they knew, not to join. On November 1, Mr. Goodman, the new Project Attorney, told me that a young man had been attacked with a knife by an Issei on October 30. I was told later by several Japanese American friends that the Issei who committed the assault was a zealous Resegregationist and that the father of the young man who was knifed had criticized the Resegregationists. It is noteworthy that when I asked the ladies about this knifing they did not seem to be aware of any political implications./

Mrs. Tsuruda was depressed. She is leaving Tule Lake on the 8th of November to go to Rower (a Relocation Center in Arkansas), where she will remain until she is allowed to relocate and join Bob. Bob himself, she told me, is still in Topaz. He applied to the Sioux Ordnance Depot of Sidney, Nebraska, for a job but was refused because all of his family are in Tule Lake. He plans to appeal, however.

I started out the conversation by inquiring how their block (36) was feeling about the people from Manzanar. I was told that they still didn't like them.

"People around here seem to dislike the Manzanar people. They even say that the Co-op Board was being run by Manzanar, by a man named Kimura."

(I heard several weeks ago that Mr. Kimura, the manager of the Co-op, had resigned. For additional details about trouble in the Co-op, see my fieldnotes of October 22, 25 and 27.)

On the morning of November 1, I had talked to the project attorney, Mr. Goodman, who had given me a detailed account of a knifing that had occurred in the Manzanar section on the night before./ So I asked the ladies what people were saying about the knifing that had occurred in the Manzanar section (on October 30):

"They say that the knifing still has some connection to the baseball fight."¹

1. It is interesting that the only other account I have of this "baseball fight" comes from Mr. Kira, the reputed leader of the Manzanar gang and a powerful Resegregationist. On September 7, Kira asked me: *"Have you heard about the fight they had after the baseball game on Saturday? Well, one of the boys here (in the Manzanar section) had been struck over the head with a chair or something and had to have seven stitches taken."* I heard that the Internal Security said to notify Kira not to take revenge. *"One of the men hurt is in the hospital and they won't release (this man) from the hospital because they're afraid he'll be murdered by the Kira gang."/*

"Manzanar and Poston were playing. They were fighting whether a fly was caught or not. After the game the Manzanar fans piled on the fielder. They say an old man (a zealous Manzanar fan) started it. This old Manzanar fan is of an aggressive way. A lot of people know him. They say he practically runs the team."

I then asked the ladies what people were saying about the renunciation of citizenship.

Renunciation of Citizenship

"The renunciation of citizenship may bring big trouble."

We then discussed the intimidation of Kobate (the alleged profiteer).¹ I was told that everybody thought that he had it coming to him. I then remarked casually that I was noticing that there wasn't nearly so much talk about inu as there had been before Noma's killing. Noriko, Bob's sister, agreed. *"That's right, come to think of it."*

1. On October 25, Sally Wakida had told me that a Mr. Kobata was selling things in camp *"at a very high price. I heard he made a lot of profit. The Manzanar group said to him, 'If you don't close the door of your store, we'll lay you flat.' This was something O.K. to do. The people like the Manzanar group for this."*

Resegregation Group

Noriko did most of the talking although Bob's wife and his brother's wife (Mrs. Sato) were present. Noriko said:

"I think there are two groups. One of them is really for it and the other group doesn't care. I don't think that there is any group really against it, because if they talked against it they'd go out (relocate)."

"The way it seems to me one or two people in a block start it (support of the Sokuji Kikoku Hooshi dan - the Resegregation group), and they pull the others in. In this block we don't even hear about it, but in some other blocks they're very strong."

Reverend Abe

"I heard a story about how Reverend Abe acted kind of yellow in the stockade."

Rumor about Mr. Best and Meiji Setsu

"Do you know if this is true? I heard that Best has announced that if the people do not go to extremes in celebrating Meiji Setsu² he would not put out the American flag on that day."

"Each school is going to have it's own individual celebration."

"If he (Best) did announce that I think it's about the smartest thing he ever said. At least he gave in and gave something in return."

2. The anniversary of the beginning of the Meiji dynasty.

All present agreed with me that the support which the Resegregation group was getting now was far less than was given the Daihyo Sha during the incident (October, November, 1943).

Before we finished Bob's five year old son came in. He sat himself down, surveyed us solemnly and remarked calmly in Japanese, *"I want to go to Japan."* The women laughed in embarrassment and told me that he talks like that because he picks it up from the other children. (With his father asking for work in a defense plant, little Kizo will have to change his mind again.)

JANUARY 14, 1945

VISIT WITH BOB TSURUDA'S FAMILY

Today I found Bob's sisters, Mrs. Sato and Noriko, and also Mr. Sato at home. Mrs. Sato's husband, a tall, fat man, has finally arrived from Santa Fe. He was very friendly, and, when I arrived, he was calmly tramping on dough, for making noodles. As he tramped, he made blasphemous remarks about the WRA, in Japanese, which his wife obligingly translated. But in spite of their sour remarks about the WRA, the atmosphere of this household is very favorable to relocation, providing they can be assured of a fair and square start. Mr. Sato, who did not seem radical at all after some of the people I have been associating with, said several times that he'd be glad to go out if the WRA gave him 100 dollars a head, which for his family would be \$700. He has a fair start promised him with his former employer in California and feels that with this much help to buy equipment, clothes and furniture, he could make out.

Mrs. Sato and her sister, Noriko, told me that they had had an interview with Mrs. Jones, the leave officer, on Friday last. Neither of them liked Mrs. Jones. Mrs. Jones (they said) was very anxious that the ladies prepare their families for immediate relocation. *"She wanted all the names of the members of our families. She sure wants us to go out. She says even those who renounce their citizenship will still get sent outside."*

Mrs. Sato, who has not lost her gift of picturesque speech, remarked that she told Mrs. Jones:

"What do you want us to do, go back to California and get filled full of lead?"

To me, she said:

"I'm going to sit here and watch. How can a person make up their mind when they don't know anything? We can't depend on the WRA."

The conversation then turned to the rumors of the murderously inclined Filipinos, as it has in several of my visits of the past week. The Filipinos, who are pictured as lurking slyly in California waiting to murder the Japanese on their return, are either feared very much or they serve as a good excuse not to relocate.

The talk then turned to the Hooshi dan and the Hokoku. Nobody present had a good word to say about them. Mrs. Sato and her sister even called them "bald-heads" which is, I think, the second time any of my informants have used this term to me. Noriko told how she had been in the canteen and a male friend of hers was there with long hair. A Hokoku friend of his had addressed him, *"I'm not going to have anything more to do with you if you keep looking like that (with long hair). Are you a Japanese or aren't you? That's how they keep talking all the time."*

I was then asked if any more would be picked up. I said it was possible. "Good," said the two women.

Noriko then gave her view on renunciation of citizenship:

"I haven't taken any steps toward renouncing it. If the Japanese government or somebody recognizes it, it would be different. But heck! What guarantee do you have?"

Speaking of the "super-patriots" she added:

"Quite a few are already packed up. They're all ready to go (to internment)."

Mrs. Sato broke in here:

"They (WRA) are cutting down on the work, they're cutting down on everything. All the workers here are being terminated. A lot of blocks are having trouble over the terminations - they're fighting over who's to be terminated (and who is to keep their job)."

Noriko then wanted to know what had happened to the linoleum the Tuleans were supposed to have received. This is a matter that is brought up to me every once in a while. The conclusion usually is that some WRA employee grafted and made off with the linoleum. The subject of grievances over poor Tule Lake facilities was pursued at length:

"They don't give us soap. Six months ago we got one bar per person. I understand they're supposed to furnish that. A little while ago we had no rice for two days. The people were in an uproar. They told us there had been a train wreck and they couldn't get the rice here."

The subject then turned again to leaving camp:

"We think by June we ought to know something. The other centers will be relocated by then and we can see how they get along."

"We want to get out. But we can't with \$25. We have to buy a bed, blankets and we've got to eat. It looks as if you eat you can't sleep."

"With 100 dollars a head, I could do it," said Mr. Sato.

Then Mrs. Sato added:

"The people in here have all gotten dumb, slow and lazy. We're so behind in the world outside too. We've all been in camp too long."

She added that her brain had gotten so slow she can't remember where she puts her things anymore.

"We feel it's much safer in here."

FEBRUARY 8, 1945

TALK WITH BOB TSURUDA'S SISTERS

When I arrived, Mr. Sato was having visitors so his wife and sister and I retired to the back of the apartment behind a screen. We three women really began to gossip. Mrs. Sato asked me if it were true that everybody who renounced their citizenship was going to be sent to Santa Fe. Later in the conversation her sister asked me the same thing. I said it wasn't true. Mr. Sato, they told me, had received a letter from his old boss, a Mr. Zuckerman, for whom he had worked in California. The letter (I was told) contained an urgent request for Mr. Sato to have himself cleared and get together 50 Japanese families and return to California to take up his old job. I think Mrs. Sato would really like her husband to take action, but (she says) he giggles foolishly when she lets him have it in pretty strong language. On the other hand, she thinks it won't hurt to sit in Tule a little longer and see what the government decides to do. After all, she hears from Rower that they /the evacuees/ are asking \$1,000 a head, or to be sent back to the Assembly Centers so they can "get used to the people before they relocate." She doesn't want to get hurt outside. I ventured to remark that what with the Hōkoku carrying on, a person never knew when he was going

to get hurt in Tule Lake. "That's true," said Norkio, "but at least here you know you'll get a good funeral with all your friends around." "Yes," said Mrs. Sato, "probably out there they'll just shovel you into a hole in the ground."

We then turned to the Hōkoku. Mrs. Sato asked me if it were true that 600 were to be picked up soon. When her brother, Bill, came in later he asked me the same question, so I assume the rumor is pretty widespread. There are quite a few Hōkoku people in their block and, though they do not seem to be as domineering as the ones George Wakida has to live with, they give this family a pain in the neck. "The more they take out the better," said Mrs. Sato. She told me that she had heard that a friend gave his Santa Fe bound friend an envelope, which according to Japanese custom, should contain money as a farewell gift. When the man opened it on the train it contained only a slip of paper on which was written Bakatari (damned fool).

Mrs. Sato: "When those so-and-so Hōkoku go, we can't go and say, 'We're sorry you son was taken.' You have to congratulate them! I heard some of them complimenting a family whose son was sent. They say they are true Japanese. The man said, 'Next trip it will be my son.' They're just tickled pink!"

/In late January, in an attempt to stop the flood of applications for renunciation of citizenship and put an end to Resegregationist pressure, Paul Norden, the Justice Department representative, sent an open letter to the chairmen of the Hooshi dan and the Hōkoku. Mimeographed copies of the letter, with a Japanese translation, were posted in all mess halls on January 24./

I asked the ladies what they thought of the statement made by the Department of Justice:

Noriko: "The people not in the group thought, 'They're telling them.'"

Mrs. Sato: "It didn't make any difference to me what they said. I don't give a damn about the sons-of-bitches."

Both the sisters seemed to take considerable comfort from the statement released by Myer on January 29th, in which it was stated that Tule Lake would be kept open until 1945.

"If that's so, they can't force you out."

As several other people have asked me this week, Bob's sisters also asked if it were true that the other repatriates and expatriates in the relocation centers were to be moved to Tule Lake.

I also learned that Mrs. Sato and her sister are good friends of Mr. Abo, one of the teachers who escaped the pick-up.¹ Abo is an ex-Gilan. Mrs. Sato said:

"He's a good kid. I've never seen a kid as honest as that."

/1. See Fieldnotes for January 25, 1945./

She added:

"There's a fellow I know who regrets having to go. (This boy thinks he will be sent.) He told me he'd like to resign but he feels that it wouldn't seem like a man."

Noriko: "They just can't stop now. That's the trouble."

Here Mr. Sato, leaving his mother-in-law to entertain the guest, came from behind the screen and said in a stern voice: *"It has to be stopped."*

Noriko: *"I said, 'If you're a man, you should have the courage to change your mind.'"*

Mr. Sato, who himself was confined in Santa Fe, then said:

"The Hōkoku feels that they are going to train all the people in Santa Fe to think along Hōkoku ideas. But I hear they're finding out different. I think the Issei should be taken out of Santa Fe and just leave the Nisei there. The first generation should be separated. It's the old men who teach the young men the bad ideas."

Mr. Sato had also heard that when the Hōkoku arrived at Santa Fe, they had attempted their early morning marching. But the guards stopped them. *"I can't understand English,"* said a Hōkoku. *"What's the language you're talking, then?"* said the guard. *"Get back!"* The ladies enjoyed these stories.

Mr. Sato then gave his opinion of Mr. Yamashita, who was probably the most influential of the leaders of the Resegregation Group:

"In Santa Fe Mr. Yamashita was appointed to be one of those to work to get the families reunited here in Tule Lake. He and Fujii and about four others. But those six men got out and just left us there. I was one of the last to get out. He said he would honestly represent us, but he didn't."¹

/1. Mr. Sato and Mr. Yamashita had been interned in Santa Fe in the spring of 1943. But Mr. Yamashita was allowed to join his wife at Tule Lake in the spring of 1944, whereas Mr. Sato had not been allowed to come to Tule Lake until December or November of 1945. Mr. Sato is saying that Yamashita took care of himself and, more or less, deserted his fellow internees at Santa Fe./

He then added:

"If America lets the Hōkoku go back to Japan first, there's going to be trouble in camp. Then all the center will turn to Hōkoku. If people in camp would know that Japan wouldn't really take the Hōkoku, it would really scare them."

All agreed heartily.

Mrs. Sato then said: *"The (Hōkoku) women here are so proud to see their husbands go to Santa Fe they walk into the mess with their snoots up. (Mrs. Sato demonstrated.)"*

Noriko: *"Our block has split into two. Up till now we were all together. Last time it was all right. The girls weren't together yet. Now they have this club and it seems like our club will be broken up."²*

/2. Noriko, I believe, was referring to the center-wide girls' club which Mrs. Aida had been organizing. (See longitudinal oral history of Mrs. Aida from December 15, 1944 to April 1945.) What Noriko fears is that the recently organized Joshi iin, composed of female Resegregationists, would break up the neutral girls' group to which she belonged./

Mrs. Sato: "A week ago my husband met a friend who had a bozu¹ haircut. 'What! Are you bozu too?' he said. 'Sh-h-h,' said the friend, 'This is camouflage - otherwise nobody in my block will talk to me.' When he came home, my husband laughed his head off. I hear they're pretty strong in block 74 too. In that block, I hear there are two families whose daughters refused to become members of the girls' organization (the Joshi iin). All the other girls won't speak to them now."

/1. Most of the male members of the Resegregation Groups had, by now, shaved their heads, in imitation, some of them told me, of the Japanese Army. Bozu, in Japanese, refers to the shaved head of a monk./

Noriko: "If these organizations showed that it would make a change, it would be all right. But now they're so blind that we just have to wait. We can't talk to them now."

Mrs. Sato: "There is a man in this block with six children. He's had one each year - they're one to six years old. He says he's going to get picked up too. So I told him, 'What's going to happen to your children.'"

"I feel so sorry for his poor wife. Every time she hears a car rattle she gets all jittered up. She thinks they're coming for him. She's such a nice lady. I feel so sorry for her."

✓ "Our block manager is just dazed by the Hōkoku pick-ups. He doesn't know what to do. He goes to the wife of a man who has been picked up and says, 'I'll be glad to help you.' But she just acts superior. Then he talks to me and says, 'Goddammit, what am I going to do with those guys? It's their will to be taken in.' They tell me, 'My son is going to be a real Japanese now.' You have no pity for them."

Noriko: "There are ten girls in our Japanese class and five or six of them are Hōkoku girls. At recess they all get together and talk. We who don't belong have to sit quiet."

Mrs. Sato: "Mr. Best is ignorant. If he'd think a little more, he'd have stopped this racket when it started."

"If they could assure us that we were not going to be forced out of camp I think a lot of people will drop out of the Hōkoku. The Hōkoku are the only people who feel safe now. They feel they can't be yanked out of camp and they can't be yanked into the Army. In a way, that's the main reason they founded that club."

Noriko: "In a way they can't trust the American government. That's the only sure way they could assure themselves in forming that crazy old so-and-so."

Mr. Sato: "You know how to stop this crazy Hokoku? You have to pick up the first generation runners. Then things will start quieting down. They're the ones who set fire to it. The first generation starts it."

Noriko: "They ought to pick up the women first. The families will be worried to death to have their daughters go where they can't keep their eyes on them. The people figure they won't take the girls no matter what happens."

Here I said, "Don't you think that's kind of cruel?"

Mrs. Sato: "Well - they asked for it."

I asked about the high school students leaving the English school and the ladies told me that the most important reason students were leaving the English school is that their parents believe they must concentrate on Japanese if they are to go to Japan. Mrs. Sato said she has been arguing with some of the parents, saying any kind of education is valuable. But they're all set for Japanese now.

MARCH 1, 1945

TALK WITH MR. TSURUDA'S SISTERS

I always enjoy these sessions with the voluble and frank sisters of my old friend, the relocated Bob. However, today they were a bit subdued, perhaps because of the tension which has arisen in camp since I saw them last and partly because it appears as if Mrs. Sato's Issei husband is kicking up again in pro-Japanese style. I think the real problem is that Mrs. Sato wants to relocate and the old man is against it.

Shortwave Broadcast from Japan

"We heard a broadcast over the shortwave that Japan is not actually considering the exchange. The Japanese claim they know nothing about it. But the Gripsholm did dock in New York, I read."

Hokoku and Internments

"What they ought to do is send the agitators out."

"There are many people in here who don't make a peep but they're still a lot smarter than those others. They'll stand up at the end. Those taken out of here (interned) are dumbbells."

"There's a fellow in this block whose mother and father wanted him to join the Hokoku. But being the only son he said he wouldn't join. 'What's going to happen to you if I'm interned,' he said. He's smart."

"I've heard they (Administration) don't give the Hokoku people employment anymore."

"They're also saying that among those people taken away in the Hokoku, the rest of the families are not being paid by welfare. You know a lot of these Hokoku people are not for the internments and the women are not for it at all."

"I heard they are getting block 99 ready for the Joshi-dan. Somebody said they are even getting ready to take (intern) the kids under age."

"If they take out (reunite?) those families who agitated, they'll say, 'See what we did?' That would be a very dirty double cross."

Reverend Abe

"What's happened to Abe nowadays? He's staying quiet like a mouse. When he came out of the stockade, his name was mud."

Japanese Schools

We then entered a discussion on what types of Japanese teaching should be allowed in camp. The women raised no objections to strict regulation of the teaching. What was forbidden by the WRA or Department of Justice shouldn't be taught. Mrs. Sato said, "But it's all right to teach them to read and write so that they learn something. You should learn your own language."

Back to the Hooshi-dan

"Nothing but a bunch of Isseis believe the Hooshi-dan. Some of them start saying they got a letter from so-and-so in Japan and they tell the people who are in the Sokoku that when the time comes we'll tell the government only who we want exchanged."

"I've heard that the Japanese school teachers say that the kids of the Hooshi-dan families are so nansiki (fresh). Even in ward III they are complaining."

Idea of bringing back some internees

"If they bring back some of the boys from Santa Fe, they won't dare let out a peep."

The women agree, however, that the decent boys should be allowed to come back, repeating the story of the interned man who had attempted to commit suicide.

Young People

Mrs. Sato volunteered this remark:

"The young kids under age are making quite a lot of riot. The old man and the old lady are in the background. The only way to stop it is to pick up the old man. These kids don't know anything. They're innocent."

Reuniting Hōkoku

"If you reunite the Hōkoku everybody will join. Naturally, you'll join because it's the best way to stay in camp. Just about the whole camp will join."

"The Hōkoku feels they're going to get darn good positions when they get to Japan."

Relocation

"Even if you were living in California (before evacuation) and decided to move, you wouldn't move right away. You'll send a member of your family to go and see for a few weeks and then maybe you'll go. Even if they have the idea to relocate, people don't like to be pushed."

Janitor bribes his sons to enter Hokoku

"The janitor at the beauty shop says the only way to save his sons' life was to join the Hōkoku. So he begged them please to shave their heads off. He said, 'I'll give you 100 dollars each if you'll join and shave your heads.' Finally he won the battle."

Bill (Bob's brother) and the Hooshi-dan

The ladies told me that Bill had renounced his citizenship, but he's resigned from the Hooshi-dan. His wife's family were strong members of the Hooshi-dan and he had to join or he couldn't get along with them. Noriko (Bob's sister) has not renounced, though her mother keeps after her to do so. She doesn't see where it will improve her status in going to Japan (really, she doesn't want to go to Japan) and she figures she can always renounce when it's necessary.

"There's a rumor that they're sending this next bunch (Sunday's pickup) to Montana."

"These Joshi would quiet down if they were arrested. They ought to arrest a group."

"Our neighbor has a boy 14 year old. He's the only male left in the family after the pickups. He's very weak and frail and only as big as a nine year old boy. But he gets up at 5 in the morning and goes 'Ru-bu-bu-bu,' on his bugle. Then his mother is always wondering why he has the bellyache."

"Those Hōkoku are tsura no kawa (tough skin - shameless)."

"I hear they're having special hearings for the Hawaiians. My instructor went. But he said he had to go again for a special hearing. I wonder why?"

Tsuruda - March 1, 1945, April 13, 1945, -39-
May 8, 1945

More names for the Hōkoku: ishi otama (hard-headed); moto ichi (contrary).

"Block 74 is the worst Hōkoku block. In there there are only 2 families who aren't Hōkoku. If they meet anyone in the shower, they don't even say good morning. My sister-in-law's family happen to live there, so you can imagine how they are. At first they came over and they didn't force us. They gave us a beautiful talk and asked us if we wanted to join. When they knew we weren't very much for it, they don't bother us with it."

"My sister-in-law's sister's husband was taken in the first group. It just seems to have started up trouble in that family. The mother had a miscarriage. My sister-in-law's sister was pregnant. She had her baby but now she's having trouble with her breast. She had to have another operation the other day. Everything is going wrong with them."

APRIL 13, 1945

ENCOUNTER WITH BOB TSURUDA'S SISTER, NORIKO

I had written a letter to Bob's sister asking to be allowed to call. I encountered her today while making an appointment in the beauty shop and she cautiously asked me not to come because there was going to be another pickup.

No internment was contemplated. But on March 16, the WRA had issued and posted a body of Special Regulations, declaring that Resegregationist (Hooshi-dan and Hōkoku) activities were unlawful and punishable by imprisonment./

MAY 8, 1945

TALK WITH NORIKO TSURUDA

Noriko is one of my best "gossip" contacts. The Hooshi-dan, however, still has the family scared, for when they heard there might be another internment, they asked me not to visit them. Since nothing has happened for a month, they now thought it safe for me to show my face in their block.

Hooshi-dan people

"There are some sisters in this block whose brothers were taken. They say they hear rumors that they're going to send their brothers back here from Santa Fe. But they say, 'I hope it isn't true.'"

Noriko made a disgusted face to indicate her sentiments toward the behavior of these sisters.

"But the Hōkoku is not so arrogant as they used to be. For a while it seemed as if they / Hōkoku / promised at the Administration building not to do such things. But about a month ago they started blowing their bugles again. But in this ward, they're very quiet (Ward II)."

"I've been hearing rumors that they were going to take about 500 more."

The Demented Woman in block 36

(George Kunitani referred to this case last week.¹ But Noriko, living in the block, knows the inside story.)

1. See Fieldnotes for April 30./

"There was one case in this block of a woman whose three sons were taken. Their father died in Poston. He left the mother with four sons and four daughters. When the Hooshi-dan started, they all got pulled in. One boy is still here but he's only 12 years old."

"This lady didn't like the idea of the Hooshi-dan business. Naturally, all their friends were in it and so they were pulled in. When her sons were taken she lost her mind. She went around saying, 'What is this Hooshi-dan anyway?' Then she'd pound the table. She'd keep on repeating the names of the people who talked her sons into the Hokoku. She feels all the time these men who came and argued and forced them are coming to see her. She says, 'he's here again, he's here again.' And she keeps on hitting the table."

"The Hooshi-dan wouldn't let the daughter take her mother to the hospital. The girl left here is only 18 or 19. She has to take orders from the Hooshi-dan people. The Hooshi-dan people wouldn't even let us go near there. The next door lady wanted to go and help but they wouldn't let her go into the house."

"So the Hooshi-dan lady's family went to a Nichiren reverend. The prayers of the Nichiren reverend seem to have a mysterious effect in that kind of illness. He came over every night for weeks. He said, 'From tomorrow night she'll really quiet down.' All through the prayers, they say, she was just as quiet as can be. But as soon as he was gone she was at it again."

"But from the third night on, she really did begin to quiet down. She's really well now. She was really grieving over her sons."

"All the other people in the block here feel it's better not to fool with them (Hooshi-dan). Better to stay on the safe side. You should see her daughter. She's so thin now."

"The Hooshi-dan people told us not to write to the boys about their mother. So we don't say anything."

Letting People go to Klamath Falls

"They let us go down to Klamath Falls now. We wonder what's the catch. I figure there must be some catch somewhere."

Myer's visit

"Myer's visit didn't make much impression. The people didn't even care."

Spanish Consul Committee

"All the people on that committee are nothing but dopes. Our representative from this block is the worst dope in the block. He calls himself a doctor. He's a real dope. A real smart man doesn't go in for things like that."

"The people don't give them a chance. As soon as they start to go back and forth to the Administration building, they say, 'Oh that inu.' They never get a chance. No matter how good a group we have, it may be all right for a week or a month. But if anything should go wrong it'll be a mess."

Caucasian Women in Beauty Shop trying to get Girls to Relocate

"Old lady Harwood keeps trying to convince the girls in the beauty shop that they should relocate. She tells the operators we better start worrying about jobs because sooner or later we're going to be put out. I just ignore her and talk to her so that she'll be pleased."

"Telling me I have to worry about a job! One operator said, 'Why didn't you tell her she should be looking for a job if the center is going to close?' We have quite a few Caucasians coming in like that and beating around the bushes more or less."

"Another thing, they say people are going out to Klamath Falls.¹ I hear quite a few are going out."

Renunciation of Citizenship

"People really are worried about not hearing about their renunciation of citizenship. Especially the Hōkoku people. The only reason they think their citizenship is renounced is because they are interned."

"I'd laugh if they were sent back here. But the people really don't want them back."

"I think we will have another mental case in this block. This lady's husband was taken first and then her son was taken. When we used to sympathize with her she wouldn't listen. Now her eyes are wandering and she looks so queer. One of these days she's going to fly off the handle. Only in her case, nobody will have sympathy. They'll feel sorry of course, but they won't sympathize."

"They (Hōkoku) are really sorry inside only they won't show it."

"Until the Coast was opened the Hōkoku was dying down. Opening the Coast strengthened it."

More members of the family came in now, Mr. Sato, Bob's brother, and Bob's sister-in-law. I asked how Bob was (he's relocated) and was told he's fine. Noriko added that all of his friends who had thought they were safe in Gila before segregation are now in the Army. "Bob and his brother used to argue with them, but they thought they wouldn't be drafted from Gila. One is even going overseas." Noriko also told me that she doesn't read the papers. If she read them she's the kind "who'd have to believe what she read" and she couldn't take it. We then discussed relocation. The family repeated that if they were given "a decent amount" of money they might consider it. Bob's brother brought up the Doi case and said, "Yeh, you're free all right if you go out. You've got civil rights. Civil rights to be dynamited, civil rights to have your head cut off! They're even trying to take poor Doi's land away from him now."

"If they had made an example of those soldiers," said Noriko, "it would have helped."

¹/1. Evidently some Japanese American residents of Tule Lake were now being permitted to make visits to Klamath Falls. Had I been permitted to stay longer at Tule Lake I would have inquired about this./

On November 24, 1981 I had a long talk with Bill Tsuruda, Bob's brother -- and then found that my tape recorder had not been functioning properly.

I will call him again, in a month or so, but will now record all I can remember. He was born on January 26, 1917, in Sacramento, California. Before Pearl Harbor, he had finished high school after which he went to work as a farm laborer. But he found that he could earn more money as a fisherman, got a job, and after a year or so, he heard of an even better job as a sardine fisherman. He applied for the job and was accepted. He was very happy about this. Then came Pearl Harbor. He was at work when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and when a fellow worker came and told him about it he couldn't believe it. Nor, he told me, could he believe that the decision to evacuate the Japanese Americans applied to him. He was a citizen. It might apply to Issei, but not to him.

Unlike many other respondents, he seems to have regarded life in the Assembly Center (Turlock) as a joke. The grass was growing through the floor, but he and his friends (male peer group) slept in the grass and thought it was funny. They expected to be released at any time.

When I asked about Gila, the Relocation Center to which he was sent, he had more complaints. When they arrived, there was nothing in their barrack room but a couple of beds and some blankets. *"No tables - no chairs - nothing!"* Getting wood to make furniture was the problem. So one day, when there was a terrible sand storm - *"the sand was so thick you could not see more than a yard ahead,"* he decided to steal some wood from the WRA woodpile. It was very fine wood - red-wood. So he crept up carefully, groping his way, and suddenly, a yard ahead of him, he saw a soldier with a gun. So he crept back and carefully made his way to the other side. The wood was tied in very large heavy bundles, but he managed to get one on his back and made away with it. Then, as he was staggering along, he saw someone else through the sand. It was his friend _____, *"who had had the same idea."*

I asked Mr. Tsuruda how he had felt about the military questionnaire. If I remember correctly, he began his answer by explaining that his mother was ill and frail and that his father had had several strokes. In consequence, he felt that it was his obligation to stay with them and help them. Had he answered "Yes-Yes" and relocated he would have been drafted, leaving his ailing parents alone. His older brother, Bob, was married and had a child. Then he began to tell me about the meeting held in Gila at that time at which an American Army officer presided. Bill had asked the officer boldly: *"If I say 'Yes-Yes' why can't I go back to California?"* The officer replied by saying that California was a restricted area. Bill indicated by his tone of voice that he was very angry and indignant and that the indignation is still with him. He answered, No-No.

Bill had nothing good to say about Tule Lake. It was a sad, dark, gloomy place, everything always getting dirty because of the coal dust. (This was volcanic ash and not pleasant to walk on.) He disliked the Kibei, and he told me that the man who was murdered lived right across from him. He liked Mr. Noma (the man who was murdered) and could not see why *"the gang"* had killed him. He had no use for the *"hard-heads,"* his name for the Sōkoku and the Hokoku. I asked if they had ever threatened him, and he said *"No."* But they were always *"talking to"* him, to get him to join their group and he thought they were stupid. He repeated the word "stupid" several times. I asked how he coped with them and he said that he just left them alone. They could go their way and he would go his.

I asked if there were any person he respected in Tule Lake, to whom he could go for advice and he told me that there had been an older man to whom he went when he had questions. I asked about friends of his own age (apparently he had many friends in Turlock and in Gila), but he said that in Tule Lake he had none. He spent much of his time with

his family, and was able to get a job as janitor in the "*Caucasian Recreation Hall*." He said he had worked in the "*Rec. Hall*" until the end of 1945, when two WRA persons had suddenly taken hold of him and thrown him out. He did not know why.

He told me that all of his wife's relatives had repatriated, though she remained in the U.S. with him. His in-laws had had a terrible time in Japan, but after 17 (?) years, they had been permitted to return to the U.S. Many had been minors and had not renounced their citizenship.

I asked if he could remember any happy or pleasant experience at Tule Lake. He thought a long time and then said he could not remember any.

He spontaneously began to talk about the Kibei again and about how stupid they were. For example he said that immediately after his family arrived at Tule Lake, a social dance had been scheduled for the young people. But a gang of stupid Kibei had come to the dance, armed with sticks and baseball bats and had denounced the dancers for participating in this "*un-Japanese*" activity. "*One of them even wore a kimono!*" I asked if this had happened before the farm accident in October (1943). He said it happened before.

I asked what he had done after Tule Lake and where he had gone. He said he had returned to California to work for Mr. Suckerman on his farm - Suckerman had a vineyard - But when Mr. Suckerman had died he had moved about, looking for work - and had finally been given a job as a Checks Maintenance Man. (He sounded happy about this.) He continued to work as a Checks Maintenance man until a year ago when he retired.

I asked, "Looking back, is there anything you did or other people did in the camps that makes you feel good when you think of it?" He thought a long time and then said: "No." "*It was four years cut out of my life.*"

^{copy}
Eric shows me
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might help him —

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