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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
War Relocation Authority
Tule Lake Center
Newell, California

Community Analysis Section -- July 31, 1945

CENTER TOPICS OF CONVERSATION

July 30, 1945

Conversation on Kibei Pressure-Boys

(Between two Nisei involving an assault by a Kibei. A and B are Nisei, C, a Kibei with slight experience abroad.)

Mr. A. How was the Girl Reserves dance last night?

Mr. B. Waste time, you know what. Heck, I got slugged last night on the way home.

Mr. A. No lie, where did you get hit?

Mr. B. Right on the side of my face, got a little cut inside. You know, good thing I was relaxed cause I wasn't expecting to be hit, or I would have felt the blow more.

Mr. A. How come the guy hit you anyway?

Mr. B. Well, I guess they got burned up cause they couldn't crash into the dance on account of couple of Caucasian who was watching the entrance. You know those bunch of "low class guys" chicken out when they come face to face with a Caucasian.

Mr. A. Did a bunch of guys attack you?

Mr. B. No, just one guy.

Mr. A. Where did this happen?

Mr. B. Right by the High School. You know, I think that guy was laying for me and another guy, cause when I rounded the building that "low class yogore", step out from the dark and ask me where the heck I was going and I told him home. You know me, I was kind of getting burn up. So, I started to walk away not willing to start anything 'cause I had a date with me. That's when that "yogore" hit me, lose fight, man.

Mr. A. Did you hit back?

Mr. B. You know, usually I see red when a stranger hit me, but I kept cool cause I'd had to see my date home. Hell, if it wasn't for that I would of have layed him out, even though he was tough looking "yogore".

Mr. A. I think it was a good thing you did not tangle up with that "low class" cause if you beat them up right there, hell, he will come back with a gang to get even with you.

Mr. B. Yea, I guess he would do that, damn it, though this camp is really getting to be a waste time place. Christ, a guy can't even have fun without worrying when a guy is going to attack you. Sure wish I could scream out of this dump.

Mr. A. You're the only one that got slugged?

Mr. B. No, Mr. C got slugged too, right after I got my share.

Mr. A. Did Mr. C get hurt more than you?

Mr. B. Yea, he got a puff up cheek, but he's OK. Just went to church a little while ago.

Mr. A. How was the social?

Mr. B. It was alright except for the slugging I got. Heck, but I was about the oldest guy there. You know, I had a funny hunch and didn't feel like going but I couldn't help it cause I was asked by the girl.

Mr. A. Good thing I didn't go or maybe I would of got slugged too.

Mr. B. Here comes C. Hey, you feeling good this morning? Your girl-friend was kind of worried about you; we told her you was hurt pretty bad.

Mr. C. Shut your mouth.

Mr. A. I hear you got slugged last night, did it hurt?

Mr. C. Jesus Christ, when that "yogore" hit me, boy but I saw stars.

Mr. B. I guess I was lucky cause I didn't see no stars. But I tell you it was the first time I got hit like that by anybody. Shucks I never got hit like that when I boxed in the gym.

Mr. A. Say did that "low class yogore" give you any chance to defend yourself?

Mr. C. Heck no, he just told me "stop" and started telling me off. Saying, "What's the big idea going to dances when Japan is in her crucial stage of war? Going to dance and acting like a Hakujin showing no Nihon sei-shin or sympathy to the people of Japan when they are being bombed 24 hours a day! You should know better!"

Then I started apologizing that I was wrong and from the next time I would caution myself from doing anything that would cause me to be in sort of embarrassing situation. Then the bastard asked me if I was a Nisei or a Kibei. I told him I was a Kibei. I think that was a great mistake 'cause that "yogore" said, "Being a Kibei you should have more sense than to attend a dance." Then it happened: bang! bang! What really hurt me was my feeling that when the "low class" made a remark "Being a Kibei" he had the expression as if he was a high-class Kibei, that "low class yogore".

- Mr. A. Did you put up any resistance?
- Mr. C. Heck no, I don't want to be the second Hitomi case. Damn it, I didn't think there was that kind of "low class yogore" among the Japanese.
- Mr. A. No lie, there should be a Nisei gang. Sort of a vigilantes that would go beating up these "low class yogores" who makes trouble and beating up innocent residents for no good reason.
- Mr. C. I think it's a good idea, but I don't think it will work out because the Nisei right now haven't got that much power in this center.
- Mr. B. Heck, it's no use. Best thing to do is just go out of the camp. It's the only way to get away from the "yogores". You know after what happened last night, I asked my parent if I could relocate. Did I get a preaching!
- Mr. A. You sure must be a sad case. Your brother gets to go on a 30 day leave and when you talk about leaving camp you get the heck.
- Mr. C. I tell you, guys, you lucky. Shucks! Me, I haven't got a Chinaman's chance to leave this camp. Jesus Christ, before I knew anything about it, my big brother renounced my citizenship. Me, I'm really a sad case man.
- Mr. A. Let's go up to the club house and see if any other guys got tatooed.

Conversation on War News July 26, 1945

Scene: In the front of Mr. A's garden
Date: Sometime in July, 1945

Mr. A is an Issei, about 45 years old, and better educated than the average Isseis in the colony.

The conversations started out with techniques of flower raising in the center which gradually turned into ~~the~~ war news.

B. Have you heard any news lately? Japan sure is taking a lots of beating from the U.S. Forces, does she not?

A. Not much news now. I don't feel like listening any more.

B. The way U.S. is bombing and shelling the cities of Japan, what do you think is going to happen to Japan? I am worried about the whole thing.

A. Same with me. The bigness of the U.S. production and its overwhelming forces are keenly felt by all of us. I am wondering if she still has a powerful sea and air fleet to defend herself against this ever-growing tides of U.S. invasion armada. If she has, I do not understand why she did not come out and fight when Iwo and Okinawa were in danger.

B. I think it is a strategy of Japan to keep U.S. coming as close to her shore as possibly can, and when time is ripe, she would strike with all she got which she has so patiently conserved just for this occasion. She can't afford to expend her remaining fleet and air-forces in any battle she pleases like enemy.

A. The very fact that she has to wait until that time comes clearly explains that she is no longer capable of producing the essential war materials necessary for defense as well as offense. I think this could be attributed to the miscalculation of potential industrial power of Japan as well as that of U.S. on the part of "Gunbatsu" (Militarist clique). It is obvious that "Gunbatsu" never thought U.S. could build such a powerful air and sea fleet in such a short period of time after their crippling blow at the Pearl Harbor.

B. I agree with you there. At any rate, I hope Japan does not lose the war.

A. Realizing the present trend of the Pacific War, the best she could get out of this war, it seems to me, is a compromise peace. That is if she does not lose completely. If she ever lose, you know just about what is going to happen to all of us in the center as well as those in the old country. We in the center would undoubtedly be treated harshly and would be shoved out of here like a herd of hogs after the war.

B. That is why, it is necessary that she must pull through this war no matter how long it takes to do it.

Conversation on Eta

July 23, 1945

A young couple, both Nisei, decided on winding up their whirlwind romance. The story got around, and before long there was a multiplicity of versions. "The most gossippy stories were full of hackneyed gall, a legacy of feudal Japan," said one Nisei. Then he gave the example below.

Two elderly women (Issei) sat discussing the case, one saying to the other, "You have heard that so-and-so's boy is engaged to be married, I presume? They're...." She paused and gestured with four extended digits from her palm. "I gathered the girl's parents gave no objection, but instead they consented. Besides, it is said, she is getting on in her years. There, then, is no doubt she is one of them," whereupon the speaker repeated the gesture and grinned. The old inveterate probably was pleased by her reasoning and got a lift out of thinking that she herself was not "one of them", to borrow her euphemism.

The other, growing apprehensive, turned to her son, a close friend of the engaged pair, and said, "You must not take an active part in the wedding."

"Why?" asked her son.

"You know what they are; therefore, in case you do, it will reflect unpleasantly on us."

"I don't understand. They're good people, and it makes no difference to me if they are," he remarked with finality.

"I personally feel as you do, but we must be wary of what others will think. You must do no more than attend. That can bring no harm."

Conversation Concerning Nisei

July 16, 1945

Mr. Y is between 35 and 40 in age, a warden and "Old Tulean" who has wide acquaintance among the center residents. He was born in a village in Kumamoto-ken, had been a farmer before coming to the U. S. , and has a wife and children in Japan. The following conversation took place on a Sunday afternoon (July 16).

Y. "..... My brother's kids don't like to stay here; they have been wishing to get out of here all the time."
(The family of Y's brother is living in the same block, and has two or three children ranging in age between 18 and 22.)

- P. "The children are here under their parents' pressure."
- Y. "Yes. You know, there are a lot of people in the same situation."
- P. "I think most of married Nisei with children want to get out."
- Y. "Yes, and a great number of Issei, too."
- P. "There is no place in Japan for those half-hearted people. Japan doesn't want the young people brought back there under parental pressure. It doesn't do any good to them, and probably they will cause a lot of trouble after they get back."
- Y. "I heartily agree with you, especially so when I see those like my brother's kids. They can't be of any use over there. Their life has been so easy here."
- P. "Well anyway, those who want to get out should do so as soon as they can. The sooner the better for them, for the remaining residents, for this country and for Japan..."
- Y. "Yes, I hear the Justice Department may be taking over Tule Lake any day now and then it'll be too late."

Discussion Outside the Gym on Youth July 16, 1945

(Two boys of about 14 years and one Appointed Personnel teacher.)

The two boys came running out of the Gym door, their teacher right behind them.

Teacher: "Manabu - Kenny, come back here!"

The two boys reluctantly slow down. One turns and mutters -- "Sh----, who the hell's gonna buy the show tickets, then?" The continued to move off towards the ticket booth.

The teacher is insistent.
"Come back here."

Authority wins out. The boys turn back to class. But the more rebellious one asks openly, "Who the hell's gonna get out tickets."

Laughter and comments from the crowd: "Kids are sure sassy as hell to their teachers." "Sure is different from the time I went to school." "These hakujin teachers sure take a beating."

Nisei Discussion: Renunciation, the Draft
and Segregation

(Ages range from 15 to 28.)

21 yrs. "Hey, -----, did you get your renunciation approved?"

28 yrs. "Hope, not yet."

21 yrs. "I hear 20 from this block had theirs approved."

28 yrs. "Gosh, that many?"

"I wonder why they had to report to Block managers' office?"

21 yrs. "I dunno. Maybe they gonna shove the rest out. It'll be just my luck to be shoved out and then get caught in the draft."

28 yrs. "Nah -- that won't happen. If you had your hearing, you're probably on the Justice stop list." "Who had theirs approved?"

Names are counted off.

"Hey, most of them are those who went back to Japan."

24 yrs. "That's right. Maybe, they're approving those first."

22 yrs. "How about _____ and _____? They've been to Japan. They haven't got theirs approved."

Silence -----

28 yrs. "I hear 6 or 700 people are coming in from Poston next month?"

18 yrs. "Where they gonna put 'em?"

28 yrs. "Maybe, they'll clear all the rec halls."

15 yrs. "No Japanese school?"

28 yrs. "Maybe"

15 to 21 "Thataway!" "Oh boy!" "Hot dog!"

28 yrs. "They can always use the ironing room."

18 yrs. "They probably will, darn 'em."

On Family Splits Over Renunciation July 23, 1945

(Between two young married Kibei wives.)

Mrs. X "I was surprised at the large number of people that didn't renounce their citizenship. I hear that those who renounced and those who didn't are going to be separated."

Mrs. Y "There are some funny cases. The husband is a renunciant and the wife is not because she saw no reason to renounce. If what you say is going to be true, then the husband the wife will be separated. It's really funny. I believe in staying with my husband. Don't you?"

Mrs. X "Sure. That's why I renounced at the same time as my husband. We were about the 100th ones to be given a hearing. So we're not worried a bit even if things get worse."

Conversation Concerning Gila
(Two Nisei Women)

July 20, 1945

Mrs. X "Gee, we just received a package from Gila and I believe they must think condition here is very bad."

Mrs. Z "Oh, how do they find the camp there?"

Mrs. X. "From the looks of her letter, I think they have to start thinking of relocating real soon."

Mrs. Z "Where do they intend going?"

Mrs. X "I don't know, but I hear food is getting pretty bad there. She didn't mention any discomfort, but guess what they sent me?"

Mrs. Z Melon? Gee, that's one state that grows lots of melon, neh?"

Mrs. X "No. Have you ever heard of 'can weenies'? Well, they sent us some can weenies - she mentioned that meat are hard to get in Gila."

Mrs. Z "Gee, I didn't know they canned 'weenies'."

On 'Canceling Renunciation'
(Young Nisei)

July 20, 1945

- Mr. B "Heck, what kind of policy do they have here?"
- Mr. M "What happened?"
- Mr. B "You know what I heard?"
- Mr. M "Lead me to it."
- Mr. B "Y_____ wanted to cancel renunciation and wrote a letter concerning that and received a queer answer."
- Mr. M "Why he can't cancel it?"
- Mr. B "Now, the letter stated that they wish we wouldn't send any more such letter cause renunciates or not renunciates do not mean a darn difference to the Dept. of Justice."
- Mr. M "Now where that leads us to? More muddle huh?"
- Mr. B "I guess they sent out renunciation forms to just get the camp in an uproar when the Hokoku-Hoshidan were acting up."

On Working for the Maintenance Department July 20, 1945

(Announcement was made in the mess halls of the need for more men for the Maintenance Dept. Two Nisei discuss the announcement.)

- Mr. B "Hey, _____ let's apply for the job." (Mentioned that it was a steady job and the number of people working in the family didn't matter.)
- Mr. T "Why not, we were going to volunteer for the farm pea-picking, but since we had to play too many ball games we couldn't. Now it's OK."
- Mr. E "Too bad about the pea-picking job huh? But I heard that group is nothing but women so I guess it was a good thing we didn't sign up for it."
- Mr. T "No lie, pop was saying the volunteers are nothing but old women and you know what a pain in the neck they can be."

Mr. B "Well, how about this maintenance job? Want to go sign up...and if we don't like it, well, we could chuck."

Mr. B "I heard it's a job requiring skill workers (laugh). Finally WRA got enough tar paper to finish the roofing. Let's see when did they start the job? Half year ago wasn't it? Well, Joe was in that crew and he said it's loads of fun."

Conversation on Hoshidaners Loosing Space July 18, 1945

Mrs. A (Member of Hokoku, with two sons and a son-in-law at Bismarck): "Have you heard how they took half a room from the I family? They really gave the housing 'Keto' a battle, but he got pretty nasty and told them if they did not give up part of one room, they would be put into the stockade and their furnitures and other belongings would be dumped into one room someplace in Block 72."

Mr. M (Member with three sons gone): "Just my wife and I got a 'B' room and I guess Housing will be trying to move us too. I rather give up half of our room, then move to a smaller room in some other block, since I'm working in the mess and know all the people in this block."

Mr. Y (Non-member): "Mrs. A, why don't you move in with your daughter since you sleep with her every night, and won't that be for the best for the two of you?"

Mrs. A: "Yes, but we have so much stuff that I will have to have about half of our 'B' room to keep our furnitures, trunks and clothes."

Mrs. Y: "I heard that the Housing will keep your things at the warehouse for you."

Mrs. A: "I wouldn't trust them to keep my things at the warehouse. Did you ever see how they toss things around at the warehouse?"

Mrs. Y: "I guess that's true. I heard that they were kind of rough."

Mr. M: "I guess we will have to wait and see what they will do."

Mrs. A: "I think they are foolish to move us around since I heard at the end of this year when they kick all the free-listers and the citizens out they are going to return all those who went to Santa Fe and Bismarck, back here again, so they will have only one camp to maintain. Then they will have to readjust us all over again."

On Child's Play and Accidents July 15, 1945

(Conversation heard between ladies in front of a barrack. In Japanese. Old section of camp.)

Mrs. X "I heard someone drowned in that big canal down near Manzanar."

Mrs. Z "Drowned? I heard Wednesday a little girl of three almost drowned. Said she even went through the pipe and had to wait till she came out."

Mrs. Y "Three? What were her folks doing? Must have strayed out of the block with other youngsters?"

Mrs. X "Then this must be the same story, only the victim is not dead, but almost died."

(Laughed because the story that goes around is always exaggerated.)

Mrs. Y "Where is she, in the hospital?"

Mrs. Z "I heard she's doing alright now, but was taken to the hospital and of course the water was full of disease--and she broke with rash."

Mrs. X "I'm certainly glad we don't have such big ditches running down this way. These block ditches are bad enough. Children making mud-pies and all."

Mrs. Y "We have so many mosquitoes and flies recently, these ditches must be the cause of them."

Mrs. Z "Bobby said he caught tadpoles. He must have gotten them in one those ditches...How awful, we'll be having frogs and now our youngsters will be having warts. What next, if it isn't car danger we have to worry about, it's drowning. Getting dirty is one big problem too."

Mrs. X "At least now, I don't have to bump into children playing in the latrine. You know, playing with water."

Mrs. Z "You know up Manzanar way? Well, they're glad that these ditches were constructed, cause the old area will now not waste so much water for their gardens (from latrines). And they can have water now."

Mrs. Y "I guess there's no end to complaining, but do you know what I heard?"

Mrs. X "What."

Mrs. Y "One person went to complain about these ditches, and the Caucasian told him that if he isn't satisfied with the condition here, just think about going elsewhere and get things done the way you want it cause this is as much as we can do for you here."

Mrs. Z "I heard something like that, too." "I guess we should be glad and not complain since we have abundant supply of water here and I'm sure if the kids get hurt it's just our fault. Oh, well we have a short summer, so winter will be coming around and the kids will get their minds off'a the ditch."

Mrs. X "I'm glad the little girl didn't drown, but almost did, I better tell Alice the new slant on the story."

On Center Closure

July 27, 1945

Time: Evening Place: Outside of a barrack, cooling off.

A general conversation was taking place among several young men about weather, war, etc., when the subject was changed to the following:

Tom: "When is that important announcement by Best going to be made?"

Dick: "Yeah, when? I hear it's to be something about closing the center here."

Harry: "I don't think that's so. Best, I understand, has been back from Washington for quite some time, so if there was anything to that, he would have said so, especially since the center closure dates of the other centers have been made public."

Dick: "Well, I wouldn't be too sure about that. I heard something today which may bear out the center closure angle."

Harry: "What's that?"

Dick: "It may be just another rumor or misunderstanding, but an old Issel told me that his friend told him of a guy who was going to relocate, but had changed his mind. This guy went to tell them that he'd changed his mind about relocation. Well, they're supposed to have told him that he'd better go ahead with his relocation plan inasmuch as 70% to 80% of the people here will be shoved out within a few months. If

this relocation worker said that, there must be something to it."

Tom: "70% to 80%? I don't see how that's possible with the 'segregate' status and the Justice Department 'stop list', unless they intend to split families and shove out the women and the kids."

Harry: "No, I don't think they'd do that, although you never can tell what they might do. Another reason why I don't think they'd close this center is that some of the surplus from other centers like Minidoka and Heart Mountain are coming in here. We've unloaded roofing tar and toilet bowls at the warehouse. Boy, that tar was a messy job. Leaking all over the car floor."

Tom: "Why don't they send in window screens? We sure can use them. These d--n mosquitoes and bugs are sure getting fat on us."

Then followed the usual cursing of the insects, accompanied with slaps here and there in futile attempts to exterminate them.

July 30, 1945

Time: Afternoon

Place: Near the block office

A: "I hear that the important announcement is going to be about this center closing."

B: "What makes you think so?"

A: "Well, this is what makes me believe that this center is going to be closed. I had a letter from a friend in Manzanar. This guy is eligible to come here, but he wrote and said that he won't be coming here."

B: "Did he say that the administration at Manzanar told him that they weren't going to ship him here?"

A: "No, he didn't say that, but that he won't be coming here."

B: "Maybe he changed his answer."

A: "Could be, but this guy used to have his mind pretty well set to come here."

B: "Well, something could have happened for him to change his mind."

A: "Maybe."



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
Tule Lake Center
Newell, California

Community Analysis Section
November 15, 1945

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER
Conversations Involving Issei and Kibei
(1st Half of November)

The following conversation was overheard in the Post Office while on line to get a money order made out. Date-- November 2, 1945. A number of people were on line to get money orders--some of them for the Defense Committee.

A: (A middle-aged Nisei who renounced talking to an Issei friend). How is everything with you? If I am deported, I can't help it (shikata ga nai). I will go back leaving my citizen wife and children. I am doing the best to stay in this country (evidently he is in on Collin's case). However, in case I go back, please look after my family. They have to eat somehow without me. I am sending them back to Los Angeles.

B: We can't help it when our old man (meaning Japan) kicked the bucket...I will do the best I can to help your family in case you are deported.

A: If I could stay here, I would establish a grocery store in Los Angeles, and then I would work for few years before going back to Japan.

B: I heard it is still pretty hard to establish any business now because of discrimination. Also, Japanese have not returned to their old truck farming where all the vegetables

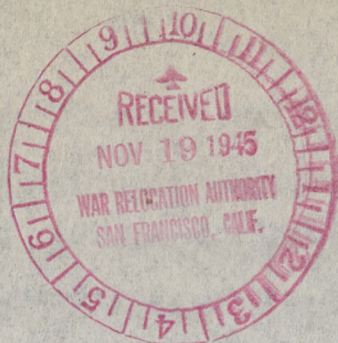


were obtained. I heard that Mr. I is back in L. A. doing gardening, however, and making pretty good money.

A: So Mr. I is back there. If he is doing gardening (evidently he used to run his own business), there is not much chance for us to do anything in business.

The following conversation took place at a party held in the Block 35 Messhall. Date-November 4, 1945.

A: (A middle-aged Nisei who was a newspaperman before evacuation and who "lost citizenship" so he says when he was called for repatriation on the second exchange ship).
It was Japan's fate to lose the war. If she won, her people would continue to slap Chinese, Koreans, and all the other nationalities. She was too small to win the war...
Do you know why the Koreans demanded their independence after some thirty years have elapsed since annexation to Japan? It is because Japan did not treat them right from the start. I still remember an incident when I was a small boy in Korea. A group of firemen beat hell out of a Korean candy-vendor, and do you know what this vendor did? He just smiled as though he didn't mind it...Watching this from the side, I felt like kicking the firemen, but I was too small to do it. That Korean was "toobig" for these firemen. It shows that Japan was in no position to rule other people and that is why the Koreans still want their independence.



B: There is no doubt that Japan learned many lessons in this war, even though she lost it. There are many things to be reformed: economically, the rule of "Zaibatsu" should be disorganized. Let the common people have more chance in business enterprises. There should be labor unions in Japan like we have here in the United States. Socially, women should be freed from the present status of mere housewives, and should be given more rights. And politically, the form of government should be changed. In ten years' time, I ^{am} hopeful that Japan may be reformed and may be a good place to live in just like this country. What did you decide, Mr. A, to return to Japan or stay here?

A: I am trying to stay in this country though I lost citizenship. Personally I don't think it is wise to go back at this time when conditions over there are worse than expected. Why should one go back and share the limited amount of rice with bombed-shocked people?

B: I have a same opinion about that. We have to think about feeding our own mouths when we consider conditions over there. I am afraid there won't be much opportunity for us when so many people return from abroad, from Manchuria, Korea, Formosa, China and other former colonies. Besides, we must take into consideration the future industrial development of Japan. The Potsdam Conference will prevent her from engaging in heavy industry which absorbed so many millions of laborers. This means that there will be competition among the people to get jobs in light in-



dustry. We would be better off staying in this country.

The following conversation took place in a block latrine on November 1, 1945.

A: What did you decide to do about repatriation, Mr. M? (A middle-aged Issei reverend)

B: I have finally decided to apply for repatriation, and nothing is going to change my plan now. I had a family conference and we debated the pros and cons of repatriation last night. If I try to stay in this country for a couple of years, I am sure I would not make enough money to return to Japan. That is why, this is an opportunity for persons like us to make use of this free trip. Besides I don't have any house to return to in this country, whereas if I go back, we have a big house to return to, and I have an old father to look after as soon as possible. He is pretty old and might pass away any time now.

A: If that is the reason, I think it is wise for you to return at this time. Anyway, it is an individual problem, and we must think this thing out seriously before deciding what to do. I decided to stay here for a few years before making any further plan because my children are too young and to take them back where food is scarce and everything so high would be criminal.



Conversation overheard between two Kibei. Both are married, have families, and have signed for repatriation. Since the talk was in Japanese, the translation may not be entirely correct. This is a stab at (humorous) literal translation.

A: Well, It won't be long now.

B: Yes. What won't be long now?

A: Did not knowing? Oh, you wonderful fool! Why, Japan is sending us ships to take us back.

B: Oh really! I did not know that. When is this wonderful day transpiring?

A: Well, according to the latest report, ships are to be docking the day after tomorrow. (November 15).

B: Then you mean that if Japan is sending boats for us, we will be allowed to bring back unlimitable baggage and money.

A: That is right. Oh, joy! Oh, wonderful day!

B: Please excuse me. I must be hurrying home to tell my worthless wife to making preparations for this trip.

November 3, 1945

Subject: The "Defense Committee" Handling Nearly 1,000
Renunciant Cases.

People: A Kibei member-----A
A Kibei member-----B
A Married Kibei
non-member-----C

A: We hear daily that deportation is definite, that it is threatening, that the Justice Department might transfer



us to another camp. We hear that no consideration will be given the deportees' family, that MacArthur has given his approval in accepting deportees from America, and so the story goes. Furthermore the source of the story is regarded as this "Defense group". Maybe it is true, yet it is uncertain. The "group" is too young. What they need as their "head" is a clear thinker.

B: Yes, but we have to convince the people of the center that there are such possibilities.

A: And in case there aren't, will you take full responsibility for creating such rumors?

B: Now don't take it so seriously. In case there is no deportation, which I personally don't believe, what harm will it make? Everyone will be too happy to criticize.

A: I joined this group because I'll feel safer if my rights are protected by a lawyer. However, there are other persons with other ideas: maybe they are right or wrong, I don't know. Nevertheless, we must respect their point of view, too.

B: But I'm convinced this is the only organization which can help us. That's the reason I'm trying to convince others to join for their own sakes. That's what Mr. Collins was stressing, is it not?

A: I don't care what Mr. Collins said. I'll analyze this situation myself. If you once step aside from the "group", you'll see it in a different way. You're not a free agent,



as Collins says, if you are under pressure. How about the pressure of rumors which prevail within the "group"? The atmosphere at this "Defense" office is so tense. Let people decide on what to do. Just communicate the information to them, but don't try to persuade them, even for their own good.

C: My primary desire isn't to get deported, but if it can't be helped, that's that. But I have confidence that such will not be the case, at least for the unwilling repatriates in Tule. If some concessions are obtained, or if some compromising plans are worked out between the Justice Department and Mr. Collins, it's not only the people who signed the "power of Attorney" that will be benefited by it but Tule renunces as a whole. I may be selfish but I can't afford to contribute \$100 now.

B: But the Defense Committee is accepting hardship cases.

C: If I am to be protected by Mr. Collins, I'd like to dish that money out of my own pocket. We have been mistreated by this government in many respects, but I trust that the government will not separate families.

B: Yes, I, too, trust this government but we must not forget that if the congressional committee does pass a "Bill for Deportation" regarding the Tule renunces, the Attorney General must execute that law without any discretion of his own.

A: But also, in the event that a certain committee is appointed to study this matter, I presume that Mr. Myer or someone

from the W.R.A. will be present. Before enacting such a law, the committee will surely get ample information concerning this and the only government agency which could handle this problem is the W.R.A. I don't believe that the W.R.A. is in favor of deportation or breaking families.

C: Since the registration for non-repatriation and repatriation has been completed, I believe that an important announcement concerning this will be made soon, and I won't be surprised if the Justice Department will come out with a statement that the "unwilling repatriates are free". I'm sure that Mr. Collins has more information than he actually told us. After all he's representing a big union. He must have certain contacts with Washington. Maybe he won't even have to bring the case to court, and there may be some compromise plans worked out. From the congressman's point of view, we're only small fry, and it's not going to hurt them or the American public whether we get deported or set free. The problem they're mostly concerned ^{with} now is to dissolve all W.R.A. centers. Since the closing date of Tule Lake has been published, it's quite certain that a definite announcement will come very soon.

B to C: You see now, you get a different, but a logical interpretation, once you avoid the "group". Of course I don't mean that his (A's) interpretation of the present situation is correct; he may be wrong, but still it seems logical. Nothing is definite yet. Yes, we're on the safe

side, but don't let the rumors of deportation scare you too much.

November 4, 1945

Subject: Barriers to Relocation

Issei woman-----A

Issei man-----B

B: Now that everyone is resettling, what are your plans?

A: Well I'm free to go outside and so are my daughters but it's a little difficult for us at the present time to make any definite plans.

B: May I ask what the difficulty seems to be? Maybe I can help.

A: It is really a secret yet, but my eldest daughter is planning to get married in the near future.

B: Well, that is good news.

A: The only thing that is troubling me is that the husband-to-be is a renunciant. Unless something definite is announced, I do not want to give my daughter away. Another thing, too, is that after my son relocated, and later my husband passed away, I've been depending on my daughter for support. If it was two or three years later, I wouldn't hesitate so much.

B: Yes, that is true but you must give your daughter away sometime and since this husband-to-be is such a nice fellow, with clean family background, you need not wor-

ry, too much.

A: I have considered that also but the children's Mena are different and so far apart. I wanted her to stay as close to the family as possible. Then there's another thing to consider. In case they do get married, the husband is a renunciant and my daughter is not a renunciant. What would happen to her if he is deported?

B: Maybe I am being too optimistic about everything, but I read a letter tonight from Bismarck which was written by a member of the Hoshi Dan and one who wants to relocate now. It said that the officials there are very kind and it is their opinion that there will not be such a thing as deportation. How can they send people to Japan when they aren't even citizens of that country? Where can they put them? The Nisei who renounced are really people without a country. The letter sounded very much as though they would be able to go outside soon.

A: I'm so happy to hear that. I've been hearing such awful things these days that I've had my nights of crying myself to sleep. Of course what you say may not be perfectly true, but at least it is good to hear the bright side of the story once in a while.

B: Yes, and after doing everyting possible to remain in this country, and yet beingⁿ deported, then we will have to swallow our tears and do our best to adapt ourselves to the situation.

(Issei discussing Relocation and Renunciation--Nov. 5, 1945)

B is a moderate; A and C are extremists.

Mr. A: It's been a long time since I've seen you.

Mr. B: I just came in from Los Angeles. I relocated from Gila in July. I couldn't see much use staying in camp.

Mr. A: How is it in Los Angeles? I want to go out too, but my son can't leave.

Mr. C: Y--- left last week. He says he's going to stay in this country even if his wife and children are shipped back to Japan. His wife is a Nisei and renounced.

Mr. A: I feel sorry for her. She only renounced to please him. Still I suppose he is doing the right thing. He can send money back to them in Japan. No sense in all of them starving. Maybe I should do the same.

Mr. C: I don't agree. It's bad policy to split families like that. It's not fair to the children. I ought to know. I was brought up by my grandparents.

Mr. B: It's for the good of everyone if we go out and make money. If we go back we will only be a burden to our relatives. If we stay here, we're helping them more.

Mr. C: No! I maintain that you are not doing more good for our people by staying here, even if you make more money and can send some back. After all, you are a man at the productive peak of his life. If you were in Japan, you would be producing things which will stay in Japan and be useful for Japan. If you stay here, that productive capa-

city stays here with you. The houses you build and the crops you grow are staying here.

Mr. B: I'll be sending back money.

Mr. C: That money is what you might call net profit. Wait, maybe we're really arguing about different things. Do you still insist that your staying here is doing more good for Japan or do you really mean that it is doing more good for yourself and your relatives.

Mr. B: If you put it that way---I am just thinking of my relatives.

(A conversation heard between an Issei repatriate and a non-repatriate---November 6, 1945)

A: repatriate
B: non-repatriate

B: I guess you must think that I'm a person who doesn't know his own mind. After all, I did do quite a bit of talking about going back to Japan regardless of the consequences. Especially at the time of renunciation--I was all for it and everything else connected with it. And now I've decided to apply for non-repatriation.

A: Well, I always say that a person has a right to make up his own mind at all times. I have my own reasons for repatriating, and I feel that anyone who has changed their minds must have good reasons for doing so, too.

B: It's not only because of Japan's defeat, although that had something to do with my decision. But, you know, it's a certainty that if we are deported now, we will never be

able to return to America--or for that matter, we'll probably never be able to leave Japan. In that way, we'll be limiting ourselves and our future. When you think about the great things atomic power is bound to bring about, it seems unwise and even a little foolish to throw everything overboard for ideals.

A: I can understand your point of view very well. I am fully aware of the hardships facing those of us who are going to return to Japan now. I am not going back because of mere ideals or to "save face", so to speak, but I feel that some of us, as Japanese, must go back to help rebuild Japan. She must be made into a great nation again--not a warring, militaristic nation, but a nation we could point with pride to, a nation which would help lead the affairs of this world.

B: I had never thought of that. But I can see your point of view too, and I can understand why you are so determined to return to Japan.

Conversations Involving Nisei Only:

Two Nisei (renunciants) talking about current affairs. I am using the names they used to address each other: namely, Hey and Say. (Dated--November 5, 1945)

Say: Hey! Hear anything new?

Hey: Nope. Nobody seems to know anything. Say, do you hear anything about that registration? (Alluding to the

completion of the Department of Justice Repatriation Survey.)

Say: Well, I heard that maybe all non-repatriates may be able to go out.

Hey: You don't say!

Say: Hey! How about you? Did you sign up for non-repatriation?

Hey: Yeah. Say, you think I got a chance?

Say: Sure. Just this morning I heard from a fellow in Santa Fe that signed for non-repatriation that he received his alien registration form while those that signed for repatriation did not. Therefore, they get to go out as aliens. The repatriates going to Japan don't get them, but 'they' don't need these. Don't you think that means that the non-repatriates will be able to leave the center as aliens while the repatriates are deported.

Hey: Say, that sounds reasonable. If they are deported, naturally the government won't waste forms on them.

Say: Sure, with the center housing shortage in Japan, MacArthur may not be accepting unnecessary people. After all, if he says no, I don't think the Justice Department will deport people he doesn't want around.

Hey: Do you think the situation in Japan is as bad as all that? I heard that some people are receiving letters from Japan saying that things aren't too difficult, and to come back.

Say: Could be. But doubt it.

Hey: Say, if we get to go out, where are you going?

Say: Darn if I know. But I wonder if we'll get any grants.



Hey: It's pretty tough now. I hear guys have to fight like heck to get what they can. Of course, you get train fare and the 25 bucks. No more clothing grants. Furniture grants are tougher than all get out.

Say: Hey--you're not in that Iyakuen gumi (\$100 group) are you? (Alluding to the "Defense Committee" which has engaged an attorney.)

Hey: Heck, no!

Say: Just as well. Maybe we'll get to go out regardless.

Hey: Say, did you know that out of our whole block, only three persons are in that group and they are all Kibei.

Say: Isn't that funny? The Nisei in the block aren't so interested. It might be that the Nisei are ignorant of Japan, while the Kibei know what they are getting into if deported so they fight not to be deported.

Hey: Sure is a headache. Say, but the way, did you know that old man Y... went out?

Say: You don't say! The way he used to talk, you'd think he'd never go out.

Hey: Yeah, you can never tell about people.

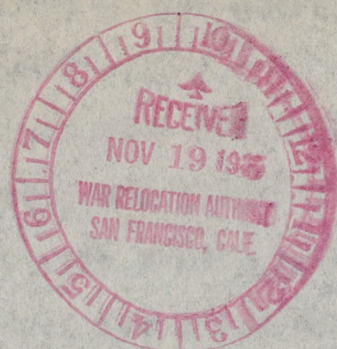
Say: I understand we're not to have any more movies at the gym.

Hey: Is that right? Just because of that stabbing, I suppose.

Say: Yeah, its always like this. One guy causes trouble and everybody has to suffer.

Hey: They say this guy had a gang backing him so he thought he could get away with it.

Say: The I.S. ought to lay down the law to those gang leaders.



All they do is drive around in a car and look important.

Hey: ...Changing the subject, but with the canteens closing this month, I bet there are going to be a lot of private enterprises springing up.

Say: Hey! Maybe we ought to start a good racket. I hear people are charging a buck fifty on some shells posted on a board in the form of cherry blossoms. I guess people want souvenirs of Tule Lake bad. As for me, I can't wait to forget it.

Date: November 6, 1945
Time: About midnight
Place: Shower room of Block 7B

Several Nisei late-comers were sitting around the hot, steaming shower. Conversation drifted, as it usually does when a group of people assemble, to the topic of renunciants and the Justice Department policy.

A: I wonder if the Justice Department is going to make an announcement regarding us soon?

B: You know what I heard? I heard that Mr. X.... is supposed to have stated that the Justice Department will begin conducting hearings for the non-repatriates soon..

A: Where did you hear that?

B: Well, a son of a man who works at the Personnel Rec Club told a friend of mine that his father overheard Mr. X.... saying that there.

C: Gee, I sure hope that's true! If hearings are assured, I

think that we'll all have a good chance of staying.

D: Yeh! There might be something to that. You know, the Justice Department stepped back the deadline for filing of repatriation and the non-repatriation forms two days. Today was the deadline instead of the 8th, as previously announced.

E: Is that right? I didn't see any announcement of the change in the date for the deadline for filing the forms.

D: Well, the block manager of Block 82 told me that, and he doesn't say those things unless he is certain. He's that kind of a guy.

E: The fact that the Justice Department is in such a hurry may mean that there is reason to believe that there will be an announcement about us soon. - hope it'll be good news.

A: Don't we all!!

Two Nisei Discussing Center Life

November 7, 1945

A Nisei: Did you know that a fellow got stabbed the other day? Yea, the fight began over a seat and I heard that the fellow who got stabbed has only a fifty-fifty chance to live. Just on account of the fight, we're not going to have anymore movies.

B Nisei: This is only the beginning, there are going to be lot more brawls from now on. You know that four years of



camp life has been a quite a mental strain on everyone. Look at those minority fanatics. They are way off the beam. There's lot of young fellows who do not want to go back to Japan but due to family tie, they have to. Those fellows don't give a damn anymore, and they are walking around with a chip on their shoulder. Some think it is better to spend their time in jail than go back to Japan, so keep out of their way.

A Nisei: Gee, without the movies, there's nothing to do over the week-end. The CA is all shot nowadays. Gosh, what the hell are we going to do, to pass our time away. I sure was looking forward to the next picture. I heard it was one of the best pictures that come to Tule Lake. I hope they start dances again or something.

B Nisei: The Issei really don't approve of dancing, but I think these socials they are having in blocks are the only thing which will relax these young people's minds. I looked into a couple of the parties, and they were playing games and everyone was enjoying it. I even saw Hoshi-dan members and Kibei non-dancers having a swell time. Then they had very nice refreshments and then they danced toward the end of the evening. Everyone in the block enjoys parties and therefore, there's no hard feelings. At some of the parties, I use to see where a small group would borrow a mess hall and have a good time just by themselves, which brought ill feeling within the block, which is very bad.



A Nisei: I think that's a swell idea, since the CA is at the standstill and there seem to be no activities. I think it would be a good idea for the CA to furnish a place where we can hold socials and dances. They should work it on the same basis as they did the picnic ground. They should have a camp-wide dance at least once or twice a month.

B Nisei: Something will have to be done for recreation when there are still 15,000 people in the center. If deportation notices come out, it will be lot worse than you realize.

Ward VIII Nisei discussing the Deportation possibility.--Nov. 10

A: I hope that the Justice Department will come out with something definite soon. If it's going to be deportation, okay; if they're going to turn us loose, okay. At least, we'd know exactly where we stand. This way, I don't know how to make preparations. They don't say what we can take or how much if deportation is the order. If we're to be turned loose, then there are ways to pack too. At this rate, we can't even start packing for one way or the other. Why don't they say what the baggage limits for the deportees will be? Then, at least, one can start packing for deportation, expecting the worst, and make preparation for disposing of the surplus. If no deportation, swell! It won't be any trouble to repack; it'll be a pleasure.

B: Yeah, doesn't it gripe you? At least they should say

what the deportees can take and how much. What has the Justice Department got to lose in giving out that information?

A: You know what I heard? I heard that there are so many requesting repatriation that the Justice Department is wondering what to do with them. Say there are 10,000 guys wanting to go to Japan. With the announced cost of deportation at \$400.00 apiece, it'll cost the government four million dollars and that's not hay. So it looks as if the guys who don't want to go back to Japan may get to stay here after all.

C: Yeah, I heard something like that too. I hope that it's true. As for the ones who asked for repatriation, they say that there are no boats available so soon. That is before the center closure, so that they'd have to go out once and wait for the repatriation notices before they're allowed to go back.

D: Could be, but once they turn them loose, it'll be a job to round them up again. It'll take a long time to complete the repatriation program. What dya think?

A: I guess you're right.

E: (running in): Say! Ya know what I heard? I just saw a letter saying Tachibana is serving a seven year term in the Federal Penitentiary.

B: Well, it's a little late, but they say the wheels of Justice-- and I don't mean the Department--grind exceedingly slow, but at least they move.

Hisei on Relocation--November 12, 1945

A: Did you make up your mind where you are going?

B: No. With a family, it's pretty hard to decide. Especially with the housing situation so acute all over the state, I can't see where any landlord will rent to a family with small kids when they can get all the tenants they want without children or with grown children.

A: Why don't you try the hostels for the time being or make an application for the Federal Housing Project?

B: I don't want to sit in a hostel forever. Besides, it will cost a fortune to live there with a family as large as mine. I can never earn enough to support them..As for the Federal Housing Project, I understand that that's practically limited to the family with some son or father or brother in the Army. Unless you come into that category, it's almost impossible to get a place there.

A: Well, they say that you have to be out to get a house.

B: Yeah, I heard that plenty of times, but when you know just what you're up against, it makes it very difficult to make up your mind to go out and take a chance. You know what I heard today? A fellow got a letter from a friend in Frisco that there are about 800 persons living in hostels now with no prospect of housing and not much chance for employment. I guess the large number is due to the Topaz Center closing last month. Most of the Bay Area people were sent to Topaz, you know. This guy was saying that the conditions were so bad, and people without any source of income, that



some were even searching the garbage cans for food. Another thing that I heard was that there is a lot of propaganda being spread by people from the other centers against Tule Lake relocatees and attempts are being made to ostracize them, both by the Japanese and the other people.

A: Could be. Yeah, I guess it's pretty tough alright when you have a family. Maybe it's better if you'd take the plunge and go fast.

B: Yeah, maybe I will. It seems to be the best solution, but boy, do I dread the long trip with so many kids.

A: Well, "beggars can't be choosers". Anyway, you're lucky your whole family is free to go.

HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED!
(Recorded by a Staff Member)

SCENE: A block in Tule Lake on November 13, 1945

A: Hey! Why don't we have a dance in our messhall?

B: Sure. But don't you think there might be some objections?

A: Heck, no! Conditions are different now. The war's over. People are going out. Nobody cares.

B: Some Issei and Kibei in this block might raise a stink. They're are a few pretty radical ones, you know. They still think Japan won the war, or got a negotiated peace.

A: The hell with them. They're just a minority now.

B: (Still pessimistic) I asked my pop about it the other night. He didn't care too much but he said people would



laugh at us. I asked him why and he said we shouldn't be too boisterous or merry. Since Japan lost, we shouldn't fool around too much.

A: Aw, nuts! Let's have a dance anyway.

And so they had a dance. Everything went off smoothly. Even some of the Block Kibels attended. No repercussions the next morning from the die-hards. The Kibels want to know when the next party is. Amazing.

FLASH BACK-----one year ago today.

A: (In a hushed whisper) Hey! Let's have a dance in our kitchen.

B: (Equally hushed, but shocked) Are you crazy? You wanta get bounced on your head? You wanta land in the hospital?

A: But, gosh! Things are so dead.

B: So will you be if you try to do a stunt like that. The Issais and Kibels in this block are fanatics. Besides, where would you get the women?

A: Yeh. Cherchez la femme. They're probably locked up at night.

The subject is dropped. They crawl back to their third grade "tokuhon"(reader) "Hey, Taro!" (Taro is A's ten year old brother) "What's this word?" Taro gives him a scathing look of disgust. "What a punkin head. Don't you know what that word is?"



Frayne

File

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
Tule Lake Center
Newell, California

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER Community Analysis Section
December 5, 1945

Two Nisei renunciants talking over the recent developments in their court action; both are in the Defense Committee. (Nov. 28, 1945)

A: Hello B---, I guess I won't be eating my Christmas dinner with my family as I planned or be celebrating New Year's with them.

B: Why is that?

A: I just heard that the Justice Department is asking for more time to answer to the Court why we should be detained. Ivan Williams was supposed to appear before the court on Dec. 10, but now it is extended to Jan. 10.

B: I bet the Justice Department sure has a big head-ache trying to answer that \$64 question. Is this extension of time good or bad?

A: Well, it's bad because we will have to stay in here longer, but on the other hand, it's good because the Justice Department knew that we were going to file suit and if they haven't got anything to toss back at us when they had all this time to prepare, then I say we have a darn good chance. But be ready to expect anything though.

B: I heard that the Justice Department, is going to throw everything they can back at us. So I guess we can expect plenty.

A: I heard some of the fellows, who are not in on the case talking and they think the government is going to give them back everything on a silver platter and admit that they were wrong and it was all a mistake. They kind of make me laugh. They are saying that we handicap or postpone their relocation by our suit. The only reason they don't get deported is that we filed suit in a nick of time. But there is a chance for them to get deported yet and if they do get to stay on account of our suit, they will never get back their citizenship without themselves filing suit.

B: Some of those guys are lousy with dough, but too tight-fisted to spend just a little to get their citizenship back. But they are willing to ride on us. It's a gripe, isn't it?

A: There's that kind of people any place we go, but we just have to put up with it because we are fighting for our rights and our future. But if they gain because of us, well that's okay because that kind of people will not get very far in this world. They're

simply too small inside.

B: An old Issai, who lives in our block, told me that you cannot even get a 10¢ loaf of bread free, so how can you get your citizenship back without fighting for it or paying a price. It is much more valuable than a loaf of bread. And I think he got something there.

Two Nisei talking about the mid-December Repatriation Trip.
(Nov. 29, 1945)

A: About packed?

B: Not yet. What a mess.

A: Well, there's no hurry. The sailing date has been extended a week. Gonna sail on or about the 15th.

B: No kidding! Nuts--That's more than two weeks off.

A: Can you get under the baggage limit? I'm having a heckova time. We've already reached the limit and there's still more clothes and a sewing machine to take back. I don't know what to do.

B: Pack it anyway. It might pass.

A: Hey! You know. I heard old man Y---- talking and he says there are six Japanese ships in Seattle harbor waiting to take us back.

B: Aw-- I wouldn't take in what old man Y----- says. He's fulla hot air. Maybe he's one of the few nuts who thinks Japan won the war. I heard him talking in the latrine the other day an he says each person is going to receive \$10,000 on arrival in Japan. The only reason they say America won the war is because Japan doesn't want it announced that she won the war in the interests of world peace. If everyone knew that Japan won, the whole economic system would go floeey. Or something like that.

A: Well-- maybe Japan didn't win the war but there must be some conditions attached. I don't think it's as bad as all that. Some people say Hiroshima is wiped out while some say just parts of it. The American newspapers say 10,000,000 people are going to starve in Japan this winter but I think that is a lot of propaganda.

B: You know, one thing I don't understand is why repatriation is made so voluntary. You can go as far as Seattle and still decide not to go. C---- thinks its because conditions are so

terrible in Japan & hat the Justice Department doesn't want any censure in deporting people to a famine-stricken nation. It would be like sending a lot of people to their deaths. The Justice Department wants an out by making it purely voluntary. Then they can say, "We didn't send you back. You asked for it".

A: Ah!!! C--- just talks like that because he's not going back. I betcha it's not that bad.

B: I hope it isn't anyway. Did you hear that some bachelor fellows actually came back from Seattle after they left to repatriate a few days ago?

A: Is that right? I guess since it's voluntary nobody much wants to go.

Two Nisei on Repatriation in General (Dec. 4, 1945)

A: X--- got a letter from his brother in Tokyo. He's a Nisei soldier over there. It said the most surprising things: about the whole town being burned out and a housing shortage. He said starvation is staring those people in the face.

B: Yeah! I saw one like that from Y----'s cousin probably in the same outfit. It claimed U. S. repatriates were being put in concentration camps in former buildings at the Naval Base, too. Out of the frying pan and into the fire.....

A: Sure, anyone who repatriates is either baka (crazy) or doesn't know much. Besides everyone I know is counting on being able to go outside.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
Tule Lake Center
Newell, California

Community Analysis Section
December 11, 1945

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER

Two young men talking (November 30, 1945)

- A: I terribly hate to see these people go to Japan at this time. If the Justice Department would only postpone the trip till spring or summer.
- B: Sure, it might be all right for the parents, but what about the little kids?
- A: I wonder if these people are thinking sanely about this repatriation?
- B: It seems to me that they are still feeling the momentum of camp hysteria.

"Liberal" old men (December 3, 1945)

- A: Something's wrong with these people who are going to Japan at this time. When they hear the report that Japan is starving, doesn't it sink in? They are going to make suffering Japan suffer that much more.
- B: That's right. The more that go from here, that many more children will be deprived of so much of their daily subsistence.
- A: Instead of going now, they should go outside and for two or three years earn some money and then go back to Japan if they want.

Woman Repatriate (December 5, 1945)

- A middle-aged woman: My daughter and I promised my husband, we will never complain though we have nothing to eat, when we live in Japan.

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--2

Conversations of Voluntary Repatriates (Nov. 30, 1945)

One man on the last trip to Japan was asked by a Justice official why he was going to Japan.

The man replied, "Because I have no money^x, I might just as well go back."

Justice official, "How much do you want?"

Man (jokingly), "Oh, say \$500."

The story goes he was given \$500 and hustled off to the boat. The relater of this story says if he is asked, he will reply, "A fortune". He doesn't want to be denied the trip.

Another: "If the Customs Officials are so strict about food, soap and yardage, then there must be plentiful supplies of it in Japan."

A "sit-tighter" replied: "They don't let you take it back because ^{Mr} Arthur doesn't want to create more black markets."

* * * * *

Conversation concerning the choice between Relocation or Deportation (December 1, 1945)

Nisei (renunciants) - A

Issei ----- B

A: How was your trip to Sacramento? Did you find a home?

B: Yes, but I tell you it's not easy. It's a matter of what you might call luck. You see, if one goes out early you'd think they'd get the better place, but it seems even if you go out late, if you know the right party and with enough luck, you can land up with a good job and home.

A: Tell me, how are the people outside?

B: They're all eyes looking for a place to stay and place to do business. When you go out you really find out what kind of persons they are. If you haven't a great deal of money, you can't do anything. Money is what talks these days. I have a son and daughter, both renunciants. Now that I've seen with my own eye, the troubles and suffering the people are going through outside, I feel that I don't care whether my son and daughter are deported. In fact, they might have a better chance

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--3

in Japan. Of course, in that case the whole family would go and then too since my parents are still living, there's no worry about a home; the door is always open to us.

A: Yes, my parents are saying that every now and then, that if they knew how hard it was going to be to find a place, we should have gone to sign up for repatriation in the first place. There we have plenty of relatives and their parents will be overjoyed to have us back. My argument to that would be that at that moment it may be good outside, but one must think of the future too. The future doesn't seem too good right now does it?

B: Oh they'll be a lot of Americans there and you can get a job right away, since they'll be needing people who can speak both languages. It's needless to worry about that. At least you have no worry about shelter there.

Conversation with a Repatriate (Dec. 5, 1945)

Key--a typical Nisei girl (nineteen years old)--(A) repatriating with the family group. Her father is about 55 years old and there are eight children in family. Two Nisei discussing.

Q: What do you think of your trip?

A: I don't want to go. I'm sick of it but I can't help it because of my family. My mother is so soft-hearted she would collapse mentally if I did otherwise.

Q: How about your two sisters? (ages 17 and 18)

A: They feel as I do but they are as helpless. They are involuntary repatriates as well as I.

Q: Discontented and restless, aren't you?

A: Yes. We are getting on each others nerves over nothing. I hope we get over with it--waiting makes me sick.

Q: Why take the risk when it's against your better sense of judgment?

A: We're just girls, and it's hard for us to start on our own, and besides my older brother is in Bismarck. He has repatriated. We are trying to keep our family together.

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--4

Q: Why does your dad want to go?

A: Most of his friends are that way, but the main reason is my brother in Bismarck.

Q: Maybe he believes this is his only chance to ever see Japan because if he once relocates he'll never know when again.

A: Yes, I guess that's about the size of it.

Q: Another thing he is worrying about is his age I believe?

A: He is getting old, not as spry as he used to be. Another factor is that my mom wants it.

Q: Do you hear stories from returning veterans from the Pacific?

A: Yes, their stories aren't so pleasing.

Q: You've got good common sense. You don't believe that Japan has won the war, do you?

A: Of course not. I ought to know by now. I'm not like some of these narrow-minded idiots here--they don't believe anything unless they like it.

Q: I notice your folks allow you to go to dances these days.

A: Yeh. I guess they realize that we are miserable. It's the only way to forget, anyhow. I guess we won't be able to dance anymore.

Q: Why?

A: In Japan we'll be so busy, providing food enough we won't have any time for pleasure.

* * * * *

On Relocation (Dec. 8, 1945)

Two Nisei talking on the relative merits of the east vs. California.

A: When are you going out?

B: Next month some time.

A: You are certainly taking your time, aren't you?

B: Yes. There is no hurry.

CONVERSATIONS OF THE CENTER--5

A: Where are you going?

B: Sacramento.

A: California is all shot, if you ask me. Why don't you go east?

B: But I don't know anybody back there. Besides, the climate is terrible, I hear.

A: Oh, it's not that bad. There are more people living in the East than in the West. It can't be as bad as all that.

B: I guess so. But if I go to Sacramento, I know a lot of people there and I know my way around. I'll feel a lot better in California. You sound as though you are going East.

A: Yes. I am seriously considering it.

B: What do you expect to do?

A: Well, I can always do house work or be a gardener. It will be a lot easier than farming.

two
Conversation between *two* wives whose husbands are interned at either Bismarck, N. D. or Santa Fe, N. M. (Dec. 11, 1945) Both are Nisei. One is a renunciant.

A: Well, it looks like the Justice Dept. has finally made up our minds for us.

B: Yes, I had asked for non-repatriation on the hope that we may be permitted to stay here in this country, but after the announcement of last night, it looks as if I'll have to ask for repatriation.

A: That was my hope too, but I guess it can't be helped now. I'd even been down to the relocation office to make plans to get out so that I could meet the Dec. 15th deadline, but I'll have to cancel all that now. You know that I hadn't even renounced my citizenship, though my husband was such a hardhead.

B: I've heard that the internees from Tule Lake at the internment camps have already been inoculated for the trip to Japan. One of the young boys at Bismarck wrote to his brother here in this block and told him so. It's a shame that none of his family is going, isn't it? He's so young.

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--6

- A: I've heard that one of the husbands had wired his wife to find out the amount he earned at the WRA centers so that he can figure how much he can take with him on the trip. Then another wired to have a certain sum of money sent to him for his trip.
- B: Yes, I guess we'll be hearing more of the same sort as the days go by. Well, I'll have to get ready and sort out the things that I won't be able to take with me. I had hoped to stay in this country, but I guess "shikata-ga-nai"
- A: Yeah, that's right. Let me know if you need any help. I'm still hopeful.

* * * * *

Rumor on Hearings (heard December 10, 1945)

Nisei talking:

- A: I heard a big announcement is coming out today.
- B: Of course it most likely concerns the repatriation trip. I heard it will be the last one and then renunciants can leave.
- A: Now some people say all 3000 people who are renunciants can go. As for the trip they changed or I should say changed again the chuppatsu date to the 13th of December. Some people say the departure date has been set back to the 27th of December.
- C: I heard Nelson Pringle, noted news analyst and authority on Far Eastern affairs say this morning that it was a sorry bunch of repatriates that reached Japan last week. They are now housed in a former military garrison at Yokosuka. Their reception by the Japanese was worse than that afforded American war prisoners. The buildings which the Japanese officials put up for them are mere shacks. There are chinks in the walls and inside the walls they sleep on straw pallets. They are fed one plate of rice the size of a coffee saucer, and one umeboshi (pickled plum) per meal. They are to be kept there until suitable housing can be found for them. The Nisei especially are sorry they ever asked for repatriation in a fit of anger and bitterness at the treatment afforded them by a so-called democracy.

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--7

- D: I mentioned this to a stripling lad of eighteen but he seemed fazed not one whit. He said he had a lot of places to go to in Japan and he wasn't worried. That he would believe all those stories only after he saw it for himself.
- A: People who are repatriates tell prospective relocaters the miserable conditions that exist outside. That to be sure and find a house before they go out.
- B: And it works in reverse, too, now that the picture inside Japan is coming out. Anyway, someone on the Hewell Star said this morning we renunciates will get hearings so I think after the repatriates are out we'll be looking for the houses pretty soon.

* * * * *

Subject: Repatriation and Family Ties
People: Sepatriating old Issei man (A)
His friend (B)
Place: Shower Room, December 8, 1945

- B: Mr. A, I hear you're repatriating.
- A: Yes, but I'm going to leave my children here. You know I'm having stomach trouble and have been going to the hospital ever since I entered camp and the doctors can't find the cause of it. I'm returning to Japan to have my brother, who is a doctor, look it over. If I go to Japan I'll be well taken care of and could afford good medical treatment.
- B: I hear your wife's dead.
- A: Yes.
- B: Who's going to take care of your children?
- A: My brother-in-law could take care of them.
- B: Won't your children be missing you?
- A: Well, they might for sometime, but I've got to get good medical treatment first.
- B: Why can't you have a good doctor look it over in this country?

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--8

A: My brother's a good doctor and I want to see Japan with my own eyes before I pass away. I don't want to have my children suffer over there so I'm going to leave them here.

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Subject: Re-hearing for renunces (heard December 11)
People: Renunces who had signed up with Mr. Collins (A)
Renunces who had not (B)

B: You heard the news that we're going to have a hearing?

A: Yeah.

B: Well, looks like you guys that paid up \$100.00 wasted your money eh?

A: I don't know. Maybe it was because of Mr. Collins that the J.B. was forced to make policy on renunces.

B: They'd had to sometime.

A: But do you realize that it was because of our \$100.00 that we got good publicity in the papers?

B: I don't know if it's account of your \$100.00. It's most natural for the Americans to react that way since the war's over.

A: What you going to do after you get released?

B: Go back to my home town I'd guess. My brothers are already there so I don't have to worry too much.

A: Well don't be too sure, because we still don't know how the hearings are going to turn out.

B: Guess you're right. But what's the use of giving us a hearing if they're going to deport us?

A: Ask Williams or someone about that. I can't understand these things.

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CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--9

Conversation on the Justice Announcement of Hearings
(heard December 11, 1945)

Kibei renunciant and a Nisei, discussing the extra put out by the Justice Department on rehearings.

Kibei (In the Court trial): What do you think about the extra?

Nisei (In the Suit): I think it is a good news. I believe the Justice Department is trying to let us out and save face at the same time. I think we will be out by the time the camp closes.

Kibei (Not in the Suit): I guess the Kibei, like me, haven't got much of a chance at the hearing. I haven't got much to say or I can't give a very good reason of staying in this country.

Nisei: Well, you're from Hiroshima and your place is wiped out, so tell them you have no place to return to.

Kibei (In the Suit): Will being in the suit help me? And I got a brother in the army. Will that help me any?

Nisei: Sure, that's going to help you a lot. The suit really stopped deportation for all the renunciants and I think a lot of the people not in this suit may benefit by our suit; but I'm sure they will never get their citizenship back without court action.

Kibei (In the Suit): I'm going to send this "Extra" to my friend who's outside, and have him find me a job.

Kibei (Not in Suit): I guess I haven't much of a chance at the hearing, so I won't bother to do that.

Nisei: Well, you better wait and see this time. Up to now you've been looking on the blackest side. It doesn't look so black to me now.

* * * * *

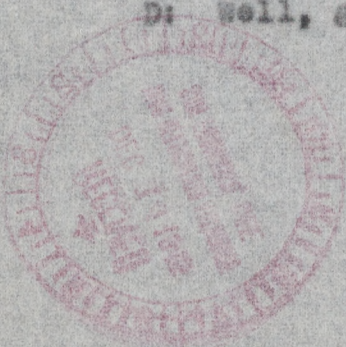
Characteristic conversation which occurred among a group of Nisei, some of them renunciants and some not, after the announcement of Department of Justice policy on individual hearings.
(Heard December 11, 1945)

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--10

- A: Boy, people are sure optimistic in here! Yesterday's announcement concerning individual hearings for renunces is making a big difference.
- B: I noticed last night and this morning a lot were saying the hearings would be a mere formality. One Kibei was saying he couldn't express himself in English, and so he was afraid of it. Others were saying they mention either release or deportation, and since they've been afraid of deportation, they still expect it and it's no use to pin faith on a hearing. But today the mood seemed to be changing.
- C: Yeah, I heard the Relocation Office is just packed since yesterday. Someone who works there said they were lined up this morning, the busiest day yet, and that quite a few had detainees in the family.
- A: The policies and the way people feel about it sure swing up and down in here.
- C: My friend said to sign up to go to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. He said everybody's doing it. There's even a rumor among the people on line that then your hearing will come quicker.
- B: Yup! Then it ought to be a cinch.
- C: Others are writing their brothers in the Army or old friends to get letters of recommendation to show the hearing boards.
- D: B_____, you ought to write that head of Douglas Aircraft you know. Or your college classmates.
- B: Oh, it's too bad, he's dead in a plane crash. Didn't I ever tell you?
- D: Well, don't worry. You'll be able to scoot out right away.
- A: Say, what about that repatriation trip? Isn't the ship leaving toward the end of the month?
- B: I'll bet there will be only one tiny bunch after that. Did you read what that loud-mouth Yoshiyama wrote from the Tokyo prison-camp?
- C: Yes, last night the announcer said the camp is under the Japanese government. They gave them one hell of a reception. Dirt and filth, a rice ball and pickled plum, and chinks in the wall you could put your hand through.

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--11

- B: Yoshiyama's family lives in my block (9). They sure feel sad. His wife is "not-bad". Wonder if she'll go; they were only married a few months.
- C: Well, the guy they quoted was not Yoshiyama on the last broadcast. It was some other guy who went in the first or second bunch. I guess all repatriates who wish to go will be taken on a ship with accommodations for 5000. The name of the ship was the Uruguay and someone said it was a luxury liner.
- A: I'll bet it isn't. Anyway, if the repatriates only have a last boat left, it's more reason to release the ones here who get hearings. They will sure pull off repatriation now with hearings.
- C: Sure, I told you the detainees' families are so optimistic they are going out. This is the first chance some families had to be free.
- E: I wonder what Collins will do. The Defense Committee says they forced this policy, among other things.
- C: Oh, Collins will string along. They don't want to send Wasei across to starve and he knows it.
- E: Well, he'll be cautious. They still don't have the citizenship back.
- D: It's something to fight for. They are walking on air, let me tell you.. I'm glad I'm in. Citizenship is worth a lot more than \$100, and I may get it after we are all released.
- E: Why, it would help Collins fight for citizenship when they are on the outside.
- D: Well, goodbye Tale. I prefer Gotham for a change.





UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
Tule Lake Center
Newell, California

Community Analysis Section
December 21, 1945

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER

Issei on Labor Shortage (Dec. 4, 1945):

- A: "We walked off the job today. The foreman ordered us to clean thirty-two pigs this morning and told us if we couldn't do it, we should go home. There are only seven of us butchers now so we talked it over and decided to finish the two pigs we had already killed and then go home, since we thought thirty-two were too many for us. We're so shorthanded as it is. Our regular crew used to be eighteen before."
- B: "How many pigs can you butcher in one day anyway?"
- A: "Oh, we could have butchered the thirty-two pigs all right, if we worked hard but it's such dirty work. It isn't too thankful a job we have. You know how people talk, too."
- B: "Yes, I heard the other day that Block 35 was known as 'eta mura'." ^{from}
- A: "That's right. At one time, there were six or seven people ^{from} that block."
- B: "What did the foreman say when you quit?"
- A: "Oh, he turned pale and came rushing over to where we were and tried to threaten us into staying but we didn't listen to him, so he went after his superior and after another talk, it was decided that only those who wanted to would go to work tomorrow. I don't think many will go. That foreman may have been a butcher outside but he certainly doesn't know how to handle people."
- B: "The M canal supervisor was the same kind of person. He was always yelling at everybody and telling everybody to go home if they didn't want to work hard. He seemed to think we should work just as hard for ten cents an hour as for a dollar and fifty cents an hour."
- A: "It didn't matter so much, I suppose, when there were more workers than jobs but they ought to have enough brains to know they can't get away with that kind of attitude anymore. There are no replacements."

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CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--2

"Die-hards" Surrendering (Dec. 9, 1945):

(Some old "boiler room generals" or die-hards who have been subject to much slander and rebuke talking. They now want to stay in this country.)

- A: "I'll bet those people who went to Japan are really surprised, for when they went they still thought Japan was winning the war."
- B: "It sure is tragic. Even children should know that Japan is not the victor."
- A: "It's been broadcasted and printed so much, even if we didn't like to believe it, our conclusion will be inevitable."

Issai Die-Hards on Repatriation (Dec. 10, 1945):

- A: "Did you hear the broadcast this morning? They say the first repatriates reached Nippon. They were put in shacks without heating and they only get a plate of rice and "umeboshi". They sleep on straw pallets on the floor."
- B: "We have to expect that. We aren't going back to Nippon with the expectation of living a luxurious life."
- A: "That's right. We're going back to be real Nippon-jin. What do we care for luxuries."
- B: "Sure. For Nippon-jin, a little rice and umeboshi is ample fare."
- C: "As long as I have rice, I don't need anything else."
- B: "Because we're in this country, we eat meat and things, but we can easily adjust ourselves back to eating rice and "tsukemono"."
- A: "Nihonjin don't need any more. We're going back, knowing we face hardships and have our minds prepared for such hardships so it won't affect us."
- C: "I hear lots of talk in the latrines, but I don't pay any attention to them."
- B: "It's best to ignore them."



CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--3

Nisei on Hearings and Release (Dec. 13, 1945):

Nisei girl (renunciant) -- A
" " " -- B

A: "Gosh, I wish they'd hurry with the hearings. My parents want to stay with me as long as they can and if possible we want to relocate together, but it seems that the latest they can stay is the 15th of January and my hearing hasn't even started yet."

B: "I can understand how you feel since we're in the same boat. But even if my parents go out first, I still have my older brother with me so I guess it won't be too bad. Really, I sympathize with you, because you're all alone."

A: "My parents are awfully worried because I'll be alone and besides I'll be the only one in the barrack. The people in the apartment in front are planning to relocate soon, too, so I don't know what I'll do when my parents go."

B: "Why don't you make plans with a friend and have her stay with you?"

A: "Yes, I suppose that would be the only solution."

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Nisei on Repatriation (Dec. 14, 1945):

Nisei girl (a member of a large family and a repatriate) -- A
Nisei girl (renunciant) -- B

B: "Have you decided to repatriate?"

A: "Yep! We finally decided to go. My father and brother wanted to remain in this country, but my mother is begging us to repatriate. We had been having family conference every night for almost two weeks and it seems as if mother finally won."

B: "I guess you had quite a time of it, since your family is so large. It must have been very difficult to arrive at a conclusion."

A: "That's no lie. My second brother insists he is returning to Japan and he thinks only of himself. At the time of the alien



CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--4

registration he was the only one who signed for repatriation, while the rest signed for non-repatriation. To think we had stressed family unity thus far and a thing like this happens!"

B: "I presume you are prepared for hardships if you plan to return to Japan at a time like this."

A: "With a family as large as ours we'll have to strive through hardship wherever we decide to go. The only thing that worries me now is my mother's poor health. She is very allergic to car sickness and is very weak. I am not sure she will withstand the long trip to Japan."

B: "I certainly sympathize with you. I hear she was in a critical condition on her way here from Arkansas."

A: "That's right. I couldn't sleep all the way up here for fear she'd pass away."

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Nisel on Internment Abroad (Dec. 15, 1945):

Subject: Repatriation
People: Two youngsters A & B
Date: December 15, 1945
Place: Shower room

A: "Why are you going to Japan?"

B: "Because my parents are going."

A: "You think you'll like it there?"

B: "I don't know..."

A: "You know that you'll be interned when you reach Japan?"

B: "That's what my folks say too."

A: "I wonder why they got to intern you fellows?"

B: "Because the Japanese don't want any trouble-makers like the 'Seinen-Dans' we had in 'Iule.'"

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CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--5

An Issei Lady from Ward VIII Talking (Dec. 14, 1945):

"I wanted to go into Klamath Falls sometime before the boat sails so I went up to the Leave Office to see about it. The person there told me that although I am free to go, I will not be able to ride in a WRA bus because there are so many people relocating and therefore congested. The person suggested that I ask some person with a car to drive.

"I was to go to San Francisco on the 26th of November, but there was a sign up for a ship to sail on the 7th of December so I cancelled the trip. Then the trip was postponed till the 18th, then again to the 28th. I heard that the boat will sail on New Years, but a lady in 75 said that she received a telegram from Santa Fe stating that her husband would leave that camp on the 24th. If that be true, it sounds like the ship will sail on the 28th after all.

"I went down to the Department of Justice building this afternoon to see about the announcement the block manager made. He said that the Government will send the baggage of those who will go to Japan to any of their friends wherever they may be in the U. S. He also said that those who had no friends to send their things could store their property in a government warehouse. The D- of J- man said that they do not store things in gov't warehouses. My husband when he writes always says for me to store our property in a government warehouse. They will not do it for us. If we do not decide before the 15th where we will send these things we will not even get help from the WRA.

"As for money we are able to take with us, we can take \$60 in cash, and the amount of money a person had earned while he was in camp. An old person who had not worked one bit during his whole stay in camp can only take \$60 in cash. Ironically, a new born baby can also take \$60 in cash. The amount one can take in travelers' checks depends on the length of work done in the 3½ years of camp life. Some families will be taking over \$1,000.

"I got my check without much trouble, and they told me that they would send some paper to some bank in Japan stating that it was all right to cash my check there. When I got home, I learned that a special paper signed by Mr. Best would be necessary in order to make it any good. If this special paper was not in one's possession, the traveler's check would be worthless. So, after hearing this, I at once walked all the way down there. It was true that such a paper was necessary to make the check valid.

"The Department of Justice doesn't tell us anything definite, and when they do say something, they make haste in changing that

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--6

policy. The Justice Department and even the WRA are giving us a troublesome time."

"Watashi tachi wa ijimeyo to shite iru." ("They are just playing around with us.")

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Nisei Talking: (December 15, 1945):

A: "According to a middle-aged person, a certain Issei in the employ of the Southern Pacific Railroad received word from the WRA that the Department of Justice will start hearings on the 21st of this month, and that by the 15th of next month, all will be able to leave."

B: "...Though a hearing this early sounds improbable, it does fit in with the plans of the WRA to have this center cleared by the end of January."

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A Hospital Worker Talking: (December 15, 1945):

A: "Hearing will be set for those whose history shows that they have not done anything bad, I hear."

B: "Then does that mean that the individual person does not request a hearing? The Justice Dept. will notify those persons automatically for a hearing?"

A: "I guess so. I don't know where Dr. X gets his information but that is what he said."

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Nisei talking on the general mood of the Center: (Dec. 16, 1945)

A: "You know, people felt relieved when they heard there would be Department of Justice hearings."

CONVERSATIONS IN THE CENTER--7

- B: "I don't notice that so much any more. Good news wears off fast in here."
- C: "Yes, it's all up and down, the moods."
- B: "That's because people are so cut off from the outside, It's not a normal life in here."
- C: "I notice a lot more are saying the hearings will be tough. At first, people went around saying it's a snap to get out and that there'll be hearings. Or we'll be released by New Years. Now they are wondering. No hearings yet. No release."
- A: "I suppose a lot of people don't know why they renounced. Others don't know what to say. They scare at the mere mention of hearing."
- B: "They have reason to. A lot figure they may get deported anyway."
- A: "But that's no reason to say shikatanai, or give up."
- B: "Well, a lot of Kibei said that when they first heard of hearings. Maybe they were just expecting release. Something easy like that. Then they hear hearings and they get scared."
- C: "I hear that more now."
- B: "But the fellows I know will fight for their rights."
- A: "The ones I know best are in the Court case."
- C: "I think a lot of Issei parents wouldn't give their children the money for the court case."
- A: "When I went out, I was surprised how different people looked on the outside."
- B: "People in here don't know how unhappy they really are."
- C: "Well, they have reason for sour faces. It's a tough choice they face. Repatriation is no bed of roses and relocation is hard, too. Hearings are no fun. Fences are not to keep the cattle out of this 'garden spot'. I don't think we've had it easy, or that we'll have it easy next week."

