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~~Military WRA~~

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The military's aim was to get the J. population out of the Pacific area and into camp, whereas WRA embraced a longer view. The military exerted pressure on WRA because the military was in haste to clear the coastal area, and the haste in the first period was the underlying cause of a number of developments, particularly the nature of the WRA personnel in that early period: the fact that we drew so heavily on Indian Service and the Agriculture Dept. for our staff. Eisenhower was chosen director; he happened to be Dept. of Agriculture. Hence when he had to grab personnel in a hurry he reached for men he knew and trusted, naturally in the Dept. of Agric. Fryer, in this through Indian Service, and the Poston negotiations, promptly made S. F. Regional Director with very short time between acquisition of Poston and its scheduled occupation, reached for the men of the Indian Service (which was over-staff if under paid and was willing to hand the surplus over to WRA). It was a godsent for manpower.

Up to March 29, WRA did not consider a duration set-up for evacuees. Voluntary evacuation was stopped by the Freezing order of March 29. WRA had considered its job to be that of guiding evacuation, assisting in getting evacuees resettled and employed, providing temporary holding places for them. Poston was conceived as a temporary holding place by the army, and WRA more or less adopted the view, a temporary holding place by the Army and WRA more or less adopted the view, planning it as a cooperative project or colony. Even after the freezing order WRA thought in terms of resettlement and employment of evacuees rather than the gathering together of large numbers of them for consideration center life for the duration. Mr. Eisenhower, according to Mr. Fryer, in this period between ~~life and the duration~~ freezing and the Salt Lake City Conference of April 7 was strong for employment outside any camp.

April 7, the conference of Salt Lake City knocked on the head of the policy of broad scale releases and resettlement, and made it seem inevitable that life for the evacuees must be arranged for the duration in these barracks within fences; employment would have to be made on the projects, and the ~~protection within fences~~ projects must have sites that would allow of agricultural development, industrial enterprise, etc.

There was a week long meeting of Federal agencies in San Francisco to set up a way of selecting sites. A Site-location group was designated to examine such possibilities as were suggested in the course of the long meeting.

Once a site was located and appraised and approved by WRA, WRA informed the Military of the fact, provided the money, and then the Military notified the governor of the state in which the site was located that as a matter of military necessity such and such an area must be declared a military area, etc., made all arrangements and actually bought the land, handling everything. This saved WRA a lot of grief and stemmed the rising tide of opposition at that period.

Military--WRA *Grodzins*

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McKee Files, cont'd.

In the case of Poston the Army discovered and transacted the business both. The deal was completed on March 23d, only four days after WRA was established. Military had flown to Poston, liked it as a prospective site for an evacuee colony, wired Sec. of the Interior and the Com. of Indian Affairs. Fryer, then Supt. of the Navaho Reservation was wired to meet the commissioner, etc. (See paper on Poston, signed by Lucy Adams and Fryer). WRA put up money to pay off the staff at Poston, but handed it over to the Indian Service so that the cheks are routed through the I.S.

There is divergence in view and adm nistration from this fact, though technically WRA should be the sold administrator. It is confusing. All Mr. Fryer could think of as the men officially on WRA payroll at Poston are Attorney and Liaison officer, but report says there are four. One reason for rushing this through with an unsatisfactory system was the lack of time between acquisition of the site and the date set for its occupation by the military (about May 20). This was unreclaimed land that had to be cleared and leveled, roads graded, everything from scratch.

Military built the assembly centers and their army engineers also did the relocation centers. Daily reports on work accomplished were sent in to headquarters, but with increasing difficulty in procuring construction materials, equipment, etc. work slowed. Sometimes the reports did not make this clear. The army would issue orders for removing a contingent from an assembly center to a R. C. or just to an assembly center for a given time, and once issued, the order could not be changed by God or the B.V.M. in their best miracle-performing form. Hence evacuees arrived before the quarters were fit for occupancy, and much hardship was caused.

On April 7, the conference of roving Governors at Salt Lake City made the WRA do an about-face in regard to resettlement and outside employment. This state of mind continued until the great need for workers in the sugar beet raising district brought pressure to bear on the militant governors, and made them change their ideas about evacuee labor. The valuable assistance rendered the growers by the evacuees softened public attitudes considerably in certain parts, and paved the way for the development of the policy announced in the third quarterly period of dislocating the relocation centers by large-scale leaves and resettlements.

WORD ON THE FARM EQUIPMENT CASE.

(See Fryer's report in vert. file)

Maharg, Sec. of Arizona Farm Bureau is a violent Republican. Consistently opposed Democratic administration on principle. He kicked up the row about the farm equipment deal.

Selection of Personnel.

Aside from snatching known people from Dept. of Agri. and the I.S., WRA tried to get WCCA people who had been on assembly centers for the Relocation centers. WCCA had used some from FSA, many WPA. Manzanar was an assembly center was manned just about 100% by WPA. Nicolson, Regional Director of the Western area of WPA put a cog in the works by refusing to release WPA men except on a condition. The condition which he put up to Eisenhower was that Eisenhower make him an assistant director (like Rowalt). Eisenhower got very mad and kicked him out, and we have just two men at Manzanar from WPA, Bob Brown (reports officer) and somebody named Black.

Notes of Ruth Bekee
WRA history

MILTON EISENHOWER AT THE COCKTAIL HOUR ON EARLY WRA HISTORY

Sunday, July 11, 1943. John Baker's Home.

E2.10 *41.01*

Mr. Eisenhower was attending an Agricultural Conference at Roanoke, Virginia, when he received a wire from Harold Smith, Director of the Budget, asking him to return at once to Washington. This was about a week before the official creation of WRA. Mr. E. thought he was going to be handed Wayne Coy's job as number 2 man in the Bureau of the Budget, and found that he was being handed the Japanese evacuation problem instead. He protested. The group he faced kept him behind closed doors from three p.m. until nearly midnight, by which time hunger and the force of his persecutors' arguments caused him to weaken and accept.

The office was first housed by Agriculture, until latter part of May when WRA moved into the Barr Building. Eisenhower took the nucleus of his staff from Agriculture, men he knew and in whom he had confidence. They all had dealings with the Library of Congress, trying to acquire overnight a background of knowledge of the Japanese. Barrows, Rowalt and Glick were the first appointments (together with John Bird, first Reports Officer). Province and Holland and Tozier followed soon after.

Mr. Eisenhower flew to San Francisco in a bomber prior to the official creation of WRA (Ex. Order 9100 signed March 18, released the 19th). He milled around for a few days and returned to Washington. Flew back to S.F. immediately after the formal creation of WRA and his official appointment, and set up the S.F. Regional Office. Along the way he met John Collier of Indian Service and had his finger on Fryer as the man to head the regional office, though the official appointment did not come until April. He interviewed dozens of men, searching for middle-of-the roaders--discovered that these were scarce in California. He called in a man from Tripple A and one from FSA to help. They pulled in experienced government people. Dodd, of AAA (Director of the Western Regional office) got Harry Stafford, now P.D. at Minidoka. Fryer hired Nash, taking him from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Eisenhower was introduced to Coverly (the big mistake of Tule Lake) by Major Walker who said he was the best man in FSA. Fryer hired Sherrill. Eisenhower was doubtful about Sherrill as a project director, largely because of his social worker's attitude and background, and kept him in role of acting director as long as E. remained with WRA. There was no full director at first at Tule Lake, but Eisenhower hired Ratchford and sent him up later as project director. When Ratchford went to Heart Mountain, Sherrill was made project director. Eisenhower hired Paul Taylor. Fryer got Ernst for Central Utah and Smith for Gila River. Eisenhower hired Whittaker.

In conferences held in San Francisco March 26, 27, and 28, the ideas on private employment of evacuees were brought forth, and the fruit of the conferences was Eisenhower's Five Point Plan, the first setting forth of basic policies of WRA. One of the points was the employment of evacuees in the outside world. Many requests had come in even at this early date for the employment of the Japanese outside the evacuated areas; while a number had come from large companies, many had come from private or individual employers. In a letter of March 19, the very day the announcement of the creation of WRA was made, Jules Rosen, member of the Chicago Board of Trade, wrote to Milton Eisenhower about the possibilities of getting evacuees to

work on a project to produce pierced silk cocoons, to be located in either Alabama or Florida. His letter was persuasive enough so that we had possibilities checked by Carl Tjerandsen with Entomology and Plant Industry, and reported by Tozier. The sum and substance of the report was that while not an impossible undertaking, the project would involve serious technical difficulties, and nothing was done about it.

At the time this series of conferences took place, voluntary evacuation was going on, but threats had mounted to the place where it became necessary to stop the movement, and on March 27, DeWitt announced the freeze, effective March 29.

The conference of Western Governors in Salt Lake City was called for April 7 with the expectation that an explanation of WRA policy and plans would result in cooperation from the governors. Eisenhower was completely unprepared for the violent expressions of hostility which he encountered there. Tom Clark, WCCA's coordinator, had made a trip through the western states prior to this conference making promises to sugar beet companies and other large companies which he had no authority to make and which neither the army nor WRA knew he was making. Specifically he promised the big interests that he would supply them with a limitless supply of cheap labor; they could name their own price. In other words, he was promising slave labor. Of course they were deeply interested. Further, he said that the government would pay the cost of transporting the workers and would even build houses to accommodate them after they got there. When it became evident that Clark had been talking through his hat, everybody was mad. The attorney-generals of Utah and Colorado were reasonable, but the Governor of Utah was then a leader of the opposition to WRA. For general details of the arguments see the Transcript of the conference. Mr. Eisenhower never gave the speech carefully prepared for him by John Bird and Ed Bates; it didn't fill the bill.

The most outstanding result of the conference was the temporary abandonment of the idea of relocating the evacuees in private life. For a time even seasonal employment was out, and it looked as if the evacuees would have to have centers to serve as their home for the duration. DeWitt, when saving the harvests became a great problem, issued a statement concerning what conditions should be met by companies wanting to employ evacuees.

The next big problem was providing a place or places for the evacuees to live. Eisenhower and Glick thought of using CCC camps for temporary housing while awaiting private relocation. They weren't suitable, having been designed for single men. The Army said it wouldn't guard less than 10,000 in any one place, but later came down to 5,000. Eisenhower found out that the Army plotted to raise the quota for Manzanar to 20,000. Eisenhower flew to Manzanar, saw that there was only 1,000 base acreage for even 10,000, and conferred with DeWitt. DeWitt quashed the plot to foist 20,000 on this center. It was after this that the Army agreed to guarding 5,000 in a unit. The Army accused WRA of holding up the program 6 months by slow selection of sites. For details see p. 11 et seq. of the San Francisco Regional Office's report submitted to the Washington Office for the quarter ending June 30, 1942. Also see statement of Mr. Fryer to McKee on the acquirement of sites.

The Work Corps idea was implicit in Ex. Order 9102, sec. 7--in fact

section 7 definitely provided for the creation of a Work Corps, and Title 32--National Defense, Chapter 1--War Relocation Authority, Regulation No. 1, works out details for Enlistment in Work Corps. This was filed April 29, 1942 (F.R. Doc. 48-3858). Around this time or early in May people went up to Oregon to the assembly centers to recruit for work corps. Our Assistant Solicitor, Walck, was guilty of the first sabotage of our program. He and Rex Lee were sent up to Oregon. Walck was in agreement with sugar companies, managed to arrive three hours ahead of Lee and got in his licks. He told the people they would be damned fools to enlist in the Work Corps. Lee was convinced that if it had not been for Walck, the people would have fallen for it.

Mr. Eisenhower does not think well of Col. Bendetsen. He cited two instances in which Bendetsen tried to doublecross WRA: 1) In Washington, when pressure from the agricultural interests of the northwest particularly had resulted in an order from the Whitehouse to do something about allowing seasonal work leave, Bendetsen and Eisenhower drew up an agreement with the army to establish procedure for private employment. Heretofore E. had been in agreement with DeWitt and WCCA. In the course of this work, Bendetsen agreed to Eisenhower's request that DeWitt issue an order freezing the evacuee within the county to which he went ~~matchbook~~ for seasonal work. In view of our doubtful public relations at that time, Eisenhower felt that it would be safer all around to make sure that the evacuees stayed where they were sent; arrangements for protection were made by county. The military order was the most effective way of achieving this end, as Public Law 503 made it a crime to violate an order by a military commander. After agreeing to this point, Bendetsen thought better of the matter, reflecting that if there should be a flare up of public opinion against letting the evacuees out for such employment, the Army might have to take the rap. He wanted the WDC to avoid responsibility in the matter. He privately got De Witt to reverse. Eisenhower discovered this and took a plane to San Francisco, went into conference with DeWitt and kept going until three A.M., at which time the General reversed again, and the agreement was signed.

The second instance of a Bendetsen doublecross was in regard to the transfer of Manzanar. Manzanar was going sour under WCCA. Eisenhower agreed to take on Manzanar as a Relocation Center under certain conditions. The Army had moved in and occupied Manzanar without ownership. The Army can do that sort of thing safely in time of war. Eisenhower feared that WRA would be sued by the city of Los Angeles, and refused to take over without a document from the War Department saying that WRA was taking over as the Army's Agent. Bendetsen in Washington agreed to put the deal through on these terms. WRA was due to take charge at midnight on a Saturday night. The night before, Eisenhower sent over the letter of agreement or understanding. ~~It was returned~~ It was returned Saturday noon rewritten in terms that not only exposed WRA to suit but invited a suit. Bendetsen had lit out and could not be reached. Eisenhower wired Friar saying under no circumstances to take over at midnight. At 4 p.m. that Saturday afternoon Eisenhower got Bendetsen on the phone, and to save his own neck Bendetsen agreed to go back to the original letter. He had put himself in an illegal position by drastically changing the letter without Eisenhower's sanction.

A policy committee composed of Leland Ford, Tolan and WRA agreed on present pay policy. It was Eisenhower's policy to make use of informal committees composed in part of west coast congressmen. Some backfire, in that Ford's information thus gleaned went to the Hearst Press.