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*Fordley*

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Office of Indian Affairs  
Washington

*Poston* 7724  
*B*

November 5, 1942

MEMORANDUM:

The Poston community is evolving so rapidly that it almost eludes characterization. This is not to say that Poston is without character or form or objective; it is frankly a city in the making, and any cross section taken during this formative period must fail in some respect to capture its full quality. The careful, painstaking study submitted by Dr. Arensberg emphasizes the point. Things have happened at Poston since August which either fortify or detract from the aptness of some of the observations. In particular, I call attention to the following:

1. The community council with which Arensberg had contact and on which he comments was designedly a temporary council. It was anticipated that time would be needed for leadership to emerge. Until there was leadership, it was thought expedient to establish a recommendatory rather than a legislative council. Poston is now conducting a constitutional convention in which permanent community government will be worked out.
2. On page 29 there is reference to the desirability of developing in the Japanese some equity in these Colorado River lands. It should be understood, with emphasis, that these lands are Indian lands and as such they are inalienable; and there is no thought or intention of in any way clouding the Indian title.
3. Reference is made to cooperative community enterprises on page 32 and following. In the early summer cooperatives were still an ephemeral idea. Since then extensive planning has taken place and the cooperative enterprise will reach into every phase of Poston life. Acceptance by Poston residents is demonstrated by the fact that more than 7,000 signatures were secured on petitions requesting the establishment of cooperatives.
4. I believe it will not be so difficult for the administrative staff to shift responsibility to the Japanese as the report anticipates. All administrative positions are examined with the thought of filling them by Japanese either now or eventually after a period of training.
5. I query also the suggestion made on page 33 that the administration will not entrust heavy machinery and equipment, expensive seed, etc., to the Japanese. I believe the practice will negate the assumption.

In making these remarks I do not at all detract from the validity and worthwhileness of Dr. Arensberg's study. I have found it a most incisive and stimulating document in a field that is new to the thinking of most of us -- the field of social analysis into the makings of society.

*John Collier*  
Commissioner.



REPORT ON A DEVELOPING COMMUNITY

POSTON, ARIZONA

Conrad M. Arensberg



## REPORT ON A DEVELOPING COMMUNITY

(A Month's Study and Participation in Poston, Arizona.)

- To: Mr. John Collier,  
Commissioner,  
Office of Indian Affairs.
- To: Mr. Joseph McCaskill,  
Chief Planning Officer,  
Office of Indian Affairs.
- To: Members of the Executive Committee,  
The Society for Applied Anthropology.
- To: Members of the Administrative Staff at Poston.....among whom the report  
may be circulated:

Gentlemen:

I report here the conclusions, impressions and suggestions derived from a month's study, observation, and participation at the Poston, Arizona, relocation center which is housing the evacuated Japanese of the West Coast. The report is comprized of several parts:

- 1) A description of my activity at Poston.
- 2) An account of plans for the organization of research at Poston.
- 3) A record of my impressions, derived from interviews and from participation in camp life, dealing with the development of the community among the Japanese-American evacuees.
- 4) And an appraisal of the Administrative situation as it affects and is affected by the development of the community. In many instances there was not time enough to gather completely trustworthy evidence supporting these impressions and that appraisal. Consequently, I must remind the readers of the subjective character of both. Nevertheless, as they are both the product of considerable inquiry and reflection, however short of the dignity of a full-fledged study such an inquiry may have been, I hope they are of some value.



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## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

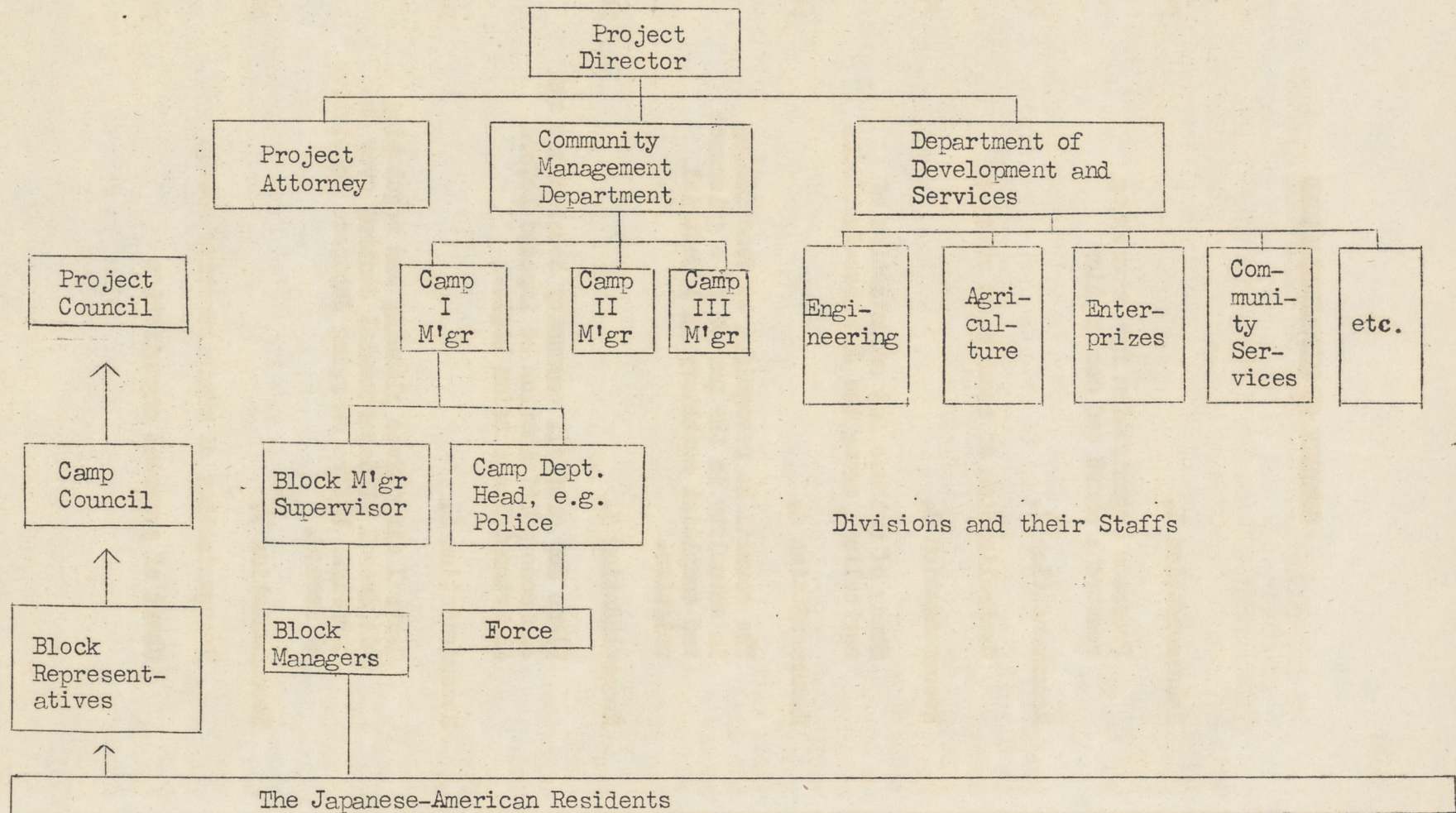
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- Centralization of records on evacuees
- Recommendation 3. page 11
- Study of methods and organization of agriculture among the Japanese-Americans
- Recommendation 4. page 24
- The council be recognized as functioning in actuality in the manner of a grievance and complaint machinery in industrial unionism.
- Recommendation 5. page 31
- Plans for over-all community development and Japanese participation be imposed before departmental expansion begins.
- Recommendation 6. page 32
- Central directives planning and regulating withdrawal of departmental control over enterprises before emerging Japanese initiative be issued.
- Recommendation 7. page 35
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RECOMMENDATION NO. 7  
Administrative Reorganization

See page 35

Chart





## ACTIVITY AT POSTON AND METHOD OF INQUIRY

I arrived at Poston the afternoon of August 5th and stayed, with but one day's absence, until the late evening of August 31st. Quarters were found for me with Dr. Leighton in the Administrative Personnel barracks. After several days of exploration and of introduction, I fell into a routine which held pretty well throughout my stay.

Dr. Leighton was kind enough to welcome me to his Bureau of Sociological Research and to give me desk space there. I took part in the staff conferences held every morning there and conducted a course of eight hour to hour-and-a-half lectures and seminar discussions in these conferences. Dr. Leighton, Dr. Spicer, Miss Tsuchiyama, and the entire group of students, workers, and interviewers engaged in the bureau were present in these. In addition, we had the stimulating assistance of Mr. Ted Haas, the project attorney. In these lectures I described the best and most complete recent examples of anthropological and sociological research in industrial and governmental work and adapted their conclusions and their methods to the situation at Poston. These researches included the study of morale, output, informal social organization, and worker's attitudes at the Western Electric Company--the exploration of worker's attitudes and administrative organization changes at the General Radio Company--the adaptation of sociometric studies to village life by Lundberg and Loomis--the keeping of records of participation and activity in a rehabilitation settlement at Penncraft--and the many applications of sociometric study of community organization to the units of Agriculture-Department Administration, undertaken by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. All of these were described with a view to training and stimulating the young Japanese workers of the Bureau to their task of applying social science to the administrative and community situation confronting them. In addition, I had the pleasure of discussing at considerable length, research and procedures of organizing and conducting it, with Drs. Leighton and Spicer. I will discuss these in the second section of this report.

In order not to use up all the brief time at my disposal on the problems of research training and organization and to steep myself the more in Poston life, I devoted part of each day for a little over two weeks to whatever administrative activities I could usefully share, using these as a base for observation, interviewing, and exploration into the minds of the evacuated Japanese. In this manner, I hoped to make a start in anthropological observation, at the same time that I gained an insight into the administrative problems actually facing the director of the camp. Mr. Head early suggested that Mr. Burge at Camp III, (which was just being filled up at the time and was thus just in the first throes of organization) needed some help. Accordingly, I moved in



with Mr. Burge at Camp III and tried to make myself as useful as possible there, spending most of the day at the Administrative Office in Camp III, handling a very small few of the details that came up, and learning by watching, doing, and questioning, what must be done in the daily administrative chores of a camp. I chose Camp III, not only at the request of Mr. Head but also because as a new camp it would give me insight into the development of community organization from the very first. Camp III could thus show me an early stage of the community development of which Camp I at Poston represented a later picture.

In this part of my month at Poston, Mr. Burge was more than helpful. He was a sympathetic, genuinely interested, imaginative and thoughtful guide. He certainly needed no help, as he seemed to have a very confident and competent command of his job, and an easy and friendly authority which made him warm friends among the Japanese of Camp III. But I like to hope that I was of some use, and I know that my experience there, where he and I were for long the only Caucasians among three thousand Japanese-Americans thrust into a new and unprecedented situation, was an invaluable one for my own insight into the life of the camp. Much of what I shall report under subsequent headings comes from this experience.

In order that the detail of my observations at Camp III not be lost, I reported them into the sociological journal maintained by Dr. Leighton's office. In addition, at Camp III, I set up the first steps of a research program, eventually to be fused with that of the bureau in the other camps.

The third aspect of my work of the month at Poston was an attempt to appraise the relationship between the administrative organization of the camps and the community life growing up among the Japanese. I had hoped to interview members of the administrative personnel quite widely, but I discovered that I had neither the time nor the energy left for a comprehensive program. Nevertheless, a series of staff conferences was being held at the time of my stay, the formative stages of the growth of the community council were being passed through, and the initial steps of programs in agriculture and industries, in community services, and in community enterprises were being undertaken. These matters seemed of most moment at the time of my stay and I explored them by interview. I met and talked at some length with Mr. Head, Mr. Evans and Mr. Haas and several of the council; with Mr. Sharpe, Dr. Shephard, and Mr. Fister in the area of enterprises, and with Miss Findlay and Dr. Powell in that of services. Of all the Departments only the Engineers were completely left out. The impressions gained from these interviews combined with my own observations from the vantage point of Mr. Burge's office, and with statements made by Japanese evacuees lie behind my remarks in the final section of this report.



## II

PLANS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF  
RESEARCH AT POSTON

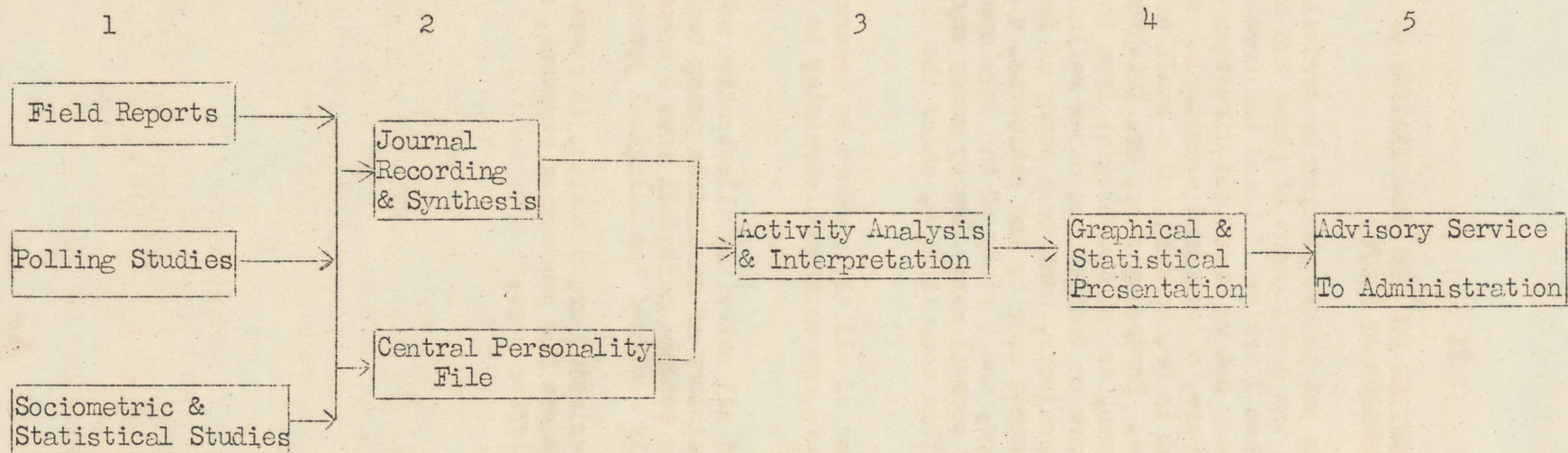
One of the chief tasks put before me upon my arrival at Poston was to take part in the development of plans and organization for research at Poston. When I arrived I found the Bureau of Sociological Research already set up under the direction of Dr. Leighton. It has office space, a competent secretarial staff, an excellent second-in-command in Dr. Spicer, and a staff of young Japanese which gave promise. During my stay, Dr. Leighton got the assistance of Miss Tsuchiyama, an anthropologist from the University of California, who began work on Buddhist and other religious groups in Poston. Several other projects, such as a study of food complaints, a study of housing improvements made by the residents, a study of sports and recreation groups, and a study of the development of the functions of the community council were already under way and in process of coordination. This coordination, under the direction of Dr. Leighton involved:

- a. The common training of all the workers on separate projects in seminars and courses-of-training in the office of the Bureau.
- b. The compilation of all materials illustrative of events at Poston and revelatory of sentiments among both the Administrative and evacuee personnel into a comprehensive and chronologically arranged "sociological journal".

Developing upon this existing organization, it seemed most relevant to suggest a procedure for processing research, which I give in a chart on the following page.



SOCIOLOGICAL BUREAU  
ORGANIZATION FOR PROCESSING RESEARCH





Such a procedure for dealing with research and its results is aimed at putting the information and insight gained through the efforts of the social scientists and investigators of the Bureau, to continuous and immediate use as well as providing a record for appraising the experiment of Poston as a whole at the end of its development. It is postulated on the assumption that the most useful job the Bureau can do is to provide factually backed advice to administrators and to officers of the local council and to other official organs of the community as it is needed. To grow into such a function the Bureau will need its present independence and its present right to a seal of confidence for its materials. It will need the continued support of both Mr. Head and Mr. Evans and others of the administration, which it now enjoys, and it will need the support of the evacuee population, which it now seems, with time, in a fair way of winning. But, it will also need an internal organization and division of labor which will make such a function possible.

The processing of research from its inception in various kinds of field studies that can be undertaken at Poston to its presentation as advice to administrators and officials of the council requires five steps, as indicated on the preceding chart:

- Step 1. Field work, in various aspects.
  - 1a. Field studies of special areas of social organization and behavior.

Many of these are already under way, and more will be undertaken by Dr. Spicer and those whom he succeeds in training for the task from among the evacuee population. Much of the progress that can be expected here will depend upon the more or less fortuitous chance of the interests of the Japanese-Americans who wish to do the work. But Drs. Leighton and Spicer already see the outline of the new community in sufficient clarity to assign field-workers to the areas of its developing social behavior that have the greatest importance and to avoid duplication of effort. Of most immediate interest for administration will be an insight into changes in family behavior and authority; receptivity to the new Japanese-run institutions of the community, such as for example, the police force and the council; and a study of participation in plans for agriculture. I believe Drs. Leighton and Spicer have these areas of social organization in mind for special emphasis already.

Among 20,000 people it will always, naturally, be impossible to do a complete exploration of every group and every phase of cultural and social activity. Some sort of sampling and choosing of areas for intensive work will be necessary. Drs. Leighton and Spicer are aware



of this necessity. It can be met in two ways: 1) by a careful recording of all chance material that comes into the Bureau--in the Journal maintained there--such material later to be analyzed for its accord with the data derived from intensive study to make sure of the typical character of the results of intensive study, and 2) by making wider studies based upon the conclusions and oriented toward the problems revealed by intensive study. Thus:

1b. Attitude and Opinion Polls

will have a place in the Bureau among its field studies. These naturally must wait until adequate statistical material is compiled giving the chief characteristics of the evacuee population, a task not yet complete. They must wait also upon the clear-cut development of issues and attitudes about issues which represent a widespread enough popular feeling to be worth while testing. Some of these attitudes--like those about food--already exist and are being studied. Others like the issei-nisei right to vote and the value of Rochdale cooperative organization are still in the formative stage.

At present there is a certain amount of confusion in the plans for polling at Poston, which is, however, not at all to be deplored. In Camp I, the adult education department, which has come to handle a good deal of the explanation of administrative and community policies and developments to the evacuee population, particularly the issei, has plans for doing polling upon the issues and attitudes which it encounters among the evacuees. I sat in with them and helped outline to them some of the techniques and pitfalls involved.

It seems, however, that any polling actually undertaken would more profitably be conducted under the aegis of the Bureau. I am sure a policy could be worked out between Dr. Leighton and Dr. Powell (who heads the adult education department) whereby a cross-fertilization of ideas could take place. It is necessary, of course, that the Japanese most vitally interested, such as Mr. Ouchi and others in the adult education department, carry out whatever plans they want to. But they do need help and there is a need for centralizing their efforts and their results. The Bureau is the best place for such centralization. It is required in order to make sure that the polling which takes place is more than a mere activity for activities sake, and rather a thoughtful inquiry into attitudes of real importance for administration (and the councilmanic officials) to know.

The same remarks apply as well to subsequent polling at Poston. The activity should be one step, as suggested here, in the procedure by which information on local custom, organization and attitude (sentiment) among the evacuees is funnelled into a



processing function through which it can eventually emerge as considered and expert advice to persons in authority and responsibility.

#### 1c. Statistical and Sociometrical Studies.

A further aspect of field work at Poston is little developed, but there is hope for it and I should like to suggest a means of providing it. At present almost all the statistical information available about the Japanese evacuees is scattered among various agencies by whom it was gathered in the course of routine activity at the camp, particularly at "intake". Registration, Housing, and Census all took information about the evacuees. In addition, Welfare gathers occasional information suited to its purposes. A Census Bureau, manned by 22 persons, has attempted one compilation of this information, and the Employment Office another. But each of these is still separate, and while much of the information gathered is duplicated, much of it is cast in special form of little use beyond the immediate office where it was compiled.

If statistical and demographic information is to be made available for reference in making decisions at Poston, it seems vital that a centralization of this information be achieved. Motives of efficiency, economy, and horror of duplication of effort should all alike impell the move. In addition, the move would go far to end the repeated questioning of the Japanese residents, many of whom were annoyed at having to fill out identical questionnaires as many as four times (this after arrival at Poston). During my stay there were several conferences with Miss Findley, Dr. Powell, and others on the subject, and it was agreed that steps toward setting up a central file should be taken. Since the work of the Census Bureau may soon come to an end, it might very well be the Census Bureau that could be most fittingly charged with the task of setting up such a central file.

The Bureau of Sociological Research could play an important part in this centralization. It should not, however, be saddled with the administration of a central file, unless a much increased personnel (say the present Census Bureau) were to be added to it. Yet the Bureau would be in a better position than any other agency to direct the statistical inquiries which might be addressed to this central file and to interpret and summarize their results. Furthermore, the Bureau would be better equipped than any other branch of the administration at Poston to make use of such a centralized repository of information on individuals at Poston as a basis for further work. All polls of sentiment and attitude would have to be based upon and checked against the statistical generalities to be got from censuses. All studies aimed at exploring parts of



social organization would have to begin with the centralized information on housing, family composition, past occupation and present participation in camp life that such a file would provide. I shall have more to say of the usefulness of such a file when I come to discuss its place inside the Bureau. In addition, of course, the central file would be a clearing house for all information about the Japanese residents needed by the administration for the purposes of the War Relocation Authority, the Army, the draft boards, and so on, whenever inquiries about specific persons had to be dealt with. It would thus be made to act, unobtrusively, as a central inventory of the population (like those of the registration of citizens in such a country as prewar Holland).

A last aspect of the field work of the Bureau would be, as suggested, to conduct statistical and sociometric inquiries, where relevant, to aid in planning the programs of community development at Poston that will require a maximum cooperation from the Japanese community. These would be based upon the general information of the central file. These studies, particularly ones using sociometric methods, can become of quite practical value. For example, in selecting persons or families for agricultural settlement, or for cooperative group membership, it might be very useful to choose beforehand groups of persons and families already well adapted and mutually helpful. Special sociometric studies can reveal such groups. I have charged myself with the job of sending complete bibliographies on sociometric studies conducted elsewhere to Drs. Leighton and Spicer.

## Step 2. Recording and Synthesizing of Data.

The second step in the process of converting scientific observation into useful expert advice is necessarily that of recording and synthesizing the material gathered by field-workers in the office of the Bureau.

### 2a. The Sociological "Journal" with its files.

A great deal of this second step has already been taken in the institution of the "Journal" already functioning at Poston.

### 2b. The Central (Evacuee) Personnel File.

Another aspect of the second step would be to set up machinery whereby individual participation as recorded in the journal and in the official memoranda of the various departments is abstracted and entered against the individual information of a central file. This should be a continuous process, giving a running picture of the part all persons are playing in Poston life and should be charged to the



office keeping the central file, whose function it should be to keep such records up to date and make sure that the administration, at the end of the Poston experiment, has at least a more accurate a record of individual performance after relocation than it has of performance prior to evacuation. Indeed, I should like to recommend that that be one of the chief responsibilities of W.R.A. It should never be possible to argue again that we had in the United States to submit all Japanese-Americans to scrutiny and surveillance because we did not know which ones to trust. The responsibility of the Bureau in the matter should be to see that the central file was a living record rather than a mere civil service listing.

### Step 3. Activity Analysis and Interpretation.

The third step in processing data from field work and statistical inquiry at Poston should be to subject it to sociological and psychological analysis, to check it for validity, and to assess it for trends, for subjective insights, and objective verification of answers to problems in community life and popular attitude posed by scientists and administrators both inside and outside Poston. Very little can be said about this step right now. Drs. Leighton, Spicer and I have discussed methods and their probable use, but little can be settled until the data of field study accumulate. It will be a long time before any of the procedures of this step can be delegated to the Japanese, but as Drs. Leighton and Spicer learn by doing and by consultation how to cope with it, they can also bring others of the staff up to proficiency at it.

### Step 4. Graphical and Statistical Presentation.

A fourth step in the processing of research data will obviously be its visual and statistical presentation. The data relevant to administrative or popular problems derived from field work and statistical study will necessarily have to be digested and illustrated if it is to carry conviction. Drs. Leighton and Spicer are aware of the problem here and look forward to developing a personnel (probably small) of visualizers and chart-makers from among the Japanese (who should be excellent at such work).

### Step 5. Recommendations to Administrators.

The last step, of course, is a crucial one. It is the rendering of advice based upon and implemented with the concrete information derived from the first four steps to administrators and to councilmanic or political officers both inside and outside Poston. Naturally, to be most effective, this work should be continuous and immediate. Nothing much can be said about it because it depends on



tact, confidence, and mutual understanding on the part of all concerned and is a product of the growth of these things in both the research and the administrative personnel at Poston. The only specific safeguard for its development that can be devised--assuring research at Poston the right and privilege of high rank and confidence--has already been provided. I am very sure that in such persons as Mr. Head, Mr. Evans and others there will be little difficulty here, as I am sure Drs. Leighton and Spicer have the tact, the forcefulness and the patience to do their part. The rest is a matter of time.

Finally, I should like to add a specific recommendation for field study, before we leave the subject of research. At Camp III, I began, with one man, a study of methods and organization of agriculture among the Japanese. Of all the practical studies that can be undertaken, I think this the most important. There must be someone at Poston to bring to administration, to the engineers, to the agriculture department, and to the planners of the whole experiment, accurate and intimate knowledge of the methods, work-habits, and culturally-determined proficiencies and forms of organization among the Japanese, particularly the older issei. After all, the California Japanese are among the world's most skillful and most successful farmers. They have a heritage of experimentation, knowledge, and method older and in many ways more successful than even our best "scientific agriculture". One can either enlist this skill; or one can ignore and discard it. But if one wants to make a success, with the least friction, loss, and expense, of agriculture at Poston, it is far wiser to enlist it.

It seems clear that only the Sociological Bureau is in a position to find out the actual form of this skill, and to present it to planners and administrators in such a way that they take it into account. It is obvious that the council and later on the Japanese themselves, individually in agriculture, will bring this skill forward. But if no one learns of it before that date, it will be exercised in opposition to, not in support of, administrative plans. By interview and study, the Bureau can get the Japanese themselves, who are vitally interested, to describe their own methods and to show their own habits of work and organization in agriculture. Once known, then, these methods and habits can be taken into account, in making realistic plans for agriculture, land use, settlement, and disposal of produce.



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Let me warn specifically once more: no one at present at Poston knows anything about these matters and no one (except Mr. Head, who seems aware of the problem) yet sees the importance of such knowledge in making plans for agriculture and settlement at Poston. And this remark includes even Drs. Shephard and Nieschmidt, whose plans, excellent as they are from the point of view of soil and land use, do not include any insight into the reservoir of existing Japanese skills and habits.

If there exists any money for research either in the W.R.A. for all its projects or in the Indian Office for Poston, I do not hesitate to recommend that an agronomist or rural sociologist, with some knowledge of agriculture in the orient (or at least outside the United States) be hired to make a study in this field and to advise the planners and administrators accordingly. One might even find a Japanese to do it.



III

IMPRESSIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY AT POSTON

First of all, Poston is rapidly becoming a community and will continue to become one. By no means all of the evacuees are ready yet to take an active part; by no means all of them, or even most of them, think of the place as home, or as anything more than a place of indefinite detention. But they will, in time, because the ties of adaptation to a new environment are already being laid down.

There are many external signs of such evolution toward a community. The painstaking decoration and remodelling of the barracks everywhere, particularly in the older sections of Camp I, the cultivation of the plots of food and ornamental plants, the springing up everywhere of ramadas (arrowweed and brush shelters), the appearance of household pets, the endless multiplication of sports groups, the coinage of nicknames and jokes about camps and blocks, and places in the camps, are all sure signs. Wisely, most of the departments of administration at Poston encourage the individual initiatives of such development.

Then there is the strong neighborliness and the almost extraordinary cooperative spirit to be seen among the families of the blocks. There is still much complaint about the communal kitchen and mess hall arrangements but there are also the facts that they do work quite well; that the families of the block share alike in the buying of coolers and refrigerators, that the block managers, by and large, win easy and willing support, that disputes among neighbors and arguments over the disposal of the residents' meagre water, irrigation, furnishing, and other household facilities are rare, and are settled in the block.

For a "Caucasian" group much of this might perhaps be extraordinary. But the Japanese both rural and urban have a long history of living in crowded communities and of subjecting one another to strong conventional controls. Writers like John Embree have reported on the paramount importance of the local group--the buraku--in Japan and on the strength of local and prefectual solidarities in new communities in Hawaii.

There are many signs, too, that the evacuees are speedily making the most of their new and strange environment. These signs are not only such formal ones as the building of parks. The Japanese have discovered the river (though it is officially out of bounds). Fish and turtle have appeared in more than one mess hall. They know that the canals, too, yield smaller fish. They have discovered pigweed,



and may eventually learn to prepare the flours of mesquite bean. With the huge ramadas going up everywhere, they have taken a leaf out of the Indian's book and the first breath of cold should see charcoal braziers in use as in old Japan. During the hot months, when the desert was new and strange and forbidding, it was easy to keep the Japanese in bounds. But in the winter it will not be so easy; already there are men hiring horses from the Indians. The older, rural men are making, it seems, a quicker adaptation than the high-school-bred and towns-dwelling nisei, but the nisei won't be far behind them. All this is to the good, I believe, though the large amount of wandering about that the Japanese do may eventually lead to a clash with the townsfolk of Parker. If some form of transportation between the camps--a sort of regular bus line--could be set up, much of this wandering could be channelled within the community. Meanwhile, it is symptomatic of a growing familiarity with the new environment. It would be silly to try to control it too strictly.

Further symptoms, too, are to be found in the seemingly growing number of minor plans and suggestions to be heard among the Japanese, all the way from specific plans for agriculture to landscape architecture and rabbit-drives. Part of the service the Bureau of Sociological Research might well render is to pass such suggestions up the line to administration.

Against this background of evolution, then, many of the current attitudes of the Japanese population can be reexamined. The most widespread, and one of the most recurrent, is that which expresses anxiety about the future. I believe it has already been amply reported. It takes various forms: among the older people: what is to become of them? will it be worthwhile working and planning if no ownership or equity in the land or its produce can be assured? are they merely to be thrown out at the end of the war? Among the younger people: how are they to prepare for taking their part in American life at the end of the war? will they not be worse off, less well-equipped? why have children, if there is no future to offer them? These must be the attitudes of all the evacuated Japanese but at Poston, since it is Indian Reservation land, there is added another note: will we be Indians from now on and forever? Or alternately: can this ever be ours, if it is in effect Indian land.

A good deal of the apprehension these attitudes reveal can be, I believe, allayed by a few statements of policy as to the future. There is an extraordinary amount of ignorance about the most elementary matters of governmental organization among the evacuees,



even educated nisei. Adult education can clear these up, as can explanatory articles in the News Bulletin. For example, few people hearing Mr. Collier knew who he was or why he should be there (in August). Knowledge will eventually be disseminated outward and downward through the elective Community Council, but the matter that still remains hazy for the Japanese at Poston, is the matter of the responsibility of the Indian Office for them. If the policy of the W.R.A. to provide means for moving individuals and families out and eastward is generally announced it will do much to allay the general feeling of confinement that exists, though I doubt it will institute any great rush of emigrants. But some specific announcement on the score of whether or not the Japanese can stay to reap the benefits of their labor at Poston, rather than having to fear further evacuation "fourteen days" after peace comes, would help clarify matters for many of them. As for the issue: are we to be Indians? it is, of course, largely an emotional one; a matter of names. It will always remain a sloganeering rally-cry for them.

As far as the growth of the community is concerned, I believe it is well not to exaggerate the importance of the issei-nisei conflict. That conflict is, and will be, waged in every relocation center. The conditions of relocation cannot fail to intensify it for it is a convenient means for the Japanese of expressing their fears and resentments at the destruction of their economic base. But it is also a universal conflict of this age and this country: there is not an immigrant group, and very few regional and class groups either, in the United States, that does not face inter-generational conflict at the present turn of our culture's evolution. The administration at Poston, and the whole W.R.A., will have to learn to live with that conflict among the Japanese and to turn it to good account.

The conflict will reflect itself in political development, where it has already made its appearance at Poston. I shall return to the subject when I discuss the community council. But it will, and already has shown itself in more intimate aspects of the life of the community.

In the first place, I am sure that it lies behind the current fears among the Japanese of the "breakdown" of family life and family authority. Mr. Collier was interested in the subject during his visit in August; and I can report some impressions of it.

In educated, urban circles among the Japanese of the West Coast the breakdown of oriental patriarchal households seems to have gone



quite far. Young couples in the cities were strong for setting up separate households of their own--the American way--and moving out. They did retain, however, most of their obligations towards their parents, in spite of the altered pattern of residence, and the appearance of grandchildren--a sansei (third generation)--tended to knit the extended family group together quite strongly once more. Yet the "emancipation" of the young people, in setting up households of their own, did have an effect on their acceptance of authority, and the older people had to content themselves with a good deal less direct authority over habits, dress, food, recreation, and other externals of life, which, in the bigger towns, the younger generation adopted wholesale from the "Americans" (that is, the Californians). Thus the conflict was joined over these externals, but the fundamental patterns of mutual aid, of family solidarity, and authority over work, were, even in the Californian cities, very little shaken, with individual exceptions. The Japanese still lived in tightly-knit colonies, little Tokyos; they still lived more upon one another than upon their relationships (except in produce dealing) with the "American" community; and an education, a job, a start-in-life, however patterned after American White-collar and middle-class values it might be, still was conferred upon a nisei by his senior relatives and their associates. The Japanese themselves complain of their being divided into endless "cliques and factions". So they seem to have been, and many of them upon lines of extended family relationship, as well as upon loyalties of place of origin (tokoro and ken) and class.

In the country districts, among the Japanese farmers, the "emancipation" (as it would appear to a nisei--the issei would call it "the breakdown of authority") does not seem to have progressed to anything like the extent it had in the larger towns and in the middle classes of Japanese-American life.

In Camp III, where the population were mostly fruit and vegetable growers from the "heat counties" of California, I was impressed with how often the younger men acted merely as spokesmen for their fathers. They are still active members of large-family enterprizes, not independent workers. In this they remain Japanese, "un-Americanized". In fact I heard Japanese spoken as often as English among these young men, an impression one would never get among the urban nisei in Camp I, but by no means an unusual phenomenon among second-generation rural immigrant groups in the United States. But most important was the fact that, as spokesmen for the older men, many of these lads, adult farmers and produce handlers, were still working for and under the authority of aging fathers and uncles. The successful Japanese farmers are family-farmers commanding the enterprize and directing the labor of quite a wide circle of sons and younger relatives.



Many of these family enterprizes were, at the time of evacuation, at the point of transition. Many of the older issei were, in fact, retiring in favor of their now-adult sons and nephews. The evidence seems to be that among the rural Japanese a breakdown of authority was far from real.

The current Japanese fears of such a breakdown, then, are fears for the future. They reflect the destruction of the economic base of Japanese-American life and the destruction of the family enterprizes over which the older men had command. They reflect, at the same time, the resentment of the older men--the issei--at what seems to them the failure of their sons to achieve a stronger influence with the "Americans" and a resentment of the sons against their fathers' disastrous "foreignness". The conflict is sharpened at Poston, certainly, as in all the evacuation, but the feared breakdown lies still in the future and may be averted entirely if some economic base in which the older men can play a proper role is restored to the group.

Accordingly, a great deal of the complaint of the issei lies in the fact of the destruction of their economic position, the destruction of their headship of farms and produce-dealing organizations. Naturally, the older generation, coming to average about fifty-five or sixty years of age, would have abdicated their control before long. But it would have been a voluntary, customary, tradition-supported act of their own volition. Forced dissolution of farms and businesses overnight was nothing of this kind. And nothing yet has evolved at Poston, or in any W.R.A camp, to take the place of the former authority.

Yet to exaggerate this blow to Japanese family organization into a destruction of morality is to forget the marked recuperative powers of human habit. At Poston, a good many of the older people more proficient in English and better adapted to American life are already finding themselves as block-managers and as leaders in the new enterprizes. Families eat, live, and build together, still keeping up the skeleton of their organization. If any kind of activity can be found--such as agriculture and industry at Poston--to enlist the skill of the older people, the Japanese family should weather the storm.

As for worries of "immorality"--sexual misconduct--they are the hardy perennials of such situations as this. The council is worried about this situation, more, it seems, to assure the community a good name than for any other reason. The code of law drawn up in August made it perfectly clear that the Japanese-Americans were good Americans



in their concept of legislation. It gave notice that the code of law at Poston should be second to none in the United States as an expression of stern moral rectitude. The only danger in such a situation is that the young police at Poston take its provisions against gambling (which is as unquenchable among the Japanese as lotteries among the Italians in America) seriously and use its strictures against "illicit cohabitation", "fornication", and "prostitution", to persecute the love-making and common-law marriages such a situation as Poston makes inevitable. Already they show a certain over-zealousness that has angered some of the residents. The best solution is probably encouragement of early marriages--which, however, seem to need none anyway.

The Japanese will find a way to handle the problem themselves; they have strict conventional controls in the matter which already seem to be operating.

But another factor will intensify the generation conflict here, and is already doing so. That is the difference between the opportunities for participation in camp life open to the two generations. At present the community offers a wealth of new experience, new training, and new prestige to the younger people, particularly the young male nisei. They can become firemen, policemen, office-workers, soil chemists, school-teachers, and many other things which were closed to them in the communities of California. These positions have already come to bear the only external insignia of high station that exist in the community. Privileges, such as the handling of cars, the right to occupy air-conditioned buildings, the right to eat in a special messhall of each camp, the ability to consort with the "American" personnel, all fall to the young people, often very young ones, who in many cases have had no training in authority and no experience in public position before, either among their own people or in the California communities. All this is to the good, for them, but it is a source of annoyance to the persons in whom authority prestige so recently lay and from whom it has been stripped. A good deal of the present conflict over the police force, and much of the reluctance of the older people to come forward, is traceable to the quick emergence of these "nouveaux riches" of Poston life. Much of the conflict is inevitable, since after all only the younger people can hope to be trained for participation in the machinery of a community of this kind. But it is well to remember that the "issei-nisei" conflict finds fuel in the situation at Poston, as well as in the whole history of Japanese-American life. It brings forward new persons to fill roles very like those of the "white man's Indian" among the Indians. Yet the Administration must ask itself if that is not one of the prices it will have to pay, if the Japanese-Americans are to be taught the forms of American municipal organization.



But the real difficulty with the development of community life at Poston lies deeper. It is reflected in the fact that nothing has yet been done to enlist the skills of the older people and the forms of authority and expertness that are theirs. It is the fact that the community has as yet no economic base. And the people, except those running the new municipal machinery, have nothing to do. Everywhere there is a pathetic eagerness to set to work. Wherever there is any chance of it, these people can be trusted to work for themselves, as they do already in the remodelling of their houses and the construction of ramadas. In a few cases there are minor projects, such as some of the carpentry shops, perhaps even the adobe project, where the Japanese have been allowed to fall into their own familiar rhythms of work, where the older and wiser heads can shout back and forth the arguments and exhortations which seem to accompany Japanese work cooperation, and where the people without the full benefit of American schooling can use their own knowledge. That is not to say that in many of the offices, departments, and projects already begun there is not ample work, and real and able cooperation, on the part of the young educated Japanese, particularly the urban ones. There is. But it is to say that the community as a whole has (had in August) not found able and rewarding work for itself. And it is to say that the community will not make the transition to self-regulation and self-support until they do.

This is a theme to which I will return. Since more than anything else at Poston it involves the relationship between the administration and the Japanese I shall leave it till I come to that topic.

Meanwhile, a word should be said about the community council, which began to function in Camp I while I was at Poston, and for which elections were arranged in Camps II and III.

Since my leaving Poston, at the first of September, further change may have taken place; but I report the situation as of the date I saw it last. The council at Camp I had already begun to function and was engaged in its first controversy--the inquiry into the steward's books and the question of food. It was fairly obvious that the council was going to act as many other new representatives bodies, particularly in union-management situations in industry, act in the first flush of their self-discovery: as sounding boards for complaints and as outlets for collective emotion. It was obvious, too, that the council was going to explore its powers and test the limits of its influence, just, again as new union-management grievance committees do. The difficulty over food and the steward's office was the first such test.



Yet there was a danger in this situation. The principal danger was not in the council's actions, certainly not in its expression of emotion, but in the failure of persons in authority to recognize what was taking place. That danger was especially well illustrated in a document from W.R.A. headquarters which outlined plans for self-government. The document in itself planned detail excellently, but it also felt that the council should have certain traits of behavior and attitude which the council does not and will not yet for a long time exhibit and which can hardly be expected, realistically, of persons in the shoes of the Japanese evacuees. The danger lies in that persons in authority who hope for a speedy development of self-government will be hurt and disappointed at the council's manifest failure to live up to such lofty ideals laid down for it and will lose faith in its natural evolution.

The document referred to proceeded on the assumption that the councils were to be:

1. Recommendatory only.
2. Fact-finding bodies.
3. Not complaint bureaus.
4. Such that they do not reflect emotion (sic!).
5. Such that they must be carefully taught and lead in the adoption of parliamentary tactics.

Let us take up these points, in reverse order, against the observed realities of council action and experience during August at Poston.

1. That the council needs carefully to be taught and lead in parliamentary tactics.

The ideal ignores the age-old experience of Japanese tradition in meeting and discussion which is very evident at Poston. Two points differ in Japanese practise, it seems. One is that there is never any contest for the floor or difficulty of recognition by the chair. At meetings each person who has something to say is heard in turn, before any action is undertaken and there are no motions until the end of such discussion. No need for Roberts' Rules here! Secondly, decision is made informally, out of the consensus achieved by such orderly discussion in turn, but is not formulated on the floor at all. Consequently, a formal resolution in words is, it seems, oftener an attempt to meet American convention than an intention to act. The decision to act comes out of the small group of persons behind the scenes who direct the others on the basis of such consensus. It may or may not resemble the formal resolution. Here difficulties will not rise from ignorance, but from a difference in habit and meaning.



2. That the council should not reflect emotion.

Fond illusion! The Japanese, under a courteous and noncommittal exterior, are very full of the emotions engendered by their treatment during the evacuation. However well they may, intellectually, recognize the wisdom of decisions taken, the patriotic necessities they face, and the good intentions of those in all the agencies which have handled their cases, they are also humanly disturbed and angered at the long-drawn-out dislocation of their lives and the new, minute and arbitrary ordering of their existence. To give them an opportunity to express themselves is ipso facto to release some of the pent-up emotion of this experience. As I shall point out later, that emotion is going to be directed at the most readily available objects and personages against whom it can be safely expended. These happened to be, in August; the cooks, stewards, and others of the commissary departments: hence the emotional outbursts about food, as the one source of most constant irritation against which emotion can be safely directed. The fact has nothing to do with the merits of the case. A fact-finding commission reporting the actualities of the food situation and showing its inevitability would change nothing whatsoever. The next safe target will probably be: their own police and other regulatory machinery.

The council will, like all political bodies worth their salt, continue to be an expression of the organized, symbolically-expressed emotion of the evacuee population. To expect otherwise is to ignore the experience of human beings over centuries. The proper attitude is to recognize the fact, to let such emotion play itself out harmlessly, and to deflect the released energies to other things, after emotion has been discharged. Such a course will require an intelligent, sympathetic, and imaginative administration. I am sure Mr. Head and Mr. Evans supply it. The danger is that people farther from the scene than they are will exaggerate such natural outbursts as are bound to take place into a failure of the experiment in self-government. A far better index of failure would be that such outbursts did not take place.

3. That the council will be a fact-finding body.

So it may eventually become, after a long experience of commissioning and hearing parliamentary inquiries. But there are too many other things for it to do, and too much emotion and complaint for it to listen to and to represent, for it to waste its time (and I am speaking from the evacuee point of view in my choice of the verb) in making factual studies. Fact-finding will come later, as an equilibrium develops and as mutual confidence among the council members, their constituents, and the administration develops. But not till then.



And, as in the matter of food, the factual reality of many of the situations the council is going to debate, is of little moment beside their value as channels for emotional outlet and as means of exploring the limits of the council's influence. If either the W. R. A. or the Indian Office wants a fact-finding body let it set up one or make use of such agencies as the Sociological Bureau at Poston or empower the local councils to commission such permanent research bureaus to undertake special inquiries.

4. That the councils not be complaint bureaus. This ideal for local self-government again goes counter to the realities of life in the relocation camps, if Poston is any criterion of judgment. Why have representative government if not because it allows the handling of individual and collective complaints? At Poston there are already developing among the block representatives and managers, persons who make or will soon make a practise of bringing their constituents or block-residents to the administrative offices which will handle their case, trying to "smooth the way" there in order to impress upon the applicant their influence and their knowledge, perhaps, but at the same time making the machinery of administration run the more effectively for those who must use it. These are embryo politicians, and Poston will have them. But they are part of every democracy of more complex administrative machinery than a New England town and Poston is infinitely more complex than that. Similarly, the role of the council representative as a getter of favors for his constituents is not going to be separable from his role as policy-making legislator (or recommender, if you will). If the ideal means that the time of the council should not be taken up by petty debate over individual difficulties with the machinery of administration, well and good. But if it anticipates a situation in which councilmen do not spend a large part of their activity handling matters for individual constituents, it seems to forget what a congressional democracy means in these United States.

There are three channels by which the difficulties, the minor wishes, and the larger individual or collective problems of the evacuee inhabitants of Poston reach the administrative offices which can handle them. The first channel is by means of an appearance before the proper officer of administration in person. But this is all too often a laborious, puzzling and time-consuming process for the individual evacuee. It may mean a whole day of travel, thumbing rides, and finding taxies in heat and dust, several hours of waiting for an appointment, and even a search for the proper authority. This is the matter at its worst; at its best it is and will always be difficult to take any but major requests direct to the administrative officers of so large scale an enterprise as the community at Poston.



This is no criticism of the staff; most of them are courteous, painstaking, sympathetic, efficient, and quick in their handling of the Japanese who come to them. It is in the nature of things among a community of 20,000 people.

The second means by which an individual matter can be dealt with at Poston is through the administrative hierarchy itself; that is, through the block-managers (conceived as civil servant employees of the administration responsible for the administration of the residential units) who in turn take the matter to their superintendent in the office of the camp director (or "town manager") who in turn transmits it to the proper staff office. This means was the principle one adopted during my stay and I shall discuss it further when I deal directly with the relationship between administration and community at Poston. It works quite well, now, as long as the camp directors such as Mr. Evans, Mr. Crawford, and Mr. Burge have the time and energy to channelize the administrative details to the proper quarters, but it is necessarily as slow as all bureaucratic administration is slow, and it brings into direct focus the problem of the functional division of authority between the staff officers of the central administration and the "town managers" of the three camps. As the work of the specialized staff departments--enterprises, agriculture, etc. etc. grows at Poston--it will bring this problem more and more to the fore.

The third means of dealing with an individual matter at Poston thus brings the council directly into this area of administrative organization. If the block representative is to do his job for the residents, he must do more than influence policy at the time it is debated and "recommended" at council meeting. He must be able to take his constituent to the proper officer of the proper staff department direct. He must be able to explain and recommend modifications and adaptations of policy in particular cases affecting his constituent. He must be able to complain higher, for his constituent, if such explanation and recommendation is ignored. Indeed, with time and the growth of the staff departments at Poston, this third means will become more important month by month as the council gains strength and experience. It will serve an indispensable liaison between administrator and administrated at Poston and should do likewise at other relocation camps. It should be recognized, valued, and encouraged as such.

Perhaps I do not use words in the same way as do people in government service. But from my experience of industrial and community organization (the actual, habitual and informal organization, as well as that provided in the regulations of the written word).



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I insist here that the council at Poston, like the council at all W.R.A camps will succeed only in so far as it does become among other things, a smooth-running, quick-functioning complaint or grievance machinery.

5. That the council be recommendatory only. As for the first ideal laid down for the council, that it be recommendatory only let me say this: It will be very difficult indeed for the council at Poston to learn what that means. It will learn only by having its plans turned down and its desires for inquiry or action frustrated. Much of its activity will be directed to exploring the limits of its own authority, and the danger is that it will become disillusioned and disheartened if it finds them too narrow. It will have to learn step by step just whom it can recommend things to, just whom it has right of appeal to, and all this can take place only as it goes from debate to debate. It will take tact and patience to turn it into a democratic legislative body in the narrow field in which it must operate. I am sure it can be done, but it cannot be done quickly. Already Messrs Evans and Head and Mr. Ted Haas, as its advisers, are patiently at work deflecting its energies to the sphere of self-government within the limits of Poston. Let them not be discouraged if for a good time to come the council tries to burst these shackles, which, after all, are the shackles of all the interned Japanese. Let them not be discouraged that the attempt to burst these shackles will take the form of appeals by the council or its members over their heads. Where else is there to appeal?



IV

REFLECTIONS ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS & ORGANIZATION  
OF POSTON

Perhaps the most important realization to reach in examining the administrative arrangements at Poston, and I am sure it will be the more true at other W.R.A. relocation camps, is that there is a vast difference between a community and a project. Poston may yet become a community; there are signs of it. But it is now and for a long time will be a project, a centrally directed and departmentally organized governmental enterprise, without local autonomy (except as the higher administrators, not the people administered, win it for themselves in practice) and without economic base. Let us not regret the fact, let us face it, and deal with its implications in all realism. For the fact makes the administrative problems at Poston more important, and more vital for an ultimate transition of the camp into a community, than any others.

These administrative problems seem to fall under three large heads. First, there is the matter of supplying the community with an economic base. Second, there is the matter of correlating the central administration of the residential units--camps, quads, and barracks, with the vast array of staff departments that exercise their specialized functions upon or with the cooperation of the residents. Third, there is the problem, intimately connected with the two foregoing, and already touched upon at length in the discussion of the probable future growth of the Council, of the most efficient channeling of individual evacuee problems within the administration.

A. Supplying Poston With An Economic Base.

I need not point out the overwhelming importance of providing an economic base for Poston. The administration is well aware of the problem, and it is devoting much of its energy and thought to the matter. I should like, therefore, to deal with the one aspect of the matter that I feel myself most competent to touch upon: the means of enlisting Japanese skill and zeal in the process. That is to say, I want especially to suggest means by which the community can be made a self-regulating and a self-supporting one, and to warn against what seem to me to be the principle pitfalls lying in wait for administrators and planners during the development of the community.



In the first place it is obvious that agriculture, either alone or in conjunction with minor manufactures must always supply Poston's economic base. There are plans to bring manufactures in, and many of the Japanese would be eager to take part in industries, such as making camouflage nets, which might contribute to the war. In addition, there is a great deal of interest among the Japanese in instituting the manufacture at Poston of the foods, specialties, and delicacies of the Japanese diet which are not yet sufficiently included in their commissary: Tofu, tsukimono, shoyu (soybean) sauce, soap, and many other things can be manufactured for local consumption, as can the adobe bricks already being manufactured for school and house building. There are a large number of persons with skills and experience in such minor manufacture in the Japanese community, and a start has been made in Mr. Mathiesen's department toward enlisting them. Other local supply services and subsidiary manufactures can undoubtedly be developed as soon as Mr. Mathiesen's department gets into the swing of its plans interrupted by Mr. Mathiesen's illness. These manufactures will be of especial interest to older people, both issei and those of the nisei who approach them in age, and will set to work many of the people who found their economic place in serving the local Japanese communities in California. These minor enterprises are certainly to be encouraged in every way possible, as they will provide local employment, supply the local community, cut down the cost of the camp commissary, and consume the local agriculture produce. But they would never give the large scale employment or bring in the large scale income of industrial manufacture keyed to the war effort. They could never be more than a supplement to the agriculture on which they depended.

As for such large scale industrial and factory employment, it is well to consider the current plans for it in the light of what is known of the Japanese and their communities, their skills, and their interests. I had not the opportunity to discuss any other projects than that of the proposed camouflage factories, but I wonder if even that is well-suited to the needs and interest of the Japanese. The introduction of a factory project or projects into Poston can be expected to draw on some of the younger women, perhaps some of the unskilled younger men, too, and to provide a great deal of useful employment for them. But the past history of Japanese-American economics is going to make it difficult to find any of the skilled industrial mechanics and craftsmen which would make it possible to turn the enterprise over to Japanese direction and to Japanese skill. The Californian Japanese do not have a history of experience in industrial work, and while they can undoubtedly be taught it, while the younger men can be trained in lathe, tool, and machine-work which would fit them for factory jobs in war industry on the outside world,



one would have to be careful to remember that for a long time to come such industrial development at Poston would be much more in the nature of an educational experiment than it would be in the nature of a productive enterprise.

Carey MacWilliams, writing this summer in Harpers, has brought out the matter quite well. He points out the very narrow base upon which the Japanese communities of California lived. There were large numbers of the Japanese-Americans in the service, clerical, professional, and retail trades, but nearly all of these served only their own communities. There were few other occupations, however, except those of agriculture. Consequently, the Japanese were in fact a highly specialized group, depending, even in the case of the large numbers of their better educated people in such service occupations, upon their agricultural knowledge. He deplored this narrow specialization of the American-Japanese community and saw in it, rightly, the chief source of the communities lack of integration into California life.

Japanese-American writers (see.....Sept. 1942 Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences), however, see the matter in a different light, as do persons with whom I discussed it at Poston. After all, this crowding into occupations serving only their own community was not voluntary on the part of the nisei; it was a matter of training for the only opportunities that existed.

Likewise, the continued dependence upon their agricultural proficiencies by the Japanese community was their chief source of strength, their entire reason for being in California, and the reflection of the habits of life, family organization, and individual aspiration which made them what they were. The Japanese came to this country as laborers, peasants, farmers, with a background of centuries of success on the land, to seek out anew soil upon which to win independence, status, and a better livelihood for themselves by their agricultural skills. They did not stay as hired laborers very long, to the disgust of the Californians, and their early success in winning independence for themselves insured that they should immediately reestablish the patterns of diversified, family-corporation farming most congenial to them. They became yeoman farmers, somewhat like Pennsylvania Germans in the east, because they were most successful with the yeoman methods and organization that they knew from the homeland. In a land of commercial latifundia, organized on the basis of what MacWilliams has called "the factory in the field", their success should and did make them all the more different, the more unassimilable, and the more suspect. Consequently, if the Japanese are still so narrowly specialized, they are specialized in the one proficiency which has brought them success and continues to do so.



Now, the continuation, in fact, the strengthening of patterns of yeoman, family, and experimentally diversifying farming among them makes them, now in Poston and the other War Relocation Camps, rather recalcitrant material for factory labor. They do not know industrial skills; neither are they by training or disposition capable of becoming docile unskilled, foreman-directed workers. They are used to working independently, under traditional controls and conventions of their own, and they will not take kindly or easily to direction at the hands of Caucasian strawbosses. Any managers, foremen, or engineers trained in the usual American factories and the American methods of gang labor are going to have trouble with them, not because they are not excellent, capable workers, used to exercising their own initiative, but precisely because they are. Until a Caucasian managerial and foreman personnel can be trained to realize the difficulty or a Japanese personnel can be developed from among the workers at Poston, the course of industrial understanding and cooperation at Poston will not, I am afraid, run very smoothly.

Indeed, in the light of our knowledge of these characteristics of the evacuees and our realization that they are so highly specialized in agriculture, the problem arises if, after all, too much planning and worry over industry for Poston and for the War Relocation Camps in general, does not run the danger of blinding one to the far greater possibilities of agriculture itself.

For it is in planning and developing agriculture at Poston that the only complete success for the community can be hoped for. Yet one feels, unfortunately, that agriculture is the orphan among the hopes and projects of the camp. The feeling is probably not justified, but the fact does remain that agriculture, far from being, as it should be, the central and coordinating interest of all the plans of all the many staff agencies at Poston, is merely one, and by no means the most important one, of many, many co-equal plans and projects at the Camp.

There are practical political and administrative difficulties to be overcome for agriculture at Poston. I am not competent to speak of the engineering and agronomic problems involved. They seem to be succumbing rapidly, in any event. I should like to confine myself to the political and administrative ones.

First of all, the future of agriculture at Poston is the future of the community. The Japanese cannot possibly be expected to



reestablish an autonomous and spontaneously inspired and directed community life of their own unless something at least of the initiative, the authority, and the controls over work, effort, and devotion to family and community interest, which was theirs, is restored them. The restoration must be an open one, bringing these realities of Japanese life out into a position of prestige and recognition once again. If it is not an open one, Japanese initiative, authority, and controls over work and community relationships will not, I am sure, disappear; they will continue in submergence and, probably in covert opposition to any others imposed upon them,

Now the chief political problem, which cannot be solved entirely at Poston, is just in restoring these things. Plans and policies must be made and defended, so that agriculture will, in fact, go back to Japanese-American hands, to Japanese-American direction and planning. The alternative is already foreshadowed. I had the opportunity of spending a whole day with Mr. Utz, director (?) of agriculture for the War Relocation Authority. Mr. Utz is an excellent, trained agriculturalist and manager of commercial farms. Perhaps I misinterpret his remarks, but he lead me to understand that the political exigencies which the War Relocation Authority faced made it necessary that the projects be conducted as single, large scale, commercial-agricultural units. His reasons for thinking such a development necessary were these:

The Authority is committed, under the terms of its grant of power, to turning the lands reclaimed and developed by the evacuees back to public ownership. The Japanese are thus to make their contribution to the war in opening such lands and in readying them for occupation by someone else after the war. Thus, no equity or other shadow of ownership can be allowed to grow up which would work against this ultimate turning-back of the lands to public domain. In addition, the Japanese contribution to the war must be in turning the produce of this land into the national larder, cutting down on the expense of their own maintenance and supplying the armies and allies of the nation with food. Both objectives--the prevention of the growth of Japanese equities and the maximizing of production for the national effort--dictate, according to my understanding of Mr. Utz's position,--that the camps be run as immense commercial farms without division of holding under professional management making use of the Japanese principally as foremen and labor.

Such plans may not eventually prevail; they may have no application to Poston, where a different authority reigns, and where Mr. Head is by no means in sympathy with them, but they exist and they will continue to show themselves in many guises. I want here to show where their support will emerge and to warn what they would mean.



I shall try to point out what they imply even for the goals held out by their advocates: the maximizing of Japanese contribution to the war effort.

Such plans are infinitely beguiling to those of an engineering and commercial turn of mind. They seem to offer a minimum of effort, a maximum of systematization of planning and management, and the greatest speed of realization. They will suit well the engineer's need for rectilinearity of ditches, canals and fields, the commercial farmer's need of huge spaces and easily calculable acreages in which to operate his machines, and they will prove beguiling to the economic agricultural planner who finds it far easier to advise a switch from crop to crop, as the market requires, where only the administrators of a project have to be convinced, and no numerous stubborn householders of a community or members of a cooperative must be persuaded. There is a real professional necessity why such persons, intent upon the quick and efficient discharge of their specialized functions in almost autonomous staff bureaus and departments, will favor such plans, and come to think of them as the only feasible ones, especially if a political case can be made for them too. Indeed, it will be a difficult administrative task to stay them, to direct them to the realization of other considerations, and to prevent, through the failure of synchronization in planning and execution of community projects, such persons from making decisions embodying these plans even though they are expressly decided against by central authority.

I mean no strictures against engineers and commercial-farm management men. We are dealing with human beings; and these men are fired with the laudable professional zeal of expert experience. But they may fail to understand the limitations of their experience and to gauge the human and organizational results of their zeal. And, as in nearly all industrial and governmental work, where a ponderous administrative set-up favors their autonomy, they may become very impatient of the imposition of procedures derived from other considerations of administration.

Poston runs that danger. There, as elsewhere in governmental (and industrial projects) it is easier to hurry with clearing the land and with getting in the first plantings, and with setting up the first community-wide enterprises, like an immense poultry farm or a large scale pig run, than it is to plan to incorporate Japanese plans and enterprise from the first. Then, when the Japanese come forward at all, they can be used only to carry out, under central direction, policies and procedures which they had no part in formulating and which may or may not fit any experience or interest



of their own. The result again is to draw from their community the eager, most "Americanized", middle-class-trained younger men, often of a white collar or professional outlook, and to relegate the rest of the workers of a project to the role of straw-bosses and labor gangs under these new people and their Caucasian project administrators. If such a situation should develop, either through failure of synchronization of plans, or through the rush of well-meaning but almost autonomous farm managers or engineers to make a best showing in their own departments, it would mean imposing a very great handicap upon the development of the community.

Indeed, it would mean that the Japanese might come not only to hold back from taking part in such enterprise but also might actively oppose them. For if the American Japanese, yeoman family farmers and diversification specialists in agriculture, may prove difficult material for factory labor, they will prove all the more difficult fieldhands. I need only refer the reader to what has been said above, in connection with factory employment, to indicate how much more difficult would be Japanese adaptation to a regime as commercial-agricultural laborers.

The chief difficulties that might give rise, in whole or in part, to a centrally administered agriculture, in which the Japanese had no real part, are at once administrative and inherent in such a project as Poston (or the other camps).

I have already said that the chief administrative difficulty will be the synchronization of plans and procedures among the many nearly autonomous departments at the camps. Unless continued staff conferences are held, and a rounded and balanced picture of the goals to be achieved is continuously drummed into the head of separate and often highly technical departments, land-subjugation, clearance, planting, and cropping may well be completely shaped by the practical demands of immediate action long before the Japanese community is enlisted to take part. The community and the administration may find itself faced with faits accomplis.

Much of the decisions about land-use, crop-selection, field-size and arrangement, sites for homesteading, division of labor, management of enterprise, etc. etc. will have already been made, by the specialized staff departments at Poston in the course of their daily work if the central administration has not provided them with clear-cut statements of policy beforehand. That is not to say that the planning that is being done in this area is not excellent. I had the pleasure of discussing plans for soil testing and selection and for crop, vegetation, and other types of environmental control with Drs. Shepard and Nieschmidt at Poston. Their jobs were being done with technical skill and imagination of



a high order. But it is still planning of a specialized technical kind, confined to a single department.

Such plans nowhere involve any clear-cut policy about homesteading, division of farms, turning-over of machinery and seed to individuals, families, or larger groups. These things are all felt to be matters to be left for future agreement.

Yet, they should then have first place, not last. The Japanese already have their own working groups and their own existing conventions and habits of agricultural organization. These have proved completely - perhaps - too completely - successful in land subjugation and crop-planning and produce-growing in California. Why should such habits, such skill, and such organization be ignored and neglected? Yet, there is no department of administration at Poston (or perhaps any WRA camp) whose sole interest and function it is to let the Japanese do the job as they know how.

The plans for coöperatives in the clubs and canteens of the community can hardly provide the whole means for liberating Japanese initiative. Apart from the dubious prospects of the evacuees' accepting the Rochdale ideals, the canteens and stores play much too unimportant a role in Poston life. What is needed is a policy for turning over the means of self-support and self-help to the evacuees in the matters of most moment to them, namely in land clearance, irrigation, crop planning, land-utilization, and agriculture.

Let us see what the difficulties in the way of effecting a transfer of initiative to the Japanese are. It is just in connection with this problem that the most important relationships of the central administration and the residential units and the staff departments at Poston must be studied.

For the separate departments cannot be expected to give over their functions to the Japanese of their own accord. To do so would mean, in effect, either their retiring out of existence - and their jobs - altogether - or it would mean their falling back into the role of onlooking advisors to be called in only when needed. Only the central administration can force this gradual retirement, this British-withdrawal-from-India, this reversion to indirect rule and consultant status. But the central administration will have no easy task, whatever its policy and wishes in this regard.

In the first place, the central administration will have to fight against the spontaneous, unconscious discriminations of a situation, which however lofty and democratic the ideals of the individuals concerned, is unescapably a racial caste situation. The



evacuation and resettlement of the Japanese has already, even at Poston, been conducted in atmosphere where echoes of such a race situation cannot be excluded. Difficulties and resentments on that score are already present, in spite of the efforts of the administration to correct their causes. It will continue to take a very strong hand and a great vigilance to keep them down. It will take one, too, which knows unconsciously or by reflection that caste discrimination is a natural human phenomenon --as natural as philandering or thievery --and as ceaselessly to be controlled.

This caste discrimination, showing itself in the little things decided upon by the lower ranking Caucasian personnel, and springing out of their American race attitudes, will work, again unconsciously, hand in hand with legitimate bureaucratic hesitations. For example, much of the work at Poston must be done with heavy machinery, equipment, and with expensive seed and other materials. The departmental staffs responsible for these things, often held personally accountable for their misuse, will be all too reluctant to let them go into Japanese hands. They will be all too diffident about compromising their prospects of a good showing as a department. When responsible decisions are to be trusted, even in part, to the Japanese, all the more courage will be needed.

Thus, the departments at Poston are going to have to be alternately coerced and encouraged to surrender the natural prerogatives they may feel to teach, instruct, and direct the evacuees. A strong hand will be needed to keep down their natural disinclination to taking the risks inherent in entrusting equipment, resources, and plans, to the Japanese community and the Japanese "employees" of their departments.

#### B. Administrative Organization at Poston

The administration at Poston will have a huge responsibility in effecting any such transfer of initiative at Poston. Does present organization at Poston make it possible for the central administration to execute such a function at all? Can it plan for and direct the operations of the numerous expert staff departments at the Camps in such a way as to encourage their withdrawal before developing evacuee initiative?

The question immediately sets us to exploring what seems to me to be the chief problem of organization at Poston. This is the relationship between the central administration of the housing units --- the "line organization" --- to use army and industrial language --- and the vast array of specialized or "staff" departments. Specifically it is the relationship between the "camp managers" and the "departments", in the language of Poston.

At present, the camp managers administer the residential units and their needs, through the hierarchy of the block managers. Together with these officials of the Japanese community, the other officers of that community, with whom the residents deal in their



day to day life, also report to them. These are numerous: police, fire department, clinic, maintenance, transportation, even adult education and recreation. All of these deal with great frequency with the camp managers and their block managers and handle, as first point of contact, the affairs of the residents. But all of them as well have some sort of relationship with corresponding central departments of administration at Camp Headquarters. In the case of the ones listed above, this relationship is variously close or tenuous, but for the most of them it is rather tenuous than close.

With other department offices, however, the case is different. Before long, many other offices of such departments will be opened up in the three camps. Construction, agriculture, and enterprises will come to play a large part in the lives of the residents. Half of the residents, indeed, living in Camps II and III, can hope to come into contact with these departments only through the branch offices. With these departments the question of division of responsibility and authority between the central offices and the camp managers becomes a vital matter.

In the first case, for example, as in the case of the police department, the relationship is fairly clear. It has had a chance to develop naturally out of the consultation in every day matters between camp manager and police chief. The administration of the residential camps would be nearly impossible without such daily contact. Similarly, the wishes and the needs of the residents get an immediate hearing. By the same token, the officer of the central administration whose department deals with matters of law and order finds that such arrangements leave him the vast majority of his time for handling special legal cases, for correspondence with higher agencies outside Poston, for giving advice to the community council and the heads of central administration. As a result, his authority over police matters comes perforce to be principally advisory and do not prevent a close collaboration's developing among the camp managers and the chiefs of police in the separate camps. The police departments become integral parts of the administration of the local camp, the residents need go no farther than their own home camp, and the camp managers can, in relation to this department at least, plan a development of the force consistent with the rest of the plans for developing that camp and responsive to the needs and wishes of the residents.

Let us contrast this situation with that of an administrative office which might come to have too little connection with camp management.

In the case of other branch offices, such as construction, agriculture, enterprises, the matter is more difficult. If the execution of the plans of these divisions is going to be directed in



the set-up of a large scale project-wide enterprize, there is a danger of remote and absentee control. Such control cannot hope to be so immediately responsive to the local needs and wishes of the residents as one vested in or shared by the camp managers. The difficulties of making absentee decisions consistent with the plans and policies of the residential camps' development, as planned by the camp managers, would be very great, and appeals by the residents would take a much longer way to a hearing. If such control develops and persists it is going to be difficult to get anything done in which the Japanese can take any part other than that of "employees". And it is going to mean that the camp managers find themselves relegated to a position of merely executing plans imposed from outside with very little relevance to local conditions.

As it is now, the relationship between central departments such as these and camp managers is stated explicitly neither way. The present August 1942 administrative set-up places Engineering (Mr. Ruppke), Agriculture and Enterprizes (Mr. Matthiesen), Services (Miss Findley), Administration (i.e. fiscal and office management) (Mr. Empie) together on a first level of authority directly under Mr. Head. The Project Attorney (Law and Order) occupies the same level, as does Mr. Gelvin, as associate project director. The arrangement is awkward, making for a very large "top administrative staff". In addition the three camp managers, as "assistant directors", occupy an indeterminate level in which they are formally included in this group when in actual practise they cannot function as members of it. The result has been to pull Mr. Evans, as the senior camp manager, managing the first and largest camp, Camp I, into a position where, in effect, he is in charge of the direction of all the residential units and coordinator of the work of the other camp managers at a level with the division heads under the department heads, and to bring them into most frequent contact only with these men and to make it necessary for the camp managers to go over these men's heads if they wish to reach a seat of authority.

It would seem far better to simplify the administrative set-up at Poston in such a way as to give further recognition to the camp managers and to bring them, as the persons most directly in contact with the Japanese community, into any central administrative planning and policy making staff. Such a simplification could be effected as follows, to give a tentative suggestion: 1/

Let Engineering, Agriculture and Enterprizes, Services, and (fiscal, etc.) Administration be lumped together into a single all-embracing Department of Development and Services, under, let us say, Mr. Gelvin. Then group the three camp managements into a Department of Community Management, under Mr. Evans, freeing him from his dual task of directing Camp I and coordinating the others

1/ See chart on page ii



with it. Then three Town Managers, for Camps I, II, and III could report to him. The central administrative staff could thus be effectively reduced to four (Mr. Head, Mr. Gelvin, Mr. Evans, and Mr. Haas, as Project Attorney.) It would make a much more wieldy body and one in which camp management could have an equal voice in planning with the "expert" departments of the staff. In addition, it would make a body much more accessible to any council which might develop to serve as the central representative body of the three Poston Camps. And lastly, it would relegate the expert departments to the role of executors of policy rather than that of makers of policy, without in the least impairing their ability to transmit plans through their new head-of-department, to the central administration. It would, further, free Mr. Head from much routine and give him more scope for over-all planning.

I want to add to the above the statement that this plan is my own, arrived at on the basis of what seemed to me to be the needs of Poston, but without consultation with any of the men involved. None of them knows I intend to make any proposal along these lines at all. I make them merely as suggestions derived from study and from an experience with administrative organization.

#### C. The Administration and the Development of the Community.

Let me, finally, say only a few words as to what I believe must be expected in the ever-changing relations between the administration and the evacuee population at Poston. I foreshadowed much of what I should like to say on this score when I discussed the council, above. There is only, therefore, one further thing to add.

The council at Poston, if it works at all, will continue to be a sounding board for disgruntlement and resentment. But this resentment will not be directed primarily against the administration of the project, or the Indian Office, or the W.R.A., or the other agencies which have handled the evacuees since first they were assembled. The community and its council will continue rather to react to the area in Poston life where the strongest pressures and the most frequent restraints and commands emanate to press upon the evacuees. As I said before it will burst out against those most readily available objects from which the evacuees experience the most frequent and least escapable impositions of authority.

In August the source of this pressure, most frequently experienced by the Japanese, was the commissary. The cooks and stewards, under the orders of a centralized department (through Mr. Best to Mr. Empie, thence to the army), were the arbiters of Japanese fate three times a day, inescapably, and from their decision, often



arbitrary, harassed, or imposed from above, there was no appeal. This is not a matter of personalities, but of organization. There was little or anything Mr. Best, his stewards, or even Mr. Head could do. But there was something the Japanese could do: namely, complain, appeal to their councilmen, complain to their camp managers. They did what they could, and they did it with verve and emotion.

Later, as the chief source of imposition of arbitrary authority moves, so will the chief target of complaint, protest, and council emotion move.

The Bureau of Sociological Research could yield no greater service to the administration at Poston and to the Indian Office and the W.R.A. than to record, follow, and eventually predict what these moves will be.



COLORADO RIVER  
WAR RELOCATION PROJECT  
DEC 10 1942  
PARKER, ARIZONA