

J 15.52

67/14
c

September 9, 1942

REPORT TO: MR. JOHN G. EVANS
ASSISTANT PROJECT DIRECTOR
HOUSING AND REGISTRATION OFFICE

SUBJECT: HOUSING

SUBMITTED BY: REV. JITSUO MORIKAWA ON REQUEST OF
MR. JOHN G. EVANS

I. THE HOUSING PROBLEM

It is an unquestioned fact that the most critically urgent and acute problem of Boston is the intolerable housing condition. It is hard for a normal human personality to be expected to create a home out of a floor space of eight feet square, except it were in the slums, and yet that is the Government allotment per person where a family of seven occupies one apartment. The community is baffled as to the moral ideals our democratic Government has when fathers and mothers and sons and daughters of one family, yes, two families and even three are thrown together into a moral and social heterogeneous company. The Japanese and the Americans of Japanese ancestry along with other races are fighting a determined battle, a battle for individual and family integrity, and it is most disheartening when conditions and circumstances forcibly superimposed threaten to defeat them in that fight.

To whom the criticism should be directed is not known nor whether it is a purposed plan or an unavoidable condition, but the improvement processes of Boston to the casual eye seem to have a very distorted sense of values. It is apparently proceeding on the assumption that smooth roads are more essential than happy homes and that community economics demand greater attention than community morale. But continue to proceed in this direction for a few more months and there will be danger of a collapse of morale, that will have serious repercussions in all the departments of our community.

What are the actual problems created by inadequate housing. It must be understood that anything presented on paper and read and interpreted from paper seriously lacks the drive of experiential reality. The subjective element is usually ignored by the reader and judgment is cast on the basis of objective data. But life's greatest agencies are subjective and no figures and graphs are going to adequately present and interpret the deep sufferings of our people in Boston. The only fair opportunity that can be given these people is to set up a hearing board before whom their representatives can express and articulate their deep experiences as well as present and interpret the facts and figures of the problem. What are the problems. Those presented here in the following pages are but few but probably representative, and added to them are some suggestions as means of alleviating our housing condition.

1. CROWDED QUARTERS

Here is an apartment occupied by three families with a total of seven adults. In order to secure some measure of privacy the apartment is divided into three sections with curtains making the divisions, and a narrow hallway so that the family occupying the innersection need not disturb the other two families. What is the consequent result. Each family has a floor space of less than 12 feet square, and in that space there are two beds in two of the sections and three in the third. The rest of the floor space is congested with trunks, bags and boxes being unable to find lumber to build closets or shelves to conserve space. The curtains completely cut off the air current from some sections of the apartments, that during the hot spell the heat was unendurable to the point that many nights were spent absolutely sleepless. No man goes out the next day with mental balance but he is charged with tension and irritation. It is little wonder that men and women have been acting very abnormally since coming to Poston.

2. THE DIRE NEED OF PRIVACY

Life in Poston is a contradiction and a strange paradox. The people were brought from the crowded cities and thrown into immense desert plains with its unlimited space, and they find to their deer dismay that they cannot have any privacy. There is plenty of space but not enough for a man to have the privilege of calling a little shelter his home. He can not have a little place where he can get away from the congested and compressed society of men and women and secure for himself a few moments of aloneness and quiet. He comes home from his day's work out in public life and finds his home just as public as any other place. Unrelieved tension continued over a period of months will have serious consequences.

3. BREAK OF MORALE

Many friendships of long standing have come to an end. Many more are being threatened to a breaking point because of the unhappy enforced living with other families. Japanese are a sensitive people and the breaking of friendships is a matter of serious concern, a matter that cannot be healed in a day or a week. Sometimes it means the complete termination of relations. There are rumors, though most must be utterly unfounded, that the moral condition of the young people is declining. If this true it can hardly be other wise expected when housing conditions force children and young people regardless of age or sex to be thrown in together in one room. The housing of course cannot bare the full burden of responsibility but it is very evident that it is a decidedly contributing factor.

4. IMPOSSIBILITY OF HOME-LIFE

The lack of adequate room drives children into "the streets"

and young people outside of their homes for their social life. Organized recreation is trying nobly to recompense this need, but nothing can adequately take the place of life in the home. It would not even be impossible to anticipate a reaction against everything organized, even organized recreation and a determination for individual freedom if we assume organization and regimentation to replace and become a substitute of the home. It is a common fact that nobody stays at home in Boston and that is an unhealthy and dangerous sign. The older people try to make front rooms of their doorsteps but the approaching fall and winter is going to deprive them even of this luxury and they must find room in the shelter of the barracks. The nights are going to be longer and there must be much consideration of leisure hours that cannot be comfortably spent in cramped quarters.

5. UNEQUAL HOUSING DISTRIBUTION

Much criticism is current in finding some blocks provided with conspicuously more space and privacy. With it there is added irritation that Camp Two and Three are proportionately much less crowded than Camp One. There are also reports that housing conditions in the Salinas Reception Center were far superior so far as adequate space is concerned, and it is wondered why a temporary center of a few month's duration would be given more consideration than a Relocation Center where men and women are expected to spend at least five or six years.

6. FAMILIES WITH COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

When two or three families live together, so compressed, and there is even one individual who is afflicted with some serious contagious disease the situation is most unhappy and serious to say the least. Especially is this true when one understands the fact that tuberculosis is feared with almost superstitious repulsion especially by the older people and in many cases even with the young.

7. SINGLE MEN'S BARRACKS

Their life is as remote from privacy and comforts of home as can possibly be conceived. It is almost discouraging and depressing sight to visit one of these barracks. Added to this, young men and older men are put together whose habits are radically different. For example, young men retire late and rise late while the older men retire early and rise early. Thus creating unavoidable difficulty, the young disturbing the old at night and the older men disturbing the young in the morning. This is merely one of the many existent problems in the single men's barracks.

8. THE AGED SINGLE MEN

Some of the aged single men are too feeble to take care of themselves, are actually in need of institutional care but not critical enough for hospitalization.

9. GRADUAL LOSS OF CONFIDENCE

Three months ago the community started hearing encouraging promises of how the living quarters would be improved and along with many other promises they created a healthy co-operative and an appreciative spirit toward the administration of Poston quite in contrast from the rather negative rebellious spirit with which they came. After three months there seems to be little sign of those promises being fulfilled and the people are gradually beginning to lose faith, coming to feel that all of those promises were just empty "pep talks" to infuse spirit into the discouraged people.

II SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM

The absolute minimum provision must be an apartment to each family. The demand is unreasonable to expect two families, regardless of congeniality, to live together for the duration.

2. LARGE FAMILIES

A family of seven cannot be expected to find sufficient room in one apartment. Such a family should be given the adjoining apartment, or at least part of it partitioned, with some members living in other barracks with friends as is being done now must be thoroughly avoided and discouraged. The family unit should be by all means maintained.

3. FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY IN DISTRIBUTION

The purposed plan of constructing small apartments in each block will increase the problem, creating hard feelings, unless quarters are provided for all couples and all small families without exception and not just to a few or even many. One unfortunate and unhappy family will create a problem that will permeate the whole block. This is not to discourage constructing additional small apartment but an insistence on a one hundred percent alleviation of the need.

4. ADDITIONAL BARRACKS

It is very evident that there are not enough barracks in Camp No. 1 to comfortably house ten thousand people. There must be additional barracks built and the cost should not be a problem. If only the material is provided, the people themselves could and could build them as is being done in certain Relocation Projects of Canada. A rumor is current

that the original plan called for sixty blocks in Camp No. 1 but for some unknown reason there are only thirty six.

5. IMPROVEMENT OF BARRACKS

The walls, floors, and ceilings should be lined for the winter season. In its present condition it can hardly weather the winter cold. Lumber should be provided to build shelves and closets to conserve the little enough space there is.

6. HEALTH PROBLEMS

The housing department should work in close cooperation with the public health department and segregate families with communicable diseases. Very frequently where sickness actually exists people are loathe to apply and request for a change of quarters for very apparent social reasons. In such cases the health department as well as the housing ought to take the initiative and insist upon their separation.

7. COMMUNITY SURVEY

Conduct a community survey through questionnaires to give the people opportunity to air their housing problems and to suggest improvements. Their tabulation will give direction to energies of alleviation.

8. SINGLE MEN'S BARRACKS

Partition single men's barracks into smaller units. Allow the young men to have quarters of their own separate from the older men and vice versa.

9. HOME FOR THE AGED

A home should be established to take care of the aged who are unable to take care of themselves but not sufficiently critical for hospital care.

10. YOUNG WOMEN'S SOCIAL HALLS

In the young women's barracks there should be a separately partitioned living room or social parlour where guests may be entertained.

11. INFORM THE PEOPLE

If plans of housing improvements are in progress, the people should be adequately informed to help keep up the morale and spirit lest they become tragically hardened and bitterly reconciled.

As is very evident, the report proposes no claim of scientific survey but is the observation and conviction of an unprofessional eye mingled also with his own personal experience.

Respectfully Submitted,

(Rev.) Jitsuo Morikawa

ly important and when I was in New York, lots of people/^{there}were
getting ~~xxxxxxx~~ excited about what has ~~xx~~ happened and wonder-
ing whether anyone was taking notes at all, and we were under
the impression that this whole colossal movement was going
on unrecorded. It is very thrilling indeed and I am person-
ally extremely/^{very}happy that this is going on with the compe-
~~gent~~ tent trained leaders of the very best methods of/^{American}sociol-
ogy. I congratulate you all and I hope you realize what you
are doing as you cannot afford to lose a moment as you have
~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ everything to discover. It is the most extra-
ordinary thing that has ever happened in this country. It
will be of enormous value, not only to America, but to the
world at large/^{and you will be the only informed people on it.} I congratulate you on the work and hope you
continue to do so.

8-10-42

Mr. and Mrs. N. live with another couple, Mr. and Mrs. O. in the same apartment. Both are young couples and have been wed but a few years apiece; however, their many little minor frictions have contributed immensely to the building up of a great wall of difference between the two couples. At the present moment this difference almost verges on the point of hatred. I have written up of an interview with these two couples in another report, and I wish to record only one point here:-

The chief grievance on the part of the N's seems to be that they feel that the O's are not very thoughtful and considerate of the biological needs and urge of the other couple. The N's state that they go out for "long walks" occasionally in the evenings so that the O's might have some measure of privacy in the early evening in which they could have sexual intercourse as they see fit. The N's state that the O's never go out of an evening, and thus give them no privacy. The N's feel that their sex life is held back because of this inconsiderate attitude on the part of the O's.

(JNF)

Tsuehijama

9/24/42
A H L

STUDY OF A FAMILY


(Data to be secured on every family in the blocks)

1. Age, sex, name of each member. Chart of relationships.
2. Biographic sketch of each person.
 - a. Education
 - b. Occupational history
 - c. Present occupation
 - d. Place of origin
 - e. Religious denomination
 - f. Outstanding characteristics

9/24/42
A H L

MORE DETAILED STUDY OF CERTAIN SELECTED FAMILIES

*_*_*_*_*

1. Select families so as to get different parts of the whole range of variation shown by the block as to size of family, geographic location, crowding, occupation, economic status, etc.
2. Secure more detailed biography from each member of these families.
 - a. Childhood - How spent? Happy or unhappy? - In what way? Illness? Age of walking and talking? Kind of relationship with parents. Adjustment to friends, - easy or difficult? What was home environment like? What strong memories remain? Conflicts between older generation and younger? Japanese culture versus American?
 - b. Education - School record. Favorite subjects. Sports and extra curricular activities. Social life in school.
 - c. Work - History of all jobs and salaries.  changed when jobs changed.
 - d. Social Life - (Prior to evacuation) - Who were the friends? Of what sort? What activities were done socially? Sex life.
 - e. Chief sources of security and satisfaction throughout life.
 - f. Chief sources of insecurity and unhappiness throughout life.
3. Opinions and Attitudes
 - a. Dominant ideas in regard to right and wrong, social questions, morals, sex.
 - b. Ideas about how life should be ordered - what constitutes a good life.
 - c. Views on religion - Is there a future world?
 - d. Political views.
 - e. Attitude toward relocation.
 - f. Attitude toward life in Poston.

g. Other ideas which strongly mark the personality.

4. Temperamental characteristics

What is his personality like? Jolly, sad, hot tempered, various combinations of these? Slow or quick, lazy or energetic, etc.

5. Physical Appearance

Describe clothes, order of hair, physical build, speech - quick or slow, well ordered or scattered, typical mannerisms of body and speech. What sort of first impression does he make on people?

6. What are his Chief Activities in Poston?

How he passes time? Social life, job, recreation? Where does he go and what does he do and with whom? Attitudes toward these people? Chief source of satisfaction here and chief source of uneasiness.

* * * * *

Both the long and the short family studies should be kept in a folder in alphabetical order. As odd fragments of information or observation come along, they can be added, each to the appropriate family.

From time to time, summarize in red ink, all the data on each family. Date the summary. Attempt to state the outstanding assets and liability of each person and each family at the time of making these summaries.

*_*_*_*_*

BLOCK SOCIAL LIFE

1. Sociometric questionnaire is O.K. - but it needs to be shortened and simplified. Perhaps a period of direct observation of various families and also studying the diaries should be done before the survey is made. Look over the Food survey, especially as it refers to Block 30 and try to understand the social structure of the Mess Hall, the Block Manager, the kitchen and their relations to the block.

Consult Dr. Spicer about this.

CHILDREN

1. With some help, carry out over a period of weeks careful observation concerning what the children really do with their time. Where do they go? What do they do? Who do they follow? Who do they imitate? Who do they admire? What do they talk about? What games do they play? What children are leaders? What activities? At first a general description of the behavior of the block children could be worked out, and then a specific study on a certain number of selected children, following them through their days. How do they sleep? Any nightmares? Do they seem happy, or excessively exerted? Any increase in bed wetting since coming here? Nail biting?

*_*_*_*_*

ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

The family studies outlined will in time yield data on this topic.

54
copy 2
9-6-42

INFORMAL MEETING

PRESENT:

Miss Ida E. Morrison	Mr. Chester A. Potts
Miss Frances S. Cushman	Dr. Miles E. Cary
Dr. Homer Howard	Dr. Hubert Armstrong
Mr. Arthur Harris	Dr. A. H. Leighton

MR. ARMSTRONG: The Japanese family structure is the chief source of security. Next comes a few Caucasian friends. Here in Position they find conflict between their culture and the white culture. They are separated from those whites who gave them most security in Caucasian culture.

As new teachers, they feel very inadequately trained. This is one source of insecurity. Different status, they will have in relationship to Japanese families. Especially this progressive teaching because Japanese will expect the pupils to ask questions and not the teachers. They feel this will affect their prestige.

The girls have felt more thwarted than the boys. They haven't learned sports, painting or other forms of expressions. Some say they haven't even learned to dance. No satisfactory relationships with the opposite sex. They were told at 8 not to play with boys.

MR. HOWARD: In early days at school, the men were always at one table and the girls at the other. The teachers spoke to them about it but still some do it.

MR. ARMSTRONG: The girls say that if they sit at a table with mostly boys, they don't get enough to eat.

In Japan, a woman never tells a husband something he doesn't know. She may hint and try to get him to find out if he knows but she never tells him. She is supposed to be dull and he is supposed to be bright.

Girls in a chorus say that they don't want to play the Japanese role, but then start to make exceptions. Father has the most status. Then, an argument whether the oldest son or mother. It seems the son takes over when he becomes socially mature.

One should never point out faults in Japanese culture but say that since they are going to live among the Americans, they better do as Americans do which is different.

Misunderstanding over words--they are against the phrase, "Progressive education" though many of them came from progressive

schools without knowing it. California carries a lot of prestige and if you tell them that California gives credit, it helps a lot.

MR. HOWARD: We have tried to avoid use of the word, progressive education. California State department frankly advocates "progressive methods." After two days in one school this year, they were all very upset. They thought a bunch of crackpots had been sent in to run the summer school. As a result, we gathered all we could from California to support a change. They felt we were giving an honest attempt to show modern education methods. At least, they were open-minded. They are very original in their ideas for getting material and they like projects. There still is a resistance in a minority.

MR. ARMSTRONG: It isn't an intellectual matter but mostly emotional. Their society was fairly static and social practices was institutionalized. You found out you should do something and then you did it. Now we are telling them the future should grow out of the present. I asked in a test, "Was the scientific method the best way of handling current problems?" and nearly all said no. Pragmatic method seems almost wrong to them. But, there has been a marked change which is not perfunctory.

MR. HOWARD: How successful they will be in winning their parents, I don't know.

MR. ARMSTRONG: A Nisei doesn't try to convert an Issei. It just isn't done.

MR. HOWARD: What are the problems and needs in Poston? Resource? Means of livelihood? Projected development of means? Safety hazards? Dreams and Illusions? What trips, interviews and experiences do you think are desirable for children? How to involve older people in planning?

These are questions I asked and had the whole group write on this. I have had these compiled into lists. Some gave very smart suggestions.

• They have been concerned about education being centered in Poston but after I explained in some detail, they came to feel there were ample opportunities for reaching out into the outside world. They got over the feeling that it was narrow.

MR. ARMSTRONG: The more their emotions are centered on after the war, the better. That is what they are looking towards.

Speech--it will deteriorate unless something is done about it. They would like to have it improved. I had them teach me some Japanese words and that keeps them from getting self-conscious about it.

MR. CARY: WE should get a recording machine and start a speech clinic.

MR. ARMSTRONG: 90% have difficulty with some words. The teachers need courses in speech. Same for their written English--verb forms and plurals and other characteristic errors.

Japanese are called deceptive and treacherous. This is often due to their cultural emphasis on excessive politeness. Japanese male is not supposed to show emotions or what he thinks. They have to go through a rigid code. Only outlet is taking it out on those below. What are good Caucasian practices would be good material out of which to build a whole course.

MR. HOWARD: Some Japanese think the Japanese should not concentrate in large areas again but be spread out like the Chinese are. If they had done this in the past, they think there would have been no Poston.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Many feel that even though evacuation may have been in general needed, it was unfair to some. "Truly, it is harder to live for one's country than to die for it" says the aviator. Ted, one of our bus drivers said that they could never take his loyalty away apropos of the American Legion's Nisei citizenship attitude on Ted Hironoto.

MR. HOWARD: He is a fellow with real stuff in him. He is a hard working fellow and finds things to do and helps people. He is suitable for custodian work. Could be better than a bus driver.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Individual resentment will show itself and I think it is healthy. We must realize that we do things to generate it and let it go.

Many students are very devout Christians. Many are very adolescent and naive. It is a field with an evangelism that is essentially American. A minister's wife has told me that many in the Christian Church were until recently, Buddhist.

MR. HOWARD: There is need for caution regarding these very religious people in the teachers' group. Some are very good imitations of very narrow Puritans. Some have the idea that a teacher must be a very goody, goody kind of a person, must never be criticized by a parent. Can they wear slacks? etc. Many of the Issei are violently opposed to girls wearing slacks. Don't wear any in some blocks.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I feel there is great need for sex education. Everything is learned after marriage. Many boys mentioned this.

MR. HOWARD: I have been surprised by the unusual natural ability in teaching in these teacher students. Most of them have had no formal training in education.

9-22-42

B.M.
I

THE FAMILY:--

The following is an excerpt from the proceedings of the Block Manager's meeting of September 18, 1942, and which excerpt is self explanatory.

Mits Kaneko, Housing Department: "Only the earlier blocks have populations which are below the minimum of 280. Today there are only twelve vacant apartments. These are necessary for all the social problems that arise in the community. Privacy is important, without it "explosions" are bound to occur. There are many cases where people are on edge and cause trouble because of the housing situation. Today we have 173 applications for small apartments which are considered urgent. We need the cooperation of the Block Managers to keep the vacant twelve/apartments to take care of serious social problems. 573 small apartments are needed in this unit (for housing families of two and three members) to accommodate all the requests that we have on file.

"There are nine or ten blocks that have over 280 in the block, and four blocks have over 300. In making changes in housing, we must think in terms of the community as a whole. An effort will be made to try to even the population in the different blocks.

"A suggestion has been made to move the partitions in the buildings to accommodate the people according to the number of persons in the family unit. This system can be tried as an experiment in one block. A large family will be given more floor space than one with fewer members. An average of 20 people to a building will be maintained."

At this point there was a discussion concerning the res-

ponded.

pensibility which the Block Managers should assume in problems involving housing. It was pointed out that there are two schools of thought among the Block Managers:

1. One group feels that Block Managers should assume responsibility about moving within the block.
2. The other group feels that Block Managers should keep their hands off moving because they want to avoid kickbacks later.

Mits Kaneko reported that in many cases residents move into vacant apartments without consulting the Housing Department first. They file their application to move after they have moved. Mits asked that the Block Managers cooperate with the Housing Department in discouraging this practice. He felt that the ideal procedure for moving from one block to another is to obtain the consent of the Block Manager in which the resident now lives, the permission of the Block Manager of the block to which he expects to move, and the OK of the Housing Department.

It was suggested that Block Managers bring persons wanting to move, to the Housing Department instead of having the individuals come by themselves. After careful consideration it was decided that this would not be the most satisfactory system because some residents might wish to move for reasons that they cannot discuss with Block Managers.

It is possible to move from Unit I to Unit III at any time.

The Housing Department will issue mimeographed instructions regarding the proper procedure for moving. These will be distributed to the Block Managers.

John Katano: "The housing problem is the most serious problem here. The only way to get cooperation from the people is to make them happy. One way to make people happy is to give them privacy in their homes. Right now on this Project we are spending money on things that are necessary and important (tractors, implements, etc.) But not as necessary as improved housing. We must give people privacy. We should stress to the authorities that we must get everything for our homes first. We must get our partitions first. If we cannot get lumber, then we must have canvas. Everyone must make known to the Administration and to all others above us that we need this done. We must ask that the councilmen work on housing first."

Mits Kaneke: "People will collapse if we do not have better housing facilities here. Before we buy a single tractor, we should get partitions. People cannot use the tractors and other equipment which are now being purchased if they are not well -unhappy at home. I suggest that the Community Council take this matter up - apply to Washington - tell them about Poston. Conditions in the dining halls and housing conditions are important. Because of the pressure brought to bear on the Housing Department by the residents, no one is willing to work in the department. Dr. Leighton has promised to cooperate with the Housing Department by sending one of his investigators to help."

Mr. Izuo: "You should get more people to work for you in the Housing Department. There are 400 to 500 people employed in the Recreation Department so you should have a larger staff."

Tak Nishimoto: "Dr. Spicer is very anxious to hear of Block Manager's opinions through the Daily Log. Through you he

wants to learn the general atmosphere in the blocks. If you have housing trouble, put it in your Log. Through Dr. Spicer, it will get to Dr. Leighton, and finally to Washington."

Mits Kaneko: "The American Friends Service Committee has written to ask if they can be of assistance in some way. It is true that recreation is important and supplies are needed, but we feel that housing is more important so we are going to ask that these people help us with housing."

Mits Kaneko: "The physical condition of the applicant is our first consideration."

(JNF)

The Family.

9-14-42

HOUSING

~~Notes on the families~~ With the limited number of apartments available to meet the needs of the applicants for a change of address, ~~the~~ Housing Registration Department has set aside a file for the applications for those desiring smaller apartments. To date there has been filed about eighty some odd such applications. The following are some of the reasons stated in detail by the applicants themselves.

1. "Living in unpartitioned dorm at present. Sixteen in here."
2. "There are eight of us. One child three years of age, an elderly fellow interne~~d~~ that must have urinal bowl and chamber pot which baby bothers with. Too many adults for the one child."
3. "At present there are two families living together. We have no privacy. And I have many interviewers -----especially pertaining to welfare and etc. As a block manager I believe I am entitled to an apartment of my own."
4. "At present there is eight in one apartment. It happens to be in the smaller rooms and is very uncomfortable and crowded."
5. "There is eight in one apartment and would like to move to an apartment adjacent to my parents. The room that we are now living is very small and inconvenient."
6. "My family is small. I would like to leave this large room for a large family and move into a smaller room."
7. "The room we have now is too big for our family so we will like to move to another quarter where there is vacancy."
8. "We have a ten month's old baby, requiring during certain parts of the day absolute quiet. This cannot be accomplished unless everyone in the household recognize the importance of sleep to an infant. Another single room for our family will be in the best interest of health for our baby. Our family is living with another in a single room. It is difficult if not impossible to obtain any privacy under these conditions. Where there are two heads of families, there is bound to be misunderstanding, hence incompatibility."

*Lack
Privacy*

overcrowding

two families

overcrowding

overcrowding

*fear of being
doubled-up-*

two families

9. "Work in the kitchen so it is better to live nearer the kitchen. There is too in our family so we rather live in smaller room and give big room to big family."
10. "My son,-----, works in the night as an ambulance driver and at present with eight in one apartment it is very difficult for-----to rest during the day. I wish to have two apartments together because when the children run in and out as it is at present and when we have visitors my son has to get up and leave. With two apartments, one can be used for the family and the other for my son."
11. "Living with father, mother and my sister besides my own family seven altogether. There are five adults and two babies. The babies take up just as much room as the adults if not more. Also we belong to the volunteer block so we feel that we are justified in making this request."
12. "My father is a cook at Block 6 and he would like to be able to keep an eye on the dining hall."
13. "Ground is not level. Neighbors are too noisy. My mother has to be near the latrine during the winter."
14. "Too noisy. Bad for ----'s nerves and ----'s heart. Want room for two people only. Want privacy."
15. "There is six in the room now and the baby needs more room now. The people with us cannot rest well with a baby crying at night. Also baby cannot sleep with noise in room during day so we like have an apartment of building 13."
16. "People with whom they are living were strangers before she came. The other family has a member very ill and when she uses the chamber, it leaves a very pugnacious odor. The other day when she her illness became serious, she went as far as accusing Mrs.----- for it. As the result Mrs.----- has become extremely nervous more so than she was. Please move her."

few I
being
double-up

look I
privacy

two families
overcrowded

employment

privacy

two families

two families

17. "Family troubles. Volunteers."
18. "Want smaller apartment. Doubled up to make more room when room was needed."
19. "Want to move into smaller apartment because of baby."
20. "There are two couples and two single men in one room. The room is partitioned with curtains hanging all certain ways. The room is hot because of lack of air going through. Want to move to relieve some pressure."
21. "Want to move into smaller apartment. Cannot get along with the people with whom they live which is a different family and not related."
22. "At present we are occupying temporarily a large apartment and since we have to move when the smaller apartments are partitioned we would like to move to Block 5 because some of our friends reside there and for the added reason that it is relatively quiet."
23. "Desires to move to 31 because husband works in hospital."
24. "Living with -----family. Do not like living with another family."
25. "Being single and alone I desire an apartment by myself rather than to have an apartment with strangers."
26. "There is three family in the room. I have to go to work at 4 A.M. on water truck to Parker so it bothers the people who live with us early in the morning and so at night I can't not sleep early account of noise."
27. "There are three families in this one apartment. This is a very urgent case."
28. "Needs partitioning immediately due to cold weather."
29. "Wife is pregnant. Baby expected in two weeks."

two families
two families

two families

two families

has been
doubled-up

employment

two families

lack of
privacy

three families

✓

out -

privacy

30. "As a Block Manager present living quarters is too far from office, and not convenient to attend urgent matter after office hour."
31. "Majority of people of this block wishes them (---3) to move (-----) out because of mothers refusal of anyone elses entrance into latrine while any member of family occupies it."
32. "Employed as a night watchman, cannot sleep during day sharing the cabin with another family and child."
33. "Can't get along with other families."
34. "Mr. A and Mr. B who is now in 5C can't get along with Mr. C in the same apartment. This has been going along since the day they got together."
35. "Mr. A can't get along with the B's in Apartment C. They've arguing for a long time now, and they want to move immediately."
36. "Nine in apartment. Over-crowded so three wish to move to smaller apartment when they are completed."
37. "Living with another family. Wish privacy as need room for study."
38. "Mrs. ----has very sick heart. Needs absolute rest."
39. "Cannot get along with other family. Mr.----- at present cooking school. Over-crowded. Living at present with another family of four at above address."
40. "Two separate families, one of two people and the other of four people occupying one room. Would like to live as family unit. Also crowded now. Would like to change address before any difficulties should arise."
41. "Over-crowding and two separate families occupy same apartment. Two families with no previous acquaintance are sharing the intimacy of one single room. Another thing the boys are studiously inclined and need more room for study."

employment.

leech

privacy.

two family

✓

✓

✓

over-crowding.

two family

medical

over-crowding

two families

two families

42. "Mrs.----is in poor health and would like to be as near latrines as possible. Other occupants of apartment are all elderly also and it would be convenient to be near kitchen and etc. They do not get along with other family they are living with at present time."
43. "Couple -----newlyweds would like to apply for small partitioned rooms."
44. "Very crowded."
45. "He's working at the pump house and it'll be a great help if he moves to Block 32. He's married and wishes to have a small room after the carpenters get through."
46. "Wishes to move to other end of barrack so they can be near water faucet. They are from Salinas and unaccustomed to hot weather so they water their house three or four times a day and it is hard to carry water from one end of the room to the other. The old people also wish to be as close to the latrine as possible."
47. "More privacy desired."
48. "Center apartment desired. More privacy desired."
49. "Two families living in one room. Losing family relationship be not being able to talk freely because of other family. Also plan to become teacher. Will need quiet for study."
50. "Seven in one room. Three different families."
51. "Wants small apartment. Eight in one apartment at the present time."
52. "Eight in one apartment. Too crowded."
53. "At present they are living with another family of three. But they would like to move into a smaller apartment for more privacy and because the baby is sick."
54. "-----being ill would like to get into a room where she can rest peacefully. There are seven in -----family and at present we are living with another family in Block 54. Therefore if a larger room is available all the members can live in the same block."
55. "Overcrowded with two families. Families do not get along very well."

Very families
overcrowded
Privacy

56. "Inconvenient with two families. Expecting a baby."

THE FAMILY STUDY:

Report on joint meeting of Block Managers' Housing Committee
and Housing-Registration staff:--

Those present:--

1. Tak Nishimoto - Asst. Supervisor of Block Managers
2. John Katano - Block Managers' Committee
3. Roy _____ - " " "
4. Elmer Suski - " " "
5. Mits Kaneko - Chairman, H. & R. office
6. Phyllis Kinoshita - Spec. Investigator Housing
Applications
7. John Fukushima

The above group met in the afternoon, as a result of Mits Kaneko's report at the Blockmanagers' meeting in the morning, and its purpose was to further clarify the acute housing situation and discuss ways and means toward alleviating the present housing condition. I was asked to sit in at the study of the readjustment of the Japanese families to the Poston set-up.

Tak Nishimoto opened the discussion with a brief remark about the dire need for finding a quick solution to the housing problem in view of the fact that the partitions had been promised the families, but that after weeks of waiting there still remains some doubt about the materialization of these promised partitions that would enable each family to have a unit of its own. Mits interrupted Tak at this point and said that the partitions were already bought, that is, plastic partitions and not wooden partitions, and that these plastic boards were already at a Los Angeles loading platform awaiting transportation. However, he was not certain of this point and said he would check with Mr. Evans. It seems that plastic materials do not have a priority rating, and in as much as funds are al-

ready provided for partitioning material there seems no apparent reason why plastic boards could not substitute for wooden partitions.

The housing problem should receive the united and individual attention of all the departments in Poston, avers John Katano. If families are dissatisfied here in Poston, no further progress can be made in the economic or agricultural fields. It is necessary that the importance of the housing of families be brought to the attention of all the people, and that the people maintain a common front in the plea for the alleviation of the situation.

During the course of discussion it was brought out that there should be a more equitable distribution of population by blocks, and that it would be wise to accomplish this before the partitions were put up. The partitions are not a definite arrangement, and so this matter can be adjusted with plenty of time. The difficulty confronting the process of equalizing population distribution is that of actually persuading the people of an overcrowded block to move into a lightly burdened block, and that of whether the latter type of block would welcome such a move. All those in the discussion felt that this was not a problem where personal selfishness should take the highlight but a problem that must and can only be solved by the willingness of all 36 blocks to cooperate with the program.

Mits explained why the earlier blocks are not as loaded to capacity as those blocks that were occupied at a later date. Blocks #6 and #11 were filled with volunteers and at that stage of registration these volunteers were assured that no families would be doubled up regardless of how small the family unit. The first evacuees were assigned in like manner to about 13 or 14 blocks before the housing

department awoke to the realization that there would not be sufficient room to house 10,000 evacuees at the rate the blocks were being filled, and so it was decided to establish a policy that said not less than five or more than 8 can be assigned per apartment. This policy led to the resultant overcrowding and the unequal distribution in those blocks that were filled at a later date. The overloaded blocks are not insisting that certain families be re-assigned to the lighter blocks, but are only asking for a larger number of partitions. However, the committee felt that it would only be fair to equalize the blocks before actually partitioning the apartments.

Of the 36 blocks in Unit #1 there are 8 blocks with a total population of 280 or more. These blocks would be termed "frozen blocks" and no movement can be made into the block, but movements out of these blocks to other "open" blocks will be advised. It was pointed out that most of the families are rather well settled and did not wish to move into a new neighborhood. And to overcome this hesitation to move on the part of the established families, it was suggested that an official bulletin be issued either by Mr. Evans or Mr. Head, or even by resorting to an appeal to Mr. Meyer of the W.R.A. This bulletin would officially freeze those 8 overloaded blocks, and would permit movements to other blocks until such time as an even figure that would approximate around 260 was reached. It was further suggested that blocks #6 and #11 be also included in the "frozen" list with the exception of those empty barracks and apartments to which movements can be made. These 2 above mentioned blocks would be thrown out of the "frozen" list only when it is found absolutely impossible to equalize the blocks without the aid of these two blocks. This would constitute a concession granted to the

volunteers.

The advantage of equalizing the blocks as regards the population total would lie in the fact that when the partitions become a reality the amount of floor space given per individual would then be almost equally distributed. Another decided advantage in the equalization of the population would be the fairness with which food can be distributed to the 36 kitchens. At present the 36 kitchens are divided into 4 classes, and some kitchens fall into a given class because they fall 1 or 2 persons short of a given count, and distribution based on such a system is not fair in the long run to such unfortunate kitchens. However, an equitable distribution of population would enable the food allotment to be equal to all kitchens.

It was further suggested that all movements be made only on paper, and not involve the actual transfer of families. In this way, it would be possible to grasp an over-all picture of the housing distribution.

Mention was made of the laborers who were leaving camp for outside work under contracts that are to expire in Dec. 1942 and that this would enable openings of several apartments. It was also mentioned that these apartments must be kept open for these workers who might in all probability return to Boston at the termination of the contract. However, it seemed more advisable that the present housing situation be partially alleviated by the use of these new vacancies, and to consider later those laborers who left camp.

The meeting terminated with the decision to take a survey by the housing department of the 36 blocks and to find out exactly how many separate families there are with 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 members in the family.

(JNF)

9-5-42

NOTES: The Family
Rev. Jitsuo Morikawa

"What bothers me the most here is the lack of stress upon the human element of camp life, and that too much importance is placed upon the physical aspects of this camp. It is not as important to develop this virgin land for agricultural purposes as it is to meet the human needs of the families that are so crowded together. It just doesn't make sense that men, women, and children of various ages be placed together in the same apartment."

"I don't mind the bumps on the dirt road, but I am concerned about the bumps that are arising in the families that are crowded together. The people are willing to pitch in and help build the necessary partitions and additional barracks if only the administration would exert their influence towards the purchase of building material."

"Also I am very much worried about the morale of the leaders of the community. The leaders of this community deal with human personalities and are in contact with people all day long, and yet when these leaders enter their own apartments they do not find peace and quiet, for there are other members living in the same apartment. Many leaders have expressed the feeling that they cannot possibly continue under this constant strain of seeing people continuously. Leaders need solitude--to rest and to think things out. When the morale of the leaders sag and crack, there will be dire consequences upon the members of the community."

"One point I would like to stress very heavily is in regard to the latrines. There is absolutely no sense in permitting such a large number of people as are in the block to use a common latrine. Think of it from the communicable social disease angle. Why there are ever so many possibilities for contracting all sorts of diseases by such practices as the common useage of latrines and showers."

"One of the greatest mistakes that the authorities made here that certainly does not contribute to the making of a happy family relationship here in camp is the haphazard way in which we were assigned our rooms. No sooner had we arrived at the intake center in the red busses, we were asked to make up our minds as to with whom we wished to be roomed. Now, how could we possibly decide, in such a short time, and as tired as we were, with whom we could amicably get along for the duration! Most of us who nubered less than five in the family had to look about for our new room mates and more than often our best friends were in another bus, and we had neither the time nor the opportunity to talk this matter over with them. Consequently, most of us were roomed with total strangers, and that, you know, will require a great deal of readjustment."

"One case with which I am acquainted is that of a couple having been assigned a room with another family, one of whose members was discovered to be tubercular just very recently. The first couple upon this discovery demanded to be transfered elsewhere. Now, I feel that someone slipped somewhere along the line here, for tubercular people should never have been sent

here, and knowingly or unknowingly thrown into the same apartment with other healthy people."

"Oh yes, another point, and that is this:--I feel that it is a tragic thing that bachelor men of advanced years -- say 65 to 75,-- should be forced to keep house for themselves. There is nothing "homey" about the men's barracks, and men who are well advanced in years should receive some special consideration. They should not be forced to wash their own clothing-- no, not at 65 and 75 years of age. Possibly these men of advanced years should be institutionalized. (JNF)

"People are losing their restraint here in Poston, and with the Japanese restraint is more than one-half of family life. The Japanese are a race full of restraints, and without these restraints the Japanese begin to crumble."

Rev. Morikawa was having a field day today, and expressed his thoughts freely. (JNF)

II

Miss Marvel Maeda, eldest daughter of the second volunteers, arrived in a car which towed a trailer and therefore reached her destination several hours later than did Mr. Nakashima, although both left El Centro at 6 a.m. They wanted to get an earlier start but could not do so because of the curfew regulations that the army had set down on the West Coast. When Miss Maeda's group arrived at the sentry post, Mr. Nakashima had already gone on ahead with another sentry, and so Miss Maeda and the balance of the eleven volunteers were compelled to wait almost an hour at the sentry post amidst dust and heat. From where they were waiting they could not get a view of the camp proper, but once in camp they were very pleased with the barracks, the latrines, and the general construction of the camp. While waiting at the sentry post they had gathered the impression that camp life here in Poston was something a kin of what was in view--the make-shift construction workers' cabins and tents, "privies" and the lack of plumbing facilities. Miss Maeda said that her heart fell out when she saw the "privies" with which the construction crew was provided, thinking that she had to use the same type of structure and was very much relieved and thankful when given her first view of the evacuee camp set-up, ie. the neat barracks row on row, the neat latrines and washrooms, and the spacious dining rooms.

The eleven volunteers were called for at Block No. 6 at dinner time on the first evening, and were driven to the personnel mess hall where they were served an evening menu consisting of fresh vegetable salad, Virginia baked ham with candied yam,

battered carrots and peas, and piping hot apple pie with melted cheese, and plenty of milk. However, all were too fatigued after the long hot desert trip to fully enjoy the dinner that evening. Miss Maeda thought at the time that if such were the menu at camp, she had made no mistake in volunteering in coming to Poston. However, she discovered the very next day that the menus for the evacuee kitchens were to be slightly different and somewhat disappointing in comparison with her first meal in Poston.

Miss Maeda recounts an amusing and yet an embarrassing incident which occurred on the first evening. The soldiers had been ordered to examine all baggages with respect to contrabands such as weapons, flashlights, and etc. but were very, very embarrassed by the femininity of the contents of the women's baggages. After this incident, Mr. Evans reassured the group, both men and women, that hereafter no baggages will be searched piece by piece either of the several hundred volunteers who were to come during the week or of the evacuees who were scheduled to arrive at later dates. The morale of the volunteer group was very high and still is, Miss Maeda claims. "We left everything behind us and volunteered to come here with the idea that we had everything to gain and nothing to lose. General conditions were pictured to us as being very poor, but knowing this we came anyway as volunteers to make the choice of a none to cheerful situation."

(J.F.)

III

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Ohta comprised the membership of the third family of volunteers who came on May 8th. Mrs. Ohta had signed up as a volunteer; Mr. Ohta came as a member of the family, but nevertheless was immediately given an assignment upon arrival.

Mrs. Ohta is a graduate of U.C.L.A. as a sociology major, and had volunteered as a librarian, that being the position she held prior to evacuation. She recounts of the difficulty the auto party encountered on the way to Poston. The party only vaguely knew where the relocation site was located. They did not know that the name "Poston" was given to this camp. Upon arrival at Parker, all inquiries about "the Japanese relocation camp" brought only vague descriptions and directions for response. The auto party did the best it could under the circumstances and wormed its way through the soft pulverized dirt road through the Indian Reservation. Half way to camp the party stopped at a small general merchandise store and inquired, but again only a vague general direction was given. Finally, in desperation Mr. Ohta flagged a Diesel truck loaded with lumber, and this time their inquiry was rewarded with a "follow me". The auto party trailed the huge truck, constantly enveloped by the dust stirred up by the lumber truck and finally reached "the promised land."

Mrs. Ohta's version of the armed guards that were placed about the barrack the first night is that it was so done not in the belief that the volunteers needed to be guarded from escaping or from committing any act of sabotage, but in the

belief that the presence of the Caucasian construction crew might possibly be a potential threat to the lives of the volunteers. This precautionary step was taken to protect the Japanese from any physical violence outcropping from the possible antagonism of the white workers.

Mrs. Ohta says that the first meal here in the personnel mess hall was one she really enjoyed, for she says she was famished, not having had any thing to eat since an early breakfast. At Blythe, the auto party of Japanese volunteers was refused admission at the various restaurants, and the party had not eaten lunch that day. At Blythe, the proprietors were willing to serve the Caucasian friends of the party, but flatly refused service to the volunteer Japanese. Rather angered and dismayed at this incident, they drove on to Poston, and were relieved to discover the pleasant expression of surprise on the faces of the administrative staff members.

(JNF)

Shig Nakashima

August 24, 1942

IMPRESSIONS OF THE FIRST JAPANESE ARRIVALS IN POSTON

(I)

"I was the first Jap to knock at the gates of Poston," so said Shig Nakashima who came together with his wife and two other families as volunteers of the West Coast. They checked out of El Centro, California. The three families, numbering eleven people, arrived on a dusty and warm, wind swept afternoon on May 8 and took the administrative staff by surprise--for the W.R.A. had not yet wired ahead of the arrival of the vanguard of thousands of Japanese who were eventually to be shipped to Poston. The first of the three families was Mr. and Mrs. Shigeru Nakashima. The second family of volunteers was Mr. and Mrs. J. Maeda and their five children Marvel, Alice, Grace, Edith, and Robert. The third family was Mr. and Mrs. Fred Ota.

In three passenger cars they arrived, with Shig Nakashima's car arriving four hours ahead of the other two cars. The vehicles were packed to capacity with the personal belongings of the volunteers. Three Caucasian friends of the volunteers accompanied the group so that they could drive back the three cars, which the W.R.A. said the Japanese could not keep in camp. Mr. Nakashima and his Caucasian friends drove ahead in the first car, the other two cars being impeded by trailers and heavy luggages, and arrived around 2:30 p.m. Mr. Nakashima was challenged at the entrance to the camp by sentries on duty, and was accompanied to the Administration Building by a sentry who

was equipped with a tommy gun. On presentation at the Administration Building, there was at once a great amount of flurry and excitement, for no word had been served the administration of the arrival of the volunteers. This was made quite evident by Mr. Wade Head's absence from Poston, he being in Parker at that particular moment. Misterns John Evans, Ned Campbell, Gelven, Crawford, and Dr. Schnur and Misses Mahn, Hosmer, and Ellis were among the then present of the administrative staff.

Registration of the volunteers was conducted on a make-shift schedule, as no registration staff had yet been set up. Mr. John Evans personally took charge of the eleven volunteers, typing out the registration data without the aid of a secretary or a typist, and he typed the necessary information with his "pick and punch" system. The volunteers were assigned to their quarters by Mr. Evans and given their work assignments, effective the following day. Shig and his volunteers were assigned to Block 6 where throughout the night four sentries with tommy guns stood on guard. The volunteers chatted with the sentries during the early evening and both the sentries and volunteers jokingly agreed that there was no actual need for any armed guards, "but yet both felt that the army was like a mule anyway and that orders were orders." The following night, however, the guards were stationed around the block and not around the ~~barrack~~ for seventy-five additional volunteers had come in the next day, and still on the third night the guards were placed only on the main road that passed through the center of the camp. Today only the guard house on the main highway serves as a memento to the Postonians of the part the armed guard had in

the evacuation process. Mr. Nakashima states that during the first two weeks there was a very close harmonious relationship between the volunteers and the administrative staff. The staff members knew and recognized each and every volunteer by the first name. However, with the influx of new evacuees and the accompanying increase on the various duties on the part of the administrative staff, this close harmony in relationship began to lose itself in the mailstrom of the new community activities engaged in its own organization.

(J.F.)

NOTES: The Family

Mits Kaneko: (*Supervises housing department.*)

"Many cases of mental instability cropping up lately. In many cases, I feel that it is a result of the crowding together of the family or families in the small apartments. There is no opportunity in a crowded apartment for each individual member of the family to let off excess strain in the presence of others in the apartment and even where there are only two people (a couple) in the apartment. There is a tendency to hold themselves back from violent emotional outbursts because of the loosely constructed walls that seem to have ears. There is a Japanese proverb that in essence says that one can hear the gossip in undertones better and more clearly than talk given loudly and orally."

"Many blow off elsewhere, steam that cannot be blown off in the apartment. This "blow off" takes form in various complaints about food, about the dust, about the inconvenience of the latrines and wash-rooms. The adolescents find their outlet in the form of various recreational activities-- and when this excess steam cannot be thrown off, then the beginning of family difficulties arise."

"The home is what makes the family, and these apartments cannot be called a home in the true sense of the word. First, there must be comfort to a measurable degree, and that is something that cannot be satisfied under the present set-up. In summer these pre-fabricated structures are too warm, and allow too much dust to seep into the rooms. The lack of screens, the unfinished floors, the common use of the apartment to serve as combination bedroom, living room, and sometimes kitchen is not conducive to a happy family life."

"And as I look forward to the winter, the matter of comfort again looms up--what with the thin walls, and unfinished flooring, and the uneasiness caused by the absence of the oil-burning stoves that the residents believed they were to be given soon." (Chimneys were put into the roofs in July but many of the residents have the suspicion that they were put in as "pacifiers" until spring rolled around once again.)

(In reference to the stoves mentioned above I overheard today several warehousemen who claimed that no stoves will be placed in the barracks, and that the government had put a stop to the chimney construction. And thus, as one goes about the camp one can notice completed chimneys in some barracks, while some roofs are untouched, and still others have plain round holes in roofs. The reason given was that the oil burning stoves would constitute a fire hazard, but another warehouseman said that the government was unable to obtain so many stoves for the Japanese.)

"The thing I miss the most in connection with the dining hall is the pleasant after-dinner chats that we used to indulge in before all this happened. I feel that if we could somehow learn to linger in the dining hall after supper, and discuss events of the day, and other interesting things relative to ourselves we could gradually recapture a few of the fine pointers that go into the making of a happy family life."

(JNF)

9-2-42

*application
small
apartment*
THE FAMILY

INTERVIEW: PHYLLIS KINOSHITA-(Housing Dept. Investigator)

"Up until last month we did not follow through with an investigation of the many requests for a change of address simply because we were too overburdened with the many intakes and the resultant work. Now we feel that we can give each request the kind of attention that should be given in each instance, and we are investigating each request as it comes in to us. We are cooperating with the Family Welfare Department in this respect. To date there have been 1121 applications for a change of address filed in Poston I, of which number 799 were filed before July 24, 1942. The applications are coming in at the rate of 6 to 10 per day. These investigations that we are now conducting were begun only a few days ago, and to date we have only about 15 that have been followed through. Our policy now is to follow each application, and weigh the evidences carefully before either rejecting or approving the change. There is every reason to be careful in this respect because there are only about 9 vacant apartments at present (as of Sept. 1), although there are about 5 or 6 empty barracks that are being reserved to be divided into small apartments as soon as the partition material comes in. The few vacant apartments that we have on file now must be kept for emergency cases, and for special transfers from other centers. There are altogether too many applications being brought in with letters or notes written by a member of the hospital staff.

We cannot issue transfers for purely medical reasons because the number of available apartments is so limited. We feel that in the first few months we issued transfers too freely, and sometimes not too wisely. There have been many cases where approval was not justified, and many more instances where rejection was not justified. However, we hope to give a more just treatment hereafter by our policy of investigation.

"Many families came into camp feeling that they could get along well even if they were assigned to the same apartment; however, in due time, the many small irritations became involved into a huge ball of friction, and soon the families find themselves not on speaking term, and so forth--leading into an application for transfer."

"In almost every instance where an investigation was conducted prior to approval or rejection it was disclosed that there was a deeper reason underlying the written reasons on the surface. Only a thorough investigation brings out these true reasons, and so it is very necessary ^{to} we conduct these personal investigations."

(JNF)

THE FAMILY:--

TRI-UNIT MEETING OF BLOCK MANAGER'S HOUSING COMMITTEE

There is a general feeling among the people of the three camps that the government is not keeping its promise of providing for adequate housing as is shown by the lack of screens on the windows, the failure to install additional flooring and wall insulation, and the apparent inaction with regard to the installation of heating units for the individual apartments. Hopes were high when the evacuees first came into Poston, but with the passing of each successive week without any signs of action on the part of the administration there seemed evident a gradual loss of confidence in the administrative promises of these improvements. This loss of confidence seems to increase as the nights and early mornings become cooler and cooler, and as the increase in the number of mosquitoes becomes more and more noticeable.

The consensus of opinion among the members of the Block Manager's committee of all three units seems to be that the most important thing in Poston now is the immediate and imperative necessity for making each family as comfortable and as happy as possible, and that without a happy family background no community project will receive the full-fledged cooperation of the people. And to bring about this happy family background nothing can contribute as much as physical comfort, and to this end, finished flooring and side walls, screens, heating, and adequate room space play a vital role here in Poston.

The people are concerned very much about the approaching winter. They seem to feel that the government is of the opinion that it does not get cold enough here to warrant as much attention as the other relocation

centers located further to the north. The people from Imperial Valley point out that the cold here in the desert is a dry coldness that strikes quickly and is highly penetrative, whereas the cold of the northern snow is a warm kind of coldness. There seems to be much apprehension on the part of the families about how much cold they will actually have to endure this winter.

(JNF)

57
July 27, 1942 S

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Head

At your request I spoke briefly to the meeting of July 25, Friday, arranged in the mess hall of Block 27, which was called and addressed by Mr. Kurata. After your few words of greeting, you left. I was introduced and spoke briefly, ending my remarks with the statement that I would be happy to answer any questions that I could. Rev. Mitani, who was interpreter, was about to interpret that fact. Mr. Kurata and another man seemed to have suggested that Mr. Kurata's speech be delivered, which was done. I sat in the third row and listened to Mr. Kurata's address, which was delivered in English and translated by the Rev. Mitani.

Mr. Kurata spoke with considerable feeling; his black eyes flashed as he observed the audience during the translation. The text of his address was taken down by me and follows:

-----O-----

Thank you all for coming. At the time of the evacuation I wondered what would become of us, and while wondering I came here with 75 pounds of baggage. Since then I kept wondering without any solution. It was a tragic affair, which never happened in the continental United States before. We were wandering aimlessly and wondering what we should do tomorrow. In such a condition, I noticed that my fellow men and women were suffering under the same condition which prevailed, without any definite relief. Mentally and physically, we were weaker and weaker and our morale was lowered. It was almost unbearable to watch our neighbors. I had decided then and there that a solution must be found.

found; that this problem must be rectified; that that must be done now.

The immediate question which came to my mind was: First, what method should I use and when should I use it? I decided that I must analyze myself first. Why am I wondering today? Why have I a headache? Why am I wandering aimlessly? I have analyzed myself as to my condition. When I had thought what I was, I asked my neighbors to show me, according to their state of mind and their condition. Their suffering was very similar to what affected me. I decided that there must be found a solution to the moral conditions, that the interest of men must be preserved immediately.

I have had the happy opportunity to contact the men who are in office today in Boston. The affair came to the point when I realized that they were in the same quandry as I was. Our conversations ran into many difficult angles--social, economic, and political angles. We came to the conclusion that the people must be satisfied; they must have a mission; that the mission must be revised, otherwise all will be a failure. I saw that we must take your problems to heart. We were to approach a major problem but after we had pondered, it came to my mind the whole solution--you have forgotten practically all responsibility which you possessed before. The rest is not an easy matter - that you have lost all interest which you had in other days. Therefore, it was an important matter that first we must give you some point which will guide you so that you will not be "forgotten men"; and we decided to let you know what the working conditions are. Progress then would not be very difficult.

There have been changes, but as conditions change we should change. But first, you will understand the condition under which we operate. It was to the interest of all to have one determination to serve, for gaining the good is not worthwhile, regardless of money involved; something to leave behind - that was the problem. We must maintain first the honor of the people, so that when we again face the world, we will be in a position to be accepted. We have a moral obligation to ourselves, our friends and our descendants, the aged and the young, that we accomplish this end. We must first preserve our morals and do not degenerate and to have interests as heretofore.

Therefore, we must have some objective on which to concentrate ourselves. Everything we do from this present day is all to our credit and everything we do not do is to our discredit, but if we do a good thing, this is work well done.

Considering matters as a whole and coming to our conclusion, I decided to formulate a plan under which you folks desire to live. This plan was formulated by myself; I am responsible for every word of it. I have taken into consideration that in this solution, if you consider it thoroughly, will be the condition under which many of your questions will be answered.

There are, perhaps, problems facing you which I have not understood. We will take that into consideration also. In formulating this plan I had in mind that you folks of the first generation, fathers and mothers, you folks that have striven hard and preserved your family and have done so much

to preserve your family ties and have gone so far - it should not be destroyed. I could not tolerate it. I consider it my duty to my fellow men that it shall not be ignored. The first generation of Japanese who have struggled so hard are being ignored in Poston. Therefore, I have exerted all my efforts to that they shall be given the rights the same way as the nisei. I have not asked for anything that you shouldn't ask for, but for the fair equality of all - you should get it.

Furthermore, I have considered many problems which were for your interest. This solution, you will understand, is equally beneficial to father as to son. The true point and the conclusion is that this proposition is for the mutual benefit of all. The major issue in my proposition, as I have understood, is to give you folks recognition in all forms, so that with your son and relatives you can talk together as man to man.

This proposition, which was accepted by Mr. Head is not to be construed as the final word from Washington, but it all depends on the conduct of ourselves where by we shall be rewarded with perhaps a little added to what we asked. If you understand this proposition as a major issue, as it appears to you, it will bring friendship, respect of family - without that respect it is nothing. But we can build a moral standard in itself. There is a problem which exists that you will have the benefit as you go along.

In the why and when and if you are going to get anything from the federal government, you will just comply and it is

waiting for you; and at the termination of the war, in which we all pray for, I have also asked the government for assurance of travel, to reside and enjoy American life in the United States as Americans, as free citizens.

I shall read it to you--perhaps you have read it. We should ask for equal rights for the residents of Poston, equal rights to all. (At this point, Mr. Kurata read the ten-point proposition to Mr. Head from him dated July 21 with slight variations, such as the pluralization of "privileges" in Proposition 2 and omitting the word, "granted".)

This, I am sure, includes most of the wishes you folks have today in adjusting yourselves to the conditions now present. None of you will get out of here as millionaires, but you are proceeding in the way of successful accomplishment while you are here. It is a major undertaking, never before undertaken by a people in the continental United States, a gigantic problem that you folks had never dreamed of under conditions which ordinarily people can hardly survive. This problem is in the interest of all not only yourself, in the interest of all to create friendship, spirit of the mind that the hereafter will come; that when it does come you will be there to handle all issues. Then, and then only, will you have the measure of strength in mind and spirit. It will be measured by the people. It will be that exertion toward that permanent improvement. I believe you will all understand the responsibility that rests on you. You will build the residents' morale, activities and other vital con-

ditions, as well as their physical well-being.

You have now an idea of the condition, the basic idea of things existing; what you really want to know is how to accomplish this.

-----0-----

At the close of the speech, questions were asked which, together with answers, lasted until after 11 o'clock. Although dust storms caused the closing of the windows several times, almost everyone of the audience stayed until the end. The audience was composed almost exclusively of men; four-fifths were middle age or older. A few block managers were present. Two women, one middle age and the other in her late twenties were present.

Mr. Kurata said that the snow a few blocks away diminished the attendance. I understand that the meeting was announced through the whole camp at the mess halls by block managers and at least one block manager, Block 36, knew about the meeting the next day. With the exception of three or four, all of the questions were directed to me. The three or four addressed to Mr. Kurata were in regard to the point as to whether Mr. Head had approved these propositions as Mr. Kurata had stated.

He was also asked why the memorandum was dated July 21, four days ago. He said, "We had a discussion together, forty representatives of the blocks, and very thoroughly read and discussed from Proposition One to Ten. I am solely responsible for these propositions. I wrote every word of them

and I went to Mr. Head for his approval. In this case, there is no definite answer. We have his approval only, but we have no definite answer from the War Relocation Authority. The names were: (He held up the three or four pages containing names of individuals.) They are the persons who attended the meeting where we discussed for half day in Mr. Head's office the propositions."

In answer to questions regarding whether officeholding by Issei was included in the proposition, Mr. Kurata said that Propositions One and Two both covered this and that in ninety days, maybe sooner, in fact it would be sooner, the Issei would be able to hold office too.

I asked Mr. Kurata, when he had finished, and the Rev. Mitani whether I could add a few words to this. They said, "yes". I stressed the fact that while some of us favored the holding of office on the Council by nisei and issei, we did not know what decision the War Relocation Authority would make on this question. I added, however, that Mr. Head and Mr. Evans had frequently stated that they desired the younger folks to consult their fathers in gaining the experience and wisdom which comes through the years. I added that Mr. Evans in a speech before the Temporary Community Council a few days ago had again emphasized this point.

The questions which were asked me covered a wide range from international law, wage scale, hours of work units, the nature of camp, whether a concentration camp, whether the \$20 charge, whether residents were prisoners of war, whether forced labor would be enforced, whether the whole plan was to devel-

op an Indian reservation by the work of the Japanese people, whether subjects of Japan could be compelled to work, whether the Project should be operated as a government proposition, whether the government should not operate it rather than having the Project operate it by themselves, whether the enterprises would be managed by the residents or the administrative staff, etc.

One speaker who made several points on two occasions addressed international law and evoked loud applause from a few of the people after he had discussed several points. Rev. Mitani said that he had made a statement and that he would like me to clarify some points. I answered his points and at the close of the meeting, he came over and shook my hand.

-----0-----

On July 26, Mr. Kurata visited me at the office. He had very courteously thanked me at the close of Saturday's meeting and he again expressed his thanks, stating that he would not have been able to carry on the meeting without me since several questions were asked which required answers from me. He asked me to come to a meeting to be held on Saturday, August 1, at Block 30. I suggested that if I went I would just say a few words of greeting and would be willing to answer any questions that might be asked.

Mr. Kato said that he had not been feeling well on Saturday and that he had a fever and feared that he left out several points that he had not explained fully all the pro-

positions. He said that he felt that the people would understand and that they already were working on an agricultural project near the river away from the wind. I then suggested that he see Mr. Evans which he did.

THH yy

Theodore H. Haas

cc to Mr. Burge, Mr. Evans, Dr. Leighton.

P.S. At the Community Council meeting today, July 29, the proposition to Mr. Wade Head from Mr. Kurata was brought up. Questions were asked about why the office mimeographed it.

THH