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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
Midland Savings Building
Denver 2, Colorado
March 6, 1945

MEMORANDUM

To: Everett R. Lane, Acting Relocation Supervisor
From: Harry F. Tarvin, Relocation Reports Officer
Subject: Final Report

The job of the Relocation Reports Officer in the Western Plains Area has been different, perhaps, from that of any similar job in the WRA. Due to the popularity of Colorado with evacuees and the apparent lack of numerous relocation opportunities in other sections of the area, the relocation program here had virtually reached maturity when a Relocation Reports Officer was employed. Many of the pamphlets, bulletins containing job offers, news letters, etc., which were considered valuable in other areas were held to be supererogatory here.

Denver and immediate vicinity, focal point of most of the relocation in the area, was adjudged to have absorbed as many evacuees as could be accommodated without deterioration of public sentiment. Colorado Springs, Pueblo and Grand Junction were almost closed to relocation. In most of the remaining territory there were occasional relocation opportunities, but they were necessarily limited because of sparse population and lack of varied industrial activity.

Hence, the duties of the Relocation Reports Officer were largely concerned with maintaining and creating favorable public sentiment by means of news releases, the arrangement of talks and exhibits, the showing of WRA films, and the like. The creation, or attempted creation, of favorable public sentiment sometimes took intangible forms. One of them, the results of which cannot certainly be appraised, consisted in calling upon newspaper editors and radio station managers throughout the area to acquaint them fully with the WRA program as a means of combatting false impressions and downright misinformation. Another was to assist church and other groups in the marshaling of public opinion against the senseless baiting and persecution of loyal or law-abiding evacuees. Still another took the form of averting threatened trouble by supplying unfriendly groups with facts which tended to dissipate or alleviate hostility.

But even in evolving methods to create favorable public sentiment, the Relocation Reports Officer fell between two stools. There was often a marked diversity of opinion among relocation officers as to whether openly and unapologetically to espouse the cause of the evacuee -- that is, to assert forthrightly that an evacuee had certain inalienable rights which the public was bound to recognize -- or whether to keep as still as possible in the hope that the public would overlook the presence of persons of Japanese ancestry.

The attitude of relocation officers naturally influenced area chiefs in one way or another, depending largely upon the temperament and experience of the supervisor; and the judgment of the supervisor naturally was binding upon the Reports Officer. This often led to confusing policy shifts. Again, one area supervisor might take the position that the Reports Officer should devote a good deal of his time to formulating reports; another might attach more importance to public relations than to reports. It is conceded that in a unique program such as that of the WRA these differences of opinion are inevitable, but that does not lessen the confusion.

Without intending to reflect upon anyone, it has always seemed to me that it was a mistake to place area reports officers in the Relocation Division. Such an arrangement might work extremely well -- indeed, it has, in some cases -- if the supervisor has a public relations sense or if he is sympathetic with the idea of a public relations program. If he is inclined to scamp or ignore a public relations program, the difficulties are obvious. In my opinion, area reports officers should be technically responsible to the Reports Division in Washington and only administratively responsible to the head of any relocation office, as was the system in effect at first. Reports Division heads were chosen because of their public relations experience -- they could not have qualified for their jobs without it -- but relocation heads are selected for their jobs because of a different type of experience.

With the lifting of the evacuation order and the elimination of so-called closed areas, the duties of the Reports Officer in the Western Plains Area have changed somewhat. It plainly is advisable to issue more material designed to enlist the interest of evacuees in the area and to encourage them to relocate in it. In my opinion, the area could accommodate a large additional number of evacuees without untoward public reaction; there is in most sections a severe housing shortage which is bound to act as a barrier to excessive relocations.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Midland Savings Building
Denver 2, Colorado
March 10, 1945

R Spier
WRA Library Washington 2

Mr. H. Rex Lee
Acting Chief, Relocation Division
War Relocation Authority
Barr Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lee:

In accordance with administrative instructions we are
submitting the final report made by Harry F. Tarvin,
Relocation Reports Officer, before leaving the WRA
employment.

Sincerely,

/s/ Everett R. Lane

Everett R. Lane
Acting Relocation Supervisor

Enclosure

R Spicer

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