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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY  
CENTRAL UTAH PROJECT  
TOPAZ, UTAH

PTA MASSMEETING AT TOPAZ

by

RUSSELL A. BANKSON

PROJECT REPORTS DIVISION  
Historical Section



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## PTA MASS MEETING AT TOPAZ

Early in February the members of the Topaz Parent-Teachers' Association made plans for a general massmeeting of the membership to be held in the new civic auditorium building on Monday, February 14.

For this occasion, officers of the Utah State Parent-Teachers' were invited to attend and to participate in the program. Those accepting were Mrs. Edmund P. Evans, president of the Utah Congress of Parent and Teachers; Mr. U. Blain Winters, chairman of the program department of the State Congress, and Mr. Melvin Weenig, professor of Japanese language at Weber Junior College at Ogden, Utah.

Mrs. K. Togasaki, president of the Topaz association, presided over the conferences that were held on Monday afternoon and the general mass meeting on Monday evening. Mr. Weenig addressed the conference in Japanese as a majority of the membership present consisted of Isseis. More than 700 persons were in attendance at the mass meeting.

The meeting was developed for the purpose of increasing good will between the Topaz organization and the State Congress. Through the attendance of state officials it was felt that a better understanding of the problems of the Topaz group would be had throughout the state membership.

The program, a copy of which is attached, included, besides the addresses, a number of entertainment features. The principal



speech of the evening was given by U. Blain Winters, and a copy of this talk is also attached.



三月十四日午後七時半よ  
リ公會堂にて  
PTA大会  
がございます  
何卒御出席下さいま  
すやう御案内とお願  
ひを申し上げます  
ト、ス親師會

御案内

You are cordially invited to  
attend the Parent-Teachers' As-  
sociation Mass Conference on  
Monday, February 14, 1944, 7:30  
P.M. at the auditorium.

#### PROGRAM

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Presentation of the Flag   | By Topaz Boy Scouts  |
| 2. Opening Address            | Mrs. Togasaki  |
| 3. Greetings and Introduction | Mr. LeGrand Noble<br>(Superintendent of Education)                                   |
| 4. Music                      | Elementary School  |
| 5. Speech                     | Mrs. Edmund P. Evans<br>(President of Utah Congress<br>of Parents and Teachers)      |
| Interpreter                   | Mr. Shigeru Aso  |
| 6. Japanese Dance             | Miss Abe's pupils  |
| 7. Speech in Japanese         | Mr. Melvin Weenig<br>(Professor of Japanese Lan-<br>guage at Weber Junior College)   |
| 8. Music                      | High School  |
| 9. Speech                     | Mr. U. Blain Winters<br>(Chairman of the Utah Con-<br>gress of Parents and Teachers) |
| Interpreter                   | Mr. Shigeru Aso  |
| 10. Vocal Solo                | Mr. Shigeru Aoki   |
| 11. Closing Address           | Mrs. Togasaki  |



ADDRESS BY MR. U. BLAIN WINTERS

My dear friends:

The children of today are going to inherit the consequences of the events of today. Their use of this inheritance will depend upon the way these children are trained.

I don't wish to dwell upon the events of today to any great extent for I realize that you people are probably as well informed as I and perhaps better informed on some factors.

What I do wish to talk about for a few moments is the problem of the training of children in these troublesome, complex times.

In fighting this war and worrying over materials and supplies and men and money, which are all vital factors in winning the war, we are forgetting, it seems to me, a vital part of that for which we are fighting. We are fighting to protect this great democracy. We are sacrificing the lives of our youth to preserve this democracy for the youngsters of today who will be the men and women of tomorrow.

We have no hesitancy in saying and believing that we will be victorious and that democracy shall be willed to our children. With their present training what will they do with it?

Education is the life-giving principal of democracy and I am not sure that education has even been considered secondary in this war.

We as parents and teachers must take first steps while there is yet time. The public school is an agent of the democratic political state. If free public education is not supported democracy



is not nourished.

Teachers and parents must take part in shaping large social policies. I sometimes wonder if the major share of this shaping of social policies is not handled at the present time by the press. At times the press is hopelessly reactionary and attempting to corrupt our democratic thinking and break our social order which was so skillfully worded in the Declaration of Independence, "We believe that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

This was not a new philosophy when it was embodied in the Declaration of Independence. For 1300 years, if I understand the writings of Chief Abbot Sanyu Ohtani, the Japanese have been ruled by Buddhism. One of the basic principles of this religion he states is the principle of love for one and all and the universal compassion and sympathy. This also is a fundamental principle of Christianity. In a talk delivered at Stanford University in November 1925 the Chief Abbot of the Buddhist faith said he "believed the United States and Japan were the meeting places of the cultures of the East and West. It would be, indeed, a happy thing for both American and Japanese people if they would study and adopt the virtues of the other. By this it is obviously seen that the two peoples may come to a better understanding and would as a result trust each other. I earnestly beseech you to use all your energy to help hasten the approach of the day of a happier, brighter world - a new world in which we may hope to find mutual trust,



and understanding prevailing between all nations and peoples for the good of entire mankind."

This was not done and as a result we have the catastrophe of war.

We have not, as Christians or Buddhists, followed the paramount principles of brotherly love and sympathetic understanding.

As children in our public schools we are nearest that ideal. We are not born with hatred nor do we acquire them until our minds and emotions are poisoned by adults. Children play freely with one another regardless of race, color or creed.

Recently in my little girl's 5th grade class at Lafayette school in S.L.C. three little American classmates with Japanese faces were elected President, vice-president and secretary. The ninety per cent of the class who were of Caucasian descent were willing to trust and honor them.

We find our homes and our schools facing new and challenging problems - problems which are startling and often disheartening. Those things for which we have stood and enjoyed so long have been upset and shattered.

One of the most powerful groups yet organized for the purpose of maintaining morale is the Association of Parents and Teachers. We are the ones who must take strength now and preserve the thing for which our boys are fighting. This must be done in our schools. The purpose of the schools must be to fairly weigh the issues and then educate and they must not be influenced by propaganda if it can possibly be avoided.

What has been and what is are the raw materials out of which



we must create what is to be.

The three great forces of violence which cause war are fear, hate and revenge. These are now being taught through the press, but should be counteracted in our schools, churches and homes.

We must teach the inter-relation of nations. Of all the nations we should be the last to exclaim "No more foreigners!" Ernest L. Meyer describes what our feelings should be toward aliens. His article was published in the New York Post. Let me read it to you.

### No More Foreigners!

Now it happened that a certain Congressman rubbed the magic lamp, and the genie appeared, and the genie said: "What is thy will, master?"

And the Congressman answered: "It is my will that straightway all the aliens in America be exiled to some distant and most inhospitable spot, and that there do sufferance for their sins."

And the genie said: "Truly I can grant thy wish, master, but there is a law in my land which says that whosoever is sent into exile shall be allowed to take with him whatever he has created by his own efforts. This is, I think, a just law, and if you abide by it, I can grant your desire."

And the Congressman said: "Indeed, your law is quite just. Let the aliens be deported, and let them take with them what they have created, for surely they fashioned nothing but dissent and plots and radical heresies and sins and sabotage, and to these they are welcome."

And the genie said: "So be it, master." and he uttered a



few words of strange power, and a miracle happened.

It followed in that very instant that a vast fleet of barges and boats was fashioned, and into them, millions upon millions, flocked the aliens, and they took with them what they had created in America.

They took with them highways hewn out of the wilderness by Cicilians and Slavs, and great rafts of lumber felled in the forests by the Irish, Swedes and Norwegians, and many millions of square miles of earth made fertile by the Germans, the Danes, the Dutch and the Japs, and billions of garments woven by the Jews, and mountainous masses of coal and iron and copper dug from the pits by Italians and Finns and Poles, and whole cities of skyscrapers and subways and railroads and mills and marts wrought by the sinews of many aliens from the earth's four quarters.

And they took with them also their alien culture, their music and their songs, their languages and their literature, their books and their Bibles and their cookery, their piety and their passions, their ideals and philosophy and folk-dances and fun which had been woven into the rich and multi-colored fabric of America.

Now all this happened when the genie granted the wish of the Congressman, when the aliens left with all their works, and a great silence. And in that silence there was naught to be heard save the frightened whimpering of the Congressman crying: "Genie, genie!" But there was no answer, for the genie, an alien, was on one of the boats to Bagdad, and after that there was nothing and the night.



I know that we cannot appreciate all what you people are going through now and we admire your courage. We admire the extreme loyalty of your boys who are fighting in the service of our country. I read all the articles I can on the American-Japanese problems and occasionally read a copy of the Pacific Citizen handed to me by one of my Japanese friends. One thing I know from my associations with peoples from many nations, is that there are heart-beats like mine under all sorts of exteriors.

Recently my wife and I attended a party where all were of Japanese ancestry but five couples. We had a very enjoyable evening and were treated most graciously. This is a virtue possessed by your people. I am sure others would enjoy such an evening also if given the opportunity. Such socials are mutually helpful. They help us to understand each other.

My appeal to you is assist in your homes which are so upset and in your schools which have been so newly organized to teach brotherly love and tolerance. We must teach our children that this is a temporary catastrophe which will be wiped from the slate of this country--and soon, we hope. We as parents and teachers must be the stabilizing influences in the lives of our youth and assist in directing them from under these dark clouds of hate and strife and into the sunshine of brotherly love. We must move under the direction of that Master Ruler to whom we have refused to listen.

Now that things have been so shattered these ideas must be cultivated with infinite patience and great human toil.

There is no organization better equipped to accomplish all this than the Parents and Teachers.



My greatest wish is that we may all contract this spirit and work unitedly to a successful completion.