

The first stop on my Detroit trip was made at the office of Miss Florence Cassidy of the Detroit Council of Social Agencies. Miss Cassidy is Secretary of the Division of Nationalities and from very early days of WRA has been intensely interested in the problem of the adjustment of evacuees. She had set up a number of appointments. Immediately on my arrival she vacated her office for my use, this in itself being some measure of her interest in our problem.

During lunch I met with Pete Fujioka of 14040 Prairie. Mr. Fujioka is a Nisei, between 30 and 35, is married, and has one child. He was recently elected President of the local JACL. He is employed by a large insurance broker in Detroit, his work being to handle direct mail advertising. The arrangement provides that the company furnish equipment, materials, postage, with the actual work being on a contract basis, with Mr. Fujioka paying his own help. His gross during the past year was \$16,000. He also sells some insurance during his spare time.

It was Mr. Fujioka's feeling that there was real need for additional all Nisei recreational activities. In general he felt that Nisei were happier in their social relations when the group was largely closed. He stated, however, that in the immediate personal relationships of his family there was a certain amount of neighboring with other Caucasian families.

He recently purchased a house in an unrestricted neighborhood. He had hoped to buy a new house in a new neighborhood, but found it impossible to secure financing in an area where restricted covenants were enforced. He told me he could not afford to make a fight on this question and later to a larger group he stated that it was impossible to secure a necessary 2nd mortgage under the circumstances. Probably both factors were involved.

During the preceeding spring there had been a good deal of Nisei activity. He stated, however, that most of it fell on just a few individuals who had found the burden too heavy.

The next contact was with Mr. Charles A. Meyer, Assistant Secretary and Chief Examiner of the Detroit Civil Service Commission. About 2 years ago a report from the city of Detroit indicated that there were approximately 200 Nisei employed in a great variety of occupations. Mr. Meyer stated that he felt there had been little change in this. He agreed to secure a breakdown of city employment of Nisei shortly after January 1 when a new list of city employees will be prepared. He stated that the experience with the Nisei had been very favorable.

Following this, a discussion was had with Mr. George Schermer, Director of the City of Detroit Interracial Committee. Mr. Schermer had had no cases involving Japanese Americans brought to his attention. Since the Detroit Interracial Committee is a funnel to which all sorts of information is brought, it may be assumed from this that no serious problem of this nature has arisen. This if, of course, borne out by other contacts.

Contact was made with the Wayne County Bureau of Social Aid by telephone. It was discovered that only one family is receiving assistance, this from the city of Detroit. In this case the father is an invalid. His son was wounded overseas, being hospitalized at Percy Jones GH which brought the family to Detroit. Upon his release he was attending school in Detroit while his wife worked at Herman Kiefer Hospital.

According to the Wayne County records, 11 individuals were assisted in returning to their County of original settlement. In 2 cases the cause of dependency was illness. The remainder involved old people.

It was learned also that during the entire WRA program 97 cases were assisted by Wayne County. These were largely medical, although there were a number of cases in which individuals were established in homes, assisted with furniture, and the like. In the great majority of cases, assistance stopped

after 1 or 2 checks.

Recently the Detroit newspapers carried the story that relief rolls were at a peak. This peak, however, relates to a postwar situation. A year ago 3034 were receiving relief while on the date of inquiry 5076 were receiving assistance. This compared with some 82,000 cases during the depression.

Mrs. Guiney did state that aid to dependent children and old age assistance cases were coming in at the rate of about 60 a day.

At dinner I met with Wendel Gee, former WRA Director for Detroit. His contact with the Japanese American group had been largely broken. Although it was widely known that he was available for employment counsel, no requests had come to him.

During the evening a meeting was held with a group of Nisei who had been called together by Mr. Fujioka and Miss Cassidy. Approximately 600 invitations were sent out, this comprising the active mailing list known to the Council of Social Agencies. Nine or ten Nisei were present, including the 3 members of the old WRA staff remaining in Detroit, Mr and Mrs. Fujioka, Mr. Abe, who is employed by Mr. Fujioka, Miss Cassidy's secretary, and Jack Nishimoto, who is employed by the city of Detroit. This response in itself is indicative that no very serious problem is agitating the group of resettlers in Detroit.

Jack Nishimoto is employed by the Detroit Street Railways as an electric repairman's helper. His shop is at present involved in a controversy with the Detroit Civil Service over the question of retention of war service employees who rating in a Civil Service test is lower than those who have taken the test since the war. Mr. Nishimoto expressed some concern relative to his own status, although apparently he ranked first among his own group of workers. He is a member of the United Public Workers, CIO, Local 312.

Mr. Nishimoto's primary interest is in the racing of midget automobiles. He is a steward of the American Midget Racing Car Association and does a good

deal of going about the country officiating at races and racing his own cars. The November 1946 issue of Chrysler House Organ, "People and Places," contained his picture of starting one of his cars.

Mr. Nishimoto's social contacts are apparently entirely with midget racing car enthusiasts and it is believed he has no contact with other Nisei.

An attempt was made to secure a list of the Japanese American organizations in Detroit, the following being mentioned:

J.A.C.L.

Only 1 or 2 meetings have been held so far.

Nisei Caucasian Fellowship of the First Baptist Church

Average attendance of monthly meetings is about 20 persons, most of whom are Nisei.

Issei Kii-Christian

Meets once a month, Trinity Me Church; Rev. Tanabe, Minister. Usual attendance 20 to 25.

Buddhist Congregation

Maintains Rev. Shausheew Sakow, 3915 Trumble. Numbers in attendance are not known, but it is probably not greater than the Christian Congregation. It is entirely Issei, Nisei Buddhist Congregation having disbanded.

There are approximately 10 bowling teams.

Bowl regularly at the Art Center.

Mr. and Mrs. Club

Meets the first Saturday monthly at the International Institute. Approx. 20 couples belong. This group was described by Pete Fujioka as having a generally stationery membership.

International Institute is host to a variety of unorganized activities. There was general participation on the part of the Mr. and Mrs. Club at the recently held "Old World Market." Beyond this there has been very little inter-group activity involving Nisei at the Institute. In this connection it should be noted that the Japanese Americans of Detroit pledged \$1000 toward the building of the International Institute and raised something over \$1900.

During the fall a dance has been held under various auspices; the first under the now defunct Coordinating Council; the second by the Mr. and Mrs. Club, and the third by the JACL.

The Japanese community hopes to collect \$5000 in addition to a large quantity of old clothing for the Japan Relief Drive sponsored ~~by~~ by the Phila. Organization of the Society of Friends. The clothing drive is under the

direction of Sam Ishikawa. The Issei in Detroit are sparking the drive.

Seven teams, with 8 or 9 persons per team, are participating in a basketball league sponsored by the International Institute which plays at the Franklin Settlement on Saturday afternoons.

No Teen-age group organized in Detroit which was felt to be a serious lack. One of the difficulties in organizing such a group is the great geographical spread of the Nisei living in Detroit.

Golf is apparently a primary form of Issei recreation.

During the summer a number of softball teams were organized.

Practically all athletic competition is between Nisei teams, although Japanese League also plays Chinese teams. It is recalled that on at least one occasion Nisei basketball players went to a neighboring city to play other Nisei.

An attempt was made to discover the total number of Japanese Americans living in Detroit. Estimates varied from 1100 to 1500, with a figure falling somewhere between probably representing the true situation. It was believed there were about 200 Issei in the city. There was some discussion concerning the intention of the group to remain in Detroit. It was felt there would be some departures, but no wholesale leaving of the city.

The group knew of no cases of economic difficulty and it was felt employment in Detroit was holding up very well. An attempt to run down cases of discrimination produced very little. Mr. Fujioka again mentioned the problem of restrictive covenants and housing. It was mentioned that the J.L. Hudson Co. and Saunders, a local catering company, refused to hire Nisei. There was also a vague report that the Vanity Ballroom refused entrance to Nisei, although this was not verified.

A call was made to an individual in the USES who had been greatly interested in the resettlement program. He knew of no cases of particular difficulty involving Japanese Americans. Apparently few are requesting assistance of USES at this time.

The following day a luncheon meeting was held with Miss Alice Sickels, Director of International Institute; Florence Cassidy and Mr. Fujioka. The discussion brought out very little that had not been mentioned the preceding day.

SUMMARY

The situation in Detroit had changed very little since the WAR office had closed in April of this year. Economic adjustment in Detroit has been reasonably satisfactory with employment by the city providing an outstanding example of non-discrimination at all levels. There appeared to be complete integration as far as employment is concerned. Housing remains difficult with the pattern in general resembling that of the entire population. The restrictive covenants may prevent a few from expanding into desirable areas.

Socially the group in Detroit appears to be staying very much to themselves with very little interracial contacts on an individual basis. The desire for all-Nisei activity was positively stated. Conversely, there was no feeling that activities in the larger community were closed or that participation in such activities would be desirable.

