

7/17/44



COMMITTEES—
CIVIL SERVICE AND STATE DEPARTMENTS
JUDICIARY
LABOR AND CAPITAL
MILITARY AFFAIRS
PUBLIC HEALTH
REVENUE AND TAXATION
WAYS AND MEANS

*Senate
House Committee
to Investigate Japs.*

CHESTER F. GANNON
MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY, EIGHTH DISTRICT

VICE CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND STATE
DEPARTMENTS

December 30th, 1943.

Albert [unclear]

Sgt. William N. Ikeda, 39163883,
Camp Fannin, Texas.

Dear Sgt. Ikeda:-

As one who wore Sgt.'s stripes for many months in 1917-18 (Infantry) address you and answer letter of the 16th inst.

You are unduly exercised over the present status of the Japanese question in California and along the Coast. As Chairman of the Committee, it was my belief and shared by fellow members that the committee would meet and organize in Los Angeles and then wait developments. This we did in August, 1943. I called no meeting and had no immediate intention of calling one until a number of organizations, nation wide in scope, started an active campaign which would have brought all evacuees back, not after the war, but RIGHT NOW. They poured money, literature and influence into the campaign and it was then that the committee decided that it was time to have meetings. These were held. At them we met people who had little or no idea of the racial problem which presents itself now in California.

You may have your opinion but the fact remains that it would not be proper for Japanese, either American or alien, to come back to this state at this time or later, when the casualty lists will mount to thousands a week. I need but remind you of polls taken within the month in different parts of California. This was not influenced by anything our committee did or said because some of the polls were announced before we met. The Los Angeles Times conducted a poll and to the Question: Do you favor the return of any Japanese after the War, the replies total about one Yes and 11 Noes. Got a copy of a paper from San Rafael, a small city close by. It is neither country or urban but a cross section of a small city where a good vote should pertain. To the same question the vote was about 1 Yes and about 15 Noes. Had laid this clipping, which was sent to me, aside and intended to forward to you but seem to have mislaid same.

With that feeling is it not inadvisable to foster a return movement at this time? All one American would have to do would be to assault one alien Japanese and Tokio would know about it in less than 24 hours. You can well imagine the severe punishment would be meted out to

our prisoners of war. Reports from Americans of Japanese descent serving in the armed forces are very good. When this war is over and those boys have returned with unblemished records, the feeling should be removed and I believe it will. Remember this, California, has been anti Japanese almost before I was born and this discussion would take many ramifications and will not try to present them one way or other. Merely mention that the feeling is not of recent origin.

Many radicals are to-day in the background, saying to minority groups, "Demand equal social and racial rights." This is a matter which can easier be said that accomplished and this despite the Constitution of the United States. I have known Jap Town in Sacramento for many years. I have known Chinatown for a similar time. Yet in all that time I have never seen a Chinaman and Japanese together in social, equal contact. I have yet to hear of either of these two races mixing ~~even~~ in a slight degree. Why? I do not know. Does one race think itself better than the other. I will go further with but one more example and that is the Negro population which lives just around local Japtown. The Negroes and Japanese have no social or racial contact. And Yet, there are those who picture all these people and all others sitting down in one big family group now and after the war. Stirring up this feeling is causing trouble now and will continue to do so. I'm writing this as one soldier to another.

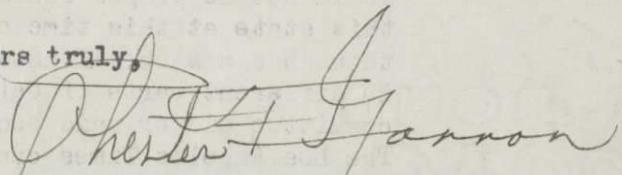
An inclosing article from newspaper, This was sent to my office. From the Sacramento Union of yesterday, inclose a clipping. Thus you may see that the feeling is here and it is no time to bring back people to perhaps what will be utter misery for them. Have similar clippings but will not

I'm sitting in office this lunch hour, behind typewriter, typing this out. You will please excuse the hurried touch and composition but have been extremely busy of late. Your letter was most gentlemanly and is appreciated. Wish you could see some of the abusive ones I get as well as some of the extreme laudatory ones. Often, neither writer knows his subject. Some of the ladies who are now yelling for the return of all Japanese admitted they had never up to the moment they testified had any social or racial intercourse with the Japanese and they had had plenty of opportunity to have done so in past. They just got in campaign which is being stirred up by sinister groups as well as well meaning people.

Be of good cheer Sgt. This is the greatest and best country in the world. It may have some defects but is is the finest government of them all. Have been to Europe three times so have a little personal experience in comparison. You may be sure that I will fight on the Home Front for that which is right and be against that which is wrong.

Best of luck to you. A Happy New Year and may you return safe and sound from your army experience.

Yours truly,



Time magazine, radical sometimes, took me to task because I would not permit the Civil Liberties Union to take over meeting. Have known that bunch of radicals for years. They had had their day on stand when the attorney for them came up with more testimony or witnesses. Never knew what. So Time picked here and there among thousands of words of testimony and put in a story to discredit the hearing. Mention this because you may have seen story.

¶ Take the hobbles off the people and give them a chance to think and act for themselves. In other words, return to the American way of life and the people will solve their problems."
—Former Vice President Garner (Dem.) of Texas.

EDITORIAL

From The Denver Post

¶ The war relocation authority wants Jap internees to teach Ohio and Michigan farmers a "lesson in sanitation." It wants these Japs to show midwest American workers how to be "careful, painstaking and accurate." It says that we in the United States need from these Japs "your faithfulness to your task, your willingness to work, and your application of a job well done." THE JAPS WHICH WRA SCREWBALLS ARE LAUDING TO THE SKIES AND HOLDING UP AS AN EXAMPLE FOR REAL AMERICAN FARMERS AND WORKERS ARE BLOOD BROTHERS OF THOSE YELLOW DEVILS AMERICAN BOYS ARE FIGHTING IN THE PACIFIC. IF THESE WRA BUREAUCRATS ARE SO IN LOVE WITH THE JAPS, THEY OUGHT TO BE SENT OVER TO JAPAN WHERE THEY CAN GET A BELLYFUL OF THE JAP "CULTURE" THEY ARE SO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT.

* * *
¶ In an article written by Everett L. Dakan, WRA relocation officer in Columbus, O., for Midwest Frontiers—a publication issued by the Cleveland office of the WRA—Jap internees were told:

¶ "You will discover that many of our houses were built in pioneer days. That rural electrification is mostly a new thing. That many tenant houses do not have bathrooms because they were built before bathrooms came into style. Then, believe it or not, you have some tenants and seasonal workers who do not bathe! They think it unhealthy. WE NEED YOU (JAP) PEOPLE TO CHANGE OUR IDEAS ABOUT THIS."

* * *
¶ The WRA publication also told the Japs "you have a lesson to teach Ohio and Michigan farmers in sanitation. We need to know something of your skill in packing and grading, your artistic sense of orderliness. We need your faithfulness to your task, your willingness to work, and your application of a job well done."

* * *
¶ It is no wonder that Ohio and Michigan congressmen and senators "hit the ceiling" when the Washington Times-Herald called attention to this WRA insult to American farmers. The attempt of the WRA to picture the Japs as a superior people, far above real American stock in cleanliness, industry, skill, is an insult to every white American.

* * *
¶ This WRA propaganda is an outrage to every taxpayer. These WRA papers are published at the expense of American taxpayers. There is supposed to be such an acute paper shortage that legitimate publications have been forced to reduce drastically their use of paper. THE MORE PAPER THE REAL AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS SAVE, THE MORE THERE IS FOR WRA BEAUCRATS TO WASTE PUTTING OUT PROPAGANDA EULOGIZING JAP ENEMIES OF THE UNITED STATES AND BELITTILING AND RIDICULING GREAT MASSES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

* * *
¶ Why should the WRA of any other Washington bureaucracy apologize to Jap internees because there are farm houses in this country which do not have bathrooms? The chances are that a lot of these Japs never saw a bathroom until they were herded into internment camps because they couldn't be trusted to be left at large after their country attacked the United States.

(Continued on Page Four)

Farm Bureaus Fight Return Of Japanese

Dec 29/43
Directors of Sacramento county farm bureau federation, having heard reports that Japanese are to be allowed to return from internment camps to their former homes in the Florin district, yesterday authorized the writing of a letter to Governor Warren opposing such action and at the same time praising the governor on his stand on the Japanese question.

Local FBI officials said they had heard no reports that Japanese were to be returned to Florin, and Supervisor Luke Conrad, whose district encompasses Florin and who also was at the meeting of the farm bureau, declared he doesn't believe there is any truth in them.

Sol Kitchen, a member of the bureau's board of directors, said the reports had no official confirmation, but that the bureau had received many such stories.

The letter to the governor is to be written and sent to him today. The bureau not only praised his stand in proposing that the Japanese be kept from the Pacific coast defense areas, but also praised his rapping of the state board of agriculture for its action in advocating return of Japanese to California agricultural centers should military authorities approve the move.

At that time Warren declared the action was taken "by three holdovers on the board taking advantage of a skeletonized meeting."

The three board members who voted for the proposal were all appointed by the previous Olson administration.

One board member voted against it and one refused to vote, while three were absent from the meeting.

Gannon Assails Groups Trying To Return Japanese

By INTERNATIONAL NEWS
SERVICE

Assemblymen Chester H. Gannon, one of the leading supporters in the fight to prevent wartime return of Japanese to the west coast, lashed out today against what he termed "pressure groups" and warned "the Japs will be back here before we know it."

His comments followed disclosure he had been approached in the case of American born Esther Takei, Japanese-American who is a student at Pasadena Junior College.

Gannon said he has been asked to introduce a bill in the legislature amending the California School Code to make it possible to bar all Nisei from the public schools. "but I was forced to retort that I believe such a law would be unconstitutional."

Sympathizes With Opposition

Gannon, who is chairman of the assembly interim committee on Japanese problems, expressed sympathy with the efforts of George L. Kelley, Pasadena safety chairman, and others who recently appealed directly to President Roosevelt to take action in the case of Miss Takei and bar her from returning to the west coast.

Referring to what he called new pressure groups, Gannon declared "I want to warn California right now there are four strong minority pressure groups which are fighting to return the Japs to California—not after the war but right now when we are about to put all our effort behind the gigantic task of whipping Japan."

Gannon asserted the newest of the "pressure groups" is one which calls itself the "Japanese-American Citizens League," which he charged is soliciting donations of from \$5 to \$25 to be sent to offices in New York City.

Mostly Easterners

"This group," said Gannon, "was brought to my attention by another state legislator, who himself had been solicited to make a donation to the league fund."

"The prime purpose of the league is to return the Japanese to California, right now, restore all their rights and it is an organization whose membership is made up mainly of easterners who know nothing of the Japanese problem in California."

However, Gannon added, the list of members of the league which he received from a legislator representing the San Francisco bay region, includes the names of Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, former head of Stanford University, and Norman Thomas, Socialist candidate for president.

Gannon continued:

"As you know Thomas recently castigated California for her attitude against the Japs, but just the same, the army and navy have made it clear they do not think it is safe to have Japs on the west coast while we are up to our necks in a war with their emperor."

This New York outfit claims it has national headquarters in Salt Lake City, and that it has been in existence for 15 years, but I never before heard of it.

Sacto Bee
9/30/44

7/17/44

Continued with the Fair P. Committee fund

January 23, 1944

(Albert's brother)

Dear Bill,

It's seven thirty Sunday Morning. If you knew how much I enjoy sleeping late on Sundays, you would appreciate this letter. The last two months have been wild, trying to crowd two days' work into one. But they have been worthwhile. The plan of having Pasadena children send little gifts to Rivers went over big. Over two thousand things went and many were accompanied by the name and address of the sender. The result is that a large correspondence has sprung up between the children, This does the youngsters good and is not so bad for the parents. We had a lot of fun gathering up the things. Herbert Nicholson was to take them but came down with a very severe case of "flu" so Walt Raitt took Herbert's truck.

Just before Christmas, I took over a new subdivision in Linda Vista. Possibly you know the property, the Hoffman avocado ranch just west of Linda Vista Avenue and about opposite the north end of the Rose Bowl. Put on two new salesmen and have had a lot of negotiating between the owner, the bank, lawyers, etc. But that is all pretty well over now and the tract has sold with a bang - one third gone already. We are fortunate to have it for there are almost no houses to sell now for everything is crowded and if folks sell, they have no place to move.

In addition to the Christmas Committee and my own heavy work, there have been quite a number of conferences with folks who are determined to work for democracy now. Plans are still formative for we want to make no mistake in starting. Had a grand visit with Rev. A. A. Heist of Santa Maria. Know of him? He has conducted a one man campaign there and sure hits the ball hard. Best of all, the local Fair Play Committee seems to be finding its legs. Shall not be a bit surprised if in a few months they come out strong for the return of the evacuees now. They may be able to swing the Northern group with them for some in Oakland are realizing that principle cannot be sacrificed to expedience.

There is still plenty of blind hysteria here but there is a positive improvement in sentiment of the general public. Actually, in many cases, a slight feeling of guilt - suspicion that they have been misled to play Hitler's game. Although there is still a long way to go, it has never before been as easy to discuss the subject intelligently with the average person. Less heat and more desire for facts. I am convinced that the chief factor in this change is the record you boys are making. Just now Ben Kuroki is here at Santa Monica and talking to influential organizations and over the radio. In spite of the Times and Examiner ignoring him, he has good publicity in the L.A. Daily News and all local papers. Our family is looking forward to a grand time next week end for he and Bob Borchers, the marine, plan to be our house guests. Should be a great visit.

Never before has there been so much honest thinking on racial matters. Everywhere ministers and other speakers are showing how we give but lip service to democracy. Papers and magazines are full of it. It is emphasized in schools. Tuesday night we go to a dinner meeting in Los Angeles where

Negro and white folks will eat together and plan for changed public thinking and doing. A similar meeting will be held at our Pasadena Presbyterian Church next month. There is a general improvement in public thinking - may it become intense and nation-wide.

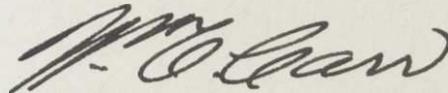
So much for that.

I smiled when I read your last letter. Why should you find it hard to write to me or anyone else. Say what is on your mind and let it go at that. I like "autobiography" and certainly don't mind a pat on the back. Does us all good now and then. So next time, don't make three or four false starts - just spit it out. There is one thing about which you have the right to be as reserved as you wish - "some girl in Jerome". But when and if you feel like it, I wouldn't mind knowing a bit about her, too. If you do as well as I did, genuine congratulations will be in order.

Things at our house are much the same. John, our seventeen-year-old, leaves in February for a month in Mexico with a chum. Then in March he plans to join the Merchant Marine. Bill has not been here since early in December although he has arrived in Long Beach a couple of times for short stops. They keep the pilots going very hard. He has lost ten pounds. But is he having experiences and seeing the world! I envy him. Mrs. Carr and I don't know where the time goes. We get up early and before we know it, it's past eleven and bedtime again. But it is a happy and interesting life. The many letters and notes that came from servicemen and Rivers made us feel mighty good. You should see the pile that is still unanswered. Best wishes and good luck and let's hear from you soon.

Cordially,

1360 West Colorado Street
Pasadena 2, California



P.S. - Did you know that
"Swish" Ogura's sister is
a WAC? Her picture was
in the Pasadena Post.
W.O.C.

Here at last are the letters you
sent me. They, especially the thin
one, made a hit with many of
my men friends - human life. Com.
afraid a wife or two peeked!