

TOLAN COMMITTEE
 Washington, D. C.
 March 25, 1942

*all criteria
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From John W. Abbott to Robert K. Lamb

Subject: Report on First Evacuation of Japanese from Los Angeles to Reception Center at Manzanar, Owens Valley, California

Under arrangements worked out between Thomas and myself the evacuation was to be covered as follows:

Thomas to proceed from San Francisco to the Valley by automobile a day in advance of the evacuation. His instructions were to interview local residents, talk with representatives of the WPA in charge of setting up the reception center and otherwise obtain first-hand information concerning the entire project. I was to join the actual convoy at Pasadena and make the journey to Owens Valley with it.

Comment:

Up to the time of the accident yesterday, these arrangements had been carried out as planned. Thomas had obtained a number of interviews, had secured all existing plans for the development of the "center", including a map prepared by the U. S. Engineers in charge of the project.

Since I had no opportunity to discuss these interviews with him in detail, I am unable to furnish further information until Thomas arrives here tomorrow. At that time I will forward whatever he collected in the way of data other than reports including local newspaper articles and announcements. My report on the convoy follows:

I was present at the south end of the Rose Bowl in Pasadena at 5:45 A.M., March 23, in accordance with arrangements worked out between myself and the Southern California Sector U. S. Army, Pasadena. I there met Major ~~Viegter~~ Victor Cadwell, assigned by General Wilson, commanding the Southern California Sector Western Defense Command, to handle all phases of the evacuation. The convoy included 140 civilian vehicles, owned by the Japanese plus 41 Army vehicles. During the 230 mile journey, which required just under twelve hours to complete, the parade stretched as far as six miles from end to end.

Attached convoy story.

I was impressed with the efficient fashion with which the Army handled the movement. The convoy was required to keep a specified distance between vehicles with one jeep to each ten civilian cars. All railway crossings and highway intersections were adequately policed by a picked company of military police. There were rest periods every two hours. A wrecker at the rear of the convoy cared for all mechanical breakdowns. A box lunch was served to all in the party at 12:30, when a half hour stop was made for this purpose.

Approximately 250 Japanese moved by automobile and 500 by train. The railroad movement was accomplished with a soldier detail of six. Four Japanese doctors and two Army ambulances accompanied the automobile cavalcade. A hot meal, prepared by Japanese who had gone up to Manzanar on Saturday, was awaiting the new arrivals.

Railroad passengers were moved from the Lone Pine station to the camp by three special Greyhound busses sent north by the Army for the purpose. The Reception center details are being handles, as you know, by the WPA.

Summary: Based on my observations, I would say that the actual movement of the people from the prohibited zones, if left to the Army, will be the easiest part of the problem. Major Cadwell appears to be competent in every particular and the men working with him are especially trained in convoy work.

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There are serious lags on both sides of the actual movement of persons, however. As I stated by telephone, the first evacuation was accomplished almost entirely, insofar as I was able to discover, through the efforts of the Army and the Maryknoll Fathers, with Clark and Bendetson present at one or two preliminary conferences. The points to be made are that (1) "voluntary" migrations of any size actually take careful planning, and (2) because of unfavorable publicity throughout the country, an unfavorable reception for small unescorted Japanese groups is almost a certainty. Furthermore, from my own observation, I can testify that motor parties of Japanese in any size without Army supervision would almost certainly have fatal consequences.

These single male evacuees were content to go, Major Cadwell reported, when he assured them by renting 15,000 square feet of space in a warehouse near the Maryknoll center, and telling them that their belongings left behind would be cared for. Further the Japanese have become convinced that Manzanar actually is a haven of permanent character and are already disposed to view with misgivings any ideas for moving out from the center unless a definite location is offered.

Insofar as I can observe, there were no representatives of the civilian affairs branch of the WCCA present at the first evacuation. An exception can be noted in the case of Mr. --- Thomas, representative of the Office of Price Administration, who made the trip with Major Cadwell and myself. However, since the OPA has little, if any, actual work in this evacuation to date, his presence can scarcely be considered representative. In fact, he informed me that he intended to visit relatives in Pasadena over the week-end in any event and having been told of this, Colonel Bendetson asked him to accompany the convoy as a civilian observer. Neither Clark, nor his deputy Howland, nor any qualified representative from the top of WCCA, was present. The WPA was, of course, in charge of reception of the Japanese but, again, this does not relieve the administrator of responsibility for personal supervision of the first large-scale evacuation, where many things were to be seen and corrected in planning for future movements.

My observations, supported in most instances by other witnesses, lead me to these conclusions (1) The only real work being done in this whole problem is being done by the Army. (2) There is a serious lag between the efforts of the evacuee property disposition division and the Army.

It is the property disposition question about which the Japanese are most anxious. Major Cadwell informs me that they are reluctant to move until they are satisfied on this point. Their second objection, he said, was the matter of where they are to go. The Army recommends that a central depot, such as the Maryknoll main yard and hall, be used as gathering points for future evacuations. It does not look with favor upon the "service centers" of the Employment Service.

The Army is most anxious to have the question of disposition of personal property cleared as soon as possible since families cannot be moved without assurance that their belongings will be cared for. According to Major Cadwell, what is needed is the immediate provision of large quantities of storage space, the personal effects to be tagged and stored as the families are moved to Santa Anita or elsewhere pending final resettlement. He declared the problem of sending these belongings on later to be a minor one compared with the immediate issue of removing the Japanese.

Major Cadwell said he was unable to find any representatives of the various civilian agencies over the week-end despite the fact that the evacuation was scheduled to begin at six o'clock Monday morning and that many Japanese were asking numerous questions at the ~~the~~ gathering place at Maryknoll. The Major said he had finally got in touch with one individual who promised action by 9:30 Monday morning. The Major replied that he would be three hours on the road to Manzanar at that time and would handle the matter himself.

Personal Observations: From the incidents described above, I am unable to see any reason for a distinction between the war relocation authority headed by Mr. Eisenhower and the WCCA's administrator post held by Mr. Clark with Mr. Howland as deputy. It is clear that whoever directs the civilian affairs branch must maintain the closest possible coordination

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with the Army and I hope it has been made clear that such has not been the case to date. My suggestion is that the immediate consolidation of Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Clark's jobs, together with much closer relationship between the property disposition division and the Army would result in marked improvement.

It was indicated to me strongly that the Army is approaching a deadline for voluntary evacuation and that it will have to proceed without regard to ideal arrangements insofar as the civilian affairs branch is concerned if something is not done soon.

Whether by his own choice or by direction, Mr. Clark appears to have concerned himself mainly with the survey of possible relocation sites for Japanese on a private or voluntary resettlement basis. His protracted absences, together with his own and Mr. Howland's unfamiliarity with resettlement problems have resulted in an organization loose in the extreme and almost entirely lacking in the necessary liaison with the Army. For example, had either Mr. Clark or Mr. Howland, or a designated representative, been at Major Cadwell's elbow from Friday to Sunday, advising and directing in matters primarily involving the civilian affairs branch, much of the Army's work could have been simplified. As it was, the civilian agencies were telephoning to the Army, to the Maryknoll Fathers, and to each other in an effort to answer the questions of the Japanese with nobody quite sure who could take the lead.

A further complication appears to exist in the division of authority between the Farm Security Administration and the Evacuee Property Disposition Division of the Federal Reserve Bank with regard to the conservation of agricultural property.

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TOLAN COMMITTEE

San Francisco, Cal.
April 7, 1942

B. V. Abbott to J. W. Abbott

Subj: Evacuation of Japanese, Monday, April 6.

The evacuation to Santa Anita of alien and citizen Japanese living in the waterfront area bounded by a line running north and south along 19th Ave., Juniper Serra Blvd. and Worcester Ave., and east and west along California St. to Market and the Embarcadero was accomplished April 6. This area does not include the principal Japanese residential and business district stretching for ~~for~~ several blocks around the intersection of Post and Buchanan Streets. Most of the people living in the area evacuated are household servants, some fishermen, some shopkeepers and professional people.

The authorities expected that about 1,000 persons would be affected by the first evacuation but the total reached only 646.

The Japanese reported with their luggage, to one of two Centers at 2020 Van Ness Ave., and 1701 Van Ness Ave.

Their luggage, with the exception of small hand pieces, was piled on the sidewalk outside the centers and they were assembled inside. A few chairs had been provided but most of the people had to stand. One Center had been a large garage and the other an automobile showroom.

Families provided for their own transportation with luggage, to the Centers, where they were loaded on busses and their baggage into commercial vans provided by the Army.

The busses were due to leave for the Southern Pacific station at Third and Townsend at 4:30 p.m. for the Center at 2020 Van Ness and 5:30 for 1701 Van Ness. The busses, however, were late in arriving and consequently the departure time was delayed by an hour in the first instance and two hours in the second.

Each person, including infants in arms, wore a tag bearing his "family case number", which had been assigned previously. Families were instructed to stay together and keep track of each other.

Procedure for checking out the families and loading them was the same in both Centers. A Japanese interpreter and two representatives of the U.S. E. S. stood at the door of the Center and checked each family against the master case list, examined the tags and marked each tag with the car and seat number the person was to occupy on the train. The family then moved along to the busses. Filled busses pulled up along the street and waited for the others to be loaded, and then they all moved off together in a convoy, bound for the railroad yards. The Japanese were unloaded from busses and loaded into trains well out in the yards. They did not go through the station.

The whole loading and unloading and reloading was done under the supervision of the military police. Also, one military police rode in each bus and one was assigned to each railroad car for the journey. Two lieutenants rode the train.

Facilities on the train were as follows: children under one year of age, their mothers and all aged people were given berths, all others rode in day coaches. Dr. Teru Togasaki, a Japanese woman doctor, was detailed to the train, and two nurses. According to a representative of the Bureau of Public Assistance, they were hired by the Bureau and sworn in at the Center about two hours before the busses left for the yards. He said that he believed the U. S. Public Health Service had made some arrangement for provision of medical care, but that it had "fallen through" at the last minute. Dr. Togasaki told me that she was ill from overwork, but that she had volunteered to go as "everybody else was busy." A Japanese social worker, Miss Margarette Fujita, employed by the Bureau of Public Assistance was also detailed to the train.

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All 646 persons were accounted for and left. Eight were missing from the check at the first Center but turned up at the second meeting place.

Comments:

Nearly everyone officially concerned with the job was thoughtful and decent. There was a great deal of confusion at both Centers. I do not believe, after talking with most of the Federal Security Agency people on the spot, that any really well thought out plan had been evolved. Mr. William Pierce, of the United States Employment Service, who is in charge of this part of the job, seemed worried and not very anxious to talk to me. The same was true of Mr. William Ladd, also the United States Employment Service, in charge of the operation at one of the Centers. They were doing the actual checking out themselves. Mr. Samuel Kaplan, United States Employment Service, seemed anxious to know how the job had been done in other localities.

The Army people were very considerate and efficient. Every operation that was in their province was carried on smoothly. In particular, their stand on the luggage question was to stretch a point in favor of the Japanese in every case. The evacuees were told to bring only what they could carry. They brought, however, small trunks, duffle bags, three or four suitcases for one person. Most of them had more luggage than they could, individually, carry. The Army said nothing about it, just loaded the stuff into vans and took it on to the baggage cars.

I talked to a Federal Reserve representative, Mr. Graves, at one of the Centers, who volunteered some figures on storage of Japanese belongings and cars. They were somewhat inaccurate. I checked with the Federal Reserve man in charge, Mr. Diamond, today. He told me that only two automobiles had been left with them for storage, and 46 "family groups" of furniture and other belongings.

Mr. Graves thought that no cars had been accepted for storage. I asked him if the Federal Reserve was not empowered to accept a power of attorney and sell automobiles for the Japanese. He said "Oh, yes. We can but we don't. We would rather have them make their own arrangements."

Any Japanese who was ill and expectant mothers who were eight months pregnant or more were left behind.

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