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Report on Attitude of Citizens and Officials in Tule Lake  
Area and Klamath County, Oregon, to Japanese  
Reception Center near Tulelake, Calif.

ALSO

Some General Facts Regarding Tule Lake Basin, California

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PART 1.

A. CONCLUSIONS:

1. I believe it is accurate to report that when I left the Tule Lake area on April 24th, opposition to the establishment of the Japanese Reception Center some four and a half miles south of the City of Tulelake had disappeared. Though hostile at first, the people generally have accepted the decision of the War department patriotically and, while they still would rather it had been located elsewhere, they will take the situation in stride and cooperate with the government in its operation.

2. The problems, it will be recognized, are distinctive from those of other reception centers so far announced, in that the same will be within three eighths mile of settled farms and because of the nature of the country and the people living there.

3. Most of the opposition was engendered by mishandling of public relations at the beginning, the inability of the people to obtain correct facts and the proneness to believe the most preposterous rumors. Back of this is the suspicion the reception center project was "engineered" by the sugar beet interests in order to obtain a supply of cheap Japanese labor and eventually turn the Tule Lake basin into a great beet growing country, without the due regard for the feelings of the other settlers who are exceedingly proud it is a "white man's country."

4. Had someone gone into the area ten days or two weeks ago and talked with the people there as I did, I am certain most or all of the opposition could have been avoided.



5. While satisfactory now, the situation will not necessarily remain in that way automatically. Principally it will require a definite pronouncement at the earliest feasible date on the entire question of the use of Japanese labor in the fields.

6. A labor shortage unquestionably will develop this year in the Tule Lake area and deserves consideration in determining policies on the use of the Japanese as farm workers. Some farmers have opposed the employment of Japanese in the fields; but greater than any opposition to employing Japanese well might be the criticism which would result if crops went unharvested due to a labor shortage while a large supply of workers was only a mile or so away.

7. Opposition would develop if Japanese workers were used while any white laborers still were available. (The United States Employment Service should be in a position to provide information at all times on available labor supplies and labor needs.) Violence easily might occur if Japanese and whites were worked in the same field.

8. The belief is general, perhaps unanimous, it would be far better to utilize the Japanese in some essential war effort than allow them to twiddle their thumbs in the reception center at government expense.

9. Farm products raised by the Japanese in connection with agricultural operations at the reception center would not be competitive with products of other growers. The nature of the agriculture is such that almost all products are shipped to comparatively distant markets.

10. Careful attention, I believe, should be given to the matter of taking over areas of public land near the reception center that has been scheduled for homesteading this year.



More than 1,100 applications, mostly by war veterans, are now on file with the Bureau of Reclamation for these lands.

11. Official assurances ought to be given to the people soon on certain obvious things, such as the guarding will be done by regular soldiers, the Japanese will not be permitted to wander at will throughout the area nor to mingle with the white children in the public schools. Most people understand these points, but many do not.

12. Residents of the area have no fear of the Japanese, and only under certain conditions herein discussed does there seem to be any real danger of direct or vigilante action by the people in the community against the Japanese.

13. I am now certain there will be no more protests from the Tule Lake region against the establishment of the reception center. Future attitudes will depend upon future policies and developments. Full cooperation can be relied upon from the press, the civic organizations and, I believe, most of the individual citizens in the neighborhood. This spirit of cooperation should be utilized wherever advisable. The people in the area feel somewhat isolated, and while they have given in great measure of their sons to the armed forces, those at home are anxious to make some contribution to the war effort. This can be one way.

B. The People:

To understand local problems affecting the Japanese Reception Center at Newell, California, it is necessary first to have a knowledge of the people inhabiting the Tule Lake Basin in which the project is located.

Essentially they are pioneers. Most of them settled in the district when it was nothing more or less than a sagebrush



wilderness. Literally and figuratively they have built their homes and their farms from the dust up. Tule Basin originally was settled exclusively by veterans of World War I under provisions of the homesteading laws. Ninety-two percent of the homesteads still are farmed by the veterans, the majority of whom have been there since the project was opened about twenty years ago.

They are sincere, hard-working, hard-drinking people. Sales of liquor in adjacent Klamath County, Oregon, through state liquor stores are second in the State only to those in Multnomah County, which includes Portland. Many of them carry rifles constantly in the back of their automobiles to shoot jackrabbits or ducks which abound in the area, or, as they frankly admit, to take care of any emergency that might arise.

They are exceedingly proud people, proud of their homes and farms, which are notably well kept, and particularly proud that this is "a white man's country". They intend to keep it so and are depressed that the Japanese are coming in. They are no Japanese in the Tule Basin nor in Klamath County. The last census showed only twenty two Negroes out of a population of some 40,000. Few Mexicans are brought in during the harvest season to work in the sugar beets but are moved out when the harvest is completed. The German and Italian population is small.

These people, too, are intensely patriotic, vitally aware America is at war. They claim to have a larger proportion of the eligible population in the armed forces than any other selective service district in the United States. This I could not verify, but young men were conspicuous by their absence. Nearly every family has contributed a member to the service and



one family has two boys in the air corps and one in the navy. Those at home are eager to have some part of the war effort- and this is a significant factor in their present attitude towards the reception center. Three persons from the region are known to be war prisoners of the Japanese. There may be others.

Being surrounded on all sides by mountains, they naturally are somewhat provincial in their thinking. Rumors and gossip spread rapidly and far. Nevertheless, on the whole they are a reasonably intelligent people, talk straight from the shoulder, trust those who do likewise and distrust brass hats, big shots and brain trusters.

c. Peculiarity of Problem:

The Tule Lake Reception Center differs from those at Manzanar, Parker and Gila in that it is close to a highly cultivated and fairly well populated area. The camp buildings are about 3/8 mile from the nearest settlers, and if certain areas under discussion were taken over for agricultural purposes Japanese would be working on lands adjacent to the property of thirty eight of the permanent settlers. The camp is located a little over four miles from the City of Tulelake, which has a basic population of about 600. The camp site is visible from the homes of perhaps twenty settlers.

Also, here but in none of the three other projects is employment of evacuees on nearby farmlands possible, and whether or not this labor supply is utilized may be a source of considerable contention in the community later on.

d. Labor Situation:



Because of the highly seasonal character of the crops grown in the basin, almost all the harvest labor is migratory. In past years, about 3,000 persons have come into the district for a period of six weeks or two months in late September, October and early November. These people are typical migrant laborers, moving in just before the harvest commences and moving out when it is completed. They are composed chiefly of white- Okies and Arkies. A few Mexicans perform the more arduous stoop labor in the sugar beet fields. There are no Japanese nor Negroes among them. They live on the farms or in temporary shelter in the City of Tulelake.

Principal crops are potatoes, barley, wheat, alfalfa, sugar beets, oats and clover and flax seed.

A mild labor shortage was apparent in 1941 and a serious shortage is anticipated this year, due to the usual causes of the loss of farm laborers to military service and more highly paid war industries, and also the decimation of the farmers' own families by draft and enlistments. How great this labor shortage may be there appears no way of estimating now.

At present a temporary situation has developed through the loss of a considerable number of farm workers to construction jobs at the reception centers. Wages paid at the project range from 94 cents up to \$1.40 per hour. Possible earnings run as high as \$130 a week, or two or three times what they might earn on the farms in a month. Since this is the beginning of the planting season, this fact has caused some annoyance to the settlers in addition to all the other factors which have developed.

#### F. Activities of Clark Fenaler:

Clark Fenaler is a comparatively recent arrival in the Tule Lake district, coming from Oregon, but has established himself as one of the leading figures in the community. He is a farm owner



but does not operate the land himself. He holds the local school bus contract and is regarded as one of the best dressed men in the area, a minor fact but one which may have caused some resentment among other settlers. Fenaler is a World War I veteran and has three sons now in the service - Lieut. Robert W. Fenaler and Private Jack Fenaler in the Air Corps and Richard L. Fenaler in the Navy. He is an active Legionaire and was described as a person who leads all the parades. Beets are grown on his land and he has been active in promoting beet culture in the basin. By several persons with whom I talked he was called a sort of liaison man for Spreckels.

Several weeks ago Fenaler called a meeting of persons in the community. It was held at the Tulelake Chamber of Commerce and was attended by twenty-two persons. Fenaler announced he had been to San Francisco, conferred with Lieut. General John L. DeWitt, commanding general of the Western Defense Command, and had been told by General DeWitt in effect that a Japanese reception center would be established in Tule Lake if the community was in a "receptive mood." He asked that the meeting adopt a resolution favoring the project.

As reported to me by two persons who attended the meeting, Fenaler pointed out the imminence of a labor shortage this fall and the fact that Japanese labor would be available for work in the fields if a camp were established. He mentioned the possibility of bringing in "three or four hundred" Japanese. Many questions were raised - How would they be guarded? Would they be permitted to roam at will in the community? Would they work side by side with white laborers? These Fenaler was unable to answer and promised that in a few days he would have an army officer come to Tule Lake and explain all the details of the project to them.



Days went by and no army officer arrived, at least to the knowledge of those with whom I talked. Meanwhile reports were circulated that Tule Lake had been selected as a site for a reception center for 10,000 Japanese. In the course of time, lumber began to be moved to the reception center site. When it was apparent a reception center was to be built, the settlers reached the conclusion, individually and collectively, they had been given the "run-around" by the government. They thought their rights as good American citizens had been ignored.

On top of that they did not have the faintest idea what a reception center meant. Many of them actually thought it was something like a church reception- a place to gather and have a party! Rumors began to multiply. Some I picked up were as follows:

The Japanese would only live at the camp and would be allowed to work in the fields without supervision.

They would be permitted to go into Tulelake and Klamath Falls whenever they pleased- to sit on the stools at lunch counters alongside white residents, or to get "liquored up".

The government was going to loan the Japanese money to buy farms in the area.

Leased lands were going to be seized without compensation to leases for Japanese agricultural activities.

Five hundred Negroes were to be brought in to guard the camp. (I later proved this one out as having been started by a joking remark by the chamber of commerce secretary in the rival city of Medford.)

Non-beet growing farmers charged in so many words the sugar beet interests had "sold the army a bill of goods" in order to get cheap labor into the district at the expense of the other settlers.

(I take time to cite these groundless rumors to show how con-



ditions were in the district and also to illustrate the results of bad handling of a situation. In my opinion, had someone gone into the area and tried to set the people right on these things, most or all of the opposition could have been prevented. It is suggested that if additional reception centers are established in comparable areas, someone be on the ground before or when the announcement is made so there will be no misconceptions as to what the project involves.

Passing time was marked by increasing hostility and there were open threats that: "Let' em come; we'll take care of them in our own way." And I(m inclined to believe they would have.

(Fenaler has been given a fairly important job at the project—a fact which also does not set well with many of the settlers. Douglas Puckett, a farmer, said: "That's what we all predicted would happen. But I guess it's O.K. if he's got pull enough to swing it.")

#### G. The Incident at Morrill:

About the time Fenaler first announced the possibility of establishing a Japanese reception center at Tule Lake, an incident occurred at Morrill, twenty miles north of Tulelake and fifteen miles south of Klamath Falls, which had a strong influence on sentiment in the area.

A man named Don Hubble, a former pool hall operator at Bremerton, Wash., purchased a farm about six miles from Morrill early this spring for \$14,000. Without previous farming experience, he decided to bring some Japanese he knew from Bremerton to operate his land for him. He later told the sheriff he had discussed his plan with some of the other settlers and found no opposition, but added: "I guess I talked to the wrong people."

Six Japanese arrived at Morrill on March 29th. They were



Mr. and Mrs. Masaomi Kibo; Barbara Kibo, a baby; Seich Dogen, Kinichi Fujita and Sumiko Fujita, a 15 year old girl. All except Dogen are American citizens. They were "put up" at the hotel in Morrill. Hardly had they arrived there when reports of their presence began to spread. The number grew to six families and finally (absurd as it may sound) to 600. Hubble, it was asserted, was acting only as a "front man" for Japanese aliens to buy land up in the district.

(Sheriff Lloyd L. Low of Klamath County, Oregon, investigated this and satisfied himself Hubble was acting for himself only and had put up his own money in the deal from the proceeds of the sale of his pool hall.)

The sheriff believes there is no question but that vigilante action was intended against the Japanese, and possibly also against Hubble. There is one well-founded report that two settlers came from the Tule Lake area armed with their rifle. According to the information reaching Sheriff Low, the vigilante action was scheduled to take place on the night of March 31 st.

About noon that day the sheriff went to Morrill and removed the six Japanese, Hubble and Mrs. Hubble to Klamath Falls for safe keeping. (The local press referred to it as "protective custody".) No charges were preferred against them and they were not placed in jail. Mr. and Mrs. Hubble went to a hotel and since have returned to their farm at Morrill. The Japanese were quartered secretly in a rooming house where they since have been kept.

The problem was compounded by the fact the military order "freezing" Japanese went into effect March 30th. Since then, Sheriff Low has tried repeatedly to "get the Japs off my hands" but without success. He said he had taken the matter up with the Western



Defense Command in San Francisco which referred it to Governor Sprague of Oregon, who referred it back to the sheriff, who commenced the process all over again. This has gone on for some three and a half weeks and the Japanese still are in Klamath Falls.

Sheriff Low is somewhat resentful he has not been able to get some action on this matter. He is willing to load the Japanese into an automobile and personally drive them back to Bremerton, but he is of the opinion Japanese can now be moved only by the military.

(I have been informed by the Federal Security Agency the Japanese will be moved during the week of April 27th to the assembly center in the State of Washington. In my opinion, prompt action on this matter would do an inestimable amount of good in the area and remove a sore spot which easily could produce an incident.

The temper of the community was illustrated by the fact that a week ago Saturday Night the sheriff received a call to the effect "his Japanese were running around the streets and if he didn't take care of them the people would. The sheriff hurried into town and found the roaming "Japanese" were a couple of Filipinos.

While this incident is isolated from the reception center, it is linked closely with it in revealing the temper of the people in regard to all Japanese.)

#### H. The Homestead Matter:

A bit of digression will be necessary to draw the picture of another problem I found in the Tule Lake district, and that is the matter of land slated to be opened this year for homesteading but which is included in the area reportedly intended to be taken over for farming operations by the Japanese in the reception centers.

Originally all land in the Tule Lake basin was government owned. These public lands have been opened from time to time to homesteading. To date 390 families have settled on homestead lands in the Tule Lake Division of the Klamath Reclamation Project.



This includes 25,189 acres. In past years preference in homesteading has been given to World War I veterans, accounting for the large percentage of ex service men in the community.

This year a change in the homesteading law goes into effect. This gives preference to those who have lost their homes due to drought or to no fault of their own. This was intended of course to apply to Dust Bowlers but, for future reference, I desire to call attention the clause "no fault of their own".

The Bureau of Reclamation administering the Klamath Project had previously announced that 7,500 acres of new lands in Tule Lake adjacent to presently settled lands would be opened to homesteading this year. This, roughly speaking, is the "buffer land" between the already settled section of Tule Lake and the reception center and which, I am advised, is the land the War Relocation Authority proposes to take over for farming operations by the evacuees. It is reclaimed and at present operated by persons working on lease arrangements with the reclamation bureau.

On file in the reclamation bureau office in Klamath Falls are approximately 2,100 applications for this land. About 1,000 of these were filed by veterans who had been unsuccessful in obtaining land in Prior openings. This year to date, 145 applications have been received, mostly from persons in California, Oregon and Washington, but others from as far away as Illinois.

I do not know what the reaction of the veterans who have filed these applications would be if they should be advised the land has been withdrawn from homesteading in order to make it available for farming by Japanese\*all provided, of course, such action is taken. No doubt there will be disappointments. In my opinion, considerable thought should be given this matter.

Selections of persons to be allotted farm lands are made by a board composed of B. E. Hayden, Project Superintendent for the



reclamation service; C. A. Henderson, county agent; and a banker and a farmer to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The applicant must furnish proof of at least two years' farming experience and assets of \$2,000. Applications may be considered on these two bases but there exists some question whether an applicant can be turned down merely "for cause".

This brings up the question disturbing many of the settlers in the area of whether citizen-Japanese would be able to qualify for homestead lands if they desired to remain in the area after the war. This appears to be a legal question. Could, for example, an American born Japanese, meeting other requirements of the homestead law, who had been evacuated by the Army from his farm be construed as having been forced from his home through no cause of his own?

As this report will discuss later, the residents of the Tule Lake basin, now reconciled to the establishment of the reception center insist that the Japanese be removed from the area after the war. There are four ways the Japanese could remain there. These are: (a) Through approval for homesteading, if that should be found possible under the new law; (b) through purchase of already settled lands, which can be sold by the settlers after three years' "proof" residence; (c) through leasing of reclaimed but unhomesteaded lands; and (d) through employment as farm laborers by the homesteaders or lessees.

Points (b) and (d) are matters up to the settlers and their consciences, and if they are as strongly opposed to Japanese settling there as they pretend to be, those would not happen. Points (a) and (c), however, present a problem to be considered. I might say these are largely my own ideas gathered from the reclamation bureau and were not included among the points raised by the settlers.

Also, no protests had been received by the reclamation bureau



by applicants from homestead lands against turning the acreage over to Japanese farming operations. This may be because apparently only a few persons are aware that such a move is under consideration. I suggest this matter be watched as it is a potential trouble maker, as anything would be that presented a clash of interests between the Japanese and other citizens, particularly war veterans.

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# 1. My Work At Tule Lake:

In the foregoing pages I have tried to paint a picture of conditions at Tule Lake and in Klamath Falls as they have been for the past several weeks and pretty much as they were upon my arrival in the district. I talked with numerous settlers on the reclamation project and with people in the city of Tulalake and Klamath Falls. I sought to sound out public sentiment so far as possible, to find out what matters were bothering the people and to receive such suggestions as they had to offer.

Two factors worked decidedly in our favor, these being the intensely patriotic feeling among the settlers and, secondly, the fact three of their own residents are Japanese prisoners of war, one of them being Dr. Stanley S. McNulty, a popular young dentist in the community was taken a prisoner at Wake Island, and, incidentally a close friend of Edwin A. Davis, editor of the Tulalake Reporter.

After clearing away some of the groundless rumors that had been befuddling the entire matter, I was able to appeal to them successfully on the ground that the evacuation was a matter of military necessity which had been decided upon by the United States Army. The general reaction among the veterans was that "what is good enough for the Army is good enough for my money." While it was made plain that many administrative phases had not been worked out yet in the short time the WRA had had the project, they were willing to place their faith in the government doing the right thing.

The attitude of several could be summed by this way: "Of course, nobody wants the Japs. But we recognize they must be evacuated from the combat areas, the Army has decided this is the best place to put some of them and it will be our contribution



to the war effort to see the job done".

They were made fully aware of the danger of reprisals to our imprisoned troops should any untoward incident occur at the reception center and for the most part will try to see that nothing does occur. When I left, I believe it accurate to say the general attitude was that they will accept the reception center as a duty imposed upon them by the government; in fact, they will go further and offer such cooperation to the government as may be desired.

This, of course, will be conditional upon several factors to be discussed subsequently in this report.

#### J. Attitude of the Settlers:

I talked with numerous settlers in the Tule Lake Basin and in the following paragraphs will summarize the views expressed by some representative farmers:

John S. Couson, a war veteran and nearest neighbor to the reception center (about three-eighths mile): "There's no use protesting now that the camp is under way. We won't mind having the Japs here but we don't want them staying after the war. I figure the Japs won't like this country anyway, it's too cold, and the growing season is too short for their kind of farming - about five months.

We're going to have a bad labor shortage this year and you can blame the draft boards for that. Farm workers should have been deferred until after the harvest's over. If we have to take the Japs to get the crops in, well, that's all right with me.

"But why bring the Japs to raise more stuff when the AAA program restricts what we can grow? If there is a food shortage we can grow twice as much if the lid was taken off. We have no fear of any trouble from the Japs."

G.V. Sommerville, proprietor of Sommerville, one of the



area's top farms, and a war veteran, said he thought there would be little or no opposition to the project from now on. He did not attend any of the protest meetings. He recognizes the Army must put the Japs somewhere and respects its judgment....."The least we at home here can do to help the war effort is to cooperate with the government." He expects no trouble if the administration of the project is sound.

Douglas Punkett, war veteran, said he had opposed the project right along, but had decided he would support it, and when I left, said: "If the Army can't spare the men to guard the camp, well, some of us settlers will go over and give them a hand." He blamed "selfish interests-the beet growers and Fenaler" - in having the project established in Tule Lake. He believes the government should establish a policy immediately in regard to using Japanese labor so the farmers will know where they stand. He thought it would be all right for Japanese labor to be used on the farms if no white labor was available, but Japs shouldn't be employed as long as a single white man was out of a job. He expressed the belief it would lead to trouble if Japanese and white labor were worked on the same farm; they should be segregated, all white or all Japanese labor on his place.

George M. Smith will go all out in cooperating with the government now that many questions have been cleared up for him. He was opposed to the project but now states, "I will cooperate in any way the government <sup>asks</sup> asks and will take Japs on my land if necessary." Like many other farmers, he voiced suspicion of the beet interests but took the attitude that "This is water over the dam now and we'll make the most out of the situation."

I talked with several others but to recite their conversation would be repetitious. They represented various shades of



approval and divergent ideals ohn how the labor question should be handled, but I might add there was not a settler who was hostile to the reception center after I had talked with him. The matter of labor will be summarized in a subsequent section.

K. The Press:

In the area are two newspapers, the Klamath Falls New\*Herald, a twice daily published by Frank Jenkins, and the Tulelake Reporter a weekly of which Edwin A. Davis is the publisher. Both are highly intelligent, respected and influential in the community. Prior to the formal announcement the reception center would be established at Tule Lake, they opposed the location of the project there. It simply was a case of just not wanting the Japanese.

However, now that the decision has been made they regard the issue as closed. They are thoroughly aware of the delicate problems involved from now on and volunteered their cooperation in any way they can ve of service to the War Relocation Authority in stablizing public opinion and quieting opposition. They will editorialize if and when necessary along those lines.

(Neither paper has received a singly release from any agency on the evacuation program. This matter should be attended to at once and it is suggested that future announcements regarding Tule Lake be wired to them. Also, the camp administrator might do well to keep in close contact with both editors. He will find them extremely helpful and should have no hesitancy in discussing problems with them as they might arise. It seems to me most important to keep the good will of both these papers and it cannot be said that the situation in the past has been conducive to that. In fact, quite the contrary.)

Davis stressed several points which he considered highly important in future policy setting. These include the following:



A policy regarding the use of Japanese labor should be announced as soon as possible.

It is imperative that no Japanese labor be used so long as there is white labor available, but he considered it proper to use Japanese if necessary to harvest the crops. He believes there will be a serious labor shortage and Japanese laborers will be needed.

He believes the danger is real that white laborers will refuse to work in the same field with the Japanese and suggested some sort of segregation.

Obviously, no Japanese should be permitted to attend the schools as the children of the settlers.

Davis owes his livelihood to the people in the community and while he is extremely favorable now he cannot be expected to remain that way always regardless of what actions are taken if those actions conflict with community interest.

Jenkins' observations agreed pretty fully with those voiced by Davis, but he added the additional thought that the type of administrator will determine the success of the camp. He said he should be one who can "speak the settlers' language"; a "brass hat" type would cause dissatisfaction among the people and might doom the project.

He felt as Davis did that whites and Japanese would not be worked in the same field but believes segregation might be all right. Jenkins <sup>declared</sup> ~~declared~~ that if the situation is intelligently handled, "any settler who suggested harming a Jap in the reception center would be the one who would be in danger of getting "lynched" because of the general appreciation of the possibility of reprisals and the international complications that might be involved.



Editorial, Klamath Falls News-Herald, April 19, 1942:

"Reasons for official reluctance to announce the Japanese camp at Tule Lake are not clear. In the past week, there have been so many developments in evidence here that knowledge of the general camp plans became public property, but still the various governmental agencies which might give the official word have kept mum.

"There should be no objection to the gathering of local information on the matter. It is a story, incidentally, which should be received favorably in Japan if it ever gets there, for the camp is to be favorably located in a fertile basin.

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"Perhaps it is well at this time to repeat what was said here a week ago. It was all right to object to the location of the camp in this area, and to list reasonable arguments against it. Once action was taken in spite of these protests, we should all cooperate in every way possible with the authorities.

"The project is a part of the war effort. It has evidently been decided that the location's desirable features offset the objections raised here. Let's accept the decision in good spirit and do our part.

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"Repeating further, the communities of the basin may well insist upon removal of the camp and the Japanese once the emergency is over.

"That is a fair request and should be pressed home."

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L. Civic Organizations:

Resolutions of protest against establishing the Japanese reception center in the Tule Lake basin were adopted by the chamber of commerce of Tulelake, the county chamber of commerce at Klamath Falls, and about four other organizations in the area. All were approximately in the same tone. A copy of the Tulelake Chamber of Commerce resolution is appended to this report.

I talked with H. E. Dickson, president of the Tulelake Chamber of Commerce, and Earl Reynolds, executive secretary of the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce. Dickson said he did not prepare the resolution to which his name was signed, personally



thought it should not have been adopted, and was not present at the meeting at which it was approved. Reynolds gave me definite assurance that opposition in his organization no longer exists and the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce stands ready to cooperate with the War Relocation Authority and the Army in any way possible to insure satisfactory operation of the reception center.

In fact, both Reynolds and Dickson bordered on the apologetic that their organizations had adopted the resolutions.

Dickson, Tulelake representative of the California-Oregon Power Company, expressed the belief all opposition would disappear though there may be some "discharges". He thinks, however, the future attitude will be dependent largely upon the labor policy established by the War Relocation Authority.

If Japanese are used in the fields, he said, it must be made certain no white labor is available. In other words, camp labor should be only supplemental to insure the harvest of the crops. If Japanese were used while any white labor was unemployed, trouble might result.

Much of the chamber's early opposition, he stated, was based on the belief the government would take over about 7,500 acres of lease lands already prepared for crop planting. He said assurance had been given the lessees would be permitted to plant and harvest their crops.

(This leased land lies between the homestead area and the camp site and reportedly is the area the government has-- has proposed to take over for farming operations. The land has been prepared by the lessees for planting and some plantings, mostly of grain, have been made. I am advised it will be too late for the Japanese to do any planting this season.)

Reynolds assured me there will be no more protests from



the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce. He pointed out the resolution had been adopted before the formal announcement of the site selection was made, and reported the general sentiment in his organization now is that the camp location is a matter of military decision beyond questioning and that the government agencies will find that a spirit of cooperation has supplanted opposition.

(Of course, the business men of both Tulelake and Klamath Falls have an eye on any business that may develop from the reception center. Dickson and Reynolds expressed much interest in the number of soldiers to be on guard duty. They had heard it would run between 400 and 500. I could not enlighten them on the subject except to say it would be sufficiently large for adequate guard duty and not so large that any soldiers would be removed unnecessarily from combat duty.)

M. The Mayor of Tulelake:

A.A. Rodenberger was elected mayor of Tulelake on April 20, 1942, previously serving as a councilman, and is proprietor of the City's largest department store. He has been strenuously opposed to the location of the project in Tule Lake and still is to a considerable degree.

His opposition is a little intemperate and follows stock lines: This is a white man's country and we want to keep it that way; the Japs will drive white labor out; this will get the reputation as "a Jap country" and white labor won't come here; the location of the reception center was the result of the "dollar patriotism" of the sugar beet interests who wanted cheap labor in the vicinity.

He is the type who does all the talking and the more he talked the more diaphanous became his real opposition to the project.



Boiled down it appeared to me to be this:

1. White labor in the area gives him a large amount of seasonal business at his store in the purchase of overalls, shoes, etc. Japanese at the reception center, if not allowed to come into town, would spend nothing with him.

2. The contractors building the reception center are paying off the workers with checks cashable at a Klamath Falls bank. He should pay off in cash so they could spend the money in Tulelake.

I thought I made some progress with him on the basis of the military necessity of the project and the patriotic duty on the part of the people there in accepting some responsibility in the war effort. But he is not entirely satisfied. Because of his position as mayor of the City is is desirable he be on our side and some further talks might be in order. He definitely is the type who will have to be "Apple polished"; logic and reason will have little effect.

N. The Law:

Since the reception center is in Modoc County, the seat of which is Alturas more than <sup>100</sup> 200 miles away, I was unable to talk with a ny law enforcement officer of that county. However, I did chat with Chief of Police Frank G. Rhodes of Tulelake and Sheriff LLOYD L. Low of Klamath County, Oregon.

It is Rhodes' opinion, knowing the settlers as he does, that it cannot ve said there is not some danger of trouble developing, though he regards it as unlikely. He thinks the greatest danger might arise if word reached the people there that any American prisoner of war had been mistreated or, possibly, if some resident of the valley was killed in action. This is especially true if a few settlers get "liquored up."

(As a thought along these lines, it might be well if the ad-



ministrator kept in close touch with news of this nature. It might be a barometer of the feelings of the people, and alertness to any situation could forestall some serious incident.)

Sheriff Low has an excellent outlook on the problem and, I am convinced, can be relied upon to act intelligently and will do all in his power to prevent any possible incident. He has been the sheriff of Klamath County for seventeen years. For some time he has been pointedly telling the community that a single individual getting out of line in the treatment of the Japanese here well could create an international incident that would endanger the lives of many Americans, and believes this has had beneficial effect.

He thinks there will be no trouble but admits the remote danger of some "hot head upsetting the apple cart."

#### 01 Summary of Labor Views:

One of the difficult and vital problems affecting the operation of the reception center is that of the use of Japanese labor on the farms. Considerable thought must be given to the subject and the views of the settlers respected.

It seems quite apparent a labor shortage will develop this year in the Klamath Reclamation Project just as there will be a shortage of normal labor in all other agricultural areas. There is some opposition to the use of Japanese labor at all; I'm certain there would be more complaint if the loss of crops was threatened because of the lack of harvest hands while there was a great reservoir of unused Japanese labor in the reception center.

Climatic conditions in the region are such that harvest operations cannot be prolonged. Freezes come early in the autumn and serious crop losses can occur if the harvest is not completed quickly.



It is my opinion the vast majority of the settlers would favor the use of Japanese labor if that was the only way to get the crops in. There are reports of some farmers saying they would let their crops rot in the ground before they would hire a Jap. I was unable to clear this out but I'm satisfied the reports are extremely isolated and unrepresentative, and disappear when it appeared the attitude meant money out of their pockets. It would be cutting off their noses to spite their faces.

However, there are two palpably obvious conclusions: The people believe: (a) Japanese labor from the reception center must not be used while any white labor is available and (b) it would be extremely inadvisable to work Japanese and white labor in the same field.

Each year, during the harvest season, the California state employment service (now the United States Employment Service) has maintained an employment office in Tulelake. The Oregon state service maintains a year-round office at Klamath Falls. Some settlers have migrant workers who return each year to their particular farms, but the bulk of the labor is placed through the employment service. Should a decision be made to use Japanese labor, it would appear the employment services would be in a position to determine at any time the actual labor supply situation and to decide whether any necessity existed for the supplemental use of Japanese workers.

( I do not feel qualified now to make any recommendation in this matter. While I am satisfied the great majority of farmers would favor the use of the Japanese if necessary to harvest the crops, the opposition of 1 percent might well be 1 percent too much. I suggest a further investigation of this matter.)

However, there appeared to be no division of opinion about the inadvisability of working Japanese and white in the same fields. The opinion of the growers as well as the sheriff of Klamath



County and the chief of police of Tulare is that it would not work and would lead to trouble. If both kinds of labor were used, it would have to be a case of employing all white labor in one field and all Japanese in another.

The wage scale presents a confusing situation. Frankly there is a deep rooted suspicion among many of the settlers that the establishment of the reception center was "engineered" by the sugar beet interests in order to get a supply of cheap labor into the district. Should, for example, Japanese labor be used in the beet fields at less than prevailing wages, considerable resentment would develop among the settlers, who would feel their suspicions had been confirmed and who, of course, would not relish paying higher wages for white labor on their places.

On the other hand, there probably would develop considerable opposition among the white laborers if the Japanese were paid the same wages as they received. This was one point particularly stressed by Sheriff Lloyd L. Low and also mentioned by others. The sheriff is convinced that would be the case. Since there now are no migrant laborers in the area I could not sound out sentiment among them. In any event, if these observations are true it presents something of a vicious circle that is difficult of solution.

("Dollar patriotism" is quite a favorite figure of speech in the area. Looking at it realistically I gathered that it was "dollar patriotism" if someone else makes a dollar out of the war program, but maybe it's not such a bad idea if I can.)

P. Guarding:

The problems relating to guarding, I think are quite simple. War veterans, it will be found, have the highest respect for the ability of the Army to take care of the situation.



Because of the temper of the people it will be necessary to keep the Japanese evacuees out of sight so far as possible. It would be best if no Japanese ever were seen outside of the reservation unless, possibly, when being transported back and forth for work in the fields. The majority impression I gained was that guarding at all times, on and off the reservation, should be left to uniformed army men, although a few expressed the belief the settlers were well qualified to take care of the Japanese on their own farms while doing farm work.

Of course if Japanese are not used as farm laborers no problem exists here. Should they be used, careful consideration should be given to the matter. It is very delicate subject and requires more time for investigation than I was able to give to it.

Q. Farm Operations and Industries:

Almost all of the products grown in the Klamath Reclamation Project are shipped from the district. There is little or no truck gardening from which the products would be sold locally in Klamath Falls and nearby towns. Practically all truck produce is imported.

Therefore, I could find no serious opposition to farming operations by the Japanese at the reception center because of the threat of competition. This might be otherwise if local markets were involved. In the broad sense the comparatively small amount of produce the Japanese would raise would be less than a drop in the bucket. There is no thought of Japanese grown products depressing the market price. Conversely, the settlers have good markets for their products now. It is immaterial whether or not they sold anything to the Japanese reception center.

I made the approach to many on the basis that with the reception center now established there as a military necessity,



two courses of procedure are open to the government: One to let them twiddle their thumbs at government expense: the other to put them to work producing something for the war effort and to help pay their own way.

There was an excellent response to this and many thought sardonically, it a splendid idea if evacuees could make some war materials which could be used by our army against the Japanese.

#### R. Post War Problem:

The present temper of the people in the area is that after the war the Japanese must be moved out and the general belief is they will be. Few fears exist <sup>any</sup> Japanese would remain of his own volition because of the climatic conditions and the fact agricultural practices are not such as generally appeal to a Japanese.

Since I had no answer to this question I purposely avoided discussion of it so far as possible except to receive opinions. It does not seem to be a particularly pressing matter at the moment and Frank Jenkins, editor of the Klamath Falls paper, made a good suggestion that sleeping dogs be allowed to lie until such time as it becomes a more active issue than it seems to be now. In other words, no one believes the United States Government is going to dump 10,000 Japanese into their midst after the war and let them stay and shift for themselves; they realize it is a matter that must be taken care of and will be.

A discussion of the homesteading situation relative to the Japanese is contained under the heading of the Homestead Matter.

#### S. Schools:

I heard a single rumor that Japanese children from the reception center would attend already established schools, mingling with the white children. It goes without saying this must not be done.



Resolution of the Tulalake Chamber of  
Commerce

WHEREAS it has come to the attention of the Tulalake Chamber of Commerce that it is the intention of the United States Government to locate an encampment in which to concentrate aliens and American-born citizens of foreign descent, and

WHEREAS it is recognized by the chamber of commerce that it is the duty and a matter of vital importance to the government to segregate and remove from vital areas, adequately protect and suitably provide for both enemy aliens and certain American citizens of foreign descent for the duration of the present national emergency, and

WHEREAS it has come to the attention of the chamber of commerce that valuable lease land in the Tule Lake basin now farmed by native born American citizens has been proposed for occupation of concentration camp evacuees, and

WHEREAS this land is highly developed and in full production; that the present operators are all local people who have a considerable investment in their operation; that it is now producing crops that United States D. A. Secretary Wickard has asked be increased for war emergency; that because of short growing season but one crop a year can be grown, rendering the land unsuitable for truck farming as proposed, further that the reclamation project will be deprived of several thousand dollars annual revenue which is used in reducing the bonded indebtedness against each individual homestead in the project, thus depriving land owners of benefit of income from lease rentals, and

WHEREAS this area is only 125 miles from the Pacific Coast, well within the 150 mile limit which we have been informed by the press has been set aside as a defense area, and



WHEREAS the proposed camp site is located within the Klamath Reclamation Project, the farmers and settlers on which are now engaged in the production of food for national defense and which is dependent upon an extensive system of laterals, canals, dams, dykes and pumping plants, all of which are readily susceptible to sabotage, and

WHEREAS ? this area is highly developed and has been settled by ex-service men of previous wars, and that it has been a matter of pride that the settlement of the project has been purely of the white race, and that in an instance of six Japanese coming into the vicinity they were forcibly removed.

NOW, THEREFORE? BE IT RESOLVED that the U.S. Army be requested to substitute as a camp site the Madeline Plains, a vast area of which ten or twelve thousand acres are watered, ninety miles south of here and fifty miles north of Honey Lake Valley a fertile area similar to ours which we believe desirable for such concentration camp, and from which such farm labor as needed could be used by both valleys, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to senators and representatives of both Oregon and California and to the commanding general of this area and to other governmental agencies involved.

H. E. DICKSON, President

Sara Welsh, secretary.



A 17.11

SUMMARY OF PRESS REPORTS OF MERRILL INCIDENT FROM KLAMATH FALLS

Source: News-Herald  
Klamath Falls, Oregon.

Period: March 31, 1942 to April 22, 1942

Contents: Summary of Press Reports of  
Merrill Incident from Klamath  
Falls . . . Klamath Falls News  
Herald.

Editorial in Klamath Falls  
News-Herald, April 9, 1942.

Prepared by  
George Dean, Senior Information Specialist  
War Relocation Authority

April 27, 1942



SUMMARY OF PRESS REPORTS OF MERRILL INCIDENT FROM KLAMATH FALLS

News-Herald:

A. March 31, 1942--"A report that six Japanese families had moved into a district near Merrill in the south end of the county was made to the sheriff's office Monday by a citizen of Tulelake, who expressed concern over the situation.

"Sheriff Low said he had not confirmed the report but would check to determine if the Jap families have proper authority. Sunday night was the deadline for voluntary removal from Military Area No. 1. . . . . Presumably, it was said, if proper authority for moving had been granted, there is no legal bar to Japs residing on the east side of that (No.97) highway."

B. April 1, 1942-- "Six Japanese were escorted from an aroused south end district yesterday by Sheriff Lloyd L. Low, but the sheriff was not sure last night just what would be done with the charges in his 'protective custody.'

"Sheriff Low said he had asked the Japanese to leave the Merrill district pending settlement of questions that developed after their arrival there from Tacoma to work for a white farmer they had known in the Washington city. He stated the Japanese readily complied with his request which resulted from stirred-up public sentiment in the south end area.

"He said there were no overt acts but 'considerable talk' .....

"Sheriff Low conferred with authorities at Tacoma and with Army officials, and will probably know today what further is to be done about the Japanese who apparently had violated no legal restrictions or Army regulations ....



"The Japanese came ..... according to investigation, on a moving permit granted by the U. S. Employment Service at Tacoma ..... Hubble stated he had known the Japanese in Tacoma and anticipated no trouble in bringing them here .....

"Southend communities were aroused by the arrival of the Japanese, and it became a matter of widespread discussion there.... Signs reading, 'No Jap Trade Wanted', appeared in some Merrill business-house windows...

"The Merrill Service Club, at a meeting Tuesday, passed a resolution thanking the sheriff for his efforts."

C. April 2, 1942-- "Sheriff Low awaited advice from Army authorities at San Francisco to what further steps should be taken in connection with six Japanese in his 'protective custody' ..... He said he had asked the Japanese to leave Merrill because of evidences of strong community feeling and resentment there .....

"Sheriff Low wired the federal employment agency at Tacoma for advice as to what to do with his charges and was referred to an army provost officer at San Francisco. The office had not replied....

"Sheriff Low talked to M. Kibe, a man about 35 years of age and graduate of Northwestern University, Chicago, leader of the Japanese group. Kibe told the sheriff that apparently the best thing for the group to do is to return to Tacoma, where their relatives are and where they have interests ....

"Kibe told the sheriff that he had had difficulty finding other Japanese to go to Merrill with him to work on the ranch."



D. April 4, 1942-- "Still waiting for a permit to travel back to Tacoma were six Japanese taken into 'protective custody' by Sheriff Low. The matter now rests with Ernest Leonetti, war-time evacuation officer with headquarters in Portland, who has undertaken to obtain a travel permit for the Japanese from Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt.

"Word has been received from the federal employment agency in Tacoma, Low said, that the Japanese will be received back up there. The catch, however, is obtaining a permit for them to make the trip up through Oregon and Washington. Permits can be issued only from military sources."

E. April 5, 1942-- "A week-end in the Klamath Falls vicinity is apparently in store for the six Japanese men and women who have been held in 'protective custody' ....By noon Saturday no word had been received on the travel permit....Ernest Leonetti..is obtaining the permit from military authorities.....The Japanese were escorted from the Merrill district.. because of evidences there of feeling against them...They are now staying outside the restricted area in Klamath Falls."

F. April 6, 1942--"Six Japanese awaiting a permit to travel back north rounded out their first week in the Klamath Falls vicinity..still uncertain of their status.....The order permitting them to travel was received from Portland and cancelled again before the Japanese could be gotten under way..... M. Kibe expressed some concern at the prospect of the trip north. Under the curfew law, aliens are not allowed out between 8 P.M. and 6 A.M., and it will be impossible to travel from here to Tacoma in the 14 hours available to them without making an overnight stop."



G. April 9, 1942--"The public welfare commission stepped into the saga of the six Japanese who have been waiting in Klamath Falls for over a week for an alien travel permit that will get them back to Tacoma. The welfare commission is arranging details of transportation for the Japanese pending issuance of the order for their removal..... The Japanese voluntarily left the Merrill district on March 31, when their presence there was objected to by the south-enders....So far, the request for the (travel) permit has traveled from Tacoma to San Francisco to Salem to Portland and no word has yet been received authorizing departure of the Japanese, the sheriff said."

H. April 22, 1942-- "Still waiting in the Klamath Falls district for permission to travel are the six Japanese men and women who voluntarily left the Merrill area March 31, after evidences of feeling against them had developed there...It is understood that their case now rests with Governor Sprague who is expected to take some action shortly, according to Sheriff L. L. Low."



Editorial in Klamath Falls News-Herald April 9, 1942

THE SHERIFF'S DILEMMA

I. "Official floundering and indecision is apparent in the case of six Japanese who have been in Klamath Falls for more than a week after voluntarily leaving the Merrill district at the request of Sheriff Low.

"The sheriff has been treated to a demonstration of buck-passing and red tape in his efforts to move the Japanese to some acceptable destination and out of his modified 'protective custody'. Officials in Tacoma told him to ask San Francisco, San Francisco referred him to Salem, Salem to Portland, Portland to San Francisco and San Francisco to Portland.

"The evacuation officer in Portland notified the sheriff at 9 A.M. Tuesday to start the Japanese on their way to Tacoma, and at 10 A.M. cancelled the instructions. Authorities at Tacoma had assured the sheriff the return of the Japanese to that city, from whence they went to Merrill, was satisfactory, but after nine days no one in authority has made this simple solution of the problem possible.

"When a potentially serious situation developed in the south-end in connection with these Japanese, Klamath's sheriff acted promptly and with good judgment. The higher-up authorities with whom he has since been dealing apparently do not know the meaning of those terms."