

Supplementary Comments by the
War Relocation Authority
on Newspaper Statements Allegedly
Made by Representatives of the
House Committee on Un-American
Activities.

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1.

The San Francisco Examiner in a story from Washington on May 11 attributed the following statements to an "informant" in the offices of the Committee:

A report to be submitted by a subcommittee (of the Committee on Un-American Activities) in about three weeks, will oppose release of any Japanese whatsoever, American citizen or alien, from confinement. This report will insist that "known subversives", estimated to number more than 25,000 in the centers, be taken from their "comfortable environment" and placed in rigidly guarded Department of Justice detention camps for enemy aliens.

Comment: The most significant fact about these statements is that they appeared in print on May 11 -- the very day the Committee started its investigations at the Manzanar Relocation Center. If the statements are accurately reported, it would seem quite obvious that individuals directly connected with the investigation had reached conclusions and formulated recommendations before the investigators had ever visited a relocation center or requested any information from the War Relocation Authority.

If the Committee has evidence that there are more than 25,000 "known subversives" in relocation centers, we earnestly hope that it will be turned over to the authorized investigative agencies of the government and to this agency with all possible promptness. As this is written, the Committee has submitted to the War Relocation Authority no evidence whatever in support of this charge.

2. "Records of the Dies Committee show that prior to Pearl Harbor, there was a 'Japanese-American Veterans Association' in Los Angeles. Our investigation revealed that this was not a harmless organization of ex-servicemen, but actually a division of the Japanese army. In Japanese records, which we have recently obtained, the Japanese themselves called this organization the Japanese army reserve and listed company commanders and where the commanders were located. Our records also show that the Japanese had a completely trained infantry unit on Terminal Island on December 7, 1941. Why they did not strike then I do not know."

(Direct quotation attributed to Rep. J. Parnell Thomas, a member of the Committee, in an Associated Press dispatch from Los Angeles dated May 13).

Comment: Although this statement contains no direct charges against the War Relocation Authority, it does carry the clear implication that a large number of the evacuees in relocation centers constitute an active military threat to the United States. The statement probably refer to the Imperial Veterans Group of Southern California, an organization centered mainly in Los Angeles County in the days before Pearl Harbor. The Group was composed mainly of veterans of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 -- men well over 50 years of age. Information available to

us indicates that the organization probably never had more than 140 members at any one time. All alien members located within the United States have been apprehended as enemy aliens and have never been under the supervision of the War Relocation Authority.

3.

"...if the War Relocation Authority is in fact releasing thousands of the Japanese as routine procedure, it must be releasing many who are not loyal to the United States, who would become distinctly dangerous should opportunity present itself."

(Part of a direct quotation attributed to a "spokesman" for the Committee by the Los Angeles Examiner on May 14).

Comment: To characterize the leave procedures of the War Relocation Authority as "routine" shows a gross misunderstanding of those procedures and of the manner in which the Authority is conducting its program. In granting indefinite leave to evacuees, the Authority checks all available records on the individual involved at the relocation center. If there is any evidence of questionable activity, a further check is made of the records maintained by the Federal investigative agencies. Every proper precaution has been taken and is being taken to safeguard the national security.

4.

In a dispatch from Los Angeles on May 19, the Associated Press reported that Rep. Thomas had telegraphed President Roosevelt urging that WRA stop release of evacuees from relocation centers. The Congressman was also reported to have commented on the case of a wealthy Japanese from Los Angeles who had been apprehended by the FBI and sent to Camp Livingstone, La. The following statement was attributed to Rep. Thomas as a direct quote:

"It has been reliably reported that he (the interned Japanese) has stated the food and wine at his camp are excellent and that he is concerned only with his expanding waistline. Are we to release this fat-waisted Jap while our American boys on Guadalcanal are barely receiving enough food with which to keep alive?"

Comment: The clear implication of the remark allegedly made by Representative Thomas is that the interned Japanese may well be released from Camp Livingston under the leave procedures of the War Relocation Authority. Camp Livingston is an internment camp administered by the Department of Justice. Its inmates are in no way eligible to apply for leave under the program of the War Relocation Authority.

5.

"Certain government officials responsible for administration of the WRA have lost sight of the fact that America is at war, that America has enemies, and the Japanese in and out of America are as much our enemies as any other Axis peoples."

(Direct quotation attributed to Rep. J. Parnell Thomas in a United Press dispatch from Los Angeles dated May 19).

Comment: The War Relocation Authority has not lost sight of these facts and has no intention of doing so. Our belief, however, is that all loyal Americans and law-abiding aliens -- regardless of ancestry -- should be given a chance to contribute their energies and skills in the battle of production. We also believe that unwarranted confinement of our people of Japanese descent gives the Japanese government a powerful propaganda weapon to use in convincing the peoples of the Orient that the United States is conducting a racial war.

6.

The Committee wants to know why the personnel of the WRA includes many members of organizations which have been characterized as communistic by the Department of Justice.

(Statement allegedly made by a "spokesman" of the Committee in an interview purported by the Los Angeles Examiner from Washington on May 20).

Comment: All employees of the War Relocation Authority are investigated as a regular procedure by the Office for Emergency Management Investigations Division. One copy of the investigation report is sent to the War Relocation Authority and another to the Civil Service Commission.

In all cases where the Civil Service Commission considers an employee unfit to work in a war agency, the WRA is informed of this fact and ordered to terminate the employee. Of the employees so far terminated under this procedure by the Authority, none have been dismissed because of affiliation with a subversive organization. In fact, our review of the investigation reports has not revealed a single employee of the Authority who holds membership in any organization considered subversive by the Department of Justice.

7.

(a) Many Japanese released from relocation centers have been trained in espionage and sabotage, in a school operated in Tokyo by the imperialistic Black Dragon Society how to carry out a program of destruction in the United States in the event of war;

(b) The school was known as the North American school of Military Virtue;

(c) Its graduates in this country number 10,000.

(Statements attributed to Robert E. Stripling, Chief Investigator of the Committee, in an AP dispatch from Washington dated May 29.)

Comment: The school in question is apparently the Hokubei Butoku Kai Kodo Gakuin which seems to have been established on the outskirts of Tokyo some time in 1938. Information available to us indicates that this school was intensely nationalistic and included a practicing hall for Kendo, the art of Japanese fencing. The Dean of the school was Takichi Nakamura, leading Kendo expert of Japan. The sponsor of the school was the Military Virtue Society of North America, a group organized in Japan to inculcate the Japanese spirit overseas. Some time during March 1937, Nakamura issued a "Manifesto on the Enlargement of the Activities of the Military Virtue Society of North America" at San Pedro, California. This Manifesto contains the following information:

"Within the last several years, many members of our Military Virtue Society have gone to Japan for study, but their record has not been very good. In fact, there were many who returned with bad habits ... Not only did these Nisei, who went to Japan, fail to grasp the Japanese spirit or gain anything, but many of them returned to the United States definitely disaffected."

The War Relocation Authority has made a rather careful study of the number of American-born Japanese in relocation centers who have received all or part of their education in Japan. Of the more than 70,000 American-born Japanese in relocation centers, our records show that about 2,000 have had schooling in Japan since 1938, the year the Military Virtue School was founded. This figure includes not only adolescent males, but girls and extremely young boys. In the light of this fact, it is difficult to see how there could possibly be "10,000 graduates" of the school in the United States.

8.

(a) The Committee has acquired a list of the 10,000 members of the "Butoku-Kai", an organization affiliated with the Black Dragon Society of Imperial Japan and composed of young American-born Japanese;

(b) Many of the members of this organization are now being released from relocation centers.

(Information allegedly gathered at headquarters of the Committee and published by the San Francisco Examiner on May 22).

Comment: The War Relocation Authority has never seen any list of members of the Butoku-Kai. If the Committee has such a

list, we hope that it will be made available to us at the earliest possible date in order that we may use it in connection with the investigation previous to the granting of indefinite leave.

9.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer service, in a story from Washington dated May 23, reported that the Committee was expanding its investigation to include the following points:

(a) A report that the WRA is planning to import Japanese evacuees from South American allied countries for eventual release in the United States after periods of nominal confinement in relocation centers.

(b) The formal report of investigators that disloyal Japanese at the Rivers Relocation Center, Arizona have disrupted attempts to maintain camouflage net factory there.

(c) The coincidence that a recently reported Japanese invasion plan mentions contemplation of use of 10,000 Japanese Americans, while almost exactly that many names compose a list of the American membership of the Youth Movement of the Black Dragon Society, the world-wide secret society operated by the Japanese war office.

Comment: (a) The Authority has never contemplated any plans to import Japanese evacuees from any South American country and has neither funds nor authority with which to do so.

(b) It is true some few of the evacuees at the Gila River. (or Rivers) Relocation Center did attempt to dissuade the residents from collaborating in the establishment of a camouflage net factory at the project. All the evacuees known to have engaged in such activity have been removed from the center and sent either to internment camps or to an isolation center. The factory was established according to plan and has achieved an excellent production record.

(c) See comments on Statements No. 7 and No. 8.

10.

"We are not so sure that the top directors of the WRA know everything that is going on in their organization. That is why we are going to search thoroughly for the origin of the program under which thousands of Japanese from the centers are being liberated now for willy-nilly distribution over the country ..."

(Direct quotation attributed to a "spokesman" for the Committee by the San Francisco Examiner in a story from Washington published on May 23).

Comment: The suggestion that the leave program of the War Relocation Authority was initiated without the knowledge or consent of the Authority's ranking officers is completely without foundation. The Director of the Authority takes full responsibility for origin of the program and for its execution.

11.

"What persons, what influences, are responsible for the flagrant discharge of the Japanese from the centers at the rate of 1,000 weekly in the face of the proof we are offering that perhaps as many as 40 per cent of the Japanese are loyal only to Japan and that thousands may become active traitors, spies, saboteurs, and fifth columnists in general?"

(Direct quotation attributed to Rep. J. Parnell Thomas by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer in a story from Washington dated May 24).

Comment: The comment directly above is also applicable here. It might be added that the Committee has never offered any proof to the War Relocation Authority regarding the loyalties or disloyalties of any evacuees at the relocation centers.

12.

The San Francisco Examiner, in a story from Washington dated May 25, attributed the following statements to Rep. Thomas in the form of a direct quotation:

- (a) "The Dies Committee investigators and I found conditions very bad in the War Relocation centers."
- (b) "At one camp the Japanese objected to a fence which confined them. They tore it down. It stayed down and the Japs are still roaming around there at will..."
- (c) "Camp newspapers are virulently critical of anyone who opposes Japanese interests"
- (d) "Short wave radios are permitted, although even a Japanese subject may not own or use one in Japan."

Comment: (a) Representative Thomas had never visited a relocation center at the time this story appeared.

(b) It is true that a section of the fence surrounding the Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho has recently been removed and has not yet been replaced. This particular section of the fence was so located that it cut off some of the project farm lands from the community proper

and its removal was in the interest of efficient operations. It was removed by evacuee labor crews working under orders of the War Relocation Authority and with the full knowledge and consent of the military authorities.

The statement that evacuees at this center are permitted to "roam around at will" is wholly inaccurate. At Minidoka, as at all other relocation centers, no evacuee is permitted to leave the relocation project area without a permit at any time. And after dark, no evacuees are allowed even to leave the community proper without a permit.

- (c) If the "Japanese interests" referred to are those of Imperial Japan, this statement is wholly without foundation. The War Relocation Authority has reviewed relocation center newspapers since they were first established and has never seen one line of criticism directed against any person because of his opposition to the interests of Imperial Japan. If, on the other hand, the statement refers to the interests of the Japanese-Americans, criticism seems wholly in accord with the American principles of free speech. Like any other group of Americans, the evacuees at relocation centers are naturally critical of those who oppose their interests.
- (d) In accordance with plans formulated some time ago, the War Relocation Authority recently prohibited the use of short-wave radios at all relocation centers. Prior to the time when this regulation went into effect, American citizens among the evacuees were permitted to use short-wave sets at the four centers which lie outside the Western Defense Command.

13.

"The agents report that 'Ronin' used direct physical threats to gain anything they wish. They rule peaceful Japanese with a brutal hand and white supervisory officials, we are informed, kowtow just as deeply to their wishes. Their common act is to walk into commissaries and demand an extra side of beef, or something like that."

(Direct quotation attributed to a "spokesman" for the Committee by the Baltimore News Post in a story from Washington dated May 27).

Comment: The term 'Ronin' may be freely translated to mean "gangster". Although there have been trouble-makers in some of the relocation centers, all those who could be identified as such have been removed either to internment camps or to an isolation center operated by the War Relocation Authority. The statement that trouble-makers have walked into a commissary and "demanded an extra side of beef or something like that" is utterly false.

14.

The pro-Japan element is determined to stay in confinement because "something terrible is going to happen on the West Coast by October 1."

(Statement attributed to Robert E. Stripling by the Milwaukee Sentinel in a story from Washington published May 28).

Comment: This statement stands in flat contradiction to statements allegedly made by Mr. Stripling on other occasions to the effect that "many" pro-Japanese have been and are being released from relocation centers.

15.

(a) Transcripts of questioning of Japanese by camp directors showed the latter pleading with the evacuees to change their answers from "no" to "Yes" on a question concerning loyalty to the United States. Young Japanese in particular were urged to assert their loyalty so they could be released for work in American communities.

(b) The camp directors, many of them recruited from the WPA, are anxious to release Japanese despite their assertions that they are not loyal to the United States.

(Statements allegedly contained in report received in Washington from field investigators of the Committee and appearing in the Washington Times Herald on May 28)

Comment: (a) Since other newspaper stories dealing with questioning of evacuees have referred specifically to Mr. Ralph P. Merritt, Project Director of Manzanar Relocation Center, we have asked for Mr. Merritt's comments. In a teletype message dated June 7, he makes the following report:

"The story from the Dies Committee (representatives) that I urge disloyal Japanese to say they are loyal is complete abuse of material I voluntarily offered them to show the thoroughness with which records were developed to clarify loyalty or disloyalty and to recommend to you denial of leave clearance to each of the cases quoted in this article. Men questioned are group known as kibe~~I~~ who have American citizenship but for most part educated in Japan and speaking only Japanese. During registration due to language difficulties it is claimed that errors were made by interviewers and to clear all records we reviewed each case with results shown in interviews which will become basis for denial of leave to legally detain such types of citizens. If Dies Committee honestly desires to assist our work in securing necessary records such stories which cause confusion, weaken authority, and interfere with war effort will cease. Quotations by use of evacuee names has put all evacuees on notice not to testify freely as before. We have recommended no leaves as yet but when

we do, no doubtful cases will be on our list."

(b) None of the ten project directors at relocation centers was recruited from the Work Projects Administration and none has ever favored granting indefinite leave to evacuees who are disloyal to the United States.

16.

- (a) Evacuee residents of one camp, receiving monthly wages from the War Relocation Authority, refused to unload coal, shipped in for their own use, with the result that camp authorities employed residents of nearby Klamath Falls, paying them 90 cents an hour to do the work.
- (b) A dinner was given at the Minidoka Center in honor of Charles Takahashi, who is under a four-year Federal prison sentence for having sold scrap iron to Japan after a ban was placed on such activity. At this dinner, George Townsend, an assistant WRA director, served as toastmaster and 4,800 pounds of turkey was served. At the trial of Takahashi and Osawa, his partner, H. R. Sprinkel of the Minidoka WRA staff appeared before the court and pleaded for leniency. Sprinkel returned to the center in Takahashi's Cadillac sedan driven by Takahashi. Takahashi has been allowed to keep his car at the camp, using it to drive to Twin Falls daily, although the machine carries only an "A" sticker.

(Statements attributed to Committee investigators, Tom Cavett and Gene Hagberg, in a story appearing in the Denver Post of May 29).

Comment: (a) The WRA has experienced some difficulty in maintaining coal unloading crews at a number of the relocation centers, for the obvious reasons that the work is dirty and unpleasant and brings no more compensation to the evacuees than other, less arduous duties. The center referred to in the story is quite obviously Tule Lake project which is located about 30 miles from Klamath Falls, Oregon. The director of this project specifically denies employing residents of Klamath Falls or any other community to unload coal at any time.

(b) Mr. Harry L. Stafford, Project Director at the Minidoka Relocation Center, in a teletype message dated June 7, 1943, has made the following statements on the charges centering around Mr. Takahashi:

"No dinner tendered C. T. Takahashi. Dinners referred to and turkey purchases appear confused with banquet tendered by administration to volunteers for United States Army and their parents, at which time turkey was served .. Turkey justified for volunteers banquet on basis that our daily meat and fish costs are \$1,019.33, while turkey requisition amounted to \$1,808.63 and was used for two days making cost per day \$904.31, or cheaper than normal meat expense per day. Only other time turkey

ever purchased by project administration was for Christmas Dinner."

"Dinner referred to ...as having been given to Takahashi....was a personal party given by members of the coal crew members and was not purchased with project administration funds.

Purchase was made from independent meat company, of Twin Falls, and amounted to 150 pounds turkey, paid cash \$70.00. The so-called dinner for Takahashi was held January 24 in mess hall 5 and only cost to government was use of facilities. Coal crew, under Takahashi completed a successful effort to unload 38,000 tons by hand and party was in nature of a celebration. Dyke Miyagawawas toastmaster at this dinner referred to. Takahashi is not in charge of motor pool and never has been."

Reference to Townsend as toastmaster may have been confused with fact that Townsend organized banquet for United States Army volunteers. He is not assistant project director but is chief of community services."

"Sprinkel did not appear in defense of Takahashi and Osawa. He was...escort (required under military rules for evacuees entering the restricted West Coast area) and attended court sessions called specifically for purpose of giving sentence and was asked by defense attorney, with permission of court, to answer questions about their behavior at Minidoka for purpose of further bail which court subsequently allowed, permitting these individuals to return to project while case is under appeal."

"Western Defense Command, in travel permit authorizing Takahashi and Osawa to travel through excluded area, authorized use of Takahashi's car, and supplemental gas rations permitting travel was issued by Seattle ration board for one-way trip to Eden, Idaho. "A" card rations are granted all car owners regardless of need and his were issued by ration board in nearby community. C. T. Takahashi has storage for his car in Jack's Garage, Eden, Idaho. He does not have authorization to travel daily to Twin Falls...."

17.

- (a) The 85,000 Japanese in relocation centers are among the best fed civilians in the world.
- (b) Reports show a plentiful supply of beef, pork, mutton, canned pork and beans, potatoes, coffee, canned fish, and chocolate bars in the centers.

(c) A week's shipment to Manzanar from the Quartermaster Depot at Mira Loma, California, included 22,500 lbs. of white potatoes, 1,330 lbs. of coffee, 12,000 lbs. of hard wheat flour, 12,000 lbs. of soft-wheat flour, 12,000 lbs. of pancake flour, more than 5,700 jars of marmalades and jams, 14,400 cans of evaporated milk, 130,000 lbs. of rice, 7,200 lbs. of spaghetti, 21,500 lbs. of sugar, 2,500 lbs. of bananas, 120 boxes of grapefruit containing 300 grapefruit per box, 240 boxes of oranges containing 200 oranges per box, 240 boxes of apples and 26,000 lbs. of fresh vegetables, 10,000 lbs. of beef, 5,000 lbs. of pork, 2,800 lbs. of mutton, 1,200 lbs. of salt pork, 2,200 lbs. of frankfurters, 2,000 lbs. of pork livers, 4,000 lbs. of corned beef, 2,800 lbs. of fresh pork sausage, and 2,200 lbs. of bologna.

(Statements attributed to investigators of the Committee in an AP dispatch dated May 31).

Comment: (a) The statement that evacuees at relocation centers are "among the best fed civilians in the world" is highly dubious and definitely misleading. In March, 1943, when point rationing of food became effective, the WRA registered with the OPA as a "institutional user" of rationed foods and became subject to all rationing restrictions applicable to such users. The Authority has gone beyond OPA requirements for institutional users and has established food consumption quotas for relocation centers on exactly the same per capita basis as those applicable to the civilian population of the United States as a whole. Even before point rationing went into effect, the Authority practiced voluntary rationing in accordance with quotas suggested by the OPA. The cost of food served to evacuees at the centers has never exceeded 46 cents per person per day and it has been the constant policy of the Authority to avoid purchase of foods which are not available to the public generally or which are locally in short supply.

(b) The statement that ~~canned~~ pork and beans have been purchased and stocked at relocation centers is wholly untrue. The phrase "chocolate bars", conveying the impression that evacuees are being provided with candy bars, is misleading. The Authority has occasionally purchased baking chocolate as a substitute for cocoa when the latter commodity was not available. Candy bars, however, have never been furnished to evacuees in the messhalls at relocation centers.

(c) Whether intentionally or not, this paragraph clearly conveys the implication that the quantities indicated were intended for one week's use at Manzanar. The fact is that only coffee, meats, fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, dairy products, and lard are received weekly. Other foods are received monthly. As previously noted, consumption of all rationed foods is strictly limited to civilian quotas, and the per capita cost is also strictly limited.

18.

The committee is investigating information that the War Relocation centers are "heavily staffed" with Caucasian conscientious objectors to war.

(Statement attributed to Robert E. Stripling by the New York Journal American in a story from Washington, dated June 2).

Comment: Of the approximately 1800 employees of the WRA, there are two who have been classified as conscientious objectors by the Selective Service System and who were assigned to the Authority from Civilian Public Service Camps. If any other employees of the Authority should be classified as conscientious objectors, they will be removed from the WRA payroll and sent to Civilian Public Service Camps in accordance with Selective Service procedure.

19.

"We do not want any representative of this agency (i.e. the War Relocation Authority) to come here and attempt to censor any testimony developed in this hearing. I have declined Mr. Myer's offer. I have read most of the newspaper accounts of these hearings and they have been very factual; in fact I think the press has made every effort to give a fair and accurate account of the testimony."

(Direct quotation attributed to Representative John M. Costello, member of the Committee and chairman of the subcommittee investigating Japanese-Americans, in a United Press dispatch from Los Angeles dated June 16.)

Comment: The offer to which Representative Costello refers was contained in a telegram addressed to him by Director Myer on June 7. The text of this telegram is quoted in full:

"I am informed that a sub-committee of the committee on un-American activity under your chairmanship is opening hearings today in Los Angeles to investigate activities of Japanese and Japanese-Americans in this country. The War Relocation Authority will welcome the opportunity to cooperate with the committee by supplying information on those phases of the problem for which this agency is responsible.

Because of recent statements in the press attributed to members and representatives of your committee in which facts have been garbled I suggest it may be helpful to have statements concerning policies and procedures of the War Relocation Authority checked before statements are released to the press. To this end, while you are on the coast, I am glad to offer you the services of Mr. R. B. Cozzens, field assistant director of this agency, whose headquarters are in the Whitcomb Hotel, San Francisco. Mr. Cozzens is thoroughly conversant with W.R.A. program, and he will be at your disposal to assist in any way by supplying or checking information."

20.

"We have a definite report that at camps No. 1 and No. 2 Poston, Arizona, on the Colorado River Indian Reservation the Government spent \$100,000 in constructing inclosures with the idea that they would be valuable in the event the camps were ever used for prisoners of war."

"Our investigators say that Japanese gangsters in the camps circulated a petition that the fences be removed. When the petition met no response these gangsters tore great sections of the fences down and dared the camp officials to have them erected again."

(Direct quotation attributed to Mr. Robert E. Stripling by the Los Angeles Examiner in a story from Washington dated June 1.)

Comment: This statement is almost wholly unfounded. No fence has ever been erected around Camp No. 1 or Camp No. 2 at the Poston Relocation Center. A fence has been built around the entire relocation area, embracing three separate communities and a total of 80,000 acres of land, at a total cost of \$17,000.00.

A few sections of this fence were removed under supervision of the construction foreman in order to facilitate land subjugation, road construction, and other work at the center. All these sections were closed as soon as the work was completed, and the fence is now wholly intact.

21.

Officers of the Japanese-American Citizens League attend so many confidential staff conferences of the War Relocation Authority that Myer has expressed feeling that Congress would "jump down his throat" if it knew to what extent the League was formulating WRA policy.

(Information allegedly discovered by "agents" of the Committee in a raid on JACL Headquarters in Washington and reported by the New York Journal American in a story from Washington dated June 17.)

Comment: No officer or member of the Japanese American Citizens League has ever attended any staff conference of the WRA, either confidential or otherwise.