

Conflict, Disorganization and Re-organization

In common with the rest of the community, the recreation staff has been torn with conflict and disorganization at frequent intervals since the inception of the department. The difficulty which has most upset the recreation department is the one which was waged between the Issei entertainment group and Ted Waller.¹

The chief character providing the source of the difficulty in the Issei entertainment group was Ray Muramoto, a person with considerable energy in entertainment work and with some experience in radio work, but also endowed with an artist's egocentrism and temperament. The first signs of dissension appeared during the preparations for the 4th of July festivities. Roy Teshima, Issei coordinator in the recreation department, described the situation as follows:²

"Just before the 4th program, Waller and Ray Muramoto had a disagreement. It happened over the question of performers. The Issei had arranged a program for two places, as you'll remember, but the Nisei wanted a program on the outdoor stage and took some of the Issei performers. Ray and Waller had quite a bit of disagreement over that."

Gossip was going about among the Nisei that Ray Muramoto was an extremely difficult person to deal with, possessing a desire to dominate any show which he puts on. Part of the Nisei objection to Muramoto lay in his insistence upon including in his program certain forms of Japanese entertainment that seemed definitely tinged with expressions of the most militant Japanese spirit. Prior to the performances of the 4th of July, one Kibei went to Muramoto urging him to exclude nationalistic forms of entertainment, and he

¹ Document, Issei Entertainment, reported Sept. 21, 1942.
² Ibid., P.1.

says of the encounter:¹

"One of the men living with us in our quarters is putting on a kembu performance (sword dance) for the fourth of July program. I thought that was going too far, because the kembu can be interpreted very nationalistically. I suggested to Muramoto that he be careful about putting on anything with any taint of Japanese nationalism, but he only blew up on me."

A girl working in the recreation department who happened to listen in on this conversation added, "He's terrible. He just won't listen to anybody and blows up when anyone offers a suggestion."

After the Fourth of July program, the Issei group made a vigorous effort to have their department separated from that of the Nisei, and to have an Issei supervisor in a position comparable to that of Harry Mayeda's (assistant supervisor). There are two reasons for disagreement, one, a personal dislike of Waller on the part of Muramoto, and, two, a feeling among the Issei that it was impossible for them to work with the Nisei due to the complete separation of their respective recreational interests. Waller, on the other hand, refused to allow the separation because "it wouldn't look right to the people on the outside if it were known that the Issei and Nisei had separate departments." There is reason to believe that this was a view handed down to Waller by Shirrell, and is earmarked with the WRA policy to Americanize the evacuee population as far as possible. A series of meetings took place among the Issei entertainment group to argue the matter with Waller and to decide among themselves what they should do in the event the supervisor could not be dissuaded from his view. Harry Mayeda (Nisei assistant supervisor) attended these

¹Miyamoto Diary Notes, July 2, 1942

meetings as Waller's representative and tried to explain the latter's position. His presence seemed to aid in relieving the tension for he was able to bring more understanding of the Issei point of view than Waller was capable of at that early period of his acquaintance with the Japanese. On July 8, the matter came to a head. The Issei ^{had a} meeting among themselves and then approached Waller with the declaration that Ray Muramoto was resigning. Muramoto's position was that the Issei department could not function properly unless the conditions specified by him were granted. Waller, though much disturbed, accepted the resignation, for according to him there was no alternative; to back down would be to forsake the very principles which the WRA was striving to achieve.

Muramoto's tender of resignation immediately brought a wholesale resignation from the rest of the Issei staff, for while not all of them agreed with Ray that the matter was of such importance as to call for their resignation, the Japanese principle of group responsibility required that everyone act in concert on a matter in which one of their members was concerned. One of the Issei group who was working on several committees for Waller and was one of the most respected members of the staff, apologized profusely but was adamant in his decision that he must resign. Half an hour after Muramoto had offered his resignation, however, he returned to declare that the whole Issei staff had reconsidered their resignation and they declared themselves willing to continue in the department. He still protested his original grounds for resignation, but Waller greeted him back equally protesting

his desire to work with Muramoto within the limits which principle would permit him. One suspects that Muramoto was made to reconsider his resignation by the weighted argument of other Issei who carefully salved his hurt pride and at the same time urged the folly of resignation.

The difficulty between the Issei department and the rest of the recreation staff was not fundamentally resolved by this series of discussion, the hostility had only been sublimated. When the recreation center was partitioned and office space was distributed among the various departments of community activities, there was another explosion from the Issei group because of what they considered the unfavorable office space given them by the Nisei administrators.¹

"Things didn't go so well between the Issei and the recreation department. For instance, there was the big explosion about the office space. When the Issei got put away in an inside room, they blew up. (Many of the Nisei expressed the view that they'd just as soon have taken the inside room where there was more quiet, and nobody was necessarily the loser, for each room had its advantage. The set-up was: a long barrack divided up so that there was a small room at the north end for the wardens, a long middle room that was partitioned off into small offices by walls that extend up as high as one's chest, and which room was the one the Issei wanted to be in with the rest of the staff, and an inside room with a connecting door for the Issei and the Athletic departments. This inside room had the advantage of being quiet and out of the traffic in the main room, but it did not have office partitions. The small room at the south end of the barrack was then occupied by the social welfare department, but this was later given up, and the Issei took it over and made it into a neat little office of their own. There are connecting doors all through the recreation staff offices, including the Isseis, but the separation of Issei and Nisei is apparent in that there is the intervening inner room which is still used by the Athletic department. There is relatively little traffic from the Nisei office to the Issei's.) Now that the Issei have their little office, they're pretty well satisfied. They just took it over as soon as the Welfare Department left, saying nothing about it to anyone in the main staff office."

¹Op. Cit., Document, Issei Entertainment, P. 1.

The second major disturbance in the recreation department occurred early in August, about a month after the first disagreement between Waller and Muramoto. On the evening of August 5, 1942, a picnic was held out at the farm in honor of Chie Aoki, a popular recreation leader, who was leaving for Arkansas to join her fiancé, and all the Nisei members of the staff as well as several administrative personnel including Mr. Waller attended the picnic. An Issei entertainment was scheduled for the same evening on the outdoor stage. During the course of this entertainment program, Mr. Sakamoto, chairman of the evening, said to his audience over the P. A. system, "Because of the party out at the farm this evening for Miss Chie Aoki who is leaving for Arkansas to marry her army friend, all the white personnel have gone to the farm to the party. There is no white person around to hear us, so we can say anything we want tonight." Sakamoto made this statement two or three times, and just prior to the presentation of an ahodarakyo (a satirical comic monologue) he added, "There are even worse things coming." These remarks by the chairman brought out laughter from the audience, which was largely Issei, but some Issei later commented that they thought such remarks in bad taste and didn't think it wise to make such statements publicly in a place like this. The ahodarakyo performed by an old man, a person without much sense according to some, gave a running series of comments about all manner of subjects in a disconnected manner for humor's sake, but among his comments, it is alleged, was a statement, "Even in American democracy a person who does bad things will get himself into trouble and be thrown into jail." There seems to be considerable disagree-

ment as to what actually was said, and many Issei were inclined to discount its harmfulness because of the humorous content within which it was placed. People in the community talked about the Issei entertainment after the performance that evening and the next morning. The administration somehow learned of the statements made that evening, Ted Waller was held to account, and Waller in turn "jumped on" Harry Mayeda.

By the morning of Saturday, August 8, the accusations had reached down to the Issei group, and a meeting was held among them to discuss the whole thing. To the Issei, the seriousness of the problem lay in the fact that the administration had learned of the statements of Wednesday evening for there was now a threat that Issei entertainment might be censored and that some persons might be taken by the FBI. The effort seems to have been to try to identify the informer because of the threat to the community as long as he remained among them, but strangely enough it was Ray Muramoto and other members of the Issei entertainment staff who were accused of being the informers.

In the background of these accusations was a long period of conflict between Sakamoto and his henchman, Arita, both of whom were from the Arboga Assembly Center, and Ray Muramoto whom they wished to displace as leader of Issei entertainment. Sakamoto and Arita are said to be "tough" persons, difficult to deal with, and they had been causing a great deal of difficulty for the Issei entertainment group by operating outside their fold in trying to discredit the latter's work. The conflict between Sakamoto and Mura-

moto was particularly acute. Sakamoto, for instance, had been organizing entertainment groups in various wards, putting on these entertainments in various blocks without consulting the recreation department, and even preventing his performers from participating in anything put on by the recreation staff. According to Sakamoto's interpretation, therefore, Muramoto had told the administration of Sakamoto's statements of Wednesday night in order to get him out of the way. The whole Issei entertainment staff vigorously denied informing the administration, but the Saturday morning meeting broke up with complete bad feeling all around.

That evening, Saturday, August 8, another Issei entertainment was performed in one of the blocks. On this occasion, Muramoto was chairman, and prior to the start of the performance, there was a disagreement between Muramoto and Sakamoto that almost ended in blows. Sakamoto wished to announce at the performance that a money collection was being made for Ray Nakamoto whose P.A. system had frequently been used by the recreation staff although Nakamoto was never compensated for the use of his instrument. Nakamoto was somewhat peeved because the recreation department refused (at least, allegedly) to pay for the replacement of parts which had deteriorated under constant use, and Sakamoto apparently was utilizing the opportunity to discredit the recreation department and present himself as a community-minded person. Muramoto refused to permit the announcement, because, as he declared, it was none of the recreation department's business. Some of the "tough" gang from Sacramento wanted to have it out with Muramoto immediately, but somehow the disturbance was quieted and Muramoto had his way.

In the middle of this program, however, Waller and Harry Mayeda suddenly ran in inquiring why it was that the Japanese announcements were not being preceded by English announcements. Muramoto contended that he knew of no such ruling, but Waller insisted that he had made known the regulation to the Issei staff, and that the program would have to proceed with an English announcement of the program preceding the Japanese. Mayeda thereupon started announcing in English. For this oversight, Muramoto was eventually fired which again started another series of trouble within the department, but this was not to be known until the following week.

The next afternoon, a meeting was held of the Issei staff and Sakamoto and his henchmen to iron out some of the differences. Teshima describes this meeting as follows:¹

"The next afternoon there was a meeting to settle some of the differences that had arisen between Sakamoto and Ray Muramoto. Still, no one knew that Ray was to be fired, and the discussion that afternoon had strictly to do with settling the difference between Ray and Sakamoto, and also Arita who was on Sakamoto's side. We called together certain persons like Mr. Nishisaka, Mr. Miyauchi, and others of Sacramento, people who are interested in Issei entertainment but also have influence over fellows like Sakamoto and Arita. That is the way with the Japanese. Even among gangsters and gamblers there are certain persons who can give orders to them to which they must say 'yes'. They are persons of influence who are accepted by the group. We asked these persons in because they know Sakamoto and Arita and have influence over them, and we asked them to referee or act as advisors in settling the differences. Nothing definite was accomplished that afternoon, but at least the personal differences between Ray and Sakamoto were ironed out so that bad feeling no longer existed. It was also decided that these referees should hereafter act as an advisory group to the Issei department so that nothing like the troubles of the previous Wednesday night should happen again, and it was decided they should look over the program each time before

¹Op. Cit., Document, Issei Entertainment, p.2-3

it went on."

"So you see, there were two lines of difficulties in the Issei department at that time. On the one hand, Ray Muramoto was in opposition to Ted Waller and he was in danger of losing his job in the recreation department, and on the other hand, there was the opposition between Ray Muramoto and Sakamoto and Arita. Sakamoto and Arita had been trying to gain leadership over the Issei entertainment for some time, since early July, but no one wanted that type of fellow in there, and they had been kept out until then. That was the source of the difference between Ray and the others."

On Sunday night, August 9, Ted Waller called Muramoto to his office and handed him his termination paper, the ground for termination being his failure to comply with the regulation of having an English announcement along with the Japanese at every Issei entertainment. When the Issei staff heard this the next morning, a meeting was held and everyone decided to resign. They were not satisfied with the reason given for firing Muramoto and felt rather that the Wednesday affair was the real ground for firing Muramoto since, as chairman of the Issei entertainment, he was responsible for what went on that evening. On the other hand, the administration refused to recognize the affair of Wednesday night, denied any knowledge of the affair to safeguard both themselves and the colony, and Waller therefore was adamant in his position that Muramoto had been terminated for failure to comply with the regulation concerning English announcements. The Issei staff also agreed that personal differences between Waller and Muramoto had much to do with the termination, and since they themselves disliked Waller, they all agreed that their resignation should be submitted. What Waller did not realize was that he was forcing the hands of the Issei staff into those of Sakamoto and Arita, which was a double reason for the resentment of the Issei against Muramoto's termi-

nation.

On Wednesday night, August 12, another meeting was held by the Issei staff in the presence of the advisory group which had helped to settle their problems with Sakamoto. The advice of this committee of elders was that the Issei staff should not resign immediately, but remain in their positions until further negotiations might be carried on with the administration to see if Ray Muramoto might not be reinstated. It was further argued among the staff that, for the welfare of the community, resignations should not be turned in until another Issei staff had been recruited and trained for the work. One suspects that the intent of this argument was to prevent an invasion of the department by Sakamoto and Arita. In any case, the Issei staff decided that they would not resign until further developments clarified the situation.

As early as the middle of July, the Classification Committee, after some consideration of some of the Issei problems appearing in the interviews, had urged the establishment of an advisory committee of respected and stable Issei in the Recreation Department. In fact, names had been submitted to Mr. Waller and Mr. Shirrell of persons who might serve well in such a capacity, but due to Mr. Shirrell's fear that an administration appointed advisory group would have no recognition in the community in view of the people's distrust of administration action, nothing was done about it at the time. However, Ted Waller had been trying to organize an advisory committee, on the one hand, and seeking some means of displacing Ray Muramoto with a more cooperative Issei leader, on the

other hand. Plans were being worked out prior to the difficulties which arose in the first week of August, but the crisis forced Waller to meet both issues immediately. In the meantime, the community had learned of Muramoto's termination, and wild rumors were spreading about the presence of informers in the community. Two rumors which became current at the time were (a) that the old man who had performed the shodarakyo had been taken by the FBI and interned in Missoula (rumor unfounded), and (b) that no more Issei entertainment would be permitted on this project. But the most vicious rumors identified certain individuals as informers, and gradually the story boiled down to indicate one person, Ben Kasebuchi, block manager of the 1400 block, as the informer. It was said that Kasebuchi had been seen talking to Jacoby on the day following the outdoor performance at which Sakamoto had made his statements, and others declared that he had also been seen talking to Waller. A member of the recreation staff offered the information that Waller's secretary had overheard the conversation between Kasebuchi and Waller, while others declared that they had heard Kasebuchi, a Kibei with a tendency to ^{be a} loud-mouth, bragging that the FBI had asked him to be one of their agents. All these reports seemed to clinch the fact that Kasebuchi was the informer. Outraged individuals threatened to beat up Kasebuchi, and wardens had to be stationed in front of his office and home for several days to prevent any violence from taking place. Waller recognized the need immediately to hire someone replacing Muramoto, put on another Issei performance quickly to quiet the rumors, but also to have an advisory committee to stabilize the

Issei staff.

Waller was asked to reinstate Muramoto, or at least to accept Muramoto's resignation rather than to fire him, but Waller refused to do either. This brought another threat of resignation from the Issei staff. Waller's position was that Muramoto had failed to comply with regulations, and he must be held responsible for the failure; the acceptance of the resignation, in other words, would not clarify the administration's policy and authority. But Waller's effort to create an Issei Advisory Committee offered another complication which Teshima describes:

"On Monday morning (August 10) of the same week, however, I heard something which was to cause terrible difficulty later. I heard from Waller that he was trying to set up an Issei Advisory Council for their entertainment group. So Waller was trying to form an advisory committee, while the Issei department had already chosen their own advisor (unknown to Waller). Waller, of course, went ahead with his plans to select the committee, something which he kept in the dark at the time. I didn't tell Waller about the other advisory group because I couldn't very well reveal it."

On August 13, Waller called together a group of Issei and Nisei not on the recreation staff to confer with him on the problems that had appeared in his department. He declared that he had called the meeting because something had to be done immediately to quiet the community, for the disturbance in the Issei recreation staff had spread considerably among the people, and he sought the advice of the persons present in solving the difficulty. In the ensuing discussion, during which the whole difficulty was reviewed, it was pointed out by some of highly educated Issei present that the ahodarakyo originally was a Buddhist chant for religious purposes, but which because of its difficulty of understanding to the common person, was transformed to the vernacular in humorous

extemporaneous monologue by which a performer would philosophize on life. The intent of these monologues, they insisted, is purely nonsensical. Much discussion took place as to the various meanings of Japanese performances, and it seemed that many of the Issei performances which were looked upon askance by the Nisei were relatively harmless in its meaning to the Issei. But it was agreed that statements such as those of Sakamoto at the Wednesday entertainment threw a bad light on the whole affair, and the appointment of an advisory group to review performances before their public presentation was again urged. The desirability of including Ray Muramoto on this advisory council to indicate friendly relations between him and the administration was also urged by one of the Issei, and the idea was accepted. Finally, the Issei present urged the inclusion of representatives from every geographical section to avoid the appearance of sectionalism, and it was decided that advisors should be sought from each ward since wards are quite representative of sections.

By Sunday, August 16, Ted Waller and his staff appointed an Issei Advisory Committee and had their names and function presented in a full page spread of the Tulean Dispatch both in English and Japanese.¹ At the same time announcement was made of a "Colossal Show Planned for Friday." Mr. Uo of Tacoma, Washington, whose name had repeatedly appeared in the discussion for the selection of an Issei entertainment leader, was finally selected for the position.

The announcement of the advisory council immediately brought

¹ The Daily Tulean Dispatch, August 16, 1942, p. 1B.

repercussions from the advisory group which had been unofficially appointed. Teshima, who was in the thick of the Issei problems throughout this period, says,¹

"In the meantime, however, it was announced that a Recreational Advisory Council had been selected by Waller and Mr. Shirrell. When that news came out, the other advisory council jumped on us, for they had thought they were to be the advisory committee. Sakamoto and Arita, of course, goaded them on because they wanted to get into the recreation department. That was the most terrible experience I have ever had. It finally came to a point in which the whole blame for the mix-up was placed on my shoulder and Harry Mayeda's because we had known about both the advisory groups. We apologized for the mistake, but the whole thing never did entirely quiet down.

Waller and Harry Mayeda's plans to put on an Issei entertainment on the following Friday was blocked by the refusal of the Issei staff to participate because Ray Muramoto had been fired without just cause.² However, the matter was turned over to the Issei Advisory Group and they somehow induced the staff to cooperate. Sakamoto and Arita also continued to disturb the recreation department by their efforts to get in. The two men started an Issei Entertainment Club outside the control of the recreation department, and announced that this club would thereafter put on all the productions on the stage since the Issei directors knew nothing about such matters and didn't have the performers anyway. Again, the recreation department turned the problem over to the Issei Advisory Council. The Issei entertainment club never got in because no one would recognize them.

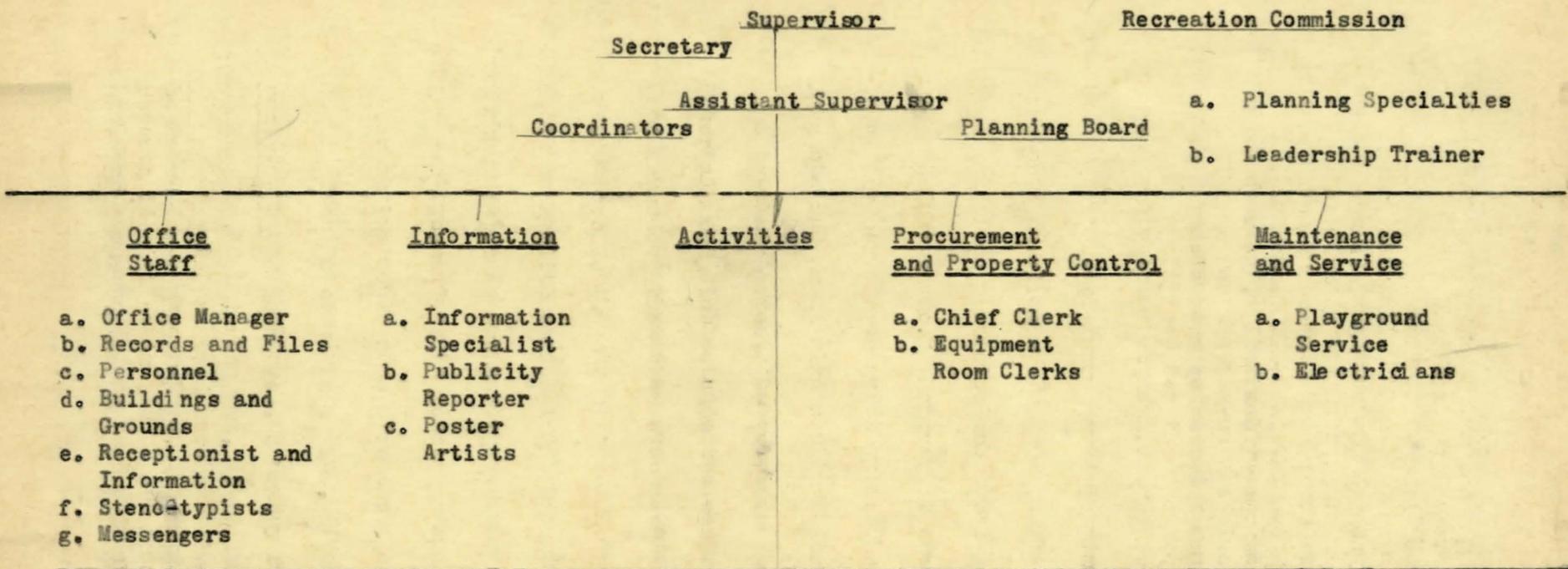
Teshima concluded: "Now, things are much quieter in the department among the Issei, and they rather fight among themselves."

¹Op. Cit., Document, Issei Entertainment, p.3.

²Mayeda promised Muramoto that a suitable position would be found for him somewhere. Muramoto refused one position as Issei reports specialist in the department. Nothing else was done for him, and Muramoto is now head waiter in one of the messhalls.

Chart I

Structural Diagram of Community Activities Section



<u>Fine Arts</u>	<u>Library</u>	<u>Handicrafts</u>	<u>Recreational Nursery</u>	<u>Athletics</u>	<u>Indoor Games</u>	<u>Adult Social Activities</u>	<u>Youth Social Activities</u>	<u>Youth Activities</u>	<u>Junior Activities</u>	<u>Clubs</u>	<u>Forensic</u>
Coordinator	Head Lib.	Director	Director	Director	Director	Director	Director	Director	Director	Director	Director
Secretary	Clerk	Clerk	Clerk	Leaders	Leader	Steno-typist	Clerk	Boy Scouts		4H Club	tor
a. Drama	Assistants	Teaching assistant	Teaching assistant	Softball	Ping Pong	Shibai	Outdoor	Girl Scout		Book	Forum
b. Music		Knitting		Hardball	Card games	Odori	entertainment	Girl		Creative	
c. Arts		Crocheting		Football	Bridge	Festivals		Reserve		Writing	Debate
d. Dance		Needle-craft		Soccer	Table games	Goh		Campfire		Young	
e. Flower Arrangement		Pattern design		Swimming		Shogi		Girls		Matron	
				Sumo							
				Boxing							
				Judo							
				Wrestling							
				Weight lifting							
Ward Leaders (7 persons)											

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Recreational Organization

This long and complicated case history of the conflict between the Issei recreation staff and Waller, the administration, and the Nisei, offers in retrospect some understanding of the factors which contributed to the disagreements. If one considers the difference in stability in the Issei staff during the period in which Ray Muramoto was its dominant figure and the present, there is no alternative to the conclusion that the presence or absence of one man made considerable difference in the action of the staff. Under Muramoto, when his star was at its height, the Issei performances were brilliant and the group had a considerable esprit de corp, but it lacked the persistent stability, the morale, which characterizes the group today. The fundamental difference in view of the Issei and the American, however, is so deep-seated that the disparity between the Issei and the administration or the Issei and the Nisei could not have been removed under any condition. The Issei were perhaps correct in their contention that the interests, tastes, sentiments, habits, attitudes, and the whole experience of the two groups are so different that it is impossible to impose the pattern of one upon the other. In the Issei view this was precisely what the administration was doing by placing the Issei staff within the structure of a strictly American recreation program. In the disorganized circumstance of the initial period in the recreation department, the Nisei at least had Harry Mayeda working furiously among them to direct the clearing of the debris, but the Issei had no such appointed leader who could communicate directly with the supervisor and gain the required authority to take needed action. The appointment of an Issei leader, and the right kind of leader, would probably have prevented much of the disorganization in the Issei group which eventually led to open conflict. Ted Waller realized this early, but once he had an Issei staff actively working on programs, it was impossible to introduce any outsider until a crisis was reached and reorganization was imperative.

The importance and authority of a carefully selected advisory group where