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CHAPTER V  
BUREAUCRACY

The "firebreak gang" dwindled from a group of 109 men at the beginning to that of 25 now. This was the gang with which I must go on. They completed so far only about 20% of the assignment, which meant there was easily one month's work ahead. I believed that I could not afford to lose any more men if we were to go on. I realized that some stabilizing influence must be exerted upon the men, as it was too easy and too free to come and go; I must make them realize that they were the members of a recognized project. I must make them feel the sense of duty and of obligation to the work. My "talks" were not showing much result; I knew the "education" was a slow process. I thought that the best idea might be to issue work cards to them through the Employment Office. I believed that:

1. It would give the crew an official status.
2. Each man with a card would feel that this was his regular job.

Therefore, I wrote a memorandum addressed to Evans and accompanied with a time sheet of the men for the past seven days. The note set forth the following recommendations:

1. To advise the Recreation Department and the Fire Department to assist in burning the trash on the field.

2. To issue work cards to the members of the crew,
3. To forward the time sheet to the accounting department.

The following points were agreed upon between Evans and Rupkey, who were called into the consultation:

1. The Recreation Department was composed mostly of boys of teen age, who were being accused as irresponsible "smart alecks". However, Evans promised that he would induce Dr. Powell strongly for the cause. Meantime,

2. I was to see the chief of the Fire Department.
3. The Employment Office would be requested to supply the work cards.

On the way back, I consulted the Japanese Fire Chief, with a letter of introduction from Evans and stressed the importance of assistance from his department. His refusal to my request was disturbing, yet his reasons were amusing. The reasons were as follows:

- 1. His duty to "put fire out", not to "set fire".
- 2. If he had done something besides what his duty called for, he would soon be asked to pick up garbage.
- 3. The department was undermanned.

I was certain that there was no hope of getting his aid and no use of urging further. I thought I would wait until further instruction from the Engineering Department, to which we were officially assigned in the conference.

On July 6, I informed my crew of 25 men the details of the conference. I told them that they were henceforth officially known as the members of the "Fire-break Cleaning" crew. I demanded that if any one had any objection, he should leave right then. Among them a lengthy discussion followed, which might be summarized as follows:

- 1. Their physical condition would not allow them to work full eight hours continuously.
- 2. Yet, they did not wish to work à la "W. P. A."
- 3. They would expend their best efforts, but they should be provided with rest periods, as before.

Questions were asked if some "white guy" were to supervise their work on the field. It was obvious that they were afraid that some Caucasian would come along and would do "slave-driving." This fear and dread were apparent in later developments, treated elsewhere in this report. <sup>20</sup> All the men consented to continue with my assurance that I had the full responsibility and that it was I who would set any policy concerning them.

With the crew and the equipment, I moved to the area near block 53 and

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block 60. Having learned that many persons would not object to working for a short duration and for some purpose which they could believe obviously that it was for their own benefit, I sent my assistants to the Block Managers of Quad 9<sup>22</sup> to solicit temporary workers. I instructed them to convey the idea that the work would require only three days and that we would move to another field unless they would assist us, which would mean no irrigation water for them. This strategy of duress had a desired effect only in Block 59, which sent 7 men on the first day, 14 on the second and 10 on the third. These volunteers intermingled with the regular men, working at the same comfortable speed and with the frequent rest periods -- radically different from the situation when I undertook the job on the first day. Upon my suggestion, they built a hut, very much like that of the unloading crew, where they could rest. Although thermometer read as high as 125° F., about 10° higher now,<sup>23</sup> the men showed neither dismay nor dread of the work, except minor, occasional comments about the weather or food, of which I had no control. They were more restful and more satisfied men than the ones who had quit on me in the early days. In fact, after they were excused after three days of work, they came back one by one asking for permanent status. They said that they wanted to work for me, because they liked the way I handled the men and because they liked the way the work was arranged. At the end I had six men from Block 59 working with me on their own accord.

In the afternoon of July 7, a new Caucasian came to see me. He said his name was Meecham, just detailed from San Carlos. He told me that he was to act as a supervisor over us and that he would spend the most of time with us as this was the only assignment he had. This was contrary to what I had promised to the men. Up to this time, there was no Caucasian on the field, except that I talked to Barbour twice and to Frasier three times. I was resentful in my mind, for all this time when I was having troubles, there was no one to help me and now when I have better control over the men and the situation, this man was here to boss me.

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Meecham had in his hand the time sheet, which I had handed to Evans. He informed me that it was returned by the time keeper and was not to be honored. He advised me to see Palmer immediately.

When I went to the accounting office and inquired Palmer of the reasons for his decision, he said, "Well, these Japs worked as volunteers, didn't they? That means they didn't have work cards. We can't pay any wages to guys who worked without the cards. That's the rule here and I can't do anything about it."

I was angry. I thought, "My men were tricked into working by a false promise of financial return. Now this guy is refusing to pay the due compensation. That's treachery! They just wanted my men to work for nothing. They just wanted to exploit them without any intention of paying wages."

I said to myself, "God damn it! So we are Japs, are we? Ignorant bastard!"

It was difficult to keep my composure, when I said to him, "Mr. Evans promised us that we are going to be paid for what we were doing, although we don't have work cards."

He replied excitedly, "Mr. Evans doesn't set the policy of this department. He can't make promises like that without our knowledge."

I thought there was no use in arguing any further.

I left the building and looked around for Evans, but he was not in his office.

"Something must be done quickly. I must get the work cards right away. Otherwise, they would be working for nothing," I thought.

I walked to the Employment Office. There was no one but an errand boy in the office. He told me that since Miss <sup>24</sup>Mahn was absent I should see the Japanese head, T., who was in conference and could not be disturbed. I waited. I waited for 45 minutes. Meanwhile, my anger was aggravated by every minute of waiting, by reflecting the things that had taken place in the afternoon. When I met T. and explained my predicament, he informed me in much aloof and detached manner that

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he could issue the cards, but it was necessary to bring the men in for interviews; that he had no authority to honor their time previous to the issuance. I argued with him for sometime. I was losing patience at the same time. Finally he decided to take me to Miss Findley, who had been presiding over the conference just concluded. When I explained the whole thing all over again, she was silent and meditated. Then she turned to T and said, "It is not courteous to order these men to come in the office (for the interview)." Then looking at my time sheet, "Look at the ages of these men! 59! 66! 62! If it is necessary for you to interview them, you must go to them instead. I know that is against the rule here. But, Mr. T. rules are made to be broken."

Then she turned to me and said in a deliberate tone, "You are doing wonderful work. Do you know, Mr. Nishimoto, we are all judged by our deeds, not by our words?" She went on, "Don't be afraid to do anything which you are certain you are right. Keep on with your good work. Don't worry about the time sheet. I'll take care of it for you."

"What encouraging words!" I thought, "What a grand lady! She's got lots of common sense."

Although this was the only occasion to meet her and she may not remember me now, I think dearly of her as a grand lady who gave me kind words when I needed them most. I always talked reverently of her to my men, although I never mentioned this incident, which would have created more distrust toward the administration.

It was the next morning -- the morning of July 8. There was a little excitement, while I was with the unloading crew on the other side of the creek. According to one middle-aged Issei, Meecham came to the field and began instructing the men how to use rakes, how to make small piles of trash, etc. The men resented these elementary instructions and one of them shouted to him, "For Christ sake! What do you think we are? Bunch of kids? You getta hell out of here!"

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To this the younger men chimed in and Meecham left.

One Hawaiian Nisei came to me and supplied me with another version. He said, "That son of bitch tried to tell us how to hold a rake. So we told him, 'You want us to clean this field, or don't you? You better shut up and getta hell out of here.' "

That was all I learned about the matter; but, since then, Meecham did not stay on the field any longer than necessary to exchange a few words with me in the morning.

On July 9, an order came from the Engineering Department: that we must burn the trash in the areas -- (a) and (b) on the map -- without any aid from other departments. I assembled the crew together and explained the order and the situation. I knew that the task was quite dangerous and must be done early in the morning before the wind came out. Yet, I did not wish to give any definite order to them; instead, I wanted them to say from their own initiative that they would come out early in the morning and would undertake the task. So I emphasized the danger involved and lack of outside assistance and told them that it was not necessary for them to do it, if they thought it was beyond their capacity. Without hesitation after my discourse, some of them offered their service and promised me that they would report to work at 4 o'clock in the morning. I was elated that they started "the ball rolling." The rest all agreed willingly to the suggestion and they accomplished the assignment the next morning, firmly believing that they were doing something of their own accord.

The fire was so extensive, so fierce, and so tense that some soldiers rushed down from Camp II. Some residents of Block 36 came out in pajamas and nightgowns and complained that they were being "roasted." I remember a worried look on Evans' face, who had been awakened by the crimson sky and the crackling sounds and ran down to the field. He stood with me for a long time, murmuring anxiously to the fire, "Woa! Take it easy! Take it easy, will you?"

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While I was conversing with him, I said unintentionally, "The code of conduct at Poston -- No. 1 -- the path of the least resistance is to do nothing yourself and to expect nobody to do anything for you."

He was, no doubt, irritated by this statement, as he reminded me of it on two subsequent occasions. However, it represented my sentiment at the time, because every person I came in contact officially lacked the spirit of cooperation and was doing the least that his duty called for and no more.

When we were getting off duty at noon that day, Frasier came and asked me if I could take care of a little field near Block 22 next morning, as it would require only a day and lumber piles were in the way of Caterpillars leveling nearby. It so happened that this was another occasion to learn another lesson regarding the administrative set-up at Poston. It was the first time that I discovered an evidence of friction and jealousy existing among the Caucasian staff.

In the morning of July 11, when we began working on the field -- the area (c) -- Meecham came to see me. I could observe that he was cross and angry. I failed to ascertain why. "Who told you to work out here?" he said in an unfriendly, ugly tone.

"Frasier asked me yesterday to come over here," I replied.

"You can't do that. I am your boss; Frasier's got nothing to do with you," he retorted.

I was offended by his statement and his tone. I replied, "Hell, no one is my boss. If anyone were my boss, that's Evans."

Soon afterward, Meecham drove away in flurry; and entered on the scene Frasier, to whom I explained what had happened. While we were still talking, Meecham reappeared from nowhere and began addressing Frasier. Meecham was indignant and raging with anger; Frasier was anticipating what to come. "Well, there's no use of both of us taking charge of this crew, is there?" he opened with biting, sarcastic vein.

I walked away in a hurry, but it was apparent that heated arguments followed. I shall not go into the details of their conversation or of their previous relationship. I merely wish to add that I am informed on a good authority that this was not an isolated case of the kind.

There was another occasion on which Miss Mahn and I disagreed shaply as to the authority of my hiring and discharging of men. However, it is another repetitious example of bureaucratic incompetency and it is, therefore, omitted here.

As days passed, the crew began to show a sign of unity and cohesion. Seven men from Block 59 were added to the regular staff and were assimilated. Meanwhile, I continued with my "lecture" which was not a formal speech but common gossip tinted with a theme or themes of some ultimate purpose. I was always careful to avoid the form of "sermon." I was always anxious and cautious to attain the highest degree of casualness, so that the men would not suspect me of my ulterior motive, because I was certain that they would be resistant to lectures and sermons in their pure and naked form. Hence, my favorite medium was recounting of my personal experiences, true or fictitious. In addition to the theme on the cooperative spirit, described previously, I had another topic among my repertoire. This was, "There is so much talk going on in the camp about our status under the international law. After all, we are the subjects of an enemy nation. However much we agitate and complain under the code, we would not find ourselves back in California right now. Let's try to be happy here. And that happiness is attained by keeping ourselves busy in some gainful work and by doing the work well."

This theme was most effective when the men were talking about a certain N (N = Nagai) in Block 3, who was known as an avowed "agitator" and a "soap-box" orator of the first magnitude. This was at the time when they were arguing pro and con on the question of the attempted eviction of N from the block and of the petition circulated signed by his co-residents for the purpose.

Another topic was like this: "The American government is spending an enormous amount of money for the project. But they are doing it for our protection and for



our benefit. Suppose they said, 'Get out of California. Do as you please in other states. We can't look after you.' Then, where would we have been?

Toward the end of July, it was getting noticeable that the men developed some sense of obligation to this community and willingness to serve for its welfare and benefit, due either to the changing trend of the general sentiment or to my effort. It was about this time that we were called upon to collect rubbish in order to relieve then existing alarming condition. Subsequently, after the regular hour as an emergency duty, we were called three times in rubbish service and once for collecting 3 - 5 days old garbage. Even on these occasions, I had the least difficulty in soliciting volunteers among ourselves. They were not only anxious to serve, but also eager to do the work well. It was a remarkable change in their mental attitude in contrast to that of the days gone by.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE MEN

At this point, it may be well to discuss some characteristics of the men who comprised the "firebreak gang."

Two days after my meeting with Miss Findley at the Employment Office, T brought the work cards to the field and with much dignified and histrionic air, he distributed them. He emphasized that he was taking this "very unusual and irregular" procedure in recognition and in appreciation of their "meritorious" spirit and service. There was no doubt that the men were greatly impressed by his words and felt flattered. And I was appreciative of his theatrical gestures, too.

With said addition of men from Block 59, the crew expanded to that of 33 men. It is this group of 33 men, of which the following statistical studies were made. It is also mentioned, in passing, that the identical characteristics and proportionate distributions would have been discovered and prevailed if the original group of 109 men were subjected to the same studies. There was, of course, a minor fluctuation in the enrollment, later which, however, was of an inconsequential nature.

As shown in Table II, two thirds of the crew were Isseis -- those who had spent their younger days in Japan, and since then migrated to this country. The age distribution of the Isseis was 37 - 66, which represents about 90% of the age group 30 - 66. That is to say, all men older than 30 were Isseis, except three. They comprised the groups 40 - 49, 50 - 59, and over 60. The educational background of the Isseis, however, was much lower than those of the other groups -- two university graduates, one "Chugaku"<sup>25</sup> educated, and the rest only with the elementary school diplomas. Thus, in Table V, all of 19 men listed as "Elementary School Graduates" were Isseis. In Table VI, all, except one, listed under "Farmer", "Farm Migratory Laborer", and "Gardener" were Isseis. One could say, therefore, that they lived among themselves in the rural district and had had very little

TABLE I

Distribution by Residence

Block	No.
2 .....	2
12 .....	7
37 .....	2
43 .....	12
45 .....	3
54 .....	1
59 .....	<u>6</u>
Total	33

TABLE II

Distribution by Intraracial Classification

Classification	No.	Percentage
Issei .....	22	67%
Kibei .....	3	9%
Hawaiian Nisei.....	3	9%
Continental Nisei.....	<u>5</u>	15%
Total .....	33	

TABLE III

Distribution by Former Residence

District	No.	Percentage
Urban	9	27%
Rural	<u>24</u>	73%
Total	33	

TABLE IV

Distribution by Age

Age Group	No.	Percentage
19 or younger.....	2.....	6%
20 - 29.....	6.....	18%
30 - 39.....	6.....	18%
40 - 49.....	4.....	12%
50 - 59.....	9.....	28%
Over 60.....	<u>6</u> .....	18%

Total..... 33

The youngest ..... 17  
 The oldest ..... 66  
 The average age ... 44

TABLE V

Distribution by Education

School	No.	Percentage
College Graduate or Education .....	4 .....	12%
High School (or Jap. Equiv.) Grad.....	<u>10</u> .....	30%
Elementary School (or Jap. Equiv.) Grad.....	<u>19</u> .....	58%

Total ..... 33

TABLE VI

Distribution by Former Occupation

Occupation	No.	Percentage
Merchant .....	4 .....	12%
Commercial Employee .....	4 .....	12%
Farmers .....	12 .....	37%
Farm Migratory Laborer.....	8 .....	24%
Gardener.....	2 .....	6%
Resident Farm Laborer .....	<u>3</u> .....	9%

Total..... 33

contact with the white Americans and the American culture. Only four of all the Isseis showed any ability to carry daily conversation in English to some degree. The rest of them were unable to either understand or make themselves understood in English. In other words, they were illiterate with respect to English -- although they had fair command of Japanese in reading and writing. In their speech in Japanese, the majority used their respective dialect with their provincial enunciation and intonation -- the standard form of Japanese being entirely absent except in two.

Three men listed under "Kibei" column, in Table II, were those who spent 5 - 10 years of their adolescent age in Japan. They had been subjected to the Japanese culture and had been trained in the Japanese habits and customs. Their records invariably revealed that, although they did not attend school in the United States, they had 1 - 3 years of "Chugaku" education. Therefore, their knowledge of English was limited and their vocabulary was of daily conversational variety. They had strong accent in them and were hesistant to speak English. Previous to the evacuation, they were employed by the Japanese and lived among the Japanese. That is to say, they had little contact with Americans and American ways of life. Their reading matters were in Japanese and their thinking was done in Japanese; eg. when they do a mental calucation, they do it in terms of "ichi, ni, san" instead of "one, two, three." It is interesting to note that they spoke better Japanese than the farmers or the farm migratory laborers -- better in form and freer from dialect or provincial intonation. They had inclination to respect and to be considerate of the older people. They addressed them in the polite, reverential form of the language <sup>26</sup> irrespective of the appearance, the cultural background, or the station of life. <sup>27</sup>

Three American-Japanese, born in the Hawaiian Islands, were reared in the vicinity of Hilo, T. H., where the Japanese culture is prevalent. In the early twenties, they had migrated to the continental United States and found themselves again among the Japanese. Their ages were 34, 38, and 39 respectively. Their characteristics were similar to those of the Kibeis, but milder and less accentuated. Their education

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varied from 2 years in high school to one year in a university. They spoke more fluent English with wider vocabulary, although with the accent typical of the people. They have had more contacts with the white Americans and were more appreciative of the American civilization. They spoke Japanese well without any trace of accent, although their form was crude and rough and their vocabulary was limited.

The Niseis, five in number, were high school graduates, without exception -- one with one year of Junior College training. The age distribution was 17 - 23. They were all evacuees from the rural district, where they had been helping on the farms, which their family owned. They had lived outside of the school hours, entirely with their family or with the older Japanese. Although the exact data are not available, it was evident that they had some systematic Japanese training, through a Japanese language school or otherwise. They were able to converse freely with the older Isseis and to intermingle with them, although at the early stage of our work, they formed a clique with themselves. They gathered apart from the others and conversed entirely in English, as their duty was distinct from that of the Isseis. Later, however, as they handled axes and shovels in a group with the Isseis, they developed comradeship with them and the trace of clique disappeared. It is interesting to note that this comradeship was imbued in some degree with the Japanese patriarchal conception. The young boys were considerate of the older men; always willing to go out of their way to assist them. They were often the target of "joshings" and "kiddings," some of them, I thought were crude and sarcastic, but they took them in good humor and responded in friendly retorts. Even in a friendly argument on such a timely topic as the cooperative store, they were willing to argue to a certain limit and no more, beyond which they did not stick to their point doggedly and stubbornly. Their friendship with the other groups developed to such an extent that they were together on numerous weekend fishing trips. It is my observation that the characteristics found in the Niseis were more similar to those of the Isseis and their background was under greater Japanese

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influence than that of the urban Niseis whom I knew. This simplified the matter of breaking down the barrier between the two generations.

It is not difficult, therefore, to understand that the crew developed into a solid, homogeneous, and congenial group. Their ties were strong, irrespective of whether they were from urban or rural district and of whether young or old. During eighty days together, there was not even a trace of friction nor any occasion for quarrel among themselves. As far as I could ascertain from different members, there was no ill feeling between any two of them. Even the men<sup>38</sup> who joined the crew after they had had quarrels or disputes elsewhere, were easily assimilated and stuck to the end. They worked hard and enthusiastically. They did not create any problem that I was forewarned.

The satisfactory relationship was general. They were so well satisfied with each other that they were greatly disappointed, when the disbanding of the crew was announced in September. I believe that the high attendance record<sup>39</sup> and the commendable accomplishment attained by the crew, despite the extreme heat, was largely attributable to this congenial friendship.

Due to the dominance of the Issei elements, the crew as a whole displayed "Japanesey" characteristics collectively. They worked hard, intermingled with short rest periods at frequent intervals. They wanted to relax completely during the rest periods. They resumed the work after the period without any external coercion or persuasion, which they detested. They wanted to be told only what was to be done and what purpose was to be served therefrom. They wanted to use their own initiatives and experiences to determine what method or procedure was to be taken in order to accomplish the assignment. They were obedient, yet they resented to be told how to work in minute details. This was the aspect of which Meecham was ignorant and which resulted in the abusive remarks to him. In other words, they were hateful of any "nosey, meddling, overbearing boss." They were sensitive about their belief that their intelligence, ability, and experience were as good as those of any other race.

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They were proud in the belief that they were the most industrious and diligent people as a race, or as a generation.

Once when we were discussing the shortage of green vegetables in our kitchens, many of the men remarked, "With the Japanese gone, that is to be expected. That's what happens when they have kicked the Japanese farmers out."

On another occasion, when I mentioned that the Mexican labor was to be imported into California, they expressed, "Those guys can't take our place. They don't work as hard as we do. They don't know how to raise vegetables."

At another time, when we were discussing the shortage of farm labor everywhere, some said, "War or not war, we'll be back in California next year. They need us there."

It is true that I took the advantage of these "weaknesses" and exploited them to the full extent to obtain the result.

It was apparent, as the reader would have foreseen, that the group was backward in understanding and appreciation of the American government and the principles, yet they were neither defiant nor antagonistic. They were simply ignorant. Only two of the Isseis had any faint idea of what the Bill of Rights is. Even though there was neither restraint nor restriction as to the topic of their conversation, there was not even one utterance which might be deemed detrimental or disloyal to the American government. It was a consensus of their opinions that this was the best country to live in and that they were thankful for comfortable life and living which they had been provided with in America. They were, in other words, appreciative of their material gains in America. They did not possess the capacity to appreciate the abstract phase of Americanism.

On the other hand, they were critical and suspicious toward the administration and the staff at Poston. They placed credence without any examination in the story of alleged graft by Mr. Best. They did not doubt that the hospital was killing the Japanese. They thought that they were discriminated by them in favor of the Niseis in the Administration Buildings. They thought that the white men



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were "slave drivers." This was the problem which I endeavored to combat most vigorously. I expended every effort and every mean to alleviate the skepticism and the suspicion. I believed that I was successful in my attempt until . . . . When my crew failed to receive their wages which were due to them, they were again outspokenly suspicious and resentful (discussed in the succeeding chapter). They suspected that somebody in the accounting department was manipulating the books and was embezzling the wage payments due to them. I felt as if I lost all the ground which I had gained, and I was disillusioned that my efforts were all in vain due to the counteractive and destructive effect of the administrative carelessness and inefficiency.

The Isseis were inherently gentle people -- mature in their thought and conservative in their reaction. These qualities were manifested collectively, too, as a crew. Yet they have shown tendency to be provoked by such an inconsequential pretext as by some person showing overbearing authority. This defect was more remarkable among the urban evacuees, especially ones with higher education. Yet, this excitement was of short duration; they cooled off and became gentle quickly. It is also interesting to add that it was the Isseis of the migratory farm group with the least education who exerted a soothing and counterbalancing effect upon these men.

It was the morning of July 20, when we set fire on the field adjoining Block 43 (area d). The Japanese Fire Chief, N., came running down and questioned me if I had a permit to burn. Knowing that this was a part of our regular routine, I did not feel necessary to go through the "red tape" and told him so. N. began to scold and chide me, which I felt was obnoxiously arrogant. Meantime, Frank M., a Block Manager, appeared on the field hanging on to a dump truck with heaping load of papers and trash, which was driven by a boy of small frail stature, who appeared to be about 15. I understood that at the time the rubbish collection service was suspended and the accumulated trash created a serious problem to the Blocks. In order to relieve the problem, M. had borrowed the truck and loaded the trash with

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his block residents' aid. He intended to burn them where we were working.

Just as soon as the chief noticed M. with his load, he stormed down to him. "You can't dump 'em here!" the chief shouted.

"What'ya mean I can't dump 'em here?" M. returned angrily.

The rage and excitedness between the two gained momentum.

The chief's argument was . . . . There was a place provided in camp for burning trash. Any burning was prohibited without a permit. All the rules must be strictly observed.

The manager's point was . . . . The rubbish situation was dangerously menacing the sanitary welfare. It was safe, as thirty odd men were working in the field. M. shouted to the little driver, "Dump it! Go ahead! Dump it!" N. yelled with rage, "Go on! Drive on!"

These contrary orders were screamed to the boy continuously. Poor kid! The little boy did not know what to do and sat in the cab "dumb-struck" and "punch-drunk."

Simultaneously, my crew was gathering around and was getting nervous and excited themselves. They began to involve themselves in the heated argument on the manager's side. Someone shrieked in Japanese, "God damn it! The young punk's cocky, He's arrogant! Let's beat him up. That's the only way to teach him. Come on, let's beat him up."

Others took up the chant, "Let's beat him up!"

I was convinced that a mob violence would have resulted if the chief had not sensed the tenseness and had not driven away with the boy in the dump truck. I knew that I would not have done anything to prevent it in view of my previous experiences with the chief. It was fortunate that he could sense the ugly atmosphere, as I was informed later that he could not understand Japanese beyond "nagure!" Subsequently, I inquired my men if they understood what the chief said, as he spoke in English so fast and so nervously. They informed that they did not understand much

more than "drive on." They resented his arrogant and overbearing manner. Soon afterward, some Isseis ... farm migratory laborers ... began to imitate comically the perplexity and bewilderment of the little driver in the dilemma; and others joined in laughter. Thus the crew regained calmness and composure.

Events must have taken place fast later in the day. A new order was announced by the administration in the same day to the effect that it would be permissible henceforth to burn trash before 10 a.m. and 150 feet clear of any object.

The men were steady and persistent, once they had started. They showed unusual stamina and perseverance in the heat of 120° - 128° F. (An unofficial temperature reading was as high as 145° in the open.) Even though they were benefited with frequent rests, the work required tenacious determination mentally and exhaustive effort physically. Yet all the members, except five, once they had joined the crew, remained to the end. One left to take charge of the sanitary detail. Two men were transferred, by the request of their managers, to the farming in their respective Block. Two young Niseis went to operate Caterpillars after the tractors for our use had been reduced to two and their service was no longer needed.

The record of attendance was excellent, as a study of the graph, attached elsewhere, would indicate. On the same chart, it is reported that on any one day there were no more than three absentees, the lowest point of the percentage curve being 90%. For 30 days out of 59, the record was perfect; that is, without an absentee. It is also noted therein that the frequency of the curve increases after August 11. This is explained by the fact that cases of illness or of illness in their family were reported. Another interesting fact is that the low points on the percentage curve occur on Thursdays at the earlier period and on Mondays later. I failed to discover any explanation beyond a statement by some ... "That's about the time you get a little tired and feel like taking a day off." The latter feature, especially for the last two weeks is accounted by the fact that the cooler weather was conducive to more vigorous outdoor activities on the week-ends.

It is my belief that the rate or the amount of compensation, that is, \$12.00 per month, did not have any effect upon them. They thought they were compensated for the wage differential by my special treatments such as providing the rest periods, supplying sandwiches, etc. The people, of course, commented on the low wages, but in good humor and jokingly. The following expressions were common among them:

"Say, you are working at one-dollar-an-hour speed." Or at the end of a day, "Well, I've earned fifty cents today."

The only time a monetary matter might have had some effect upon the men was an incident when the majority of the crew failed to receive the correct wage payments for the month of July and expressed their disgust and dissatisfaction on the field. One extremist said, "What's the use of working steady? Even if you work a full month, they won't pay a full wage anyway."

One could say, therefore, that the fluctuations of the curve for August 27 - September 3 are probably accounted by the resultant reactions from this administrative incompetency, although I am inclined to minimize such effort, judging from my own sentiment and experience under a similar circumstance.

The people in my charge spoke of the Niseis hatefully, belittlingly, and abusively, whenever some young men were passing in shiny sedans. Some expressed their displeasure, "The young punk is acting important."

One well-educated Issei was more emphatic, "They are getting cocky, just because they are being patronized by the 'Ketoos'." <sup>32</sup>

The vexation was more widespread, pungent, and serious, when a car was kicking up dust so badly as to envelope the workers with its smoke. It found expressions in more pugnacious form: "Let's drag him out! Let's beat him up!" Yet the tone was of reprehensibility and condemnation, rather than of criminal premeditation. <sup>33</sup>

A few found a source of irritation in the trousers some Niseis were wearing --

they were odious of any other kind of trousers but "blue jeans."

These hateful feelings were general, in more or less degree, among the Isseis, Kibeis and the Hawaiian Japanese. They were stronger, however, among the age group 35 - 55 and more outspoken among the men of higher educational background and of urban extraction. Even my Niseis occasionally shared the sentiment and were critical of their contemporaries. It is interesting to add that even the Isseis -- fathers of Niseis of the late teen age and of the early twenties -- were contemptuous of the Niseis other than their own.

However, upon a more detailed individual check, it was found that their reasons for the irritation and resentment were superficial and not deep-rooted. They gave their reasons such as:

"They are cocky."

"They want to show authority and want to act important, just because they are patronized and are in the favor of the administration."

"They are discourteous."

"They don't know how to talk."

"They sold their fathers 'down the river!'."

It is my contention that although the reasons being superficial as they are at present, the breach shall develop into a serious problem in the future unless corrective and preventive measures are applied soon.

Before closing this chapter, I shall add the following datum without detailed interpretations. It attracted my attention as the differences existed between the generations were sharp and remarkable.

TABLE VI  
Period of Inactivity

No. of days elapsed from the time of arrival at Poston to the time of obtaining their first employment.

No. of Days	No.	Percentage
1 - 9 days	4	12%
10 - 19 days	2	6%
20 - 29 days	1	3%
30 - 39 days	1	3%
40 - 49 days	25	76%
Total	33	

That is to say, three fourths of the men were idle for 40 days or more since they arrived in the camp. Four men listed in the group 1 - 9 days were three Niseis and myself.

A further check with the men listed under the 40 - 49 days group, 76% of the entire crew, revealed that only two made any attempt to seek a position by inquiring at the Employment Office during the inactive period. In other words, 23 men were idle without making any attempt or indicating any intention to obtain an employment.

To make a contrasting study, I interviewed 20 young Niseis at random in the camp and obtained the following result:

1 - 9 days	.....	17	.....	85%
10 -19 days	.....	1	.....	5%
20 -29 days	.....	2	.....	10%
Total	.....	<u>20</u>		

That is to say, the Niseis obtained their positions as soon as they had arrived in the camp. It is another evidence to prove my contention further that the Niseis are more aggressive and "go getters."

As a supplementary study of my men in relation to the general sentiment of the camp, the following observation is presented herewith. ~~The observa-~~  
~~tion is presented herewith.~~ The observation was made when the War Relocation Authority announced the following regulation:

"..... each person who is offered employment and who refuses to work will be charged at the rate of \$20 per month for himself and each dependent. such charges if not paid immediately will accrue against the enlistee and a deduction will be made from his salary when he does work, to cover the amount due the United States." <sup>36</sup>

The notice was posted at the Block Manager's office on or about July 11 and created widespread discussions pro and con.

I was curious at the time how much effect the regulations had on my men and inquired of them on the subject. The following question was asked of them individually on or about July 20:

"Do you believe that the administration shall charge \$20 a month to a

4/  
person who does not work?"

The result compiled from 25 men of the crew was as follows:

"Yes"	8	32%
"No"	17	68%

Some comments to their "no" answers were amusing. They varied from, "Try and get it," to, "That's a Nisei big shot's scheme to get the men out to work."

On the other hand, the records in the Employment Office for the period indicate that there was some increase in the interest on the part of the residents to obtain employments, due to this announcement or otherwise. ✓