

~~James Sakoda~~
James Sakoda
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THE CO-OP MOVEMENT IN TULE LAKE

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Preliminary Report

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Introduction

A. What the co-op movement in Tule Lake is

When the Tule Lake Project was first opened there was no provision for the War Relocation Authority to run a store for the benefit of the colonists. The desire of the War Relocation Authority was to have the colonists form a consumers' cooperative and operate their own store. For the convenience of the residents, however, it was felt imperative to set up a temporary community store to sell necessary articles. Mr. Kendall Smith was put in charge of the Community Enterprise, as it was called. Although the Enterprise was in Mr. Smith's hands and not under the War Relocation Authority, it was understood that "the existing net worth of the temporary community enterprise now in operation on certain relocation centers belongs to the evacuees. This fund shall be paid over in full to the permanent/^{consumer} cooperative association upon its organization."¹

The War Relocation Authority was not allowed to operate a store. Private enterprises for the sale of retail goods and services were also prohibited. Mr. Smith, therefore, could not operate the store as a private enterprise on more than a temporary basis. It could not be turned back to the War Relocation Authority. The need to form a cooperative which would take over the community enterprises was immediate.

The significant policy of the War Relocation Authority has been to allow the Japanese to run their own affairs as much as possible. Early in the history of the War Relocation Authority to allow consumer cooperatives in the relocation centers had been made an official policy. While there was

¹Administrative Instructions No. 26.

much talk of self-government and allowing Japanese to take over as much of the work done by Caucasian staff members, the Co-op Movement was the first opportunity the Japanese had of actually controlling their own affair completely. Ever since they had been in an assembly center, most of their needs had been taken care of by the WCCA or the WRA. Many Japanese were in the frame of mind of desiring to get as much ^{out} of the War Relocation Authority as possible at the time the idea of setting up a cooperative of their own was approached them.

Another interesting aspect of the Co-operative Movement in Tule Lake was that it was not set up to fight competition of other business, especially big business, but was more or less forced on the Japanese people through the War Relocation Authority policy. The resulting antagonisms that were released, however, not only involved the War Relocation Authority and the Japanese people, but also Mr. Smith, while the Community Council also joined the entanglement.

B. Significance of the Co-op Movement

While the study of the Co-op Movement in Tule Lake should reveal a great deal in terms of what actually happened when the Japanese were given the opportunity to set up a consumer's co-op of their own, the Co-op Movement seems to be valuable in offering a good contrast to the Community Council. While the Council is composed only of Niseis, as Isseis are not allowed to take elective positions in the community, the Co-op Movement was dominated from the beginning by Isseis and had an equal representation of Isseis and Niseis. While the Council conducted most of its business in English, the Co-op employed the Japanese language as its main means of communication, except in its relation with the Caucasian staff. The Co-op was a business organization, whereas the Council was a political organization. The Council

had the interest of the Niseis to protect against encroachment of Isseis with nationalistic tendencies. Fortunately for the Isseis the Co-op was also a democratic social movement which held democratic ideals highly. The co-op leaders were people who were willing to leave the final decision of important matters up to the people. In the Council, however, a struggle was going on to retain the power of making decisions within the Council instead of taking issues back to the people, and a few JACL leaders were being accused of trying to control the Council.

These differences may be too varied and numerous to afford a good comparison. Factors which are responsible for differences of reactions by these two organizations may be difficult to point out. Differences of attitudes, ways of doing things, etc., however, should afford some good insights into many problems.

Also since these two organizations will probably be the two most powerful ones on the Project, their progress and interaction will be worth following closely.

Because Isseis and Niseis will be represented equally in the Co-op Movement, it will afford grounds for Issei-Nisei interaction. The development and progress of the Issei-Nisei split should be one of the important issues to observe. The antagonism between the two generations have become quite evident in a series of incidents. Through the study of the Co-op Movement, some of the causes of this split may be discovered. Some cultural conflict situations that Niseis must face may also be discovered.

Since the Co-op Movement is dominated by Isseis, its study should reveal many of the customs maintained by the Japanese and the attitudes many Isseis have brought with them to the Project and developed here as a result of their life in the Project.

All of these phases of the Co-op Movement should reveal, in part,

the repercussions of living in a Relocation Project.

C. Method of Writing

Since the process of organization of Co-op Movement is mainly discussed in this section of the preliminary report, a chronological act of the Movement will be given. An attempt will be made to develop the points brought out in the preceding paragraphs. Following this an account of any other important problems which have not been clarified will be given, analysis and evaluation of the data coming last.

A. The Launching of the Movement

Ever since the first arrival of evacuees to the Tule Lake Relocation Center, local WRA officials have frequently voiced the view that this project constitutes a "cooperative venture," or a "cooperative community." The term "cooperative" so used lacked clarity and full meaning to the people, although it indicated the desire of the administration that the people learn to work as a united body for their common good. How such unified action might be achieved remained unexplained at the outset. But a concrete program for a cooperative movement in this project developed when it was suggested that the community stores, temporarily under the supervision of the WRA community enterprise division, might be controlled by the people through a consumer cooperative. The chief organizer of this movement was Mr. Don Elbersen of the administrative personnel, abetted by cooperative leaders in this community.

The idea of a consumer cooperative in the Tule Lake Project had its inception among a few members of the administrative personnel; namely, Dr. H. L. Jacoby, Dr. J. D. Francis, and Mr. Theodore Waller, who began to talk of its possibilities here. Elbersen came as a cooperative specialist, and

further stimulated discussion on the subject among the administrators. Since the resettlement of evacuees was begun on May 28, 1942 and was not completed until July 24, 1942, the education of the people in the consumer cooperative plan was, at first, necessarily slow; but recently an organized cooperative movement was begun among the people.

B. Incipient Organization

Mr. Elberson started this work here early in June with a talk, to the small group of evacuees who had already arrived, on the possibilities of a consumer cooperative in their community. This talk stimulated discussion, but gave few who attended the meeting any clear conception of the speaker's view. Personal contact was established with leaders of church groups, the forum committee, and other special interest groups, but each group tended to see the cooperative in terms of its own interest, which resulted in a diffusion rather than concentration of energy in the organizational work. Confusion dominated this incipient spread of the cooperative movement, but the ground was laid for its more systematic propagation.

C. Leader Training

Observing the need for a more careful education of the community in the cooperative movement, Mr. Elberson met with a small group of interested persons at the home of Howard Imaseki, then city editor of the Tulean Dispatch, to discuss the desirability of evening classes on the cooperative movement. As a result of this discussion, a series of nine lectures by Mr. Elberson on the "Highlights of the Cooperative Movement" was proposed, and scheduled to be given twice a week, beginning on Monday, July 6. Twenty persons were invited to the first session of the class, but almost fifty persons appeared at the meeting. During the first few discussions, there seemed to exist a

general skepticism of the cooperative movement, especially of its application to this community, a doubt enhanced by the widespread grumbling against the "high prices" in the community stores, which pointed popular concern toward some direct method of lowering prices rather than toward the reorganization of the whole economy; but as discussion progressed, a nucleus of leadership developed, and rumors spread in the community of the projected cooperative movement. Popular opinion about the desirability of the cooperative naturally was divided, and based on scant knowledge of its program, but discussion on the subject served to intensify interest in the movement.

D. Don Elberson, A Liberal

Much of the success of the Co-op Movement, if any, must be attributed to the co-op staff headed by Don Elberson, which often worked behind the scenes. Mr. Elberson was in his late 30's. He had a stable personality and liberal ideals which helped him adjust himself well among the Japanese people. He never made a dogmatic decision when he could consult the Japanese on the matter. While he continued to make suggestions to Japanese co-op leaders, he did not protest when they went ahead of their own accord. He insisted on maintaining democratic principles, and preferred to work behind the scene as much as possible. His attitude toward the Japanese, moreover, was that of a liberal who believed in not discriminating because of race. This background of democratic ideals made it possible to deal with Japanese without taking a superior attitude that so many of the other Caucasian staff members tended to take. As the head of the block managers, he was able to come in contact with Japanese in key positions, both Issais and Nisais, and he was able to get insights into their nature. Of all the Caucasian staff members, he was probably the one who got along with the Japanese the best. It was for this reason that he was made the labor relation man for the administration by Mr. Shirrell.

III Preliminary Organization

A. Issei Interest in Co-ops

A combination of favorable circumstances laid the setting for the next stage. Dissatisfaction with the existing management of the community stores led to a search by the people for some system whereby the people would have more direct control over their stores. A group of about fifteen Issei, who were a part of the dissatisfied element, were meeting among themselves trying to seek some solution for the problem. When Mr. Elberson learned of this group, he invited them to a meeting in which he offered the cooperative as a possible way out. The fifty to seventy Issei who attended were in favor of an immediate application of the plan, but Elberson saw the time as premature, for there yet remained the need to organize the people for mass support of the cooperative movement. The possibility of a community-wide organization of the educational process, however, was now clearly at hand, and Elberson decided to use the block managers and their knowledge of block personnel to enlarge the scope of propagation. He thereupon asked each block manager to select from his block two representatives, preferably one Issei and one Nisei, and preferably from those who had attended the lecture series, to attend a community-wide cooperative assembly. About the middle of July, block meetings were held in some areas to discuss the proposed cooperative plan and to select representatives, while in other blocks the managers made their own appointments.

On July 22, the first general meeting of block representatives to the cooperative assembly was called. Mr. Kendall Smith, Supervisor of Community Enterprises, Mr. Larry Collins, Regional Supervisor of Consumer Cooperatives, and Mr. Don Elberson were among those present. At this time all of Pinedale had not entered the Colony yet, and consequently they were not wholly repre-

sented at this first meeting. There were probably 80 or 90 representatives present at the meeting.

Mr. Elberson opened the meeting and explained that there were two purposes for the meeting. One was the choosing of a Provisional Advisory Council to the Community Enterprise Manager, Mr. Smith. He suggested one from each ward be chosen to sit on this council. The main purpose of this Advisory Council was to convey some of the desires of the people to Mr. Smith so that there would be less friction in the management of the store, which was entirely in Mr. Smith's hands. It was also calculated to be a means of getting the Japanese people interested in managing the Community Enterprise by themselves. This was to be a temporary Council to function until the cooperative was organized.

The other suggestion that Mr. Elberson made was that this group of representatives be the nucleus to organize a representative among the Japanese. For this purpose, he suggested a series of educational meetings in each ward where representatives could learn something about consumer cooperatives before launching a cooperative of their own. It was Mr. Elberson's firm belief that a cooperative would not be successful unless it sprang from a need felt among the people and there was an understanding of the principles of the Co-op. This desire for a groundwork of education was based on Mr. Elberson's deep belief in the principles of the coop, a fact which characterized Elberson's relation with the Japanese people.

As many of the representatives were Isseis, who did not understand English very well, Elberson had provided a translator, Tad Tomita. During the discussion, too, some of the discussion had to be translated to Isseis, and to Caucasians when Isseis spoke in Japanese. This language difficulty was to continue as long as relations had to be maintained with Caucasians, who could not be ignored.

The ensuing discussion was characterized by confusion. Few of the Nisei representatives had attended some of Elberson's lectures and had an understanding of some of the principles of the co-op. Some of them also had faith in the good intentions of the War Relocation Authority which was doing all it could to help the Japanese people. To these enlightened few the Co-op Movement which was encouraged by the Administration, was a sign of their good faith--a chance for the Japanese people to run their own affairs which they should seize. The majority, however, had very little understanding of the principles of the co-op. Many of the War Relocation Authority policies concerning the Community Enterprises were not clear to most of the people, too.

One of the most surprising occurrences at this meeting was the strong opposition to the Japanese people taking over the Community Enterprises at all. From the questions asked and remarks made, most of this opposition can be traced to suspicion toward the War Relocation Authority, a desire to get the most from the War Relocation Authority, and a short-range view of the Co-op Movement.

The feeling of suspicion was very clearly expressed. There was a feeling that the War Relocation Authority was trying "to put something over" on the Japanese. Someone asked: "Why doesn't the Government run it (the canteen) and sell at cost?" The opinion was expressed that it was doubtful profits would be returned to the people. "We don't know whether the War Relocation Authority wants to unload its burden on us. Are they going to unload their mistake on us?" After the meeting a Nisei expressed what others probably felt too: "If a cooperative is operated, then it's less likely for the WRA to foot some of the overhead. They should do that."

Similar to this feeling of suspicion another Nisei expressed this opinion after the meeting: "What's the use of being satisfied with just a small portion of self-government. If we are going to talk about democracy inside barbed-wire fence, we should not be appeased with only a little of it." This same Nisei was suspicious of the motives of the WRA and was against the setting up of a cooperative. He could not reconcile the discriminatory treatment he had received with the desire of the WRA to allow the people some measure of self-government.

Practically all of the people who took part in the discussion showed ignorance of the importance of the cooperative as a social movement. The only one who expressed a favorable opinion on this point was Mr. Smith, who was not what can be called a "co-op man." But he could see some of the advantages of a cooperative to the people, and he seemed to be exasperated because so many of the people seemed to be against it. He said at one point: "You can't sell at cost. Cooperative is not profit. The idea is to get you to run it." Then again: "I'm not a cooperative man. Here I am trying to persuade you to do it. Why the reluctance to form the Advisory Council?"

A great number of opinions were expressed showing no concern for the cooperative as a democratic organization or as a social movement, but insisting on the importance of low cost to the people. Many were against the co-op if it were going to mean more expenses to the people. One person wanted to know whether the WRA or the Army couldn't buy things more cheaply for the people than could a co-op. Someone else asked who would put the extra expense because co-ops would be bound to have more overhead than the present canteen. Many persons expressed the opinion that if the price were kept as low as possible, that was all that was necessary. As one Issei put

it: "How was the store run until now?" "Isn't it sufficient to keep the least money from going out from the men's pocket?" This short-range view of things and the harping on the economic insecurity of the people here have been evident in other issues, such as the theater project.

The opinion that the people should get all that they can from the WRA was expressed directly or indirectly by several persons. This is especially interesting in view of the fact that Japanese were known before evacuation to refuse public assistance in most cases.

The attitude of many Isseis toward the co-op was that they already knew a great deal about it, where, as a matter of fact, they seemed to know very little about it. This insistence on a knowledge of the co-op or the ability to get along without knowing very much was contrary to Elbersen's desire for thorough education on the co-op and was to crop up again later on. One Issei who seemed to know more about co-ops than others, still showed that he didn't have a deep understanding of them as a social movement. He said "Kobai Kumiai" (consumer cooperatives) are popular in Japan, but we don't know how long we'll stay here. How are we going to split the \$2000 daily profit? There's no need to make so much profit. Why not lower the price. Why not get the refund as we go along?" He implied that there was no need to have the co-op.

The same gentleman said: "If we leave it (canteen) up to the Japanese, it's understood there would be a lot of criticisms." A woman co-op leader got up and demanded in English (the man had spoken in Japanese), "Is this gentleman saying that we Japanese aren't able to run a cooperative?" Immediately she had the wrath of a large part of the assembly on her. There were protesting mumbles throughout the hall. Some said that the man hadn't said any-

thing of the sort. This incident seems to reveal the touchiness of the Japanese people to criticisms, especially when it comes from the young people.

Several persons who took part in the discussion are worth mentioning. Elbersen was patient throughout the meeting, trying to answer all of the questions that came up. He was probably rather discouraged by the stiff opposition he met to his plans to help the colonists set up a cooperative, preferably along the Rochdale plan. Smith seemed to be exasperated by the suspicion of the Japanese and put himself on Elbersen's side in trying to bring out some of the advantages of a co-op. This good relation between Elbersen and Smith was going to be broken later on. Collins did not say very much except to urge the people to study the co-op a little more. Tom Yogo, a JACL leader from the Sacramento Valley was outspoken in his stand against the setting up of the co-op. His arguments were that "First, the WRA owes the evacuees all their needs since they were unvoluntarily uprooted from their established economy, and the cooperative program sidetracks this more basic issue; and, second, that the Japanese people would be held responsible under a cooperative plan should the stores fail as seems likely in view of the extremely low wages in contradiction to the prevailing high prices."¹ Tom Yogo was to voice his protest against the Co-op Movement still later on.

Nothing can be said about the differences of opinion within the group, except to say that the major split was between the Japanese and the Caucasian. Both Isseis and Niseis voiced their opinions against setting up of a cooperative, while a few from both groups favored such a plan. Sectional differences were not noted. The only notation that can be made at this point is that the Pinedale group which seems to be more favorable toward the Co-op Movement was not represented at this meeting.

The discussion was centered mainly around the cooperative plan until one

¹ P.M.

of the co-op leaders suggested that of the two plans presented by Mr. Elberson the one concerning the Advisory Committee be taken up first. This was done and the ways and means of establishing a co-op left for a later meeting. Even the Advisory Committee, which would only convey the wishes of the people to Mr. Smith, met with some opposition. Said one Nisei: "We are just unpacked. Everyone understands cooperatives. Inside here, however, we can't figure on a normal basis. Let's leave even the temporary board until further discussion." A vote was taken, however, and there were only five dissenting votes. It was decided that representatives from each ward would elect one person to sit on the Advisory Council. It was made clear that this Council was only temporary and that it was to operate only until the consumer cooperative was formed.

C. Activities of the Advisory Council

The Advisory Council was made up of the following:

Ward I	Horiuchi
Ward II	Itoeda
Ward III	Hitomi
Ward IV	Kubo
Ward V	Tomita
Ward VI	Taketa
Ward VII	Matsuhara

Almost all of the members of the Advisory Council spoke both English and Japanese, although Tomita and Matsuhara were the only two who could be called Niseis. The latter spoke no Japanese while Hitomi spoke only broken English. The meeting, interestingly enough, was carried on in English, except when it came to extremely technical matters. Tomita was one of Elberson's leaders, who was well informed on the co-op, and he was chairman for the Advisory Council in spite of his relative youth.

The first activity of the Advisory Council was to meet with Mr. Smith and the managers of the various stores and shops of Community Enterprises and find out how the enterprises were actually being run. How much profit there was,

how the price was marked, how the bills were paid, what expenses were paid by the Community Enterprises -- the first meeting was occupied largely with asking these questions.

Sandwiched in between these major questions were those dealing with the status of the Council, the Community Enterprises, Mr. Smith, and the future cooperative. Mr. Smith made it clear at the very beginning of the first meeting that unless the co-op was organized there could be no discussion of changing the present setup of the canteen. When the status of the Council was brought up, Mr. Smith stated that its task was to carry back necessary information and to bring in any questions that bothered the colonists.

This matter of status was the chief topic for discussion of the second Advisory Council meeting which met Sunday, August 5. The Council felt that it was not enough to function merely as an Advisory Board and that as long as Mr. Smith was the supervisor of the Community Enterprises, there would be complaints from the people. The members of the Council expressed the opinion that Mr. Smith's managers had no opinions of their own, but were under complete control of Mr. Smith. The main issue no longer was how they could advise Mr. Smith, but how soon the existing setup with Mr. Smith in control could be changed. It was the opinion of the Advisory Council even then that Mr. Smith should be retained in an advisory capacity only.

The Advisory Council had really no jurisdiction on the matter of forming a co-op, but their energies were centered in that direction. It was felt that a co-op plan, even though sketchy, should be presented to the co-op representatives immediately for their consideration. The Council thought it could work out the details first, and present them to co-op representatives for revision. The long-range educational program contemplated by Mr. Elberson was ignored. As an expediency, it was decided that co-op representatives would be asked to attend

Mr. Elberson's last lecture of the second series that was to be given that week. The secretary was asked to look into the legal phases of incorporation of a co-op.

On August 12, the Advisory Council met with the stated purpose of examining the books of the canteen, but most of the meeting was occupied with discussion centering around the co-op. A new complication had entered into this problem in the form of the City Council, which was made up of Missis and considered a political organization. Mr. Smith and Mr. Elberson assured the Advisory Council that it was as much a voice of the people as the Council. But ^{it} was brought up that the Council was the only recognized representative of the people which could have control of the profits from the canteen. However, if the cooperative should be organized both Mr. Smith and Mr. Elberson felt that the co-op would have a stronger claim on the profits than would the Council. Mr. Elberson was asked whether the people couldn't go ahead with the organization of the co-op and get their education on the co-op later on. Mr. Elberson tried to impress the importance of education on and understanding of the co-op before it was formed.

A decision was made by the Advisory Council to work on a set of proposed by-laws which would be taken back to the ward and discussed with co-op representatives before presenting to the people. The set of by-laws was written up several nights later. The Advisory Council had become the co-op organization committee and plans for preliminary education were dispensed with. The Advisory function of the Council was forgotten when they took up the new task they were hardly prepared to tackle.

D. The Community Council Intervenes

At first the understanding was that the permanent Council would have

the power to distribute the profit from the canteen in any way it saw fit. Discussion was brought up in the Council on August 11 on whether it might not be a good idea for the Council to take over the co-op, too. The groups which made this proposition was composed of Walter Tsukamoto, Tom Yego, and Henry Taketa who were entrusted by the Council to work out a chart of city government organization. They argued that the Council was the rightful representative of the people. While opposed to them were Miyamoto, Takamoto, Mayeda, and others who feared that the Council and the whole community would be controlled by a small clique.¹

At the Ward II co-op meeting, Mr. Tsukamoto was present, and he broached the suggestion that the co-op might be taken over by the Council. His arguments, however, were clever. After saying that he thought the power of the people should not be divided, he said that he himself did not care who ran the co-op. Mr. Elberson was against the Council handling the co-op, he said, because Elberson was a co-op advisor and a failure to make a co-op would mean that he had failed in his work.

The point of view of the ward member on the Advisory Council was interesting. He maintained that the Advisory Council was willing to let the Council run the co-op if they so wished. But Mr. Smith had protested and had urged the Advisory Council to take over matters in the economic sphere. It was only then that the Advisory Council decided to go ahead with the organizing of the co-op. However, they were still willing to reconsider he said.

While the meeting was attended by both Issais and Niseis, the comments made were all against having the Council take over the Community Enterprises. One Issai mentioned that if the Council took over the co-op, then Issais would

¹ F.M.'s Council Minutes, August 11, 1942.

be deprived of power. Tsukamoto answered that the Community Council does not mean to deprive Isseis of any power. Another man demanded to know whether they shouldn't do something if the Niseis were going to deny the Isseis any power at all. Tsukamoto then relinquished his argument somewhat and said that the Council only wanted the final say in legislative matters. This power of the Council was conceded by the others.

At this meeting it was thought desirable to ask the people in the block whether they desired to take over the co-op by themselves or let the Council take care of it. On the following night, however, at the Council Meeting the growing friction between Isseis and Niseis over the control of the co-op was brought out. This was felt to be unfortunate, and Walter himself got up and made a motion to have the Council divorce itself from the Community Enterprises, except for legislative powers. The motion was passed. Walter had reversed his stand and had put himself on record as favoring harmonious relations between the first and second generations. This is mentioned because he refers to this incident later on. Thus the brief intervention of the Council in the matter of the co-op was brought to an abrupt end, but it had served the purpose of spurring the co-op movement forward at a more rapid pace.

During the discussion of the Theater Project, it was revealed that "Mr. Shirrell had at previous occasions promised the fact that the Council will have a voice in the distribution of profits accumulated by the Community Enterprises until the permanent Council was established."² At the meeting on September 29, this was corrected to read: "...when the permanent

¹ Minutes of Council Meeting, August 18, 1942; also F.M.'s minutes.

² Special Council Meeting, September 26, 1942.

Council is established." This understanding seems to have been quite general, and at one time it was announced that the profits would be distributed by the Community Council. Mr. Shirrell, however, did not agree that he had made such a promise and said that the above statement should read as follows: "that until the co-op is organized, the profits of the Community Enterprise will continue to be under the management of the Community Enterprises."¹ According to Administrative instructions the latter would, of course, be the more correct statement for Mr. Shirrell to make. The Council was left only with legislative and taxation authority over the Community Enterprises.

E. Activities of Co-op Representatives

The temporary co-op representatives (the real representatives were to be elected later) had not had a meeting since they had elected an Advisory Council member from the ward. Most of the co-op representatives had only a vague idea about co-ops because they had not had an opportunity to hear very much about it. When a ward meeting was called by the Advisory Council member in that ward, the discussion was marred by confusion. Mr. Elberson had first planned that these ward meetings, which were to be educational in purpose, would be presided by a discussion leader who already had an understanding of the co-op. Members of the Advisory Council, however, felt that they were capable of leading the discussion. The combined meeting of Wards II and III on August 17 will be outlined to show some of the trends.

The meeting was co-chaired by two members from the Advisory Committee, Mr. Ikeda and Mr. Mitomi. First a report was given of the progress made by the Advisory Council thus far. It was brought out that the Advisory Council

¹ Council Minutes, September 29, 1942.

had pushed the progress of the organization of the co-op because they thought that an educational program would take too much time. There was a suggestion that the Advisory Council make a definite plan to present to the people. Mr. Hitomi said that the Advisory Council desired the approval of the people on the co-op before going ahead with the plans. Another question that came up during the discussion was whether the people desired the canteen or not. It was finally decided that co-op representatives would go back to their blocks and have the people decide on two questions:

1. Do the people want to have a canteen?
2. Do the people want to take over the canteen or do they want the Council to handle it?

The two chairmen could not answer satisfactorily many of the questions that were asked. Someone in the audience asked for a description of the co-op to present to the block people but the chairmen were unable to give it. Mr. Hitomi started to read a provisional by-law which he had, but admitted that he couldn't understand all of it very well. J.S. and Sumio Miyamoto, Niseis who had some understanding of the co-op, kept quiet during most of the discussion. It was being carried on wholly in Japanese and Isseis were doing all of the talking. Finally J.S. asked whether the group shouldn't learn a little more about co-ops, if they were to go back to their blocks to explain it to the people. Many agreed at this suggestion. It was a situation where Niseis had to tread with care. The two Issei leaders had proved inadequate in so far as their knowledge of the co-op went. But the younger people could not come right out and take away the leadership without causing resentment. Mr. Elbertson had instructed several of the younger co-op leaders to help out in the discussion, but they had kept still most of the time. J. S. prevailed