

INTERNAL RELATIONS DIVISION

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The Internal Relations Office was originally organized and designated as the Liaison Office and was directed by Patrol Inspector Larry R. Elwood. On June 8, 1943, the writer, then Assistant Officer in Charge of the Fort Stanton Internment Camp, was detailed to Crystal City to take over direction of this division.

Upon arrival, the staff of the Liaison Office was found to be quartered in the east end of the present Food Market building. Here, in four small rooms, a valiant effort was being made to take care of the censoring of several thousand pieces of mail and numerous packages, amid the confusion of people buying groceries, people wanting employment, people wanting better housing, people wanting answers to a myriad of questions and people just wanting. Many of these questions concerned problems new and different from anything encountered previously. Details of a few of these will be given later.

There followed a period of orientation and familiarization with the camp, its programs, policies and aims. Within a few weeks a pattern of things to come was beginning to materialize. Looking back, it might be compared to a giant jig-saw puzzle. A few pieces were in place, with others recognized but not yet ready to be set in, and it might be said that the puzzle had, for all concerned, a certain fascination, a certain something, which for all the work, sweat and frustration obviously in store, would not allow anyone to give up or turn back. And the principal reward in view was headaches, heartaches and backaches. But no one shirked.

By July 1, 1943 the writer had perceived that his division was understaffed. A plan was drawn up outlining the work to be performed, the personnel needed at that time and the personnel need as the camp population increased. It was necessary to justify this recommendation to the Officer in Charge and to Mr. W. F. Kelly, Assistant Commissioner for Alien Control. However, with their suggestions, recommendations, and directions, an adequate staff was authorized and very soon organized. Larry R. Elwood was appointed Assistant Liaison Officer, a new and larger office was made available and business commenced to pick up. Not that it hadn't already been adequate ....

One of the most complex problems was the billeting of families. Here were seven or eight types and sizes of quarters designed to fit the varying needs of different sizes of families. To further complicate this, however, it was found that each family had an individuality all its own. For instance, here was a family of five consisting of father, mother and three sons, ages one, three and five and here was another of five persons consisting of father, mother and sons, ages 14 and 17 and daughter, age 15. Obviously these two families of five persons were faced with entirely different situations. We were trying to house the maximum number of people in the camp, keeping in mind, of course, the social problems involved etc., while the internees, naturally, were trying to obtain living quarters as large as was possible. We soon found that we could lay down no hard and fast rule for

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