

## THE PLACE OF SCHOOLS IN-WAR RELOCATION CENTERS

### The Birth of a Community.

The evacuation and resettlement in areas under military restrictions of large groups of people of Japanese ancestry, of whom a majority are American citizens by birth, creates conditions which will profoundly affect the educational program and the place of the schools in the Relocation centers. The communities will not spring into existence in response to any of the usual causes - discovery of gold, or oil, or opening up of factories, or construction. They are created by an act of government because of military necessity, and the people brought in under military control.

The population of each center is made up of individuals and families brought together from many different localities. The restrictions under which these new communities must operate will combine to create an environment totally unlike anything they have experienced before. It limits freedom of movement, right to engage in private enterprise, and prescribes in detail arrangements for housing, eating, and general living. In return every member is guaranteed security and protection, a common measure of food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, and schooling, and opportunity to work for a small fixed wage. Within this framework a large measure of self-direction and determination is encouraged, and freedom given to develop appropriate civic and social patterns and institutions. The communities are temporary in their present character, and are expected to disperse or be greatly modified after the war. The restrictions under which they now operate are also subject to revision as circumstances and public opinion permit.

The evolution, out of amorphous assemblies of individuals and families ranging in numbers from ten to twenty thousand persons, into self-governing and self-supporting communities is a pioneering task of herculean proportions. The changes in family life and relationships which will be brought about by the new housing and living conditions; in economic relationships through the virtual disappearance of private enterprise; and in civic and social relationships through the absence of familiar forms of community organization and control, will cause a radical alteration of old social and economic patterns and require the creation of many new ones. In such a society every individual is a pioneer who must not only find his place in society and the community, but help to create the body of that society as he goes. The demands upon him in terms of ability to adapt and adjust, and to devise new social garments, are far greater than in an ordered society, even though that may be undergoing rapid change. The fact that in the beginning there can be little effective established leadership and few recognized channels of group action is likely to render the process a fumbling and painful one.

### Task of the schools in the Relocation Centers.

The primary task of the schools in the Relocation centers is to develop an educational program which will promote understanding of American ideals and loyalty to American institutions and train for the responsibilities of citizenship, of family, and for economic in-

dependence both on the projects and in communities to which the students may return. The schools must provide the interpretation necessary to help individuals and groups to adjust to the shocks of evacuation and to the unusual conditions of life within the Relocation centers, and prepare them for reabsorption with a minimum of handicap and friction into normal civilian life. The schools must be responsive to conditions and needs within each center, and at the same time maintain standards which will enable students to transfer without prejudice to other schools, to enter colleges, and to obtain outside employment; and they must provide sufficient contacts with the main currents of American life outside the area to prevent intellectual stagnation and inbreeding.

The school is perhaps the most important institution carried over into the Relocation Centers, and the one least changed in its functions. It can become, in a measure often dreamed of by educators but seldom realized, an effective instrument of community planning and building, participating through its recognition of the potential contribution of its students, and the devising of means for its realization, in every phase of community life, lending its facilities and its membership for all types of activities and interests.

#### Educational Policy of the War Relocation Authority

The War Relocation Authority recognizes the value of the American tradition which assigns to state and local governments responsibility for the creation, maintenance and control of the public school system; and its policy is to establish schools on the Relocation centers which will be a part of, or affiliated with, the public school system of the state in which the center is located, and responsive to the direction of a local elected school board. It recognizes also the responsibility in a pioneering community to enlist through the schools the constructive services of children as well as adults in the formation of a healthy community life and the educational value of partnership in community enterprises; and proposes to give the schools every encouragement and help in developing programs making possible such participation.

(by Mrs. Lucy W. Adams, July 13, 1942)