WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

In reply, please refer to:

August 11, 1943

To: Mr. Dillon S. Myer, WRA Director From: Temporary Council of Block Chairmen Subject: Relocation and Center Problems

Your welcome visit to our center affords us opportunity to submit for your esteemed considerations some of the problems which are puzzling us at present. Before doing so, however, may we express our sincere appreciation for your past, untiring effort in solving our many complicated and difficult problems? Your deep insight and sympathetic understanding, and your tactful and statesmenlike manner of handling our problems have resulted in achievement of many "impossibles". We are indeed fortunate to have a man of your caliber at our helm who places our interest paramount in his heart and guides us wisely to our future destiny.

The problems that confront us now may be alvided into two major headings, namely, (1) those pertaining to our center life, and (2) others in connection with relocation. We anticipate that these problems shall serit your immediate attention with usual, sympathetic and vigorous approach.

PROBLEMS IN THE CENTER

1. Food:

Food we are served in the center is not satisfactory in enality and quantity. We understand that the present food budget of \$.45 per capita per day was established about twenty months ago with view of supplying minimum dietetic and calorific requirements obtainable at prevailing food prices of that time. Since then ford prices advanced greatly, in case of some basic food over 100%. This means the shrinkage of food supplied to evacuees. If we are to receive the minimum food requirement, the figure of \$.45 must be advanced in direct proportion with the price advances.

To the best of our knowledge during the past year we were not supplied with the budgeted amount. We figured the actual amount of food consumed was about \$.30 instead of \$.45. To augment the insufficiency of mess hall meals the evacuees dig deep into their pecket to buy supplementary food at their canteen. The fact that the sale of foodstuff in the canteens amount to about \$30,000 per month is an ap arent testimony of insufficient food supplied by WRA.



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There seems to be some basic deficiency in producement system, for we are frequently told that the producement department is unable to buy the required amount. We request you to streamline the producement procedure so that we would be supplied with full amount of budget.

2. Unemployment compensation and clothing allowances:

The pending policy of reducing the project employment will make a large number of our workers involuntarily idle with subsequent deprival of wages and clothing allowances. As this idleness will be caused not by their fault, these workers should be paid unemployment compensation. Infact, WRA should provide unemployment compensation in all other similar instances.

As to the clothing allowances, we hold a firm conviction that the clothing is one of basic nessesities of life, and as such our government is obligated to furnish it to all evacuees. We are told that WRA considers clothing allowances as a part of wage and not as a payment for subsistence. We cannot see any logic in this. We one needs to be reminded that clothing is just as essential as food and shelter for one's existence. Maployment or any other condition should not be imposed as prerequisites for granting clothing or clothing allowances. We ask, therefore, WRA to furnish slothing to all residents without any exception.

The clothing allowance of \$3.75 per person was figured more than a year ago on the basis of prevailing prices of that time. For are undoubtedly aware of the increase in prices, certain items of clothing doubling or trippling their prices within past year. We request WMA to increase the amount of clothing allowances commensurate with the advanced prices.

3. Shertage of Dectors:

We have only four evacues dectors to the total population of 9,200 residents. The standard established by MES, we understand, is one doctor to every 1,400 persons. We believe the maintenance of this standard is Secolutely necessary if we are to receive adequate medical care. To meet this requirement our center must secure the service of at least two more doctors.

Bue to the shortage, pur doctors are obligated to take a twenty four shift every three days. This is too heavy a burden for our doctors to bear, and particularly so for our two aged doctors who are around seventy years old. Under such shift it is humanly impossible to give proper individual diagnosis and care. There is a limit to human endurance. At the present rate of overwork our doctors may soon need a doctor themselves.

Our clinic also suffers the consequences of insufficient number of physicians. Quite frequently a large number of clinic patients is next home witnout seeing a doctor, because whenever there is an emergency operation, at least three doctors are needed, leaving only one in charge of clinic which necessitate sending home majority of patients.

The chief medical efficer, Dr. Irwin, is too busy with administrative duties and has no time to give direct service to evacuee patients. A suggestion is made

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that if his administrative duties are shared by some other persons, Br. Igwin may devote at least a part of his time to see some of our patients. This will partly lighten the burden of other everworked doctors.

When Mr. John Province visited this center some time ago we made a suggestion that some of the physicians in the interment camps may be available for service in the relocation centers. Such transfer may involve many complications, but under the present critical situations no stone should be left unturned to find needed doctors. We request you to look into this possibility personally at your earliest convenience.

There are indications that the present shortage of doctors may further be aggravated by relocation of some of the doctors now in service at our hospital. Some measures should be adopted immediately so that our doctors will be induced to stay in the center. As the shortage of doctors is constant source for mental anguish to all residents, anything that you could do to allegiate this situation would be greatly appreciated.

4. Psychopathic Ward:

A number of psychopathic patients is placed in our hospital with no special equipment or facilities and without a specialist's care. We ask WAA either to install proper facilities and hire a specialist or to send the patients out to an outside institution which is equipped to handle mental cases.

5. Bental Service:

At present we are receiving limited dental service free of charge. Bridge and plate works are done at the patient's expense. This is contrary to our understanding, for we are teld that our government, by virtue of forced evacuation, took upon its shoulder the responsibility of furnishing all essential health requirements of its wards. We believe that we are entitled to secure free of charge all standard dental services which are considered as part of modern health requirements.

RELOCATION PROBLEMS

1. Business and Professiona Licenses:

Reports are circulated that the local authorities in many sections of the country refuse the issuance of business or professional licenses to resettled evacuees or, at best, are very reluctant about doing so, Recently, in Denver, a nisei barber obtained his license which was refused at first by State Authority but finally granted after a special plea of the WRA resettlement officer. In case of non citizens, it is reported that licenses are next to impossible to obtain. We believe that similar difficulties prevail at many other places. We ask WRE to exert every effort to combat this discriminative attitude of local authorities.

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2. Recettlement by Fully Groups:

A successful resettlement program cannot be worked out without due considerations to family groups whose means of sustenance were previous to evacuation independent farming or business enterprises. This group consistitutes about two-third of center population.

Regarding a group resettlement program we wrote you previously expressing our desires and plans, but at that time your reply indicated that WRA was not interested in such program. However, according to the recent publication of "S ntinel" WRA is seriously considering, in complete reversal of its former positions, a relocation program for family groups. WE hail this as a step in the right direction.

3. REturn to West Coast:

The recent announcement of Honorable James J. Byrnes, War Mobilization
Director, which bolstered the position of evacues to American public states
in part, "It is the policy of the War department and the Army, in all respects,
to accord American soldiers of Japanese ancestry, the rights and privileges of
all other American soldiers". It states lastly, "The present restrictions against
persons of Japanese ancestry, will remain in force as long as the military situation
so requires. In view of this statement, we could expect that the families of
soldiers would be the first to return to their former homes. Then, after the
completion of the present segregation program, the military reasons which restricted the loyal evacues shall no longer exist, and consequently, the evacues
should be paraitted to return to the west coast.

We believe if the WRA combined with other government agencies, endeavor to eradicate prejudices against persons of Japanese and Japanese ancestry, by channeling the efforts of church, welfare organizations, and other community groups, using all other machinery at their command and so convince the public on the west coast that the source of uncertainty which existed in their minds has been cleared, and with true American justice and fair play, should pave way for evacuees to return to their former homes on the west coast. According to the informations reaching us from our west coast friends there is a strong and persistent movement among American people demanding the return of evacuees to their former farms in order to ease the deplerable food shortage.

The rehabilitation via this avenue would produce the greatest result with a minimum effot and expenditure, for the evacuees in former surroundings and occupations would require least amount of readjustment to be independently established. Without questions, they would add substantially to the American productivity in shortest possible period of time.

We have presented foregoing problems merely in outline. If you so desire, we shall be pleased to discuss more fully any one of the above problems.

Respectfully submitted,