

RELOCATION PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

July 26, 1944

10:00 A.M.

Members present: Dick Fujioka, Mr. Kumazo Hatchimonji, Rev. D. Toriumi, Mr. Shoji Nagumo, Mr. Toshio Kimura, Mr. Eiichi Sakauye, Mr. Saburo Nakashima, Mr. Kosaku Matsumoto, Mr. Motomu Kambara, and Mr. Wallace Tsuda.

Special Guests: Dr. Hansen and Mr. Fujii

Mr. George Nakaki presided as Chairman.

Mr. Tsuda, Mr. Kambara and Mr. Fujii were introduced.

Mr. Sugimoto's letter of resignation.

OLD BUSINESS: Mr. Sugimoto's letter to the Finance Department regarding Government Request for Transportation. Inconvenience of the Nickel-Plate Line--does not run often enough from Chicago. Two runs daily.

Chairman read the teletype from Washington regarding it.

Mr. Sugimoto's memo to Mr. Carroll and Mr. Ryan in reference to Nickel-Plate Railway. Reply from Mr. Ryan to the above matter.

Chairman read Relocation Division Memo--a report of Planning Committee at Chicago Conference.

Mr. Carroll, in reply to if there were any other things he would like to reiterate: Discussed lot of other things. The change in the returning regulation--said it will be out within the next two or three weeks from the date of the conference, but hasn't come out yet. I think one of the most important thing brought out is the lack of understanding on the part of relocation field officers and the Washington Office about the problems of the Projects and evacuees in the Projects. We have preached on that for months and months for two years practically--on relocation procedures and regulations. The people in the centers fail--another recommendation made at the conference and at Denver--I advocated this for a long time--a year ago this month. Do away with the application of indefinite, seasonal, trial, short-term leaves and issue identification card to the relocatees who have leave clearance--regardless of citizens or aliens. This will remove all restrictions and relocation will be on their own initiative.

Mr. Tsuda: Referring to the paragraph about returning to the center, there are cause I know where the request for return to the centers is very much refused. People have gone out on indefinite leaves and found the conditions not as expected--can't make a "go" of it. I can cite numerous cases where a person could not get an approval from field officers to be inducted into the center. They come back to the center and go through a lot of "red tape"--go up to different officials in the center before they are reinducted. The

relocation officers just don't use common sense especially in the cases of aliens. Aliens are more or less tied down. The young boys can go up to the relocation officer and can tell them off, whereas in the case of aliens, if they try to say anything, the first thing the relocation officer says is, "You'll be sent to Santa Fe, if you don't shut up." Officers should give them a clear bill. I think it should be a simplified matter, especially in the cases of aliens. Because of this many people hesitate to go out.

I think more people will go out if they are able to come back into camp more easily. I think a body like this--Relocation Planning Commission--I think it's their job to do something about it so that a person gets fair treatment and fair judgment--to have him come back and let him come back easily.

Mr. Sakauye made a motion that Mr. Tsuda's suggestion be put in memorandum form and sent to Mr. Carroll and he in turn forward it to the proper person in charge.  
Unanimously approved.

Mr. Tsuda: I have talked this over with Mr. Gilmore and he has agreed with me. It seems that in the Relocation Office the only object is to get people to relocate. We cannot push people out. People will relocate when they are ready to relocate. That's outside the question, most of the recruiter come in here with the idea that Center is a labor pool. They think that there are 8000 people who are just aching to get jobs. Out of that, 3500 are available to work. They think they can get 200 or 300 people to go out right away. I have seen racial prejudice in its raw form. I understand Mr. Gilmore is taking further steps about this offer from Chicago so that things like this will never happen again. This offer from Chicago--I thought it was a pretty fair deal. Other boys in the office thought so too. The recruiter said there is no discrimination in Chicago. The Union will accept you there. Will accept you 100%. These boys have signed up to work on a certain job. They were promised the acceptance of Union. When these boys went there to work in one department, the workers there said, "Either the Japs go or we go". These boys had to transfer to other job. This sort of things put Mr. Carroll and his staff on the "spot". When people come to us for advice--whether they should go out on that job. We tell them what we think, but when the agreement isn't carried out--I think the Relocation Officer should make a thorough investigation of the actual condition out there--advise us if there is discrimination, so that people will not be fooled.

Ryoichi Fujii: From Chicago, originally a member of the Relocation Office. I would like to tell the people how outside is like. While in Granada I had three meetings--one mass and discussion group and family meetings. Rest of the time I was busy visiting my friends there. Extended my trip to Heart Mountain, my own place. I have about 200 people whom I closely know. I want to visit these people. At the same time if I have some opportunity I want to speak to the people in the Center and report from my experience. How Niseis boys and girls are living on the outside, feature of Japanese people in this country. I can present this program very satisfactorily. I will try to make best as much as I can. Of course I have no authority nor right to do this. If I can get some plans or schedules, I am staying here until the end of next week. A couple of meetings in the form of questions and answers--I have a more specific plan in mind just as I had in Granada. I cannot push people out or advise them to go out. I can present the fact and give information upon which they can make their own judgment. If you make some arrangement and if you think there is some value in my assistance, I will do my best.

George N.: It is before the Commission whether you feel it is valuable enough to have a mass meeting or not.

Mr. Sakauye: I think it will be very worthwhile to conduct several meetings and to extend to the public the information what the outside is like. I think it will be a great benefit to the community and so I suggest that we make some sort of program where these people will get some information of the conditions on the outside.

Motion made that Chairman pick out a committee to make this program for Mr. Fujii to lecture various part of the Center. Motion seconded and passed. Will speak in Japanese.

Mr. Fujii: This time I came more to appeal to the parents.

Committee: K. Matsumoto, K. Hatchimonji, S. Nagumo, and S. Nakashima.

George N.: Will the committee make out the schedule immediately and publicize it to the public.

Mr. Hatchimonji: Regarding W.F.A. contracts. Because of poor crops, many boys came back disappointed. Suggest that experienced men go out there first and see if the sugar beet is in good enough condition to thin. I wish to have this matter taken up to Mr. Carroll.

Mr. Carroll: I believe agreement should never have been made by the WRA and WFA to contract labor. It is not a relocation program. It's just a means of furnishing help for the farmers and gives the evacuees a chance to make a few dollars. And when he has a few dollars he doesn't think much about relocation. It brings up problems. At the Chicago conference it was agreed that WRA will have nothing to do with seasonal labor problems. We refuse to take any action on labor disputes. This fall we are not going to make any investigation. I don't want to have anything to do with it. The boys may go out with this understanding. It (seasonal work) does more harm to this program than anything we have.

Duties of the Relocation Officers.--not to investigate labor disputes. Duties confine to assisting relocatees--assisting in the case of medical care and labor needs.

Mr. Carroll: As you know this Center is the first to have this Relocation Planning Commission. Other center have organized one as the result of the action taken here. Sending in reports of the Commission to Washington. Lately not much activity. I am sure we all know the reason why--most of the active leaders have gone out. This organization have proven so successful and so valuable, Mr. Arnold in his letter to me asking me to take this up to the Relocation Planning Commission. Hate to see this project be the first to go down.

Mr. Hatchimonji: The reason why is that we make recommendations and they are never considered.

Mr. Carroll: I wouldn't say that. We asked about Grant, about Government request for Transportation. Keep on plugging, it's a cinch if we keep at it long enough we will get it.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 A.M.