

2/43-7

ADDRESS BY LT. RAY McDANIELS AT HEART MOUNTAIN:

We are here on a mission which will be made plain to you within the next few minutes. Some questionnaires are to be distributed among you and what is said here is by way of explaining what use the government intends to make of them.

Our mission is not an experiment but marks the radical extension and broadening of a policy which has always intended that ways should be found to return you to a normal way of life.

Presentations such as this one are being made simultaneously at all of the Relocation Centers over the United States. All citizens in this country who are of Japanese blood are being told the same things.

The effort is not a campaign or a drive but is an attempt to find a workable solution for the acute wartime problem of one portion of our population. Its fundamental purpose is to put your situation on a plane which is consistent with the dignity of American citizenship.

What is done is being done with the authority of the government of the United States and with the approval of the War Department. But whether it is to be successful will depend finally upon the voluntary acts of free American citizens.

You may object that this---your life here---is not freedom. The circumstances were not of your own choosing, though it is true that the majority of you and of your families accepted the restrictions placed upon your life with little complaint and without deviating from loyalty to the United States.

In any time of crisis, however, when national survival presents itself as the all-important issue, the best interests of the few must sometimes be temporarily sacrificed or disregarded for what seems the good of the many. The proof of a nation's good faith is to be found in whether it moves to restore full privileges at the earliest opportunity.

Admittedly this past year has been for you a period of considerable hardship and great anxiety. That was because war came to the United States and imposed extraordinary burdens upon all of its citizens. Our citizens everywhere feel these burdens increasingly.

Your own burdens have differed from those of the majority of our population in kind and in degree, bringing you perhaps greater anguish of mind. The decisions which led to your present situation were studied as carefully as the rush of events permitted, and the steps taken were in the interest of national security and in behalf of your personal safety. You are aware of the reasons for what was done.

Not all Japanese Americans are loyal to their government. Not all members of any group of our population---even those whose ancestors came here hundreds of years ago---are fully loyal to their country.

That is so because ours is a free society permitting the individual often to choose in what measure he will contribute to the common good. In all groups there are individuals who will not accept any obligation to the land which gives them their opportunity. Wherever you find them and whatever their blood may be they are the disloyal ones.

When war came between Japan and the United States, there were immediately two difficult problems for our government in connection with that part of its population which is of Japanese blood. The first was how to deal fairly with the loyal citizen who wishes only to serve this country. The second was how to protect this nation from the acts of those who are not loyal.

It would have been a good thing if both of these obligations could have been met at one time. That was not possible because it has never been the practice of the United States to intrude into the privacy of its citizens and to keep track of all of their movements and make a check of their loyalty.

Therefore, until a better way could be found, a general policy had to be followed which in the long run has no doubt tested severely the loyalty of those among you who wished only to serve the United States.

Of that, the government has been aware, but one risk or the other had to be taken, and it seemed best to count upon the continuing loyalty of those whose hearts and minds were with this country rather than to accept the danger from the disloyal acts of those who were not so.

It is felt now that before any change is made and before you are asked to make any new decisions these words in explanation are owed to you.

What is wanted by your government is that your strength shall be added to that of the rest of the nation in its present fight with its enemies and that ways shall be found to restore you as quickly as may be to your normal and rightful share in the present life and work of the people of the United States.

This does not mean a promise of any relief from worry and hardship, for these will continue for all of us until the war is won. But it does mean that such hardships as you are now experiencing will be gradually replaced by the same hardships which are now being experienced by other American families--the hardships of saying goodbye to family when you leave home to fight for the United States and the hardship of getting along without many things which Americans have always regarded as necessities.

Americans of Japanese blood are wanted to fight for the United States like any other citizens. They are wanted for combat duty where they are fitted for combat duty and for war work where they are best suited for war work. They are wanted because the government and the Army are convinced of their loyalty. And they are wanted not less because of their ability as soldiers and as citizens doing useful work for the American community. You have superior qualifications for the kind of service in which it is intended to use you.

These are among the primary purposes of the questionnaire which is to be executed by you. Those who are willing and are loyal, of military age and physically fit, are being asked to volunteer for induction into the Army of the United States. Those who are loyal but for some reason are not qualified for military service -- the young men and the young women -- will be given the opportunity to support the war effort by work on the home front.

The major purpose of what is being done here, however, is this: There are some individuals in this center whose ties with the Japanese Empire are such as to disqualify them for positions of trust in this country. This does not mean that they will not be treated humanely, but it does mean that it would be unwise for this government in this time of crisis to give them an opportunity to endanger the national security. Therefore, steps must be taken to determine those individuals in whom the United States can place full trust and confidence. The questionnaire is a means to that end.

Your government would not take these steps unless it intended to go further in restoring you to a normal place in the life of the country, with the privileges and obligations of other American citizens. The invitation to the young men here to volunteer is simply a token of its good faith and further interest.

As was the case with all other Americans of military age who were first given the chance to volunteer for service, and if they did not so volunteer were then inducted into the Army via the Selective Service, it is contemplated that in the normal process of building our Army, those among you who do not volunteer but are of the right age and physically fit will probably be taken into the military service in due time.

That is a part of sharing the lot of the general population of this country. You would not want that you would be treated differently than other Americans. Universal service is now the national policy and in the long run there is no better way to apportion our present military responsibilities.

However, the plan now being contemplated is that Americans of Japanese blood will be formed into their own combat team. You may want to know why it is being done this way. The reason is that if your strength were diffused through the Army of the United States---as has already been done with many other Americans of your blood---relatively little account would be taken of your action. You would be important only as man-power---nothing more. But united, and working together, you would become a symbol of something greater than your individual selves, and the effect would be felt both in the United States and abroad. All other Americans would long remember what you had done for the country, and you would be a living reproach to those who have been prejudiced against you because of your Japanese blood. Can it be doubted that this would mean a greatly improved relationship between you and all other parts of the American population in the post-war period? To the nations abroad, and especially to the peoples of the East, you would provide the measure of the solidarity of people who get together in the name of democracy.

Accordingly, you will be given the same pay and the same chance for advancement as other American soldiers. As you prove yourself qualified for officership, you will be given training for commissioned service and the only limits which will be placed upon how many of you are advanced to commissioned grade will be determined by your own willingness and ability. It is recognized that in point of aptitude for military service by reason not only of your natural ability but of your education, many of you are suitable officer material.

It was believed that you would want a straightforward presentation of this new proposal by the government, and therefore the explanation of the plan behind the questionnaire has been made as simply as possible.

It is not necessary for me to appeal to the loyalty of those who are loyal.

If there are any questions in your minds with regard to the policy or to the questionnaire, we will try to answer them during our stay here at the Center.

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