

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPER ON COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT - NO. 1

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FAREWELL ADDRESS OF SAIKI MUNENO, RETIRING  
CHAIRMAN OF THE TOPAZ COMMUNITY COUNCIL,  
GIVEN BEFORE THE COUNCIL DECEMBER 30, 1943.

The Community Council provides for the physical and mental well-being of Topaz. This is a sweeping remark. However, if we give ourselves a few solitary moments of reflection and thought, that is exactly what the Council does. The two previous Councils and this present Council, which is about to fade out and become a part of history, have provided these for Topaz. And by Topaz, I include the residents as well as the Administration.

For after serving for some 15 months as Councilman, I have arrived at the conclusion that so far as the welfare of Topaz is concerned, cooperation equals pro-residents plus pro-Administration. This equation is simple, almost axiomatic. For should either the Administration or the residents antagonize each other there can be no cooperation. The peace and harmony depend on the cooperation given one to each by the two groups. Without one, the other cannot properly function. I used the word "properly" advisedly as Topaz can exist without cooperation. But the existence would be chaotic. The residents and Administration will live constantly in a tense atmosphere, void of normal peaceful interchange of greetings and negotiations. And we all know, suspicion can actually eat into our very mental processes and physical beings.

Frankly, from my personal contact, I have found the Administration most cooperative. I have found the staff willing to give me whatever information I sought. In fact they have given me certain information I did not ask, some of which I have kept to myself. Moreover, they have bluntly denied me certain concessions I requested.

The first real job of the new Council is to find means of giving out information to the residents. The Councils to date have failed miserably in this respect. Such information should be rapid -- more important than that -- accurate. Some misguided Councilmen have erroneous ideas that they should be rapid but not accurate. Consequently, they have interjected their ideas in the reports and in a few instances distorted their reports beyond accuracy.

The Administration is relying more and more on the Council for dissemination of information. Conversely, they are expecting information they require directly from the Council. Being a Councilman is an honor and privilege. Honors and privileges carry responsibilities. We are prone to belittle the Council or be belittled by the residents. But this does not preclude us from shouldering our responsibilities.

The dissemination of information as rapidly and accurately as possible is a responsibility far from belittling.

Some of us have abused the privileges of a Councilman by not assuming our responsibilities. I mean by that they have unknowingly or deliberately expressed their personal views rather than those of the block. They have also voiced their views as that of the Council to their blocks. Such members, unfortunately, have a misconceived idea that theirs is the duty to inculcate their personal views into the block - in other words - my personal views, therefore, it must be the block's.

Limited, we know, are the powers of the Council; limited also is the scope of influence of the Council. Limited is the course of action we may take. In other words, our hands are bound by many knots due to the limitations imposed in this unnatural situation. We should be conscious and understand this. Therefore, with this in mind we should work within this scope. Unless this is distinctly understood the work of the Council will never progress.

And as I just stated, unless we realize the full import of our scope of activities we will have many resignations. Each resignation should be well grounded. Petty causes should be eliminated and never founded on personal reasons.

In this regard a general conception of parliamentary laws is quite necessary. The addressing of the Chairman, the making of motions, the keeping of discussion germane are a few instances. Furthermore, it is most desirable that each and every Councilman respect the majority opinion of the Council. This is a basic principle which in all probability should never be mentioned now. I am only doing this because I feel the necessity of this statement.

The duties of a Chairman are varied and plentiful. It calls for a person who can devote his full time to the work. To facilitate his work, I shall be remiss if I do not solicit each member to render him whatever aid they can. The many committees formed is for this purpose. Therefore, in particular, should the chairman of each committee cooperate with him. In this respect probably an executive board should be organized as a consultant group for the Chairman, the members to be chosen from the more active standing committees.

The present Council has initiated the procedure of passing regulations on a sounder footing. The lengthy discussions and quibblings, the constant desire to present the residents' sentiments probably on many occasions became boring. No doubt, at times it was disgusting. The new Council will improve this procedure by adopting methods in order to get a better and fairer sentiment of the people. In this respect there must be developed a clearer understanding among the Internal Security, Project Attorney, Judiciary Commission and the Council. For only by this understanding can the regulations be strictly enforced.

The Judiciary Commission and Arbitration Board are in dire need of a manual. These bodies should be consulted not only frequently but regularly on policy making and as consultants. The Juvenile Board and Advisory Board should be revamped and made active parts of the Community Government. It is very important that members of these Commissions and Boards be appointed or reappointed at once. The utilizations of these bodies to the fullest is a definite responsibility of the Council. And their facile consultations for sage and practical counsel necessarily will improve the prestige of the Council and gain the confidence of the residents.

The Vice-Chairman should be given specific duties relevant to the smooth functioning of the Council. His duties as an alternate of the Chairman do not materially aid in anything. He should be a constant consultant of the Chairman. He probably should be the executive secretary of all Commissions and Boards.

Recently I have been forcibly reminded and I admit reluctantly that at times a Councilman takes the attitude that we, the Council, are the law. I mean by this we take the attitude; This is the regulation, the Council made it; it's up to the people to obey. Any contrary opinion of his constituents is either not presented or followed by resignations. It should be understood that a Councilman reflects the thoughts of the people he represents.

The Council should discourage oratory with all its trimmings. Flourishes and wild sweeps of the arms, undue raising of the voices does not contribute to the dignity of this body. All members are working for the welfare of the people and therefore, too wide differences in opinions could be ironed out more satisfactorily only by serene and judicious deliberations. Furthermore, the use of abusive invective and allusions and the mentioning of profane and filthy parables should be prohibited.

As retiring Chairman I recommend to you the retention of the permanent Community Government Staff. The office of Office Manager insures the continuity from term to term of the work of the Council. The details of managing the office is a difficult job requiring a tactful and efficient person. Our Secretaries are newly appointed but have caught on to their work well. They are efficient, diligent and constantly pressed with work. It is incumbent, therefore, that all members make certain that whatever they request to have done is absolutely necessary.

In conclusion, the foremost function of the War Relocation Authority today is relocation. Needless to say the Administration has concentrated its whole efforts in carrying out this policy. The Council as liaison body has the responsibilities of taking to the residents the available information. Conversely, it has the responsibilities of keeping informed the Administration of the residents'

questions and desires. And unless a perfect cooperation is borne in this matter, bitterness and chaos will follow. The Community Council provides for the physical and mental well-being of Topaz. This is a sweeping remark. However, if we give ourselves a few solitary moments of reflection and thought that is exactly what the Council does.

May I take this opportunity in thanking you all for your generous support during my short term as Chairman. I have enjoyed my work as Councilman of Block 30 and then as Chairman. I leave here with mixed feelings - sad to leave your good company and happy in anticipation of my future work. But above all I am satisfied that the incoming Council will carry on for Topaz.