

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL REGIONAL DIRECTORS AND PROJECT
DIRECTORS

Subject: Rumors Concerning Legislation by Congress
Depriving Evacuees of Citizenship and
Providing for their Internment

Gentlemen:

Rumors have been spreading from one relocation center to another to the effect that the House of Representatives has passed, and a Senate Committee has favorably reported, a bill or bills that would deprive evacuees of citizenship in the United States and that would provide for their internment for the duration of the war.

On October 3 I sent you a memorandum quoting a telegram from the Solicitor to Mr. Shirrell, Project Director of the Tule Lake Relocation Center on this subject. I have just had called to my attention a letter sent by the American Civil Liberties Union to the President, mimeographed copies of which have apparently been widely distributed, and which repeats these rumors.

The following paragraph is quoted from the American Civil Liberties Union letter:

"The easy characterization in the public mind of all persons of Japanese blood as disloyal to the United States and the cause of the United Nations has produced most unfortunate effects. It is responsible for a bill which has passed the House and is now favorably reported in the Senate, not only depriving American-born citizens of Japanese descent of their citizenship, but also interning for the duration of the war all persons of Japanese blood, aliens and citizens alike. It has produced a proceeding in the federal courts in California intended to accomplish the same result."

These rumors are not true. A bill was introduced in the Senate some time ago that would have provided for internment of persons of Japanese ancestry. It was favorably reported by the Senate Committee on Immigration. As soon as the implications of the bill were recognized, several Senators called attention to its dangers on the floor of the Senate and no attempt has since been made by the author of the bill or anyone else to call it up for a vote. So far as I know, no companion bill was introduced at all in the House. It is certain that no such bill has ever passed the House. About two weeks ago, a Senator introduced a bill proposing a constitutional amendment to authorize Congress to determine the conditions under which citizenship in the United States

could be obtained by persons subject to "dual citizenship" under the laws of other countries. That bill was referred to a Senate Committee. That bill has not been reported out of Committee. So far as I know, no companion bill has been introduced in the House, although in April of this year a somewhat similar bill was introduced in the House. That bill was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary and has not been heard from since.

The bills dealing with citizenship propose amendments to the Federal Constitution. Before such an amendment can become effective it must be passed by a two-thirds vote of each House of Congress and must be ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the States.

Obviously no person can give any assurances as to the passage or nonpassage of any bill introduced in the Congress. The bills referred to above, however, have merely been introduced and referred to committees. They have not been passed by either House. There is no sign that any of the bills are going to be called up for debate or other action.

The proceeding in the Federal courts referred to in the last sentence of the paragraph quoted above from the American Civil Liberties Union letter was a proceeding that sought to strike the names of niseis from the voting registration lists in one county in California. The Federal District Judge who heard the case dismissed the proceedings as being entirely without warrant. The Solicitor has advised me that there is no legal basis whatsoever for this suit, and that he is confident that the action of the District Court will be affirmed on appeal.

Sincerely,

/s/ John H. Province

Acting Director

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Hunt, Idaho

To:

Mr. John Bigelow

For your information.

Philip Schafer

Philip Schafer
Asst. Project Director

10/13/42