

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Washington

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RESTRICTED

A MESSAGE FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

To: Staff Members of WRA:

Distribution: C

Let me extend to you the warmest greetings of the Christmas season and best wishes for the New Year.

Looking back over the past year and looking forward to the one ahead, I see a great deal about which all of us should be cheerful. We've come a long way, in spite of the rough going at times. For example, a year ago most of us were greatly concerned about acceptance of our relocation program which then was only a few weeks old. Today relocation is accepted generally by the public; even by some of the most ruthless critics of W.R.A., and more than 16,000 evacuees successfully relocated on indefinite leave stand as testimony to the soundness of the program and the effectiveness with which relocation has been carried on.

We've made real progress in moving the centers toward self-sufficiency in major items of food. There has been a great deal accomplished in increasing the efficiency of labor. Much has been done to make the relocation centers more livable. One of the greatest forward strides has been in establishing mutual confidence between W.R.A. staff members and evacuees, which has led to sharing of responsibility for our major programs.

Those achievements are great enough to overshadow the unfortunate incidents which have made it possible for critics of W.R.A. to gain widespread publicity for themselves and for the minor defects in our administration upon which they have capitalized. But it is important for us to keep our perspective, and not become discouraged by criticism.

Within the last few weeks several events have taken place which give me great encouragement, and I want you to know about them. In mid-November I accepted an invitation to appear before the state commanders, state adjutants and the national officers of the American Legion at their annual meeting. The reception accorded my outline of the W.R.A. program was most heartening. The group, as expected, at the close of the meeting reiterated the resolutions adopted by the national convention several months earlier. But I am convinced that these resolutions do not represent the attitude of the majority of the Legion officials;

and that within this organization, unfriendly though it has been, we have secured a substantial amount of understanding and support.

Late in the month of November I had the opportunity to appear in executive sessions before two important bodies of the Congress, the Senate Committee on Military Affairs and the Congressional delegations from California, Oregon, and Washington meeting jointly. While the Tule Lake incident was of primary interest, both groups were concerned with the W.R.A. program in general and asked numerous and pertinent questions about the broad aspects of the job we are attempting to do.

Representatives of the State and War Departments also appeared before the Senate committee; and State, War, and Justice Department representatives appeared before the West Coast delegation; without exception, their remarks strongly supported the W.R.A. position and program. I am convinced, following these two meetings, that behind the window dressing of a great deal of critical publicity, the key leaders in Congress have a better understanding of the W.R.A. program and are more strongly in support of it than ever before.

I am not blinded to the many critics we have, but I believe sincerely that we enter the new year in stronger position than we have ever occupied. We shall need to proceed with scrupulous regard for the policies and procedures that have been established; our administration must be just, reasoned, and realistic, even beyond the standards set by our critics. The challenge is great but the opportunities are unlimited, as we enter another year of the task which has been assigned to us.

D. S. Myer
Director

