

WEEKLY PRESS REVIEW

No. 1

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For the Use of the WRA Staff Only - Not for Publication

SUMMARY

Several developments accounted for a rise in newspaper items about WRA this week. The Senate investigation was, of course, top news event, with the opening of the Chicago employment office and Congressman Leroy Johnson's resolution also of interest. Other important news sources were school construction at Granada, Governor Maw's visit to Central Utah, and conditions at Jerome. Although, on the whole, the press treated these events factually, the subject matter was such as probably to arouse more unfavorable public reaction than otherwise.

SENATE INVESTIGATION --

The Associated Press sent out two separate stories on January 15. The first announced investigation as a plan to halt pampering and to restore Army control, quoted derogatory remarks of Senators Wallgren and Johnson, and stated that an Executive Order provided that evacuees could not be employed on projects for their own welfare. Memphis Commercial Appeal. Baltimore Sun. Memphis Press-Scimitar. San Francisco Chronicle. Colorado Star Gazette. Wichita Falls Record News. 1/16/43

The second January 15 AP dispatch repeated most of the above, but also gave WRA's side of the picture. It reported an unnamed WRA official's explanation of the work provisions at the camps, his statement that camps had been built by the Army with new construction authorized only at the Colorado and one other camp, and his explanation that issues at camps were feuds among individuals rather than loyalty or disloyalty toward the United States. Tucson Arizona Star. 1/16/43 AP

The International News Service presented a report similar in tone and facts to that of the first AP story. New York Journal and American. Harrisburg News. Denver Post. 1/15/43

The Chicago Tribune and Washington Times Herald carried identical stories, with treatment and coverage about the same as the INS.

The United Press treated the investigation as a drive to return camps--"scenes of sporadic anti-American demonstrations"--to military control. The inquiry was motivated by the Manzanar demonstration and by near riots, unrest, and labor difficulties reported from other camps. Tennessean. Memphis Press-Scimitar. Johnstown Democrat. Lexington Herald. 1/16/43.

The Chicago Sun was the only paper with a good word for the evacuees. It referred to Director Myer's statement of confidence that an explanation satisfactory to Senators would be uncovered and described evacuees as being Japanese who had not been found guilty of crimes or subversive activity.
1/16/43

A signed article by Warren B. Francis in the Los Angeles Times was perhaps the most biased. It claimed that WRA had refused to supply any information about the steps it had taken to segregate pro-Axis internees, as well as repeating the Senatorial complaints of laxness, etc.

Editorial Comment:

In an editorial headed, "Where It Belongs", the San Diego Union came out in favor of putting camps under the Army. The WRA has been "fooling around" with the problem. Great many of the evacuees are dangerous enemies--"the situation is not of a sort to be handled by welfare or social service workers." 1/16/43

The San Antonio Express, on the other hand, carried an editorial in sympathy with WRA's position. While citing the specific charges being brought by Senator Johnson, it answered them by a statement that even Federal prisons are equipped with schools, gymnasiums, and bathhouses. The Army already has enough jobs on its hands. Camps should be made as productive and decent as possible, while those evacuees who give cause for suspicion should be transferred to Army controlled camps. So long as the national security is not endangered, prejudice should be restrained. 1/18/43.

JOHNSON RESOLUTION --

The UP dispatch of January 10, digested last week, appeared in the following additional papers: Buffalo Courier Express, Dayton News, Brooklyn Eagle, Omaha World Herald, Detroit Free Press, Memphis Commercial Appeal, Seattle Times. 1/10/43. The Washington Times Herald also ran a short item on the introduction of the resolution.

Thus far, only one editorial has been received. The Albuquerque Journal on January 12 stated that the resolution should be pushed promptly. If reports (on food wastage, etc.) are false, the public should be informed to stop the "ugly talk", if true, corrective measures should be taken. Japanese--"many actual enemies of our country"--shouldn't be treated better than anyone else.

LEGISLATIVE --

Two legislative attempts to restrict or prohibit land-ownership by Japanese occurred.

Land ownership in Arkansas by Japanese--whether citizens or aliens-- would be barred by Bill introduced in Arkansas legislature by State Senator D. Frank Williams. Purported reason for this action is to prevent unfair competition with Arkansas' living standard. Washington Star. 1/13/43 Salt Lake Tribune. 1/13/43 and 1/14/43. Associated Press

Loopholes would be closed in present California legislation restricting land ownership by Bill introduced by State Senator Clair Engle of Red Bluff, California. This Bill has been signed by 17 Senators, both Democrats and Republicans. San Francisco Chronicle. Associated Press. 1/16/43

Two cases involving evacuees will be heard on January 20 by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal sitting en banc in San Francisco. The petition of the Native Sons of the Golden West, which seeks to have names of all American-born Japanese withdrawn from voting lists, will be considered, and the legality of the exclusion orders will be tested. In the latter, cases in challenge are being brought by Fred P. Korematsu and Gordon Hirabayashi. San Francisco Chronicle. 1/12/43. San Francisco News. 1/11/43

Evacuation was of doubtful constitutionality, according to Malcolm K. Whyte, a Milwaukee attorney, in an address before the Wisconsin Bar Association. The theme of Mr. Whyte's speech was that democracies can fight effectively without abandoning the democratic process. Milwaukee Sentinel 1/17/43.

EVACUEE PROPERTY --

Idle farm equipment owned by Japanese in Relocation Centers has been surveyed by Attorney General Konny of California with a view to putting it to work in war food production. Konny plans to confer with WRA officials shortly on ways to achieve this. The survey showed that in the southern part of the state alone there are 754 pieces of idle equipment. The machinery in question is being catalogued by WRA's Evacuee Property Division, whose authority is limited to putting prospective purchasers in touch with the owners. Sacramento Bee. 1/16/43. Associated Press.

Supervision of the protection and liquidation of evacuee property is listed among year's achievements by the Treasury Department in its annual report. Journal of Commerce (New York City). 1/13/43

MESS OPERATIONS --

Rumors about food rations at Centers have persisted in San Francisco. Four letters to editors discuss this. One, from Froda Muller Harding of Berkeley, is an especially fine reply to previous letters condemning center rations. Evacuees are on compulsory meat rations, including pork. Centers

are not concentration camps. Men and women managing WRA are not "swivel chair" politicians. San Francisco Examiner. 1/9/43 and 1/13/43.

A widely-printed Associated Press story from San Francisco answered false rumors about food mishandling at the Centers. According to this dispatch, official sources disclosed that camps are moving toward a self-sustaining basis. Livestock farms are in operation at some projects, vegetable-growing produced around 1000 carloads at two projects last season. WRA stewards have mapped out program conforming both with prospective rationing and shortages. New York Herald Tribune. Washington Evening Star. Jackson Citizen-Patriot. Galveston News. Reading Eagle. Wilmington Journal Every-Evening. Los Angeles Times. Tucson Star. 1/18/43. AP

Food purchases for the Alien Internment Camp at Kenedy, Texas, drew same sort of press comment as have purchases for Relocation Centers. A San Antonio businessman's "blood is boiling to think of treating aliens this way while Japan is slowly starving our captive citizens and soldiers." 1/18/43. San Antonio Express.

PUBLIC ATTITUDES --

Threatening call reported to have been made to Washington, D. C. employer of a Filipino houseboy thought to be a Japanese. Dr. Hrdlicka, head of the National Museum's department of anthropology said that the physical difference between Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos is practically nil--but the mental and psychological differences are vast. Japanese are tricky, and rarely learn to speak good English. Washington Daily News. 12/15/43.

Rumors: The country is crackling with false and fantastic rumors despite efforts of Government, press, and radio to dispel them. Those about racial groups have increased noticeably since last November. Among false rumors are:

Wyoming--"Government is feeding elk and deer to the Japs in the internment camps, while white people in Boston get horse meat."

Tempe, Arizona--Japanese at Central Utah are buying up butcher knives, cleavers, and bowies at nearby small town. "One hardwareman sold 500 knives before he realized they might be used to slit the throats of the white people in town."

Washington Post. 1/17/43. Article by George Gallup.

Unrest in Camps: There is more unrest than has leaked into papers. Strike at Tule Lake accompanied by threat of bodily harm to non-strikers.

Strike at Granada of evacuees who refused to haul coal. Certain elements--those mostly Kiboi--are spreading dissension. On other hand, evacuees themselves sometimes try to stop agitation. Washington Post. 1/14/43. "Washington-Merry-go-Round", by Drew Pearson.

Anti-Japanese letters: Six letters published in one day. Two protested letting Japanese out of camps to shop and pick up mail at nearby towns. One asked that everyone interested in getting rid of Japanese after the war send him a post card so that mass action toward that end could be started. Sacramento Bee. 1/8/43

Marriage of Japanese Soldier: The marriage of U. S. Army Sgt. Shig Nishimura and evacuee Yoko Nakamura drew some favorable press comment. At least five papers carried the story, which was the subject of an AP release. In Columbus Dispatch, Sgt. Nishimura was quoted as saying that he had found little prejudice in the Ft. Hayes area. Columbus Dispatch. 1/14/43. Chicago Times. 1/10/43. Richmond-Times Dispatch. 1/15/43. Washington Star. 1/14/43. Washington Post. 1/15/43

Photograph of relocated student: Towru Kobara, student relocated at Case School of Applied Science is set to fight for the United States, was shocked by Pearl Harbor. Cleveland News. 1/14/43

Segregation Advocated: Loyal Japanese should be segregated from disloyal, and some method should be evolved to give loyal Japanese a chance to prove their loyalty. Manzanar brought this situation to public attention. Johnstown Tribune. 1/11/43. editorial

NEWS FROM THE PROJECT AREAS --

Granada:

The controversy about school construction at Granada continued, with the Denver Buildings Trades and Construction Council (A.F. of L.) and Representative J. Edgar Chenoweth adding their voices to those publicly disapproving.

Chenoweth suggested to Director Myer the use of vacant store buildings at Granada as schools for evacuee children, and Myer has promised to investigate possibility. Plans for three school buildings have been abandoned by WRA, according to Chenoweth. Denver Post. 1/15/43. AP

The Denver Buildings Trades Council voted unanimously to denounce any school building at Granada. In a letter to Senator Edwin Johnson, the union business agent stated that "our every effort should be to kill those slant-eyed back stabbers instead of educating them..." Denver Post. 1/14/43

A feature article by Frances Wayne compares cost of permanent school in Denver with temporary structures planned at projects. Difference is blamed on "bureaucratic extravagance." (The Denver school referred to in this article has a capacity of 240 pupils, with five teachers employed, according to Donald Sabin, Assistant Chief, Employment Division). Denver Post. 1/10/43

While Japanese children should be given an education it should be no better than that of other American children. Pueblo Star-Journal 1/10/43. Editorial

Following a statement by Paul Terry, Superintendent of Education at Granada, on the reason for the cost of schools there, the Rocky Mountain News expressed the feeling that ire of citizens over the cost should not result in neglect of obligation to educate the 1,800 American-citizen children. Rocky Mountain News. 1/3/43. Editorial

Central Utah:

Governor Maw of Utah, upon return from a trip to the Center, made some extremely favorable public comments. He said that he had found no evidence of "pampering"; that many evacuees (including 20 American Legionnaires, veterans of World War I) who feel bruised at their loyalty's being suspect, are accepting evacuation as their contribution to America's war effort; and that the evacuees would make a major contribution to Utah agriculture because of the presence of many agricultural experts. Salt Lake Tribune. 1/16/43

Jerome:

In four news items, the Commercial Appeal continued its attack on Jerome. There were further repercussions from Eugene Rutland's article, reported last week.

On basis of Rutland's story, Ben H. Gildart, Sr. of Greenville, Mississippi, urged Mississippi's Senators and Representative Whittington to start an investigation. Commercial Appeal. 1/8/43

WRA's official denial of Rutland's criticisms covered rather fully. However, the lead paragraph quoted a construction engineer at the Project as saying that conditions have not improved and that all employees have been instructed not to discuss the situation. Commercial Appeal. 1/10/43

Senator McClellan of Arkansas, "shocked" by Rutland's story launched an inquiry into conditions at Jerome. Such a condition as described could not continue to exist, and if present authorities are not competent to deal with it, alternative would be to get officials who would take matters in hand, according to the Senator. Commercial Appeal. 1/12/43

In article headed, "Censorship Lacking at Jap PostOffice", this fact reported as if it were a dangerous omission. Commercial Appeal. 1/17/43

Readers should not put too much stock in Rutland's Appeal article, according to a paper published near the Jerome Project, Rutland is a disgruntled former Government employee who unsuccessfully bid for job with WRA. Citizens should weigh facts carefully before demanding action, although matter warranted investigation and steps to assure program is handled properly. "Because we in this state have a tremendous and difficult task to play in our part in National Defense by seeing that these relocation centers operate as smoothly as possible, we urge all citizens to minimize reports of sabotage, etc. at Denson until the facts are positively known." Dermott News. Editorial

The San Francisco News carried Eugene Rutland's article on January 5 as did the Cleveland Press on January 4. An AP story, based on WRA's January 8 press release which answered Rutland's article, was carried in the Christian Science Monitor on January 11 and in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle on January 10. The Washington Star commented editorially on the Jerome situation on January 14 to the effect that while reports may be exaggerated, there is probably enough truth in them to warrant an investigation. The American people should, at least, be assured that Japanese aren't living under the luxury conditions depicted.

Dr. J. B. Hunter, chief of Community Services at Rohwer, addressing Federation of Christian Churches at Memphis, answered charges that evacuees were being "coddled" by saying that they lead "Spartan" lives. Conditions at Centers are not as satisfactory as they might be but are being improved. Commercial Appeal. 1/16/43. Little Rock Gazette. 1/16/43

MAGAZINE ARTICLES

NATION, "How to Speak to Japan." By Selden C. Menefee in "Political War" Section, page 16. 1/2/43

Article on Japanese radio propaganda and counter-propaganda. The writer feels that United States counter-propaganda could be improved. Japanese propaganda to this country emphasizes racial discrimination, stresses the exclusion acts, exaggerates or fabricates U. S. "mistreatment" of evacuees, and blames the war on U.S. desire for white supremacy over East Asia.

The writer of this article believes that a more effective way to answer Japanese broadcasts would be by action proving Japan wrong on racial angle. He suggests speeding up and publicizing policy of evacuee release. Immediate release of all Nisei whose loyalty stands upon investigation, while keeping in custody Japanese citizens and Kibei unless they are known to be harmless, is advocated. To play up to Japanese superstitions and fear of ridicule is another technique suggested-- "Some of the best talent for this sort of psychological warfare is still lying fallow in the Japanese relocation camps in the Western states."

NATION, "Back the Tolan Committee". Editorial, p.6. 1/2/43

Asks readers to write Speaker Rayburn and Minority Leader Martin demanding continuation of Tolan Committee, and lists the Fourth report (study of Japanese evacuation and warning against similar evacuation of German and Italian aliens from East Coast) as among Committee's most noteworthy accomplishments.

THE JOURNAL OF ARKANSAS EDUCATION, "In Our Midst." By Joseph B. Hunter, Chief of Community Services at Rohwer. pp. 4-5. Reprint of Hunter's address to A.E.A. Council on Education, Nov. 5, 1942.

WRA's program is described as a challenge to preserve the democratic spirit among loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry. The history of the Japanese in America is briefly sketched--why they came here in the first place, their splendid record of self-support, etc., and the good disposition with which they accepted evacuation.

THE INTERNATIONAL QUARTERLY (organ of the International Houses in New York, Chicago, and Berkeley), "Letters from Japanese Evacuated from the West Coast." p. 20, Autumn, 1942.

Letters from nine former Berkeley International House residents to other former House members portray life at the assembly centers as it looks to educated Nisei. While feeling a bit "down in the mouth" at disruption to their normal living, most correspondents write that they have been too busy getting activities started and assuming places of leadership in their new environments to spend much time brooding. Nevertheless, many mention feelings of boredom, futility, frustration, and difficulty in adjustment to a totally Japanese community.

THE BUSINESS EDUCATION WORLD, "Training Japanese-Americans for Tomorrow."
By Lucille Friedman, teacher at Granada Relocation Center, p. 256.

The aim of the Granada school system is not merely to teach subject matter, but to help students become adjusted and to prepare them for normal living after the war. In the Commerce Department, where writer teaches, the basic business subjects are offered. Opportunities to practice their training will be given by assignments to various Center jobs on a job-rotation basis. As part of practical training in democracy offered, a co-operative school store has been established. To this, students have responded enthusiastically.

FELLOWSHIP (Fellowship of Reconciliation magazine), "Japanese Evacuee News."
January, 1943

Announces the opening of five Field Relocation Offices, and states that evacuees have enthusiastically welcomed the establishment of the F.O.R. Travel-Loan Fund.

REPORT TO THE BIENNIAL MEETING OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA, "The State of the Church." pp. 19-22.

Reporting on "trends of problems that seem to merit special consideration during the coming biennium", a special FCCCA Committee recommended that the following steps should be taken by the Government with respect to evacuees:

- (1) Publically clear the great majority from suspicions of disloyalty;
- (2) Release evacuees so cleared for outside employment.

This report expressed feelings of regret that the wholesale policy of evacuation of Japanese from the West Coast was considered necessary, having done a great deal of harm which cannot be undone now. It felt, however, that the policy of all agencies involved in the evacuation had been "humane", and especially commended the War Relocation Authority. In the policy of releasing evacuees for outside employment, "WRA's hand should be strengthened" by Church help in paving the way for favorable community reception.

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