

I N F O R M A T I O N D I G E S T

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For Use of the WRA Staff

DIES COMMITTEE SUMMONS RAY BEST

Ray Best, Project Director at Tule Lake, testified before the Costello sub-committee of the Dies Committee in Washington on December 20, in connection with the current investigation of the Tule Lake incident.

Mr. Best was questioned in great detail regarding the incidents of November 1 and 4 and subsequent control of the center by the Army. He explained the internal security program set up at the center and answered queries regarding the management of the hospital. Best estimated that about 2,000 evacuees were involved in the disturbance, but that only a few hundred could be considered ringleaders.

Asked to differentiate between WRA and Army responsibility for the present administration of the center, Best stated that the Army is now in direct control of the project, but that "WRA implements the Army" in handling the routine details of project administration. WRA, in other words, provides Army authorities with manpower to carry on the functions of the project. All decisions, however, are ultimately made by Army authorities.

APPEAL BOARD PLANNED FOR TULE LAKE SEGREGANTS

Residents of Tule Lake who wish to be considered for transfer to other WRA centers will be allowed to present their cases before an appeals board soon to be established. The new board will be composed of prominent civilians, otherwise not associated with WRA, and will include West Coast attorneys, businessmen, and civic leaders.

Individual cases will be heard by a three-man panel which will meet at Tule Lake at the Director's request. Only those evacuees whose applications for leave clearance have previously been denied may appeal to the board.

Repatriates, expatriates, and persons who answered the loyalty question negatively and whose leave clearance has not yet been denied will first be required to request further investigation and leave clearance. If leave clearance is denied, such persons can then appeal to the board. The small group of persons who remained at Tule Lake after the completion of the segregation move solely because of their inability to travel will not be required to appeal their cases, but will be eligible for transfer to another center as soon as their health permits.

All persons eligible to appeal their cases will first file requests for reconsideration with the Project Director. After applications have been processed, such persons will be permitted to examine their own dockets to determine why leave clearance was denied them. They can then present evidence to the appeals board in defense of their request for reconsideration.

The need for such a board is apparent in view of the large and difficult task of segregating disloyal evacuees and the possibility that some injustice may have been done to a few loyal persons.

(For further information, see Leave Handbook, Section 60.11 and Manual Section 110.9.)

ROHWER SCHOOLS BUY THREE JEEPS

Rohwer school children recently closed their first center-wide war bond drive after selling enough bonds and stamps to pay for three Army jeeps. The drive opened on November 15 with an original goal set at \$1165., the cost of one jeep. The campaign closed on December 3, with a grand total of \$3505.95 worth of bonds and stamps, the exact price of three jeeps.

Sponsored by the National Honor Society of Rohwer, the three-week drive was highlighted by bond rallies and contests in which awards were given to those students selling the most bonds and stamps. Of the amount sold, over \$2500. worth were purchased by administrative personnel, and over \$950. worth by evacuees.

SEVEN NISEI GIRLS INDUCTED IN WAC

WAC headquarters in Washington have informed WRA that seven Nisei girls were inducted into the women's army during the past several weeks. Four girls were sworn into the service in the 7th Service Command, and one each in the 2nd, 4th, and 9th Service Commands.

The distinction of being the first Japanese American girl to become a member of the armed forces went to Miss Frances Iritani, who was sworn into the Service on November 10, at Denver, Colorado. The first evacuee to be inducted was Miss Iris Watanabe, former Granada resident, who took the oath of service on December 13, in a ceremony in the office of Colorado's Governor Vivian.

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE RESOLUTION

The California State Board of Agriculture has made public a resolution, adopted December 20, urging the ultimate restoration of employment privileges formerly enjoyed by persons of Japanese ancestry in the State. Looking ahead to the time when military conditions no longer demand the exclusion of evacuees from the West Coast, the group pledged to use its "influence to assure that

race prejudice shall not jeopardize the lawful participation of this (evacuee) or any other group in the agricultural life and industry of the State."

CLEARANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE ENLARGED

The leave clearance review committee, appointed in Washington in mid-September to speed up the disposition of leave cases of persons not clearly eligible for clearance, has been enlarged to include eight additional Washington staff members. Headed by Robert Thurber, the enlarged committee will include the following new members: Maurice Silverman, Ed Marks, Donald Sabin, Lucy Brown, Inez Mercer, Ann Freed, Ralph Stauber, and Harold James. Solon Kimball, C. M. Featherston, and Allan Markley, original committee members, will continue to serve on the board. In addition to the new appointments, several field members will be detailed to Washington in the near future to assist in this program.

The primary function of the group is to review the dockets on all questionable cases and forward recommendations to the Director who will make the final decision in each case. The committee has reviewed and taken final action on 1,500 cases to date. It was originally estimated that 3,000 dockets would be brought before the committee; this figure has now been revised upward to a minimum of 5,000 cases.

DENVER ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT MEETING

Project administrative management officers and members of the Washington staff of the Administrative Management Division met in Denver during the week of December 6 to discuss matters of administrative personnel evacuee employment, mess operations, supply, finance, and plans for presenting and justifying quarterly and annual project budgets. Leland Barrows, Chief, Administrative Management Division, was chairman of the conference.

One direct accomplishment of the conference was the revision of project employment procedures to give greater flexibility to the evacuee employment system. Ceilings on project employment will remain in force, but section-wide ceilings will be eliminated. The allotment of funds for evacuee employment will continue to be made by project activities. This new plan will permit project officials to employ the maximum number of evacuees where they are most needed, so long as the over-all project quota is not exceeded.

Project officials were cautioned against failure to comply with VRA administrative management instructions and manual procedures. It was agreed that whenever project administrative management work is not functioning due to failure in following prescribed procedures, that function, after clearance by the Washington office, may be taken over and administered by members of

the Washington staff. This will apply to all sections coming under supervision of the Assistant Project Director in charge of Administrative Management.

COMMUNITY COUNCILS TAKING ACTIVE PART IN RELOCATION PROGRAM

One of the most significant developments of the new relocation program has been the active interest being taken by community councils, according to Community Organization Advisor Solon Kimball, recently returned from a visit to several projects.

At Heart Mountain, the Council has asked that Director Myer call a meeting of evacuee leaders and WRA staff members from all projects to discuss ways and means of meeting relocation problems. Rohwer has made a similar request. Relocation Commissions have been established by the Councils at Gila, Granada, Rohwer, Jerome, and Central Utah. Minidoka and Heart Mountain have had similar committees functioning for some time.

Relocation commissions will act as the over-all relocation advisory groups at the projects. Their functions will be : 1) to introduce and explain WRA policies and procedures developed to facilitate relocation; 2) to "survey" evacuees in and out of the centers in order to make available facts on relocation possibilities and evacuee reception in outside communities; 3) to assist in working out individual and family relocation plans; 4) to convey evacuee desires and recommendations to WRA officials; and 5) to establish outside contacts and continue affiliations with religious and national groups with which evacuees are associated in the centers.

RELOCATION "TEAM" AVAILABLE TO ALL CENTERS

The relocation "team" which recently visited Rohwer will be sent to any center requesting its services. It is expected that visits can be arranged by the middle of January, at which time the "team" will have developed new programs and plans for furthering relocation.

The "team" plans to visit only those projects to which it is invited either by the community council or project director. Announcements have been sent to all projects except Tule Lake with the suggestion that invitations be forwarded to Washington if approved by community leaders.

JAPANESE CHRISTIAN LEADERS HOLD NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The National Conference of Japanese Christian Leaders met in Denver on December 16-17 to discuss problems of relocation and post-war aims. Ministers from relocation centers met with conference delegates, which included members of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service and the Home Missions Council of North America, an organization representing 23 major religious denominations.

WRA staff members attending the meeting included Joseph B. Hunter, Assistant Project Director at Rohwer and James Curtis, Relocation Officer for the Denver area, both of whom presented talks on various phases of WRA's relocation program.

PROPERTY OFFICERS TO MEET IN SAN FRANCISCO

Project Evacuee Property Officers, Project Attorneys, and Property Officers from various West Coast cities will meet in San Francisco on December 18-20 to review past policies and procedures and to formulate new plans for the future administration of the evacuee property program.

Washington staff members scheduled to attend the conference include Assistant Director Leland Barrows, Solicitor Philip Glick, and Assistant Solicitor Edwin Ferguson and Robert Leflar.

RELOCATION OFFICE CLOSES

The relocation office at Belle Fourche, South Dakota, one of the first offices to be set up this past spring, will be closed shortly after the first of the year. Opened in March, 1943, the office was successful in finding employment for about 75 evacuee seasonal workers. Because of the climate and wage scales prevalent in the area, however, few evacuees chose to remain permanently in the district.

Emery Fast, Relocation Officer at Belle Fourche, will be transferred to the Greeley, Colorado, relocation office.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING COMMITTEE REORGANIZED

The Washington Vocational Training Committee, which determines policy and supervises the administration of vocational training programs at the centers, has recently been reorganized in line with changes within WRA. The new committee will include a member of the Operations Division, as well as a representative of the new Relocation Division.

Committee members include Dr. Joseph Samler, Community Management Division, Chairman; Edward B. Marks, Relocation Division; C. H. Powers, Operations Division, with F. W. Thunberg as alternate; and Harold James, Administrative Division.

GILA BUDDHIST GROUP PROMOTES BETTER UNDERSTANDING

Over 500 evacuees and appointed personnel attended a banquet tendered WRA staff members at Gila River by the Young Buddhist Association of the center. A highly interesting program was presented, featuring entertainment by evacuees and speakers from the Association, who explained the activities and philosophical ideas of Buddhism.

Center residents considered this affair to be an excellent beginning for a continuing program of better understanding between the various religious and racial groups at the centers.

CENTRAL UTAH DEVELOPS NOVEL METHOD FOR TEACHING BASIC ENGLISH

The Adult Education Department at Central Utah has developed a program for including basic English instruction in music and sewing classes. Under the supervision of evacuee teachers, a portion of the time allotted to each class is set aside to a discussion of the work project, using as many basic words and phrases as possible, and calling upon all students for group participation.

This new plan has proved very effective in teaching evacuees the most widely used phrases and sentences in the English language. By encouraging group recitations, evacuees are losing their natural shyness and gaining instead greater confidence in their learning ability and adaptability to a new language.

WRA TO GET NEWER MOTOR EQUIPMENT

Out of date or badly worn motor equipment at the projects will be replaced with 1939 vehicles, under the terms of a new agreement with the Army Ordnance Department. Trucks, passenger cars, ambulances, and similar motor equipment, will be turned over to WRA without any additional cost. Repair parts for 1939 models and older will also be made available. The 1934 to 1938 equipment now in use at the projects will be disposed of through the Treasury Department.

By providing newer equipment, it is expected that WRA will be able to make all necessary repairs without assistance from the Ordnance Department, and will, therefore, reduce maintenance costs as well as increase the utility and serviceability of the vehicles.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Phil Barber, Chief, Coordination Section of the Relocation Division, has resigned to return to his home in New York. His resignation was the result of serious illness in his immediate family.

Jackie Burton of the Washington Personnel Management Section has been transferred to Tule Lake as Personnel Transaction Officer.

NOVEMBER AT THE PROJECTS

CENTRAL UTAH

Armistice Day highlight was football game between Topaz eleven and Millard County high school team -- Topaz boys won....sewing school celebrated first anniversary...art school conducted one-man show...118 evacuees granted indefinite leave...September clothing allowances paid...Freezing weather during first two weeks in November resulted in some crop losses...90 dozen eggs produced during month...watch repair shop placed in full operation...high school library began evening hours to accomodate more students...Alteration of bean sprout plant completed.

GILA RIVER

Four carloads of vegetables shipped to other centers...beef cattle herd increased to 1700 head...over 8,000 pounds of cotton picked...enrollment in adult education classes totaled 2,591...49 members of Salt River Valley Elementary School Principals' Association visited project...Business Enterprises approved opening a store for appointed personnel -- to be started in December...Rivers was first community in Arizona to raise its quota in National War Fund Drive...ground broken for erection of monument for servicemen...Ship Model Shop produced 40 models during month...special committee appointed to study possibility of soap manufacturing on project...Servicemen's Relatives Association formed.

GRANADA

Center business enterprises did gross volume of \$37,776.67--largest amount of business since last February...127 indefinite leaves granted...silk screen poster shop produced jobs with a retail value of over \$11,000...harvesting of vegetables and field crops completed...200 elementary school children presented operetta...fire prevention program completed during month...Evacuee Property officer reported decided increase in requests for storage of property in government warehouses because several California storage places requested removal of all evacuee property.

JEROME

First meeting of permanent community council held...109 indefinite leaves granted...large drainage ditch project completed...Paul Taylor resigned as Project Director...volunteer woodcutting program successful, averting any danger of insufficient fuel during winter months...Project's USO organization developed larger program and moved to more spacious quarters...Internal Security Section completely reorganized...auto mechanics courses added to both high school and night school curricula...Leave Hearing Board continued to speed up disposition of pending cases with 243 additional dockets forwarded to Washington for review.

MINIDOKA

Secondary schools reopened on November 15 after six-week harvest vacation...147 indefinite leaves granted...project employment increased 13½ percent...Co-op opened store in administration area for use of appointed personnel...housing situation serious because of influx of returning seasonal workers and Tule Lake families...farm operation for season successfully completed with more than two million pounds of crops harvested from 270 acres during the season...2,900 visit successful flower exhibit...boiler room fire caused \$2,500 damage...root cellar completed...six-day art exhibit attracted 2,500 visitors...community charter approved by Washington and plans made for its adoption by residents.

ROHWER

Farm completed most of its harvest operations during month, and began plowing and leveling land for 1944 planting...serious truck accident resulted in death of one evacuee..."Buy a Jeep" campaign carried out successfully -- with funds collected to buy three Jeeps instead of the one vehicle originally planned...81 persons granted indefinite leave...project "annual" prepared and distributed by Reports Officer...Community Council appointed Board of Information to study budget problems and WRA administration of the project...elementary schools observed American Education Week.

TULE LAKE

Normal activities of project industries, Evacuee Property Office, Housing Section, Education Section, Community Activities, and other project enterprises were suspended or curtailed when the Army took over the project on November 4...the Welfare Section and similar offices carried on their work under Army supervision.

MANZANAR

Garment factory produced goods valued at \$5,500.--for use in center projects and for resale to co-ops at Tule Lake and Central Utah...other industries continued to operate full blast, including food pickling and dehydration plants...44 evacuees granted indefinite leaves...138 tons of produce harvested...30 head of beef cattle purchased...adult English classes resumed with enrollment of 133...53 cases treated at Crippled Children Clinic held in project hospital...school health program started with one hour each day given to school health examinations.

COLORADO RIVER

Los Angeles EXAMINER campaign to smear and discredit administration and evacuees at center ended up a complete washout...most disastrous fire in center's history destroyed two barracks and contents with property loss of \$4,500...considerable progress made in land subjugation and planting--expect to plant 700 to 800 acres of field and truck crops by end of December...Community Council organized following new Committees: Planning Board, Food

Committee; Public Relations Committee, and Public Health Committee...Camp II secondary school students moved into new adobe buildings...Rest Home for old and infirmed completed and ready for occupancy.

HEART MOUNTAIN

Community Council adopted resolution calling for a voice in forming relocation programs and policies...a definite step forward...Judicial Commission established by Community Council...\$220 worth of artificial flowers shipped to Kansas State College to be sold at YWCA Bazaar...Bakery building completed...practically all harvesting completed during month...70 tons of daikon pickled...fire school held for 57 members of M.P. detachment...sewing industry resumed manufacture of coveralls, producing several hundred suits for use at center.