

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM
AT JEROME RELOCATION CENTER

50 During the latter part of March and the early part of April, the leave program went rapidly, with as many as ~~100~~ per week leaving the Center. During the past two weeks, however, the number leaving has slowed down considerably, so that only about 25 per week have been leaving. The questions arise as to why this number has been so much smaller and what might be done to expedite the program. One of the reasons for the reduction undoubtedly is that those who were definitely sold on the idea of leaving the center have left as soon as they could get clearance and suitable employment. Those who have not made up their minds are still hesitating. Why are they hesitating?

Following is a listing of the reasons given for the slow pace of the leave program, followed in each case by an evaluation of the Community Analyst:

1. The influence of the "repatriate" groups is hindering young people from going out. Those who have renounced loyalty to the United States are living in the same blocks with the loyal groups and are ridiculing their efforts to remake a place for themselves in the normal current of American life.

Evaluation: This reason seems to have definite validity. Those at the center who oppose resettlement seize upon every rumor to demonstrate that the U.S. has no use for Japanese-Americans. The young people find their arguments hard to answer, and conflicts arise as to whether to resettle. The conflict is especially marked in cases where the parents oppose leaving on the part of children.

2. Parental doubts or definite opposition cause young people to hesitate to resettle. This is true especially of parents of young women, even if they are of age.

Evaluation: This appears to be one of the strongest barriers to resettlement. Even when the parents have sworn loyalty to the U.S., and expect to make their future here, they are reluctant to see their families separated. The majority of the families at Jerome apparently had a farm background. In California, they usually operated family farms and the family as a group had great solidarity. Parents maintained a great concern with their children's lives far into adulthood. Frequently sons took over operation of the farms and supported their aged parents. Thus, even though children may be in their middle twenties, parents at the center do not wish to see them go far away from their families. Unfortunate incidents have been reported back to the center and have undergone

the usual distortion in the form of gossip. These are seized upon by parents to justify their opposition to their children's departure. Parents are adamant in the case of daughters, whom they say will be unprotected.

3. Life at the Center offers a security which evacuees fear they will not find in resettlement. This reason takes many forms. Some members of the Caucasian staff become profane when they talk about how much the people here are babied. They say you will never get people to leave until you cut out a lot of the pampering here. Evacuees define it not so much in terms of comfort at the project (which they say is still minimum) but in terms of changing the predictable for the unpredictable. They are reasonably certain what to expect here, but they do not know how they will be received on the outside, whether they can support their families, whether they will have any friends. They do admit that living for a year with their physical needs cared for without much effort or initiative on their part has affected the morale of many people at the center.

Evaluation: Cracking down on conditions at the center might cause increase in the number leaving, but it would tend to increase the sullenness and demoralization of many of the evacuees. A gradual change in employment practices probably is desirable, in order to give more incentives to efficient work, but a policy of making center life "as tough as possible" would have repercussions much more serious than present so-called pampering. "Get 'em out at any cost" may cost too much in terms of breaking the spirit of a proud, and, on the whole, a still loyal people. The evacuee analysis described above seems to have more merit.

4. There is inadequate information and "selling" of the program at the Center. In the absence of accurate and complete information about the resettlement program, many false rumors spread in the center. Of course, people deliberately spread these rumors because of an initial prejudice against the program. But a more adequate informational and promotional program would help to dispel much of the misinformation being circulated. Examples of the types of rumors are as follows:

The cost of living has gone up tremendously in the past year.

Evacuees cannot find adequate housing, and have been evicted frequently from rooms or apartments.

People on the outside are extremely antagonistic toward Japanese-Americans, making no distinction between loyal and disloyal ones. There has been actual physical attack in several instances, and people are snubbed and ignored generally.

Wages and working conditions seldom turn out to be as good as described.

Evacuees are not well received by fellow workmen. In several instances, strikes have been called when the Japanese-Americans were employed.

Some of the larger (thus better) colleges will not accept Japanese-Americans. There are few colleges in the Midwest or East anyway which are as good as those in the West.

The WRA is always reversing itself, so why try to cooperate. Next month they may want everybody to return to the centers. Anyway, the only reason the Government wants us to leave is to save money.

Apparently the bad reports have more currency in the center than the good ones.

Evaluation: This is a valid reason for the slow pace of the leave program though it must be understood in terms of the expectations, attitudes, and experiences of these people in the past. The unhappy experiences are credited and spread because of a readiness on the part of the people to accept them. Therefore, strong emphasis of factual material and counter-propaganda are indicated. It is true, too, that the actual machinery of matching jobs and people is inadequate, as are the techniques of recruiting at the center. This is no criticism of the leave office. They just do not have enough facilities or cooperation from the whole staff to do the job.

5. Lack of sufficient organization in the center to do the job. This statement refers to the fact that the process of getting the best-qualified person the center lined up with the available job at the strategic time does not operate smoothly and effectively. As yet, there is not an analysis and filing of the experience and background of the evacuees (occupational classifications are in the process of being coded). Information about job opportunities does not reach everybody in an arresting form rapidly. There are not enough people in the community pushing the program personally.

Evaluation: This statement can be accepted at face value.

6. Types of jobs offered and wage scales are not acceptable to evacuees. Most of the offers are for domestic help or farm labor. It is largely the Issei, many of whom are not eligible for indefinite leave, who had been domestic workers. Not many of them were domestic workers at the time of evacuation. Some of the younger people have done part-time domestic work, but they do not want to be "stuck" in such a job for a long period of time. Most of the jobs carry

small remuneration compared with what most of the families were accustomed to in California. People who operated their own farms previously are reluctant to accept farm labor jobs, both because of the low pay, and because they do not wish to work for someone else. Wage scales in the Midwest, particularly for farm work, are considerably lower than those in the Pacific area. People with large families to support do not feel they can get along on the wages offered.

Evaluation: This reasoning must be examined critically individual by individual. In some cases it is valid. In others it is pure rationalization. Those who do not wish to leave the center can easily rationalize their position by setting high job requirements or picking fault with every possible opportunity.

7. Lack of coordination between placement work on the outside and recruitment within the center. For instance, the distribution of types of work for which persons in the center have capability and interest does not correspond very well with the distribution of jobs available. It is particularly hard for those who have been farmers, small business men, professional people or specialists of some kind to get employment. Also, it is hard to do placement by mail. The mere machinery of job clearance is confused. It is never known for sure just what jobs have been filled nor which are available. Employers assume that someone is on his way to the job while prospects at the center are awaiting replies to letters of inquiry.

Evaluation: This statement needs no comment; it may be accepted as factual.

8. Attitudes of some prospective employers are negative. Actions on the part of Japanese in refusing bona fide job offers or in shifting jobs soon after being employed have created a negative attitude on the part of some outside people. Widespread misconceptions are responsible for other prejudices. Among these misconceptions are:

That the centers are internment or concentration camps and that all the people in them have been placed there because they have been definitely investigated and found to be dangerous.

That the Japanese-Americans are unskilled and uneducated, suitable primarily for domestic and stoop labor.

That the Japanese are a crafty, inscrutable, sneaky people, who are not to be trusted under any circumstances. This type of prejudice, of course, applies both to Japanese and to Japanese-Americans, and is part of the racial mythology

of America.

That Japanese-Americans in Hawaii and California were engaged in widespread sabotage and espionage.

A "Jap is a Jap", regardless of where he was born or educated, and regardless of professions of loyalty to the United States. This statement, of course, has been made in high places.

9. This is not the "psychological moment" for resettlement of many of the people. There are two types of statements about the timing of resettlement. The first is that people have been pushed around so much they now want a period of stability. When they came to Jerome, they understood this was to be their home for the duration. Now we want them to leave and make another difficult adjustment. The other is, that many who had farms or businesses in California are holding out until they can return and resume their pre-war status quo.

Evaluation: This reasoning has more apparent than real merit, though it is certain that it constitutes a strong basis for resistance to the leave program. We must distinguish again between the emotional state of people (attachment to former home, emotional inertia or resistance to continual upheaval) and rationalization. Their hopes for the future are probably illusory. Some will never go back to their previous homes and status. Furthermore, remaining in the center longer is not likely to increase their desire to leave. The opposite effect is more probable.

Community Analysis Section
Jerome Relocation Center