

Jimale Doi
August 26, 1942

Three months have passed since we have entered this assembly center. During that time we have tried our best to make our lives more pleasant and more happy. We have succeeded. A few days from now we will be on our way to a relocation area.

There we will endeavor to live under a new system of life--the cooperativeway. With this in mind, the cooperative committee of this center has been trying to accustom us to some of the cooperative principles. In conjunction with this movement, this evening I would like to discuss the factors which will determine the success of our cooperative.

One of the most important will be our knowledge of the co-op way of life. No group of people, no matter how intelligent or resourceful can build a successful cooperative, if it does not have a firm knowledge of the cooperative way of life. This economic system as defined by the Cooperative Committee of this center "is a business enterprise which is owned and controlled by the producer or consumer, the control of which rests equally among all the members, and the gains of which are distributed directly or indirectly to its members."

In other words, it will be you the people who will own the farms, stores and factories of our relocation area. It will be you, who will determine its policies and management. And lastly, it will be you, who will benefit from any gains.

In order to make a success of our cooperative, we must not only possess a knowledge of its principles, but we must also have competent leaders. The history of the cooperative movement has shown that the success or failure was determined by the quality of the leaders. Our cooperative without strong men will be like a ship in a storm without a captain. For although we may form the policies, the means of applying them rest entirely in the hands of the administration.

Among the Issei and Nisei, there are relatively few if any who are properly trained to administer a cooperative as large and as complicated as ours will be. This lack of trained men was immediately recognized in the early formed relocation areas, namely, Tule Lake and Manzanar. Tule Lake started a semi-weekly night class on cooperatives for all Nisei leaders. Manzanar followed soon after with its co-op congress.

Don Alberson, who is an authority on the co-op way of living at Tule Lake, said, "Cooperatives in order to be successful must come from the crying need of the community. And you must have competent leaders who are well trained to put the thing over right."

Thus far, I have spoken to you of these two things, knowledge of cooperative principles and good leaders, as being necessary for a successful cooperative. However, there is a more important reason, and that is, we must support and show interest in our cooperatives. This reason, perhaps, more than any other we must remember.

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Our knowledge of cooperatives as a whole is very limited. Therefore, it is very difficult for us to show a great deal of interest. However, this reason should spur us on rather than retard us. Again, there is this attitude--"Oh, I don't care. Let them do what they want."

If everyone were to take this attitude, our cooperative would surely become a failure, regardless of whether we have competent leaders or not.

Tule Lake and Manzanar must have realized the danger of this attitude. For they have created numerous co-op discussion groups in order to arouse interest and to gain the support of the people. The Cooperative Committee of this center has also been endeavoring to create interest among us. The movie which was shown a few days ago "A day with Kagawa" is an example of the work, as well as their articles in the "El Joaquin".

The United States Department of Agriculture recently said, "In many respects, cooperatives can be likened to the human body; its life blood is its membership. So long as the life blood permeates every part of the body, there is life and activity."

Tonight, I have pointed out these elements--appreciation of the co-op way of life, competent leaders, and our interest and support, as being paramount in determining the progress of our cooperatives. At our relocation area and throughout life, in whatever we may do, we can surely succeed if we remember these words of Abraham Lincoln, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in."

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