

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Washington

June 17, 1943

Mr. Charles F. Ernst
Project Director
Central Utah Relocation Center
Topaz, Utah

Dear Mr. Ernst:

This will acknowledge your memorandums of May 17 and May 26 requesting additional information concerning the Crystal City Camp.

We are making inquiry of the Immigration and Naturalization Service concerning arrangements for food, clothing, personal items, and the charge, if any, for the use of the central laundry facilities, and will advise you as soon as a report has been received.

With respect to the fourth question in your May 17 letter, I would interpret paragraph 11 of the statement "Information concerning the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service Internment Camp at Crystal City, Texas" as meaning, if interpreted strictly, that articles other than those enumerated may be taken to the camp only on the approval of the officer in charge. The name of the officer in charge may change from time to time and inquiries may be addressed simply to the Officer in Charge, Immigration and Naturalization Service, should be made only after a family has been advised that it has been approved for transfer. In most cases, however, I believe, the Immigration inspector who arrives to handle the actual transfer will be able to clarify any questions. If he does not already know the answers in a particular case, I believe he would be willing to wire to the officer in charge at the Crystal City Camp at the time he is arranging the transfer.

In regard to Question 6 of your May 17 memorandum we have tried to point out in previous communications that families should go to the Family Internment Camp with the expectation of remaining for the duration unless the interned members should be paroled. It is our understanding that permission to depart from the camp would be handled on an individual basis. I am certain that no advance commitments on this could be made as to what reasons would be acceptable in a particular case. The point of establishing the camp is to establish a place where families of interned members can stay for the period of internment so that families will not be separated. The

emphasis should be on staying rather than leaving. People who think they are going to want to leave the camp should not go there in the first place.

Turning now to your letter of May 26, Items 1, 2, and 3, referring to windows, linoleum, and mosquito nets, are the type concerning which it is not practicable to make specific statements. Possibly the apartments will not all be precisely the same. Some might have more windows in them than others, and any statements concerning the number of windows will merely become a subject for argument later. The same is true about questions of linoleum on the floor, mosquito nets on the windows, and other similar details. I feel that emphasis on details of this type will simply prolong discussion and argument and will serve no very useful purpose. The emphasis must be placed on whether families want to live with the interned member for the duration under conditions of internment, and not on whether the minutiae of details on living conditions in Crystal City will be better or worse than in a relocation center.

With respect to Item 4, I think the statement in the Immigration Service Summary about the Crystal City Camp should be accepted at face value; namely, that "The number of letters and postcards an individual is permitted to send must be limited. However, at least two letters and postcards per week will be permitted." I think we may assume that the Immigration authorities will be as liberal and reasonable as is practicable under the conditions.

With respect to Item 5, we have been advised by the Immigration and Naturalization Service that "virtually all space at Crystal City Camp has been committed for at least six months. It is impossible at this time to be any more specific than we have been concerning which families may or may not eventually be reunited. The final decision as to whether a family may be accepted for the camp will be made by the Department of Justice. It is the mutual desire of both the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the War Relocation Authority that the most urgent cases, particularly those involving family hardships, be permitted to go first, and we will bear this constantly in mind as space becomes available.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ D. S. Myer

Director

cc to Denver