

Comments by the War Relocation
Authority on Newspaper Statements
Attributed to Representatives of
the House Committee on Un-American
Activities.

During the past few weeks the House Committee on Un-American Activities (popularly known as the Dies Committee) has been investigating the program of the War Relocation Authority. While this investigation has been going forward-- and to some extent even before it was fairly under way-- numerous statements on the WRA and its program allegedly made by members, investigators, and "spokesmen" of the Committee have been appearing in the Nation's press. Some of these statements are true; some are completely without foundation in fact; and others are a compound of half-truths blended with either careless reporting, slipshod investigating, or deliberate distortion. To run all these statements down and prepare a factual comment on each would require more manpower and more money for communication with field offices than the War Relocation Authority can afford to expend while engaged on a war program. The Authority has, however, taken time to select some of the more flagrantly inaccurate statements attributed to representatives of the Committee and has prepared factual comment on them.

These statements and the WRA comments are listed below:

1. The WRA is encouraging high government officials to take Japanese from the centers as farm workers or domestics, so that greater public trust in the Japanese may be created.

(Statement attributed to a "spokesman" for the Committee in a story from Washington appearing in the San Francisco Examiner of May 23).

Comment: The Authority has never "encouraged" any government official to employ an evacuee at any time. Like all other employers, government officials are fully entitled to forward job offers to the War Relocation Authority for submission to the evacuees at the centers.

2. Both alien and American-born evacuees are being fed so well through the Quartermaster Depot of the Army that they are sending packages of butter, coffee, and other rationed food to friends outside the centers.

(Statement allegedly contained in a report submitted by field investigators of the Committee and appearing in a story published by the Washington Times Herald on May 28).

Comment: As the War Relocation Authority has pointed out on numerous occasions, evacuees at relocation centers are subject to the same rationing restrictions as all other civilians in the United States. We have absolutely no evidence that any evacuee has ever sent any rationed food to persons outside the centers. If this were done, it could be done only at the expense of the sender's rationed allowance.

3. As many as 76 per cent of the Japanese in one camp have refused to profess their loyalty to the United States.

(Same source as that of Statement No. 2).

Comment: No comment seems necessary on this statement beyond the fact that it is completely untrue.

4. The disclosures of the Committee have not hampered the release of 27,000 for work in agricultural and industrial communities and education at government expense.

(Same source as that of Statement No. 2).

Comment: At the time when this story was published, a total of 12,799 evacuees had left the relocation centers either temporarily or permanently under the regular leave procedures of the War Relocation Authority. Of this number, about 800 are students who left the centers to continue their education. Neither the WRA nor any other Federal agency has provided any of these students with financial assistance.

5. "...we have no evidence of proper check being made by the War Relocation Authority before releasing Japanese..."

(Direct quotation attributed to Robert E. Stripling, Committee investigator, in a United Press dispatch from Washington dated May 29).

Comment: If the Committee had no evidence that proper check is being made, this can only be because the investigators did not take the trouble to examine the War Relocation Authority's leave procedures. Before granting indefinite leave to any evacuee, the Authority checks all available records at the relocation center. If there is any question about the individual involved, a further check is made of the records maintained by Federal investigative agencies. The Authority firmly believes that, in granting leaves, it has taken and is taking every proper precaution to safeguard the national security.

6. (a) Evacuees in the centers are permitted large quantities of gasoline for pleasure driving, some using government automobiles.
- (b) They have been allowed to bring their own automobiles to the centers and use them mainly for "visiting back and forth."
- (c) One camp has clamped down on pleasure driving and saved 1,000 gallons of gasoline the first week.

(Statements attributed to Rep. Joe Starnes, Acting Chairman of the Committee in a United Press dispatch from Washington dated June 2. Rep. Starnes has categorically denied ever having made the statements).

Comment: All of these statements are wholly unfounded. No evacuee is permitted to use a personally owned automobile at any relocation center. Only in a very few cases have evacuee-owned automobiles even been stored within the centers, and in all these instances, the cars have been impounded by the War Relocation Authority. All evacuees who have used their own automobiles in going out of the centers on indefinite leave have obtained their gasoline through the local ration boards and in accordance with the regular rationing procedure.

7. Evacuees at the centers are allowed five gallons of whiskey per person.

(Statement attributed to Acting Chairman Starnes by the Washington Times Herald in a local story appearing on June 4. As in the case of the statements immediately above, Rep. Starnes has denied ever making or even authorizing this charge).

Comment: This statement scarcely deserves comment. The only whiskey ever made available to the evacuees by the War Relocation Authority has been dispensed strictly for medical purposes in accordance with the prescription of a practicing physician. A small amount is stored at each center for this purpose and is kept constantly under lock and key in the custody of the Chief Medical Officer.

8. They receive \$50 from the WRA in addition to clothing and transportation when they leave relocation centers to take jobs. Many make a practice of working a short time, then returning to the camp and leaving again to benefit a second time from the \$50-leave-taking present.

(Same source as that of Statement No. 7; also denied by Rep. Starnes).

Comment: The first half of this statement is partially true; the latter half totally untrue. The War Relocation Authority does provide financial assistance to each evacuee going for the first time on indefinite leave to take a job in cases where the individual lacks the necessary ready cash to make the trip and establish himself in his place of employment. No evacuee, however, is entitled to more than one grant of this kind. Those who return to the centers and then go out a second time receive no financial assistance whatever from the WRA in connection with the second trip.

9. "They /the Committee's investigators/ have reported that one of the main reasons why the Japanese are so belligerent is because of the influence and teachings of the Shinto priests who are still permitted to preach and teach in the relocation centers."

(Part of a direct quotation attributed to Rep. J. Parnell Thomas, member of the Committee, by the Los Angeles Times in a local story published on May 20).

Comment: The War Relocation Authority has never tolerated the preaching or teaching of State Shintoism at relocation centers and has no intention of doing so.