

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

The lifting of the blanket exclusion orders by the Western Defense Command is undoubtedly the most significant event since evacuation both in the lives of the evacuated people and in the program of the War Relocation Authority. To the great majority of the evacuees, it means full restoration of the freedom of movement which is enjoyed by all other loyal citizens and law-abiding aliens in the United States. To the War Relocation Authority, it signifies the beginning of the final phase of the relocation program.

Our prime objective in WRA, as always, is to restore the people residing in relocation centers to private life in normal communities. The lifting of the exclusion orders makes it possible to broaden the scope of this program and put it for the first time on a completely nationwide basis. Within the next few weeks WRA will establish field relocation offices at key points in the evacuated area and will extend assistance to those who have good reason to return. At the same time, we shall also continue our relocation offices and assistance for those who wish to locate in other parts of the country.

Although the WRA is now entering the final phase of its program, the relocation centers will not be closed immediately. All of them will remain in operation for several months so that all the residents will have reasonable and adequate time and opportunity for the development of sound relocation plans.

During the period ahead, many of the facilities at the centers will have to be sharply curtailed as the population declines. Schools, however, will be continued through the current school year. This will enable families with school-age children sufficient time to plan their relocation so that the pupils may reenter school in their new communities at the beginning of the fall term. All the really essential services at the centers, including mess operations, housing, and medical care, will of course be provided until the time each center actually closes.

The re-opening of the evacuated area and the broadening of the relocation program come at a fortunate time for the evacuated people. Largely as a result of the splendid record which your sons, brothers, and husbands have achieved in the armed services, the American public has come increasingly to a recognition of the essential good faith and loyalty that characterize the great majority of people of Japanese descent. Today the evacuees as a group have more friends and supporters throughout the Nation than at any previous time. They are being accepted in hundreds of communities as fellow-workers, friends, and neighbors. The removal of the restrictions that formerly applied in the West Coast area underscores this growing public acceptance and should help to bring about even more widespread recognition of the fact that the great majority of the evacuees are loyal and law-abiding people.

It is fortunate, too, that the WRA program enters its final phase at a time when there is a good demand for workers in war plants, in civilian goods production, in service occupations, and on the farms. Both from the standpoint of the national welfare and the evacuees' long-range economic security, it is highly important that the people now residing at the relocation centers make the transition back to private life at a time when employment opportunities are still plentiful.

Recognizing that there are a number of people in the relocation centers who have not been able to relocate previously because they are incapable of self-support, the War Relocation Authority is now making intensive efforts to meet this problem by mobilizing facilities and resources that are available for public assistance in normal communities throughout the Nation. Special funds have been provided by Congress through the Federal Security Agency for the assistance of needy people who have been displaced from their homes by restrictive governmental action. All evacuees -- both citizens and aliens -- who are in need of such assistance are eligible to apply for it under the terms of this Federal law. In addition, old age assistance and grants to certain other types of handicapped people are available to both citizen and alien evacuees as they are to all persons who can qualify under the regular programs of the Federal Security Agency. In the development of individual or family relocation plans at the centers, the Welfare Section will give special attention to those who may need some form of public assistance after relocation. In all cases of this kind, the specific needs of the family or individual will be presented in advance of relocation through the WRA field office to the appropriate agency in the community of proposed resettlement. Wherever individuals or families find themselves in need of public assistance after relocation, the WRA field offices will help to facilitate arrangements with the appropriate state or local agency. In view of the funds that are available and the arrangements that are being made, the War Relocation Authority feels wholly confident that no evacuee will be deprived of adequate means of subsistence by reason of the closing of the centers.

It is possible that some evacuees who have relocated outside the evacuated area will now wish to avail themselves of the opportunity of returning to their former homes. The final decision as to whether this is the best thing to do rests with the individual relocatee. Many have homes, business connections, or close personal friends in the evacuated area and will be anxious to get back to them. On the other hand, many relocatees have found new friends and much greater opportunities, both social and economic, than they enjoyed prior to evacuation. There is every indication that these greater opportunities will continue for most persons. The WRA believes that all relocatees should carefully consider all factors before breaking their present connections and moving back to their old home communities. It should be remembered that the entire West Coast area has undergone a tremendous change since evacuation. Hundreds of thousands of war workers have moved into the area. Housing is difficult to obtain and living conditions are extremely complex and expensive. Many relocatees will find that it will be much easier and more advantageous to have Center family members join them in their present location than to dislocate themselves again to return to something new and untried.

If after careful consideration and investigation the relocatee decides to return to his former home he should see his local relocation officer. The Authority will furnish the usual types of relocation assistance to such people provided they have a sound plan for resettlement in the evacuated area and provided that certain other requirements, such as those of the War Manpower Commission, are met. This assistance will be available for the duration of the relocation program and there will be no need to make hasty decisions in order to qualify for it. It will be available only in the field and cannot be obtained if the evacuee returns to a relocation center or the evacuated area without the approval of the relocation officer.

Those relocated evacuees who have close family relatives still residing at the centers and who need to consult with these family members in the development

of relocation plans may apply at the nearest WRA field office for permission to visit the center. However, in view of the War Manpower Commission regulations governing job transfers and the congested transportation facilities in the vicinity of the centers, it is exceedingly important that all relocated evacuees desiring to return to the centers at this time actually obtain such advance approval. Those who attempt to come back without it may be denied admission to the center and may become ineligible for all future relocation assistance.

More detailed information on the policies and procedures which the War Relocation Authority will follow in the final phase of its program, insofar as these have now been determined, is contained in the attached bulletin. As additional policy decisions are made and procedures further clarified, every effort will be made to provide the essential information both to the people at the relocation centers and to those who have relocated.

In conveying this message to you, I want to express my sincere appreciation of the fine, cooperative attitude which has been displayed by the overwhelming majority of the evacuated people over the past two and one-half years under the most trying of circumstances. All of you who have already left the relocation centers or who will be leaving in the next several months have my very best wishes for a successful and satisfying life in the communities where you choose to make your homes.

D. J. Myer
Director

SUMMARY OF WRA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE FINAL PHASE OF THE RELOCATION PROGRAM.

Now that the blanket exclusion orders have been lifted, the War Relocation Authority has made a number of basic policy decisions covering the immediate future of its program. These decisions are:

- (1) WRA assistance will now be made available for relocation in the evacuated area on the same basis as elsewhere.
- (2) All relocation centers will be closed within a period of six months to one year after the revocation of the exclusion orders. No center, however, will be closed without three month's advance notice to the residents.
- (3) Essential services at the relocation centers -- food, housing, and medical care -- will be provided until the centers close. Schools will be maintained at the centers through the end of the present school year.
- (4) Relocation in areas outside the evacuated zone will continue.
- (5) WRA assistance will be extended, within certain prescribed limits, to evacuees who have previously relocated and who now wish to return to the evacuated area.
- (6) There will be no further processing of evacuees for leave clearance and leave permits will no longer be necessary for relocation. Relocation assistance, however, will be made available only to those whose relocation plans are approved by WRA.
- (7) Arrangements will be made with appropriate state and local agencies to provide public assistance throughout the country for those evacuees who are incapable of self-support.

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

Relocation offices will be established in the immediate future at key points throughout the evacuated area. These offices, like those already functioning in other sections of the country, will assist relocating evacuees in a wide variety of ways to become satisfactorily established in the communities where they decide to make their homes. In this effort the field offices of WRA will call on the resources and facilities of a great many public and private agencies which have indicated their willingness to cooperate in the relocation program. Relocation offices, both in the evacuated area and elsewhere, will be maintained for a period of not more than two months after all relocation centers have been closed.

Travel grants will hereafter be made available to all evacuees whose relocation plans are approved by the War Relocation Authority. This will apply both to those who are leaving the centers for the first time for relocation to any part of the country and those previously relocated who have an approved plan for resettling in the evacuated area.

Relocation grants and subsistence while en route will be provided to center residents, as previously, only upon application and on the basis of actual need.

Leave permits will no longer be required of evacuees wishing to leave the relocation centers for purposes of relocation. However, those who leave without having their relocation plans approved by the WRA, will not be eligible either for relocation assistance or for re-entry to the center. Seasonal leave and trial indefinite leave will no longer be available. Short-term leave will be retained in its present form. Travel for the purpose of investigating relocation opportunities in the evacuated area, however, will be at the evacuees's own expense.

Visits to relocation centers, either by relocated evacuees or by residents of other centers, for the development of family relocation plans must be approved in advance by the Project Director of the center where the visiting evacuee resides or (in the case of relocated evacuees) by the nearest WRA field office. Those who undertake trips of this kind without obtaining such approval may be denied admission to the center and may become ineligible for all future relocation assistance.

Re-induction for residence at the centers will no longer be possible once an evacuee has left for the purpose of relocation.

PROPERTY ASSISTANCE

Transportation of household goods and personal effects, like travel assistance, will hereafter be available to all relocating evacuees whose relocation plans are approved by WRA. This will include transportation (1) from a WRA warehouse in the evacuated area to a point of relocation anywhere in the United States (except that those relocating within a reasonable trucking distance of the warehouse will be expected to provide their own delivery service), (2) from a relocation center to a point of relocation anywhere in the United States, (3) from a railhead in any community outside the evacuated area to a point of approved relocation within the evacuated area, and (4) from a railhead in the evacuated area (in cases where properties are now in private storage) to a point of approved relocation anywhere in the United States. As previously, the WRA will provide assistance and materials for the crating of such property both at the WRA warehouses in the evacuated area and at the relocation centers. However, those evacuees whose goods are being moved from a point of private storage within the evacuated area or from a point of previous relocation outside the evacuated area will provide their own crating facilities and deliver the property at the nearest railhead. At the receiving end, properties of relocating evacuees will be delivered at the railhead nearest the point of relocation.

WRA warehouses in the evacuated area will be maintained for a period of not more than three months after the closing of all relocation centers. Evacuees who have property in storage at these warehouses and who return to the evacuated area will be required to remove their goods from the warehouses within a period of 60 days after their return.

Other types of property assistance will continue to be available through the Evacuee Property Offices and the Assistant Solicitor's office in the evacuated area as well as through the Evacuee Property Officers and the Project Attorneys at the relocation centers. Such service will be maintained within the evacuated area for a period of not more than three months after all relocation centers are closed. However, when an evacuee returns to an area in

which his property is located, assistance will not be given beyond a 60-day period.

Contraband property, such as cameras and radios, previously surrendered by citizen evacuees to the United States Government may now be returned to the owners. Citizen evacuees should make application to the War Relocation Authority on prescribed forms (WRA-156 and WRA-260) supplying whatever identifying information or receipts they may have. Contraband property surrendered by alien evacuees cannot be recovered at the present time.

WELFARE ASSISTANCE TO RELOCATEES

The War Relocation Authority will make every effort to see that adequate assistance is provided outside the relocation centers through the appropriate public welfare agencies for evacuees who are incapable of self-support or who are in need of financial aid in an emergency situation. Special funds, appropriated by Congress to provide such assistance for people who have been affected by government restrictions, are available to needy evacuees from state and local welfare agencies. Such assistance is available to both citizen and alien evacuees alike.

Public assistance is available under this program to evacuees who need medical care, money for rent or groceries, or money for emergency living expenses. Those needing such assistance should consult the nearest public welfare office or the nearest field office of the War Relocation Authority. They should be prepared to describe their financial resources in some detail. Depending on the individual situation, the welfare office may provide personal help in solving the problem or may furnish cash resources for the purchase of the needed goods or services. Cash grants of this kind are available on the basis of actual need even though the applicant may not be a resident of the community where he is making application, even though he may be employed, and even though he may have property which is not in expendable form.

Special aid for the aged, the blind, and needy children is available to relocating evacuees, as it is to all other persons in these categories, under Federal programs which are administered by state agencies. For more detailed information on these types of assistance, evacuees should consult the nearest public welfare office or the nearest field office of the WRA.

Assistance for dependents of servicemen is now being extended under the Dependency Allowance and Allotment Act. Relocated evacuees desiring detailed information about such assistance should consult the nearest office of the American Red Cross.

Social insurance may now be obtained by evacuees over 65 years of age whose employers withheld part of their salary for this purpose prior to evacuation. Those who believe themselves eligible for such insurance should consult the nearest field relocation office or the welfare section at the center for the name and address of the nearest field office of the Bureau of Old Age and Survivors Insurance of the Social Security Board. Full particulars may be obtained by writing or visiting the latter office. The applicant should furnish the Social Security Board office with his Social Security number and with essential information about his pre-evacuation employment.

CENTER OPERATIONS

Essential services -- food, housing, and medical care -- will be provided for the residents of each center until the date when that center actually closes. In some cases, it may be necessary, because of shortage of trained personnel, to close the hospital at the center before the center is completely de-populated. If this should happen at any center, WRA will make arrangements for providing necessary medical service at some outside hospital.

Schools will be maintained at the centers at least through the end of the present school year in June, 1945. If summer sessions are found to be necessary at any of the centers, the schools may be kept open beyond that date but in any case not later than August 31, 1945.

Business Enterprises, including all types of cooperative stores and services, will be encouraged to continue operations as long as possible, taking into consideration the time required for orderly liquidation.

Farm operations at the centers will be sharply curtailed. Both vegetable and feed crops planted during the fall of 1944 will be harvested at all centers. No crops will be planted during 1945 except at Gila River and Poston. At those two centers, the vegetable crop program previously planned, with some modifications for declining population, will be carried out. Hog feeding will be continued based on anticipated declining population so that all hogs can be slaughtered and consumed before the closing of the center. No more feeder cattle will be purchased and any cattle remaining on hand at the time of center closing will be sold. No additional chickens will be purchased and both meat birds and laying hens will be slaughtered and consumed well in advance of the closing date for the center.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Travel permits must be obtained by all alien evacuees before the travel is actually undertaken. Aliens at the relocation centers going out on relocation either to the West Coast or elsewhere may obtain permits covering travel to the original point of destination by applying to the relocation office at the center. All those outside the centers desiring to travel either back to the centers or to another community should apply for a permit at the office of the United States Attorney for the district in which they are currently residing. Within five days after reaching the point of destination on any type of travel, alien evacuees must report their new address to the Alien Registration Division, Immigration and Naturalization Service at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation field office mentioned in the alien's certificate of registration. If there is any further change of address, the same requirements apply.

Travel to Hawaii and Alaska is controlled by the War Department. Evacuees wishing to go to either of these territories should apply to the Office of the Provost Marshal General, War Department, Washington, D. C.

Frozen funds are not affected by the lifting of the exclusion orders. Alien evacuees eligible for relocation throughout the United States whose assets have been frozen and who now wish to regain possession of them should

consult the nearest office of WRA. In justifiable cases, arrangements will be made for taking the matter up with the Foreign Funds Control Division of the Treasury Department.

Legal residence of evacuees in the states from which they were evacuated has not been affected by reason of their having lived in a relocation center. Those who have relocated and who have acquired legal residence in other states, however, can regain legal residence in the states of the evacuated area only in accordance with the provisions of the state law.

Voluntary evacuees who have never resided in relocation centers and who have an approved plan for returning to the evacuated area are eligible for relocation assistance (if they request it) on the same basis as persons who have been relocated from WRA centers. For this purpose, a voluntary evacuee is defined as a person of Japanese ancestry who left the evacuated area in response to government urging between February 16, 1942 and the date when voluntary movement from that area was prohibited by military order (March 29, 1942 in the case of Military Area No. 1; June 2, 1942, for the remainder of California) or who later departed by special permission of the Western Defense Command. Application should be made at the nearest field office of WRA.

Deportees and parolees now residing at relocation centers may relocate under sponsorship arrangements approved by the Department of Justice, and are eligible for relocation assistance on the same basis as other evacuees. Full particulars may be obtained from the relocation office at the center.

Government property at the relocation centers which is surplus to the needs of center operations will be disposed of through the regular established procedures of the Treasury Department. WRA has no authority to make such property available to evacuees either through sale or any other arrangement.

Gate control will be maintained at all relocation centers even though leave permits are no longer required of those going out on relocation. All evacuees leaving or entering the centers will be expected to report at the gate.

Address cards will be furnished, as previously, to all relocating evacuees in order that they may report arrival at their destinations and subsequent changes of address. There are many situations where the WRA will wish to communicate promptly with evacuees regarding restoration of personal property and similar matters, or where the Authority will be called upon to furnish the address of a relocated evacuee to friends, relatives, and business associates. It is highly advisable, therefore, for all evacuees to keep the WRA constantly informed of changes of address as long as the field relocation offices remain in operation.