

# U. S. Urged to Pay for Japanese Evacuation Losses

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6.—(AP)—

Dillon S. Myer, former director of the Japanese-American war relocation camps, today declared the mass wartime removal of 110,000 Japanese from the West Coast was unjustified and the government should make amends.

Myer said Congress should permit immigrant Japanese, most of whom have lived in the United States 25 years, to become citizens and should create a commission to receive claims for "several million dollars worth" of property loss or damage from those forcibly removed from their homes and businesses.

The Supreme Court ruled on December 18, 1944 that the Army had the right to exclude Japanese from the West Coast as a safety measure immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In another decision the same day, however, the court said there was a difference between the exclusion order and other orders under which Japanese were detained in relocation centers in the interior.

In a report to Secretary of the Interior Krug, Myer asserted that Lieut. Gen. John L. DeWitt, West-

ern defense commander who ordered the 1942 evacuation, "was by no means free of racial feelings" in taking this step.

Myer said the War Relocation Authority "believes that in all probability a selective evacuation of people of Japanese descent from the West Coast military area was justified."

But, he added, "it does not believe that a mass evacuation was ever justified and it feels most strongly that the exclusion orders remained in effect for months and perhaps for years after there was any real justification."

The report quoted DeWitt as telling a House committee on naval affairs at San Francisco in 1943:

"I don't want any of the Japanese here. They are a dangerous element. It makes no difference

whether he is an American citizen, he is still a Japanese."

Myer said "in 1944 and 1945 the American people of Japanese descent not only regained their pre-war status but actually achieved a higher level of popular acceptance than they have known since the early 1880's."

This was due, he said, to the record of the Japanese-American soldier and to the quiet, unobtrusive return of the former war relocation camp inmates themselves to civilian life.

Myer said that 54,000 of the evacuees have not returned to the West Coast but are scattered throughout the country—particularly in the Chicago, Denver and Salt Lake City areas—in "surely one of the most rapid population readjustments in American history."

Myers added: "The W.R.A. believes that three major lines of action are needed to insure a better integration of the Japanese people into the body of our society and to soften existing injustices. These are:

"1. Enactment of legislation providing for an 'evacuation claims commission' to consider claims against the government for property losses suffered as a direct result of the evacuation.

"2. Modification of the federal naturalization laws to put Japanese people on the same basis as members of other nations and other races.

"3. Continuation and expansion of activity by local adjustment and reintegration."

Myer is now commissioner of the Federal Public Housing Authority.

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