

# Indians Discharge Japanese From Oyster - Opening Jobs

In the interests of defense, Indians of the Swinomish Indian Reservation have discharged four alien Japanese oyster openers working for the Indians in LaConner, it was announced today in Seattle.

O. C. Upchurch, superintendent of the Indian agency, made the announcement during a business trip here. Upchurch has charge of about 4,000 Indians in thirteen tribes living in seven counties, and is acting coordinator for Northwest Indian agencies.

Four American-born Japanese still are working in the oyster-opening house at LaConner, Upchurch said, but these too will be let go at the end of the oyster season, probably in less than a month.

## Oyster Business Profitable

The Japanese were employed by the Indians to teach Indians the difficult and delicate work of oyster opening, so that Indians themselves can do all the work of their profitably operated and self-administered oyster industry, begun in 1938 with the planting of 600 cases of Japanese oysters. More recent plantings have been made with seed oysters from Willapa Harbor, Upchurch said.

LaConner residents complained of the employment of Japanese by the Indians, fearing their proximity to Fort Whitman, a subpost of Fort Worden, and possible establishment of a Japanese colony there.

Upchurch said the four Japanese still retained work in the oyster-opening house at LaConner, a safe distance from the fort. No Japanese are employed in the oyster

beds, which are about a mile from the fort, he said. The four aliens were discharged shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Indians plant, harvest and sell the oysters they raise on 120 acres of their reservation of 7,359 acres, all allotted, on Fidalgo Island. It is hoped that about 500 available acres ultimately will be under oyster cultivation, to provide work and a living for more Indians.

Eight Indians now are working as oyster openers at LaConner, along with the four Japanese. A year ago eight Japanese were working with four Indians.

Upchurch said the Indians are doing a thorough job of defense in all parts of the state.

"They are blending in with the white population in defense work," said Upchurch. "They work as air-raid wardens and fire wardens, and the women as well as the men are learning first aid."

"There are 14,000 Indians in the State of Washington and all are fitting right in with their communities."

Upchurch said that 62 Indians in his jurisdiction now are serving with the armed forces of the United States, half of them being selectees and half having enlisted.

## \$1,000,000 Damage From N. Y. Flood

ROCHESTER, N. Y., March 18.—(UP)—Flood waters from rain-swollen creeks and rivers in Western New York today, after causing an estimated \$1,000,000 damage to homes, highways and bridges.