

Dies Group Plans to Probe Release of Japs From Camps

North American Newspaper Alliance

WASHINGTON, May 27.—Acting on the recommendation of Representative J. Parnell Thomas, Republican, New Jersey, the Dies committee has determined to launch an immediate investigation of the problems surrounding the Japanese relocation centers on the West Coast, it was learned yesterday.

Returning from a 6,000-mile transcontinental journey, during the course of which he spent a week inquiring into the Japanese situation on the West Coast, Representative Thomas reported to Chairman Martin Dies that thousands of Japanese are being released from the ten relocation centers and scattered through the East and Middle West, where some of them are employed directly in war work. At the same time he sent a telegram to President Roosevelt urging that no more of these interned persons be released until the Dies committee could make a thorough study of the whole program.

Representative Thomas declared that the government's Japanese relocation program was the No. 1 farce among all New Deal projects. About 1,000 Japanese are being released from these centers each week, he revealed, and are being permitted to scatter through all parts of the country where surveillance of their activities and contacts is virtually impossible.

This dispersion is not only permitted but encouraged by the high officials of Washington, Thomas declared, citing the fact Secretary Ickes recently engaged Japanese internees to work on his farm in Maryland, and pointing out that

Attorney-General Biddle had requested the release of a qualified Japanese to work as houseman in the home of his cousin, Miss Constance Biddle, at Bryn Mawr.

Biddle Denies Charge

While Biddle Tuesday issued a denial that he had applied for a Japanese servant in his cousin's behalf, Thomas had in his possession today a pamphlet put out by the employment office at the Gila River relocation project at Rivers, Ariz., under the date of May 15, listing the outside jobs that are open to inmates of the camp wishing to apply for them and able to qualify.

Among those listed in this pamphlet, which was picked up by an agent of the Dies committee, was the following:

"Houseman, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: United States Attorney-General Biddle has sent through a request for a houseman for his cousin, Miss Constance Biddle. Man must be expert, trained to do cooking and housework. Wages are \$80 per month and full maintenance. Splendid job offer and a splendid opportunity to help the relocation program in general."

Asked to explain the attorney-general's flat denial in the face of the published record, an official of the Department of Justice yesterday declared that Attorney-General Biddle had not applied for the release of the houseman in question, but admitted that he had written to the authorities at the Gila River center, informing them that his cousin would file such an application and requesting their aid.

Laxity Causes Concern

The fact the attorney-general was prompted to issue a blanket denial based on such a slim technicality was taken to indicate the growing concern which the administration is apparently suffering here as a result of the laxity with which the relocation center program is being run.

Commenting on this laxity, Thomas described how the Federal Bureau of Investigation agents in Los Angeles arrested one of the wealthiest Japanese in the city December 7, 1941, and sent him to a relocation center. Thereafter this man was sent to Louisiana, where he did "a tremendous commercial business" with American citizens while furnishing substantial funds to the Japanese Navy League.

With his brother, who now is about to be released from a Colorado relocation center, this man, according to Thomas, "maintained a courier system between Los Angeles and Tokyo."

"It is inconceivable," stormed Thomas, "that such Japanese agents as these two brothers and numerous others of like caliber should be turned loose to roam at will throughout the United States. However, this seems to be the program which is being put into effect."

