

W. R. A. Needs a Director Who Heeds Public Wishes

THREE months ago (Friday, August 6, to be exact), The Times commented editorially as follows:

"... the national director of W. R. A. and his all too-numerous aides were hired by the American people to house and provide for the Japanese in a manner in best accord with American interests in wartime. They were not hired to change American thought so as best to conform with Japanese interests... It would seem to be in order for someone to build a fence around the W. R. A. boys, too."

This is offered merely as evidence that public discontent with policies of Dillon Myer, War Relocation Authority boss, had its beginnings months ago. It is not just the impulsive reaction of last week's rioting at the Tule Lake Japanese internment camp.

AT the time that The Times made the above editorial comment, Myer was touring the country and arguing his theories that the interned Japs should be better treated; that many of them should be released from the camps—in short, Myer, a paid employe of the American people, was telling them that they didn't know what they were talking about and that he intended to go ahead doing the job his way.

And he went ahead, doing it his way, even in the face of unmistakable protests from all up and down the Pacific Coast where the Jap problem is best understood. Myer's way of handling the job is now beginning to bear fruit; anytime you coddle a person of the Japanese temperament and show that you're afraid of hurting his feelings, that type of person grows bolder in his schemings and in his demands. As witness, the news reports from Tule Lake in recent days.

Those reports give the layman the impression that Myer's place this last week was at Tule Lake, directing the restoration of order among the "demonstrating" Japs—but no, he had a "schedule" to keep, so he must needs come to Seattle on his way East. Tule Lake, for those of you who have never been there, is not an inviting spot—mostly lava formations and bleak flat country with tule grass the chief crop, where it will grow anything. Combine that with the defiant mood of the interned Japs and it's easy to understand why some of the W. R. A. boys are reluctant to stay there.

BE that as it may, Myer came to Seattle and talked at length to the newspaper boys, passing off in light vein the reports of earlier troubles at Tule Lake, which he said were grossly exaggerated. And there was a note of the same song he was singing up and down the Coast three months ago that we must be kind to the interned Japs or the homeland Japs will be cruel to our boys who are prisoners in the land of the Nips.

Even as Myer was telling this story here, the wires were bringing the story of continued "demonstrations" at Tule Lake and of the Army moving in to take over. The W. R. A. camp officials—with their boss, Myer, headed in other directions because of his "schedule"—were pictured as seeking refuge outside the camp fences, watching the Army take charge.

And even as Myer was voicing fears for what Japan might do to our prisoner sons, the news reports were telling us eyewitness accounts of how the Japs have been mistreating those prisoners for all the months that we've been coddling the interned Japs in this country.

THE Army has moved in at Tule Lake. It should remain in charge of that camp and of any other center of Japs of the disloyal or questionable brand. W. R. A. is discredited when it comes to the handling of that problem.

As to other camps, where Japs believed to be loyal to this country are detained, the W. R. A. should remain in charge. There's a very legitimate and humane field of action for the W. R. A.—if that organization is properly directed.

Three months ago, The Times suggested building a fence around the W. R. A. The need for that fence is now more apparent than ever—also it's more apparent than ever that Dillon Myer doesn't belong inside the fence. He should be removed before "youth administration" methods cause more trouble.

At last reports, this country was a democracy where the people's wishes count for something. Such an important job as that of W. R. A. director should be in the hands of someone more in sympathy with popular thought than Dillon Myer has been for too many months past.