

BEST'S REPORT ON SEGREGATION PROGRESS

(Because of the favorable comments by colonists on the address given by Project Director R. R. Best at the outdoor theatre on Sunday, August 15, and because a great many colonists who were not present have asked for a copy of the address, The Tulean Dispatch has undertaken to reprint in full, in Japanese and English, Director Best's very interesting and constructive talk.--Editor.)

Today, it is exactly twelve days, since I first addressed the residents of this Center from this platform. In that brief time, a period of less than two weeks, much has happened. For one thing, both I and the members of my family have come to know many of you individually. We hope, and the appointed personnel hope too, that these acquaintances will be renewed in the future:--in better times and better places.

This evening, I wish to report to you the progress of the segregation program in which we are all engaged. From day to day, progress has been made. Two weeks ago, we faced a job together. Today, it is apparent that the job is being done. It is plain that the residents wish to keep the Center a peaceful and decent community throughout this period. It is evident that co-operation is coming not merely from a few groups and individuals, but from the entire colony, from every Ward and neighborhood. It is obvious to us and to the American public that people of Tule Lake are already earning a reputation for good sense, for sound judgment, and for dignified behavior. My first report to residents is very simple: Make no mistake about it; the segregation program is succeeding.

I mention this not merely by way of thanking you for your cooperation, but to indicate my earnest wish to see that cooperation continued. It is important, for, all of us, and you particularly, have a vital stake in the success of this program. Segregation is not someone's bad dream. It is a step commanded by the Senate of the United States to guarantee the rights of all of you,--whether you are Japanese or American nationals. It is the answer to the problem of Americans of Japanese ancestry who wish to cast their lot with the future of this country, and to live out their years on this soil. It is the answer to the problem of Japanese of the first generation who share with them this desire. It allows those who wish to be Japanese in the future to be Japanese in the present. It is not a petty question of who will move and who stay, but a matter of importance which will effect your lives in the months ahead and the lives of your children for a much longer time. In this moment of decision in the hearings every individual and family has a right to make the choice without fear of consequences. We implore you, for your own sakes, to make that decision calmly and judiciously. Whichever way you decide, first-genera-

tion or second or both together, you may rest assured that there will be no threats and no reprisals and no penalties in store for you from any government,--here or abroad. The decision is yours to make freely with a thought to the future.

Since I arrived, and in twelve busy days, we have broken precedents,--one of which is to meet here and talk things over in a spirit of mutual confidence. Many of you found that the door to my office is open. We have broken precedents, it is true, but we have not broken promises. For example, twelve days ago, I stated our desire to have factual information reach each and every colonist. As you know, we have worked day and night to get information to you through a Speaker's Bureau, through talks in every corner of the colony, given at your request. I stated that information consultants should be placed in convenient locations throughout the center. As you know, such offices were established at 1804, 2508, 1308, and 608. I also welcomed the establishment of working committees from the colony to advise administration. In response to this suggestion, not one group, but many groups, have come to advise us. Let me assure you that when they come, they represent the people's wishes. As I say, many groups have come, Buddhist and Christian, younger men and older men,--all intent upon helping the people of this Center by explaining to us in administration the hopes and fears and desires of you residents from every corner of the colony. Continue to bring your troubles to us. Bring your suggestions. And we will do our best, I repeat, to assist the people of this Center in every way possible.

Twelve days ago, I stated also that you would hear many unfounded rumors. I should like to deal with these rumors frankly, one by one, and answer them with all the authority at my command. The First Rumor is that if Issei and their families move to a loyal Center, one of the six Centers open to them, their sons will be drafted, whereas sons in the segregation Center will be exempt from Army call. The answer is simple. This rumor repeats the mistakes of registration time. Then it was said that all sons of age who answered Yes to Questions 27 and 28 would be drafted. As you know, they were not drafted. The rumor was false then, and the rumor is false now. The fact is that Selective Service is a different agency of the gov-

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ernment from W.R.A. Segregation is under W.R.A. authority and is not a Selective Service plan. Selective Service may call up young men of Japanese ancestry, just as it may call up fathers whose children were born before Pearl Harbor. In this camp, after segregation, there will be young men who come of age, who are loyal, and who never filled out the registration forms. There will be loyal youths in this camp who prefer to remain with their parents. From the point of view of Selective Service, there is reason to doubt that there would be a hands-off policy in respect to the Tule Lake segregation center. On the other hand, from the point of view of the W. R.A., it can be stated that no center; Granada, or Heart Mountain, or Tule Lake for that matter is being formed with Selective Service in mind. If you want my opinion, it is simply that young men will be called or will not be called according to the separate decision of Selective Service. And that decision when it comes will probably have no reference to the type of relocation center with which a young man is connected. At the present time, the only classification automatically excluded from Selective Service are those indispensable to farming operations on the outside.

I say this to quiet your fears, but I, who have a son in the service might put it another way. I think it would be extremely unwise to make all of one's decision depend upon attitudes toward the draft. I well know the situation of an older father who looks upon his son as his future support. But your decision to remain here or transfer to another center should depend on other choices: whether you wish your family to be closed up here for the duration; whether you wish to be Japanese or American; the effects of the coming months upon the future of your family; and the kind of choice they are making or you are making for them. These are the questions which are vital in making such choices. And let no one be stampeded into false decisions in the Segregation Interview which we may regret by vague rumors of a universal draft of young men which was false and mistaken to the core six months ago and is false again.

Along the same line, The Second Rumor is a rumor that those who move will soon be forced to relocate from the new center. Will the other nine centers be closed down immediately following segregation? The answer is a very strong No. The W.R.A. has no intention of closing the other nine centers in order to force people to relocate. There has never been any forced relocation. There never will be. W.R.A. has always looked upon relocation as a voluntary procedure, an opportunity available to those who wish to make the most of it. That opportunity will be taken away at Tule Lake following segregation. But it will continue at other centers and W.R.A. in nine other centers and in Relocation Offices

throughout the country will continue to spend vast sums to help people establish themselves on the outside, if they so desire. From year to year, Congress has appropriated funds for the maintenance of the centers and these Relocation field offices. There is every reason to believe that the Congress will continue these services in the future, as long as needed.

A Third Rumor, on the other hand, is that the Army will take over in the inside of the segregation center. This idea also dates back to registration times when experts on rumors said all young men would be drafted, all old men who answered Yes would be forced to relocate, and the Army would take over inside the center. As you know, young men were not drafted, people who answered Yes are still here six months later, and the Army has never yet taken over in the administration of Tule Lake. I therefore say definitely that W.R.A. is the agency responsible for the internal administration of Tule Lake, and present plans do not contemplate any Army administration of the center. After segregation, the center will become a closed center and the Army will guard, and possibly patrol, the outside boundaries.

There was a Fourth Rumor that an application for indefinite leave a certain Form 130, would be used in applying for a segregation hearing. People said that if they used this form, they would be forced to go out on indefinite leave once they reached the new relocation center. In the first place, this form is not used for segregation hearings, and the Tulean Dispatch in mentioning it before my arrival here was in error. We corrected that error as soon as we read it, and in the pages of the same paper. People are called to segregation hearings by individual letters from the office. No one is being asked to use an application for indefinite leave for hearings on segregation.

We have felt also, that issei who do not read English have a perfect right to read the facts in Japanese in the pages of the Dispatch. In the past, as issei know, such translations were often confusing or inaccurate or poorly phrased. Realizing this, we have set up an Official Translation Board to check on all translations of official notices to see that they are in the best Japanese style possible. The translators also have translated documents for you so that you will have information well-expressed and in both languages. You have undoubtedly noticed the difference in the last few days.

But we were speaking of hearings, and about the hearings there is a Fifth Rumor. It is said that if issei, who are not citizens, answer in such a way that they go to a so-called loyal center, they will lose their citizenship rights in Japan, and become men without a country. In the face of this rumor, I have heard that people are afraid of taking a

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definite stand; they are afraid of burning their bridges behind them. Let me answer this rumor by saying that your segregation hearings are entirely confidential, and are not seen by any other government. You will not be labeled as a resident of this center or of that one. We want you to make a free choice without fear of consequences. It is my opinion that after the war, no stigma will be attached to the residents of any particular type of center. You will be free to travel, as before, and your records in W.R.A. will be held confidential for you. There was a Sixth Rumor, a rumor that W.R.A. would not send people to the Center of their choice. The answer is that W.R.A. will do everything possible to see that people do get their choices. We cannot guarantee that every individual will get his first choice. But we will give preference to individuals joining their families in another Center, and to families joining their former neighbors from the same locality in another Center.

Very early, we noticed that some groups in this Center had few friends or relatives in other Centers, but rather that they had come here as a group. To allow such families, friends and Church groups to remain together, we have worked out a plan whereby such groups on the removal list may move together. They have told us that their wish to remain together is stronger than a desire to go to a particular Center. We will comply with these wishes though we cannot, of course, add a guarantee that they can go to the Center of their first choice. We can do this for groups of up to twenty families, and it may be necessary in some instances to further reduce this size in order to be fair to all. Such family groups may get together and have their leader submit their request through the Social Welfare Office at 1804. One can inquire about his plan through the Block managers. Such people, it is understood, give up the guarantee of a particular center; but gain the right to move together. Of course, we will try, as best we can, to send them to the Centers which they as groups select. In general, we cannot guarantee first choices of the individual or the group, but every effort will be made to meet these choices.

There is the Rumor, finally, that those who move to another Center will be unable to find jobs there, and will therefore

be at a disadvantage. All I can say to this one is that at the Denver Conference your representatives stressed this point of providing jobs for Tule Lake residents in their new Centers. The Project Directors of all other Centers listened sympathetically. Many of them stated that they would establish quotas, a fair number of jobs, for newcomers from Tule Lake. All agreed that they would pay attention to Tuleans who had held key positions here. We have decided that workers here in key positions who delay transfer until segregation is completely carried through, will receive special recommendation to the Project of their destination. They will be known, upon arrival, as key workers of the Tule Lake Project. You may be sure that they will not be looking for jobs very long. There are other lesser rumors, too numerous to mention. One, heard recently, is that non-registrants who are called for interview, or hearing, are passed on only if they promise to relocate. As we have said before, this is false and mistaken to the core. The hearings are not intended to put people "on the spot"; they are informal, easy-going conversations in which you are welcomed to say what you sincerely believe. I am sure you may come to them without fear or annoyance.

In this talk, I have stressed rumors only to give you the facts which I know you want. As you know already, we are not, in this program, repeating mistakes of registration times. On our part, we are giving you the information you need, all of it, in advance, and with every facility at our disposal. On your part, you are responding intelligently, and in a dignified and commendable manner. The colony and its administration never stood closer together, in trust, in confidence, in cooperation, than it does today. The decisions you will make are momentous, for you and your children. While I have mentioned rumors, I have mentioned them only to give you facts about the job we are doing, and doing successfully, together. I must end by congratulating the residents of this Center for their quick and thorough understanding of a difficult and complex program. And I must say that your intelligent and sober thought and action, as a group, will be of lasting benefit in establishing for Japanese-Americans throughout the nation a reputation which other peoples among us may well envy.

Thank you.

FACTS ABOUT GRANADA WRA CENTER

Granada Relocation Center, also known as the city of Amache, is situated on a low, sage-brush hill overlooking Arkansas Valley that traverses Prowers County of Colorado. It is in this valley, through which courses a river bearing the same name, that the only intensive farming of the county is carried on. The rest is composed mainly of flat-rolling prairie where lack of water has prevented the full development of agriculture.

Various geographical features combine to make this region, a part of the great western plains, much different from the Pacific Coast States in the matter of climate and appearance. The whole area, for instance, is situated well over 3,500 feet and the air is correspondingly rarer. Extremes in weather prevail with temperatures running over hundred in summer and below zero in winter. The Colorado Year Book of 1941-1942 gives the following data: Annual mean temperature, 53.9 degree; highest, 103 degree; lowest, -5 degree. A peculiar feature of this region is the large number of severe thunderstorms in the summer months.

The area in which the project is situated occupies the western edge of the dust bowl. For this reason dust storms occur at frequent intervals over the center.

PEOPLE

According to the official tabulation the original population of this center was 7,801 at the end of September 1942. Approximately 4,000 were from the Merced Assembly Center, and the rest from Santa Anita. Out of the total 5,497 were American citizens and 2,204 were aliens.

On August of 1943, check revealed that 1,636 had left the center on various types of leaves thus decreasing the population to 6,165. These people represent the following California counties: Marin, Merced, Stanislaus, Yuba, Yolo, Santa Rosa and Los Angeles.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The entire project occupies a total area of 10,423 acres, most of which is land that has already been subject to cultivation by the native farmers. The project's northern boundary is formed by the Arkansas River and the others by cactus-covered prairie land. The center itself, where the homes of the evacuees are found, is shaped like a square with the sides a mile in length.

STORE FACILITIES

For the benefit of the evacuees the Community Enterprise of Amache, a business owned and operated by the residents, provides the following facilities: Canteen, where unrationed groceries, magazines, tobacco, ice cream, cold drinks, and bakery goods are sold; clothing store; shoe repair shop; barbershop; novelty store; laundry; cleaning; shoe store; watch repair and optometry.

Goods not available in the above plac-

es may be bought in the town of Lamar located 17 miles away or in Granada 1 1/2 miles from the center. Transportation to the former is difficult at times but the latter may be easily reached, even on foot.

Various sea-food may be obtained from a market operated in Granada by a nisei. Delivery service on certain week days.

HOUSING

The barracks are probably similar to those of the other centers and the only difference that may occur is in flooring which is made of a single layer of bricks laid directly upon the dirt. The apartments, during winter, are fairly good living quarters but in the summer there might be some uncomfortable hotness due to the fact that the buildings are spaced too closely to insure the proper passage of breeze. The units are provided with canvas cots.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The center has been fortunate in not having a single outbreak of contagious diseases or any sudden appearance of group illness. This is due largely to the efficient manner which the medical officers handle the affairs of public health.

The hospital is well managed and sufficient personnel is available to care for most of the ordinary sickness. Furthermore overly-serious cases are usually sent to a hospital located in the nearby town of Lamar or to other locations where proper facilities are available.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

The water for the project is supplied by four wells approximately 800 feet deep. The pumping capacity of 350 gallons per minute is more than ample to supply the needs of the people. The water, in addition to its high mineral content, is chlorinated for decontamination purpose. This makes it rather un-tasty for drinking purpose.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Different forms of recreation and creative pastimes are offered to the evacuees through the existence of clubs and organizations. Motion pictures are held every night in different blocks with an admission price of 10 cents.

CENTER EMPLOYMENT

There are certain type of work that requires further addition of personnel. This is especially true of the farms section where lack of labor shortage has been the chief problem.

The main industry of the Granada Relocation Center is agriculture. Its prime objective is to produce enough vegetables and meat so that it will, to a great extent, become self-sustaining. Fresh greens on the mess hall tables lately attests to the fact that this project is meeting with success.

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