

Island Japanese Accept Army Mandate For Move To Owen Valley, California

● Virtually blocked by Army regulations from any practical attempts at voluntary evacuation to places of their own choosing, 274 Bainbridge Island Japanese aliens and Japanese-American citizens were resigned last night to a forced evacuation, Monday, to Owen Valley, Calif.

At a late hour last night, however, some Japanese

leaders still held hopes that they might make other arrangements.

Late yesterday authorities decreed an 8 o'clock curfew for all Japanese aliens and citizens, effective tomorrow night. This will bar 13 Bainbridge High School seniors from attending their Senior Ball.

In an order which observers believed was prompted by the Navy, Lieut.-Gen. J. L. DeWitt, commander of the Fourth Army, last Sunday suddenly ordered a complete evacuation of the Island by all its Japanese residents, aliens and American citizens alike.

The order, dated Tuesday and which must be complied with by Monday noon, was the first forced evacuation in the nation under President Roosevelt's proclamation giving the Army supreme authority over certain West Coast areas. Presence here of a Naval Radio Station and proximity of the Island to the Bremerton Navy Yard was believed responsible for the order.

Island Japanese were notified unofficially Sunday of the order, but Tuesday's official command gave the Islanders only six days in which to settle their personal and business affairs.

Earlier this week, several attempts were made by Japanese leaders to find places in the interior. Several locations actually were found, but for one reason or another had to be abandoned. In one instance, prospective Caucasian neighbors of the

evacuated Islanders objected so strenuously that the move was abandoned. Authorities were reported to have vetoed another location in Idaho because of a policy against "colonization."

Effective at 9 o'clock Tuesday morning, no person of Japanese ancestry was permitted to leave the Island. This forced them to make any further efforts at finding voluntary locations by long-distance telephone, a virtual impossibility.

Consequently, promises of "voluntary evacuation" became an empty phrase for them and they resigned themselves to accepting transportation to Owen Valley, evacuation center being prepared for them by Southern California Japanese. Owen Valley is more than 3,000-feet above sea level about 200 miles north of Los Angeles. It is a few miles south of Mount Whitney, highest peak in continental United States and is 50 miles west of Death Valley.

A Civil Control Office was functioning Tuesday at the old Anderson Dock Store, Winslow. In it were housed the Army command, and representatives of the United States Employment Service, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Farm Security Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Public Health Service.

Islanders commented favorably on the tact and courtesy of the

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More About Order

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soldiers and their officers.

"Our job is to protect and help these people," an Army spokesman said. "We want to move them with the least possible inconvenience under our orders and without leaving too bad a taste in the mouths of those left behind. Our men have orders to be considerate, courteous and as helpful as possible at all times to these people."

Registration of the Japanese began Wednesday. All those not recently vaccinated against smallpox were given that inoculation. The Army said medical aid would be given on the trip south to those who became ill from the vaccination.

Japanese were told they would be moved from Seattle in seven pullman coaches sometime Monday.

Meanwhile, they made frantic arrangements to dispose of their property, for they were told they could take only those personal possessions which they could carry. These included only blankets, toilet articles, clothing and eating utensils.

Most Japanese strawberry farmers made lease contracts with Filipinos in their employ. Those unable to make contracts in the limited time were forced to turn their property over to the Farm Security Administration for disposal. It was estimated that one-third of the farmers would have to deal with the F. S. A.

What would happen to the Eagle Harbor Market, Winslow, and Bainbridge Gardens, Fletcher Bay, the Island's two well-known Japanese business houses, was not known last night. Efforts were being made by their proprietors to find lease tenants or

purchasers, but the inability to leave the Island was handicapping them.

Some white residents of the Island did what they could to aid in arranging property disposals.

Leasing of the strawberry farms was encouraged by R. D. Bodle Company, Seattle packing company, which was attempting to salvage as much as possible of the more than 3,000,000-pound crop.

The school board, meeting Tuesday night, admitted the removal of the 84 Japanese students from the system would mean at least a \$1,200 loss in revenue for the district until the end of the school year late in May. The board again directed P. F. Ruidl, school superintendent, to make whatever arrangements possible to assure the issuance of Bainbridge High School diplomas to the 13 Japanese seniors.

The unhappy event proved a field day for newspaper men from Seattle and they spent several days gathering "color" stories and posing Japanese for photographs.

The Army increased its Island personnel and posted guards throughout the Island. Soldiers, after obtaining permission, moved into business houses with telephones so as to maintain communication lines in the event of an emergency.