

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
461 Market Street
San Francisco 5, California

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

March 10, 1945 to March 24, 1945

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INCIDENTS

Although no suspects have been arrested for attempted arson at the home of Sam Takeda, near San Jose, Sheriff William Emig announced, "The entire community is supporting the Sheriff's office in its determination to discover those guilty of the Takeda outrage". (San Francisco Chronicle, March 14). Editorial comments from the Fresno Bee, and San Francisco Chronicle, Labor Herald and News, condemned violence and vigilante action, while supporting Attorney General Robert Kenny's clear statement on the responsibility of all law-enforcement agencies in California, (March 16). At the meeting of sheriffs in Sacramento, Attorney General Kenny declared that their responsibility in protection "does not stop with prevention of shooting. The protection of their basic rights, freedom from fear, freedom to earn their living, freedom to live as peaceful citizens -- must be maintained." In listing five groups of persons who are "stirring up trouble", Mr. Kenny called "most vicious" those people who cover "their selfish economic urges with a pretense of patriotism". (San Francisco Chronicle, March 17).

The WRA has established an office in San Jose, and the San Jose Civic Unity Council is making plans for a returnees' hostel. (San Francisco Chronicle, March 14).

A cartoon on the editorial page of the San Francisco News, March 9, depicted a burning American-Japanese home on a side road leading off from the main avenue labeled "World Security Conference, San Francisco", where a signpost reads "International Unity".

The four men accused in the Sumio Doi incident have been arraigned before Superior Court Judge Lowell L. Sparks and will be tried April 17.

A rash of red paint flared up in Los Angeles, where much publicity was given to an incident at the home of Dr. Linus Pauling, employer of an American-Japanese gardener waiting his Army call. There vandals painted a replica of a Japanese flag, and the words, "Japs work here -- Americans die but we love Japs". Dr. Pauling is a professor at the California Institute of Technology, and a researcher in the use of explosives and chemicals in warfare. He has been recently cited for his contributions to the armed services by the Office of Scientific Research and Development. (Pasadena Post, Los Angeles Examiner and Herald Express).

Similar signs were painted on the home of Mrs. Marion Gooding and across the walls of the Pasadena Junior College handball court.

Four days later Dr. Pauling received a threatening note. The contents were not revealed either by Dr. Pauling or the FBI.

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DISCRIMINATION

On the heels of an announcement from the Hood River, Oregon, American Legion Post that the names of 15 American-Japanese soldiers are being restored to their honor roll, came a statement from Richard W. Johnston, United Press correspondent, home from the Pacific war zone. Johnston said, "I can tell you one thing. The boys out there from Oregon used to be proud of their state until this Hood River business came up. I would like to report that they deeply resent the Hood River acts. I've seen many Nisei soldiers in action. They do a good job and they are very popular." (Oregon Journal, San Francisco People's World, and Los Angeles Daily News). Two Oregon readers, one a soldier in France, protested through letters to the editor about the Hood River incident about the same time.

Two failures to sell their farm produce in a Portland, Oregon market has not kept S. Tsubota and his father from continuing to bring in their vegetables. In spite of a negative reception when they had a truck load of fairly scarce vegetables, the Tsubotas, first returnee Japanese growers and marketers of produce for the Portland market, have declared they will keep coming to the market. (Oregonian, Oregon Journal, Seattle Times, Arizona Republic, March 10).

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At least two letters to the editor were provoked by this episode. One mother of a son in the South Pacific stated that "such treatment is disgraceful and exactly opposite to what our boys are fighting for", while another mother objects to such waste of food that would mean more canned vegetables for boys overseas. (Oregonian, March 12).

MEETINGS

Gresham, Oregon, last week watched two widely publicized meetings advocate two opposing policies for treatment of American-Japanese persons. First heralded by quarter-page and half-page advertisements, a citizens' committee held a mass meeting March 16 while the Oregon Property Owners' Protective League conducted a mass meeting on March 13.

The Property Owners' League meeting, (which had advertised a hundred dollars worth of door prizes to be given away), announced a campaign for a constitutional amendment to exile all persons of Japanese ancestry from the United States, on the theory that Japanese cannot become good citizens either by birth or naturalization.

The citizens' committee, (advertised to present the "American way" of dealing with evacuees), drew an estimated 500 persons for their purpose of spearheading opposition to activities of groups opposing return of Japanese to coastal areas. (Gresham Outlook, Oregonian, Oregon Journal, Seattle Times, San Francisco Chronicle, March 13-17).

RETURNEES

Resettlement statistics, released by WRA, show fewer than 100 evacuated Japanese-Americans have returned to Oregon since the lifting of the exclusion ban. Although the 4000 originally evacuated came chiefly from Multnomah, Clackamas and Hood River counties, approximately three-fourths of the returnees have settled in Multnomah county. (Portland Oregonian, March 9).

The Multnomah Bar Association has appointed a committee to protect the constitutional rights of Japanese, and any others who may be affected by "war emotions". (Oregonian, March 21).

About 150 American-Japanese have returned to western Washington without incident, according to an announcement by Harold Fistere. (Tacoma News Tribune, March 21).

Newest organizations supporting American-Japanese include seven more CIO organizations which recently passed resolutions favoring the return of evacuees. (San Francisco Labor Herald, March 9).

LAND LAWS

A land law "copied largely from a California law" and passed by the Oregon Senate, now prohibits aliens ineligible for citizenship from leasing or owning agricultural land in the names of their American-born children. Senator Frank Hilton declared, "I believe it is desirable that the three Pacific coast states have uniform alien laws". (Oregonian and Oregon Journal, March 16). A week previous Attorney General Kenny told the California legislature that adequate investigation and prosecution of violations of the California Alien Land Act would cost approximately \$100,000 annually. Reimbursement of the state through sale of escheated property was not taken into consideration because up to the present time the escheat provisions of the law have not been satisfactorily adjudicated, Kenny stated. (San Francisco News, March 7).

On March 22 the Senate Judiciary Committee granted \$200,000 to the Attorney General's office to prosecute Alien Land Law violations. Also recommended to the Senate is a measure allowing the state to bring escheat actions against violators over the past twenty years. (Oakland Tribune).

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CIVIL LIBERTIES

Three days after the Oregon Alien Land Law was passed, the American Civil Liberties Union announced it will support a test of alien land laws up to the Supreme Court, if necessary, on the basis of the 14th Amendment. Test cases will be those of Mather Masoke Hirose and Fred Oyama, which have already been urged in the California Superior Court. (San Francisco News, March 19).

The Civil Liberties Union also stated on March 12 that it will support test cases of any American-Japanese still excluded from the West Coast who wishes to go to court. They will aid only those still excluded who have not applied for expatriation and who indicated their loyalty on the questionnaire, and those who later changed their answers to indicate their loyalty, (San Francisco News). On March 10 the suit of individually-excluded Messrs. Shigekawa, Ochikubo, and Yamamoto, seeking to return to the West Coast, was under advisement by Federal Judge Hall. (San Francisco News).

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RECOVERY OF PROPERTY BY RETURNEES

After Dale Bergh was given a court order to return his leased farm to its owner, Masayucki Fujimoto, because he held an illegal lease, Bergh's attorney filed a motion for an order to set aside the judgment.

However, a ruling on this motion has been delayed pending the briefing of precedents and federal rental control acts affecting the case. There is a possibility that OPA rental controls are not effective concerning leases, which is the case in the Fujimoto action to oust his tenants. (Oregon Journal, March 12 & 15).

B. Fuji, recent arrival on the coast, cannot demand the return of his property leased by the County poor farm because the lease was entered into with his two sons, both of whom are now in the armed forces, according to Stanley M. Jones, Chief Civil Deputy District Attorney. (Oregon Journal, March 20).

Other returnees include Mr. and Mrs. Ysuto Kato, who will reoccupy their farm in Warm Springs, now leased by Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Benbow. When the exclusion ban was first lifted, the Katos came back to their home under the mistaken impression that the lease held by Mr. Benbow had expired. They returned to their relocation camp to wait expiration of the lease. (Oakland Tribune, March 12). (See January Digest).

One returnee, William M. Shimasaki, wrote the Editor of the Auburn, Wash., Globe News, on his very pleasant reception in Auburn, (March 14). Many unfavorable newspaper and magazine articles about the White River Valley had led him to expect just the opposite.

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ESCHEAT CASE

A refusal to answer questions in an escheat case brought Hideo Susyena, Poston Relocation Center internee, two thirty-day jail sentences for contempt of court. Suyenga stated he did not wish to answer some questions because the answers might incriminate him and he was without advice of legal counsel. Later the Arizona Supreme Court decided that Superior Judge Henry C. Kelly had acted without jurisdiction in sentencing Suyenaga to jail, and the defendant was ordered released from jail. Yuma county officials seeking to uphold Judge Kelly's order had been aided by California attorneys. (Five Arizona papers, March 15).

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STATEMENTS

Approximately five thousand Tule Lake internees have applied for repatriation to Japan, according to Attorney General Biddle. (San Francisco Examiner, March 18). Biddle further stated, in a testimony before the House Appropriation Committee, that at times "the Japs were practically running the camp, from the point of view of expressing their loyalty." Eighty leaders were sent to a camp for enemy aliens by Jack Burling, Department of Justice representative, which broke up "the marching, the Japanese bugle calls, the bowing to the emperor", according to Mr. Biddle. (Seattle Times, San Francisco News and Chronicle, Los Angeles Examiner, March 14).

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(Other shipments of Tule Lake internees to a camp for enemy aliens included 125 men in March. All San Francisco and Los Angeles papers, etc.)

Secretary Harold L. Ickes, in a letter to Senator Gordon, Oregon, suggested that American-Japanese would be better off if they settle elsewhere than on the Pacific Coast. He stated, "We do all in our power to persuade those who formerly lived on the Pacific Coast to locate elsewhere in the country. We cannot use compulsion because most of these Japanese are citizens, with the same constitutional right of free movement as other citizens have. But we go as far as we can, and will continue to do that." (San Francisco Call Bulletin, March 17).

"Encouraged by this statement", the Oregon Property Owners' Protective League, at Gresham, Oregon, passed a resolution demanding the resignation or dismissal of Dillon S. Myer, charging he has been neither wise nor patriotic in his acts, (Oregon Journal, Oregonian, March 17.) A "dual criticism" of Ickes' statement is recorded by Robert A. Holley, in the Oregon Journal, who mentions the Property Owners' League commendation of Ickes, and Dan McDade's comment that "recent press notices put Ickes in a new light". McDade is National Vice Commander of the American Legion.

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MICELLANEOUS

A much publicized Nisei soldier on furlough in Los Angeles was Pvt. Koo Ito, commended in newspapers there for his heroism in Italy. While fighting with the 100th Battalion he lost a leg on the Fourth of July, 1944. Newspaper cuts showed him with his wife, and reported he plans to study accounting after his expected medical discharge. (Los Angeles Daily News, and Times, March 21).

Canadian-Japanese evacuated from the Pacific Coast have been notified that the Canadian Government prefers they settle east of the Rocky Mountains after the war. (Tacoma News Tribune, March 16).

Kazuo Uno, 23, is the first alien Japanese accepted by the U.S. Army, according to the Seattle Times, March 18.

California guayule will not be plowed under, according to a recent directive from the House Appropriations Committee, which disapproved the Budget Bureau's directive to the Department of Agriculture for destroying the crop. (Los Angeles Express, March 21).

Kimio Watanabe, of Auburn, Washington, is now serving with the 442nd Regiment in Italy, according to the Auburn Globe News (March 14), which reviewed the many decorations of that unit.

At Firland Sanatorium a Chinese girl and a Japanese girl were found to be "best friends", by Rev. D. Vincent Gray, City Missioner for Episcopal Diocese of Olympia. (Seattle Times, March 7).

The fighting record of Nisei soldiers in the South Pacific and their heroic exploits against Japanese soldiers was described at length in the San Francisco People's World, March 9, and other Coast papers.

A quarter-page advertisement in the March 15 California Legionnaire boosts Captain Samuel William Yorty for Mayor of Los Angeles. It states that among his achievements as a member of the California legislature, Mr. Yorty "authored and sponsored Assembly Bill 336, to ban all Jap fishermen from the coast of California". (Ed. Note: Assembly Bill 366, on file in the State Capitol, does not refer to Japanese fishermen, and does not list Mr. Yorty among the legislators who introduced it.)

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