

MAY 5 RECD

Colorado River Relocation Center
Poston, Arizona
Community Analysis Section

COMMUNITY ANALYST TREND REPORT FROM
APRIL 23 to 29, 1945

Relocation

During the week ending April 28, there were 90 terminal departures from the center, an increase of 20 over the previous week. Departures to California were not numerous; they increased from 18 to 19.

The ex-residents of Los Angeles have shown since December 17th a consistently greater interest in returning to California than have the people from many other areas. This interest has reached a new high, and family after family is considering when and how to return. These Los Angeles people are not prosperous, on the whole, nor do many of them own property in Boyle Heights, from which the majority came. They are quite vocal about their need for aid in finding housing and for Resettlement Assistance funds to pay for furniture and living expenses. If these are forthcoming, the Los Angeles blocks will be quite empty by the end of the summer.

The prospects for a return to Watsonville are improving faster than those for returning to the vicinity of Salinas. Some visitors and resettlers have been giving favorable reports about Watsonville, although these reports are often qualified with the statement that there is a certain tension still present. Of the three large towns in the area, Monterey remains the one with the best public sentiment.

The recruiters from the Tooele Ordnance Depot, who left during the week after a short visit, report an increased interest in Tooele. Fourteen families have made applications to go to Tooele, although it is possible that not all of these will receive Provost Marshal clearance.

A Civil Service employee accompanied the Tooele recruiters. On April 21, about 60 Poston office girls took Civil Service examinations, and of these only one failed to pass. Many made excellent scores.

Despite the fact that no special efforts by WRA have been made to encourage interest in the area, Phoenix is being considered as a possible destination for relocation by a number of evacuees. This is particularly true of those from districts in California like the Salinas area which do not seem to present a favorable prospect for a return at this time. Visits to Phoenix have accelerated in the past months because of the relaxation of short term visiting procedure; gradually Phoenix has come to be regarded as a familiar locality, acceptable in many ways as a substitute for California.

However, opportunities for relocation are not as varied in Arizona as they are elsewhere, and no great number can be expected to resettle in this area.

On Friday afternoon, April 27, a group of evacuees met with Duncan Mills and C. R. Carter to discuss ^{the} formation of a new organization for relocation planning. It was tentatively decided that each unit should form some sort of an organization. Units II and III could then choose one delegate, and Unit I two delegates to an over-all planning group. These four would meet with about four members of the appointed personnel.

The above plan is to be submitted to the next meeting of the Community Council; if it is approved, the Local Councils will consider the matter.

Poston has not had a relocation planning commission or a relocation study group. Recently, however, evacuees have been expressing a desire to participate more fully in helping those who feel that they can relocate.

Closing of Centers

The rumor, mentioned in last week's report, that the centers would stay open beyond next January 2 was refuted by a statement in the Poston Chronicle of April 28. The refutation was based on a statement received from Malcolm Pitts, Acting Director of WRA; it pointed out that the funds requested for the calendar year 1946 are to be used for the field offices, warehouses, and for the completion of records.

Employment and Leadership

While there has not been a noticeable curtailment of services provided for evacuees because of an inability to fill positions, relocation has created a critical shortage of certain kinds of workers. Office employees are particularly scarce and "paper work" is suffering.

The Finance Section once had the reputation among evacuees of having tense relations between the appointed and evacuee workers. A remarkable improvement in this reputation has occurred because of the efforts of Connolly, the Finance Officer, and a still greater increase is to be expected when more evacuees learn of the changes that have taken place. Nevertheless, the section still in need of more workers.

The Supervisor of Block Managers of Unit I left for what may be a lengthy short term visit to California. Several others from the same office are leaving soon. The City Manager of Poston also is away on a short term visit. Block Managers and Councilmen have been leaving regularly on short term and terminal leaves. Many of these short term leaves are a preliminary to an early return to the West Coast. A crisis in leadership, as well as one in more routine work, could develop if replacements who have the confidence of the people do not continue to appear. Incidentally, a Poston custom

for short term visits is as follows: the holder of the office tenders his resignation; he is asked not to resign but to return to his position after his trip is completed; and, someone holds the job in an acting capacity until the man returns. The City Manager, however, insisted that his resignation be accepted. That job is now open.

Selective Service

Although nearly 100 draft evaders were in Phoenix together at first of the week, and although they saw a good deal of the town, including the stores and movies, no unfortunate incidents of any kind occurred. At the trial on April 23, they all plead not guilty. The proceedings were quite short. The arguments advanced by the defense attorney were that the Nisei have been treated like aliens, having been interned in relocation centers, — not having had the rights of citizens, they should not be expected to fulfill the duties of American citizenship. Expatriates have indicated that their future lies in Japan rather than the United States, which would make serving in the American Army inappropriate.

No immediate decision was rendered by the judge, and the boys returned to Poston. If the decision was a conviction, then an appeal would be made by three of the Nisei representing three different ways in which Army service was refused.

Youth Conference

From point of view of the evacuee participants, at least, the Youth Conference began most successfully. The "kick-off" meeting in the Unit I High School was attended by an enthusiastic Nisei audience. The members of the families of soldiers, mostly Issei, who attended the program on the night of 28th in the elementary auditorium have also given favorable reports.

Nisei have commented that they have been glad to see new faces in the project for a change. About 35 outside participants in the conference have infused an energetic spirit into it that the rather tired members of the appointed personnel could scarcely have achieved alone.

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