

## "BACK IN CALIFORNIA AGAIN"

By ERANK DANK

After three years' absence I returned to my home town, Los Angeles. It was here that I had opportunities of schooling, home, business and other good things of life. Indeed, the city of Los Angeles is dear to me as well as to thousands of Japanese.

I arrived at this sunny metropolis in the early morning last week from San Francisco via the Southern Pacific. The day was calm and clear, about 80°. A crowd of hundreds were waiting to meet their dear ones at the station.

As I approached the throng a gentleman came rushing out and firmly clasped my hand saying, "...Glad to see you back in California." "Thank you," I said. "I'm happy to be back in my home State."

He is a friend of mine, a lawyer. He had been counselor to our Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry prior to the evacuation. Despite a previous trip, he came to the station to welcome me. What a precious thing in life is friendship!

After he left I had my first bite to eat in the city. I ordered fry two, over with toast and coffee. It certainly was good. I paid forty-five cents for it. A fair price! The service was fine, too.

From there straight way I walked to "Little Tokyo". Fifteen minutes later I reached the corner of East First and San Pedro Streets, the heart of the town. Here I stood motionless, with tears in my eyes, looking East, West, South and North, at the heaven above and the earth below. My heart was filled with joy, wonder, gratitude, thrills and unexpressable feelings.

The people passing me were Negroes, Americans and Japanese. Not a single face of my own blood. Most of them were walking without noticing me. Only a few looked at me and said "Hello".

I took the old Tendo Building, Miyako Hotel, Iwao Drug and Asia Company, all done up again under new names. The Yokohama Specie and Sumitomo Banks and Hori Brothers were still vacant.

Unconsciously my feet moved northward, toward the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. On the way, I discovered a red-fronted 40-10-25 cent store owned by a Japanese. Mr. Uyeda, a merchant of hardware, working and fast food. His business is doing well. The diners are mostly laborers of all races and nationalities and their attitude toward the relocated is courteous and friendly.

Some time ago, Mr. Dillon S. Myer, our National WRA Director, and Mr. Paul Robertson, the Local Supervisor for Sonoma County, came to the town. They called him to the establishment and dined with Mr. Iida. The latter cooked shrimp tempura especially for his guests and they liked it very much. After the dinner, the number one man of the WRA thanked the host and left saying, "Thank you, Ben. Please take care of our people as you can. We do our best to enable all the relocated to become independent persons in their respective communities.













