

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Washington

June 2, 1943

Hon. Martin Dies
Chairman, Special Committee to
Investigate Un-American Activities
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dies:

I have noted in the press recently a number of statements by representatives of the Committee on Un-American Activities which have a direct bearing on the work of the War Relocation Authority, and have the effect of seriously interfering with the program which this agency has been instructed by the President and the Congress to carry out. The statements have been so misleading to the public, and so fraught with errors and half-truths that I am impelled to record my comments for your information.

Several of the statements have dwelt upon the presence of organized and dangerous pro-Japanese elements in the West Coast population prior to the outbreak of war. No mention is made of the fact that the federal intelligence agencies apprehended several thousand suspects immediately after Pearl Harbor, and that those found guilty upon hearings have been incarcerated in internment camps. Instead the implication is strongly made that all such subversive individuals are to be found in the population of the relocation centers.

On May 29, Mr. Robert E. Stripling, identified as Chief Investigator of your Committee, was quoted in the press as saying that spies and saboteurs are being released from the relocation centers. The charges were not supported, but nevertheless they unquestionably would have the effect of arousing mistrust of all persons of Japanese ancestry who are seeking to relocate. Since the War Relocation Authority grants leave from its centers with the provision that an individual may be called back at any time for sufficient reason, I am only discharging my responsibilities when I request that I be supplied with the names of any persons released from relocation centers who are spies or saboteurs or who have been trained in saboteur schools. I suggest also that the names and evidence be made available immediately to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In a statement to the press on May 31, which I understand also was made by Mr. Stripling, it was charged that evacuees in relocation centers are provided with foods of kinds and quantities not available to the general public. Except for the amounts of food on hand at the Manzanar Relocation Center which presumably were accurately reported, the statement was erroneous and consequently misleading. The statement was made that "prime" beef was provided for the evacuees. The beef ordered for relocation centers is third grade. The Committee spokesman completely ignored the fact that

all food rationing restrictions of the OPA are in force at relocation centers, that the actual cost of food is approximately 40 cents a day per person, and the WRA has deliberately refrained from purchasing certain kinds of food known to be scarce. These facts were made known to the committee's investigators who visited the Manzanar Relocation Center, and could have been quickly and readily confirmed by a telephone call to this office.

The Office of the President has just referred to me the telegram of May 19 from Representative J. Parnell Thomas, a member of your committee, urging Presidential action in stopping further release of people of Japanese ancestry until section II of your committee's report on Axis activities can be issued, and the Committee's investigation of the relocation centers can be completed. In the absence of any supporting facts, we must regard Mr. Thomas' request as purely personal, and insufficient to warrant a change in the policies of this agency.

We have our own records on all persons above 17 years of age in the relocation centers, and we also have available to us information from the records of the federal investigative agencies. In the interest of national security we do not release any evacuee if his record indicates any reason why it would not be advisable for him to live outside a relocation center. On the other hand, the manpower situation plus the constitutional guarantees demand that loyal American citizens and law-abiding aliens be given every opportunity to contribute to the war effort by productive work in normal communities.

Investigators for your Committee have visited a number of the relocation centers, and have received complete collaboration of the staff there. We in the national office will be glad to cooperate fully in providing facts which your committee may desire concerning the policies and procedures of this agency. To date no member or representative of the Committee has asked me for any information or has been in touch with any member of the Washington staff.

In the meantime, I hope it will be possible for representatives of your Committee to refrain from making public statements concerning the War Relocation Authority on the basis of incomplete information. Continuance of this practice of issuing irresponsible statements can only lead to the conclusion that the Committee has abandoned its assignment of fact-finding and in this instance is devoting itself to the oppression of a minority. Such a course can contribute only to national disunity and hinder the war effort.

Sincerely yours,

H. L. Myer
Director