

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

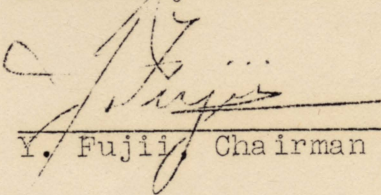
MINIDOKA PROJECT

- R E P O R T -

February 28, 1945

On the 19th Day of February, 1945, the Minidoka Community Council and the Block Commissioners met with Mr. Dillon S. Iyer, the WRA National Director, at the Community Council Chambers to discuss the questions pertinent to the center closure. Following is a condensed official record of this 170-minutes meeting.

Minidoka W.R.A. Project  
Community Council

  
Y. Fujii, Chairman



MEETING OF  
THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL AND THE BLOCK COMMISSIONERS  
WITH

MR. MYER, NATIONAL DIRECTOR

February 19, 1945

- M I N U T E S -

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Fujii, Chairman of the Community Council and the Block Commissioners, at 9:15 A.M.

Those present were:

Councilmen: Y. Fujii, S. Osawa, K. Mayeno, H. Hikida, Y. Doi, also S. Sunohara, Executive Secretary;

Block Commissioners: H. Hatate, Y. Hamamoto, G. Nomura, D. Kanaya, K. Hara, S. Osaka, M. Kawaguchi, T. Yoneyama, T. Suzuki, I. Masumoto, K. Kimura, M. Ota, K. Kashiwara, M. Otani, J. Yoshida, T. Sasaki, T. Kusumi, M. Hayasaka, F. Hata, M. Arai, S. Okumura, T. Kosakada, M. Muramatsu, H. Kurihara;

Committee Members: D. Takeoka, T. Iayano, D. Kakasone, K. Yamada, J. Sakoda;

Auditors: S. Soeda, T. Tamura, M. Hashimoto, H. Kitayama;

Appointed Personnel: H.L. Stafford, J. Nichols, J.F. Graham, F.S. Barrett, E. Ruberman, W.F. Rawlings, V. McLaughlin.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

Mr. Fujii

On behalf of the residents of this project, and as the Chairman of the Community Council and the Block Commissioners, I wish to extend our greetings and welcome to Mr. Myer, our National Director.

Since the announcement of lifting of the general exclusion order on the West Coast was made, the Community Council and the Block Commissioners have had two meetings with our Project Director, and also have met with Mr. Kimball to discuss certain phases of the problem. In addition, the Community Council has discussed and studied with the residents in the hope of bringing about constructive suggestions and recommendations by the people of this project.

We are very happy to have you with us today, to meet with you to discuss some phases of the problem. Out of this conference, we are hoping that some issues of the problem will be clarified, and that you will get a better understanding of our side of the issues and undertake necessary steps as are required in obtaining a revision of the new policy so as to eliminate fears and anxieties of the evacuee residents in this center.

Since our time is strictly limited, and Mr. Myer's time is very valuable, I take great pleasure in introducing to you our National Director, Mr. Myer, at this time.

INTRODUCTORY TALK:

Mr. Myer

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Community Council, Block Commissioners, and other folks of Minidoka.

This is my third visit here to Minidoka, and I am very happy to be here and have this opportunity to talk with you. I was asked when I was down at Granada to meet with the high school youngsters there. I met with them and talked to them. One of the first question that was asked was, "What is the real reason for your visit here?" I want to tell you my real reason for the visit to all of these centers. The real reason that I came to these centers is to try, if possible, to have you folks understand why we have announced certain policies and to discuss them with you. I came also to find out whether there are any squeaks in the machinery and to learn the details in order to help get this job done, so we can iron out this complex problem for



all of us. Any suggestions made by you people in Minidoka could be made to other centers to help them carry out their job. I am meeting with you people and the Appointed Personnel to learn what I can while I am here. And, on the national standpoint, to help you get your job done. I didn't come down here to make a speech but to discuss with you and answer some of your questions first hand, and if I stand here and give you the answers to the questions and go specifically to them, it should not take too much time on this. I do want to tell you I haven't had time to read your recommendations through in detail yet.

In the first place, it is my belief that in spite of little incidents and things in the newspapers here and there, the general attitude on the West Coast is better today than it has been before. As far as people in this center and other centers are concerned, we have reasons for that but not apparent on the surface. We still have those very people who have been carrying on a campaign of hate for the last forty years. Particularly, a large number of people do these things because of the economic reasons, and they have been doing a pretty good job of working at it. They are claiming to boycott through resolutions, through newspaper advertisements and all kinds of procedures in relationship to the whole relocation program on the basis of what you and I do. We let that little group of people, who have been your enemies throughout the years, make or break you unless you put up a fight and do something about it. That is exactly how I feel about it. In spite of the fact that I say this, I have more and more things I want to tell you and the reasons why we decided to finish the relocation program. There are two or three things I would like to say. After the mass exclusion ban was lifted, we arrived at the particular reasons, some of them as early as three years ago. In the first place we have in Minidoka and other centers between eighteen to twenty thousand youngsters who are going to continue to live and spend their whole lives in the United States. The youngsters educational life is entirely of contacts with the whole community within the world in which he lives. In spite of the fact that we have gotten along well in Minidoka, you don't want your children to live here all the rest of their lives. I have three of my own. I think it is an important assumption that those kids get back into the normal schools and outside communities as fast as they can get adjusted themselves before it gets more and more difficult for them to do so. Otherwise, they may have a far more difficult time later than now. Some of the youngsters have never gone to any other school than here. That is one of my reasons.

The number two reason is that there are opportunities today for the people in relocation centers to move out to the West Coast and other parts of the country and make a living, which may not be available later. After the war is over, when war plants close and when the boys come back, there would be competition for jobs, chaos to fill situations than we have at the present time. I have felt for many months that it was going to be essential to finish the relocation job. While the campaign situation is an object for the people to have here in venturing out, I don't think that can absorb the people. I believe that very strongly. I realize it is very hard to believe that you can make a living on the outside so easily but it will be a lot easier to do it now. It will be almost impossible later.

The third reason, I think, is important. It concerns the welfare agencies with whom we are working to give aid to the unfortunate people because they are old, ill or poor, or because of other unfortunate circumstances. The agencies are in the best position to help them today than ever before. Whenever everybody is able to work, they don't have very many people to work with. The figures are full now and they will maintain the basic responsibility of handling welfare cases. They have some funds and we have some funds. They are in a better position to help us now than they will be later on. It isn't important now but we have confidence in people and I have heard a great many people say that they have no confidence in other agencies. It is my judgement, right or wrong, for the right people here to get help so that some relationship can be established now. These people can take an interest before we take any additional step and I think you will



help carry some of that load. We have some decent friends to do that in some way. They are not going to be in a position to do it always. That is why it is one of our major reasons that we are asking you to carry out that phase of the program.

For the next year, funds are coming out of our budget but will be expended through agencies. Where we can, it will be necessary to build up our relationship.

The fourth reason is that we have to get our funds from the United States Congress. We have had pretty good relation with Congress so far. We have requested for funds all along and have been favored. How long that will be available, I do not know. It should not be necessary for them to continue to give as they always have been. It will be just so long as people can go back home and for a reasonable time afterwards. What is a reasonable time? That I do not know. We considered all of the problems involved and decided that approximately a year or so was a reasonable time and that was about the only thing. We couldn't justify a longer time because I felt it was essential that the job be done within that length of time. The budget has already been prepared. That is a practical point and I am sure that you must be considered. Congress introduced the bill to close the center by July 1st, but it won't pass because the closing of the center then is not justified. I knew that at the time of the introduction of the bill. Mr. Moervshok didn't have a good chance of that bill being passed. The reason for not passing it was that we have a program outlined and set up which was more reasonable than his. He hasn't had a program and we had some kind of a sound program. We have no concern about that bill passing now. I was surprised at him. I know why the bill was introduced. There is going to be a lot of pressure.

The fifth reason is a very important one to you folks than any one else. I think it is important and that is this. The folks who have been fighting you for the last 40 years have been opposed to our relocation program from the start. I couldn't figure it out for a little while. I didn't know the history. Some of them began to oppose the relocation program. They wanted us to maintain everybody in the relocation centers. They hoped that they could get them out of this country. There were legislative bills to remove all of you people and your children from this country. Various bills of this kind have been proposed and introduced. Some of them still have the thought in the backs of their heads. The situation is very favorable now. Relocation is best at the present time in working with those favorable people who have been pretty well financed. I don't think it is our interest to give those who have been fighting you for the last 40 or 50 years a target to shoot at.

Those are the five points. I didn't figure those out since last December. I have known those reasons for a long long time. I felt for two years or more that it was essential to get rid of the Relocation Centers as fast as possible. You folks will understand and I hope you will help us to make the rest of the folks understand. We have been fighting on the principles and have gained a lot. I have not been sent to fight your purposes but to bring about an understanding. The war has not been finally won but we have won the major battles. We were on the defensive side up till about a year ago, completely on the defensive. Some of us didn't know much and it took many of us a long time to learn your enemies. While we were learning they were on the offensive battling us, investigating agencies and other investigating committees were taking most of our time. For a time, we have been writing answers to the kind of misinformation poured out by the Dies Committee or by the group of other committees who have been fighting you for a long time, trying to get them to understand what the facts really were. It is entirely different this year. We aren't through yet but we seem to have hit the hump of the back bone and it hasn't been cracked. Gentlemen, we are going to need your help. You are going to need my help. We need to work together if we are going to finish this job. I believe strongly that we can finish this job in the next six months except for an occasional discrimination. We can go ahead with the program on a sound basis with the help of the good people who are going to help you. They are going to



roll up their sleeves and work with us so that you can go back to the old areas. That is what we find in the majority of the United States. They won't help you much here. It takes a little time to work out that pattern we have set up. I realize that there are a great many people in Minidoka. Some of them are afraid and that is understandable. The longer we have Relocation Centers, the worse that is going to get because it is one of the burdens of an isolated camp of this type. The reasons we have laid out are sound and haven't been made out with any idea of doing any damage to you folks, but were laid out with just the hope that you will understand our idea and I hope that you will keep that in mind. There shouldn't be any fight between you and me, but we should have friendly arguments and discussions as to how we can do the job. And as far as I'm concerned, details may be needed to adjust problems, but adjustments and basic discussions are of no concern to getting the job done. We need the understanding represented in this center and all of the centers. You have the leadership to do the job. And we could sit down and decide how to get the job done together. It is the only way we can get it done. We certainly can't get it done by playing into the hands of the very group of people who are fighting you and fighting me. Their techniques of putting on the best campaign are through the newspapers. Some have succeeded in scaring you by writing to you that it is not safe to come back for the duration. Some of your Caucasian friends are honestly doing their bit by discouraging you from returning. They don't understand this crowd. Just as long as you are out, whether the war is going on or not, it will be continued. You better take advantage of it.

I have summarized the basic facts for you, Mr. Fujii. I think I better hear your story and then we can talk over your specific points. From here on, it is a matter for each individual or individual families or small groups to work out their own program to decide whether they are going East, West, North, or South. I want to help you do it. Everything done has been done in the spirit of kindness and good-will and, I think, you will understand the problem. I'm not trying to push people around, certainly not you people. I would like to push around certain groups of people. I would like to help you people beat around some of these other groups who do crazy little things. They are writing to considerable people, newspapers and making a lot of noise. We are going to do some hammering on those who are doing those things. As far as they have done and continue to do this, we have an advantage. As Chairman of this meeting, we better talk of more specific points, Mr. Fujii.

Mr. Fujii:

I'm sure we all understand your report. We appreciate it from the bottom of our hearts, for your untiring efforts given for the benefit of the residents.

In order to facilitate the proceeding of the meeting today, we have our report in writing and now at this time, I would like to have Mr. Yamada present our report by reading it.

Mr. Yamada: (Report to Lyer was read)

#### INTRODUCTION

This report embodies the reaction of residents of the Minidoka Relocation Center to the announced WRA policy of closing the centers by January 1, 1946. It is the result of recent discussion of residents in the block, of special delegates elected in each block to study this matter, and of the Fact-Finding Committee composed of seven of the special delegates and the seven members of the Community Council. The report is the result of an attempt to portray for the benefit of the National Director the thinking and feeling of the residents on the all-important problems surrounding relocation and the closing of the center. Detailed documentation of the report has not been possible, but it is the conviction of the Fact-Finding Committee that the report is an accurate one.

The report is divided into two parts. The first part reveals the



reaction of residents, and the second part includes the numerous requests that the residents would like to have presented to the National Director.

To simplify the analysis of the attitude of residents toward the relocation and closing programs, they can be divided into the following four categories:

1. Those who have plans for relocation.
2. Those who do not want to leave the security of the center regardless of the condition on the outside.
3. Those who believe that they cannot relocate at present because of adverse conditions.
4. Those who are undecided.

Two months have passed since the announcement of the lifting of the ban on the West Coast and the proposed closing of all the WRA centers. The residents have had a chance to study the announcements concerning the provisions being made for those now remaining in the centers. Only a few families have relocated since the lifting of the ban, and the number of individuals who have gone to investigate the situation on the West Coast has been small. It is the opinion of the members of the Fact-Finding Committee as the result of studies that have been reported from various blocks that the number of families which have plans for relocation is extremely small. The announcement of the new WRA policy has not affected the gradual departure of residents from the relocation center. Certainly there is no sign of a wholesale exodus to the West Coast in the near future.

The vast majority of the residents are not ready to relocate and do not have plans for relocation. Some have indicated that they do not believe that forced relocation is the intention or policy of the Government, and desire to remain in Government custody for the duration. Others have indicated willingness to relocate if the proper aid and opportunities are provided them. For many of them it is a matter of waiting for better opportunities. Still other have not made up their minds. They do not know whether they will be able to relocate, or whether they will be allowed to remain in the center for the duration. They are lost in the uncertainties of the situation.

The report will first elaborate on the reasons for the stands taken by two groups mentioned above: those who do not intend to leave the center, and those who feel that they cannot relocate under present conditions. Since those who have not made up their minds are wavering between these two groups, and since the number who are presently planning to relocate is comparatively small, the explanation of those two groups should give a fairly good picture of how the majority of the residents feel about the relocation and closing programs.

#### GROUP A

##### Those Who Do Not Intend to Leave the Center for the Duration Regardless of Conditions on the Outside.

The announcement of the closing of the centers came as a shock to most residents, and many declared that it presented a more difficult situation than the forced evacuation from the Coast. In contrast to the attitude of inevitableness of evacuation, once it was ordered, many residents now believe that the closing of the Relocation Centers is unreasonable and impractical. They believe that forced relocation is not the intention nor the policy of the WRA. They believe that there are not enough facilities on the outside to take care of all of the remaining population in the centers. The opinion that the WRA is attempting a program which it possibly cannot carry out is fairly widespread among the residents, and many of them count on being able to remain in one of the remaining relocation centers for the duration.



Economic Reasons for Remaining in the Center for the Duration.

Question:

1. The economic foundation of many of the residents built up during the past thirty or forty years has been largely destroyed in the process of forced evacuation. Many properties and businesses were liquidated on short notice at a great loss at the time of evacuation. The re-establishment of business foundations during wartime, especially by aliens, is difficult and unadvisable.

2. Many residents assumed that they were to be interned for the duration and made arrangements accordingly. Some of them leased their properties and businesses for the duration. Others were forced by circumstances to sell their house or place of business and consequently do not have a place to which they can return, and do not care to venture elsewhere while a war is in progress.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

First let me say, Mr. Chairman, I think this is a very good summary as it exists and I think it is an honest analysis.

One thing it proves to me is that the propaganda from Mr. Herst, Native sons, Nifty Garrett and a few other people have been pretty effective and that is understandable. There are people and a great many of them who are feeling insecure and feel content just as long as they live in Minidoka. They don't know what is on the outside and read every story in the newspaper or in the P.I. about the atrocities going on on the outside. They don't know that there are a few good people and what they are willing to do.

I would like to get down to certain points on these individual suggestions under Group A. (Economic reasons for remaining in the center for the duration). I realize that there has been some of that. I would just like to point out that you are not making any money here in the Relocation Center and can never get started back in with that foundation very fast as long as folks continue to live in here. You will not be able to lay a lot of money aside at \$16.00 a month. That is, fundamentally, for a good many people. There are some people, not only in Minidoka but in other centers, who get funds and incomes and are enjoying retired life in a relocation center. I suppose that is understandable. While it is difficult and will be difficult to establish business, it won't be any less difficult than now but get more difficult as time goes along. If you don't hurry, there is going to be double competition than there is right now.

It is true that some of these people are unfortunate, in one reason, because they have leased their property for the duration and have made losses. They do have some income from the property but if they want to go back to their property, they have to work out some adjustment with the lessee. If they still want to have some income, that is a problem. We don't know quite how to solve that problem. Even though they have incurred these losses, now is a better time to recuperate those losses. The people who are outside can gain now in terms of wages or whatever they do because there aren't very many people losing money nowadays.

QUESTION:

3. The Issei population is advanced in age and many of them do not have the confidence of venturing out of the center by themselves. The average age of the male Issei is about 61 years. Many of them are too old or too weak to work. Those with sons in the Army, especially, believe that they should be allowed to remain in a center until their sons return. At the time of the volunteering program, parents were assured by the WRA through the Irrigator that no one would be forced to relocate:



"Evacuee Will Not be Forced to Leave Here"

While it is the desire of the War Relocation Authority to relocate all evacuees, no one will be forced to leave this center, it was pointed out this week.

Army volunteers and others who leave dependents in the center may rest assured that they will be cared for as long as they wish to remain in this center.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Irrigator, March 13, 1934

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

The WRA does not deal with force. They have gotten along pretty well without it. We have been working our program out together. It is set up with the idea of having an orderly procedure which we felt very honest and most sound and which can be carried out within a year's time. Most of the people are afraid of having it closed within a week. I think we have made alternative provision to get established either temporarily or permanently until after the war is over. But I still say that they will do much better on the outside. I don't think we are on that basis as you think. We should forget about the word "force". We have no idea in mind that people are to be forced around. We have given people time to think of getting started outside. We have provided ample time and have given the chance to discuss and understand the reasons for the program step by step. If people are ready, we will assist in working out the problems. We hope that could be done and I think it can be done. It is good for the people to relocate who are feeling this way about it.

QUESTION:

4. According to announcements, for those who are unable to work or care for themselves arrangements are being made with outside agencies for public assistance. Most of the Issei abhor the idea of having to go on relief, especially when they have been self-supporting until evacuation. Many of them feel entitled for the duration to the security of a relocation center, which is free from the humiliation which one has to experience in applying for relief on the outside.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

No relief application will be made outside. They will be made here through the Relocation Office and Welfare Office. All arrangements can be worked out before the people leave here. We also guarantee that people have a place to live and temporary arrangements can be made. I don't see very much difference between living on relief here in Minidoka and people living on relief on the outside. Most of the people won't need very much help.

We have set this program out, as I pointed out to you in my opening statement, in this manner. I think there are people who are old, people who are ill and who have sons in the Army who can't immediately move back to the main stream and cannot get their leases back. They are going to need help. We have provided funds for that and for people of that kind. We feel it is essential for those people who need help and we are in the position to do it now. I think that we got the pattern so set that there will be a good many hundred people who will understand your problem and will become sympathetic with it. Now we have the opportunity to do it. The time is now rather than later. When the armistice is signed, there will be a lot of pressure and there will be people who will be pushed out. We have an honest program set up. I think there is going to be a time when most people will not get what they want. Now we deal with the Social



Security Board who have been tremendously helpful and they will be of much help to us now.

During this period for the next several months, the WRA still expects to be in existence to work with the Social Security Board and the local board to see that discrepancies and adjustments will be ironed out. If the program that we have laid out doesn't function, we will work out a little adjustment to make it function. In any case, I think it is much better, as a matter of fact, essential to get help on the outside rather than in here while we have the opportunity to get the job done, because it will be better for the people and everybody.

QUESTION:

5. Many residents believe that they are entitled to receive compensation from the Government for the losses which they experienced at the time of evacuation. They request that they be returned as nearly as possible to their original status. If the possibility of effecting this during wartime is small, they prefer to remain in a center for the duration.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

It is my belief that remaining in the center will interfere with any possibility of any claims of folks which they may have later on. To your question raised about claims and indemnity, I question very seriously whether it was sound to work out a program on indemnity and such claims until the war is over. I will say and still say that if the folks continue to conduct themselves on the whole as they have been and if we can carry out this program together, we can prove to the United States and to your boys in the Army that you can do a job in an early and orderly basis. I think something can be worked out. I don't know what should be done, but I have some ideas on it. This is the first time that this question was specifically raised since I have been visiting the centers in the last three weeks. I will need time for receiving and reviewing those claims made by some impartial people with those who are willing. I am going to have to be in a position to do that. That is how I feel about it. We have had every reasonable cooperation from the people. I am going to need every consideration in regard to the problem which has kept the rest of the evacuees from moving and what was carried on. I am not ready to make any special adjustment for a problem, but I am ready to advise you at any time or your leaders of the whole group as to how best that job can be carried out. There should be some procedure. I am willing to go to any committee to help make recommendations but it is an ill time to do so. I believe that you have the least chance of getting it now unless we get this job done during this year. You and your folks should be planning if it is important to you. I don't mind supporting it if it's anything that is sound and honest. It has to be individual persuasion in any case.

I think loans and those claims are going to have to be worked out individually. We have to have pretty good records, pretty good facts and good proof that these things happened. We know that there has been losses and vandalism and I think we could be of help on that problem. I don't think we can be of help to folks who want to sit down and live in a relocation center all the rest of their lives rather than to get reestablished on the outside.

QUESTION:

6. Anti-Japanese sentiment still exists. This is especially true in certain places on the West Coast, where organized groups have been stirring ill-feeling against returning evacuees. Many of the old and some of the young people are afraid to venture out of the center while a war is in progress. They believe that there is the possibility of a rash act by an individual or a group which greatly dislikes Japanese. They also fear that there is the possibility of the out-



break of a more general ill-feeling against Japanese in a community. They point out that if they were evacuated for their own protection, as it has been claimed, then, they should remain protected until the danger from harm is past. The news concerning conditions on the Coast has given the residents the impression that most spots on the Coast are still greatly fraught with danger. The idea that staying in the center for the duration is the wise policy to follow has been strengthened recently.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

There has been some anti-Japanese sentiment, but not nearly as much as a year ago or two years ago. This idea of being evacuated for their own protection--that is a lot of bunk. That wasn't the reason. It has been said but people now recognize the evacuation program. So we won't argue about that point. Let's wipe that one off.

There is still some anti-Japanese sentiment among certain people along the West Coast. They have a chronic disease. Doctors tell me that it takes a longer time to cure than a case of measles. This Oriental attitude started around 1905 or 1906. I say about that time because they quit beating the Chinese around and started beating you people. They are beginning to back out now. Now the back bone of the opposition is cracked. They were for the exclusion and wanted to maintain the exclusion. That was what they were fighting for but they have failed. They don't dare try to get their foot in the back door now. That thing that has been credited was that there are over 13,000 Japanese-Americans in the Armed Forces. Half of the group of them are serving in the Army in Italy, France, Burma, Saipan, and etc. and are making a record of which you have a right to be proud. I am certainly proud of that, but even they are not escaping discrimination. The good folks in this country and folks along the Coast have had the most dramatic and tangible evidence that I know of. These kids know how to fight for their country. They have more to fight for and they have done a better job than others. That is a fact which has become evident to a lot of people, because it has traveled up and down the Coast. There are a few nuddle-headed people whom I don't quite understand. That very fact has been proven to the people of good-will. They are more well organized than they have ever been. They are willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work.

The American Principles and Fair-Play Committee have done a good job effectively and quietly. There are a lot of other groups who have been working with you. They haven't shown up as effectively as some of the others because they are not quite as well organized. It will take 30 or 60 days or even 90 days to get better organized. We have people working with us who will be ready to move in whenever they have somebody to help support it. Foolish things are done by foolish individuals. There will be a dozen or two of them and that means that when some of these things happen, we must have the support of the good people and help clean it up. It is going to take a little time. All the battles are not over and I can't tell you that there won't be any continued pressure. It is not something that will clear up just because the war is over. If you stay in the center and don't face it, it will be just as tough or tougher than it is now. There are a few people who have economic reasons to keep you in the Relocation Centers and to see that you have been scared out. The people who are running this campaign are the ones who want the centers to be continued but they know and I know that they are licked. Those are the facts.

Why sure there is Dave Becke. They did everything to make a lot of noise. They said they were going to fight us with everything they knew. I talked to him about our program of relocation. They told me why they were going to fight us. It was the first time I knew. I discovered just why they have been fighting you folks and fighting the relocation program. I thought they were very happy



to get you out of the camp, but they wanted to get all of you clear out of the country. He isn't talking about it any more. He knew that he had lost the battle. He isn't the only pebble on the beach. There isn't always going to be a pebble on the beach because there are a lot of other people who is going to give support, provided that you are not frightened out of the picture. He has been there and been at it for a long time. There are a lot of people of that type and all of the anti-Japanese sentiment have not disappeared. We have more friends and better educated people who will give us more support than ever before. Now is the time for you to take advantage of this situation and face it out if you are going to continue living in this country. It is going to be tough for some of the older folks who have been through that before, but if you are going to help your kids who are fighting over there to have an opportunity to continue to live in this country, you've got to do it now. It is going to be harder and harder to leave if you don't do it now. We are going to help you. I think we can get this job done.

QUESTION:

7. Many people who desire to return to their homes on the Coast and are not able to, desire to remain in the center for the duration. They include excludees, who are not permitted to return to the Coast, businessmen whose funds are frozen, people who have leased their business for the duration, etc. Leaving the center for another part of the country often means taking a risk which they can ill afford. Businessmen and farmers do not want to start anew in another section of the country when they are going to return to their homes on the Coast after the war.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

I realize that there are a good many people who feel that way. I don't know whether I can comment further on that. If any of you have funds frozen, I wish you would get in touch with us, either through Mr. Barrett or through me. We will do everything we can to get those funds unfrozen. I have had some telephone assurances about it so that we can help you on that. They're not very busy just now and they could get at the individual cases who are interested and want their funds unfrozen. I can't promise to get the job done but we will try and get the rest of the support on that.

I realize that there are some excludees that can't go out now, and I don't know when they will go off the list.

QUESTION:

8. Repatriates feel honor-bound to remain under Government custody for the duration.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

Well, if they want to remain under Government custody, they can remain so just as well as on the outside. It breeds a sort of a disease with some of you folks who are affected more and more to become harmless when you have a disease. It gets worse as long as you stay in bed. The only way to get well is to get out of the bed and take a few steps at a time and it won't be long before you can get this job done. It is the same kind of stage of disease called institutionalism. People in prison get it.

I went to a state prison on a visit when I was a youngster. When I went through the state penitentiary, I spoke to an old gentleman in the group probably 7 or 8 years older than I, around 60 now; who had been an inmate in that prison for 15 years. He almost wished that he was back in there. He wanted to go back there because he had adjusted himself in the place. I couldn't



understand him then but am beginning to understand that now. Some of you began to like the Relocation Center just like that, so you don't want to leave the Center.

QUESTION:

9. The refusal of some individuals to consider relocation at the present time can be interpreted as a reaction to the announcement of closing the center made by the WRA. These individuals remember that the relocation centers were planned to exist for the duration or that the WRA promised that no one would be forced to relocate. Their reaction to the announcement is that they believe such a hasty step is highly unreasonable. They are strongly opposed to a program which they believe tantamount with forced relocation. They seriously doubt that the WRA can carry out the closing of the centers.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

I think that is highly reasonable and I don't think it's unreasonable but quite understandable. I'm not going to argue about that. You seriously doubt that the WRA can carry out the program. We haven't an alternative plan because I don't think we need any plan. We are going to do the job together and I think some of the folks need your help and my help to get over this disease that we are talking about. I think it can be done.

GROUP B

Those Who Feel that They Cannot Relocate at Present  
Because of Adverse Conditions.

Relocation proceeded rather slowly in the past, and has affected Nisei mostly between the ages of 18 and 35. If the relocation program is to continue at the same pace as in the past, more of the older Issei and younger children will have to find their way out of relocation centers. The same obstacles which hindered relocation in the past, still are effective today, except, perhaps, for the lifting of restrictions on the West Coast. Unless more of these obstacles are removed, many of the residents will continue to feel reluctant to relocate. With many of the Nisei sons in the Army, the old folks and families with small children find relocation a very grave risk.

Economic Reasons for Not Relocating Now

QUESTION:

1. Many evacuees experienced serious losses at the time of evacuation. What little savings they had they have spent, or do not want to exhaust completely in venturing outside. Many of them feel that they should not relocate without more substantial financial aid than evacuees receive at the present time.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

We have some of the same problems involved here because losses at the time of evacuation were heavy and savings have been spent. I suppose that is understandable, but I think that you will agree with me if you stop to think about it that what I said is true.

A while ago I mentioned that you are not making any money in here unless they make some investment which will be of gain. I wish I could stack everybody in a relocation center including myself and ten or fifteen thousand people and say, "Here is the money. You can go out and spend it any way you like." I am not in a position to do that and neither is the Government. We just cannot do it. We are in a position however, and I think it's been pretty well arranged with agencies, to give minimum assistance for those who are not independently cared for. We will take care of them



on that basis. It is impossible and impractical to handle it the way you request. I am going to continue to try to help you do that. We will stick to plans and procedures and I think they will function. While I understand that procedure, we can't consider that problem in general terms. We have to consider them as each specific family, individual, or group.

QUESTION:

2. Many businesses and farms of evacuees were carried on by the family group. With most of the Nisei of draftable age in the Army, the older people are unable to take serious risks in leaving the center.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

Well, that is a problem I will admit. I told the folks at Granada Center more than that. There are a few words which I would like to have you folks drop out of the vocabulary. One is "can't" and one is "unable". These are words of a defeatist. We can and we will, if we work together. I am just as sympathetic as some of you. I believe that other old folks have sons in the Army and that most of them are getting allotments, some better allotments than on the outside, till the boys can come back. I realize that most of them need no funds but they need friendship. It is just as important for them to relocate outside near somebody who will be willing to lend a car to get the groceries, etc. and be in a position to go back to the ranch or farm before the boys come back. We can help them. I think we can do that. We can work out their problem, I think. There are groups in the center who cannot get assurance. Then, you are requested to put stars in the windows and on your lapels. That will assure them that you have boys in the Army. I am not in a position to push people around. I am interested in helping them out in each case. There are a good many people who feel the same way about it and we can do it.

QUESTION:

3. A large percentage of the residents of Hunt were formerly businessmen or farmers and require loans to begin their businesses or farms once again. Without loans many of them cannot get back into their own businesses, and most of them do not want to begin at their advanced age as laborers or enter a new field now. To harvest the first crop, for instance, many of the farmers would need to have sufficient funds at the beginning of the year. Many people also do not want to leave without some assurance that loans that are promised on paper are actually available, preferably before they leave the project. Some residents feel that unless loans to evacuees are handled by the WRA they cannot be relied upon.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

I realize that is a problem, a psychological problem more than a real one. There is much money to loan at a lower rate of interest than there was before today. Insurance companies are full of them. Banks are full of money. The Government is in no position to make loans now but there are others who are willing to go into a loan business on a large scale. Uncle Sam doesn't need that kind of loans. If anybody wants to buy land today, they say, "Come around, for I bought some". This is pretty invalid. My advice is to wait until it goes down a little. Don't worry about land loans. What the people is going to need is a temporary loan until they can get a little stock in the store or to get some crop put in and sold out. There are a lot of people who are willing to loan that money. I do realize that after checking it over, it is a worry of a good many people. While I have no confirmation to make about it, we are studying the problem to see whether or not you can secure money in good faith. Loans are made on the basis of good



faith. I am not sure if we can work it out but we are working on it and I think we will have some decision or some information soon whether we have the help or not. It is an individual problem.

Mr. Cozzens told me of people who went back and asked for a loan. One man asked for a loan and they wrote back the same type of letter as they have written to some of you. "As more and more people come back, there will be an undercurrent which may jeopardize your loan, so we don't want to loan it to you." Therefore this man walked squarely to the American National Bank and got his loan. He had no trouble. I don't think you will have very much difficulty. Somebody is willing to loan you some money. If you have a decent proposition, there are others who will be willing to make loans. People in the relocation centers tell me they have no money. I know better. I don't believe that people don't have money in these centers. The people are willing to loan money on better rates. I think loans are a problem but it isn't a big problem. I am willing to give some consideration to work it out some way. We have a committee or two giving consideration to work it out on a sound basis. They are giving some thought to it right now.

QUESTION:

4. Many of the residents have leased their property and have experienced difficulty in getting tenants to leave. Many farmers, for instance, have been discouraged by the tenant from coming back this year or for the duration. Those who have leased their property for the duration cannot make use of it at the present time. Others have had their leases revoked at the time of evacuation.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

This is the same one as the one we have already talked about. We are giving every help in the world. We have issued several notices about leases. We have set up additional relocation officers and lawyers and we will see that you get help and make valid leases. Sure, they are sticking to that job if they can and making pretty good money on it. We are helping you there.

About duration leases--I don't know what we can do about it, except what we have covered. I think that if they moved outside right now, they will get along much better.

QUESTION:

5. Businessmen and farmers have been discouraged from going back into operation by the difficulty in purchasing goods and equipment. The restocking of a store, for instance, is a serious undertaking. Even without the possibility of discrimination from wholesale stores, reestablishment of contact with wholesale farms in many instances can be expected to be difficult. In the same manner, it is difficult to purchase certain equipment because of wartime shortages.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

I don't think many people have hit this problem yet. I don't think that is considered nearly as difficult. In the respect that there are priorities on farm equipment, there are no priority on farm equipment excepting on tractors. It doesn't mean that equipment is easy to get but it can be found. I don't think that is insurmountable. There are lots of things to sell for people who are interested in doing business in the future. Community Enterprises in the centers have done a lot better job than some of the merchants in getting things and selling them. A number of Community Enterprises have shown that it can be done. There are a few things that are not available. Oriental goods are not available now, some of that part is true but it doesn't



mean that you can't do business. There are some Chinese in San Francisco who couldn't get their own goods so they go Mexican goods to sell. People can run businesses on some kind of a basis.

There are a certain type of goods which are difficult to purchase. We have an awful time getting clothes pins even though they are made of wood. They have quit making them. I know that refrigerators are hard to buy and certain other types of materials which are hard to get; but most of the things can be purchased some way and some how.

QUESTION:

6. Evacuees have met difficulty in obtaining business, professional and trade licenses, and this has served as a deterrent to further relocation. The licenses of some of the evacuees have relapsed, and they are unable to obtain a new one immediately.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

I haven't seen any serious problem about that. There might have been individual cases but you asked the question whether or not somebody can get their license back. We have no reason to believe that you can't get it back. If people do not have the right approach, it is so easy for them to say "no". A justifiable request for a license if made and if it were turned down, we are willing to go to battle on it. We haven't run into any serious difficulty as yet. We have not always won the battles, but we have won the battles on the outside somehow and I still think we can win.

QUESTION:

7. Evacuees have had difficulty in getting all sorts of insurance policies. Some evacuee dentists, for instance, have been refused Patient Liability Insurance. Unless evacuees are assured of being able to protect their property and themselves against harm, they will be reluctant to relocate.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

It is the same thing about this problem. I don't know about the dentist who was refused the Patients' Liability Insurance. If Mr. Barrett has the case or story about it, we want to know about it. We will want to help. I don't think it is going to be a simple problem. The only way to handle it is to handle it on a case to case basis.

QUESTION:

8. Some unions have refused to accept evacuees including former member as members. The AFL Teamsters Union in Seattle, for instance, has taken a stand against returning evacuees. Sawmill workers, cannery workers and others will not be able to return to their former jobs unless they can gain union membership.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

I realize it is a problem. They are not going along with the D. S. As far as the CIO is concerned, it is entirely a different situation. I have talked to some of the union folks in Seattle, and I don't think you will have trouble. Mr. Cozzens stated that the State Council of the CIO are giving every support to his 285 former members. Many other places have passed a bill to accept members. The local Council the San Francisco Council and the Alameda Council have passed it. The local in California area had passed the same resolution including the San Pedro Merri-



Time Union. We are getting the support. We are hoping to get the support of all the CIO up and down the Coast. I think we are going to have some tough time getting all the support, but I still think we can help lick them with the WMC and the FEPC. The AFL is not a question on the otherside. The AFBT will help us if they need to. If somebody wants to bring trouble and you want a job, we are willing to go to battle, and we will try to help. I don't think the world situation is out of control. It is entirely under control.

QUESTION:

9. Many evacuees who were in business or in a profession before have lost their customers, and it will not be an easy matter to build up a clientele again.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

You will never build up customers by staying in here. I think you will agree with me. It is hard to build up a clientele. If you haven't read the book "Prejudice" by Clarence McWilliams, I am surprised. It is a good job. Of course some of you may not read English very much but I can point out something that is important. Down in the Los Angeles area, the Issie folks were dealing with Isseis. They were dealing entirely with the small dealers. Isseis there were having a tougher and tougher time because of that even before the evacuation. The goods younger people are likely to buy are not the type of goods that you older folks are likely to consume. It is going to be a tougher road for you to climb more than the Niseis. There are more Japanese communities all around the country than there used to be. There weren't nearly half as many Japanese evacuees in Chicago than there were before the war. There are about five to eight thousand people in Chicago who have left the Relocation Centers. I have heard the folks say that they can't decide whether they are going to go into business which is limited to the community of Japanese pattern or whether they are going to do business with the Japanese public. They may not try it at all, as far as business is concerned. They will have to decide whether they want to go back to Portland or Seattle, or to go to Salt Lake, New York, Detroit, Minneapolis and etc. I don't know how long they are going to stay there, I don't know whether they are staying there. There are a few who have little ones in the family and there are some who want to do some waiting. They should do the waiting on the outside and ought to go looking around.

There are some small farmers and some businessmen who have a little capital to get back into farming or into business and who are going some place. They don't have to have family labor. They need to consider whether they have more security or whether to take small occupation or gardens. We have lots of people outside. Some will have a tough time if they have no funds, especially if people are going to be on the outside and live in this country. They will have to consider jobs as houseman or do some of the other types of jobs where their youngsters are near by and where they are making pretty good money. They don't have to work like they had before. I am not promising that that they all do but some people have made the adjustments.

When I was in Denver, I met a young chap serving as payroll clerk in a hospital. He was from the Heart Mountain Center and was getting along swell. I asked him about his folks. They had joined him after a month and they were living with one of the doctors. The father is 58 and the mother is 50. They were small farmers before. They came down and took that room and are getting \$90.00 a month for work which was not very heavy. They are happy.

We have lots of places for people who don't have much money where they can have security and friends if that is what they



want. They have worked hard all through their lives. It is a pretty hard task to do business if they do not have the children with them, but you don't need to consider that sort of thing. I think there will be considerably good people in the country who are willing to help you. I realize that it is pretty hard to make the adjustments.

QUESTION:

10. Serious restrictions, such as the freezing of assets, hamper the relocation program of some evacuees. If their loyalty is no longer questioned and they are permitted to return into the normal stream of American life, it is only fair that their funds be unfrozen so that they can make their living. Some evacuees were placed on the excluded list without apparent reason. These restrictions serve to hinder relocation.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

We will help on the problem of frozen assets if we can.

As I have mentioned before, we will do anything within reason to clear the excludées and help them on that problem. We are one little segment of the Government. We have to have the other people learn the same things which took us two or three years. They have to get in the picture and we do need to get that done. Some of you were put on the excludée list because of certain reasons. It will be dug into one of these day, and I think many of these cases could be cleared up.

QUESTION:

11. Damage to property belonging to evacuees since evacuation has been considerable. Homes and stores have been broken into. Fire has been set to buildings. The risk of incurring such damage to property discourages many from opening stores or returning to their farms.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

I realize that is true. I think those stories will be cleared up and we will help out in connection with that program. One other thing I ought to say is that much more damage is likely to occur on things if it is laying out in the open. This is true. Fires and burning of homes have been on properties in unprotected areas. We think that even if they were boarded up, it will continue to happen as long as it is sitting out in the open where people can shoot at them. That is why it is so necessary to have you people go back.

QUESTION:

12. In the past, housing has been one of the major obstacles in the relocation program of those who were able to find suitable jobs. This was especially true of housing opportunities for families. In the large cities on the West Coast housing is reported to be almost impossible to find. Those who own houses find difficulty in asking tenants to leave. Others have leased their houses for the duration or sold them. An idle glove factory in Seattle formerly employing over 100 Issei and Nisei workers turned down the offer to be provided with workers from Hunt on the ground that he did not have housing facilities to take care of the.

In spite of the tight housing situation no hostels have been set up as yet. Even some on short-term leaves have experienced difficulty in obtaining hotel rooms. The FSA type of labor camps has not been opened thus far on the Coast to evacuee laborers. Housing is one of the major obstacles of those who desire to return to the large cities on the Coast.



ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

Housing is no more a problem in Seattle than in Cleveland. You can solve the housing problem only in one way. The way to settle the problem is to get near where there is housing, and go look for it. People do move every few days. There aren't a lot of houses sitting empty. We have to move into an area where we can get housing. Provisions are going underway for hostels. We are getting hostels in most of the western areas. Agencies are working with them and they are making plans. When I left Granada, two ministers said they were going back to Los Angeles and other areas to set up hostels in individual churches, so I think that is on its way.

QUESTION:

13. The majority of the residents are skeptical of news of good public acceptance of evacuees. Recent news of anti-Japanese feeling on the Coast has only served to strengthen the conviction that it is risky to leave the center. The public stand taken by Governor Walgren of Washington has been repeatedly pointed out by evacuees as indicative of the sort of protection they can expect from local officials. Organized activities including outrageous demonstrations, of the American Legion, Pearl Harbor League, and other powerful groups have been effective in making evacuees reluctant to consider returning to such places as Kent, Auburn, Sumner in Washington, and Hood River and Gresham in Oregon. Caucasian friends of evacuees too have advised them not to return for the duration.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

I know the majority of the residents are skeptical. I agree to that and I guess that is understandable. That makes news and because it makes news, you hear more of that kind of news in the papers. Other kinds don't get into the news. Before this, you heard a lot of Governor Walgren, but we are getting some support from him now. You aren't going to hear very much noise from him any more. We will do everything we can on that. What we need is to have enough of you folks so that we can prove to yourself and some of the other people that what I say is true. We need a little support from you to relocate back there to fight those who are making so much noise. We can clear that up so long as they haven't scared you out.

QUESTION:

14. The announcement that relocation offices are to be closed immediately after all of the centers are closed has given evacuees added reason for believing relocation to be a matter of risk.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

We are planning to carry on these relocation offices for at least three months after the centers are closed. This is an open question. We want to render cleanup service which is necessary to take care of all that. There has been no final decision about that, but we have set up a budget to keep it open until about April 1, 1946.

QUESTION:

15. It cannot be stressed too strongly that the remaining population in the center are made up largely of Issei above 50 and Nisei below 20. The old folks who find the greatest difficulty, physically and mentally, in making the attempt at readjustment on the outside, are burdened with children too young to be of much help. Even if one member of the family works, he may not be able to support his family. The fear of some member of the family becoming ill and not being able



to obtain medical care or the breadwinner meeting with an accident and no longer being able to support the family haunts those who contemplate relocation. Time and again the statement has been made that there is no guarantee of economic security on the outside.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

There has never been a time that one did not have to fight for economic security on the outside. There is no guarantee that you will not have to fight for that, but I don't think very many people in this country can go hungry, as much as some of the other countries because we have the resources. It just depends on you. We will help you, of course, as far as we can. There are certain things that we can control and certain things that we can't control. There are things that we can't guarantee. These youngsters are important to you and they shouldn't continue to live in the relocation centers.

#### REQUEST FROM THE RESIDENTS

Requests from the residents to be presented to the National Director can be divided into two groups:

1. Requests from residents in general
2. Requests from those who contemplate relocation.

Both sets of requests are important for the future welfare of the residents, since unless both are given due consideration, hard feeling is likely to arise between different groups. Requests from residents in general can be further divided into the following:

- a. Requests concerning the maintenance of the centers.
- b. Requests concerning conditions within the center.

#### Request of Residents on the Maintenance of the Centers for the Duration.

The prime worry of a large number of residents at the present time is that the centers will all be closed by January 1, 1946, as announced by the WRA. This step, if actually carried out, would mean suffering and anguish for a large number of residents who do not wish to relocate for the duration or who are not yet ready for relocation. It would deprive a large number of people who have suffered because of forced evacuation from the Coast of the assurance of the basic need of life. It would take on the aspect of a mass forced evacuation from the centers without the protections that the WRA centers have provided evacuees until now. Residents request that the WRA centers remain open as long as necessary to give them adequate protection during the war and to give them ample opportunity to plan for relocation.

It has already been pointed out that there is a group of residents who, for various reasons, desire to remain in the WRA centers for the duration of the war. They believe that while the war in the Pacific is in progress they will not be able to return to their former status, which was lost in the process of evacuation. They do not want to be removed from the WRA centers against their wishes and be required to exchange their present security for a more doubtful one. To these individuals the centers, lacking in comforts, are still the only source of social and economic security left to them. To allow them to keep this source of subsistence and protection after what they have suffered through evacuation is in conformity with a humane policy.

There are also a large number of individuals who are having difficulty making their relocation plans. For many of them the obstacles under present conditions are almost insurmountable. Many people who desire to return to their homes on the Coast, for instance, will not be able to do so unless public acceptance is improved and many



difficult problems are ironed out. Some of the obstacles, such as the fear of harm, cannot be entirely removed until the cessation of hostilities. In any event the relocation of the larger proportion of the residents here is a long-range program, and one which cannot be effected, as the evacuation program was, in a short time. These individuals fear that unless the centers remain open beyond January, 1946 they will be forced to leave without having had an opportunity to make proper provisions for housing, jobs, etc.

#### Request of Residents on Project Conditions

Until an evacuee leaves the project, he is a member of the remaining population. Such individuals desire humane treatment as long as they remain here on the project. Certain steps taken by the administration have been interpreted as means of making conditions in the center unpleasant for remaining evacuees. The elimination of certain facilities, such as the school, for instance, seems to many residents a subtle means of furthering relocation. Some doubt the wisdom of employing subtle coercion, rather than persuasion, to get people to leave the center. They fear that the consistent use of the negative approach may result in a crisis situation, which might greatly embitter the residents and cause the majority of them to take a negative attitude toward all administrative policies--including relocation.

If the policy of the WRA is concentrated on the negative aspects, or appears to be to the residents, cooperation between residents and the local administration becomes untenable and difficult to fill. Channels of communication between the administration and the residents will be clogged. More and more the relocation center would take on the aspects of a concentration camp.

Paramount to the successful selling of the relocation program to the residents is the harmonious relationship between the administration and the residents. This is probably realized by those connected with the relocation program. Residents request that the channels of communication between the administration and residents be improved. They desire harmonious relationship with the administration while they remain in the center. They desire to have the more positive aspects of the relocation program--rather than the negative--stressed. They ask that the administration show sincerity in the future welfare of the evacuees, and convince them of the wisdom of relocation, rather than force them to leave against their wish.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

I think I can cover these very quickly since we've been over them. I will mention the points as quickly as I can and go over them again. I am going to add another word to my list along with "can't" and "unable". It's "impossible". Maybe it is insurmountable to you individuals now. The only way to make it surmountable is to sit down and work the problem out. I don't think that all of these things will clear up, but we are going to try to do it.

The request that the residents be free to live here for the duration is a false thing to presume. It is not going to be open for the duration. Now, to assume that is just like playing into the hands of the people who are planning and trying to get you out. There isn't much else to be said on that. We have no other alternative plan to close the centers by the beginning of January 1st. We think that throughout this year is sufficient time for each person and family who need help to get started on the outside. We can work out a plan that is sound and reasonably safe. They would be a lot better off if they relocated within the next few months. They would be much safer outside than maintaining themselves in these centers. Most of these arguments sound like the ones Marr R. Baker was making six months ago,--didn't have housing, didn't have this or that. It is the same sort of thing you folks believe. We can work it out. There is no question about it.



This question about negative approach. We are not taking certain steps with the idea of being mean to people or being negative about this. We are doing it because the plans laid out require these steps to get the job done within the length of the time set.

We are not running the farms because we have no way of making estimates in getting the labor to get the harvesting done.

As to the closing of school, I think I told you why. If we are to close the Centers by January 1st, we cannot maintain a sound school system next fall. There is ample time to help those folks who have these younger folks to get adjusted on the outside if they are going to live on in the United States. These children are going to be accepted. They many have some little things happen to them all along. We all get dominated once in awhile. Even I was in my younger days. You will be getting the assurance of the schools up and down the Coast. They may be put in any school.

We are closing the centers not because we want to be negative. Where the channels of communication are concerned, there are positive aspects as far as the relocation program is concerned. I assure you that they will be treated fine. It is a sound thing to do if we are going to close these centers this year. We have positive reasons for doing these things. I agree that it is hard to establish yourselves. I am here to clarify and help you with your problems if you will work with us. I am trying to keep the facts straight and to keep the channels straight.

REQUEST:

1. Residents would like to have schools in the project continued as long as the center is open. At the present rate of relocation many children will still be in the project when the school term ends in June. Unless formal education is continued until the closing of the center, many children are going to have to go without schooling. The residents would like to have the sacrificing of the education of a large number of children reconsidered. Education for growing children is imperative, both from the standpoint of the best interest of society and humane treatment. It is unfair to make the children suffer for circumstances beyond their control.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

That is very true about the schools, but I think the rate of relocation is going to pick up and move pretty fast. It has already picked up as it has here and all of the other centers. I don't think that you think I don't want to be unfair and make the children suffer. You don't believe and I don't believe that. I want them to relocate with their families while the opportunity is here.

REQUEST:

2. Evacuees desire to have seasonal leave restored until the centers are actually closed. Those who have gone out on seasonal work before have been able to replenish their exhausted savings and to become acquainted with life on the outside. It is a means of giving the evacuees confidence to relocate. Many evacuees who went out on seasonal work last year, now refuse to leave on indefinite leave because of the uncertainties involved. The goodwill of the residents toward evacuees in the area surrounding Hunt has been maintained largely by the aid given them in raising and harvesting their crops. Since many evacuees desire to relocate in this area, it would be unfortunate if the restriction of seasonal leave interfered with the relocation program.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer



It is impossible to carry out this program if you have seasonal leaves. It is just like a hunters' resort if we do. They will have to go out on their own job permanently instead of going out to do a job and then coming in again. I don't think it's good and I don't think you think it's good for them. I don't think we can institute seasonal leaves. You have had time to get seasonal leaves and have had opportunities to make plans. It has helped in the relocation program. You have had plenty of opportunities for that in the last three years. It's about time you went out on a year around basis rather than on seasonal leaves and you should be getting your roots down now.

REQUEST:

3. Employment cuts which create unemployment work is a hardship on evacuees. At present a surplus of labor exists on the project, and cutting down of workers, such as in the Mess Operations Section, causes ill-feeling among those terminated. It should be remembered that the project is being depleted of young, able-bodied workers, and that the older workers cannot carry the same workload as the younger workers.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

We will not be having surplus labor on the Project as relocation goes on. As relocation progresses, we aren't going to have enough people and we can't afford to run everything as if the camp were full. We are doing it because we think it's good business. It's good for the folks to relocate. If we don't close the mess halls, farms, and schools, and if we don't carry out the policies, people here won't believe what we say. We are not doing it to penalize you folks. We aren't going to have enough people to run all the mess halls, farms, etc.

REQUEST:

4. The closing of mess halls at the present time is not necessitated either by a labor shortage or a shortage of facilities. Many evacuees interpret the announced closing of mess halls as another method of making the project an unpleasant place for them. Any serious trouble or hard feeling is likely to hinder cooperation with the administration. Residents in those blocks which are about to be closed naturally attempt to prevent the reduction in the block population, which again hinders relocation. Evacuees desire to have all mess halls open until the need for closing arises.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

Frankly and honestly, we are going ahead with the program and close the mess halls. I realize that the closing of the mess halls and cutting down of workers will cause ill-feeling as far as the people are concerned. If you think it through in my position, I think you will stand where I am now. These policies were not made in order to beat somebody around. We are doing it because we have to do it. This program will be carried out. You will agree on it, I am sure.

REQUEST:

5. Recently express service from Eden to Hunt was suddenly discontinued by the WRA, and since then evacuees have been greatly inconvenienced. While other means of transportation can be utilized, the shipment of boys in uniform before they leave for overseas duty come via railway express. Minor irritations of this sort, if removed, will improve the relationship between the local administration and the residents.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer



I think you know the reasons why we did that. We have a provision against private enterprises in the Centers. The Cooperative Enterprises have objected to some of these enterprises which have been going on. One way to stop that is to stop bringing those things into the Centers. We have control of that and the same restrictions have been ordered on some other people. Private enterprises, such as fish selling, has stopped because they have quit hauling fish in the Center. Express deliveries can be worked out with the Coop or through another agency. We are not stopping the hauling of express, but we were practically forced into that. We don't want to interfere with the people who want to do the right thing. I know that is a minor irritation. I am sorry that it happened to exist. We have to have some difficulties and have some understanding. This was not done to irritate the people. It is essential to the Coop and to the people.

#### Requests of Those Contemplating Relocation

The requests of those who are contemplating relocation are implied in the reasons given for evacuees feeling that they cannot relocate at present. Removal of even one of those obstacles means increased impetus toward relocation. Some of the more important requests are listed here.

##### REQUEST:

1. The relocation grant of \$25.00 per person is considered by many residents to be too small for the amount of loss they incurred and the amount of risk they are to take.

##### ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

The \$25.00 grant was never meant to make up for losses or for the risks taken. It is a small amount of money given to the people who need it until they can reestablish themselves on the outside.

##### REQUEST:

2. Welfare assistance to evacuees, if possible, should be made in the form of a relocation grant rather than in the form of public assistance from another agency.

##### ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

Additional arrangements can be made through some agency outside. You can apply for that assistance without the feeling that they are to be relief cases. I don't see any difference between people living in here and people living on relief on the outside.

I think we can work out something for those who have no furniture or have had their property burned or stolen. This is a much better way than giving additional grants, welfare assistance, and direct grants. I think you will agree with me.

We think it is important that our agencies get acquainted with you and your problem and these folks will have some other agencies and people to fight for them. These other agencies will get used to handling it. They were trained to have sympathetic understanding.

##### REQUEST:

3. Low interest loans, preferably through the WRA, should be made available to evacuees before they leave the project to help evacuees before they leave the project to help evacuees reestablish themselves in their former status.



ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

Even though we are unable to work out something on this, I doubt it if loans will be made to people in Relocation Centers before they leave. All loans are based on a sound operating program. I don't think we can do anything about it. I can't be encouraged to believe that loans are going to be made here, but I don't think it is a serious problem.

REQUEST:

4. Restrictions--such as the freezing of assets, travel limitations, reporting to authorities--should be lifted as soon as possible.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

I thoroughly agree on the point about frozen funds. I think we can get help on the problem, where frozen funds restrict relocation. We haven't had any contacts with the U. S. Attorney, but we should be able to help you on that.

Travel limitations of less than 50 or 60 miles, I am sure, can be lifted before the war is over.

REQUEST:

5. Federal and local authorities should be responsible for the protection of the life and property and other interests of evacuees for the duration. Various types of insurance should be made available to the returning evacuees.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

We can help see to it that the local authorities will do their job. We will continue to help on that. We are going to do every thing we can in the world to see that life and property is properly protected. We are going to get the job done in the way we have planned and if we need to, we will find other ways.

REQUEST:

6. Hostels and FSA type of camps should be made available to evacuees.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

I agree that some program should be worked out. If there are enough people who want to go back, we can get the people to set up hostels along the Coast. If we have enough good faith on the part of the people who do want to relocate back there, we will do our best in making arrangements of some sort on the housing program.

REQUEST:

7. Before evacuees are expected to return to a hostile area, public sentiment toward evacuees should be improved.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

Public sentiment is improving. It has improved considerably. The only way to make it better now is for you folks to go wherever you want to go and the good folks will be able to help get the job done. Let's help to get this job done!



REQUEST:

8. Relocation offices on the Coast and elsewhere should be adequately staffed to provide evacuees with needed help.

ANSWER:

Mr. Myer

Even though we are short on secretarial help, our offices are being staffed and we will get that job done within the next 30 days. It will be pretty well completed.

I know that I talked too much and I didn't intend to but I wanted to get the points cleared up. We only hope that you will work with us. We hope that you will help us convince them on that. I hope you and the WRA and the rest could work on this job and get it done so that they won't have any insurmountable problems.

REQUEST:

Mr. Fujii

In connection with the matters of employment cuts and closing of Mess Halls, I am particularly interested to present our view points for your reconsideration which has been documented by the Mess Workers Association. I further request, Mr. Myer, to discuss over this matter with our Project Director before you leave the project and your favorable revision of the policy will be deeply appreciated.

(The documented material was presented to Mr. Myer).

COMMENTS:

Mr. Myer

When I came here, some people asked me about their having to deposit \$8.40 for just a visit of one day or half a day and why they should pay it in regard to relocation. Sometimes, children working outside want to visit their parents and every time or every week, they are charged \$8.40 for two weeks' meals. They don't understand it.

We have been thinking about it for the past couple of years. I will tell you why. In the first place, many people are relocating. We are going to need all the transportation available. These people who are living around here and communicating back and forth are simply seasonal leave workers in reality. We are going to have to break down all the seasonal program. We think it is for the good of you people and other people. We don't think we are preventing people who want to make plans for relocation and we are being reasonable. It is no hardship on those who have an honest interest in helping the family to relocate. In view of the fact that we have only one year, we've got to have the folks understand that we mean business. Their visits to the centers each week or every so often is not for the purpose of sitting down and working out plans for themselves to relocate permanently. The best possible thing is to come in and do something about relocating themselves and not just to visit. We want to get the families together so they may discuss the plans for relocation. We can't have the trains and other means of transportation loaded up just because they want to be with the family. Those are the reasons.

(An Issei in the group spoke in Japanese and asked Mr. Fujii to translate it)

QUESTION:

Mr. Fujii interpretes

The question is raised in regards to Hood River. There are about 34 families who are contemplating to return to their home-town of Hood River. Some group of individuals started stirring up anti-Japanese sentiment through publication in the newspapers. In view of the circumstances, they request that you, or other government officials take



necessary steps and obtain their better understanding, since they feel that some government agent should correct the misunderstanding.

ANSWER:

Mr. Iyer

We will do everything we can if you people are willing to go back there. I have talked to Mr. Fistere at the Seattle Office. If and when the first families will leave here for the old area, he is willing to have somebody on the job to work with them, or even two people up there to work for a reasonable length of time to get the job done. There are a good many people there who will work with us to get you people back. The publication in the newspaper is a campaign used for the purpose of working against you and keep you from returning. These names (pointing to the newspaper published in Hood River with the list of names) on here don't mean a thing.

There was the Auburn incident. There were 300 people down there in California who threatened to boycott them so that you would not go back. They have caught the culprits and they are in jail. There has been no boycott and there won't be any boycott.

Some of the same people who have their names on the petition are willing to sell things to you folks. It is easy to put your name on a piece of paper. It is hard to say no. People who are in business will sign it. Nine cases out of ten, they will sign it. I don't know why they do that. These people on this list--most of them are pretty good people. If most of you go back, they will be helpful to you, although they will be sly about it at first. They will help you. Those who have leased out your orchards, they are campaigning to keep you out. I hope they aren't going to scare you out. It will be worse the next time, if you wait. We will do everything within our power to see that the local authorities will do their job. We are doing our part. We will give you every support. I have word from the local banks that they are going to loan money to the evacuees on the same basis as any one else. I don't believe it when they tell you the workers are going to quit if you deliver apples. We will help you keep their contracts. We will help the folks go back and as soon as possible. I hope that you will go back soon and prove to the people that you are not afraid of them. We are doing some things which they don't know about but we are doing something about it.

QUESTION:

Mr. Takeoka

Suppose the Hood River people go back and start work. When the time comes to picking the apples and transporting them to the Apple Growers' Association, they will have to hire trucks and in the case when a strike comes up, then what assistance would you give to them?

ANSWER:

Mr. Iyer

I don't want to make any guarantee, but I don't think there is going to be any strike. If the people go back, you won't be bothered with a question about getting trucks. It will all be settled. I assure you that if you go back and if that does happen, we will put every weight we have behind it to get your apples harvested and sold. We will do everything we can to assist you. If it continues to be on that basis, we will do it. I know a lot of people who will help us to do it. They will help you get your crops harvested. You will have enough labor in Hood River to help harvest the crops.

QUESTION:

Mr. Takeoka

Are we assured of that?



ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer

We will do everything we can to help you. Not just the WRA but everybody. I can assure you of that. There will continue to be trouble if those folks who lived up there don't go back. I am very interested in checking up on their rough tactics. I think they are using untrue statements.

QUESTION:  
Mr. Takeoka

There was another case last week in Gresham. The Anti-Japanese League had a meeting last week where its' Congressman Governor Walter Pierce made quite a long statement. Finally, they resolved to introduce a bill to the Oregon State Legislature to ban the Japanese from coming back to the State of Oregon to do anything--farming or other businesses. They cannot do any kind of business. They also intimidated together with the Hood River Legion of which Mr. Kent Shoemaker is Chief Instigator. Some outrageous demonstration will be at work in the near future if the Japanese people go back to the West Coast. I don't know whether it is true or not but anyway many people were convinced that we have to do something about those people who were against the Japanese returning to Oregon.

ANSWER:  
Mr. Myer.

They did have a meeting in Gresham and introduced the bill. The whole thing is all a part of the campaign which I have been talking about this morning. I don't think they are dangerous people. People like Walter Pierce--they do it at all meetings. Some of the people who attended that meeting came out of pure curiosity. There are a couple of lawyers back there who are carrying out such activities and who organized these leagues. They are making money out of it. They are helping to do the business and to draw out sentiment. They are accompanying them just as much as you folks are accompanying them by peaceful means. All of this stuff is bluff. Don't let that frighten you.

There are some people who are headed back to Gresham and I am much obliged to them. We are going to give them all the help. If we have enough people going back, it will take three or four weeks to see that the campaign is lost. That is all there is to it. Things have happened in California. It will be the same all up and down the Coast. It is going to take your help and mine to clean it up. They will continue the campaign if you don't go back there now.

The Hood River Legion Post is doing us a favor by keeping the boys off the Memorial Board, and causing more and more people to get madder and madder. They are going to do something about it. This is the sort of thing that we know and something is being done about it. Unless the people go back, there isn't much that can be done. If there are enough of you, we are going to give all the help you need.

Mr. Fujii:

Before we adjourn the meeting, I wish to extend our sincere gratitude in having our National Director, Mr. Myer here with us to discuss our problems thoroughly and we hope that with a better understanding, not only to carry away our feelings and requests but to fight through for the best interest of our evacuee residents in the Project. And again we all wish Mr. Myer, all the luck in the world is with you and find yourself in an excellent health.

Mr. Myer:

Thank you and I appreciate your hospitality extended to me. I



will keep on with the battle if you will. I can't fight alone.  
You can't fight alone and I don't think you are going to have to.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

THE FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE

Council Members:

Y. Fujii, K. Mayeno, S. Osawa,  
I. Chikata, Y. Doi, H. Hikida.

Appointed Members:

T. Ogawa, I. Oyama, D. Takeoka,  
T. Hayano, R. Shiiki, T. Suzuki.

\* \* \* \* \*

Report-Drafting Committee

D. Kanaya, S. Osawa, J. Sakoda,  
T. Takeuchi, K. Yamada.