

I N F O R M A T I O N B U L L E T I N

JAPANESE AMERICAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Pacific Coast Branch, American Friends Service Committee
544 East Orange Grove Avenue
Pasadena, California

Number 3

April 1, 1942

AT THE MOMENT

During the week-end of March 21, one thousand volunteer workers such as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, laborers, cooks, etc., were taken under army escort by motor convoy, bus and train to the 6,000 acre tract of land at Manzanar, in the Owens Valley, which has been appropriated by the government as a reception center for Japanese and Japanese Americans.

Here, under army supervision, the construction of housing facilities for families, dining halls, sanitary units, recreational centers, hospital facilities, etc., has been rushed to completion for the reception of the 10,000 evacuees from the coastal area. Here families will be able to keep together in separate sleeping quarters, but all will eat together in community dining halls. Mass feeding will be carried on in all camps and induction centers, in the beginning, at least.

Ten days ago there was only desert sand, sage brush, wind and desolation, plus a breath-takingly magnificent view of the snow-covered Sierras back of the camp site. Today and tomorrow, April 1 and 2, will witness the arrival of thousands of women, children and old men, joining their men folk who were already there, for a life in the wilderness. Through their efforts and for their sakes, may this wilderness blossom as a rose!

On the hot, paved parking lot at the Santa Anita race tracks, frame buildings are being rushed to completion to be used as induction centers for the thousands of Japanese and Japanese Americans who will there be registered, examined and housed pending removal to the larger inland camps such as Owens Valley camp.

On Friday, March 27, curfew went into effect, restricting movements of all enemy aliens to an area within a radius of five miles from their homes, excepting as they must go to and fro to business, school, church or Federal buildings. None may be outside their homes between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

On Sunday, March 29, all voluntary evacuation was revoked by the Army order freezing the movements of enemy aliens. From then on all evacuation must be strictly under Army order.

On March 31 Japanese farmers and their families -- 237 souls -- were registered, finger printed, tagged and evacuated under army escort, from strategic Bainbridge Island in Puget Sound and taken by special train to the Manzanar camp. They had worked in the strawberries and peas up to the last moment in order to help save the crops for "national defense". There was no apparent bitterness in their grief at leaving their homes and the land they love.

Friends in this area have worked closely with this group -- especially the students.

EXEMPTIONS

By proclamation of General DeWitt, the following classes of Axis nationals and American-born Japanese will be subject to exemption from future exclusion orders:

1. German and Italian aliens of 70 or over.
2. Members of family and dependents of German and Italian officers, enlisted men or commissioned nurses on active duty in the United States Army or Navy; or
3. Members of family and dependents of German and Italian officers who on or before December 7, 1941, died in line of duty with the armed services of the United States.
4. Germans and Italians who had filed ~~first~~ naturalization papers and paid filing fee on or before December 7, 1941.
5. Those too ill or incapacitated to be moved without danger to life.
6. Inmates of orphanages and the totally deaf, dumb or blind.

Under these regulations very few Japanese will be entitled to exemption.

PROFITEERS

One very real problem the Japanese have had to face has been the determination of unprincipled profiteers to take advantage of this emergency situation and make capital of the need of the Japanese to liquidate their assets in a hurry. All up and down the coast Friends have endeavored to prevent this exploitation of the helpless by counsel and advice, but in spite of all efforts there has been a great loss on the part of many of them. Fear and uncertainty caused them to sell for whatever they could get in numerous cases.

GOVERNMENTAL POLICY

Conferring in San Francisco with Milton Eisenhower, head of the W.C.C.A., Raymond Booth learned that there are to be constructed some dozen or more induction centers, similar to the one at Santa Anita, for the temporary reception of evacuees prior to their definite re-location in inland camps yet to be built. Beginning April 1, the evacuation will continue daily until all of Japanese birth or ancestry are removed from civilian life for the duration.

As outlined by Mr. Eisenhower, the plan of resettlement includes five opportunities:

1. Land subjugation;
2. Subsistence Farming;
3. Public employment, probably in defense work;
4. Private employment;
5. Community resettlement.

The possibility of community resettlement is the hope of Friends, who feel it to be the vital point of the whole picture and are bending every effort toward the accomplishment of that aim.

Raymond Booth feels that Milton Eisenhower is sincerely trying to do the best he can with the job at hand, difficult beyond expression, at the best. He is determined to utilize all Federal agencies which are accustomed to doing social work and planning in an effort to make as humane and reasonable an adjustment as is possible for these unfortunate people, for which Friends are truly grateful.

EDUCATIONAL PICTURE

Friends were represented at the conference of student associations of the Pacific Coast held in Berkeley the week-end of March 21. Many college administrative officials also attended and plans were worked out whereby efforts would be made

to ensure the continuance of the education of many of the alien young men and women and so help to save the whole ethnic group.

The State Board of Education has shown a fine cooperative attitude toward the educational problem and the very real interest of Caucasian students in their Japanese-American fellow students.

A former Japanese student of Esther Rhoads was assisted by scholarship to leave for Pendle Hill on March 28.

HOSTEL NEWS

The several hostels are still functioning and will continue to do so as long as there is need for them.

Several Japanese and Japanese-American volunteers went to Owens Valley from Forsythe Hostel on Monday, March 23. April 1 and 2 will see their families joining them there in the homes they have helped to build.

Because of curfew regulations the residents at Blue Hills Hostel must depend upon friends and neighbors to shop for their food and run various necessary errands.

THE MINISTRY OF SUFFERING

They had taken her eighty-year-old husband away to Fort Missoula and she was heart-broken and distraught. After a life-time together in the land they had chosen as their own -- the land where their children were born and educated -- they were separated for the first time by war and could not understand why.

She was so lonely and afraid! The laws would not let them be citizens as they had longed to be, and so they had tried doubly hard to be good Americans and had taught their children to love the land of their birth. Now what would their grown-up children, far away in the Northwest, believe of their land?

As she grieved for her man, a Caucasian neighbor in passing paused to tell her of the capture of fourteen local Caucasian lads at Guam and Wake Island by the Japanese.

In her lonely little room that night, the conviction grew that she, a Japanese mother, must in some way show her sympathy with the mothers of these "home town" lads, held prisoners in a foreign land by people of her own race.

And so, early in the morning, with friends driving her from home to home, she called on these mothers personally, presenting to each of them a lovely potted cyclamen, and in her broken English endeavored to express her sympathy, as one mother to another, and her deep chagrin and regret over what her people had done to their sons.

And as mother heart met mother heart in understanding grief, something of that love which passeth human understanding so sanctified their sorrow that each was stronger to bear whatever might be in store for her or her son. And all because of the concern of one little enemy alien to ease the worry and the fear of her anxious fellow-mothers.

Note: Send news material to Gracia Booth, 544 East Orange Grove Ave., Pasadena.