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TESTIMONY TAKEN BEFORE THE DIES COMMITTEE

8 July 1945.

At the afternoon session on 6 July 1945 Dillon S. Myer was called as witness and testified as follows:

He was born 4 September 1891 in Ohio and attended an Ohio country school, a Cleveland, Ohio, high school, Ohio State University and Columbia University. He received a master degree in education and economics. His formal education did not include a study of the Japanese language or culture. He has studied Japanese organizations and espionage since his appointment as director of WRA. He was not able to give the Committee a list of subversive organizations, but referred the Committee to the Intelligence Agencies.

Witness gave the following statement relative to the setup of WRA:

1. Washington Headquarters—250 employees—23 Japanese employed as clerks, stenographers, and statisticians (all were formerly residents of Relocation Centers). Very few of the 250 employees have any specialized knowledge of Japanese affairs.
2. There are three field offices headed by Assistant Directors, with six employees in each office.
3. There are ten Relocation Centers and one Isolation Center for trouble-makers. There are sixty evacuees at the Isolation Center. There are 2013 employees in the Relocation Centers. The ratio of appointed personnel to evacuee personnel is about 200 to 2,000.
4. Fifty field offices have been set up since 1 January 1945 to assist in relocation. About 150 employees are engaged in this activity.
5. There are several property offices on the West Coast with 82 employees.

Our requested budget is \$48,170,000. This figure is based on an estimate

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of 100,000 population. Thus far, 15,306 persons have been released from the Centers, 9,309 on indefinite leave.

Witness was asked if WRA is assisting the State of California in appropriating farm equipment of evacuees. Witness answered, we are attempting to assist the State, but it is a long, hard job because all of the property must first be inventoried. We found that there was a much smaller amount of farm machinery than was originally believed. There have been some cases where machinery has been moved or sold by evacuees after the State has given notice of its intention to appropriate it.

Witness stated that there have been numerous reports of unfair dealings with evacuees at the time of evacuation. Many evacuees are embittered over this. In some cases fraud has been proven.

Witness was asked whether he believed the sum of \$19 a month is a sufficient amount to pay evacuees. Witness stated that it is not a satisfactory amount, and that some evacuees are suffering although others are better off than before evacuation. Witness stated that no change in the amount was contemplated, fundamentally because the small pay in the Relocation Center is a motivation for relocation. Witness mentioned that the maximum salary of evacuees is less than the amount received by prisoners of war. Witness stated that only about four per cent of the evacuees have refused to work.

Witness was asked why more ground has not been put under cultivation at the Poston Relocation Center, and why crops were not offered for sale outside of Relocation Centers.

Witness stated that the fundamental policy of WRA is to produce only enough to make each Center self-sufficient. This is to encourage the program of relocation. Witness feels it more important to have workers out in the harvest than to have them producing commodities for outside consumption in Relocation Centers. This policy, witness admitted, has partly been dictated by labor organizations

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and farmers who have objected to the raising of commodities in Centers for outside sale. Witness stated, "we are trying to encourage all eligible persons to relocate." Witness then made an eloquent plea for democracy as applied to the Japanese.

Witness was asked to explain the relocation policies of the WRA. He stated that the first relocation began in the Spring of 1942 when the WCCA allowed evacuees to go from Assembly Centers to work in the harvest. On 20 July 1942 our first resettlement policy was established. This program was limited to citizens only. On 1 October 1942, leave regulations were set up to allow relocation on a wide-spread basis. This program was cleared with the Attorney General, the War Department, and the FBI. We have a letter of approval from the Attorney General; the approval of the War Department was based on conversations with officials.

"I feel the WRA has been very conservative in relocation and release of evacuees." Originally the War Department never intended the evacuees would go to Relocation Centers. This step was necessary because difficulties arose while evacuees were trying to locate new homes, and it was found that the large number of evacuees could not be voluntarily moved in as short a time as was necessary.

Congressman Mundt asked if WRA set up any weekly quota for the number of evacuees to be released. Witness replied, no, but during April and May of 1943 we released about 500 per week on indefinite leave, and 500 per week on seasonal leave. This figure has now dropped off to about 350 per week.

It was asked: Is there any difference in eligibility for seasonal leave as against indefinite leave?

Witness answered: There is no difference at present. A year ago there

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were no regulations for seasonal leave. All those who wished to work might leave the Center. There was no personal investigation conducted. To date no disloyal incidents have resulted from this procedure. Several persons have wandered away however. This seasonal leave policy was approved by the Attorney General and the War Department.

Present Leave Policy: Before 2 April 1943, applications for leave were checked here in Washington against FBI files. Letters were written to five or six persons who knew the applicant prior to evacuation. The names of these persons were obtained from the application. Employers were contacted wherever possible. (Mayor Bowron of Los Angeles stated that no requests for information had ever been received regarding Japanese employed by the City of Los Angeles.) FBI did not conduct investigations as it was too busy with other war matters. The Attorney General gave his approval to this procedure however. Subsequent to 2 April 1943, we adopted a new procedure as explained in a directive. Project Directors are solely responsible for granting leave applications in their respective Centers. Prerequisites for granting leave are:

1. An unqualified "yes" to question 28 on the War Department questionnaire;
2. Evacuee must not have requested repatriation;
3. A shinto priest may not be released;
4. (?);
5. Evacuees must have obtained a job;
6. There is no reason to believe the release would endanger the war effort.

A check is being made of all persons in the War Relocation Centers against FBI, and intelligence agency files. If a record appears against a person who

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had already been relocated, he is returned to the Center. (Only two of these cases have arisen.) This policy originated back in January, and the Joint Board was formed about this time and began to function in January or February. The Joint Board is composed of representatives of ONI, MID, PMGO, and WRA, with a member of FBI sitting in an advisory capacity. The Joint Board was set up when the combat team of Japanese-Americans was announced. General Drum has some idea that the Japanese should not be allowed in the Eastern Defense Command unless they have been approved by the Joint Board. We agreed that we will not allow evacuees in the Eastern Defense Command without the approval of the Board. The Board also approves Japanese for employment in national defense. Thus, the Joint Board takes up lots of cases. So far as leaves are concerned, however, WRA is the responsible agency.

Congressman Costello asked: Then the Joint Board merely checks the names of those desiring relocation against records?

Witness replied: Yes. They do that and then they make certain other checks. If the case isn't then cleared, an investigation is conducted in the Western Defense Command.

Congressman Costello asked: The PMGO merely represents the Western Defense Command?

Witness answered: Well it partly aids them, and also is responsible for internal security.

Congressman Mundt then asked: If there is reason to believe a Japanese is not loyal enough to be allowed in the Eastern Defense Command, why is he loyal enough to be in Omaha?

Witness replied: We hope ultimately all cases will be checked by the Joint Board. After all, there are many Japanese who haven't been checked at all.

Congressman Mundt stated: That phase of the program doesn't look good

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to me at all.

Witness stated: There is now a program whereby nationals of all countries with slightly tainted records have been moved to the Mid-West because it is not considered best that they remain on the Eastern Coastline. This is true, although they may have been naturalized. (Witness became sarcastic.) After all, witness stated, an evacuee may have a little something against his record that the Board may feel just isn't up to "snuff", but it may not be anything subversive, and that person would be approved for the Mid-West. After all, subversives aren't in Relocation Centers, but in Internment Camps. Those who are in the Centers who have asked for repatriation or answered "no" to question 28 in the War Department questionnaire are turned down for leave.

Congressman Mundt stated: The success of your relocation program depends on community approval--Witness interrupted to state: "This committee and the misinformation it has publicized has set the program back for years in community acceptance."

Congressman Mundt asked: Isn't the best way to obtain community acceptance to have stringent regulations for leave so the community will know that when an evacuee leaves the Center he is loyal? Why not have the Project Director check the points listed in your directive, and then have the case go to the Joint Board? If the Board disapproves, in order to have community acceptance of the loyal persons, shouldn't the evacuees disapproved be refused leave?

Witness replied: No. We can allow people in the Mid-West who aren't allowed in the East.

Congressman Costello asked: Yes. But how about the possibility of espionage from those in the Mid-West?

Witness replied: There has been very little indication of espionage thus far. The War Department has approved our program; the Navy Department has approved

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it by participating in it.

Witness stated: Your investigator Strickling has said that Japanese sent out of relocation centers over the United States were saboteurs and spies. This is absolutely untrue. Strickling has not produced any evidence of this although I have requested it several times.

Congressman Mundt asked: Then the Joint Board only comes into the picture in the Eastern Defense Command and defense plants?

Witness answered: Yes.

Congressman Costello asked: Now a Director at a Center can release an evacuee without clearing in Washington?

Witness replied: Yes. But the Washington records are becoming a part of his files as soon as they can be sent to the Centers.

Witness stated: WRA has been very conservative on releasing evacuees. No attempt has been made by WRA to set up wage scales that evacuees must be paid on the outside. The Japanese are not cutting outside wages however. They are used to higher pay than is being offered. That is the trouble.

(As the session was about to adjourn, witness insisted on reading the following statement.)

Our Japanese program is being watched all over the world. Public statements should be made only after much thought. Many false statements have come forth as a result of the Dies Committee investigation. Much of the testimony taken by this Committee was false. Many press releases were made by Committee investigators which were either partial truths, incomplete, or entirely false. Townsend's testimony before this Committee contained over thirty falsehoods. It has appeared in the press that wine was passed out at Camp Livingston War Relocation Center. This is not a War Relocation Center, but an internment camp under Army

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control. I telegraphed Congressman Costello asking that one of our representatives be present at the Los Angeles hearings to aid the Committee in arriving at the truth and to keep false statements out of the press. This request was refused.

Congressman Costello read the telegram received from witness and remarked that it appeared to him that witness wanted a representative present at the Los Angeles hearings in order to censor the press.

Witness stated he criticized the Committee because investigators were allowed to release untrue news reports before investigation had been conducted and because WRA was refused an opportunity to show that witnesses at the Los Angeles hearings were falsifying the facts. Witness stated that if false news releases continue, it will be very unfortunate for our war prisoners abroad if an irate American kills a Japanese due to this false publicity.

Witness was asked whether he had urged that the Japanese be allowed to return to the Pacific Coast.

Witness replied in the affirmative.

He was then asked if it would not be unfortunate for our prisoners of war if one of the Japanese was killed by an irate Californian.

Witness replied: Yes. But by false publicity we create disunity among the American people and give our Oriental allies great concern.

Reported by Sgt. I. V. Tierman
7 July 1943

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 By KEB NARA, Date 10/2/8

TESTIMONY TAKEN BEFORE THE DIES COMMITTEE

9 July 1945.

On 7 July 1945 Dillon S. Myer continued his testimony as follows:

He met in conference with either Masaoka or Kanazawa once a week for about a year. "They came to my office to learn of any news which would be of interest to the Pacific Citizen. They never came at my request." Witness was asked whether Masaoka or Kanazawa had represented to him the size of the membership of JACL. Witness stated that no such representation had been made.

Witness stated that about two weeks ago he requested copies of Masaoka's reports to the National Headquarters from the Salt Lake Office of JACL, and that he had read most of Masaoka's reports.

The following excerpts from Masaoka's report to National Headquarters dated 19 September 1942 were read to witness. "Myer put this up to me. Myer deals with us like he deals with his own staff. We have discussed every major policy with him before its adoption. Do not reveal any confidential material, and allow all matters of policy to be announced first by WRA. Congressmen would jump down their respective throats (WRA) if they knew the part we play in forming WRA policy. Do not reveal any confidential material as we are fortunate to obtain these directives. Myer believes that Nisei, Issei and Kibei alike should be allowed to leave the Centers. Myer is willing to fight the Army on this point."

1. Witness was questioned as to whether JACL was provided with copies of confidential WRA directives. Witness stated that JACL received WRA administrative instructions and directives just as anyone else who requested them. He stated that the words "For Use of WRA Staff Only" on the directives did not imply, in any way, that the directives and instructions were confidential. He stated they were merely memorandums

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to supply information on WRA policy to the WRA field staff. They were not released to the press because they were not of general public interest. JACL received copies because they requested them. Other people have requested these directives and instructions and have received them. "I ruled last September that they were public documents." JACL records appeared to contain about 1/4th of the total WRA directives.

2. Witness was questioned regarding the reasons why Masaoka stated the information received was confidential. Witness stated that WRA did not want the directives or instructions circulated through Centers before it had an opportunity to send them to the Center Directors.
3. Witness was questioned regarding discussions of policy with Masaoka. He admitted that he discussed policy with Masaoka on a number of occasions. He stated, however, that he had not discussed all major policies with Masaoka before adoption. Witness was asked whether any one organization or person had received directives in advance of sending them to the Centers. He replied that he did not know.
4. Witness was questioned regarding policy and "allowing Nisei, Kibei and Issei to leave the Centers." He stated that this was the policy announced in October 1942, viz., to allow everyone to apply for leave. Witness stated that he had never said "he would fight the Army on this point," but that, as a matter of fact, WRA enjoyed excellent relations with the War Department.

Witness stated that Masaoka was often expansive in his reports and was given to exaggerations. He often took credit for policies formulated by others.

Congressman Mundt produced and read an article from the Poston Relocation Center newspaper of 6 June 1943. It quoted Myer to the effect that at a later

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date those who might endanger the war effort will be released. Witness stated that the military situation is continually changing. "We advise with the Military and we will release the disloyal only when they consider it safe." Witness stated WRA took this approach due to the doubtful constitutionality of the WRA program. Witness then read a statement from the WRA solicitor regarding the constitutionality of the War Relocation Authority. He stated that temporary detention may be constitutional, but it is doubtful whether permanent detention would be held constitutional.

Congressman Mundt: After you find the evacuee is disloyal, according to your statement you intend to release him anyway. Witness stated that is after the war. The War Department determines our policy on release of the disloyal. We talk of delay rather than to deny the right of an evacuee to relocate because of the shaky legal ground on which we operate.

Congressman Mundt: Whose policy is it that a bad Jap in the East is a good Jap in Omaha?

Witness: WRA accepts full responsibility for who goes to the Mid-West.

Witness produced a letter from Attorney General Biddle stating his approval of WRA leave program and witness requested Captain Hall to secure a similar letter from Secretary McCloy. Attorney General Biddle's letter indicated that he believed WRA program to be sound, but he advised that WRA should make an additional investigation after examination of intelligence records.

Congressman Costello: The check made by the Justice Department is merely cursory. It is not a real investigation.

Congressman Mundt: What steps have you taken to make the additional investigation that Attorney General Biddle stated was necessary?

Witness: The following procedure is employed:

1. We check the questionnaire filled out by the registrant (witness read the War Department questionnaire to the Committee);
2. Internal Security files are checked;

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3. Employment records are checked in the Centers;
4. Intelligence records are checked;
5. Border-line cases--evacuees records prior to evacuation are checked.

Congressman Mundt: Since 2 April 1943 you have eliminated two of these checks?

Witness: Yes, in general. We have eliminated the home check and the FBI check. We have already checked 63,000 against FBI files, however.

Congressman Mundt: In respect to Biddle's statement that you must investigate, all you do is check records?

Witness: What has me worried is the saboteurs who your investigator stated are at liberty. Why haven't we been given a list of these persons with some evidence of their activities. I wrote to the Committee on 2 June 1943 for such a list. Thus far I have had no response.

Mundt: Why do you teach the evacuees Judo?

Witness: They are Americans and have a right to learn it.

Mundt: How much money is spent on Judo as against baseball? Camps could be used to Americanize persons rather than to teach them Japanese sports.

Witness: I will get these figures for the record.

Mundt: Why do you teach the evacuees goto? This is a Japanese game. Why not teach them American games such as cribbage?

Witness: I will look into this. You are correct.

Mundt: In the Poston paper there was an article announcing beginning classes in Japanese. Do you think that is a good idea?

Witness: It is not a good idea. I will check into it.

Congressman Ebharder: Are many teachers being paid to instruct in Japanese ancestral customs?

Witness: Not that I know of. I will check into it.

Congressman Thomas: Do you check references given on War Dept. questionnaires?

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Witness: No. We used to.

Thomas: Do you have investigators to employ in checking evacuees?

Witness: Yes. We have 150 field investigators.

Mundt: How many evacuees in the Centers answered "no" to question 28?

Witness: Ten per cent. This large percentage is due to the Kibel.

Mundt: How many do you have in isolation?

Witness: Sixty.

Thomas: What would you say if I told you I planned recommending that Relocation Centers be taken away from WRA and turned over to the Army? WRA is a silly, social experiment anyway.

Witness: I will not argue with you if you have made up your mind as to your recommendation before the conclusion of this hearing.

Costello: We will now take up the 37 instances in which you stated that Townsend lied and exaggerated.(Costello went over the list.)

Costello: Townsend's statements were fundamentally correct. There are some exaggerations on details. We believe he was correct on fundamental facts and his statements were corroborated by other witnesses.

Witness: I am greatly worried if you feel Townsend simply has exaggerated on some few details.

Witness: then read a transcript of a record taken at Poston, Arizona, by Wade Head on testimony given by Townsend in which Townsend admitted that he fled from Poston during the riot because of terror and cowardice, and admitted having taken a private trip in a Government car without permission.

Costello: That may all be true, but even your own present employees have said that Townsend was largely truthful. Mr. Empey stated that Townsend was conscientious and did the best job possible.

Costello: How are your internal police equipped?

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Witness: Usually with arm bands, badges and clubs.

Costello: The force is inadequate in time of riot is it not?

Witness: It is the duty of the Military Police to guard the outside of the Centers, and to enter in case of riot. The value of the internal police varies depending on the exigency. They were not much good during the Manzanar riot.

Costello: Is it the policy of WRA to hire people of draft age?

Witness: No, and it is not our policy to request deferments. We have only done so in about ten cases.

Costello then read the record of a WRA employee whose deferment was first requested by the Department of Agriculture as being irreplaceable. Ten days later, after his deferment on these grounds, he left the Department of Agriculture and went to work for WRA who requested his deferment. WRA subsequently requested another deferment, but it was refused. After two previous physical examinations, the employee had been classified as 1A. After the last WRA request for deferment had been denied, the employee was ordered to take a physical examination and was classified as 4F, as mentally unfit for service.

Costello: This appears to be an outright case of draft evasion.

Costello: How many Issei are on indefinite leave?

Witness: I don't know--approximately 15%. They are given the same check as anyone else.

Costello: Are there any persons of Japanese ancestry in California outside of soldiers?

Witness: No, except with the permission of General DeWitt.

Mundt: Have you run into any trouble on community acceptance of evacuees?

Witness: Yes. We had one case in Marengo, Illinois. The evacuees arrived before the public was prepared for them. After public meetings had been held, the population decided to allow the evacuees to remain. Arizona is now closed

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to evacuees due to bad sentiment there. They fear permanent settlement by the evacuees.

Mundt: If you had a sufficient check on evacuees before release, you would have public sentiment in your favor.

Witness: After talking to Captain Hall, President of the Joint Board, I have been informed that checks are the same on people going to the Mid-West as to the East.

Mundt: Let's get this straight. You gave me a different answer yesterday. Suppose Joe Bloke goes to Omaha, by getting the approval of the Project Director of his Center. He then wishes to go to Baltimore. He must then go before the Joint Board. Suppose the Joint Board turns him down? What happens?

Witness: If the Board turns him down, and his record is very bad, he goes back to the Center.

Mundt: If a person is not approved for the Eastern Defense Command he goes back to the Center?

Witness: The Board can recommend and if a person has a bad record, we return him to the Center. I cannot determine the case you suggest until such a case arises.

Mundt: There have been some applicants for entry into the Eastern Defense Command who have been rejected by the Board. I want to know what happened to them.

Witness: I will get this information for you.

Costello: How can you compel an evacuee to return to the Center after he has been released to the Mid-West?

Witness: This has never come up. Thus far they have returned without argument.

Mundt: Has any agreement been made as to whether evacuees relocate in a

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territory for just the duration of the war or permanently?

Witness: No. We cannot make such an agreement.

Mundt: If evacuees aren't spread over the United States, we may have little Tokyos in other sections of the country, such as South Dakota.

Witness: That is right. But that is hard to do. Rural populations now want the Japanese. Don't worry about this, however, the Japanese make up only 1/10th of 1 per cent of the population of the United States.

Costello: Is it the policy of the WRA to set up cooperatives?

Witness: Yes. Evacuees should have the right to carry on certain businesses for themselves. More than 1/2 of the Centers have set up cooperatives.

Costello: Can they not control the Center?

Witness: It is possible. It is unavoidable that elders control thought in the Center.

Costello: In Gila River the head of the cooperative is an alien.

Witness: Probably so.

Ebharder: What is your policy on segregation?

Witness: I hope on 1 September 1943 to carry out a segregation. This segregation will include the following:

1. Those requesting expatriation (6300) will be first moved.
2. Those answering "no" or a qualified "yes" to question 28 on the War Department questionnaire will be moved after hearings by a Board.
(This will possibly include their families.)
3. Those with bad intelligence records.

This program will cost approximately \$1,000,000. We have requested an escort guard by the Army. Witness asked that the details of this program be kept confidential by the press.

Congressman Mundt: At my suggestion Mr. Slocum has made certain recommenda-

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tions for checks on evacuees before release. They are as follows:

1. Check FBI, MID, ONI.
2. Check the family:
 - a. Relatives interned.
 - b. Brother or son in Japanese army.
 - c. Son in the United States Army.
 - d. Children who worked for official or semi-official Japanese firms, newspapers, or organizations.
 - e. Religion.
 - f. Trips to Japan.
 - g. Was trip to Japan for an organization?
 - h. Married or single? Check into wife's family connections.
 - i. Request for expatriation?
 - j. Renounced allegiance to Japan.
 - k. Swear allegiance to the United States.
 - l. Inducted and released from Army.
 - m. Membership in organizations. Who were officers of organization? What language was spoken? Who were guest speakers?
 - n. Where applicant desires to live after the war.
 - o. Who started the War—United States, England, Japan, Germany?
 - p. Wasn't Japan justified in attacking Pearl Harbor?
 - q. Have you ever been threatened by any group for your American activities?
 - r. Have you ever cooperated with any of the intelligence agencies?
 - s. Do you swear allegiance to the United States and agree to fight against Japan?
3. Check into applicant's pre-Pearl Harbor opinions and reliability.

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4. Divide applicants into three classes: loyal, disloyal, questionable.
 5. Hearing board in each camp with a committee of loyal Japanese to advise the Board.
 6. Should have a presumption in favor of parents with sons in the Army.
 7. Watch employees of Japanese newspapers and official and semi-official organizations.
 8. Make a check on all persons who have never come under WRA control.
- Ebharder: Do you make any investigation of employers?
- Witness: We make the employer state the facts regarding the position offered in detail.

Ebharder: Must the employee remain at the job he has accepted?

Witness: No.

Mundt: Have you any comment to make on turning Relocation Centers over to the Military?

Witness: No. I would rather not comment.

Mundt: Do you know the opinion of the War Department on this matter?

Witness: Yes. Secretary McCloy testified before the Senate Military Affairs Committee and stated that the War Department would rather not come into the picture.

Ebharder: Is administration weak in the Centers?

Witness: No. We take a firm stand on trouble-makers and pro-Axis Japanese. There have been cases of inexperience and mismanagement. This has been limited. We have as good a staff as in any Government agency today.

Ebharder: Do the Japanese like rigid control and discipline?

Witness: Yes. Anyone likes firm administration.

Ebharder: Is your control in the Centers firmer now than it was before?

Witness: Yes.

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Ebharder: Is it true that the Issei control the councils in the Centers?

Witness: For some time the Nisei only could sit on the council. Due to a lack of sufficient mature Nisei, the last 60 to 90 days we have had to change our policy and allow Issei to sit on the council.

Witness read a statement regarding patriotism of the Japanese in the Centers.

Costello: There is a splendid opportunity to Americanize in the Centers.

Witness: It is very difficult to Americanize where all the people are Japanese.

Mundt: Is housing adequate at Poston?

Witness: It is not entirely adequate, but it is very difficult to get the material.

Reported by I. V. Tierman
8 July 1945.

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