

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON

JUN 2 1944

MEMORANDUM to the Under Secretary

Attached is a memorandum from Leland Barrows which carries implications which are quite disturbing. The fact that the Japanese American Section of the Provost Marshal General's office is being moved for reasons that are not fully clear is alarming because of the possible effect of such a move on the job we have to do.

The Western Defense Command and the Provost Marshal General's office apparently intend to begin re-opening the evacuated area to small groups of evacuees, and apparently intend to determine who shall be permitted to go back, by setting up a brand-new system of passing on the loyalties of the evacuees.

The War Relocation Authority, on the basis of 1-1/2 years experience, has already completed the screening of the evacuees. We have already determined which evacuees should be detained, and have transferred most of them to the Tule Lake Segregation Center. All of the rest of the evacuees have been found to represent no danger to internal security. They should be free to relocate anywhere; and when it is determined that military conditions no longer require continued exclusion from the West Coast, all of them should be eligible to return to the Coast if they choose.

If the Provost Marshal General's office should set up this new screening system, word of it will inevitably get out. In fact, as soon as some newspapers begin to attack the Western Defense Command for permitting some evacuees to return, the WDC will certainly defend itself by pointing to its screening system and insisting that only those evacuees found by them to be "safe" are being permitted to return. Inevitably this will cast a cloud on all the thousands of evacuees whom WRA has found to be loyal and safe, but whom the Western Defense Command has either not yet cleared for return to the West Coast or has denied permission to return.

This could easily stop our relocation program in its tracks. If the Western Defense Command should regard as dangerous on the West Coast people whom we have declared eligible for relocation,



why shouldn't all other communities regard them as equally dangerous. In addition, I am afraid most of the evacuees will decide to remain in the relocation centers until the Provost Marshal General's office determines whether or not they can return to the West Coast. Judging by our experience the new clearance process of the Western Defense Command will take a year or two to complete. On top of all this, I should think it inevitable that the evacuees in our relocation centers would suffer from new resentment and frustration at the idea of being checked and screened and cleared all over again when they know that is a process which WRA has been putting them through during the last two years.

I can see no excuse whatever for the Army, which has been participating closely in our leave clearance procedures, to set up a brand-new system of its own at this time for the purpose of "selective return" to the West Coast. Furthermore, if any such "exemptee" program is to be established it should be publicized - otherwise we will take the criticism and in my judgment reap little or no benefit.

As you know, I am convinced that the urgent need at present is the lifting of the restrictions on the West Coast. This should permit the return of all evacuees whom WRA has cleared. I can see some point in setting up numerical quotas for return to the West Coast, in the immediate period while we are waiting for the lifting of the Exclusion Orders, but the numerical quotas should, at least, permit return in the order in which applications are received -- and certainly not on the basis of a brand-new system of loyalty clearance to be set up and administered by the Provost Marshal General's office.

I would suggest that you inquire of Mr. McCloy regarding the plans and reasons for them and request that we have an opportunity to present our point of view before moving ahead.

*D. J. Myer*

Director

