

Central Utah
2-15-43
Summary of Conversation with Lt. Tracey, Central Utah, and
Colonel Scobey - Feb. 15, 1943

T: Colonel, they have had about 12 hours of meetings here over Sunday. They started at 2:00 o'clock Saturday afternoon and kept on until 2:00 this morning. We were ready to register Saturday - 14 people registered. They asked for further postponement. I refused to give official postponement. They had already been granted postponement from Thursday to Sat, as a result there were 14 who came in. During this time they held these meetings. While there was no organized resistance, and those who wished to come in were not opposed, they wish an answer to their resolution addressed to the Secretary of War before the registration starts. A copy of this resolution was teletyped to Dillon S. Myer, WRA - it is a two page resolution. This resolution is to the effect that "We as citizens of the United States feel that we have not been treated fairly." I will read two most important paragraphs.

"We ask the Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, after a thorough investigation by FBI, MIS, WRA, that persons who are cleared shall have freedom of movement and be permitted to return to their homes; that we ask that those considered by the Government as being loyal to this country, be classified as friendly aliens. That loyal Nisei be permitted to enter Army at large, rather than be formed into combat team.

"That we believe that if a satisfactory answer can be given by the Government spokesman, preferably the President, we can

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~~can~~ go and fight for our country without fear - ----- . We respectfully ask for an immediate answer to the questions in this resolution."

This was just teletyped in to the Secretary of War and Dillon S. Myer.

I immediately demanded a copy of it and have called you for this reason. Just one more thing, they state at the head of this resolution that "If registration means fighting for the United States, we feel that assurance of treatment equal with other citizens is called for." Let me state that it is my opinion that this is merely a thinking group wanting all they can get. They have decided they will ask for the moon. There is a committee meeting going on now. They are waiting for me to come in and one of the things they will ask me is: if they can register, omitting questions 27 and 28." I think I shall give an affirmative answer. I refused to attend this meeting. This is the first refusal I gave them.

They have also asked me if they are violating the Espionage Act by holding these meetings.

S: Let me make a statement. We do not propose to compromise or appease in this proposition. The Japanese situation as it has passed is not to be considered - the past situation, the causes and reasons for their evacuation is not to be considered.

We are not going to discuss that - the reasons for evacuation. We realize their position is bad. The majority of the people in the United States have no use for the Japanese; some people have been friendly to them - they have cared for them and we have

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tried to make their life better and this plan is the first step to rehabilitate them. It is as far as we can go for the moment.

T: We told them that yesterday. We told them that they would get more if they have faith.

S: There will be no appeasement policy. There are people who have fought for the Japanese - people here in the Department. If the Japs want to turn this down it is their last opportunity. I am not certain that they will never have another opportunity but if they do not accept us in good faith and go ahead and collaborate with us on this their lot will be much harder. Congress is not too favorable on this proposition or in their attitude toward the Japs in general. Therefore, they must go along with us. We realize a great many of them are loyal, but this is war and citizens as well as aliens are suffering. Each citizen must accept the restrictions placed upon them by the government. When they accept the restrictions in good faith and do what the government tells them to do, their lot will be better. Their opposition can only mean punishment and prison. We have no desire to ~~xxx~~ segregate the Japs except for their own good. The purpose is to show the American people that the majority of the Japs are all right. But we are not going to discuss the thing with them.

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T: Now, Colonel, when I go into this committee meeting they are going to say, can we wait until we receive an answer to the resolution to the Secretary.

S: Go right ahead. We will not begin with the very first step of appeasement. If they don't want to take it they will seal their own fate.

T: One more thing, we have arranged machinery for registration so that they come in by blocks. That gives a few of them a wonderful opportunity to put pressure on the different blocks, as they know when one particular block is scheduled to come in and register. I shall go ahead on this machinery for another 24 hours - after that, if this thing continues, I may throw open the doors to the entire center - to eliminate this pressure.

S: You are in a better position to determine that, than I am.

T: If I throw open the doors to the entire center it will be my last resort. As a matter of fact, I am not worried about the situation.

S: Remember - we will not appease.

T: I get that and it is fine.

S: If you get information against any man who is opposing your program and who is putting pressure on individuals, we will move against them on grounds of violating the Espionage Act.

The situation at Manzanar and Poston is good, but not very favorable at Gila.

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~~Section~~

T: I will go ahead with the block plan for the next 24 or 36 hours.

S: Call in the leaders of the Nisei, Kabe, and Issei. Tell them that this constitutes the first opportunity they have had to get privileges. This is not a complete answer to their problems, but they have to either take it now or nothing. They have friends here who have worked for them or they would not have had this. Lots of people are not converted to the Japanese and think this plan will not be a success. If they do not accept this plan it will constitute the last chance they will get - there will be no compromise with them.

T: I believe that up to now I have treated them with kid gloves, but I shall talk to them as you have now. / ^{Scobey:} The War Department has no equivocal policy. We are not going to discuss any further this matter with them - they can or cannot take it.

T: I am very clear on it.

S: If you have any trouble I will come out there.

T: I am not worried about the situation. I have been giving them time, thinking it was a matter of diplomacy.

S: Handle it firmly with full assurance that you have the United States Government and Army back of you. If any of those people interfere with the program, let us know and get information so that we can get an indictment against them. We are not going to appease.

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T: I shall continue with the block plan for 24 or 36 hours.

S: Assemble the leaders of Nisei, Issei, and Kibei and tell them that this constitutes the War Department program - it is their opportunity and they must either accept it or not. Have you discovered any mass action or influence as a result of reports from Heart Mountain?

T: We have rumors coming in that ~~they~~ lead us to believe they are contacting each other.

S: See if you can get/^{definite} information as to whether or not Heart Mountain is contacting these people. Things are bad there. Keep us advised.