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4500  
353.8 Q.A. Marshall

May 14, 1943

Dear Mr. Inagaki:

I was glad to have your letter of May 11, and to have the benefit of your observations on the entire Nisei problem. I wish to thank you for your expressions of appreciation.

The War Department and a great many of the officers located in it here in Washington are sincerely concerned with the problem of solving the Nisei question. I believe you are appreciative that all of us have attempted to approach the matter without prejudice or sentiment. The position of the Japanese American at the present time is indeed difficult. The hatred of the Japanese nation on the part of the Americans is so violent that it seems inevitable incidents of dislike must overflow against our Japanese Americans. The one thing I have always hoped for is that the Nisei would understand the realities of the situation and not expect realization of the complete position of a citizen. It is inevitable that unfortunate local incidents and situations will develop, but it is my hope that the Nisei should not express a resentment against these prejudicial acts except in a dignified, cultured manner.

A general policy is gradually being evolved by the War Department, and even though there have been many hostile expressions in Congress, I feel that the Chandler Committee report has been of great value. I suppose that you are familiar with the general context of that report. In the main, it provides for internment of disloyal people, whether citizen or alien; application of the selective service law to all Japanese American citizens (the disloyal citizens will be thrown out); and the release from the relocation centers of all loyal aliens or citizens. This, of course, would mean segregation of the disloyal from the loyal. This is the general program that the War Department has had in mind for some time.

I was quite disturbed over the extract from a letter you had from the Nisei. I showed this to the Assistant Secretary of War, and he felt as I did about it.

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The action of the commander of this camp in subjecting the Nisei soldiers to this humiliating position certainly was totally unjustified and will not be tolerated by the War Department. However, it will be necessary for us to have some concrete facts in the case before our investigation may proceed. Would you, therefore, please furnish to me the names of the soldiers who were corralled and held under guard during the President's visit, with the location of the camp. You are well aware that this attitude is entirely contrary to the War Department's policy.

I trust that you will lend your weight in giving the Nisei an understanding of the situation somewhat as I have explained it here. The one thing that the War Department is hoping for is that this Japanese American combat team will so distinguish itself in combat that no question can ever arise as to the loyalty of the Japanese American citizen who professes his adherence to this country.

I do not know when you will be moving to Camp Shelby, but when you do keep in mind that Mississippi and Hattiesburg are highly race-conscious, and it is entirely possible that some unfortunate incident may be precipitated, but against the Nisei. Should bear in mind that incidents are usually precipitated by uninformed and ignorant people.

Please let me hear from you with the information on the incident reported by the Nisei.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED)

WILLIAM P. SCOBEE  
Colonel, General Staff  
Executive

Mr. George J. Inagaki  
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OASV;WDS;NAV