

ASW 014.311 W.D.C. Permits to Enter - Live

5 November 1943

Dear General:

I understand that you have been busy accomplishing a major reorganization which relieves the Western Defense Command of a good many administrative burdens more appropriately handled by the service command. I was also interested to hear that you have instituted a review of all individual exclusion cases in the light of the present situation. This is a forward step and I think you are going about it sensibly.

I had planned to discuss the West Coast Japanese problem with you before you left, to see what our long-range policy should be. As you know, the War Department has always proceeded on the basis that exclusion of Japanese from the West Coast would continue only so long as the military situation required. In a recent letter to the Senate the President took a similar position, stating:

"We shall restore to the loyal evacuees the right to return to the evacuated areas as soon as the military situation will make such restoration feasible."

I suppose that we might as well face the fact that before the end of the war, the day will come when we cannot in honesty say that exclusion of all Japanese is still essential. Mr. Myer, the Director of War Relocation Authority, raises the whole question in a recent letter to me, copy enclosed. I have written him in reply that while I could not see any substantial change in policy occurring in the immediate future, it seemed sensible to begin thinking ahead, and that I would get your views on it.

Quite apart from the marked improvement in the external situation, we are in a good deal better position to take care of the problem internally. A lot of information has been accumulated, so that we have a pretty good idea who the bad actors are likely to be. Tule Lake has been set up, and while not all of the bad ones are in there yet, the greater part of them are. Out of some 25000 citizen cases thus far processed through the Japanese-American Joint Board, the Board has been able to recommend in favor of release from relocation centers in over 18000 cases, and some 400 have been certified for employment in war industry. It is pretty difficult to say that a man who has been found eligible for

General

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war industry cannot with safety be permitted to return to the West Coast. Taking everything into consideration I imagine that if the question of whether or not to evacuate arose now, instead of soon after Pearl Harbor, the decision would be against mass evacuation. While this is not determinative of the question of whether any of them should now be let back, it is something to keep in mind.

I do not know how you feel about this West Coast problem. I do know that your handling of the Japanese population in Hawaii has elicited favorable comment from many sources. The situation in California is not the same. You have no doubt become aware of the existence of active and powerful minority groups in California whose main interest in the war seems to take the form of a desire for permanent exclusion of all Japanese, loyal or disloyal, citizen or alien, from the West Coast or, at least, from California. The recent developments at Tule Lake will naturally fan the flames. This means that considerations other than of mere military necessity enter into any proposal for removal of the present restrictions, even for selected individuals. The War Relocation Authority has somewhat the view that the Army, having accomplished their evacuation, has a responsibility in accomplishing their safe return. It is certainly not up to the Army to do any crusading. On the other hand it is clearly in the national interest to prevent incidents when the occasion arises for some of them to return.

Some time ago I suggested to General DeWitt the possibility of permitting the return of certain categories of individuals screened for loyalty, on an unobtrusive individual permit basis possibly coupled with some form of local sponsorship. I had in mind the families of men in the service, veterans of the last war, and mixed marriage cases. As to the latter category, I urge you to review existing policy as soon as you find the time. The present ground rules authorize the granting of a permit to a female of Japanese descent married to a caucasian provided she has unemancipated children. If she has no children, she is out of luck, regardless of how loyal she may be. Perhaps this was a sound policy to start off with, but the necessity for such an arbitrary separation of families has long since passed.

There also exists an absurd situation in regard to a family named Takayoshi. The husband, Tomoo Takayoshi, an American citizen of full Japanese descent, volunteered for the Japanese-American Combat Team, was accepted, and is now in training at Camp Shelby. Permission has previously been denied his half-Japanese wife and their two three-quarter blood children to return to Seattle and reside with the children's caucasian grandmother. Such action is entirely unnecessary from a security point of view, and it is certainly a hell of a way to treat an American soldier's family.

Let me know what you think of Myer's letter, and of the mixed marriage business. I suppose you have kept abreast of the Hawaiian situation. Contrary to some newspaper reports, the writ remains suspended. Unfortunately, Metzger did not have the stature to wipe the slate clean. The \$100 fine and the accompanying opinion was a bitter pill for Richardson to swallow after his efforts to eliminate all source of friction.

Sincerely,
(SIGNED) JOHN J. McCLOY

Lt. General Delos C. Emons
Commanding General
Western Defense Command
Presidio of San Francisco, California

Enc.
CC ltr 16 Oct 43 D.S.Myer to J.J.McCloy.

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