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AGRICULTURE IN TRANSITION
FROM WAR TO PEACE

Papers and Proceedings

of the

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of the

WESTERN FARM ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION

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Edited by the President of the Association

every chance of success. Other motivations, such as the fear of discrimination, worry over possible unemployment when soldiers return, housing shortage, etc. are also significant in the thinking of the young as well as the old people and have a paralyzing effect.

If time permitted much more might be said about the factors underlying resistance to relocation on the part of both aliens and citizens. However, a sufficient number of the elements involved have been listed to indicate that any successful relocation program must be geared to counteract these major practical and psychological barriers.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the mechanics and development of the relocation program. But it should be noted that it is a vast undertaking, sensitive to the complex problems and questions which must be faced and answered. For example, W.R.A. maintains regional offices which find job possibilities for evacuees and inform the Centers of job offers. These offices also try to find housing accommodations for evacuees. If health or emergency conditions make an evacuee's return to the Center necessary, the regional office arranges the details. By working with groups sympathetic to evacuees and the resettlement program, these regional offices seek to better public relations and create a friendly sentiment toward the resettlers. W.R.A. pays for the transportation and maintenance en route of those whose cash assets are so low that they could not otherwise relocate. It provides maintenance that cares for such resettlers until they can get on the job and receive pay. It provides for the transportation of their personal baggage and belongings. It will ship their tools of trade, up to the weight of 5,000 pounds, to the point where they will be used. It has arranged with the Social Security Board to provide emergency aid for relocatees who fall ill or find themselves in sudden difficulties. It permits the return to Centers of those who for good reason cannot maintain themselves on the outside and of the families of soldiers. A vocational training and retraining program has been inaugurated for those who would benefit by it. Adult English classes help the aliens to overcome the linguistic handicaps.

W.R.A. also allows short term leaves so that those who are faint of heart or poor in cash reserves may make full psychological and practical adjustments before finally resettling. It combats the inflated notions about food prices, taxes, rationing and other alleged horrors by pamphlets which soberly recite the facts about living costs and job opportunities in specific areas. The relocation program is growing and is changing in detail if not in direction in response to understanding and experience. And it is consequently enjoying an ever-increasing measure of success.

REPORT OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY SECTION MEETING

Prepared by GEORGE SABAGH

California State Reconstruction and Reemployment Commission

The respective roles of economic depressions and of organized political pressure groups in accentuating racial tensions were discussed at length. It was pointed out that tensions were

less serious during the depression years of the 1930's than they are at present, and it was inferred that the economic factor was less important than usually assumed.

After the evacuation of the Japanese, both organized and spontaneous opposition to racial minorities has centered on the Negroes. Areas in which this tension is at present manifested, and in which it may be expected to continue during the period immediately following the war, are (1) in the labor field, where discriminatory hiring policies are carried out as a result, in part, of pressures by organized labor; (2) in the housing field, where real estate covenants operate against attempts, by government and private agencies, to alleviate the situation; and (3) in the armed forces, where the Negroes are, to a great extent, segregated. In regard to postwar economic adjustments, the probability of any large-scale "back to the farm" moving among recent Negro migrants was discounted, due to the fact that most of these recent migrants have originated in Eastern and Southern urban areas and have had little farm experience.

Regarding the Japanese, the high probability of a continuing "reservation population," similar to that existing among the Indians, was discussed. It was believed that Opler's paper threw serious doubt on the popular contention that, once the legal barriers to return to the Coast were removed, there would be a large and immediate re-influx of Japanese to the West Coast. Doubts were also raised concerning the extent of success that may be expected to result from the War Relocation Authority's policy of dispersal over a wide area. Especially serious in impeding this plan are the language difficulties of the older generation; the extensive impoverishment following evacuation, including loss of capital and tools; inexperience in types of farming prevalent in the Intermountain States and the Middle West; dependence of many of the occupationally displaced upon other Japanese for customers and clients, etc. The extent to which a wide dispersal of a minority group would be expected to contribute to the ultimate solution of racial tensions was further discussed. From the sociological standpoint, preservation of divergent cultures has many advantages over complete assimilation. The "melting pot" ideology has, in large measure, proved unworkable and undesirable in regard to European immigrants. Among these groups, the great stability has often been manifested by those who have held longest to the old-world culture, whereas too rapid and radical departures from tradition have often resulted in social disorganization, as, e.g., among the Polish immigrants. The enemy alien status of the Japanese minority, it was observed, has obscured the issue, and has tended to place a political stigma on purely cultural factors.