

# Students Address Noon Chapel On Relocation Camp Problem

"Seventy thousand native born citizens," Dave Okada stated in Chapel at noon today, "are in the 'protective custody' of the Federal government today. No charge of disloyalty is filed against them; no acts have been committed by them which can be construed as detrimental or a hindrance to the full prosecution of the War."

This problem of "Americans in Relocation Camps" was presented by Florence Herber, Okada, and Ken Okuda, and sponsored by a group of Japanese-American and Caucasian students in conjunction with the War Relocation Authority of Cleveland.

## "Uproot Citizens"

Speaking from the Japanese point of view, Okada gave two reasons why it is an "unprecedented action on the part of our government to uproot these citizens from their homes and confine them within barbed wire enclosures without apparent cause: (1) military necessity and (2) protection of this group of citizens from possible harm by their fellow citizens."

The military necessity excuse has little justification, since "it is a matter of record that investigations reveal not a single act of sabotage was committed prior to, during, or since Pearl Harbor. Committees have gone further by declaring that they are convinced that the great majority of Japanese are unquestionably loyal to their country." The protection argument has more grounds for justification because "the population of the West Coast has long held a distinctly hysterical and hostile attitude toward the Japanese there."

## Presents Alternatives

The WRA office in Cleveland, according to Miss Herber, is seriously considering the possibility of inviting Japanese families to relocate in this area which offers the chance of jobs in both industry and agriculture. Postwar settlements of this action tend to present four alternatives: all Japanese shall return to California; all shall be deported to Japan; all shall be kept at relocation centers; or families shall move into friendly communities throughout the country. "The last alternative seems most capable of solving our post-war problem of Japanese resettlement."

Ken Okuda, who has himself been interned in a relocation camp, told of the kind of home the government is offering the citizens that have been moved. In ten centers, each approximately a mile square, 7,000 to 20,000 people eat, sleep, and live in army-style barracks. "Quarters are cramped but comfortable; the food monotonous but filling."

## Face Deadening Routine

The Nisei, second generation Japanese, are "given basic necessities of life in a deadening routine, to work or not as they please; and life becomes comfortable but not invigorating."

The whole problem is chiefly and fundamentally a race issue. "Was the evacuation necessary; was it in accordance with democratic ideals? Slowly we learn that American democracy cannot live if it is denied to any part of its population."

At 8 p.m. Friday in Goodrich all interested students will meet to discuss future plans for the Japanese-American group.