

War Relocation Centers

Tule Lake Builds for the Post-War World

Today the largest "city" in the extreme northern section of California is reported to be the Tule Lake Relocation Center. The population is composed of approximately 15,000 people of Japanese ancestry and a few appointed officials who carry responsibility for the community organization and its functioning.

One of the first concerns of the War Relocation Authority in planning the Tule Lake Center was for the establishment of an adequate school system which would serve the community, an education official of the Center states in a report from which the following account is taken. To organize a plant for 4,000 pupils is a task in normal times; to start from barracks under the limitation of war priorities and with the student body and community bewildered and frustrated by recent experiences of evacuation and disrupted home life, is a problem of magnitude. There was no pattern of experience in American education to serve as a guide in such a situation.

Responsibility to Evacuee Youth

It was of utmost importance that the school program meet the standards of the California State system, both for the immediate welfare of the evacuee youth and for the future when they leave the Relocation Center and reenter the established school systems. The obligation rests upon the administration of the Center to help evacuees return with the least possible bitterness and loss of morale. Teachers must find some way to instill in these young people a love for democracy and freedom at the same time they are temporarily deprived of their freedom and citizenship rights.

Schools ordinarily can count on the home to assume part of the pupil-training load. In the Center there is little opportunity for home life. Families prepare no meals together, have no place to entertain their friends, are in a new community under conditions entirely foreign to their mode of living and making a living. Children do not have privacy or quiet for home study. These factors coupled with the lack of adequate buildings, equipment, and educational aids present a challenge to the ingenuity and teaching skills of the staff.

What type of teacher can best cope with such a task? What special qualities of character would prove most nearly adequate in dealing with the tensions of the situation in a constructive

manner? Experience of Center officials during the past few months since the schools opened indicates that sympathetic tolerance seems the first and foremost requisite. A teacher must be able to discuss personal problems with the pupils frankly, including their problematical future and the hostility of the outside world. He must also be able to handle classroom situations with firmness and justice. Most of the students are loyal American citizens in the face of evacuation, but there is always the possibility that a few may show antagonism or open revolt. In such an incident, the responsibility of the teacher to prevent harmful results is very great.

Education Through Life in the Center

Given a staff having these qualifications, with what kind of program can they best serve the Tule Lake Center? The members are ever aware that they are training American citizens who will share in some capacity in the building of a post-war world. What the role of these persons will be no one can predict. It is therefore necessary to strive to bring about in the schools a situation which approximates as nearly as possible that of schools outside the Center. It is also desirable to provide opportunities for similar work experiences. Every outlet for services needs to be explored and geared into the school program.

The training of the pupils must grow out of life in the Relocation Center. They must come to understand the need for law and justice and accept their responsibilities as voters and citizens of this community, even though its geographic limits are narrow. In fairness to these youth, the schools should give them opportunity to prepare to enter schools outside the Center without duplication of work or loss of time.

Toward a Better Civilization

With this obligation in mind, the high-school program at Tule Lake was set up on the basis of the college entrance requirements of the University of California. Students who graduate from the Center high school will be able later to enter any institution of higher learning without difficulty. At the same time, it is necessary to provide a program of vocational training. The primary aim of the War Relocation Authority program is to prepare evacuees to take their places again in the economy of the Nation.

The school system includes nine nurs-

ery schools, supervised by colonist teachers who are being trained as they teach. In the adult education work almost 3,000 people are enrolled. Activities in art, literature, drama, physical education, and other worthwhile fields are being carried on and expanded. Parent-teacher associations have been organized. Boy Scout troops, Cub packs, Girl Reserve groups, 4-H Clubs, Hi-Y, and a chapter of Future Farmers of America are integral parts of the Center educational program.

Former college students are serving as assistant teachers. Few of the Nisei (American-born Japanese) have previously taken courses leading to teaching credentials. In the Center, under supervision, they are showing unusual aptitude for such work.

Regarding the responsibility of the teachers to the evacuees an educational official of the Tule Lake Center states: "Unless we are willing to see fear instilled in the hearts and minds of all minority groups in our Nation; unless we are willing to admit that the high ideals of a democratic form of government are unattainable, then we must strive to help the American-born youth of Japanese ancestry fit themselves to meet the discouragement of the present and to prepare themselves to take their place in the building of a better civilization after the war."

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Short Course for Food Managers

A new 7-month short course for food managers is being given as a special war service at Pennsylvania State College, according to Laura Drummond, director, Department of Home Economics. This course is designed to prepare men and women as assistants to trained dietitians in industrial, commercial, and hospital food service units.

The short course started February 15 and admitted high-school graduates. There are no prerequisites and no age limitation is imposed. The first group admitted was limited to 15.

The curriculum includes elementary nutrition, bacteriology, equipment for industrial cafeterias, quantity cooking and baking, food administration, food purchasing, and labor management.

The present need for trained personnel is great and will increase markedly during the next 12 months. Graduates of this course will qualify as food managers to assist dietitians and can go directly into industrial plants, or into commercial and hospital food service units, wherever a need may arise.