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DESCRIPTION OF TULE LAKE JAPANESE COLONY

June 22, 1942

Identification

The Tule Lake Japanese Colony is being formed as a result of the evacuation program of Japanese on the Pacific Coast. Evacuees from different parts of the Coast are being moved to the Tule Lake Relocation Center, which is to be occupied by them for the duration of the war. This center differs from the assembly centers, which are temporary, and is one of the half a dozen that have been started already. Other relocation centers have been started at Manzanar, Parker Dam, Gila River, and Minidoka. Farming land is available near the relocation center, and in time the Colony is expected to become self-sufficient. The project is directed by the War Relocation Authority.

Geographic location

The Tule Lake Relocation Center is located seven miles southeast of Tulelake on about a thousand acres of land owned by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation. The land is flat and covered with low grass. Formerly the area was a lake bottom, which was reclaimed, and there is no lake on the Relocation Center. Reclamation is still going on in adjacent areas, which are owned by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation. On all sides can be seen low hills. The area is about 4,000 feet above sea level. The winters are long and cold, and the planting season is only about 114 days. The temperature does not rise above 100. While it has been as low as -27 degrees F., the average minimum is about -10 degrees. It does not rain very much, however, and averages about ten inches a year. There is no rainy season, and rainfall is generally uniform throughout the year.

Membership

Members of the Colony consist of Japanese evacuees from the Pacific Coast. At present there are about 5,000 colonists in the Tule Lake Colony. First, about 1400 came from the Pacific northwest, and the rest have come from Sacramento and vicinity. Where the balance to make up the total capacity of 18,000 is to come from is not known at present. To list the date of entry of the colonists we have:¹

May 27, 447 from North Portland and Puyallup Assembly Center, a voluntary group.

June 1, 28 from Medford

June 2, 249 from Salem and outlying districts.

June 3, 339 from Vancouver and vicinity

June 4, 307 from northern and central Washington.

June 6, 482 from West Sacramento and Clarksburg.

June 9--17, 500 everyday from Walerga Assembly Center, a total of approximately 5000 from the Sacramento area.

The capacity of the center was originally set at 11,000, but because of lack of suitable locations for other relocation centers, the capacity was increased to 18,000.

1. Information Bulletin June 9, 1942

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Shelter

Shelter is provided by a series of wooden barracks, 20 by 100 feet, with about 35 feet between barracks. Facilities are built with a block as the unit. There are in one block 14 barracks, 1 recreation hall, 1 messhall, 1 men's latrine and shower room, 2 women's latrine and shower rooms, one laundry room and one ironing room. Nine blocks constitute a ward, and firebreaks separate the wards. At present four wards are completed and additional wards are being made at the north and south sides.

Rooms

Of the 14 barracks to a block 12 are partitioned into 4 apartments, approximately 20 by 25 feet, with a maximum capacity of six people. Two of the barracks are partitioned into six rooms of 16 by 20 feet, and are for couples and threes. In each room there is a wood stove installed. The walls are going to be insulated eventually and an eight-foot ceiling put up with the same material.

Latrine-shower room

The latrine-shower room has a concrete floor. The toilets are of the individual flushing type. The shower is adjustable for both hot and cold water. The boiler is heated with coal. Women's toilets and showers are partitioned, although the front is still open.

Messhall

The size of the messhall is equal to two barracks, and has a seating capacity of from 280 to 350 people. All of the occupants of one block can be served at the same time, and therefore there is no need to wait in line to eat. At present breakfast is served at seven a.m., lunch at noon, and dinner at 5.30 p.m. The floor is lined with linoleum and the tabletop covered with water-proof board.

Community store

The community store is a barrack lined with counters and shelves on both sides. It presents the appearance of a pioneer trading store, with all the necessities of everyday life displayed and rugs hanging down from the ceiling. Oranges and apples and one or two other fruits and candies of all sorts, soda water and ice-cream are sold by the entrance. Then there are hardware articles, stationeries, sport goods, clothing. At the end of the store cotton prints and curtain material are displayed. Except for the foodstuff, most of the articles ~~are~~ come from Sears Roebuck Company. The articles are sold at current price, and all profits are to go into a community fund. While there has been suggestions for a cooperative store, this is only in the stage of discussion.

Tulean Dispatch

The colony newspaper began as an information bulletin,

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and recently changed its title to the Tulean Dispatch. Frank Tanabe is working as the temporary editor, and at present there are seven others on the staff. The colony newspaper is being turned out three times weekly in two to six page editions. The staff is working with limited equipment, with only typewriters and a mimeograph machine to work with. While the printing of Japanese has been forbidden by the administration, there is to be no censorship of the newspaper.

Government

The administrative staff, with Mr. Shirrell as Acting Director, is working under orders from the WRA with the regional office in San Francisco and the head office in Washington, D.C. The guarding of the outside of the Colony is done by soldiers, but watchtowers at the four outside corners are usually the only evidences of their existence. The internal policing is done by the administrative staff with the help of colonists.

For each block a block manager has been appointed temporarily. It is an administrative position, and he is entrusted with the taking of letters down to the central post office and of delivering mail to each apartment, as well as organizing his block to meet specific problems.

Nine blocks in the first ward to be filled held elections to select temporary councilmen, one from each block. The nine elected have formed a Temporary Community Council, and have chosen Gerry Wakayama as their chairman. This legislative body will discuss various community problems and make plans for handling them. It was decided that as soon as four wards are filled a constitution will be drawn up.

Voting power is given to all those in the Work Corp. Since the Work Corp has not been set up as yet, all those from 16 to 90 are given the right to vote. Because of orders from Washington, however, only those with citizenship are given the right to become representatives.

Employment

Employment has been available in the administration office, hospital, recreation department, education department, mess-halls, potato field, warden crew and other departments of the Colony. Many of the positions, especially the top ones, have been filled by Niseis from the Northwest who entered the Colony first. There have been protests raised from people from Sacramento that the northern people resent their seeking jobs, while fear has been expressed by those already in office of the horde of in-coming Californians ousting them from their positions. Since job is one of the very few means of determining status within the Colony, it is very important that employment be distributed fairly. All positions filled at present are understood to be temporary.

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After the Colony is filled, reappointments are going to be made on a merit basis, with the possible use of examinations in many fields, as is done in civil service.

Recreation

Recreational activities have already begun. Seven baseball diamonds were marked out and games are being played every night. At present a league of eight teams has been formed. On Saturday nights dances have been held. Dance practice, knitting and crocheting, sumo, furniture exhibit were some of the activities carried on. There are plans for a gym where judo and other indoor sports can be practised. Pingpong tables are also being made. For the Issei a softball team was organized and a senryu meeting held. Go, shogi, Chinese checkers, card games, mah jong, karuta are also being planned under the leadership of Mr. Muramoto. The organization of recreational work has been handicapped by the rapid increase of population and the necessity of constantly adding new leaders from the incoming groups.

Religion

The Christian group has started a fairly well organized religious program, and as yet there is no Buddhist movement in the Colony. The Christians have been having Sunday morning services in English and in Japanese, high school fellowship group, post high school fellowship group, choir practice, ~~and~~ church school, and women's society meeting. There are two active Christian ministers--Rev. Kuroda and Rev. Tanabe.

Meals

The meals have been simple, but generally fairly good. American type cooking has predominated, and Japanese food has been represented mainly by shoyu on the table. Fresh vegetable has been served in fairly liberal quantity, and fresh fruits have also appeared on the table. Milk is available for adults once or twice a day. Children can have milk usually three times a day, but so far there is no special diet provided for them.

Work project

Aside from maintaining the Colony, work will be provided mainly this year by farm work. Besides the furniture factory operating modestly at present, plans are being made for some other industry in the Colony for the winter months. These work projects are efforts to make the Colony self-sufficient in food supply and in defraying other expenses. All profits from these work projects are to go to the community, and will result in greater benefit to individual colonists.

For this year 2800 acres are under cultivation. Nine hundred acres of this are planted in barley, while the balance is to be planted with vegetables. Potatoes are at present being planted, while onions, carrots, rhutabagga, cabbage, lettuce, and spinach are also to be planted. There are also plans for a dehydrating plant to preserve excess vegetable. As for animals there will be 25,000 poultry and

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600 to 1000 hogs. Cows are not being planned on for this year because there are not many Japanese dairymen.

The soil is deep volcanic ash, and is good productive soil, practically free from alkali and noxious weeds. For next year 3400 acres are being planned for cultivation. The new farm equipments bought have cost \$10,000. An experimental station is being set up to obtain the greatest efficiency from the short planting season.