



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

April 13, 1943

THE WHITE HOUSE  
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My dear Mr. President:

Information that has come to me from several sources is to the effect that the situation in at least some of the Japanese internment camps is bad and is becoming worse rapidly. Native-born Japanese who first accepted with philosophical understanding the decision of their Government to round up and take far inland all of the Japanese along the Pacific Coast, regardless of their degree of loyalty, have pretty generally been disappointed with the treatment that they have been accorded. Even the minimum plans that had been formulated and announced with respect to them have been disregarded in large measure, or, at least, have not been carried out. The result has been the gradual turning of thousands of well-meaning and loyal Japanese into angry prisoners. I do not think that we can disregard, as of no official concern, the unnecessary creating of a hostile group right in our own territory consisting of people who are engendering a bitterness and hostility that bodes no good for the future.

I am particularly concerned about these Japanese because, in very large measure, they have been set down upon lands within the jurisdiction of this Department -- Indian Reservations, Reclamation Projects and Public Lands. I am unwilling to believe that a better job in general could not have been done than has been done. Neither do I believe that we can't do better from here out, especially if we tackle the job in a different spirit and with real determination without further delay.

Sincerely yours,

*Harold I. Parker*

Secretary of the Interior.

The President,  
The White House.

April 24, 1945

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have your letter of April thirteenth calling to my attention that the Japanese-Americans in relocation centers are becoming embittered. Everyone with whom I have talked is dissatisfied with the present situation of this group of people -- most of all the officials of the War Relocation Authority.

Like you I regret the burdens of evacuation and detention which military necessity has imposed upon these people. I am afraid some measure of bitterness is the inevitable consequence of a program involving direct loss of property and detention on grounds which the evacuees consider to be racial discrimination. I was therefore glad to endorse the recent announcement by the War Department which reopened to American citizens of Japanese ancestry the opportunity to become employed in essential war industries and to serve in the armed forces.

Since normal American life is hardly possible under any form of detention, I believe that the best hope for the future lies in encouraging the relocation of the Japanese-Americans throughout the country and in turning as many as possible of the relocation centers over to the War Department for use as prisoner-of-war camps. Your own recent action in employing a Japanese family on your farm seems to me to be the best way for thoughtful Americans to contribute to the solution of a very difficult and distressing problem.

Very sincerely yours,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

The Honorable  
The Secretary of the Interior,  
Washington, D. C.