

Readjustment of Nisei Into American School Systems

Educating 27,000 for Relocation

"Following the removal of restrictions on the residence of loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry, it is anticipated that relocation will be accelerated and that many school students will be leaving the WRA centers to enter schools in various parts of the United States." This statement is made by Dr. Lester K. Ade, Director of Education, War Relocation Authority, in an official publication recently issued, entitled *Education Program in War Relocation Centers*.

Approximately 27,700 children of school age were included in the population of the 10 relocation centers established for people of Japanese ancestry who were evacuated from the West Coast following the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States.

As increasing numbers of families move from the centers and Nisei (American-born children of Japanese ancestry) enter the local school systems, administrators and teachers may need information about the educational progress of pupils during their 2 years in this special kind of environment. How do center schools rank with other American schools? Does the curriculum compare favorably with that of our better urban schools? What effect have evacuation and center life had on personality development? Will these pupils be "problem children"? Can they be integrated happily into the group life of classmates and associates?

The following information from WRA reports describes in general the education program of the centers. To answer the first two questions briefly, the schools are required to meet the standards of the States in which they are located, in teacher qualifications, courses of study, and graduation from elementary and high schools. They must also provide courses needed for admission to local State colleges and universities. State attendance regulations are enforced.

State departments of education and accrediting agencies advise on school programs. Schools are approved and accredited by the States in which they are located. Graduates are accepted by schools and colleges without loss of credit.

The school year in the relocation centers covers 11 months. Outside of the summer activities program, the school

organization is typical of that in most American communities. Elementary schools extend from the kindergarten through grade 6. The secondary schools, which include grades 7 to 12, are divided into junior and senior high school units. Federal funds were not available to employ preschool appointed personnel. However, nursery schools were found necessary to enable children brought up in homes where the English language was used incorrectly to make normal progress when they entered the elementary grades. All nursery school and general or vocational adult classes are taught by evacuee assistants.

Teachers appointed through Civil Service are recruited on a Nation-wide basis and are required to have valid teaching certificates covering the types of work for which they are employed. The teaching loads established are 40 pupils for each elementary and 35 pupils for each secondary teacher. The work of the Civil Service appointed teachers is supplemented by that of evacuee teacher assistants, many of whom have college training.

Joint school and community libraries are maintained under supervision of the school librarian, assisted by evacuee library employees. Branch libraries are located in the elementary and secondary schools.

"Tell it in English"

In the nursery schools an attempt is made to provide opportunity for quiet play and to foster social, intellectual, aesthetic, and physical development. Major emphasis is given to creative activities and particularly to free use of the English language. Stress is placed on the story hour, and on the use of pictures, plays, games, and songs in the teaching of English. "Tell it in English" is a common expression in all the pre-school work.

The principal of each elementary school has the assistance of a librarian, and one or two head teachers to aid in service and supervisory problems. The head teacher devoting part time to atypical education organized and is carrying out in each school a program of special aids for the hard of hearing, physically handicapped, partially sighted, and mentally maladjusted children.

Pupils in all schools are offered opportunities to participate cooperatively in various types of social, cultural, physical, and semicommercial activities which contribute to their general knowledge and offer participation in democratic procedures. Numerous school ground beautification projects have been completed. School patrols have been organized to protect the children and to teach safety habits. Elementary pupils cooperate in writing for and in publishing in mimeographed form a school paper. Some of the schools organized co-operative stores, directed and operated by pupils under the supervision of a teacher. Class and club organizations provide opportunities for democratic participation.

The entire educational program was planned to help pupils develop self-control, initiative, appreciation for and awareness of others, and a feeling of community responsibility. Teachers make use of various activities and facilities of the community so that pupils may learn the principles of working and living together in an American community.

In the secondary schools, the heavy teacher load of 35 pupils is relieved by use of college-trained but uncertified evacuee laboratory, library, study hall, and teaching assistants. The curricula are of necessity limited, but an attempt is made to provide pupils opportunity to complete work started prior to evacuation, to keep abreast of changes and developments outside the centers, and to gain experiences that will enable them when relocating to adapt to employment and social changes or to enter outside schools and communities. When the program opened, some short courses were given so that pupils might complete at least a part of their fractional credits. Each pupil was encouraged to plan a balanced program including required subjects and the usual minimum number of courses in English, science, mathematics, health education, and the social sciences.

Class Instruction and Outside Work Complementary

The high schools early established a part-time school-work program. Under this plan, students enrolled in certain subjects are encouraged to spend a part of their time working in some center activity or office where the work and the class instruction are complementary. Supervision responsibilities of the schools and the employer are coordinated and job rotation is effected where possible. Success on the job is reflected in the pupil's credit record for the related courses.

In most schools, pupil-record maintenance conforms to State practices. The WRA has developed a uniform transcript of pupil records which will be available at the centers until they close and will then be assembled in the central WRA offices in the U. S. Department of the Interior.

Since the pupils are partially segregated from outside life and have few home duties, special attention is given to extra class activities. Through student home room and council organizations, pupils gain experience in democratic processes. Membership in local dramatic, athletic, science, glee, debating, and other clubs and societies develops a feeling of group participation. Local chapters or units of the National Honor Society of Secondary Schools, Future Farmers of America, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Reserves, and others help maintain contacts with the outside world.

High schools cooperate with communities in various ways. Under a make-up system, pupils are dismissed from school when necessary to participate in rush harvesting or crop season work, often under teacher supervision. Schools and individual pupils in some centers enter the district or county debating clubs, athletic organizations, and stock-judging contests. Young people in all the centers are active in paper salvage drives, bond and stamp sales, first-aid and life-saving courses, Red Cross programs, and service to the USO.

Throughout the school program specific attention is given to development of desirable health habits and to prevention of disease. Teachers, parents, and the WRA medical section cooperate in protecting the health of pupils. Immunization against smallpox, diphtheria, and typhoid has been provided where possible.

Frequent inspections, first aid for injuries, quarantine for children with communicable diseases, and the requirement that pupils absent because of illness return only with official permission have helped maintain a good health record for the schools. Attendance statistics indicate that absence because of illness is lower than is usually anticipated in schools. Parents are encouraged to promote good health practices in the home.

Parent-teacher organizations contribute to pupil morale and interest in the school, to development of out-of-class learning activities, and to securing the cooperation of many center organizations as well as of individual parents in the school program. In most cases, the parent-teacher organizations are affiliated with the State and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

The preschool parent-teacher organizations were active in promoting the nursery-school program. They sponsored English classes for parents who could not speak English, encouraged the enrollment of all eligible children in the nursery schools, promoted health work, and assisted in painting the walls and furniture in the schoolrooms, curtaining the windows, and building equipment from fruit crates.

Parent-teacher organizations have provided parents opportunity to understand the American school system, and have contributed toward developing, especially in the younger children, a sense of security, a feeling of belonging, and a confidence in ability to do acceptable school work.

In all the centers, pupils came from various localities and from many types of schools. Previous environments and experiences differed greatly. Probably the only element they held in common was their Japanese ancestry. Some of the pupils had transferred several times before arriving at their final center destination. In most cases their hopes for the future and particularly their educational plans had been disrupted. To aid these pupils, the center schools organized an extensive counseling service. The program is directed by the guidance counselor with the assistance of home-room teachers, principals, and others.

Adjustment of pupils to school and community life outside the centers will be influenced by the successful relocation of the family. To prepare adult members for useful occupations after leaving the centers, and to provide means of adjusting into new communities, extensive general and vocational educational programs have been organized. This work stresses principally improvement in the use of English and training in customs and habits which best enable one to participate in American community life.

The primary purpose in establishing WRA schools was to enable young Nisei to make acceptable educational progress while living in the centers. About 3,800 school children have already left the centers to relocate in many parts of the United States.

These American children of Japanese ancestry for the most part seem to have adjusted readily into new schools and to have been accepted by pupils and teachers. Experiences of pupils who have made the transition from centers to normal communities indicate that Nisei are prepared to make the adjustment with satisfaction both to themselves and to society.

Nisei College Students' Report

A mimeographed report of the work of 13 relocated Nisei college students who spent 4 to 6 weeks of their summer vacation on return trips to 8 Relocation Centers is now available. The visits were planned by the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council and financed by a number of religious organizations. The Council felt that Nisei college students who themselves have relocated could best help high-school graduates still in the centers to understand the present opportunities for higher education and could reassure fearful parents regarding the safety of their daughters outside the centers.

The returning students interviewed 809 students, including many in the high-school class of 1945, and 375 parents and evacuee leaders.

Copies of the publication titled *Final Composite Report of the Returnee Nisei College Leaders, Summer of 1944* may be secured from National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, 1201 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

New Publication

On January 1 there was issued the first number of a new semi-monthly publication of the U. S. Office of Education, titled *Higher Education*. This constitutes a medium of communication on higher education between the U. S. Office of Education and the colleges, universities, higher education associations, and persons concerned with this field of educational service.

Higher Education will include information concerning Federal activities related to higher education, reports of statistical and other studies of higher education made by staff members of the Office, materials from the colleges and universities and from educational organizations, and announcements of new publications related to higher education.

The publication is being sent to college and university presidents, deans of most of the schools, chairmen of post-war planning committees in colleges and universities, a limited number of other officials, and to college and university libraries.