

# Army-Civilian Rift On Jap Relocation Denied at Dies Probe

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Capt. Hall Disputes  
Story of Army Private  
On Reported 'Break'

A reported "break" between civilian and military authorities over a plan to allow Japanese-Americans released from the 10 war relocation centers to return to the Pacific Coast from which they were evacuated after outbreak of the war was flatly denied before Dies subcommittee late yesterday by Capt. John M. Hall, an attache in the office of Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy.

The denial came shortly after Robert E. Stripling, chief committee investigator, read excerpts from a report Mike M. Masaoka, former national secretary and field executive of the Japanese-American Citizens' League sent to various chapters of the organization last April 19.

## Private Admits Report.

Mr. Masaoka, now a private in the Army, was on the witness stand at the time, and admitted he wrote the report. It said in part:

"The notion that cleared Nisei (Japanese-American) ought to be permitted to return to the Pacific Coast if they so desire seems to have caught on here. I understand that, from highly confidential and reliable sources, Dillon Myer (director of the War Relocation Authority), is now convinced that unless the Nisei are permitted to return to California the general WRA resettlement program is doomed to failure.

"In line with this thinking, he has presented a memorandum to the President. Biddle (Attorney General Biddle) and Elmer Davis have agreed with Myer's thinking and Davis has assigned a number of his boys the job of working out an acceptable OWI release system which will prevent the vicious California press from making too great an issue of it.

## Denies Any Rift.

"Within the War Department, there is a break between the civilian and military heads on this subject. Assistant Secretary of War McCloy,

after a written confidential opinion from Mr. Biddle himself, has written the President to the effect that he now believes civilians ought to take over along the lines suggested above. I understand that Secretary Stimson has gone as far as to orally agree to that this phase of the problem is beyond that of the military.

"As you can well guess, the general staff and Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt (chief of the Western Defense Command), both oppose this thinking. They insist that as long as the Japanese have any toehold in Alaska the West Coast is in imminent danger of invasion and that therefore this problem is still primarily one for the military. Just how this behind-the-scenes argument will progress can't be predicted at this time, but I am encouraged that there is a strong opinion in favor of such a program."

Capt. Hall told the subcommittee "no such rift ever did arise." He said he was familiar with the "picture" and suggested that a representative of the War Department be called to testify with respect to it. Secretary Stimson, he explained, already has shunted the report as "complete nonsense."

## Favors Releasing Loyal.

Pvt. Masaoka, an American who was born of Japanese parents in Fresno, Calif., spent nearly six hours on the witness stand outlining activities of the Japanese-American Citizens' League.

He said he joined the Army to show loyalty to his native America and enmity to ancestral Japan and urged that loyal Japanese-Americans be given "that 'Chinaman's chance' to stay here after the war."

Pvt. Masaoka also asked present day assistance, saying that the War Relocation Authority "should get more Japanese-Americans out of the relocation camps and restore them to normal life."

Under questioning by the committee, he said he does not believe that every member of the league is loyal to the United States, but "at least 90 per cent of them are."

## Counseled Strike.

Pvt. Masaoka admitted writing reports as secretary of the league to Japanese Americans in the West urging that they refuse to work unless Government restrictions placed on them and their kinsmen in centers were removed. Committee investigators read to the committee some of Pvt. Masaoka's reports, in some of which he urged strikes among the Japanese Americans unless their demands against restrictions were granted.

Lengthy correspondence and reports of Pvt. Masaoka to Japanese Americans over the country were introduced in which he stated that as secretary of the league here he was in touch with high officials of the Government and others here. Among those mentioned were Mrs. Roosevelt, Chief Justice Stone, Mr. Stimson, Secretary of Navy Knox, Mr. Biddle and others.

Asked if he had personal contact with these persons, Pvt. Masaoka replied, "May have."

"Isn't it a fact that you were merely trying to impress the league with things you hadn't done?" he was asked.

Pvt. Masaoka replied, "All right, let's put it that way."