

unclassified 701022

NOTES AFTER CABINET MEETING

February 27, 1942.

1. West Coast evacuation. The President brought this up first of all and showed that thus far he has given very little attention to the principal task of the transportation and resettlement of the evacuees. I outlined what DeWitt's plan was and his proclamation so far as I could without having the paper there. Biddle supported us loyally, saying that he had the proclamation already in his hands. I enumerated the five classes in the order which are being affected and tried to make clear that the process was necessarily gradual, DeWitt being limited by the size of the task and the limitations of his own force. The President seized upon the idea that the work should be taken off the shoulders of the Army so far as possible after the evacuees had been selected and removed from places where they were dangerous. There was general confusion around the table arising from the fact that nobody had realized how big it was, nobody wanted to take care of the evacuees, and the general weight and complication of the project. Biddle suggested that a single head should be chosen to handle the resettlement instead of the pulling and hauling of all the different agencies, and the President seemed to accept this; the single person to be of course a civilian and not the Army. I brought up the property problem and the necessity of an Alien Property Custodian with a regional director out there in charge. This seemed to be accepted by the President. Biddle and the other agencies will probably immediately contact McCloy on this subject. I think McCloy should have somebody in the Department who can minimize this load on McCloy.
2. The West Coast alarm brought up its inevitable merriment but the President desires to have comment in reference to air raid alarms made exclusively by the appropriate officials of the Department responsible. I pointed out the regulations showing that this was the Army. Landis, the head of the OCD, strongly desires the Army to undertake this responsibility.
3. Removal of Japs from Oahu. Knox brought this up and urged vigorously the remedy of the situation out there. I told them that the Army concurred in this but that for the reasons given in Marshall's memorandum it would probably be necessary to send them to the United States. The President was staggered by this and was rather plainly in favor of placing them on the Island of Malikou (Leper island) in a big cantonment guarded by the Army. This was the plan urged by Knox. I pointed out the difficulties of this so far as I could. The matter was left unsettled.

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4. Ickes pointed out that we had only two key points for the manufacture of tetratolual lead for 100 octane gasoline and that these points should be carefully guarded. He could not tell me the two points. Nelson said that Under Secretary Patterson had charge of the defense of these points. The matter was thus left presumptively on our shoulders. I should like to have this brought to the attention of Patterson and have him let me know what is being done.

*W.A. sent to P.P. memo
to Ickes*

5. McIntyre, the Presidential secretary, caught me leaving the room and said they were being swamped with applications for the new WAAC - the Women's Auxiliary Corps. He said the President wanted me not to make any commitment on who this head should be without seeing him. I told McIntyre to tell him that I would gladly do so if he would reciprocate as we had a very good person under consideration. This should be watched carefully.

H. L. S.

Copies to:
The Chief of Staff
The Under Secretary of War
The Assistant Secretary of War.

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