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JAPANESE LABOR CONDITIONS NYSSA
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THE AMALGAMATED SUGAR COMPANY



NYSSA, OREGON

August 13, 1942

Mr. George K. Aiken
Executive Secretary to the Governor
State House
Salem, Oregon

Dear George:

Miss Azalia E. Peet is quite well known to me. She does quite a lot of worrying about the treatment and condition of the Japanese. Her background, so far as I know, is this: She is a Methodist missionary and spent about 22 years in Japan. At the opening of the war she was evacuated and returned to Gresham, Oregon, where she worked with the Gresham Japanese prior to their induction into the Assembly Center. Shortly after the first contingent of Japanese arrived in Malheur County she came down to see what she could do. She contacted the Farm Security Administration and made some sort of a deal with them whereby she lives in Nyssa and spends a great share of her time out at the Camp. I believe that she is a harmless sort of person, but she does have a lot of interest in the welfare of the Japanese.

So far as the entire Japanese labor program is concerned, it is working out entirely satisfactorily in Malheur County. We have maintained approximately 400 Japanese throughout the entire summer. They have been just about the only agricultural labor that we have had. They were very loyal to the Sugar Company and continued to work in beets in preference to other crops just as long as there was beet work to do. During the last two or three weeks, however, beet work has decreased very materially; consequently, they have gone into other lines of agricultural work such as haying, threshing grain, potatoes, celery, onions, tractor driving, irrigation, and most any other kind of agricultural work. The Warm Springs Irrigation District has been using about six workers for the last two to three weeks in the removal of moss from their irrigation ditches. Had it not been for these Japanese in Malheur County, I do not know how in the world we could have taken care of the crops. As matters stand, I believe that work is as well up to date at present as ever at this season. The Japanese program can be given full credit.

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The adjoining counties in Idaho are now getting all excited about getting the program to working in their counties as they have a lot of fruit coming on which must be picked very shortly. Some of the counties have been approved; some have not. The approved counties are using labor out of the Nyssa Camp.

Thus far there has not been a single unpleasant incident arise in connection with the Japanese program. They are good spenders and behave themselves when in town; consequently, the merchants are satisfied. They are good field workers which satisfies the farmers. At the present time there are approximately 375 of these Japanese evacuees in the County. About 235 are living in the Camp, and the remainder is scattered out on farms throughout the County.

In regard to living conditions for these people for winter, many are extremely anxious to stay here. I talked with Rex Lee just a few days ago. As you know he is with the War Relocation Authority. He told me that so far as the W.R.A. was concerned that their staying within the County met with their full approval provided they were able to support themselves and their living conditions were satisfactory. Several of the farmers have fixed up winter quarters which are entirely suitable and want to keep the workers that they have. A few families are considering the renting of houses in Nyssa for the winter. The Farm Security has changed their construction plans on the permanent camp, which they are just starting work on and which is located on the old Quinby farm about three blocks north of the Factory, so that winter housing will be provided for 35 to 40 families in their camp. The original plan was to construct walled tent houses. We objected to this plan. They have now decided to move to Nyssa 75, what they call "frame shelters." These can be moved and lined for winter use for about \$40.00 less per unit than they can construct the new tent shelters. If we can hold a considerable number of these Japanese here through the winter it will make farmers feel a great deal easier in the spring. I can see no other form of agricultural labor relief. The Japanese in the Portland camps are now well acquainted with our program, and we believe that we will have no difficulty in recruiting several hundred, probably as many as a thousand, workers for the fall harvest.

This is a long letter but I do want you to have as complete picture as possible. I hope that we can expand the program in 1943. With the very best of personal regards to yourself and Lu, I remain

Sincerely yours,

R. G. LARSON
District Manager

rgl/ph