

January 5th, 1939.

Mr. Walter A. Duffy,
Regional Administrator,
Farm Security Administration,
Portland, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

You have persistently misrepresented the attitude and actions of the Yakima Chamber of Commerce with reference to your proposed transient labor camp by stating that in previous negotiations the chamber had favored such a camp and had now reversed itself.

As acting secretary of the chamber of commerce from January to June of 1937 I carried on some correspondence with your office under direction of the chamber's Resettlement Committee. So I am familiar with that phase of the scheme. Through professional work for the chamber in preparing literature for the earlier Roza "subsistence" settlement project I am also familiar with that phase. Finally, as an ordinary citizen with no official connection with the chamber of commerce since June 1, 1937 except as a member, I am free to speak more plainly than perhaps an official of the chamber might do.

Now here are the facts. They are amply supported by written records. You also had the records. Whether you have destroyed them or not I do not know. At any rate you have ignored them.

The Roza subsistence homestead plan was advanced to the Tugwell Re-settlement Administration. It proposed settlement of families upon tracts of land large enough to enable them to earn part of their living on the land and to be available for the valley's seasonal harvest for cash income. A competent engineer spent a whole summer preparing detailed plans and tabulated data upon the labor situation. It had some practical aspects- if any paternalistic plans have. But Tugwell went on to Alaska and founded Matanuska.

During 1936 an independent committee of Yakima people known as the Welfare Council had negotiations with your office concerning a similar project, on a smaller scale and upon already developed lands in the valley. Late in 1936 the Chamber of Commerce again entered the situation with a request for such a settlement or series of settlements. Early in 1937

the Welfare Council and Chamber of Commerce committee agreed to join their efforts and Mr. R. D. Rovig, then head of the council, wrote you that further negotiations would be carried on through the chamber of commerce committee.

Now I shall point out where your recent statements have misrepresented the attitude of the chamber of commerce. Our committee and that of the welfare council then agreed, and our correspondence plainly stated, that our farmers preferred the work of men who had a place of their own. We said specifically that the proposed settlement or camp should be "set up exclusively for the residence of permanent agricultural and horticultural workers" (letter of March 11, 1937)

Your Mr. Peet stated, as you quoted him in your letter of Mar. 23, 1937, that this "venture could and should be made economically sound" that there should be "no actual subsidy either by the community or the government". Specifically, the plan contemplated a group of small subsistence tracts, on which each settler would have his own home and garden, and which he would pay for - the total cost to be such that the entire payment could be amortized in 20 years at the rate of \$10 per month.

Our committees insisted that the tiny tracts proposed by your department were not large enough, said that $\frac{1}{2}$ acre should be the minimum and one acre would be better.

Now for some further comment, which I think is entirely justified by the records. The head planners took the Resettlement Administration away from Tugwell and turned it over to Wallace about the end of 1936. During the time of my brief service it was hard to tell who was carrying the ball, you or Peet or somebody else. We tried time and again to get a definite appointment with you to come up and go over the matter with the committee. During a period of five months I believe we received one letter from you. Otherwise you ignored our communications and you never did show up.

At the present time we are still in doubt as to who is carrying the ball and calling the signals. Public statements purporting to come from you indicate that you intend to move in and set up this transient labor camp - an utterly different set-up than the one previously discussed - regardless of the vigorous protest of more than 10,000 valley residents. You ignore the obvious fact that no camp or series of camps could begin to hold the peak load of transient labor needed in the harvest. You ignore the fact, plain to everyone who has traveled about the community, that several thousand people have come into the valley since this matter was discussed early in 1937, many of whom are able to take care of themselves, have built homes and according to our farmers are the best harvest workers they have had the past two seasons. You ignore the facts testified to by every California community which has had none of these camps inflicted upon it, that they are undesirable, that they are a source of added taxes and lowered standards and a standing invitation to the foot loose in every state to move out here and live easy off the government!

You would not persist in going against the expressed wishes of a whole community unless someone was backing you up. Who is it? Henry Wallace? He is presumably the big boss of all activities in the Agricultural Department. There are a number of things Henry could do that wouldn't cost a quarter million dollars and would do our farmers a lot more good. Such as cutting down the spray residue tolerance some more and giving the beet growers some more acreage.

Another quarter million dollars added to the same amount Jim Farley is going to spend remodeling our old postoffice would build a federal building large enough to take care of most of the army of government departments and employees in the community. But I suppose that wouldn't come under the head of Farm Security.

My personal opinion - and it is becoming the belief of more and more people every day - is that your transient camp set-up is all part of the grand scheme to get a majority of the population tied to strings which brain trusters back in Washington can pull - a gigantic puppet show. It fits in with the rest of the scheme the federal theater, the N.Y.A., the bales and bales of propaganda and the sugar-coated communism that comes over the air in some kind of radio program day after day.

Of course that's just my personal opinion. But I know enough others who have the same belief to assure you that if you do come in and build this camp it is going to hasten the day when you and your bosses and some thousands of other uplifters will be looking for some ordinary jobs again - when you'll come down to earth again and find that business - the business of raising and making and trading things is really what keeps us all going. You needn't bother to answer - I understand you are coming up soon to answer all objections. I'll be interested to hear your answers.

Very truly yours,