

TEUNIS

TEUNIS J. WYERS
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW
HOOD RIVER, OREGON

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

May 27, 1942

Hon. Charles A. Sprague
Governor of Oregon
Salem, Oregon

Dear Governor Sprague:

I was in Salem last Thursday and had a considerable conference with Mr. Neuner of the Attorney General's office and another gentleman whose name I do not recall from the State Land Board office. The conference was concerning the matter of the evasion of the Alien Land Law here in Hood River. I think the entire matter was left to be presented to the State Land Board at its next meeting as to whether or not the Board would be willing to send a man up here for the necessary 30 days or more for making a study of the facts upon which future actions might be based.

I have previously written you about this subject and I thought it might be of interest to you to know what was happening to public attitudes here. As you know, the Japanese have all been evacuated.

Human reactions are always interesting. The evacuation of these people was quite pathetic at least in a number of cases. Many of the older folks wept and I think most of the younger ones were quite satisfied that they would never be permitted to return. I know that I myself was very sorry for at least one or two of the evacuees because I feel that they probably were spiritually American. The practically unanimous reaction of the townsfolk and farmers of this valley, however, has surprised me. There is an almost vicious and almost universal attitude that they must never return -- that their coming here was wrong and that the valley is far better off without them. One hears this even from those who had close personal friends among the evacuees.

Lots of letters have been returned from them and they are reporting that they are being badly treated. The reaction to this is that they are probably being better treated than our nationals in Manila. One of the Yasuis has written several strong letters back and they are quite a focal point of conversation because their father was taken to a concentration camp immediately

Gov. Charles A. Sprague

- 2 -

May 27, 1942

after Pearl Harbor and the oldest boy is under arrest in Portland for violation of the curfew law.

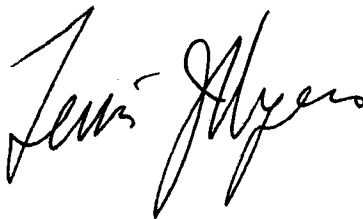
All of this to the end that Hood River really wants something done on this Alien Land Law. To this I add my own personal desire along that line. The present stage of the program is only one of investigation and the matter of what should be done after the facts are reported must be decided then. The American Legion is really very determined. Shortly after my appointment the local Commander came to my office on this program and has closely followed the situation ever since. They adopted a resolution some time ago and I think they sent you a copy of it.

I will be glad to receive any suggestions you may care to make.

Since this letter is intended for your personal advice, I want to say that it is my judgment that your political career is not ended unless you choose to make it so. I believe that 80% or more of the people who voted in the Primaries believe that you were a good and satisfactory governor. I think you have not been a perfect and complete politician but your good qualities are quite well known and appreciated. I for one hope very much that you will direct your plans toward the United States Senate or some other appropriate public service.

Best personal regards.

Yours truly,



TJW:AM

June 1, 1942.

Dear Tomlin:

The State Land Board will discuss the question of sending someone to Hood River County to study the alien land situation there at an early meeting. I feel sure the Board will want to see that the law is properly enforced, although I do not think its enforcement should be strained to the point of persecution; nor will the enforcement of the alien land law in itself keep the Japanese from returning to Hood River County.

I can understand the objection of the citizens there to their return. On the other hand, the communities where they have gone do not want them. It looks as though we will have a race minority problem of our own for the post war period. I think you should assemble what data you can and then review it with the Attorney General's office to see if the evidence justifies legal proceedings.

Thanks for your kindly comments respecting my administration as Governor. I have had a good many comment approvingly upon my work. It was a case where my opponent had done a better job at political organization and so got more votes than I did.

It is too early yet for me to make any plans for a return to public life, but I certainly will continue my interest in Oregon affairs.

Cordially yours,

Hon. Tomlin J. Myers
District Attorney
Hood River County
Hood River, Oregon

Governor.

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