

that read: "Will you please be good enough to reply to Congressman Lea in regard to the enclosed letter."⁶³

On the same day, 16 February, Colonel Bendetsen boarded an airplane in San Francisco, and he reached the War Department's offices in Washington about noon on 17 February.⁶⁴ Before his arrival the Provost Marshal General's office initiated a telegraphic survey among the corps area commanders with the following message:

Probable that orders for very large evacuation of enemy aliens of all nationalities predominantly Japanese from Pacific Coast will issue within 48 hours. Internment facilities will be taxed to utmost. Report at once maximum you can care for, including housing, feeding, medical care, and supply. Your breakdown should include number of men, women, and children. Very important to keep this a closely guarded secret.⁶⁵

A follow-up letter explained that 100,000 enemy aliens would be involved, 60,000 of whom would be women and children, and that all were to be interned east of the Western Defense Command, "50 percent in the Eighth Corps Area, 30 percent in the Seventh, and 10 percent each in the Fourth and Sixth."⁶⁶ There were three reasons for the intention (as of 17 February) for removing the Pacific coast Japanese to areas east of the Western Defense Command. Since mid-December General DeWitt had insisted that internment of enemy aliens ought to be outside his theater of operations; some of the governments of the intermountain states had already indicated that they would not countenance any free settlement of the west coast Japanese within their borders; and, lastly, an Army survey of existing facilities for intern-

⁶³ Memo, President Roosevelt for SW, 16 Feb 42, AG 014.311 (2-16-42), received in Secretary's office at 9:11 a.m., 17 Feb 42.

⁶⁴ Tel Conv, Gen DeWitt with Gen Gullion, 17 Feb 42, ASW 014.311 EAWC. In its *Final Report*, the War Department stated (page 25): "The War Department representative [Colonel Bendetsen] carried back to the Secretary the recommendation of the Commanding General that some method be developed empowering the Federal Government to provide for the evacuation from sensitive areas of all persons of Japanese ancestry, and any other persons individually or collectively regarded as potentially dangerous. The Commanding General's proposal was reduced to writing in a memorandum for the Secretary of War, dated February 14, 1942. . . . This recommendation was presented to the Secretary of War on or about February 16th." No other evidence was found that the recommendations contained in General DeWitt's memorandum to the Secretary of War were considered or referred to in the preparation of new War Department directives on the subject between 17 and 20 February. After these directives were drafted and after talking with General DeWitt on 20 February, Colonel Bendetsen wrote to the Secretary of War: "It was I who misunderstood General DeWitt's plan.—he has no mass movement in mind." Memo, Col Bendetsen for SW, 21 Feb 42, and atchd transcript of Tel Conv, Gen DeWitt with Col Bendetsen, 20 Feb 42, in SW file, Aliens.

⁶⁵ Memo, PMG for TAG, 17 Feb 42, PMG 384.4 WDC. The copy bears the notation: "Gen Gullion took this up in person with Mr. McCloy who approves."

⁶⁶ Ltr, TAG to CG's, Corps Areas, 17 Feb 42, PMG 384.4 WDC. The reference to all Japanese residents as aliens was rather frequent practice in Army exchanges on the subject during February 1942.