

ENLISTEES WRITE TO CONGRESSMEN

As part of their activity to secure civil rights for evacuees, the Topaz volunteers for the Japanese American combat team sent a letter Tuesday night to Washington, D.C., to United States Senators Elbert Thomas and Abe Murdock, and Representatives Will C. Robinson and Walter Granger, all from Utah. The letter read in part:

We, the undersigned, are residents of the War Relocation Project at Topaz, Utah, who have volunteered for the special Japanese American combat unit announced by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, on January 28 of this year. Although we are not legally constituents of yours, we felt we might address you as less than strangers, since we do reside in the state you represent in Congress, and since by our volunteering, we are making common cause with all good Americans and their government leaders in the prosecution of the present war against this country's enemies. We are, therefore, taking this opportunity to bring to your attention certain facts about ourselves, our motives, our hopes.

First of all, as to our motives:

"We believe in democracy and dedicate ourselves to the furtherance of its principles.

"To uphold these principles, we must destroy every form of tyranny, oppression and violation of human rights.

"We place our faith in America and base our hope in the future on that faith.

"Therefore, we believe that our volunteering in the armed forces of this country is a step towards the realization of these ends and a positive manifestation of our loyalty to the United States."

The sincerity of our belief in the credo can

be gauged, we think, by the fact that we have maintained an unwavering trust in the good faith of this country and her leaders through all the trying period of our evacuation and forced confinement. We have never taken this wholesale removal and detention as an expression of America's real or final intentions toward us. Our volunteering is, therefore, no more than an affirmation in terms of positive action of the loyalty we have always held toward this country.

Such is the prime motivation behind our action. At the same time, we are aware that what we have done involves an issue beyond that of our own loyalty to America. If the government's reopening of the armed forces to us is a heartening token of our reinstatement as equal partners with all other Americans in the fight against our common enemies, we are hopeful that it is also a token of the eventual reinstatement of all loyal persons of our racial minority as useful and accepted members of the democratic commonwealth of America. For the situation of the thousands of brothers and sisters and parents of the volunteers in the various relocation centers is still a problem to be solved.

Although, for various valid reasons, they are not within the volunteer group, we feel sure that the vast majority of them are fundamentally as loyal as we are. Thousands of them now stand ready to be taken into the army through the regular channels of the selective service act. But in a time of war, it is all too easy for the superficial kinship of race between them and an enemy nation to create unjust public attitudes toward them. They are looked upon with suspicion; their loyalty is doubted; and they may find it difficult to re-estab-

lish themselves as normal components of American society.

We, who have volunteered, are deeply conscious that by our actions we may in some measure help correct that situation. We are hopeful that any public approbation accorded us as volunteer soldiers will also embrace those of our kin that we leave behind, and that their re-entry into general American life will be made easier to that extent. We know, too, that government leaders; no less than we ourselves, are hopeful that this will be the result. For a war against world fascism can be fully effective only if there is a complete consistency in democratic practice here at home.

We are volunteering, therefore, not only because that is the most direct and most irrefutable demonstration of our own loyalty to this country, but because by our action we feel we are contributing to the eventual fulfillment of American democratic tradition in its best and highest meaning.

We have written to you because we felt that you would be interested in knowing how one group of Japanese American volunteers--a group from your own state--sincerely feels. And since part of our problem, the problem of all those of Japanese blood in this country, is to create a better and wider public awareness of our situation, we also felt that you as a government leader could exercise much favorable influence in bringing that end about. We shall be grateful for anything you might be able to do to make what we have expressed here a matter of wider public and official knowledge, as well as for any effort you might be able to contribute as a member of Congress toward fair and democratic legislation for all minority groups in this country.