

D.C., to report that he had just received a visit from a representative of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce who demanded the internment of all the Japanese in the Los Angeles area, regardless of whether they were citizens of the United States. DeWitt was opposed. "I'm very doubtful that it would be a commonsense procedure," he told the provost marshal general. It would be "likely to alienate the loyal Japanese," and "an American citizen, after all, is an American citizen."

A month later, however, General DeWitt changed his mind, largely as a result of the sensational publicity given to the report of the Pearl Harbor investigating commission under Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts. That report, published on January 25, 1942, laid the blame for the disaster mainly on the Army and Navy commanders in Hawaii, Lieutenant General Walter C. Short and Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, respectively, and charged these two officers with "dereliction of duty" in having failed to take adequate precautions for the defense of the islands. Short and Kimmel had already been removed from their commands, but several congressional leaders now demanded that they suffer the further disgrace of being court-martialed. The Roberts Report also asserted that "Japanese spies on the Island of Oahu" had included "persons having no open relations with the Japanese Foreign Service." Many Americans interpreted this statement as new and official evidence of widespread Japanese American disloyalty.

The truth was that there was not a scrap of valid evidence to connect any Japanese American resident of Hawaii with any act of espionage or sabotage. But this would not be widely known until after the war. The Roberts Report, at the time it was published, had an enormous and inflammatory effect on public opinion, especially in California.

On January 27 DeWitt had a long conference with Governor Culbert L. Olson. A few weeks before, Olson had pleaded for tolerance of Japanese Americans and for confidence in their loyalty, but now, DeWitt informed the War Department, the governor had joined those who were "bringing pressure to move all the Japanese out." Attorney General Earl Warren, Mayor Fletcher Bowron of Los Angeles, and many others were making this demand, DeWitt reported, and the agitation for it came from "the best people of California. Since the publication of the Roberts Report they feel that they are living in the midst of a lot of enemies." In a conference a few days later, DeWitt remarked with intense emotion that "I am not going to be a second General Short."

DeWitt was now in a state of suppressed terror, brought on by fear of the disgrace that had befallen Short and Kimmel, and it was in this state of mind that he prepared a report to the secretary of war on the "Evacuation of Japanese and other Subversive Persons from the Pacific Coast." Among other remarkable statements, this document asserted that "the Japanese race is an enemy race" and that "along the vital Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies, of Japanese extraction, are at large today. There are indications that these are organized and ready for concerted action at a favorable opportunity. The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken."

This fantastic line of reasoning was very widely accepted. On February 13 the entire west coast congressional delegation sent a letter to President Roosevelt