

REDRESS AND FISHING

The June 22nd issue of the Pacific Citizen contained an article in which John Tateishi, Chairman of the J.A.C.L. National Redress Committee, demonstrates a disheartening failure to understand what Redress really involves. He seems to yearn to make the subject of Redress so "grand and noble" that money would be treated as a minor issue if it is to be mentioned at all. And he obviously likes fishing.

In this country, when any person who has been deprived of his freedom and forced to spend time in a prison is found to be innocent, the government responsible for the miscarriage of justice usually attempts to provide some measure of redress by giving the person a sum of money.

In such cases, the ideal form of redress would be to turn back the clock and allow any innocent victim actually to relive the same period of time in the manner he might have lived had he not been unjustly jailed. Since it is not possible to provide such restitution, the only generally recognized method of providing redress for the wrong done is the payment of money to each victim.

It should be noted that seeking or receiving such compensation has never been regarded as shameful or demeaning by anyone in his right mind. Such payments are looked upon as a matter of plain and simple justice. If, as Tateishi seems to be claiming, he really thinks that to seek monetary redress is the opposite of "grand and noble" and is "self-defeating", he should resign his committee chairmanship.

Contrary to Tateishi's views, educating the American public about the Evacuation is not Redress. Nor are official declarations of the wrongfulness of our exile and imprisonment during World War II and related expressions of regret. Moreover, such official statements have already publicly been made by former President Ford on February 19, 1976, when he, as President, revoked Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 (under

which the World War II exile and imprisonment of Japanese Americans was perpetrated). Even a thousand repetitions of such gestures could not properly be regarded as Redress.

In 1978, the National J.A.C.L.'s appallingly inept comments and over-emphasis on money in its initial public statements on Redress stirred up adverse editorial reactions in certain newspapers. This experience probably accounts for Tateishi's present attitude that there is something disgraceful or unworthy in acknowledging that Redress has anything to do with money. Such a posture would be amusing, except for the fact that he and other National J.A.C.L. officials seem to have succeeded in confusing a majority of the J.A.C.L. chapters into believing that money and Redress can be separated.

The entire J.A.C.L. organization needs to be reminded that monetary payments to each individual victim of E. O. 9066 are the only way that meaningful Redress can be made a reality. "Redress" without money paid on an individual basis through the Government is not redress.

In matters concerning Japanese Americans, S. I. Hayakawa is notorious for being wrong. For once, however, he is right when he says that the National J.A.C.L. has given up on Redress by going for a Congressionally created commission to study the 1942 Evacuation instead of the Redress efforts mandated at the 1978 National J.A.C.L. Convention.

Tateishi should abandon his illogical posturing concerning a matter to which he has given inadequate thought. Let us hope that hereafter he limits his immediate activities to fishing which is said to provide both relaxation and rest for overworked minds. Furthermore, his eating the fish he catches might help improve his thinking on Redress.

SEATTLE EVACUATION REDRESS COMMITTEE

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