

When a person has been unjustly imprisoned and later released, the person is usually awarded a sum of money to at least partly compensate him for the humiliation he suffered and the time he spent in prison. Except in cases of outrageously inflated awards given by some judges and juries, there is generally no opposition to such payments.

Strangely enough, however, the suggestion by the Seattle Evacuation Redress Committee to seek payments of \$5,000 for each evacuee plus \$10 a day for each day of imprisonment seems to be regarded with ill concealed hostility by some Nisei who seem basically opposed to the whole concept of getting any kind of redress for each individual who was uprooted and imprisoned as a result of Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. In tones of disapproval, members of the Seattle Evacuation Redress Committee have repeatedly been asked, "How did you get those figures?"

If it were possible, perhaps we would ask the Government to turn back the clock and let each former evacuee-prisoner live his life over again in the way he might have lived if the evacuation had never taken place. Since this is not possible, money is the only practical way by which some measure of restitution can be made. After much searching for some precedent we could point to, we were forced to conclude that there were no real precedents in U. S. history for that World War II evacuation and imprisonment and any subsequent compensation to the victims. Moreover, there is no precise way to measure in terms of money the sufferings of each person who was subjected to evacuation and incarceration.

We feel that the amounts suggested are reasonable and the overwhelming majority of those responding to our questionnaire agree. If it can be shown that other amounts are more reasonable, we are willing to consider them.

Some critics of the reparations proposals made by the Seattle Evacuation Redress Committee seem to think that it is "unfair" for infants who were put in concentration camps to receive reparations payments on

the same basis as adults. If variations in the rates of payments should be made to depend on the age of the former evacuee-prisoner, then why not on the basis of educational level, economic level, intelligence level, etc.? What is to be considered the age most deserving of reparations? And who is qualified to determine whether, in the long run, a boy of 10 was hurt less by his being sent to those camps than a man of 35 or 50?

Furthermore, some Nisei, who still boast of having urged cooperation with the Government's uprooting and imprisonment of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II solely on the basis of race, now seem to feel that the proposals of the Seattle Chapter offend their sense of justice. They regard such proposals as being "unfair" because the plans would "penalize" those who left the camps early and "reward" those who stayed until the end.

Let such lovers of "fairness" be reminded that practically all of the inmates of those camps were put there arbitrarily by the threatened use of force by the U. S. Army and that confinement behind barbed wire under seriously substandard living conditions was not a happy free picnic which they loved and wanted to enjoy forever.

Those who left the camps early generally enjoyed the advantage of possessing the vitality of youth, a desire to get on with their education, some kind of financial backing or savings, some trade, ability, or profession which was in demand in the outside world, or some combination of these qualifications. Those who stayed until the very end were generally those who because of age, loss of financial resources, lack of proficiency in speaking English, lack of citizenship, lack of readily marketable skills, or a combination of these disadvantages found themselves unable to leave like the more fortunate and younger Nisei did.

None but the most callously selfish among those who were fortunate enough to be able to leave those camps early would be likely to feel

that they, themselves, were being "penalized" if those unfortunates who remained until the end received \$10 a day for each day spent in those concentration camps.

Let us never forget that in seeking reparations, we are in essence seeking justice to at least partly compensate for an injustice perpetrated during World War II by the United States Government. How such reparations payments could be called a "reward" by anyone in his right mind is beyond my comprehension.