

STATEMENT OF MIKE M. MASAOKA
ON BEHALF OF THE NISEI LOBBY
ADVOCATING ENACTMENT OF H.R. 5499
To The
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE LAW
AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
United States House of Representatives

June 2, 1980

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SUMMARY OUTLINE

Preliminary Comments

Personal Background and Qualifications

Expeditious Action Called For

Original House and Senate Bills Identical

Senate Amendments

Need for Quick Action

Legislation Background

H.R. 5977 Not Appropriate

Bill Summary

Price Tag On World War II Mistreatment Impossible

Raises More Questions Than Answers

Politically Unrealistic At This Time

Organizations Prefer Commission Approach

Commission Can Hear Lump Sum Proponents

Addition of Aleut Civilians

Senate Amendment Welcomed

Other Minorities May Also Qualify

Why the Commission Formula?

Summary of Legislative Objectives

Why Commission Needed for Japanese Americans

Commission Route Not Unusual or Uncommon for Congress

What the Commission Can Do

Why We Seek "Redress of Our Grievances"?

Documentation Provided by JACL

1947 House Judiciary Committee Report on Evacuation Claims

Personal Reasons for Testimony

Attachments

JACL Statement to Tolan Committee, February 21, 1942

Exhibit A--The Japanese American Creed, May 9, 1941

Exhibit B--Declaration of Policy by JACL

WWhy Japanese Americans Cooperated", The Japanese American Story, 1976

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mike M. Masaoka, with offices in Washington, D. C.

From the summer of 1941 to the spring of 1943, when I volunteered for service, along with four brothers, for the now famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team, I was the National Secretary and Field Executive of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), then and now the major national organization of Americans of Japanese ancestry in the United States.

In this capacity, I was as involved as any Japanese American in the events leading up to the subject matter of this legislation and the World War II evacuation, detention, and relocation of those of Japanese origin in this country.

After my honorable discharge from the Army in late 1945, I became the Washington Representative for the JACL and served, first, full-time, and, subsequently, part-time until I retired voluntarily from that professional relationship in 1972.

During my 35 years as a Washington lobbyist, I was privileged to work very closely with this Committee in securing corrective and remedial legislation for those of Japanese parentage, including the so-called Japanese

American Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 and its subsequent amendments that provided partial, token payments for certain property losses suffered as a consequence of the 1942 evacuation and detention, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 which extended naturalization rights--for the first time in history--to permanent resident aliens of Asiatic nationalities and which opened up symbolic immigration quotas to those in the Asia-Pacific Triangle, and the 1965 Amendments to the Immigration Act that repealed the racist, infamous National Origins Quota formula of 1924 and abolished the doubly racist Asia-Pacific Triangle of 1952.

This morning, I am appearing on behalf of the Nisei Lobby, a non-partisan, nonprofit organization of Americans of Japanese background who are the first generation of United States-born citizens of this racial minority. Most served with honor in the American armed forces in World War II. All were the innocent victims of American-style concentration camps. Practically all also are members of the JAACL.

Expeditious Action Called For

The Nisei Lobby respectfully calls on the Congress for the expeditious enactment of H.R. 5499, and particularly as it was passed without objection by the entire Senate with amendments proposed by its Committee on Governmental Affairs on May 22 as S. 1647.

When originally introduced, both measures were identical in purpose and language. Cited as the "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act", their common objective was "to establish a commission to gather facts to determine whether any wrong was committed against those American citizens and permanent resident aliens affected by Executive Order numbered 9066, and for other purposes", including recommending "appropriate remedies".

As approved by the Senate, the essential purpose remains the same but amendments were added which we believe make the legislation more effective and realistic.

In addition to decreasing the number of commissioners from 15 to seven, requiring the Commission to report to Congress earlier, and mandating the termination of the Commission itself sooner, two major amendments were adopted by the Senate.

One would add the Aleuts of Alaska to be the subject of Commission review to the unmentioned by name but understood persons of Japanese ancestry to be the beneficiaries of the bill.

The other was to specifically provide that the "Commission may request the Attorney General to invoke the aid of an appropriate United States District Court to require, by subpoena or otherwise, such attendance, testimony, or production" to better permit the Commission to ascertain the facts in the case.

The sum of \$1,500,000 was authorized to be appropriated "for the period beginning October 1, 1980 and ending February 1, 1982."

And, because time is running out on this 96th Congress, we urge this Subcommittee, this Committee, and the House to accept the amended Senate bill, substitute it for H.R. 5499, pass it as S. 1647, and send it on to the White House for an appropriate presidential signature before Flag Day, June 14.

Such quick action is necessary if the authorized appropriations are also to be approved by the Congress prior to the early October projected adjournment sine die date.

When one recalls that California in pre-World War II times was the notorious poisoned American fountainhead of anti-Orientalism, racism, prejudice, jingoism, and "Yellow Peril" warmongering, it is a remarkable commentary on changed attitudes that 41 of the 43 national Representatives from that State in this session of the Congress joined in sponsoring H.R. 5499, with both of its United States Senators similarly joined in co-sponsoring the companion bill, S. 1647.

Perhaps even more remarkable is that by a 75 to 0 vote the California State Assembly recently passed Assembly Joint Resolution 56 that memorialized the Congress to enact H. R. 5499 and S. 1647. That resolution is now before the California State Senate and near unanimous, if not unanimous, approval is expected in that body soon too.

And, in taking up H.R. 5499 this morning, please keep in mind that almost 150 members of the House, of both parties, from all sections of the nation, are co-sponsoring this bill, including the Majority Leader Jim Wright, the Majority Whip John Brademas, the Chairman of this Judiciary Committee Peter Rodino, and the two Japanese American Congressmen--Norman Mineta and Robert Matsui.

Both of the Japanese Americans, incidentally, spent some time in these concentration camps, Mineta in Heart Mountain, Wyoming, as a junior high school student, and Matsui, as an infant in Tule Lake, California, where medical facilities were so poor that his hearing was impaired for the rest of his life.

Time is of the essence in considering this remedial legislation, for most of the pioneer Issei or immigrant generation have passed on and many of us Nisei are in the twilight of our lives. Every passing day brings

news that a few more of those who experienced the concentration camps of World War II are passing away, for the initial movement took place in the early spring of 1942, some 38 years ago, with all the physical suffering, mental anguish, and financial losses that such an arbitrary and unexpected movement took out of the human body and spirit, plus the humiliation and degradation of being unjustifiably suspected by your neighbors, your fellow citizens, and your own government.

There is a lot of truth in the statement that "Justice delayed is justice denied", and we are the living examples of that denial.

Moreover, in these difficult days when American protestations of its ideals and aspirations for human and civil rights for all peoples throughout the world are under scrutiny, enactment of this legislation would be proof positive that these United States remain "the last best hope of mankind".

H.R. 5977 Not Appropriate

We are very much aware that H.R. 5977 is also before this Committee at this time. This bill provides for individual indemnification of \$15,000, plus an additional \$15 for every day spent in the camps. No explanation or justification is given for concluding that this specific amount, \$15,000 plus \$15 for every day of confinement, is the correct and proper amount to be calculated, let alone a breakdown or itemization of the factors involved in this particular calculation.

The Nisei Lobby is very much opposed to this bill, for it places a nominal price tag on our incarceration that cheapens what happened to us. We are of the opinion that no amount of money can compensate us for what we endured in those tragic times.

Moreover, the bill raises more questions than it answers. For example, should those who left the camps early to resume their schooling in the so-called "normal, outside" communities be penalized? Should the youthful volunteers for military service be paid less than those who, when Selective Service again began to call qualified Japanese Americans, refused to report for induction and remained in camp to the end of the war? Should those who left camp early to work in the fields, or in the factories, to grow the food or produce the machines for victory be compensated less than those who deliberately stayed in camp and took advantage of the government's food and clothing allowances?

Should infants be paid the same rate as adults? Should professional doctors, dentists, attorneys, teachers, engineers, etc., who were paid only a fraction (\$12, \$16, and \$19 per month) of what was paid to their non-evacuee counterparts, many of whom were only beginners and actually were in training under the supervision of the more experienced, more often highly-skilled evacuees? Should the sick, the lame, and the healthy all be paid the same regardless of whether they sustained their handicaps while in camps? Should those who voluntarily uprooted and relocated themselves outside of the exclusion areas at their own expense on the early urgings of the commanding general of the Western Defense Command be paid less than those who moved only when ordered to do so as a last resort?

Many more questions of this type could be asked, and answered rhetorically.

But the bill itself is unrealistic in the political climate of these days when a balanced budget is the goal not only of the Congress but also of the Administration. When so many urgently needed social and humanitarian

programs are being reduced in scope or even eliminated entirely, when our national defenses require considerable modernization and manpower increases, there simply is not enough readily available to pay the approximately \$3 billion or so from the public treasury that is envisioned by H.R. 5977.

The 13 to 0 vote of the Governmental Affairs Committee in reporting S. 1647 after considering the proposal for individual lump sum payments to the evacuees confirms our views on this score, especially since some of the amendments were adopted at least in part for budgetary reasons.

This political judgment was also vindicated when the full Senate without dissent approved the amended legislation.

It may be of interest to the Committee too that the JACL, the largest by far of all Japanese American organizations in the United States, with more than a hundred chapters and members in 32 states, not only polled their own members but also the many communities in which their members reside before deciding to endorse the so-called Commission formula.

In addition, the leaders of two major minorities in this country who have suffered historic racial and religious persecution have indicated their support for this Commission approach. They are Clarence Mitchell, for decades the respected Washington representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a founder and legislative director of the National Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and Nathan Perlmutter, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Furthermore, it should be noted that there is nothing in H.R. 5499 to prevent those who favor lump sum payments from testifying to that effect to the proposed Commission. Indeed, it may well be that in the end the Commission itself may reach the same conclusion. But the Congress will be more

likely to approve such a conclusion if it is recommended by an impartial Commission of distinguished Americans after exhaustive and detailed study.

Finally, should the House concur in the Senate amendment to add Aleut civilians to this bill as specific beneficiaries by name, a fundamental public policy question arises: Should the Japanese Americans, the Aleuts, and possibly others who may qualify for relief under this measure, be treated exactly alike, in every way, as groups and as individuals?

The Nisei Lobby believes that only a Commission can determine such issues as these.

Addition of Aleut Civilians

We welcome the inclusion of Aleut civilians in this proposed legislation, as we would welcome any others, individuals and groups, who were deprived, denied, or disadvantaged by the wartime activities of the United States military on account of race, color, creed, religion, and/or national origin.

Just as most Americans, especially the generations who did not live through World War II as adults, do not know--and appreciate--the epic tragedy of Japanese Americans in those perilous times, there are many more--including American Japanese--who are not at all aware of the plight of the Aleuts.

The Nisei Lobby believes that there may be other minorities who may also have been mistreated by the armed forces as a supposed "matter of military necessity" in World War II, so we would be opposed in principle and in fact to any restrictions in this bill to just Japanese Americans and Aleuts.

It is our understanding, for example, that under martial law in the then Territory of Hawaii where a mass evacuation and detention of Americans

of Japanese ancestry did not take place, certain citizens and aliens were interned in Hawaiian versions of little concentration camps for temporary periods, while several thousand others were sent to the continental mainland to join the Japanese Americans and their parents who were imprisoned behind barbed wire fences and watchtowers with mounted machine guns.

It is also our understanding that in various areas outside of the excluded region itself along the Pacific Coast, special military zones were established by designated military commanders around certain strategic installations and all enemy aliens, Germans and Italians too, were required to leave these proscribed zones for "free zones" where there were no arbitrary limitations on physical movement.

Why the Commission Formula?

H.R. 5499 and S. 1647 provide for the creation of a seven member Commission, properly staffed, whose duty would be to "review the facts and circumstances surrounding Executive Order No. 9066, issued February 17, 1942 and the impact of such Executive Order on American citizens and permanent resident aliens", to hold public hearings in various specified cities, and to "submit a written report" to the Congress.

Why, some ask, do we need a fact-finding commission to tell us Japanese Americans that we were evacuated and detained simply and solely by what the Supreme Court of the United States described as our "affinity" with the Japanese enemy?

The answer reminds us of the innocent victims of an automobile accident: they know that they were involved in an accident through no fault of their own. But, witnesses to the accident may have different versions of what happened, and why, including mitigating circumstances, if any. Recourse

to the judiciary is an obvious procedure, especially when only a few individuals are concerned.

In the case of the World War II travail of Japanese Americans, however, where more than 110,000 aliens and nonaliens--in the words of the Western Defense Command--were evacuated and imprisoned in what euphemistically may be called concentration camps, American style, the nation's highest tribunal, the Supreme Court in a six to three opinion, decided in the early winter of 1944 (Korematsu case) that the so-called evacuation was a constitutional exercise of the President's war powers as of those times and under those circumstances.

Because the Court of Last Resort ruled as it did, the Nisei Lobby, the JACL, and others are appealing to a higher authority, petitioning the Congress of the United States "for a redress of grievances", as authorized by the Federal Constitution.

In times past, ever since the Republic was established more than 200 years ago, it has not been an unusual or uncommon practice of the National Legislature to establish special commissions of distinguished and learned citizens to study general and specific problems and to recommend appropriate remedies and/or solutions.

This has been particularly true when the subject matter is such that a congressional committee or subcommittee cannot, because of the constraints of time and other factors, conduct an exhaustive investigation or study, involving a number of public hearings in several different geographical areas and a considerable variety of opinions, reach definitive conclusions, and recommend appropriate relief or remedies.

This case too is complicated by the fact that the events took place almost four decades ago and many, if not most, of the leading characters are no longer with us. And, complicating this further is the fact that at least two ethnic minorities--the Japanese Americans and the Aleuts--are directly involved. Additionally, since this episode in our history is considered by many "as our biggest wartime mistake"--in the words of then Yale Law School Dean Eugene Rostow--and by others as "The most striking (racial) mass interference since slavery with the right to physical freedom"--as described by President Harry Truman's Committee on Civil Rights in 1947--there may be aspects that remain classified, or deliberately hidden, or even conveniently lost.

Only a fact-finding Commission can investigate the many still unknown definitive facts and the influential actors who played the critical but perhaps lesser and background roles. Only a Commission can begin to try to answer officially the questions that we have raised in this statement, and many more that we and others can ask out of our personal experience in that wartime tragedy.

To assure that this Commission is not an excuse for continued delay in redressing our 1942 persecution, deadlines are written into the measure for the submission of reports and the termination of the official activities of the Commission.

That so many have agreed that the Commission concept is the most satisfactory and acceptable should be evidence enough that H.R. 5477 and S. 1647 are the only alternatives that should be considered by this Committee at this time.

Why We Seek "Redress of Our Grievances"?

Since the JACL has submitted considerable documentation as to what is generally known as the World War II travail of Japanese Americans, we will not burden the record with a repetition of such facts.

There may be some who, however, recognizing that in a global war all segments of the population are called upon to suffer, may wonder why mostly Japanese Americans will be the beneficiaries of this special legislation.

In 1947, this Judiciary Committee in its report recommending enactment of the Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act, addressed itself to this question, as follows:

"...The Committee considered the argument that the victims of relocation were no more casualties of the war than were many millions of other Americans who lost their lives or their homes or their occupations during the war. However, this argument cannot be considered tenable since in the instant case the loss was inflicted upon a special racial group by a voluntary act of the Government without precedent in the history of this country. Not to redress these loyal Americans in some measure for the wrongs inflicted upon them would provide ample material for attacks by the followers of foreign ideologies on the American way of life, and to redress them would be simple justice."

As the Committee also noted in its 1947 report:

"...The Committee was impressed with the fact that, despite the hardships visited upon this unfortunate racial group brought about by the then prevailing military necessity, there was recorded during the war not one act of sabotage or espionage attributable to those who were the victims of the forced relocation. Moreover, statistics were produced to indicate the percentage of enlistments in the Armed Forces of this country by those of Japanese ancestry of eligible age exceeded the nationwide percentage. The valiant exploits of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, composed entirely of Japanese Americans and the most decorated combat team in the war, are well known. It was further adduced that the Japanese Americans who were relocated proved themselves to be, almost without exception, loyal to the traditions of this country, and exhibited a commendable discipline through the period of their exile..."

Nevertheless, as one Japanese American who was probably more personally involved in many of the major public events of this wartime tragedy than most, in what may be my "last hurrah" before this Committee, may I presume upon the time of the members to explain why I personally feel so strongly about this corrective and remedial legislation?

When one considers how difficult it must have been for the acting heads of families, many in their late twenties, to peaceably surrender their properties, most built in a lifetime of toil and struggle on the part of their alien parents, and move out of their homes and associations with dignity, in a disciplined display of loyalty and faith in the American way unmatched in history, carrying only what they could in their own two hands, to tar-paper barracks in the wilderness deserts and river bottoms, to a dark and unknown future, suspect by their own government, I sincerely believe that they are entitled to everything that a grateful government may provide.

Consider that in the spring of 1942 what would have happened to the West Coast of America if the then Japanese population had refused to cooperate in their own removal and that the Army, with bayonets drawn, backed by tanks and artillery, had to force them out of their homes or hiding places one by one, as they tried to resist as best they could with handmade weapons and instruments, against bullets, cold steel, and chemical warfare.

There would have been bloodshed, and the entire war effort would have been compromised. The United States would indeed have been faced with a race war to be exploited by the German and Japanese military and propaganda machines.

In spite of their public humiliation, to their eternal credit, there was not a single conviction of any resident person of Japanese ancestry before,

during, and after World War II for espionage and sabotage against their country and mine, though admittedly there were many inviting opportunities for such anti-American activities.

Then, imagine: out of these prison camps, thousands volunteered for combat duty against the enemy in the same Army that had forced them into the concentration camps. They volunteered--not for ordinary service--but for frontline combat, in order to prove their loyalty and their families' loyalty to the country that suspected them. They became, in the reports of their commanding generals like Mark Clark, the most decorated military unit in American history for their size and length of service. But, at what a price! The 442nd became known as the Purple Heart Regiment, with a casualty rate of 309%, the highest in the armed forces of the United States in World War II.

I know because I was there--with them overseas, along with four brothers, one of whom was killed in action and the other 100% disabled. I know what they were fighting for: for the opportunity for themselves, their families still in the camps, and their posterity to live in the kind of America that we must have if we are to fulfill the great American dream and promise.

When I read of old barracks on Army posts that are considered unfit for today's refugees, I can remember the stinking, freshly painted horse stables in fairground race tracks where so many of my family and friends were first moved into. Then I recall how once strong family ties were broken in that communal life where there was no privacy in those concentration camps where American citizens were housed, fed, and clothed worse than the enemy alien diplomats and businessmen who were protected by the Geneva Convention.

And yet today, most are not bitter and complaining. Most are at their new jobs and new homes, being the exemplary citizens that they are. While

activists and militants, most of whom were never in the camps, try to persuade them from time to time that they should be angry and demonstrative against the government, they understand that even in America, in times of hate and hysteria, democracy may be abused. But, from their own experience, they know that in these United States justice in time will prevail and that in this land of theirs today there are opportunities for themselves and their children that not even the most optimistic of them would have dreamed possible half a century ago.

These Americans are unconquered, unbowed, and they are proud to be Americans. Therefore, I feel humble yet honored to speak for them before this Committee this morning.

On behalf of those of my comrades from the concentration camps who did not come back from the war, on behalf of the 110,000 dedicated, loyal Americans who proved by their disciplined, nonviolent demonstration of loyalty--of giving up all that they had worked and lived for--in the spring of 1942 as their contribution to the war effort of the nation they truly loved, I ask that this Committee, this House, and this Congress enact legislation establishing a fact-finding Commission that will judge the value of their sacrifices and contributions to the nation and recommend the appropriate remedy, and thereby demonstrate anew to the world that, in the language of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Americanism is a matter of the mind and the heart; Americanism never was, and never will be, a matter of race or ancestry!"

Thank you for your courtesy and attention.

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Attachments:

- JACL Statement to Tolan Committee, House of Representatives, February 1942
- Exhibit A--The Japanese American Creed, May 9, 1941
- Exhibit B--Declaration of JACL Policy, 1942
- "Why Japanese Americans Cooperated", The Japanese American Story, 1976

REPRINTED FROM:

Hearings before the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, House of Representatives, 77th Congress, 2nd Session, Part 29, San Francisco hearings, February 21 and 23, 1942: Problems of Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones, pages 11137-8:

**STATEMENT BY MIKE M. MASAOKA, NATIONAL SECRETARY AND
FIELD EXECUTIVE OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS
LEAGUE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.**

On behalf of the 20,000 American citizen members of the 62 chapters of the Japanese American Citizens League in some 300 communities throughout the United States, I wish to thank the Tolan committee for the opportunity given me to appear at this hearing. The fair and impartial presentation of all aspects of a problem is a democratic procedure which we keeply appreciate. That this procedure is being followed in the present matter, which is of particularly vital significance to us, we look upon as a heartening demonstration of the American tradition of fair play.

We have been invited by you to make clear our stand regarding the proposed evacuation of all Japanese from the West coast. When the President's recent Executive order was issued, we welcomed it as definitely centralizing and coordinating defense efforts relative to the evacuation problem. Later interpretations of the order, however, seem to indicate that it is aimed primarily at the Japanese, American citizens as well as alien nationals. As your committee continues its investigations in this and subsequent hearings, we hope and trust that you will recommend to the proper authorities that no undue discrimination be shown to American citizens of Japanese descent.

Our frank and reasoned opinion on the matter of evacuation revolves around certain considerations of which we feel both your committee and the general public should be apprised. With any policy of evacuation definitely arising from reasons of military necessity and national safety, we are in complete agreement. As American citizens, we cannot and should not take any other stand. But, also, as American citizens believing in the integrity of our citizenship, we feel that any evacuation enforced on grounds violating that integrity should be opposed.

If, in the judgment of military and Federal authorities, evacuation of Japanese residents from the West coast is a primary step toward assuring the safety of this Nation, we will have no hesitation in complying with the necessities implicit in that judgment. But, if, on the other hand, such evacuation is primarily a measure whose surface urgency cloaks the desires of political or other pressure groups who want us to leave merely from motives of self-interest, we feel that we have every right to protest and to demand equitable judgment on our merits as American citizens.

In any case, we feel that the whole problem of evacuation, once its necessity is militarily established, should be met strictly according to that need. Only those areas, in which strategic and military considerations make the removal of Japanese residents necessary, should be evacuated. Regarding policy and procedure in such areas, we submit the following recommendations:

1. That the actual evacuation from designated areas be conducted by military authorities in a manner which is consistent with the requirements of national defense, human welfare, and constructive community relations in the future;

2. That, in view of the alarming developments in Tulare County and other communities against incoming Japanese evacuees all plans for voluntary evacuations be discouraged;

SAN FRANCISCO HEARINGS

3. That transportation, food, and shelter be provided for all evacuees from prohibited areas, as provided in the Presidential order;

4. That thoroughly competent, responsible, and bonded property custodians be appointed and their services made available immediately to all Japanese whose business and property interests are affected by orders and regulations;

5. That all problems incidental to resettlement be administered by a special board created for this purpose under the direction of the Federal Security Agencies;

6. That the resettlement of evacuees from prohibited areas should be within the State in which they now reside;

7. That ample protection against mob violence be given to the evacuees both in transit and in the new communities to which they are assigned;

8. That effort be made to provide suitable and productive work for all evacuees;

9. That resettlement aims be directed toward the restoration, as far as possible, of normal community life in the future when we have won the war;

10. That competent tribunals be created to deal with the so-called hardship cases and that flexible policies be applicable to such cases.

Although these suggestions seem to include only the Japanese, may I urge that these same recommendations be adapted to the needs of other nationals and citizens who may be similarly affected.

I now make an earnest plea that you seriously consider and recognize our American citizenship status which we have been taught to cherish as our most priceless heritage.

At this hearing, we Americans of Japanese descent have been accused of being disloyal to these United States. As an American citizen, I resent these accusations and deny their validity.

We American-born Japanese are fighting militarist Japan today with our total energies. Four thousand of us are with the armed forces of the United States, the remainder on the home front in the battle of production. We ask a chance to prove to the rest of the American people what we ourselves already know: That we are loyal to the country of our birth and that we will fight to the death to defend it against any and all aggressors.

We think, feel, act like Americans. We, too, remember Pearl Harbor and know that our right to live as free men in a free Nation is in peril as long as the brutal forces of enslavement walk the earth. We know that the Axis aggressors must be crushed and we are anxious to participate fully in that struggle.

The history of our group speaks for itself. It stands favorable comparison with that of any other group of second generation Americans. There is reliable authority to show that the proportion of delinquency and crime within our ranks is negligible. Throughout the long years of the depression, we have been able to stay off the relief rolls better, by far, than any other group. These are but two of the many examples which might be cited as proof of our civic responsibility and pride.

In this emergency, as in the past, we are not asking for special privileges or concessions. We ask only for the opportunity and the right of sharing the common lot of all Americans, whether it be in peace or in war.

This is the American way for which our boys are fighting.

EXHIBIT A.—THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CREED

(Courtesy, Japanese American Citizens League)

I am proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, for my very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this Nation. I believe in her institutions, ideals, and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future. She has granted me liberties and opportunities such as no individual enjoys in this world today. She has given me an education befitting kings. She has entrusted me with the responsibilities of the franchise. She has permitted me to build a home, to earn a livelihood, to worship, think, speak, and act as I please—as a free man equal to every other man.

Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people. True, I shall do all in my power to discourage such practices, but I shall do it in the American way—above board, in the open, through courts of law, by education, by proving myself to be worthy of equal

NATIONAL DEFENSE MIGRATION

treatment and consideration. I am firm in my belief that American sportsmanship and attitude of fair play will judge citizenship and patriotism on the basis of action and achievement, and not on the basis of physical characteristics.

Because I believe in America, and I trust she believes in me, and because I have received innumerable benefits from her, I pledge myself to do honor to her at all times and in all places; to support her constitution; to obey her laws; to respect her flag; to defend her against all enemies, foreign or domestic; to actively assume my duties and obligations as a citizen, cheerfully and without any reservations whatsoever, in the hope that I may become a better American in a greater America. —Mike Masaoka. (as read before the United States Senate and printed in the Congressional Record, May 9, 1941).

EXHIBIT B.—A DECLARATION OF POLICY BY THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

In these critical days when the policies of many organizations representing various nationality groups may be viewed with suspicion and even alarm by certain individuals who are not intimately acquainted with the aims, ideals, and leadership of such associations, it becomes necessary and proper, in the public interest, that such fraternal and educational orders as the Japanese American Citizens League to unequivocally and sincerely announce their policies and objectives:

Now, therefore, in order to clear up any misconceptions, misunderstandings and misapprehensions concerning the functions and activities of this body, the National Board of the Japanese American Citizens League issues the following statement and declaration of policy:

We, the members of the National Board of the Japanese American Citizens League of the United States of America, believe that the policies which govern this organization and our activities as their official representatives are fourfold in nature and are best illustrated by an explanation of the alphabetical sequence of the letters J-A-C-L.

"J" stands for justice. We believe that all peoples, regardless of race, color, or creed, are entitled to enjoy those principles of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" which are presumed to be the birthright of every individual; to the fair and equal treatment of all, socially, legislatively, judicially, and economically to the rights, privileges, and obligations of citizenship. To this end, this organization is dedicated.

"A" stands for Americanism. We believe that in order to prove ourselves worthy of the justice which we seek, we must prove ourselves to be, first of all, good Americans—in thought, in words, in deeds. We believe that we must personify the Japanese American creed; that we must acquaint ourselves with those traditions, ideals, and institutions which made and kept this Nation the foremost in the world. We believe that we must live for America—and, if need be, to die for America. To this end, this organization is consecrated.

"C" stands for citizenship. We believe that we must be exemplary citizens in addition to being good Americans, for, as in the case of our parents, one may be a good American and yet be denied the privilege of citizenship. We believe that we must accept and even seek out opportunities in which to serve our country and to assume the obligations and duties as well as the rights and privileges of citizenship. To this end, this organization is committed.

"L" stands for leadership. We believe that the Japanese American Citizens League, as the only national organization established to serve the American citizens of Japanese ancestry, is in a position to actively lead the Japanese people residing in the United States. We believe that we have the inspired leadership and membership necessary to carry into living effect the principles of justice, Americanism, and citizenship for which our league was founded. We offer cooperation and support to all groups and individuals sincerely and legitimately interested in these same aims, but we propose to retain our independent and separate status as the Japanese American Citizens League. To this end, this organization is pledged.

Summed up briefly, the Japanese American Citizens League is devoted to those tasks which are calculated to win for ourselves and our posterity the status outlined by our two national slogans: "For better Americans in a greater America" and "Security through unity."

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Why the Japanese Americans Cooperated

In 1941, Mike Masaru Masaoka was an instructor in the speech department at the University of Utah. During that year, he was approached by the JACL to become its first full-time, paid staff member. After much deliberation with friends, he resigned his job at the university and accepted the JACL offer. Right away, Masaoka sensed the seriousness of the problems faced by Japanese Americans in case of war between Japan and America.

Shortly after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, talk of evacuation and detention surfaced in the United States. Masaoka and other JACL leaders knew then that the Japanese Americans were in deep trouble for no other reason than the fact that they were born Japanese. When the decision was finally made to evacuate and confine Japanese Americans, Masaoka was among those who saw the futility of resistance. He knew that the nation's wartime mood made it in the best interests of the Japanese to go along with the evacuation and eventually detention. Masaoka and the JACL worked hard to help the government carry out an orderly mass movement while keeping faith in American justice and fair play. Masaoka's recollections of that period are given in the remainder of this chapter.

THE EVACUATION DECISION

More than thirty years after the fact, it is difficult to remember all of the circumstances that caused some of us, then leaders of the Japanese American Citizens League, to decide that we of Japanese ancestry should cooperate with the government in our

own evacuation and detention in the spring of 1942. But there are many aspects that contributed to the temper of those times that I can still recall as having forced me, among others, to conclude that cooperation at that time was the best, and only, course of action for our people to follow.

In this connection, it should be kept in mind that we young Nisei in the JACL leadership, then averaging about thirty years of age, had to make the fateful decision that would affect the lives and the fortunes of more than 110,000 men, women, and children, of all ages and in all conditions of health, not only for the immediate future but for years and possibly generations to come.

If we could have acted as individuals and had not been responsible for the destiny of a whole minority group in its most critical period, some of us might—and probably would have—reacted differently. But we did assume the responsibility for the total Japanese population on the Pacific Coast, and often suffered, as a result, severe criticism and even bodily injury. It would have been easier on us as individuals to have avoided that awesome responsibility, but we could not think and act as individuals, accountable only to ourselves and our own self-interest. We were answerable to, and for, the Japanese on the West Coast, so we had to think and act on behalf of all of the people concerned.

We in the JACL did not want to assume the leadership of those of Japanese ancestry since we all had personal and family problems of our own to take care of, but we had no choice if there was to be any leadership at that critical time. Practically every Japanese American organization, except the Christian churches, became defunct after December 7, 1941, and almost every Issei leader was arrested for one reason or another by the FBI and interned soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor. If the JACL had not stepped in to provide the leadership, there would have been panic and chaos in the various Japanese American communities in the western states.

Some Japanese language newspapers were shut down im-

mediately following the Japanese attack, so the JACL had to provide news and information concerning the intentions and programs of the government—national, state, and local. Personal bank accounts were frozen, so the JACL had to persuade Washington to allow the withdrawal of small amounts in order to purchase the bare necessities of life. Many Japanese American businesses were closed down, and many Japanese Americans were summarily fired from their jobs. Other workers would not plant or harvest crops on farms operated by Japanese Americans. In some cases the families of those who were interned had to be taken care of. So many people were out of work that the JACL had to go into the welfare business. Some stores would not sell goods, including medical supplies, to Japanese Americans, so that special arrangements had to be made for necessary purchases. Plans had to be readied to protect as much as possible the lives and property of Japanese Americans from vandalism, arson, and even mob violence.

For understandable reasons, most public officials were reluctant to cooperate with the JACL even in such simple matters as welfare and home protection.

As soon as the demands for the wholesale removal of those of Japanese ancestry surfaced in late December 1941, the JACL tried to frustrate the outcries. Among those clamoring for evacuation were governors and mayors on the Pacific Slope; the entire West Coast congressional delegation to Washington, D.C.; practically every newspaper, magazine, and radio station in the western states; most—if not all—farm and agricultural organizations; the various chambers of commerce and businessmen's associations; the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars; all labor unions except a few affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), and such special groups as the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West.

The JACL was far too weak in terms of membership, finances, staff, and public and political influence to be effective against the combination of events and individuals and organiza-

tions arrayed against it. Too few non-Japanese along the West Coast, including the overwhelming majority of Christian ministers and members of their congregations, protested at all. The rest of the country ignored what was happening to the civil, property, and human rights of Japanese Americans in the four westernmost states (Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona).

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 9066, authorizing the secretary of war, or any military commander designated by him, to establish "military areas" and to exclude therefrom "any and all persons." On March 2, 1942, General John L. DeWitt, Commanding General of the Western Defense Command, by authority of the secretary of war, issued Public Proclamation No. 1. This designated the western half of California, Oregon, and Washington, and the southern third of Arizona as a military area, and it stipulated that all Japanese, both alien and non-alien, would eventually be removed from that military area.

"Military necessity" was the excuse used to justify this unprecedented action against native-born citizens and their resident alien parents who could not become naturalized citizens by law. It was done without trial or hearing in court, or even the formality of specific charges citing crimes or misconduct on the part of the prospective evacuees.

Thus, in the days after the presidential order authorizing evacuation, the JACL not only had to take care of almost all of the needs of every Japanese American community, but it also had to decide just what realistic alternatives there were for those of Japanese ancestry and which of these alternatives should be taken for the good of the minority as a whole. At the time the JACL was nothing more than a voluntary civic and educational association. It had been in existence nationally for less than twelve years. It had no paid staff except one untried national executive and a few local helpers working mostly on a part-time basis in the larger metropolitan areas, and it had absolutely no credentials or background for social services.

The decision to evacuate was not reached at a single meeting or a series of meetings of JACL officials when all of the facts, arguments, and options could have been carefully examined and discussed. Rather, because of the unique circumstances of those weeks, decision making was a kind of piecemeal operation, with most of those in responsible positions reaching their own conclusions, based upon the facts, rumors, and pressures that came to their attention. When one JACL official chanced across another, there was an exchange of ideas.

In spite of the seemingly haphazard method used, the fateful decision was not reached arbitrarily or capriciously, for all recognized their responsibilities. There was much too much at stake for the individuals concerned, not to mention the other 110,000 innocent people whose lives would be affected by whatever course might be taken. The consensus was developed by sober reflection, serious projections, and selfless disregard for personal consequences.

The awesome duty to recommend the basic course of action to be followed probably fell to one man more than any of the others. He was Saburo Kido, the national JACL president, who was then a practicing attorney in his late thirties. The decision also fell on me. I was the national JACL secretary and field executive and the first and only paid staff member in the history of the JACL. I was in my mid-twenties at the time: an untried, untrained youngster from Salt Lake City where there were few Japanese Americans and where the problems of the minority, if any, were quite different from those on the West Coast.

Nevertheless, since there were no others to assume the responsibilities, we did the best we could. Whenever there was an opportunity, Kido and I would discuss what course JACL should take in connection with the evacuation orders. Our discussions, of course, were based upon the facts as we knew them at that time, on the rumors that were called to our attention, and on the seemingly never-ending meetings which we held with government officials and army officers of all ranks.

Even after all these years, I still remember how wise and

statesmanlike Kido was. He had compassion for all the evacuees and a special sensitivity for the future of the young.

What, then, were some of the considerations that led us to conclude that cooperation with the army in our own removal and eventual detention was our only sane and safe course?

To begin with, both of us were very much aware of the racist, anti-Japanese history of the Pacific Coast, particularly California. Anti-Japanese sentiment, often wrapped in the cloak of patriotism, became so powerful that in 1924 it was able to persuade the Congress, against the wishes of President Calvin Coolidge and the State Department, to enact the infamous Japanese Exclusion Act together with the now thoroughly discredited National Origins Quota System. For a few short years, this racist "victory" against the so-called Yellow Peril softened anti-Japanese bigotry. But, with the great economic depression of the 1930s, when unemployment reached unprecedented numbers, the fact that Japanese Americans managed to stay off relief rolls infuriated many Caucasians. Toward the close of that decade, as the Japanese imperialists launched their military adventure against China, jingoists and warmongers joined the racists in a persecution of the Japanese Americans in their midst.

Then came the war, ignited by the attack of the Japanese militarists on Pearl Harbor. Navy wives and others, repatriated from Hawaii immediately after December 7, 1941, returned to the mainland with stories of espionage and sabotage committed by the Japanese American population before, during, and after the attack. They told of arrow-like marks cut in the sugar cane fields pointing to military installations, of Honolulu high school rings worn by the attacking Japanese airmen, and of Japanese Americans driving their trucks across highways to delay military personnel from reporting for duty during the attack.

Although these tales were rumors that were later proved unfounded, we were not informed of the truth until we were already in the War Relocation Authority (WRA) Centers, bitterly called concentration camps, American-style. Indeed,

when members of the so-called Tolan Committee interrogated us in San Francisco in late February 1942, they repeated these rumors and demanded an explanation of such activities.

We were also aware that the governors of all twelve western states, with the sole exception of Ralph Carr of Colorado, had warned the army that they could not be responsible for the safety of the evacuees. They said that if the Japanese Americans were dangerous to the security of the Pacific Coast, they were equally dangerous to their respective jurisdictions. Mayors and public officials, except for Mayor Harry Cain of Tacoma, Washington, insisted upon the immediate removal of all the Japanese in their communities. Mayor Fletcher Bowron of Los Angeles was particularly vehement on this score although he apologized years later for his un-American and unconstitutional demands in 1942. All of the major newspapers except the *San Francisco Chronicle* editorially called upon the government to immediately evacuate and incarcerate the Japanese "for at least the duration" of the war.

Several caravans of trucks and automobiles, filled with Japanese Americans who were acting upon General DeWitt's suggestion that they "voluntarily" leave their homes and possessions in the military area in California, were stopped at gunpoint. Many of the trucks and cars were overturned, and everyone was forced to return to the homes from which they had departed only a few hours earlier.

There were rumors of vigilantism and arson, brutal attacks on individuals, and mob violence against Japanese American communities in some of the rural agricultural regions. The violence was no doubt aggravated by newspaper reports of unidentified planes flying over Los Angeles, lights seen near Santa Barbara on the California coast signaling enemy submarines offshore, and arsenals of weapons and ammunition found by the FBI in many Japanese American homes.

To my mind, however, the most damaging testimony was advanced by Earl Warren, then California's state attorney general. He had maps prepared showing that Japanese Americans

owned land near many military and naval installations. He furnished evidence that many Japanese Americans attended Japanese language schools, and he said that perhaps half of the Japanese population were members of the Buddhist faith. Warren charged also that the American-born citizen was more dangerous than his alien parents. Since even then Warren was thought to be a moderate in his attitudes toward other groups and in his outlook on legal issues, his official position was devastating in its influence on people who otherwise might have come to the defense of the constitutional rights of those of Japanese ancestry.

All these incidents, and considerably more, added up to the climate of public opinion against the Japanese in the spring of 1942.

Kido and I, along with a number of other invited Nisei leaders met with California Governor Culbert Olson in Sacramento. The governor warned us that evacuation and detention were imminent. He called upon us to volunteer to go to state-controlled labor camps from which some of us would return each day to harvest our own fields or other farmlands. The money we earned would go into the state treasury! We were informed from time to time of other schemes under which racists would supervise our incarceration and control our activities as laborers—regardless of our experience, education, and excellence in the professions.

As a last effort to prevent the evacuation, some members of the JACL volunteered to serve in combat against the Japanese enemy in the Pacific. But we were turned down summarily and without thanks.

Kido and I often discussed whether one or both of us should not violate the curfew or travel restrictions imposed by the Western Defense Command and test the constitutionality of the military orders. But we eventually rejected such an alternative since we would not have been able to be with the people during their evacuation and detention and would not share their sufferings and privations and indignities. Moreover, as an attorney,

Kido realized that it would take months and perhaps years before such constitutional challenges could be settled by the highest courts. In the meantime, the evacuees would be removed and jailed. Therefore, the two of us agreed that it would be our fate to remain among the prospective evacuees and to try to provide the necessary leadership as best we could. At the same time, we knew of several others who were willing to deliberately violate the curfew and travel restrictions, so we were confident that in time there would be a constitutional test of the issues at hand. We wondered, though, whether in time of war the courts would contradict the commander in chief and his military commanders in their efforts to "protect" the nation from possible invasion, as General DeWitt once claimed in the weeks following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Both Kido and I were aware from word given us by the military and others that the army at one time was considering the removal and detention of only the enemy alien Japanese. These would be the Issei, who had been lawfully admitted into the United States but denied by federal statute the opportunity to become citizens through naturalization. By definition of law and through no fault of their own, they were enemy aliens. These were our parents, and their removal would not only separate family units but might also leave the aged and the infirm at the mercy of whatever fate awaited them in the camps. For these reasons, the JACL decided to object to the arbitrary separation of families, even though we knew that some of the more independent Nisei would denounce us for that decision. I now doubt that the JACL's beliefs concerning the integrity of the family unit had any bearing on the final military decision, for more and more people were demanding the complete removal of aliens and citizens alike.

About this time, we were beginning to wonder about the justification for evacuation on the grounds of military necessity. At first, General DeWitt had designated only the western half of the three Pacific Coast states and the southern third of Arizona as the military area from which military necessity required our

removal. He had invited those of Japanese background to voluntarily leave this area and to relocate anywhere outside the designated zone. Many, including Kido's family, left their homes and relocated in the eastern half of California. Then, without any advance warning, General DeWitt arbitrarily added the eastern half of California to the military area from which all Japanese Americans were to be excluded. Thus, these evacuees were forced to undergo two evacuation programs: one voluntary and the other involuntary.

About this time, we were also told that the Japanese Americans in Hawaii would not be relocated on the mainland. In 1942 they constituted about a third of the total population of the islands, while we made up less than 1 percent of the total West Coast populace. Hawaii was some three thousand miles nearer to Japan than were the three westernmost states and had actually been under direct military attack. If military necessity dictated our evacuation and detention, what about the Japanese Americans in the Territory of Hawaii?

In the beginning, our wholesale removal and exclusion was demanded because of the fear of espionage or sabotage. Late in February 1942, federal intelligence agencies officially disclosed that before, during, and after December 7, 1941, no person of Japanese origin on the continental mainland had been convicted of either of these crimes. At this point, however, the army and such influential persons as Earl Warren and Walter Lippmann developed the curious doctrine that the actual absence of any espionage or sabotage was even more ominous than widespread treasonable activity. The Japanese Americans, it was alleged, were so well organized and disciplined that they were only waiting for an invasion by the enemy. Then they would rise up to support the Japanese invader.

Finally, it was argued that Japanese Americans had to be evacuated and placed in concentration camps in order to protect them from possible mob action by angry non-Japanese. In other words, the army resorted to the "protective custody" concept to justify our ultimate removal and incarceration.

Where was the "military necessity" in all this?

These actions clearly revealed the racism behind our wartime mistreatment. But what could the JACL have done to overcome racism, when the government, the army, and practically the total population of the West Coast were all united in the demand for evacuation and exclusion?

Even now I remember well the government's presentation of the basic problem to the JACL. We met in early March 1942, with a group of special emissaries from Washington, D. C. They informed us bluntly that the decision had been made to evacuate all persons of Japanese descent, aliens and citizens alike, from the western half of California, Oregon, and Washington, and the southern third of Arizona. We would first be detained in Wartime Civilian Control Administration (WCCA) assembly camps in racetracks and fairgrounds. Later, we would be taken to the War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps then being constructed by the army in interior wastelands in California, Arizona, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and Arkansas.

We were urged to cooperate with the army in that removal and detention program, even though it would mean personal sacrifices and suffering and considerable loss of property. If we failed to cooperate, the army would put its contingency plan into operation, and we would be forcibly ejected and incarcerated.

Having been forewarned that the decision had been made to order a mass evacuation, we were not surprised by the announcements. And, since we had discussed the JACL's leadership position on the issue of cooperation with the army, the ultimate decision itself was not difficult to make. We did, however, refuse to commit ourselves at that meeting and requested time to confer with our fellow JACL leaders. But we all felt that we had no alternative to cooperation. Resistance was suicidal.

Our only friend in Washington who might have been able to convince the president and the secretary of war that the evacuation was both unconstitutional and unnecessary was Attorney

General Francis Biddle, a noted civil libertarian. He had already capitulated to the military and political demand for total evacuation, however, even though Navy Intelligence and the FBI, as we learned later, opposed the mass evacuation as unnecessary and undesirable. Given the situation, how could we — with little or no influence — continue to “fight” and hope against evacuation?

Furthermore, we were led to believe that if we cooperated with the army in this mass movement, the army, the WRA, and the government would try to be as helpful and as humane as possible to the evacuees. Moreover, we feared the consequences if Japanese Americans refused to cooperate, and the army moved in with armed troops and even tanks to eject the people forcibly from their homes and properties. At a time when Japan was still on the offensive and apparently winning the war, we were afraid that the American people would consider us traitors and enemies of the war effort if we forced the army to take drastic action against us. This might forever place in jeopardy our future as United States citizens. As the involuntary trustees of the destiny of the Japanese Americans in this country, we felt that we could do no less than whatever was necessary to protect and preserve that future.

We were quite aware of the personal attitudes of some of the military personnel involved. General DeWitt, who would be in direct charge of any military action against the Japanese, had testified to a Senate Naval Affairs Subcommittee in words to this effect: “A Jap’s a Jap. Blood is thicker than citizenship. And giving them a piece of paper to show their citizenship won’t change that fact.” Colonel Bendetsen, the director of the WCCA, who would supervise the initial movement out of the homes of the evacuees, was determined that any person who was as much as one-sixteenth Japanese, which was double the formula devised by Hitler for the Jews, should be evacuated as a Japanese alien or non-alien.

Probably even more pertinent to our decision to cooperate was the official war policy of the United States government at

that time. The policy was to depict the Japanese as an enemy to be defeated at all costs. Therefore, official propaganda promoted the belief that the Japanese were barbarians who could not be trusted and who should be annihilated. Should the JACL give a doubting nation further excuse to confuse the identity of the Japanese enemy with the American of Japanese origin?

Suppose there might be blood shed on the streets of many Pacific Coast communities? We leaders of the JACL could not opt for such a grim and possibly genocidal alternative. With reluctant and heavy hearts, Kido and I joined in calling upon the JACL delegates to the National Emergency Council in San Francisco in mid-March 1942 to urge their members and others of Japanese ancestry in the prohibited zones to cooperate as best they could with the army. We said that they had to move from their homes to temporary assembly centers and then to what might become permanent relocation camps. There were some heated debates and some bitter comments. But, in the end, there was close to unanimity. With sad farewells, not knowing whether they would ever see each other again and weighed down by the decision to cooperate in what amounted to their own banishment and imprisonment, the delegates returned to their home districts to report on the JACL position.

Frankly, at that time, both Kido and I were quite surprised and pleased that there was practically no public outcry or challenge against the decision to cooperate with the army. We believed that such near total compliance indicated the general agreement of the evacuees that cooperation was indeed the proper arrangement under those tumultuous and threatening conditions.

Despite all that we had to suffer as suspect citizens of our own government, many besides myself must have hoped that if we demonstrated our belief in American ideals and objectives, the people of the United States would somehow more than make up for what we had sacrificed after the hate and hysteria of the war was over.

After more than twenty-five years in Washington, D. C., I

am convinced that our decision was the correct and proper one, and the only one that could have been reached at that time by responsible and reasonable people.

I still cannot adequately describe those emotions we felt—fear and fright, anger and helplessness, and hope and faith in spite of frustrations and tears. But I am hopeful that the facts and events as I recall them now will provide an insight into why we in the JACL leadership came to the decision that we did in relation to the 1942 mass evacuation and detention of 110,000 human beings of Japanese ancestry.

In checking testimony to congressional committees and to presidential commissions, I have observed how many Americans have called for corrective, remedial, and even beneficial legislation for those of Japanese ancestry because of the unprecedented wartime cooperation shown by the Japanese Americans. I cannot even count the many times over the last twenty-five years that members of the Congress and officials of the various administrations, especially those from the Pacific Coast, have introduced and voted for legislation and regulations that have been most helpful and beneficial to Japanese Americans. I am often reminded that the Japanese experience of 1942 involving wholesale evacuation and detention remains to prick the American conscience. The cooperative spirit and actions of the evacuees themselves shamed many Americans in later years when they learned of that travesty on American justice and constitutional guarantees.

In any event, because of the Japanese American wartime cooperation, the WRA was administered by able and sympathetic officials in a most humane manner under the circumstances, especially considering the continuing racism of many West Coasters who demanded the deportation of all Japanese after the war. Due to this cooperation, the president and the army agreed to the formation of what became the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the use of Nisei combat intelligence troops in the Pacific. The WRA policy and program encouraged student evacuees to leave the centers to continue their higher education

and qualified evacuees to seek housing and employment outside the centers. Many worked in jobs and professions that had been closed to them prior to World War II on the West Coast.

Since World War II, Congress has enacted laws that provide naturalization and immigration opportunities not only for the Japanese but also for all who lawfully enter this country for permanent residence. It has authorized partial compensation for economic losses suffered in the evacuation and exclusion era and has granted statehood to Hawaii, where a large percentage of the population is of Japanese descent. It has extended civil and human rights to all Americans, without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin.

The courts, in turn, have handed down decision after decision defining the rights and opportunities for those of Japanese background and others previously denied justice under the law. Over the years, Japanese Americans have gained assurances of "equality and opportunity under law."

Altogether, it is estimated that some five hundred pre-war laws and ordinances that restricted the lives of those of Japanese ancestry in this country, aliens and citizens alike, are no longer valid and effective. Indeed, it is often said that never before have those of Japanese origin been more respected and able to enjoy the rights, privileges, and opportunities of American citizenship than today. In these and many other ways, the fateful JACL decision, more than thirty years ago, to urge cooperation in the wartime evacuation and detention of the Japanese on the Pacific Coast is vindicated time and time again.

To all of those people who may, in other times, challenge that decision, it can only be said that any review of that determination must be made in the context of 1942. It must be made with the knowledge that because of that cooperative demonstration, those of Japanese ancestry are now in a position to inquire about the rightness and the consequences of that course of action decided more than three decades ago in what was a very different and difficult period in U.S. history.