

Japanese-American Citizens League's
Committee on
**ABOLISHING RESTRICTIONS ON
LAND OWNERSHIP**

Suite 123
318-6th Ave. So., Seattle 4, Wash.

JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE
318 Sixth Avenue South, Suite 123
Seattle 4, Washington

March 1962

Dear Friends:

The Japanese American Citizens League's Committee on Abolishing Restrictions on Land Ownership is spearheading a drive in order to repeal the discriminatory 1889 Land Law, otherwise known as Senate Joint Resolution No. 21 (SJR #21), Abolishing Restrictions on Land Ownership.

It is our firm belief that SJR #4, as it was known during the presidential election in 1960, was defeated primarily because the voters of the State did not comprehend the reasons for that repeal measure.

Every organization which we contacted such as the American Legion, Washington State Association of Realtors, Washington Title Association, Washington State Grange, Democratic State Convention, Republican State Convention and the entire Congressional Delegation from the State of Washington, to mention a few, unanimously favored the repeal measure.

Out of 39 counties we were only able to carry King County by 32,318 plurality. A study has revealed the following cold facts:

- 1) Lack of sufficient funds to reach and educate 1,524,064 (1960) registered voters in the State of Washington;
- 2) Wording of the ballot and misleading statements in the Voters' Pamphlet;
- 3) Complacency on the part of thousands of our supporters who believe in the principles of democracy but giving only "lip service" towards the repeal campaign;
- 4) Latent prejudices asserting themselves at the polls.

After the decisive defeat in the November election of 1960, we again went before the Legislature explaining the reasons for its defeat and requesting the Legislature to place this issue before the voters. The Legislature responded by a favorable 41-6 vote in the State Senate and 91-0 in the House. The members of the Legislature felt that the voters did not fully understand the complexities of the 1889 Land Law.

It is no small undertaking to reach an estimated 1,250,000 voters who go to the polls on Election Day. Therefore, we are again appealing to thousands of persons of good will throughout our State to assist us in eradicating a portion of our State Constitution which was originally directed against persons of Chinese ancestry. Later, it was applied to persons of Japanese ancestry (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1880: Chinese residents in the United States, 105,465; Japanese residents, 148).

Article II, Section 33, of our State Constitution adopted in 1889, instead of clearly stating its intention "ownership of lands by Chinese is prohibited" states that "ownership of lands by aliens who have not in good faith declared their intention to become citizens of the United States is prohibited..." (Oregon Constitution, adopted in 1857, contained direct reference to the Chinese, and was later repealed.) At first glance, it appears to be a good law. However, unless you were aware that orientals, namely, the Chinese and the Japanese, were ineligible for citizenship under U. S. Immigration and Naturalization laws, you will realize that it is an unjust and antiquated law. Inasmuch as the Chinese and Japanese were unable to become citizens of the United States, they could not in good faith declare their intentions.

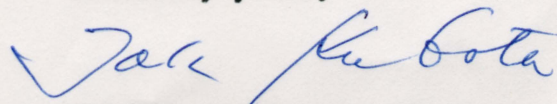
Washington remains as the only state on the West Coast which still has a law of this kind. (On November 6, 1956, the voters of the State of California repealed its land law section, Proposition 13, in its State Constitution, by a vote of 2,684,902 against 1,311,460.) It is also difficult to conceive that Washington, of all the 50 states in the Union, authorizes alien corporations but not non-citizen individuals to own properties within its territories.

I believe, and I am sure that you will also, that the people in the State of Washington believe in fair play, justice and equality. We are confident that the voters in November, 1962, will know the truth and they will vindicate our belief in the wisdom of an enlightened electorate.

We are at this time appealing to you to assist us financially or as an active participant, or both, in this repeal drive in order to remove the vestiges of discrimination which has circumscribed and restricted the lives of both non-citizens and citizens alike from 1889 to the Second World War.

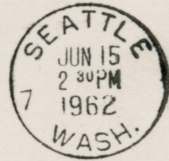
Your participation in whatever capacity you can in this worthwhile endeavor is greatly appreciated. Can we count on you personally to assist us by explaining to your friends why it is essential that they vote "Yes" on S.J.R. #21? If any additional information is desired, please contact our office, 318 Sixth Avenue South, Suite 123, MAIn 4-7773.

Sincerely yours,




Tak Kubota, General Chairman
JACL's Committee on Abolishing
Restrictions on Land Ownership

VOTE "YES"
S.J.R. 21,
ABOLISHING RESTRICTIONS
ON LAND OWNERSHIP



Mr. Joseph U. Hamanaka


Seattle, Washington