

August 12, 1973

Mr. L. S. Christofero,
Scout Executive
Chief Seattle Council
Boy Scouts of America
Seattle, Washington

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing a letter sent to your national headquarters as an expression of my dissatisfaction with the incident of comedian Bob Hope's use of a racially derogatory joke as "entertainment" of the scouts at Jamboree West and of the subsequent inaction on the part of scout officials present.

The use of the word "Jap" was extremely objectionable to the Japanese American scouts in attendance, moreover to all of Japanese ancestry and should be condemned along with all such behavior, whoever the target, by all Americans!

Only partial satisfaction may now be possible. We hope it may be forthcoming.

Yours truly,

Mrs. & Mrs. M. Katayama

August 12, 1973

Mr. Alden Barber, Chief Executive
The Boy Scouts of America
North Brunswick, New Jersey

Sir:

That comedian Bob Hope, in telling a joke for the "entertainment" of some 27,000 Boy Scouts at your jamboree, could use the term "Jap" within a premise insulting to Japanese and Americans of Japanese ancestry and in particular to the Japanese and Japanese American Boy Scouts attending the jamboree is doubly infuriating since after a previous incident he had promised not to repeat that offensive remark.

That scout officials did not immediately move to offset the damaging effects of such a performance and thereby leave the impression for the scouts that it was tolerable is most certainly disappointing.

That the officials present did not take such action upon the request of those offended after agreeing to do so (however reluctantly) is inexcusably insensitive, malicious and hypocritical to scouting's professed ideals of brotherhood and virtue.

That individual scouts could, at this jamboree dedicated to the affirmation of those same ideals, each day of that event further subject those Japanese American fellow scouts to additional racial slurs (some directly attributed to Hope's example), raises questions as to their dedication and to the quality of some scout leadership.

As a Japanese American who knows too well the past results of the attitudes that would allow such as what happened at the jamboree pass without question and active condemnation I fervently hope that we may all work so that the feelings, rights and name of no one will be taken lightly or in vain.

As a former participant in the scouting movement-- a Boy Scout while in a concentration camp and my wife and I as adults in Cubbing--feeling anger at the leaders' rejection of their own oaths and of scoutings professed movement towards greater relevance to today and particularly to be more responsive towards fulfilling the needs of minority youths, I charge that your organization owes the offended scouts an apology, the other scouts and the public an explanation of your stand against such behavior.

Mr. Hope's professional "theme" of "patriotism" and the fact that he made an appearance without fee does not give him or anyone else license for offensive conduct at the expense of others. It seems to me that one is not a "patriot" because he says he is and indeed performs some "patriotic" deeds nor because one waves a flag, but because he upholds as well as he can (however anonymously) all of the ideals of his country. It is my understanding that THIS country was founded upon the ideals of equality and freedom from oppression for all.

I hope that Mr. Hope and the Boy Scouts of America may find the appropriate courses of action possible.

M. Katayama

cc: Chief Seattle Council; Gov. Evans; Mayor Ullman; Bob Hope