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The testimony of Denny T. Yasuhara, [REDACTED], Spokane, Washington, before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, September 9, 10, and 11, 1981.

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Madam Chairperson/Mr. Chairman:

L members of Commission

My name is Denny T. Yasuhara and I am a teacher in Spokane, Washington's School District No. 81.

One ~~of the~~ purposes of my presentation today is to place in your official records the fact that economic and emotional suffering was not restricted to those evacuated from coastal areas. ~~Enormous economic and psychological hardship was endured by those of us outside the restricted zone as a result of regulations, supposedly, to safeguard the security of our country,~~ *as well as the war itself.*

Essentially, this is a story of two families, the Yasuharas and the Minatas of Bonners Ferry, Idaho. My father, Yasunobu Yasuhara and a partner bought a quarter of a city block in downtown Bonners Ferry in 1922 for \$10,000. Later, Mr. George K. Minata purchased our partner's share for \$5,000. ~~Approximately \$10,000 at 1920 values was invested in the properties that~~ included: a hotel of 20 rooms, the largest restaurant in Bonners Ferry, a shoe repair shop, a wholesale milk ~~buying and~~ processing plant, a barber shop, an assayer's office, and a dry cleaning and tailor shop. (It's understood that the business was in another person's name since my parents could not own property).

~~After the market crash of 1929, Mr. Minata and Mr. Toudaka put up their life savings of several thousand dollars to help save the Bonners Ferry Commercial Bank and the community from the chaos of bankruptcy.~~ In 1942, just over 10 years later ~~this same community forced us~~ *we were* to sell our homes and business for \$13,000.....\$13,000, only \$3,000 more than it cost 20 years earlier, because the community and suppliers boycotted our businesses placing us into a daily financial deficit. It should be apparent that this transaction took place at a time when business was booming and at the peak of the potential earning

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of our business, had it not been for the boycott, which reduced us almost to bankruptcy. Thus, with the boycott and attendant harassment, the business was sold to our competitor, who in turn, sold it about 6 months later for \$100,000, a profit of almost 700% in 1942 dollars.

~~Property such as rifles, hand guns, and radios, were confiscated and only 2 beat-up items were ever returned. The FBI ransacked our home and properties trying to locate incriminating evidence, which, of course, they didn't. This experience humiliated us in front of ^{THE} our entire community of 1200 people, almost all of whom knew us for many years.~~

My family and Mr. Minata's family were frequently verbally abused and some of our help attacked physically. Mr. Frank Sumida, a young quiet, inoffensive Nisei was beaten severely several times at work and while returning home, until he became very frightened to go to work. Later he became mentally ill and never fully recovered, eventually dying in a mental institution, Eastern Washington State Hospital. There is, of course, no way of knowing how much this abuse contributed to his illness and subsequent death.....obviously it could not have had a beneficial effect upon his health. ^{OK} ~~During this time, four (4) members of our families were in the armed forces, one in the intelligence service and the other three (3) with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. This fact seemed to make little difference.~~

When the war started, I was in the 8th grade and the president of my class, soon thereafter I was practically ostracized and on one occasion, spat upon by an adult, while walking on Main Street. We could not go to movies for almost the duration of the war, because the theater was within 100 yards of a restricted area, the bridge over the Kootenai River. A 9:00 pm curfew was also imposed upon us so that we could not

attend any functions after that time. In addition, we could not travel out of the county or beyond 50 miles without special permission. These restrictions were lifted after a time, but the impact of this treatment was devastating to ~~impressionable, idealistic American teenagers and their parents.~~ ^{ALL OF US} I cannot begin to tell you about our economic and emotional suffering nor the price we would place upon our loss or our grief.

Let me close with some remarks from a column by syndicated columnist Jenkin Lloyd Jones in the Spokane Daily Chronicle on August 22, 1981, reminiscent of the "Yellow Peril" journalism of the 30's and 40's. I quote:

"Sorry about those Japanese internees. That should have never happened. But none died of malnutrition or preventable disease."

"Sorry about those surprise atomic weapons. But would the nation that surprised us at Pearl Harbor have given us advance notice if it had achieved the A-bomb first?"

"Sorry, most of all, for those conscience-stricken Americans long on compassion but short on history, who keep deploring the inhumanity of their countrymen to the delight of the copy desk at Pravda."

And remember this is 1981.

Let us hope that this Commission can rise above the politics of today and the prejudices of tomorrow.

Let us hope that the sentiments of this Commission and those of other Americans have a greater degree of objectivity and sense of justice and fair play than does Mr. Jones.

And finally, let us hope that Americans have not forgotten that the implementation of significant and meaningful justice is often painful and difficult and is a matter of substance, not of rhetoric. Thank you.

The issue of meaningful & just
restitution
~~Compensation~~ for wartime internment
transcends Japanese American & ^{can be} applied
to any segment of citizens, but ~~more~~
^{in my view} ~~importantly~~ it directly impacts
our leadership in the free world.
A government & a nation that is
incapable of or unwilling to
provide justice for its own people
because it is not in the mood
for it, can hardly inspire trust
& ~~for~~ provide the kind of
leadership to address those issues

abroad - who would believe

us? It is said that charity begins
at home -- it might also be said that
justice ^{for} ~~the~~ ^{has} ~~as well~~
his Commission ∴ must

make meaningful & appropriate

recommendations regarding

compensation beyond an official

apology which, by itself, would

do little to inspire respect

among other free nations of

the world -- to say nothing about

our enemies.