

TO THE COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT  
OF CIVILIANS

Mr. Paul Bannai or Ms. Joan Bernstein  
726 Jackson Place NE Suite 2020  
Washington, D.C. 20506

Subject: Unsolved WRA and Internee's Legal Problems

During the first Nikkei (nisei) Pan American conference in Mexico City, Mexico, I met an old time JACLer who had just testified in Washington, DC, before your commission. He told me that one of the former WRA officials told the commissioners that the nisei never protested during their internment.

Here is an important valuable piece of data on this matter. On February 16, 1945, an all WRA center conference was held in Salt Lake City to discuss the problems of closing the WRA camps. 30 representatives from Minidoka, Rohwer, Topaz, Heart Mountain, Poston, Gila River, and Granada, attended the conference.

After 3 days of the meeting, 21 recommendations and a preamble were sent to WRA director, Dillon Myer, as the representative of the government. Since most of the nisei leaders were already out of the camps, the majority of the conferees were issei. For this reason, most nisei do not know about this conference or of its significance.

Attached to this memorandum is an excerpt from Dillon Myers' book, Uprooted Americans, University of Arizona Press, 1971. It contains the preamble to the 21 recommendations.

Also attached is a xeroxed section from American Nikkei, A One Hundred Year History, published by Shin Nichibei Shinbunsha, pages 323 to 327. The text is in Japanese. It contains more details of the meeting and part of the 21 recommendations and answers from Mr. Myers. To avoid technical errors, I did not translate the

Japanese. I request that the commission have this piece translated.

As shown in the excerpt from his book, Mr. Myers was very careful in his reply to the 21 recommendations to avoid any implication of redress or of the government's responsibility for the plight of the internees.

I ask the commission to obtain and study the legal ramifications of the 21 recommendations brought forth by this conference. If there is difficulty in obtaining a copy of this document, I have heard that Prof. Roger Daniels has photo copies.


It is my opinion that issei leaders did properly file their legal concerns and complaints and this was done back in 1945 when they were still interned. But because of the vagaries of government and typical bureaucratic procedures, their good ideas and intentions were never properly heard or acted upon.

The public asks why the nikkei have waited 38 years to ask for redress. As has been demonstrated in these documents, the first claims were filed in 1945. I would like the commission to take note of this fact and include it in their records. Most JACL historians are unaware of the existence of this conference and its significance. We wish to set the record straight.

Respectfully yours,

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