

April 17th, 1942

To Nisei:

The Security Commission still refuses to grant our request for Mass Evacuation in Family Groups.

But we are still demanding because we think beyond all doubt that our request is a most reasonable one in view of our enormous sacrifice for our country.

With this conviction we resorted to various methods to secure our last remaining freedom—freedom to live with our families by evacuating en masse in family groups.

We pleaded with Naturalized Canadians to demand it—they gave up without much effort. We persuaded J. C. C. Council to do their utmost—they also gave up too soon. They even refused to arrange a final nisei mass meeting to discuss our common trouble. We talked with the Security Commission, we wrote to them (copy enclosed) and we sent our lawyer.

The answer is that we are by law Japanese Nationals and we have to do what we are told and go where we are sent. Some families are being sent to Alberta and Manitoba and while there is no promise that all families will be sent like this, the Commission hopes to settle more family groups as time goes on. And that is as much as we can get from them.

We however know that we are Canadians and that we are going to continue all efforts to get what we feel are our rights.

NISEI MASS EVACUATION GROUP

April 15th, 1942.

Austin C. Taylor, Esq.,

The Chairman, B. C. Security Commission,
Marine Building, Vancouver, B. C.

Honourable Sir:

We Canadians have reached a point where we must stop and think deeply regarding our evacuation. For that purpose we have carefully reviewed the development of events which has brought us to this point where we are ordered to part with our families, perhaps never to meet them again for a long time to come. We enclose a summary of our above-mentioned review.

As you clearly understand and as it is fully mentioned in our review, we have said "YES" to all your previous orders, however unreasonable they might have seemed. But we are firm in saying "NO" to your last order which calls for break-up of our families.

When we say "NO" at this point, we request you to remember that we are British subjects by birth, that we are no less loyal to Canada than any other Canadian, that we have done nothing to deserve the break-up of our families, that we are law-abiding Canadian citizens, and that we are willing to accept suspension of our civil rights—rights to retain our homes and businesses, boats, cars, radios and cameras. Incidentally, we are entitled, as native sons, to all civil rights of an ordinary Canadian within the limitations of Canada's war effort. In spite of that we have given up everything. In view of this sacrifice we feel that our request for mass evacuation in family groups will not seem unreasonable to you.

Please also remember that we are not refusing to go. Indeed if it is for our country's sake, we shall evacuate to whatever place Canada commands. Yes, it was in that spirit that we obeyed all your previous orders.

Another point which we request you to remember is that separation of our families would not contribute anything towards Canada's war effort, whereas a soldier's separation from his family does result in a definite contribution.

Considering the above facts, we think it totally unnecessary that our last remaining freedom should be taken from us—the freedom to live with our families. We were taught in our Canadian schools that we should always cherish freedom and do our utmost for the protection of women and children. We can now fully appreciate what they meant. We were also taught in our church that the unity of family is sacred and must be regarded as God-given human right and should be cherished as life itself.

We understand that it is the intention of the B. C. Security Commission to avert all unnecessary hardship and ill-feeling in dealing with this problem, and we should like to bring to your attention the fact that by allowing us to be evacuated in family groups you would do this, and further, you would gain co-operation from us in carrying out your orders.

For these reasons we request your kindness in granting our humble request for the mass evacuation in family groups. We do so because we have confidence that British fair play and justice, even in war-time, will manifest itself and grant us our most human and reasonable request.

Respectfully yours,

NISEI MASS EVACUATION GROUP,

Representatives:

The Survey of Developments of Events Re Evacuation of Canadians of Japanese Origin

1. On December 7th, 1941, a most unfortunate international circumstance comes as a fact which was later to affect all persons of Japanese origin in British Columbia.

2. The Government orders and public actions swiftly heightened to make it increasingly difficult for all persons of Japanese origin to maintain war-time normality of living: loss of business and jobs, confiscation of boats, cars, radios and cameras, and imposition of curfew law. Ultimately, circumstances threatened the family unity itself.

3. The Government orders all male enemy aliens of military age to evacuate from the defense area by April 1st. On February 23rd, Mori persuaded the first group of Japanese nationals to evacuate to designated work camp, on pretext of sacrificing them for the future security of the Japanese race residing within the defense area without consulting them.

4. The Government orders all able-bodied males of Japanese origin to evacuate to designated points and jobs.

5. At this point, the Nisei hold a meeting of representatives from 52 overlapping organizations, electing an emergency Nisei council which was generally to cope with circumstances arising out of male evacuation. The method of election was thus: The chairman selected a nominating committee of five, which, in turn, nominated 30 members; finally the chairman recommended and the representatives agreed to accept the 30 nominees together with the nominating committee, thus making a council of 35.

6. The J. C. C. Council tried to better the evacuating conditions of all males of the Japanese origin and also to prevent the ultimate separation of families but reported that to be inevitable. Therefore the general policy of co-operation with the authorities was adopted. On March 23rd, the first group of approximately 150, mostly 'teen-aged boys, received orders classifying them as "Enemy Aliens" to evacuate to designated destinations. At this point not all nationals and no naturalized Canadians had as yet been evacuated. The Nisei refused to follow order under the classification of "Enemy Aliens", and moreover as British subjects they considered the removal order as void. However, after detention and various methods of persuasion, the authorities were able to evacuate approximately 100 Nisei.

7. A group supported by the Nisei majority feeling that evacuation en masse, in family groups, was the last human right lawfully due to anyone, intervened. After deliberation, the J. C. C. Council accepted their demand to again confer with the Security Commission.

8. The J. C. C. Council endorsed a concrete plan worked out by the Naturalized Canadians and submitted to the Security Commission for consideration. The basis of the plan was thus: A piece of land outside of the defense area, materials at the cost of \$1,800,000, labour to be supplied by the evacuees.

9. The Security Commission refused to accept the plan on the grounds that there is no land available. The J. C. C. Council and the Naturalized Canadians accordingly accepted the Commission's reply as final.

10. The second plan of mass evacuation of women and children to be followed by males to other designated points was put forth for consideration to the Commission by both groups. But the latter condition of this plan was rejected. The J. C. C. Council and the Naturalized Canadians accepted the revised plan. At the mass meeting on April 7th the combined groups publicly informed the audience that they would co-operate hereafter in adherence with the orders of the Commission. The meeting was predominated by a feeling of public refusal to comply with the revised plan. This attitude of the public climaxed in the detention of approximately 60 Canadians.