

## TEXT OF LETTER TO CLAIMANTS

### Claimants' Committee, Toronto

The Co-operative Committee sent you a letter, dated April 16, 1949, concerning the over-all settlement proposed by Commissioner Bird and asked you to state whether or not it was acceptable to you. On the basis of the information contained in the letter and other representations, a large number of claimants stated that they would accept the offer. Despite this fact, we have no doubt that you shared our feelings and were far from satisfied with the offer.

Since that time, claimants resident in Toronto and District have carefully analysed all the material factors to the best of our ability, with a view to finding means which will improve the proposed settlement of claims. Although we have been studying the various approaches for some months, we have not previously had occasion to submit our plans to you for your considered judgment.

In December, 1949, following a proposal from the National Executive Committee of the JCCA, that representatives of claimants work with them on claims matters, a general meeting of Toronto and District claimants was called, and at the second meeting a representative committee of claimants was elected by ballot.

At the meetings, claimants expressed the need for organizations of claimants on a national scale to protect their interests, but in view of the exigencies of time - the report of the Commissioner was expected in a few weeks - organization on a national scale was withheld and active organization was localized in Toronto. Despite our restricted basis of geographical representation, because we share the same position and are faced with identical problems as other Japanese Canadians in other parts of Canada, we sincerely hope that the program of activity proposed in this letter will prove satisfactory to you and will be endorsed by claimants in all parts of Canada. We also ask for your co-operation and advice in order to make our program representative of your interests and desires in every possible respect.

As previously stated, we have been informed that Commissioner Bird is to present his report to the Government within a few weeks. We are also informed that despite our claims which totalled \$6 millions, the Commissioner is stating that he found losses to total a mere \$925 thousands. This is the outcome of the scheme referred to claimants for their acceptance. A majority of you claimants, when pressed to accept this scheme, expressed agreement despite its unsatisfactory nature, and with protest. On the basis of the information given to you at that time, we claimants in Toronto and District have given the matter further study over an extended period and have decided at meetings, by resolution, that we are unalterably opposed to accepting this inadequate amount without further efforts for higher and more just compensation.

An announcement of the Commissioner's findings will be made by the Government after the report is received. At that time, it is proposed that we claimants make use of every means within our power to gain public support in a campaign for better terms of settlement. It should be borne in mind that this is our last opportunity to place our case before the Canadian public, and unless the true facts and circumstances of the evacuation are made known to the public at this time, the story will never be told and the success of any further public action will be forever barred. The rights and safety of minorities will be less secure in Canada without our forceful voice against racial discrimination. And it may also be stated that, regardless of the outcome of the campaign, should the Government flout all public opinion and remain adamant, we shall not receive less than the \$925 thousand offer.



With all these relevant facts in mind, and after full discussion, a meeting of Toronto and District claimants, held on January 15, 1950, reached two very important conclusions. They are:

- (1) Commissioner Bird's investigation was not fair by any standards. Claimants therefore demand the full amount of their original claims.
- (2) After investigation on even an inadequate basis of goods sold by the Custodian alone, losses amounting to \$925 thousands were found. This is positive proof that total losses are substantially higher and warrant a further program to compensate for general economic losses.

Following from these two conclusions, and after extensive discussion with the National JCCA, we have decided to undertake a further campaign on claims. The methods proposed in the campaign are as follows:

- (1) Draw up a brief on evacuation losses and state our position on the Commissioner's report.
- (2) Publish pamphlet for mass distribution describing all facts and circumstances of evacuation.
- (3) Gain support of newspapers and periodical press and have them publish news stories and articles.
- (4) Use radio time in support of campaign.
- (5) Arrange delegation to interview M.P.'s and Cabinet Ministers in Ottawa.
- (6) Enlist support of organizations - Ukrainian, Jewish, Civil Liberties, etc.
- (7) Enlist support of churches and religious organizations.
- (8) Contact local Japanese Canadian organizations, have them wire and write M.P.'s and Government.
- (9) Work through JCCA chapters, have them contact mayors, municipal councils, and other local officials, request them to wire their support to M.P.'s and Government.

The cost of such a campaign is estimated at \$5 thousands. It is proposed that the Claimants Committee be empowered to borrow this amount initially to be paid back later by claimants on a pro rata basis from final awards.

Because we are unable to initiate this campaign without being certain that it is in accordance with <sup>your</sup> desires, and merits your wholehearted support, we request that you state whether you approve of the following points of our proposed program:

*Specifically*



- (1) The two decisions of Toronto claimants, expressed at <sup>our</sup> ~~their~~ meeting of January 15th, stated above.
- (2) Our plans to make strenuous demands on the Government to improve the terms of settlement.
- (3) The methods we propose in our public campaign.

Please give the matters outlined in this letter your careful consideration and study, and advise us of your approval or disapproval at the earliest possible date.

As claimants, you will agree with us that this is a matter of utmost importance and we await your reply before deciding to undertake this campaign. We are unable to perform effective work unless we know that you have given us a mandate. Your replies may be written in either Japanese or English, and should it be possible, we request that you reply within the next two weeks. Should we not hear from you, we shall judge that you concur in our plans and that you have given hearty endorsement.

On the other hand, should you disagree with us, we shall be very pleased to have your reasons in order that we may give careful consideration to the defects in our plan, and where necessary we shall then have an opportunity to revise our program in accordance with the opinions of the main body of claimants across Canada.

We would also urge you to form a Claimants Committee in your local area. A step of this kind will improve communication between us and will greatly facilitate our work to our mutual advantage. Through such an organization, we can be assured of more effective coordination and cooperation. When your committee is formed, please advise us of the names of your chairman and secretary, and their addresses.

In the future, should it be necessary for us in Toronto to contact individual claimants and local committees on every occasion about each detail of program and policy, we shall find that the distance between us in space will hamper our work and we shall be powerless to cope with emergencies. We therefore request that you give us sufficient authority to act on your behalf as your representatives on matters concerning claims on a national scale, that is, within the range of the general policy outlined in this letter.

Again we request an early reply.

Senji Takashima, Chairman,  
Claimants Committee, Toronto,  
67 Rose Avenue.



Claimants' Committee

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