

Revised at meeting

DEBATE THE ISSUE OF EVACUATION LOSSES AND LET THE PUBLIC DECIDE

A statement recently issued by the executive secretary of the JCCA regarding the invitation from the Toronto Claimants Committee to debate the actions of the National Executive Committee on evacuation losses contains more than the usual quota of false statements. Although inaccuracies are now regarded as general from that source in his efforts to justify his actions, when the very liberal quota is exceeded and false statements are not only repeated despite corrections but are amplified and exaggerated, a reply is called for, primarily for that persons own good to show him that most persons disapprove of deliberate falsehoods and object to being fooled, and secondly, in order to show that the JCCA in its policies regarding evacuation losses, as laid down in National Conferences, is not implicated by the actions of this person. We hasten to state that no unfavourable reflection should be cast on the JCCA as a national organization for its position is clearly and unequivocally stated in their National Conference reports.

In the executive secretary's statement he attempts to propagate the false idea that the Toronto Claimants Committee is self-appointed and without standing of any kind except for themselves. He has used qualifying phrases such as "so-called" and "who call themselves".when referring to the Claimants Committee. It is a very sad and serious state of affairs

a plain and obvious fact regarding the bona fides of the Toronto Claimants Committee. It is known to all persons who have taken an interest in claims matters that the committee was elected as a result of a ballot distributed to all claimants in the Toronto Area, and that this method of election was agreed to as the most appropriate method for selecting claimants' representatives at a meeting called by the JCCA.

All persons elected to the committee were claimants and almost without exception they were persons who have been prominent in industry and commerce, fisheries and agriculture, and the community life of Japanese Canadian society for the past twenty and thirty years. The committee is composed of the following persons:

Organizational work for these persons is no new venture. Throughout the years they have been the leaders of communities and business enterprises, and have been tried and tested and found to measure up to the difficult tasks faced by Japanese Canadians in the past.

These persons who comprise the Toronto Claimants Committee are not self-appointed as were members of the JCCA Executive Committee, nor the Co-operative Committee for that matter, but hold office only by virtue of the election by claimants. They have on every occasion referred problems back to general meetings of claimants, called after proper notice, for further instruction, sanction or modification of proposed policy. The committee has at all times functioned along thoroughly democratic lines and has welcomed persons who were known to advocate views which varied with those of the committee to address general meetings of claimants - and it should be stated that on every occasion, after full discussion, the position of the committee has been upheld.

The invitation to debate the actions of the <sup>JCCA</sup> Executive Committee was in line with this previous practice of having a full disclosure of all relevant facts pertaining to evacuation losses, and this could be most satisfactorily accomplished by <sup>having</sup> speakers from the JCCA Executive Committee ~~ix~~ itself appear, rather than a second hand statement from another party - and then all Toronto claimants and the Japanese Canadian public could decide for themselves.

As they have in the past, should a debate have taken place, it is likely that claimants would have again endorsed the position taken by their committee. This would have put the lie to the claim of certain JCCA executive committee members that they represent the views of claimants - and to avoid this and have their position rejected by claimants, which embarrassment/~~would~~ would demand a change of policy to conform with the views of the Toronto Claimants Committee, they chose not to participate. It should be plain to them that their present policy is illegal and contrary to the policy of their own National Conference and their previously stated intentions.

Instead of debating their position on evacuation losses and taking a public stand, the JCCA National Executive Committee is ~~making~~ violating the instructions given to them by the National Conference and is making no attempt to

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Instead of debating their position on evacuation losses which they are obliged to do if they consider their actions defensible, the JCCA National Executive Committee has chosen to hide behind a smoke screen and in self-righteous and pompous tones prate about "unethical action" and violation of "simple rules of courtesy", when the/<sup>insulting</sup>actions of ~~x~~ certain of their members belie the contempt in which they hold claimants. Concretely and specifically, through repeated instances, the high-handed, arbitrary and callous attitude and the derogatory manner which has been overtly displayed toward claimants, would be shocking to all "right-minded persons".

There is an English saying that patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel - in this instance we believe that a parallel exists, with "courtesy" being substituted for "patriotism".