

Mr. Ferdinando de Kobbe,
Consul for Spain,
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Sir:

We the Japanese of Rosebery, wish to extend to you our most hearty welcome, and express our great pleasure in your appointment as the Spanish Consul at Vancouver. We are very deeply gratified for the pains and trouble you are taking, to tour and inspect the remote sections of the interior for the benefit of the Japanese people, and this in spite of the extreme weather and the recentness of the long tiring journey from your country to Canada.

For the duration of the war, we are in the position whereby the assurance and the safety of our lives and property are solely under the protection of the Foreign Office of the country you are representing. It is therefore our sincere hope and wish that you will give us every aid and assistance that you can possibly render. We are taking the opportunity of this, your first visit, to bring before you the various problems with which we are faced here in Rosebery, and beg of you to take these matters up with the Canadian Government in order that they may be remedied.

As you have no doubt been informed, whether in Rosebery or in other centres, the people are divided into two classes; the ones who are dependent on their maintenance, and those who are dependent on their employment.

In regards to those on maintenance the amount of relief they are receiving is about the same as the rate of relief in British Columbia prior to the war. Even if the cost of living is the same as before the outbreak of war, the amount is only but sufficient for a person's existence. Taking this into consideration we feel it is only proper that the maintenance rate be increased proportionately to the increased cost of living. Knowing we are enemy aliens, we do not expect the same treatment as the Canadian citizens. However it is our firm belief that the Canadians who are prisoners of war in Japan have been given fair treatment. Also the Canadian civilians in Japan are treated exactly like her own peoples in accordance of the Japanese version of fairness to all. With this fact in mind, we firmly believe that even if we were to ask for the doubling of the maintenance it is not demanding too much. However with our

knowledge of the extreme difficulty in your asking for any set amount, we are leaving the percentage of increase in the maintenance rate entirely up to your own judgment. When you take this matter up with the Canadian Government, will you please bear in mind the fact that the aged and the sick are receiving only their board and lodging and are not given one penny to buy the other necessities of one's existence. This matter we wish to have remedied. Also the grown-up boys and girls are given the same maintenance as a new-born child, making it very difficult for families with older children. These children should receive the same amount as the parents, or else suitable work be provided whereby they can earn something for themselves.

As regarding the working class, the amount of their pay is very small being only twenty-five and thirty cents per hour. From this low wage two and one-half cents (2½¢) per each working hour is deducted as rental, bringing the net wages to a still lower level. The only reason any able-bodied person works, is that they may better their living standard, but such deductions as rent from the already low remuneration makes it almost impossible. In cases of men with large families their effort in working means but a few dollars more that if he were to receive maintenance. A person who is working has to eat heartier meals and requires more clothing than if he were to remain idle, causing an increase in the cost of living. Due to these various reasons, there exists amongst the workers a certain amount of dissatisfaction. They feel they are not being properly paid for their efforts, causing an inefficiency in their work. It is therefore our wish that this condition be righted; by having the wages increased, deductions from the wages for rentals be discontinued, supplemental allowances be given to all. The price of the commodities in Rosebery are much higher than the same goods in other ghost towns, and we wish to see the prices in these various places all equalized.

Needless to say, you have no doubt already noticed the conditions of the houses in the different Japanese communities that you visited in the course of your inspection tour. The houses are built on the line of temporary barracks, and not as homes in which the people are expected to live especially in this cold climate. If it is at all possible, we would like to have the ceilings and the inner walls completely boarded. Even for those who are young and healthy, it is a

great hardship to pass the winter in these makeshift houses. Yet all of us both the young and the old, the well and the sick have had to live in these houses since last autumn. There has been at times a shortage in the fuel supply, and we approached Mr. Swain, the supervisor of this camp in this regard but nothing was done. Even after Mr. Swain had observed women and children helping with the wood-cutting on Sundays and Holidays, he has reduced the number of wood-cutters and placed them on less urgent projects. He has also taken the wood truck away and replaced it with a team of horses, slowing down the output of fuel wood. At present there are over ten houses not yet provided with heaters. At the beginning of this heating program, only those homes with a sick person, a pregnant mother, or a large number of small children were provided with heaters. Because only a few families were given heaters, a number of persons unable to stand and watch their loved ones suffering from the cold, purchased their own heaters even though this meant going without other necessities. Previous to our being evacuated from the coastal regions, we were all without employment, some for five or six months, others as long as eleven months. Due to this the people were without any funds, yet being unable to withstand the cold they purchased their own heaters. These people we believe, should have the cost of the heaters refunded.

With the coming of the cold weather, the pipe-line work will likely have to be discontinued. If the men formerly on the pipe-line are to be diverted to wood-cutting, more tools such as bucking saws, axes et cetera will be required. We approached Mr. Swain in regards to obtaining these necessary tools and also a truck for the distribution of the fuel, but we were refused. In the past when we appealed to Mr. Swain for aid in various matters pertaining to our welfare, he has taken a certain hostile attitude instead of being sympathetic and helpful. We therefore wish you will bear this matter in your mind when carrying out our numerous requests. As previously mentioned regarding Mr. Swain's attitude towards us, therein we believe lies the cause for the difference here in Rosebery such as the poorer conditions and the shortages of equipment in comparison to the other camps, such as Kaslo, Sloan, Tashme, and so forth. It is therefore our wish that we be treated with all fairness, and no discrimination shown to the Japanese in Rosebery.

We wish to thank you deeply for the great and numerous requests, and your interest in our welfare. It is our sincere hope that your mission will be successful, and may you continue in the very best of health.

Very truly yours,

Sakabayashi
Kodama
M. Nagano
For the Rosebery Japanese

Rosebery, B.C.
January 15th, 1943.