

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS

National Executive Office: 735 Ash Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 0R5

* * * WEEKLY UPDATE * * *
MARCH 15 & 22, 1985

To: Members, NAJC Council
From: National Redress Co-ordinator
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1. I returned from Toronto too late to prepare last week's update, so this one covers two weeks.

2. I spent two hectic weeks in eastern Canada, mainly in Toronto where I attended many community and house meetings as part of the NAJC's current effort to discuss and receive comments from the grass-roots level of our communities.

As you know, our Negotiation Team met in Toronto on March 9-10. On Saturday evening, Art and a few of us drove to Hamilton and met with some 20 members of the community at a gathering arranged by the Hamilton Redress Committee. On Sunday afternoon, after the Negotiation Team session ended, the NAJC was assisted by the North York "Chapter of the NAJC" and the Toronto JCCA in holding a public meeting at the Japanese United Church.

At both the house meetings and the public meetings, individuals were asked whether they supported the government's proposal for a \$6 million trust foundation, or whether they supported the NAJC's position that a compensation figure should reflect the losses suffered by our community. A show of hands at the meetings in all cases indicated no support for the government's proposal and strong support for compensation based on a documented estimate of losses. Centres that have held meetings where these questions were asked are requested to pass on your results for future updates.

3. Art Miki asked that Council members be informed that Jack Oki, at the NAJC meeting in Toronto on March 10 at the Japanese United Church, verbally submitted his resignation as the Vice-President of the NAJC.

4. In attendance for the Negotiation Team meeting at the Japanese United Church were Art, Gordon Hirabayashi, Rits Inouye, Elmer Hara, Maryka Omatsu, Harold Hirose, Lucy Yamashita, Don Rosenbloom, and myself. Discussions included the Feasibility Study for the Socio-Economic Study of Losses, and the need to publicize our redress cause more concretely outside of our communities. The following decisions were made:

a) Art Miki, with the Winnipeg members of the Negotiation Team, will arrange to meet with Jack Murta in Winnipeg to give him a report on the Feasibility Study.

b) To establish more tangible support from Canadians who sympathize with our cause, the Negotiation Team proposes a National Conference on Redress for the fall in Toronto. The

gathering would be hosted by NAJC Council members who would be present to meet and converse with invited representatives from ethnic groups, churches, civil rights groups, and concerned individuals. Some high profile guests will be asked to speak on various aspects of redress, and workshops or seminars will be organized to provide a forum for an interchange of ideas and views. The conference will focus on redress as a Canadian issue. Council members are asked to comment on this proposal.

c) Regarding the proposed constitutional amendments in our redress package, there was general agreement that the NAJC should solicit input from groups that have expressed concern with this issue. Perhaps a coalition of groups could be formed through the NAJC's initiative to present a recommendation to the federal government. Maryka Omatsu and I plan to explore this possibility.

5. Art Shimizu suggested in Hamilton that Council members should write to Jack Murta, Minister of Multiculturalism, on behalf of their respective redress committees arguing the importance of the socio-economic study and asking the government to base a compensation figure on a documented estimate of losses.

6. I drove to Ottawa from Toronto on March 11 to spend some time in the Public Archives scanning the files of the Custodian of Enemy Property. The initial review of data in this archive is encouraging in terms of the property losses aspect of our proposed Socio-Economic Study. The Custodian's files contain comprehensive information on real estate, personal belongings, and other assets. There are also complete files on all companies owned by Japanese Canadians, data from auctions and sale of cars, and comprehensive yearly reports on the liquidation of Japanese Canadian assets. Of course, property loss is only one component of the Socio-Economic Study, but at least we know that an abundance of documents are available in this area.

7. After leaving Ottawa on March 12, I visited Montreal to meet briefly in the evening with Vic Ogura and the Montreal Redress Committee. A lively discussion took place on some controversial aspects of the NAJC Council's decision-making procedure and redress policies. A strong recommendation was made that the NAJC could strengthen its organization by distributing accurate and detailed records of all important NAJC meetings. Committee members also requested that regular financial reports be made public and that the Agenda for Council meetings be sent out two weeks in advance.

8. The NAJC Newsletter has been mailed out, and each Centre has been sent the requested amount plus some 100 or so extra copies to be distributed by hand to shops, grocery stores, to media, to interested Canadians, etc. The newsletter, at a production cost of about 13 cents each (excluding postage costs), is a relatively inexpensive method of publicizing our position. Two typos unfortunately escaped us: Rits Inouye's name was mis-spelled in the piece on the "Negotiation Team," and the tear-out form in English and Japanese does not indicate the \$5 price for the Press Kit. 15,000 copies have been printed for distribution.

9. Centres are encouraged to get the NAJC Newsletter out into their communities as quickly as possible!! It can be mailed out for 32 cents each first-class, or at third-class rates if it is rolled up and fastened (min. thickness 3/4").

10. Jerry Hisaoka reported from Lethbridge that the latest meeting on February 10 drew 35 people from a wide geographic area of Southern Alberta. His association, the Lethbridge and District JCCA, was pleased with the enthusiastic support they received for the redress cause. Jerry wrote: "It was heartening to see many eyes and hearts open up from feelings of indifference to involvement as evidenced by the questions asked and discussed." More from Lethbridge in the April issue of the NAJC Newsletter.

11. The following news items are attached for your information:

a) A tough-minded reply to Charles Lynch, printed in the Calgary Herald, March 15, and sent to us by Mas Kawanami.

b) An editorial statement in the Globe and Mail, March 20, supporting compensation based on a study of losses.

12. Don't forget to order your copies of the Redress Brief in Japanese. We printed only 600 copies, so they may go quickly. Price, \$2.50 for Centres.

13. We're still waiting for many Centres to fill out and send in the Information Sheet attached to the first weekly update. We would like to publish a description of the NAJC Council in the April issue of the NAJC Newsletter, but we can't write this article without the information we asked for.

14. Since the first issue of the NAJC Newsletter will be distributed over the next 2-3 weeks, the next issue need not be published until the end of April. The deadline for submissions has therefore been extended to April 10.

15. The April issue will feature reports from NAJC Centres. Send us updates of meetings and activities in your area and share the views of your community with other Centres. If you can't find time to submit your report in writing, leave a message at our office and we'll call back to get your update over the phone.

16. I represented the NAJC at a redress meeting in Aldergrove, B.C. organized by the Vancouver JCCA Redress Committee with the assistance of Gilbert Shikaze, an Aldergrove resident. About 30 people attended who, we were told, represented about 80% of the Japanese Canadian community in the immediate Fraser Valley area. The gathering unanimously rejected the government's proposal for a \$6 million trust foundation and supported compensation based on an estimate of losses. The meeting ended with a forthright endorsement of the NAJC's efforts. Contributions towards the local and national redress campaigns totalled \$715! Thanks for the show of confidence from the folks in Aldergrove.

Ray Miki

Canadian property lost

When action is taken to compensate those Canadians of Japanese ancestry who were interned during and after the Second World War, it will have to be informed action. For that reason, we are glad to hear Multiculturalism Minister Jack Murta say his department may finance a study to determine the losses suffered by the thousands of Canadians who were stripped of their property and ordered into internment camps. The federal Bird Commission, which examined claims for losses in the late forties, provided partial compensation of about \$1.2-million; it remains an open question how much more money would be needed to make a full settlement.

But having opened to the door to such a study, Mr. Murta proceeds to paint it as an academic exercise intended only for the history books: the federal Government, he says, has ruled out the possibility of making individual restitution to the 11,000 surviving internees. Such compensation would be inappropriate, he says, because "we're talking about a moral issue. There's not enough money in Canada to rectify that kind of moral wrong."

He is ignoring an entire side of the discussion. Certainly redress is a moral issue; it is on that ground that Parliament should acknowledge and express regret for the injustice suffered 40 years ago by Canadian citizens against whom no evidence of treasonous behavior was, or has been since, presented. But redress also involves restitution to the survivors for property that was lost and confiscated as a consequence of the internment; such a sum would probably not mean a dollar paid for a dollar lost, but it would bear some relation to the losses.

How can Mr. Murta say on one hand that a study of individuals' losses makes sense, and on the other that the Government will not consider individual compensation on the basis of the study's results? Canadian victims of the Government's actions during and after the war deserve better than this.

'War hysteria' no excuse for Japanese internment

Calgary Herald, March 15, 1985

The column by Charles Lynch, "Readers reject reparations" (Herald, Feb. 19), and letter by M. M. Pateman ("Uprooted citizens weren't mistreated," Herald, March 2), both claiming that an apology is sufficient reparation to the 20,000 Japanese-Canadian internees, prove that Canada is still the home of a more sophisticated but equally virulent kind of racism.

To claim, as does Pateman, that "Canadian Japanese may have been moved and uprooted but none were mistreated" defies all known definitions of the verb mistreat. If the RCMP awakened Pateman in the dark of night, expropriated his home, business and belongings at less than half market value (if for any money at all) and sent his entire family to a "work" camp for 3½ years at one-third minimum wages, would he not feel mistreated?

Because Japanese Canadians were "not starved or beaten" as were "captured Canadian prisoners of war taken in Hong Kong," we need only to apologize? Can he seriously compare the treatment of soldiers by a wartime enemy government to the treatment of civil by their own government?

The facts are clear. Japanese

Canadians never posed a threat to national security and the Canadian government knew it all along. Fifteen thousand of the 20,000 were Canadian-born. Fully half of the potential saboteurs were children. Both the RCMP and the Defence Department reported to the prime minister that no organized espionage existed, that far from engaging in sabotage, the Japanese community would continue to support the war effort.

Immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he ordered expropriation, evacuation and internment. "War-time hysteria," mutter the Patemans and Lynchs. Lynch even considers such excuses justified when fighting fascism. In other words, when the Nazi government sent millions of Jews, en masse, without any evidence except race, to concentration camps, that was fascism. When the Canadian government sent the Japanese, en masse, without any evidence except race, to "work" camps, that was keeping Canada safe

from fascism. What euphemisms do the Pateman/Lynches use once the war ended? How do they explain the suspension of Japanese civil liberties, or the government's refusal to sell, let alone return, confiscated property back to the original owners? When faced with these facts, the apologists can always appeal to national unity — "Well, that was so long ago. Let's just put it behind us and be good Canadians. . . ."

"But there are so many of them!" Finally, we reach the tightwad heart of the apologists' argument. If the Canadian government had deprived 20 or 200 Japanese Canadians of their pride and possessions, the apologists would not be so quick to lift the edge of the carpet. If the falsely accused citizens had white skins and British-sounding names, the apologists would be out in the streets with placards waving. . . .

Rather than admit that it is not a question of justice, but a question of the price of justice, the apologists bend and re-write history. "That means millions. You are going to take that away from me and give it to them." The idea that it is us repaying ourselves requires acceptance of the Japanese as us, something the apologists find impossible.

If the sheer size of the monetary reparation involved frightens us, it should. The crime was enormous. . . .

If an apology is all that is necessary, what else is a Canadian apology good for? . . . Perhaps all native land claims should be settled by an apologetic television interview. Perhaps we don't even need to apologize as long as we keep the locks oiled for next year.

D. ALMBER, Oils, Alberta.



Fishing boats confiscated from Japanese Canadians crowd Vancouver pier in 1942