

TESTIMONY OF

GEORGE CHIYOJI IWAO

1400 Hours, Wednesday 5 April 1989

BEFORE THE

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE-
COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE,
THE JUDICIARY AND RELATED AGENCIES

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is George Chiyoji Iwao. I am here to testify for maximum funding (\$500 million) as authorized in PL 100-383. I thank you for the privilege of testifying before this Subcommittee today.

I will be skipping portions of the written testimony to conform to the time allotted.

First my background. I was one of the 120,000 evacuees who was interned by EO 9066 during WW II.

After a few months behind barbed wire enclosure which was guarded by soldiers armed with rifles and shotguns in guard towers, I received notice of draft classification status change from 1-A to 4-C ENEMY ALIEN.

I thought I was an American citizen by virtue of being born in the US. Well, was I not a prisoner of war in my own country ?

Then on February 1943, the infamous Loyalty Questionnaire was forced upon us, but not to Americans of German or Italian ancestry. The indignity of the questionnaire was the proverbial straw that broke my faith in the US Government.

I answered the two crucial questions in the negative and was classified as a disloyal. The questions were: No. 27. Are you willing to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered ? No. 28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attacks by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance to the Japanese emperor, to any foreign government, power or organization.

I would submit to you question No. 27 under similar conditions in 1943, would you have answered in the affirmative ?

If memory serves me correctly, in the US History class in grammar school, Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death." My attitude in 1943 was give me liberty, freedom and full citizenship status or I do not have any obligation to serve in the Armed Forces. Then question No. 28 was the damn if

do and damn if you don't question. First I did not have dual citizenship. Therefore, I did not have any allegiance to the Japanese emperor. If I answered yes, then in essence, I would be saying I have allegiance to the emperor and would be suspect. A negative answer would be correct for half of the question, which was my reply and brought me the stigma of a disloyal brand.

The irony of the questionnaire was that the War Department on February 23, 1943 handed down a startling determination that the registration and answering the loyalty questionnaire by draft age Niseis were NOT COMPULSORY. This War Department policy was not revealed to us at that point in time by the War Relocation Administration authorities.

I was detained for the duration and released from the Gila River Concentration Camp, three months after the cessation of hostilities.

After ten months of freedom, I was sworn into the US Army after a brief humiliating interrogation about my disloyal qualification in Camp on August 1946. I served for 18 months under the term of enlistment.

I was recalled to active duty in September 1950 during the Korean War for 14 months and continued to serve in the US Army Reserve until 1974.

Would you still label me as disloyal ? I challenge any group or individual who have any doubts about my loyalty as an American.

My being here today is to point out the uncompensated estimated economic losses to the detainees from income and property in 1983 dollars plus 3% real interest, vary from a low of \$2.5 billion to a high of \$6.2 billion according to the Report prepared for the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, titled ECONOMIC LOSSES OF ETHNIC JAPANESE AS A RESULT OF EXCLUSION AND DETENTION, 1942-1946. I firmly believe those numbers are very conservative.

My estimated personal loss of income for the period of detention would be \$6000. Then assuming a 50% expenses for food and lodging, my net loss would be \$3000. Using the same Consumer Price Index and the 3% real interest as in the Report, my loss would be \$50,181 in 1983 dollars. In 1989 it would amount to

\$60,000. The estimate was based on my income as a laborer with an average wage of 85 cents per hour. \$20,000 reparation is a bargain settlement to the U.S. government.

Senator Ernest Hollings, Chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee stated to to the JACL-LEC in a letter dated February 20, 1989:

" I opposed the enactment of the Wartime Reparations Act because I believe we should not attach a monetary value to human suffering. How then do we monetize the suffering of, for instance, the soldier killed in action, or the Black man who fought on the front line yet returned home to sit in the back of the bus?..... "

Senator Hollings statement is contradictory to the justice system, where judgements are handed down daily for pain, suffering, slander, death, loss of property, income, etc.

If all detainees were to be compensated for real losses of income and property, I would be more than happy to accept the \$60,000 mention above and pay income tax on the wage portion, rather than the \$20,000 token payment for suffering, Senator Hollings abjects to.

Presently, I do volunteer work in the San Francisco Japanese Community Nutrition Program, which bring me into contact with a few surviving Isseis (Japan born Americans) who are in their 80's and 90's asking me 'When will we get the \$20,000?' I have to reply "MO SUKOSHI GAMBATTE KUDASAI" (Please hang in there a little longer). Then they ask why the Canadian government have been paying their Japanese Canadians already ?

Some do get discouraged and are resigned to unfulfilled justice, seeing the proposed \$20,000,000 for redress in President Reagan's budget.

~~I am here to urgently request that the maximum authorized \$500 million in PL 100-383 be appropriated so our seniors will not be denied the full justice due them as enunciated in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.~~
in the phrase 'JUSTICE FOR ALL.'

I thank you again for the opportunity to plead our case.