

May 28, 1979

Dear Congressman Yates:

Many thanks for your prompt reply of May 23 on the reparations issue. I also appreciated your Clemenceau story in your recent newsletter. It may be appropriate to our situation. Your advice that we discuss this matter further with Nikkei (Japanese Americans in Japanese) members of Congress presents something of a problem. I truly do not feel they are my representatives, since I live in Illinois and they represent districts in California and the state of Hawaii. More importantly, I do not feel this is primarily a Nikkei issue. This is a stumbling block. We were the victims. We are not the proposed recipients of some government handout, as Senator Hayakawa alludes. The issue is to have the United States of America remedy a serious wrong, a crime against 120,000 persons. So the issue is an American one. It is one for all members of Congress to consider on its merits.

Having said this, I will grant that the Congress will still consult with its Nikkei members. What they will learn is that while these members strongly support the moral and Constitutional principles involved in redress, they have strong doubts about its fiscal implications. Passing a bill for three billion is no small feat. If they must fight alone or with only a few friends, who can blame them for their doubts? As Senator Inouye is reported to have said, "Twenty five thousand per person is not enough, but three billion is too much."

Is there not some Clemenceaunian wisdom possible? Why not divide the responsibility for the legislation? Why not have the Nikkei members of Congress support the moral and Constitutional side, while others work on the fiscal side?

I am enclosing a bill which I ask you to read and evaluate. It is not the national JACL bill. It is a true redress bill written by an Issei, naturalized American, who lives in Seattle. My pastor, Marilyn Robb, and I are flying to Washington to visit you on June 7, 1979. If you can fit us into your very busy schedule, we would appreciate a face to face discussion on this issue. I will contact your Chicago office for an appointment.

Peace,

William Hohri

