

Japanese American Redress: News Release, Press Release, Articles, 1942-1996: 1942-1988

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers

Japanese Latin American Internment, Box JL4, Folder 10

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Feinsilber, Mike. (1981, November 3). Former Official Defends Internment. *Honolulu Star Bulletin*. p. A18.

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news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic: SPEECH BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE at
Friendship Knot Bicentennial Dinner

date: HOLD FOR RELEASE:
Tuesday, August 4, 1981

release date:

As I looked back through my records, I found that the last three speeches that I gave in California were all related to the World War II internment of West Coast Japanese Americans. I had, therefore, wanted to discuss with you some matter that did not involve Japan or Japanese Americans. I would have, but according to my mailbag and telephone logs, the hearings on the internment experience which began on July 14, 1981 are the center of attention.

I will not recite for you a chronology of the events which led to these hearings, or the legislative history that preceded the creation of this Commission. It is an old story by now, and one that you have read about month after month in the PACIFIC CITIZEN and talked about in your gatherings. I will not, therefore, waste your time with the background.

I wish instead to raise with you two facets of the Commission's work which trouble me a great deal.

One matter that concerns me is the almost unanimous belief that the person most responsible for this tragedy, the bete noir of the evacuation and internment is General John DeWitt. I would like to suggest to you that General DeWitt is the victim of a "bad rap."

We should all keep in mind that General DeWitt was a fully-trained, fully-conditioned career military man. He was faced with a real attack on a not-too-distant naval base and on a number of nearby airfields. This was not a hypothetical danger, and the possibility of an attack and invasion of the West Coast was not all that remote. I would venture to say that most military men -- even MacArthur, Eisenhower or Nimitz -- might well have reacted in the same way. The mission of the military was to protect the West Coast, and the presence of Japanese-Americans could have been seen as confusing the situation needlessly. In fact, one could almost be surprised that the evacuation did not include all those of oriental descent, including the Chinese. The military reaction to the West Coast situation was not, therefore, all that extraordinary.

And yet, one of the most interesting aspects of the first hearings was that while all witnesses mentioned General DeWitt, rarely was Earl Warren or Franklin Delano Roosevelt mentioned. And even when they were, it was always with some reluctance or even apologetically.

I would expect a military man to behave as General DeWitt did. Perhaps not as crudely, but certainly in a similar manner. But I would have expected a higher degree of sensitivity to the Constitution and laws of the United States from the Attorney General of the State of California and from the President of the United States. I would also have expected a far more aggressive defense of Constitutional rights from the Justice Department. The fact that these individuals did not respond as expected is what concerns me and what leads me to believe that this could happen again.

When men and women who should know better, who are trained to know better, and who assume positions which demand that they know better -- when these men and women are swept up in the fear and hysteria of the time, strange and evil things do happen.

And so, I hope that the Commission will not be satisfied with easy answers and that it will instead not be satisfied with anything less than the full truth, no matter whose name is involved. Only in this way can we begin to approach the question of how to prevent this from happening again.

The other matter of importance to me revolves around the question of monetary compensation.

I will repeat what I said a couple of years ago here in California, to wit, it will be almost impossible to place a price tag on what happened during the war period. How will we decide on such a figure? Is a year of incarceration 52 times worse than one week? How do you compensate someone who still suffers psychological problems as a result of this experience? What about those who died of gunshot wounds in the camps? What about the suicides? It is going to be almost humanly impossible to set a price tag on these experiences, and in some cases it would be insulting to even try to do so. The difficulties should not be underestimated by anyone who is concerned about this matter.

What I fear most, however, is that the early discussion of compensation may detract from the all-important mission of this Commission. The Commission must establish, for all time, an accurate record of what happened, how it happened, and why it happened. And we must have a conclusion by the Commission on the justice or injustice of the internment.

Almost every article that has been written about the first hearings has had headlines which focus on the issue of monetary reparations. And most of the mail which I have received opposing this inquiry have also concentrated on the question of money. This is not surprising, but it is unfortunate.

I am deeply afraid that the cart has slipped out in front of the horse. If that situation continues neither will get where they should. Before a discussion of remedies, there is a chore that must be performed. And that is to educate the public about internment experience. If any of you think that this is a superfluous task, I can assure you on the basis of the mail that I have received, that it is not. Only when the American people fully understand the tragedy that occurred, will monetary reparations be possible.

I do not know what the recommendations of the Commission will be. The Commission may or may not find that the actions of the government were wrong. The Commission may find that the actions were justified because the danger of attack and invasion were real. Thus, while I have been close to this matter for several years, I am reluctant to make predictions at this stage.

I am, however, fully satisfied that the members of the Commission will treat this matter with intellectual honesty and sensitivity. They are fair and just people. We can ask no more than that in such a Commission.

In my statement to the Commission at its first hearing, I told its members the following:

No Congress, President or Supreme Court can ever unwrite the words of your report. Make them good words, even great words. Make your report one that will awaken this experience enough to haunt the conscience of this nation--haunt it so that we will never forget that we are capable of such an act, so that we will never again be able to do this to ourselves, and so that we will be able to pay tribute to the suffering, the fortitude, the patriotism and ultimately the triumph of the people who lived through this experience.

I wish you the very best as you begin your work.

Guernsey, John. (1981). An Indonesian Duo Reshapes Portland. *Historic Preservation*. pp. 40-45.

America's Day of Infamy. (1981, July 27). *Newsweek*.

Keep Internment Interred. (1981, July 27). Winston-Salem Journal.

United States Senate

MEMORANDUM

Senator,

The JACL is working on a response to this editorial, though it is not clear at this stage who will sign the letter.

Robbie

Keep Internment Interred. (1981, July 27). Winston-Salem Journal.

Riley, Walter. (1981, July 27) You'll Pay for Liberal U.S. Policies Which Put Patriots in Prison Camps. Spotlight. p. 3 & 20.

A dark day in America. (1981, July 25). *Charleston Gazette*.

Turner, Wallace. (1981, July 20). Hatred of 40's Still Vivid to Japanese. *New York Times*.

Universal Press Syndicate. (1981, July 20). Oliphant [Cartoon]. *The Washington Star*.

The Japanese Americans. (1981, July 5). *The Washington Post*.

Prejudice Called key to Internment. (1981, July 15). *The Oregonian*. p. A10.

Commission probes compensation for interned Japanese-Americans. (1981, July 15). *Baltimore Sun*.

Oyama, David. (1981, July 15). In 1942, Internment; In 1981, an Inquiry. *New York Times*.

Goldberg, Arthur J. (1981, June 5). Land Report, Former Supreme Justice Airs Views on Nikkei Redress. *Hawaii Herald*.

(Excerpted from views of retired Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court Arthur J. Goldberg, with respect to Executive order 9066. In a speech for a meeting of the Japanese American Bar Association of Los Angeles, May 1981.)

Tatsuno, Sheridan. (1981, May 27). In 1942, Redress Commission Hearing Approaching. *Hokubei Mainichi*. p. A1.

Drinnon, Richard. (1981, April 27). 'Jap camps.' *American Scene*. pp. 28-31

Gussow, Mel. (1981, April 21). Stage: Nisei Internment. *New York Times*. p. C7.

Beyette, Beverly. (1981, April 12). A Return to Manzanar, through eyes of a Friend.
Honolulu Star Bulletin & Honolulu Advertiser. p. J-50.

Ikejiri, Ron. (1981, April 17). Commission Update. *Pacific Citizen*.

news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUIE

topic: AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS
date: MARCH 7, 1981
DINNER--FAIRMONT HOTEL
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

release date:

FOR RELEASE SATURDAY PM, March 7

I can still remember that day as if it was yesterday. The members of Easy Company, in freshly pressed uniforms, stood in formation awaiting inspection on that bright, sunny Saturday morning in Camp Shelby.

The Company Commander, Captain Ralph B. Ensminger, stepped onto a raised platform, cleared his throat, and addressed the men of Easy Company. I cannot recall his exact words, but I will always remember the feeling of that moment as we listened in silence:

"Yesterday the company commanders, of the regiment received a directive from regimental headquarters. It is my duty to read this directive to you." That directive indicated that the government of the state of Mississippi had decided that during our regiment's temporary stay in Mississippi, the men of the regiment would be considered white. We were ordered to observe the laws, customs and traditions of Mississippi as they related to race relations.

"You may not like it. I don't like it. But that's the way they do things here and that's the way it's going to be. When you go into Hattiesburg, you will see that public facilities--restaurants, movies, waiting rooms, toilets--are divided into white and colored sections. Much as this will rub you the wrong way, I am asking that you abide by it as long as we are in the state of Mississippi."

It was readily noticeable to us that Captain Ensminger was choked with anger. Although we could not see his eyes behind his aviator dark glasses, we sensed that they were wet with tears as he spoke:

--more--

"Most GIs signed up to fight the enemy. That's all. Nobody has called on them to do anything else, just to get the job finished so we can all get back to what we were doing before the war started. You men have an additional battle to fight. You have to overcome the prejudice and discrimination that will be thrown at you, that has been thrown at you, because your forefathers came from a country that is now our enemy.

"What can you do about it? First you can be the best damn soldiers this country has ever known. You can fight your first battle with everything you've got."

The second battle, he said, will occur after the war, to make certain that company commanders will no longer be called upon to read directives such as this. The Captain warned that "the battle against racial discrimination will not be easy, but I will be there with you to fight it."

Ironically, Captain Ensminger was one of the first casualties of the 442nd. He died in battle on the first day.

Ever since World War II, the second battle has been fought in little towns and villages, plantation camps, the halls of Congress, city councils and state legislatures. What are the results?

From a very parochial viewpoint, statehood for Hawaii was probably the result of the outstanding military record of the 100th Battalion and 442nd Regiment. Put another way, does anyone truly believe Hawaii would have become a state in 1959 if the 442nd was not formed; if Japanese Americans remained satisfied with their 4-C selective service status?

What about the various immigration laws that have passed Congress in the years since the war, providing fair treatment to immigrants and aliens, regardless of color?

My father was one of the first to take advantage of the Walter-McCarran Act of 1952, which repealed the Oriental Exclusion Act and eliminated race as a barrier to immigration and naturalization. Do you think this would have happened if so many of our friends and loved ones had not served and died so bravely? Perhaps it would have come about eventually, but the wait would certainly have been a long one.

AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS

Page Three

Some suggest that the easy and friendly conclusion of negotiations for peace with Japan was due in part to our regimental record. I know this is claiming a lot, but we can pose the question another way: would it have evolved as smoothly as it did if young men of Japanese ancestry had not volunteered from behind barbed wire concentration camps and faraway Hawaii to defend this country with their lives?

The first battle we waged was bloody and costly. As Captain Ensminger instructed, we fought with everything we had, and we won.

The second battle was perhaps less bloody, but no less important in terms of lives affected by our struggle. I would like to believe that our wartime sacrifices had something to do with the extension of civil rights and dignity, not only to Japanese Americans, but to all citizens of this nation.

Rich, Spencer. (1981, February 11). Census Bureau Pinpointed AJAs for WWII Internment Roundups. *Honolulu Advertiser*. p. D2.

JACL

COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND
INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS ACT....PRESIDENT
CARTER'S REMARKS ON SIGNING OF S.1647

The President: "Senate Bill 1647 estab-
lishes a seven-person commission that
will work during the next 18 months to
look into one of the most disappointing
and sometimes embarrassing occurrences in
the history of our Nation.

In February of 1942, the President signed
a proclamation setting aside certain
areas of our contry from which American
citizens could be excluded and within
which American citizens and resident
aliens could be interned. This was in a
time of war, but no German American citi-
zens or aliens were incarcerated and no
Italian Americans were interned either.
The only ones who were interned in these
camps were Japanese Americans. There
were about 120,000 of them, during the
wartime, who were interned.

I'm grateful that Danny Inouye has taken
the leadership in this legislation;
Sparky Matsunaga, the other Senator from
Hawaii, has also been instrumental in
this; Senator Hayakawa from California
-- all of Japanese descent -- and Ted
Stevens, representing the citizens of the
islands off the Alaska coast. We also,
of course, have Congressman Mineta, Con-
gressman Matsui, of Japanese descent, and
others representing the citizens who are
involved. Senator (Representative) Bob
McClory is here, as well. The Japanese-
American Citizens League has kept the
issue alive, along with the Aleutian-
Pribilof Island Association. And we have
representatives from those groups here
with us.

And it's with a great deal of pleasure
that I sign this legislation into law.
This Commission study will be adequately
funded. It's not designed as a witch
hunt. It's designed to expose clearly
what has happened in a period of time of

war in our Nation when many loyal Ameri-
can citizens of Japanese descent were
embarrassed during that crucial time in
our Nation's history. I don't believe
anyone would doubt that injustices were
done, and I don't think anyone would
doubt that it is advisable now for us to
have a clear understanding, as Americans,
of this episode in the history of our
country."

The members of the Commission have not
been appointed at the time of this writ-
ing. In all likelihood Washington, D.C.,
will be the locale of one of the public
hearings. The D.C. Chapter will need to
gear themselves to providing the proper
testimony at the hearing. A great deal
of homework needs to be undertaken by the
Board as well as the membership of the
Chapter if any significant input is to be
made at the hearing. A well orchestrated
plan must be worked out so that the tes-
timony presented will cover all aspects
of suffering and deprivation both phys-
ical and mental, suffered by those intern-
ed. Also economical and educational
losses need to be documented and present-
ed. JACL both national and local chap-
ters have a tremendous responsibility
ahead of them in making sure that proper
and adequate testimony be presented at
all the hearings.

Can JACL meet this monumental challenge?
This is an exciting challenge and we can
meet it if everyone works together.

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news from

Internment

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic: INTERNMENT PANEL FUNDED

date: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1980

release date: For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Senate Appropriations subcommittee today approved \$1.5 million for the operations of a federal commission to study the internment of Japanese-Americans and Alaskan Aleuts during World War II.

The legislation establishing the commission, authored by Senator Daniel K. Inouye, was signed into law by President Carter on July 31, 1980.

"Four decades has been far too long for the federal government to wait to begin a study of this sad episode in American history. I am confident that the work of this commission will help ensure that never again will we incarcerate people solely on the basis of their skin color or racial ancestry," Inouye said.

The study commission is expected to be appointed shortly to begin its study of official records and public hearings on the wartime internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans and 1,000 Aleuts.

The commission--with three members appointed by the President and two each by the Senate and House--is required to report its findings and any recommendations for appropriate compensation within one year.

Lawson, Maggie. (1980, August 28). Norman Mineta Remembers Dark Days of the 40's. *Roll Call*.

Compensating AJA Internees. (1980, August 22). *Honolulu Star Bulletin*.

Glazer, Nathan. (1980, August 17). Limited Hospitality. *New York Times*. p. 8 & 15.

Honda, Harry. (1980, August 15-22). Tsujimura to lead JACL in this biennium. *Pacific Citizen*. pp. 1 & 3.

Carter signs S1647, commission bill. (1980, August 15-22). *Pacific Citizen*. pp. 1-2.

Tateishi named 'Biennium JACLeR', Spokane JACL wins top Inagaki prize. (1980. August 15-22). *Pacific Citizen*.

Hayakawa, S., & Tateishi, J. (1980, August 15-22). 'Direct ' involvement the key. *Pacific Citizen*.

Inouye's remarks to JACL. (1980, August 15-22). *Pacific Citizen*.

Carter Approves Study Of Wartime Roundups. (1980, August 1). *The New York Times*.

news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic:

SPEECH BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE
JACL National Convention, San Francisco
Airport Hilton, San Francisco, California

date:

INTERNMENT

release date:

Friday, August 1, 1980

Yesterday, the President of the United States signed into law S.1647, a bill to establish a national Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

For those of you who spent agonizing days, weeks, months and years in one of the camps, this event should most certainly evoke vivid memories of anguish, depression, bitterness, loneliness, and anger.

Unlike most of you, I spent but one night in a camp. But that one night was enough to anger me to the point of resolve that this should never happen again.

For those of you who dedicated yourselves during the past decades to see this day, congratulations on a good and valiant fight. But this fight is far from over. In fact it will never be over. If this democracy, with her extraordinary Constitution, could imprison, without cause and with the denial of all due process, innocent people only because of their ethnic background, it could happen again. And it could happen to anyone, black, brown, yellow or white.

You who are the victims of Executive Order 9066 need not be convinced of this. You were there. You know what happened

And because of this, you have a special responsibility, not only to yourselves, but to this great democracy. You must maintain your great resolve and vigilance to ensure that your experience is never forgotten and never repeated.

Hopefully, on the 40th anniversary of the issuance of Executive Order 9066, the Commission will have reported, and Congress will be considering, the findings and recommendations of that Commission.

But this evening, let us rejoice because this is a moment of victory.

And let us remember, as we rejoice, that many of our brothers and sisters

have sacrificed much, including their lives, to make this day of victory a reality.

news from

INTERMENT

Senator **DANIEL K. INOUE**

topic: CONGRESS PASSES INTERMENT BILL

date: THURSDAY, July 24, 1980

release date: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congress today passed and sent to President Carter a measure to establish a commission to study the World War II internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans and 1,000 Alaskan Aleuts.

"I am confident that President Carter will give his approval to this bill, which is so important to the civil rights of all Americans," said Senator Daniel K. Inouye, author of the legislation.

In final legislative action today, the Senate agreed to minor amendments made by the House to the Inouye bill. The House passed the measure, 279-109, on Monday following unanimous Senate passage on May 22, 1980.

If enacted, the seven-member commission would be appointed within 90 days to begin its study of official records and hold public hearings on the wartime internment.

The commission -- with three members appointed by the President and two each from the Senate and House -- would be required to report its recommendations for appropriate compensation within one year of its first meeting.

The measure authorizes \$1.5 million for the expenses of the study commission.

INTERMENT

news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic: INTERMENT BILL PASSES

date: MONDAY, July 21, 1980

release date: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The House of Representatives today passed legislation establishing a commission to study the World War II internment of Japanese Americans and Alaskan Aleuts, clearing the way for final legislative action.

279-109
(2/3 req.)

Senator Daniel K. Inouye, leading supporter of the legislation, said the Senate will probably agree to the House's technical amendments to the measure, which passed the Senate on May 22, 1980.

"I will ask the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs to approve the bill as amended, sending it to the President for his signature.

"I am confident that President Carter will give his favorable consideration to this legislation. It will help ensure that past errors of the government -- when an entire group of Americans was deprived of their constitutional freedoms on the basis of race -- will not be repeated," Senator Inouye said.

The U.S. Justice Department had testified favorably on the measure at legislative hearings.

The legislation would establish a seven-member commission to study official records, hold hearings, and report its recommendations to Congress in one year. In addition to investigating the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans, the commission would also study the wartime internment of about 1,000 Alaskan Aleuts.

Handwritten notes:
H. and S. ...
... 120,000 ...
... 1,000 ...

news from

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topic: INTERNMENT BILL PASSES

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news from

INTERNMENT

Senator **DANIEL K. INOUE**

topic: HOUSE PANEL APPROVES INTERNMENT BILL

date: TUESDAY, June 24, 1980

release date: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The House Judiciary Committee today unanimously approved legislation authored by Senator Daniel K. Inouye which would establish a commission to investigate the internment of Japanese Americans and Alaskan Aleuts during World War II.

The House Judiciary Committee made only technical amendments to the bill before voting 14-0 to send it to the House floor.

"This favorable and speedy action by the House Judiciary Committee greatly enhances the prospects for enactment this session. I am optimistic that, with the unanimous support expressed by the committee, the House will approve this important measure," Senator Inouye said.

The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations held a hearing on the proposal on June 2, 1980 at which House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Texas) and other House members and citizen groups testified in its support.

The legislation would establish a seven-member commission to study official records, hold hearings, and report its recommendations to Congress in one year. In addition to investigating the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans, the commission would also study the wartime internment of about 1,000 Alaskan Aleuts.

One of the minor amendments made by the Judiciary Committee was to require that the commission continue its operations for 90 days after the submission of its report, to enable it to testify before Congress.

The Senate unanimously passed the Inouye bill on May 22, 1980.

news from

Internment

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic:

INTERNMENT MEASURE APPROVED

date:

MONDAY, June 9, 1980

release date:

For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Legislation introduced by Senator Daniel K. Inouye, to establish a commission to investigate the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, today was approved by a House subcommittee and sent to the full House Judiciary Committee.

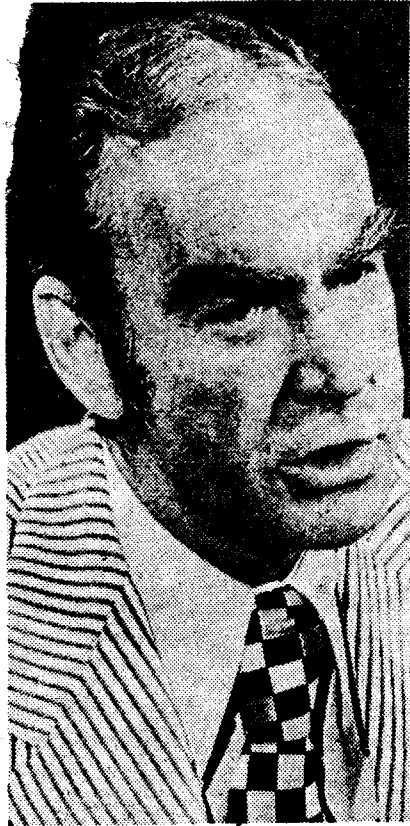
The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations heard favorable testimony on the Senate proposal at a hearing on June 2, before unanimously approving the Inouye bill today.

"I am very optimistic that we can obtain favorable and speedy action by the full Judiciary Committee and House floor, with the support expressed by Chairman Peter Rodino and Majority Leader Jim Wright," Senator Inouye said.

The legislation would establish a seven-member commission to study official records, hold hearings, and report its recommendations to Congress in one year. In addition to investigating the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans, the commission would also study the wartime internment of about 1,000 Alaskan Aleuts.

The House subcommittee, chaired by Representative George Danielson (D-Cal.), amended the measure to require the appointment of the commission members within 90 days of the enactment of the measure, and require that the first meeting be held within 120 days of enactment. The panel also deleted a list of 14 cities in which the Senate had specified that hearings would be held, instead allowing the commission to decide hearing sites.

The Senate had unanimously passed the Inouye bill on May 22.



Jim Wright

Judiciary panel starts hearings dealing with the AJA internments

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The internment of 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II is an "everlasting shame," House Majority Leader Jim Wright said yesterday.

"There is no way in which we can ever repay those proud and loyal Americans for having questioned their patriotism," Wright told a House Judiciary subcommittee considering several bills that would either study the situation or provide \$3 billion to the internees or their survivors.

"We cannot give them back the months of their lives nor redress the shame to which we subjected them by impugning their loyalty to this land," Wright said.

"In our unreasoning fear and misguided zeal at the outset of World War II, we did a great disservice to our fellow Americans of Japanese heritage those 30 odd years ago.

"Ingloriously and to our everlasting shame, the (Supreme) Court upheld as constitutional the act of our government in

rounding up the Japanese-American citizens, almost as though they were cattle, and herding them into corrals."

Wright referred to Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Feb. 19, 1942, which gave any military commander broad powers to exclude any person from any area for almost any reason.

It resulted in the internment of 120,000 Japanese-American citizens and resident aliens in the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The considerations that led Roosevelt to enact the order have never been publicly documented, and the experiences of those interned are not widely known nationwide.

But Rep. George Danielson, D-Calif., chairman of the subcommittee who himself is an American of Japanese ancestry, said his mother "has nightmares once a week or more about those days in the camp. Yet she is reluctant to tell my sister

and me what happened there."

"It is clear that not all Americans have learned from our lessons of the not so distant past," Danielson said. "An example of this is the recent suggestion that Iranians in this country be rounded up and treated similarly to the Japanese during World War II."

William Hohri, of the Chicago-based National Council for Japanese American Redress, denounced plans for a study commission of the internment. "Why must you saddle the victims with this charade, this exploitation called a study commission?" he asked.

"What are we supposed to say? Are we supposed to prove that we were mistreated and humiliated? Are we supposed to prove that our constitutional rights were violated?" Hohri asked.

"Spare us, please, the indignity," Hohri said.

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Internment

News from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic: INTERNMENT MEASURE PASSES
date: THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1980
release date: For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Senate today unanimously passed a measure introduced by Senator Daniel K. Inouye to establish a presidential commission to investigate the internment of more than 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

The measure now goes to the House for further consideration.

The legislation would establish a seven-member commission, which would study official records, hold hearings across the country, and report its recommendations to Congress in one year. It was amended by the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee to include a study of the internment of more than 1,000 Alaskan Aleuts.

"This commission would have the awesome task of reviewing the events which led to the full-scale evacuation and incarceration of nearly an entire ethnic group, based purely on their racial origin," Senator Inouye said.

"The social and psychological effects of this internment has been permanent for some, and it will be the responsibility of this commission to determine how this massive wrong committed by the Federal government can be remedied," he said.

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news from

Internment

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic: INTERNMENT MEASURE PASSES

date: THURSDAY, MAY 8, 1980

release date: For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee today approved and sent to the Senate floor a measure introduced by Senator Daniel K. Inouye to establish a presidential commission to investigate the internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

The study commission would have the responsibility of recommending to Congress what compensation, if any, should be provided to the internees.

"This commission is important if we as a nation are to cleanse a black page in our history. The wrong that was committed by the federal government under the stress of war, was not solely an abridgement of the rights of Japanese Americans, but a violation of the civil rights of all Americans.

"It is my hope that we can learn from the work of this commission, so that such a tragedy cannot happen again," said Inouye.

A hearing on the measure was held on March 18, at which the proposal to establish the commission received support from the Japanese American Citizens League, leaders of the House and Senate, and all five members of Congress who are of Japanese ancestry.

The committee approved the measure unanimously after making several amendments:

--The report of the commission would be due on October 1, 1981. The original measure called for the report 18 months after the enactment of the bill.

--The size of the commission was reduced from 15 members to 7--three appointed by the President, two by the Speaker of the House and two by the Senate President Pro Tempore.

--more--

Press Release
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Thursday, May 8, 1980
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--The scope of the commission study was expanded to include the approximately 1,000 Alaskan Aleuts who, although they were American citizens, were relocated to mainland Alaska at the same time as Japanese Americans.

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Pacific Business News. pp. 1 & 24.

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Kerr, George H. (1980, March 18). More on Japan's WWII Plans for Hawaii. *Honolulu Advertiser*. p. A15.

Goshko, John M. (1980, March 12). U.S. Spokesmen Wistfully Cling to Hope on Hostages. *The Washington Post*. p. 18.

Rennert, Leo. (1980, March 11). Senator Wants to Round Up, Intern Iranian Nationals in US. *Washington Bee*. Pp. A1 & A12.

Professor Says Japan Dropped Plans to Invade Hawaii After Losing Battle of Midway. (1980, March 11). *The New York Times*. p. A15.

Kaser, Tom. (1980, March 5). According to UH Prof's Research, Japan Planned to Invade Hawaii. Honolulu Advertiser. pp. A1, A4.

Kaser, Tom. (1980, March 5). According to UH Prof's Research, Japan Planned to Invade Hawaii. Honolulu Advertiser. pp. A1, A4.

KURALT: The world has been appalled of late to see what Cambodians have done to Cambodians and Iranians to Iranians and Afghans to Afghans, and so on. The story of what Americans have done to other Americans is not entirely beautiful or blameless either, as Bernard Goldberg reminds us in a story from the West Coast.

BERNARD GOLDBERG: Pearl Harbor, December 7th, 1941 - the Japanese attacked, and the United States was at war. The West Coast was a potential combat zone. Emotions were running high, and not just against the Japanese enemy but against Japanese Americans as well. Japanese Americans had long been targets of discrimination in the West, and now they had the unfortunate problem of looking like the enemy.

(Excerpt from Newsreel film)

So it was in that emotionally charged atmosphere that President Roosevelt gave the military authority to round up, evacuate and, in effect, imprison potential national-security risks. But the only people rounded up as a group were the West Coast Japanese Americans. They were considered disloyal, as one constitutional scholar put it, simply because of their ethnic origin. One hundred twenty thousand men, women and children, most of them U.S. citizens, were sent off to barbed-wire detention camps. They took only what they could carry, and sometimes that was only a child. And they went without trials, without judges or juries, only verdicts.

This is a piece of American history called Tule Lake in northern California, the largest of the mass-detention camps. There is virtually nothing left today, but during the war more than 18,000 Japanese Americans had no choice but to call this home. That was nearly 40 years ago, but for the Japanese Americans who were imprisoned here at Tule Lake and at the other internment camps, the past has not faded from memory; the past is still very much with them. So now, many of those who spent World War II behind barbed wire in desolate places like this are seeking official U.S. government redress, possibly even financial reparation, in order to, in some way, compensate for their years of incarceration.

JOHN TATEISHI: I can recall the barbed wire, the guards, and a real sense of fear about going close to that wire, going close to the fence. Because we were told as children, don't ever go beyond the fence, because, you know, you'll get shot.

GOLDBERG: John Tateishi of the Japanese American Citizens League in San Francisco.

TATEISHI: And I can remember, in fact, one case where a young man, teenager, challenged a guard, went across the fence, and was shot point-blank range with an M-1. And if we had any doubts up to that point, then we knew for sure that there was indeed danger in crossing over that fence.

GOLDBERG: Tateishi's group is pushing for passage of a federal bill that would create a congressional commission to investigate the treatment of Japanese Americans in this country during the war, and to recommend a way to somehow remedy the past.

TATEISHI: It's something that can happen again, I feel, in this country, and the reason why we're— we're even attempting this campaign is because we want Congress to look very carefully at what the Constitution means. And that is, whether or not the Executive or any branch of government can arbitrarily suspend the— the protections of the Constitution against one group of citizens. And we feel that— you know, that should never happen, not if this is really a democracy.

GOLDBERG: But in Seattle, the self-proclaimed maverick chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League says congressional commissions don't amount to very much. The Seattle chapter favors another federal bill, one that would grant internees or their survivors \$15,000 plus \$15 for every day incarcerated, a total of about \$30,000 per person. Shosuke Sasaki, who is 67, spent three years in a detention camp.

SHOSUKE SASAKI: (Indistinct) as I said, we'd like to have that three or three and a half years back. But you can't. Now if you people can think of any other way that redress can be provided, I'd like to hear it. Just ask yourse— ask yourselves, would you be willing to submit to exile and imprisonment for three or three and a half years for an average of— of \$15,000 plus \$15 a day?

GOLDBERG: And even though Karen Seriguchi was born after the war, she says the humiliation of internment is part of her past as well.

KAREN SERIGUCHI: Nothing can be recovered. People's lives can't be recovered. We can't recover the three and a half years people spent in prison. We can't recover the disruption of economic productivity. We can't recover mental health, physical health. The only way the government, at this point, can show a tangible apology is through money. That's the American way. (Laughs) People were in prison for three and a half years. That is a tangible insult.

^{Takeshi}
BEN TAH KESH TA: Well, for me, coming to this camp was a— you know, a kind of a scary thing because we weren't sure what was going to happen to us, whether we were going to be sent back to Japan and— or what, and— It was kind of a frightening thing for me as I was about 14 at that time and it was a— a— anyway, kind of frightening.

GOLDBERG: Ben Tah Kesh Ta was one of the 19,000 at Tule Lake. He is 49 now, but the memories are still strong.

TAH KESH TA: I always felt very conscious of my loyalty to the United States and trying to prove it, and I guess, all these things just came into— you know, seem to come back when you come back to the place like this.

GOLDBERG: Looking at you over there, it seems that that's— all that sort of came back all at once.

TAH KESH TA: Yeah. Yeah. (Sobs) It's funny.

GOLDBERG: It all happened quickly. The Japanese Americans had just a few days to settle their accounts, move out and report for relocation. Some abandoned their property, others simply gave it away. Many lost titles to houses and farms because they could not meet mortgage payments while incarcerated. And many West Coast whites, most of them in California, who encouraged evacuation and detention, did quite well, buying cheap what was left behind. The Japanese Americans lost about \$400-million worth of property, and under a federal law recovered only about 10 percent after the war. Despite that, in the town of Tule Lake, six miles from where the camp used to be, there are strong feelings against compensation. Fred Tate is editor and publisher of the weekly Tule Lake Reporter.

FRED TATE: It was something that should not have been done to American citizens, but at the time I do feel, not only for the security of the country, but mainly for the security of the Japanese American people, that the government felt that this should be done or there was going to be chaos in the— in the Japanese American communities throughout the West Coast.

GOLDBERG: Violence against them and —

TATE: Violence against them. And one thing they could be thankful for that they're not— they didn't come out like a— a— the German concentration camps. They could have been a pile of bones instead of surviving.

GOLDBERG: And opposition to financial compensation extends to Washington, to many members of Congress. Senator S. I. Hayakawa favors the congressional-commission approach, but not financial reparations. Hayakawa was born in Canada. He spent no time in any of the camps.

SENATOR S. I. HAYAKAWA: There's this business of se— watching the blacks and the American Indians and the Mexicans and so on say, we were not justly treated, therefore we want X billion dollars for that, extra hundred million dollars for that, et cetera. So, there's some Japanese Americans who think, well, we can get in on the act, we were treated ba— badly as a minority, so why not— why don't we get in the act and ask for a— ask for a handout, too? And I think that's totally beneath our dignity.

GOLDBERG: It is unlikely that when Congress takes up the redress question that it will grant financial compensation to the victims of incarceration. But money isn't the real issue, say leaders of the Japanese American Citizens League. The real issue, they say, is for the government to acknowledge that a terrible injustice took place, and to try to insure that it never happens again.

TAH KESH TA: People tend to sa— differentiate and say that while these weren't as bad as the camps in Germany and, therefore, you know, these shouldn't be called concentration camps. Well, our contention is that the camps in Germany were not concentration camps, they were death camps. And, you know, the Germans and others misnamed them. But they were death camps in Europe, and these were concentration camps in the United States.

Panel Urges Compensation for Nisei Interned in War. (1980, January 22). *The New York Times*.