

# NCRRR Delegates Report on Redress Hearings

National Coalition for Redress (Reparations) delegate Marlene Tonai telephoned the San Francisco Bay Area Regional office from Washington, D.C., with the following report of the subcommittee hearings on HR 4110:

NCRRR National Spokesperson Bert Nakano testified on Thursday, June 21 before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations and in a brief but eloquent statement urged Congress to pass HR 4110.

## Landmark

"Mr. Chairman, we would like to reaffirm that NCRRR strongly supports passage of HR 4110," he said. "This would serve as a landmark in advancing the cause of justice, not only for Japanese Americans, but for all those who aspire to the principles on which this country was founded."

An audience of approximately 150 people, including a number of former internees, heard Nakano's testimony and also that of Bill Kochiyama of New York who testified on behalf of Concerned Japanese Americans and NCRRR.

Kochiyama, a platoon sergeant of Company K which rescued the Lost Battalion, spoke of his experiences as a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Also on the panel with Nakano and Kochiyama was Congressman Mervyn Dymally who spoke in support of the bill's passage.

Congressman Dan Lundgren, the only member of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) to oppose monetary reparations, was the first witness at Thursday's hearing. The subcommittee also heard from former Commis-

sioners Joan Bernstein and Arthur Flemming who testified the day before.

Former Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy also spoke against monetary reparations. McCloy has consistently maintained that not even a governmental apology is necessary and defended the government's actions on the basis of military necessity.

Refusing to admit the government's culpability, McCloy warned that there may again come a time when the U.S. would need to take similar action and should therefore keep that option open. As an example he mentioned the high concentration of Hispanics in the Gulf area as a group of people about whom something might need to be done in 50 years or so.

## Refutes Inaccuracies

Mike Masaoka, speaking on behalf of Go For Broke, immediately followed McCloy and refuted many of the inaccuracies and misconceptions in his testimony. (e.g. that Nikkei were free to leave the camps whenever they wanted and could go wherever they pleased so long as they stayed out of the restricted zones). Masaoka also affirmed that Go For Broke supported monetary reparations.

The subcommittee members present — Chairman Sam Hall (D-Tex.), Howard Berman (D-Calif.), Barney Frank (D-Mass.), and Thomas Kindness (R-Ohio) — questioned the witnesses after they had finished testifying. After Masaoka concluded his testimony, Chairman Hall asked him when he had come to this country. At this question the audience gave a collective gasp of

shock which was audible throughout the hearing room. Masaoka assured the chairman that he was "not a wetback."

The last group of witnesses to speak at Thursday's hearing was a panel of six Aleuts representing different villages and associations. They testified that they favored HR 4322, Congressman Don Young's bill, over HR 4110. HR 4322 is identical to HR 4110 except that it provides for individual payments of \$12,000 per Aleut rather than the \$5,000 in HR 4110.

## Final Day of Hearings

The subcommittee planned to hold one more day of hearings on Wednesday, June 27. Scheduled to speak were John Tateishi, JACL redress chairman, and Min Yasui, coram nobis petitioner.

Sox Kitashima, one of the three NCRRR delegates from the San Francisco region, told the Hokubei Mainichi on Monday that the delegates did what they intended to do with their lobbying mission in Washington but that much more work needs to be done in lobbying and in educating people about the redress issue. Much of this educational work needs to be done within the Nikkei community itself, she said.

She also mentioned the effectiveness of Congressman Norman Mineta's testimony on the first day of the hearings. "When he finished speaking," she said, "the people present applauded him. He was the only one to testify who was applauded." She noted that many seemed to be emotionally moved by his testimony.

Also testifying on the first day of the hearings was Congress-

woman Sala Burton who supports the bill and its provisions for financial compensation.

"This legislation would be less controversial if it was merely a national apology," she said, "if it did not contain the compensation provisions. But we must remember that thousands of internees lost property and jobs and were never able to regain those material and financial resources.

"Without the compensation — which is a minimal amount — the apology will seem hollow indeed. I urge the subcommittee to approve the bill with these important provisions."

According to Janet Potts of Congressman Hall's office, the subcommittee is considering the possibility of holding field hearings due to the large number of individuals and organizations requesting to testify.

In his testimony, Bert Nakano stated NCRRR's support of field hearings and encouraged the subcommittee to schedule them.

The NCRRR is urging people to write or call Rep. Hall to ask that field hearings be held. He can be contacted at the following address: Congressman Sam Hall, Jr., Chairman, Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations, 2236 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; (202) 225-5425.

## Community Forum

NCRRR is sponsoring a community forum on Friday, June 29, at 7:30 p.m. at California First Bank Hospitality Room at which time Marlene Tonai, Naomi Kubota and Sox Kitashima, delegates from the San Francisco Region, will report further on the hearings. The public is invited to attend.