

ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 620

Introduced by Hansen, 42.

WHEREAS, Hiram Hisanori Kano was born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1889; and

WHEREAS, when William Jennings Bryan traveled to Japan, the Kano family, as part of the Imperial family, hosted his visit; and

WHEREAS, the visitor from the west sparked in young Kano an intense desire to travel to the United States and especially to Bryan's home state of Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, in 1916, Hiram Kano traveled to America where his skills could be put to good use in helping the many young Japanese who were emigrating to the United States to farm; and

WHEREAS, Hiram Kano earned a Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, on December 16, 1919, Mr. Kano left his farm in southeast Nebraska and met with a number of legislators at the Nebraska State Capitol because a bill had been introduced that would have prohibited aliens from owning, inheriting, or leasing land in Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, Hiram Kano testified before the Judiciary Committee of the Legislature, providing statistics on the number of Japanese people living and farming in Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, the anti-Japanese bills failed in 1919, but anti-Oriental feelings continued to grow and California passed a law forbidding the lease of farmland to Japanese farmers; and

WHEREAS, Hiram Kano was a quiet and persevering warrior in the battle against the evil of racism and a champion of his people in the struggle for justice and peace as he fought for the dignity of every human being; and

WHEREAS, in 1936, Hiram Kano was ordained a priest and continued his tireless ministry along the Platte River encouraging the Japanese people even as the State of Nebraska and the nation withheld from them the basic rights we now take for granted; and

WHEREAS, on December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor; and

WHEREAS, American reaction against Japanese immigrants was swift and harsh, and Father Kano was arrested by agents of the FBI in North Platte; and

WHEREAS, Father Kano spent time in five different prison camps and continued to minister to his people in the camps; and

WHEREAS, Father Kano, through what he called the Internment University, helped hundreds of Japanese-Americans learn to speak, read, and write English; and

WHEREAS, because of the passage of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, Father Kano became a naturalized citizen; and

WHEREAS, Father Hiram Kano died three months short of his 100th birthday, on October 24, 1988.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Legislature extends its gratitude to Father Hiram Hisanori Kano for his work with the Japanese-Americans in the Platte River valley.

2. That the Legislature commemorates St. George's Mission in North Platte and St. Mary's Mission in Mitchell.

3. That a copy of this resolution be sent to the children of Father Kano.