

# The Politics of Racism:

THE UPROOTING OF JAPANESE CANADIANS  
DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

**ANN GOMER SUNAHARA**

Publisher: Ann Gomer Sunahara  
Ottawa, 2000

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PUBLICATION INFORMATION FROM FIRST EDITION:

First edition (1981) published by: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers  
Toronto, 1981

ISBN 0-88862-414-X cloth  
ISBN 0-88862-413-1 paper

CANADIAN CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Sunahara, Ann Gomer  
The politics of racism

Includes index.  
ISBN 0-88862-414-X bd. ISBN 0-88862-413-1 pa

1. Japanese Canadians – Evacuation and relocation, 1942–1945.\*[sic 1952] 2. Canada – Politics and government – 1935–1957\* I. Title

FC106.J3S96            971'.004956            C81-094325-5  
F1035.J3S96

In 1981, this book was published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The National Association for Japanese Canada funded the scanning of the 1981 edition into an ASCII electronic format from which this 2000 edition was developed by the author.

Publisher: Second edition (2000)  
Ann Sunahara  
112 Huron Avenue North  
Ottawa, ON, K1Y 0W2

To  
Tamotsu Sunahara,  
an *Issei*,  
and  
Marion Miwa Hoshino Sunahara,  
a *Nisei*,  
in honour of  
all *Issei* and *Nisei*

# Contents

LIST OF TABLES	V
PREFACE	VII
INTRODUCTION	1
I NOVEMBER 1941	5
II THE DECISION TO UPROOT JAPANESE CANADIANS	23
III EXPULSION	45
IV EXILE	69
V DISPOSSESSION	89
VI DEPORTATION	101
VII FIGHTING DEPORTATION	117
VIII SEEKING CIVIL RIGHTS AND COMPENSATION	133
CONCLUSION: THE SEEDS OF REPRESSION	145
AFTERWARD: REDRESS	153
TABLES	159
BIBLIOGRAPHY	163

# List of Tables

**TABLE 1:**  
**JAPANESE IN CANADA IN 1941 BY AGE AND NATIONALITY**

**TABLE 2:**  
**ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS**

**TABLE 3:**  
**REPATRIATION SURVEY RESULTS AS OF 31 AUGUST 1945**

**TABLE 4:**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF JAPANESE IN CANADA, 1942-47**

**TABLE 5:**  
**ECONOMIC LOSSES SURVEY, TORONTO, 1946:**  
**REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY**

**TABLE 6:**  
**ECONOMIC LOSSES SURVEY, TORONTO, 1946:**  
**PERCENTAGE RECOUPED BY SELLER**

**TABLE 7:**  
**ECONOMIC LOSSES SURVEY, TORONTO, 1946:**  
**SUMMARY OF LOSSES**



## Preface To The 1981 Edition

The intention of this book is not to arouse bad memories or to make accusations. What is past is past. Rather my intention is to tell frankly what the record shows about an unhappy event in Canadian history, an event inconsistent with the public image most Canadians hold of their society.

This book is aimed at two groups of readers. First it is aimed at those Canadians, especially those born and raised since the Second World War, who have known only a tolerant Canada: a Canada in which discrimination has been greatly reduced, although not eliminated; in which hate literature is an anathema; and in which racists are considered somewhat deficient mentally and emotionally. To that fortunate group of Canadians who, like myself, have lived free from racism, and hence in ignorance of its pain and its power, this book is intended as a reminder that the tolerance we know is historically only a thin and recently applied veneer on Canadian society. It is written in the hope that the events discussed here will bring home a realization of how easy it is in our imperfect world for an ill-informed majority to wreak havoc on a blameless minority.

The second group at whom this work is aimed is the Nisei, those Canadian-born Japanese who passed through the events described here, and the Sansei, their children. It is my hope that this book will answer at least some of the hundreds of questions I was asked by Japanese Canadians while researching this unhappy period in our history, questions that usually began with "Why?" If my efforts can help a few Nisei to understand what happened to them between 1941 and 1950 and a few Sansei to understand why their parents and grandparents made the choices they did, then I shall consider that I have accomplished something.

My debts for this work are legion. Historians Roger Daniels, Howard Palmer and Patricia E. Roy have given valuable encouragement, guidance and criticism. Financially I am indebted to the Canada Council for the Explorations Grant that made possible the collection of scattered sources and the conducting of interviews across Canada. For their valuable assistance in collecting archival materials, I would like to thank Glenn T. Wright and Mark Hopkins of the Public Archives of Canada, John Hilliker of the Historical Division, Department of External Affairs, Phillip Chaplin at the Department of National Defence's Directorate of History, George Brandak of the Special Collections Division, University of British Columbia Library, and the staffs of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia and the Vancouver Theological College Archives.

My greatest debt is to the many people who took the time and effort to answer my many questions, and often did so with refreshing frankness. Each of those listed in the bibliography gave me a gem of information, some small, some immense, some conflicting. Of the many I am especially indebted to two: John Kumagai, who first planted in my mind the idea of a study of the wartime experience of Japanese Canadians, and George Tanaka, who first showed me that the archival material necessary for such a study indeed existed. I also owe a special debt to Thomas K. Shoyama for his assistance in persuading the Office of the Custodian of Enemy and Evacuee Property to grant me access to their documents and subsequently to turn them over to the Public Archives of Canada.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my husband, David Fumio Sunahara, who has not only offered encouragement, but through frank discussion has taught me more about being Japanese in Canada than the tools of the historian ever could. Any errors, of course, are my own.



# Introduction

In February 1942 the federal Cabinet ordered the expulsion of 22,000 Japanese Canadians\* residing within one hundred miles of the Pacific coast. That order marked the beginning of a process that saw Canada's Japanese minority uprooted from their homes, confined in detention camps, stripped of their property, and forcibly dispersed across Canada or shipped to a starving Japan.

An ugly episode in Canadian history, the events of the eight years between 1942 and 1950 left Japanese Canadians in a state of trauma that has been compared to that of a rape victim.<sup>1</sup> Although conscious that they were innocent victims, Japanese Canadians felt humiliated by their degrading experiences. Their humiliation was compounded by the knowledge that the general public held them at least in part responsible for what had happened to them. Like rape victims, they responded with silence, with an aversion to discussing their experiences.

Fortunately, time heals most wounds. It has been almost forty years since that first order was issued and over thirty years since the last of their civil liberties were restored to them. In that period of time, individuals have prospered, discrimination has diminished considerably, and Japanese Canadians have earned a reputation as a model minority: as quiet, hard-working, well-educated, prosperous and assimilated Canadians. Also in that period of time, those who suffered the greatest loss, those of the pioneer generation called Issei, have largely gone. The need for silence is past, and many of the remaining victims can now tell their stories.

Enough time has also passed that the secret workings of Canada's wartime government need no longer be kept secret. The records of the conferences, meetings and private discussions that decided the fate of Canada's Japanese minority are now available to the public. Finally it is possible to look behind the public posture of the government of the day to seek the reasons and personalities behind those policies, to seek answers to the question: "Why?"

Previous chroniclers could only speculate on the reasons behind the seven-year exile of Japanese Canadians. When Forrest E. La Violette wrote *The Canadian Japanese and World War II*<sup>2</sup> in the 1940s, wartime censorship hindered his efforts. In addition, as a sociologist La Violette was primarily interested in the exile of Japanese Canadians as a social phenomenon, one that paralleled a similar exile of Japanese Americans. Accordingly, he accepted the explanation of the government of the day – that it had merely responded to a mistaken but overwhelming surge of public opinion in British Columbia. La Violette was unable – or lacked the interest – to determine how that surge of public opinion materialized, or how it came to be translated into the repressive policies applied to the innocent Japanese.

When Ken Adachi researched *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*<sup>3</sup> in the 1950s, he was similarly handicapped. Denied access to the government

\* In this book the term "Japanese Canadian" refers to a person or persons of Japanese ancestry resident in Canada, including both citizens and aliens. The immigrant generation, including both Japanese nationals and naturalized Canadian citizens, is called *Issei*, from the Japanese for "first" (*ichi*) and "generation" (*sei*). The Canadian-born generation is called *Nisei*, from the Japanese for "second" (*ni*) and "generation" (*sei*).

documents by the thirty-year rule,<sup>4</sup> Adachi could only draw upon published memoirs, the proceedings of inquiries and royal commissions, and other documents in the public domain. As a consequence, his account is largely an update of La Violette's earlier work. Adachi does not so readily accept the view of the government of the day, but he cannot prove that the public statements of that government do not match their private actions. He therefore concentrates on enlarging the Japanese Canadian side of the story, and in doing so makes an important contribution in view of the fact that Japanese Canadians in both La Violette's account and popular myth are depicted as passive objects upon which the government and Canadian society act and react.

A more recent account, Barry Broadfoot's *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame*<sup>5</sup> makes no attempt to analyse why Japanese Canadians were treated in the manner they were. Broadfoot's purpose, in his own words, is "to put flesh on the skeleton of history."<sup>6</sup> By letting the participants, both Japanese and non-Japanese, tell their stories in their own words, Broadfoot fleshes out the facts with personal experiences. The result is a very readable account that, while marred by historical inaccuracies due to the frailty of human memory, shows the complexity of the story. More importantly, Broadfoot's account shows that the participants still do not understand what happened to them, and still seek to know why it happened.

With the use of the government's own documents, this book seeks to strip away the mask of wartime rhetoric and examine from the perspective of federal government policy the seven years in which Japanese Canadians were exiled in their own country. It is the story of how the government came to set its harsh policies. It traces the evolution of those policies from their birth in the rhetoric of British Columbia politicians, through their maturation in the wartime government of William Lyon Mackenzie King, to their implementation under the all-powerful War Measures Act – despite opposition by Canada's leading military and police officers and, in one case, by Parliament itself.

This book also tells the story of how Japanese Canadians reacted to, coped with and finally defeated the repressive policies of their government. It tells how a minority of Canadians became pariahs in the eyes of their fellow Canadians. It traces how Japanese Canadians, individually and collectively, resisted, influenced, altered and, finally, with the help of a pitifully small group of concerned Caucasian Canadians, defeated the ambitions of B.C.'s politicians. Importantly, it shows that the final victory was not a legal victory, but a political one.

The government documents reveal a very different story from that traditionally told. The documents demonstrate that each Order-in-Council under the War Measures Act that affected Japanese Canadians – uprooting, confinement, dispossession, deportation and dispersal – was motivated by political considerations rooted in racist traditions accepted, and indeed encouraged, by persons within the government of the day. The documents also show that at no point in the entire seven years of their exile were Japanese Canadians ever a threat to national security. By contrast, almost every measure taken against Japanese Canadians was strongly opposed by the most senior officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the military, and by the entire Far Eastern Division of the Department of External Affairs. In the confrontation between the educated and factually based opinions of Canada's experts and the prejudiced and politically based opinions of B.C.'s politicians, however, the Cabinet invariably sided with the politicians.

The government documents also reveal that the racism that determined the fate of Japanese Canadians was present in both an active and a passive form: the overt, active racism of British Columbia politicians and the passive, often unconscious, racism of the federal Cabinet as a whole.

In many ways the latter was more destructive than the former. While the overt racists promoted the repressive measures imposed on Japanese Canadians, it took the silent compliance of the federal Cabinet to put those measures into effect. Japanese Canadians were uprooted, confined, stripped of their property, dispersed and deported not only because British Columbian politicians demanded it, but also because apparently no one in the Cabinet could be bothered to question those demands. As long as passive racism remained the norm in Cabinet, the freedom of Japanese Canadians remained in jeopardy.

Racism was a common factor in the holocaust that was the Second World War. Among the shocking inhumanities of that period the events described in this book appear relatively minor. An important distinction between these events and those of Europe or Asia, however, lies in the fact that Canada imposed repressive policies on a racial minority while ostensibly fighting for justice and equality for all. While certainly less extreme than those practised by the Third Reich, the actions of the Canadian government were nonetheless also based on the political exploitation of racism, and in the Canadian case, such tactics were cruelly hypocritical. The Canadian government betrayed not only Japanese Canadians but also the men and women it was sending to Europe and Asia, by making a mockery of the principles for which they were fighting and dying.

**Notes**

- 1 Edison Uno, "Introduction," in Masie and Richard Conrat, *Executive Order 9066: The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972.
- 2 Forrest E. La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese in World War II*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948.
- 3 Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976.
- 4 In the period in which this book was researched, 1975 to 1980, government documents are closed for thirty years. Access to some was restricted to serious researchers. For an accounting of the available records see M.A. Sunahara and Glenn T. Wright, "The Japanese Canadian Experience in World War II," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, pp. 78-87. For the current rules see the Access to Information Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-9.
- 5 Barry Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of Japanese Canadians in World War II*, Toronto: Doubleday, 1977.
- 6 Barry Broadfoot, in a presentation to the Conference on the Japanese Canadian and Japanese American Relocations in World War II, Bellingham, Washington, 1978.

# 1: November 1941

In November 1941 Thomas Kunito Shoyama was an editor of the *New Canadian*, a fledgling Japanese Canadian newspaper in Vancouver, British Columbia. As such, Shoyama was a principal spokesman for the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League, an organization founded in 1936 to fight discrimination against Japanese Canadians. Well educated, articulate and capable, Shoyama was not an editor by choice. On graduating from the University of British Columbia in 1938 with an honours degree in commerce and economics, he had intended to enter the world of business. He quickly discovered, however, that ability and high academic achievement meant nothing when you were Japanese. Fifty years of legislation and regulation had closed most of the professions, the public service and teaching to him, while social taboos discouraged Caucasian businessmen from hiring him in any but the most menial capacity. In British Columbia, where 95 per cent of Canada's 23,450 Japanese resided in 1941, Shoyama could not even vote, although he was Canadian-born. Shoyama's outstanding abilities would in time make him one of Canada's most powerful civil servants, but in British Columbia in 1941 he was simply a 'Jap.'<sup>1</sup>

While Shoyama's employment problems were typical of those facing all Japanese Canadians, he represented only one of the three socio-cultural groups making up Japanese Canadian society in 1941: the *Issei*, the *Kibei* and the *Nisei*. Shoyama was a spokesman only for the last group. Almost 10,000 Japanese Canadians were *Issei*, or immigrants from Japan and Hawaii, some 3,650 of whom had become naturalized Canadians before 1923 when Canadian nationality was made very difficult for Japanese to obtain.<sup>2</sup> Most *Issei* were from the landowning peasant class of Japan. They had grown up in the rapidly modernizing Meiji period (the years 1868-1912 when Japan was emerging as an industrialized world power) and had come to Canada before the First World War. By 1941 they had spent an average of thirty years working in fishing, farming and agriculture, or in building up small businesses. Denied access to the larger Canadian society, culturally the *Issei* remained a microcosm of Meiji Japan.

The *Kibei* were Canadian-born but Japan-educated Japanese Canadians. As such they varied across the cultural spectrum. Those who had been sent to Japan at a young age and had stayed for their whole education were culturally Japanese. They were not exactly like their parents, for the Japan of the 1920s and 1930s that the *Kibei* knew was different from the Japan their parents had known. Those who had been sent to Japan for only part of their education knew intimately two very different cultures. Most preferred the less rigid culture of Canada. Some, however, were discouraged by the racism they had met in Canada and preferred Japan. Fluent in Japanese, the *Kibei* understood and had a greater empathy for Japanese culture than the *Nisei*.\*

The *Nisei* were Canadian-born and Canadian-educated like Shoyama. They had been exposed to the full force of the acculturating influences of the Canadian public school system. They had been carefully taught that things British and Canadian were right and that, by inference, all else was suspect. Racism, they were told, was the fault of the non-white minorities. The cause of

\* There were 13,600 Canadian-born Japanese in 1941. The number of *Kibei* is impossible to calculate. However, 1,500 or 14 per cent of school-aged children were studying in Japan in 1941.

racism, they were taught, was the failure of non-whites to assimilate into the Anglo-Canadian culture. Only when they became totally Canadian could they take their rightful place in Canadian society. The *Nisei* learned their lessons well. By 1941 their main criticism of the *Issei* and the *Kibei* was that they were too Japanese.

While taught to accept Anglo-Canadian standards, the *Nisei* could never be full-fledged members of the larger society. Nor, handicapped by poor Japanese, could they be full participants in the Japanese subculture of the *Issei* and the *Kibei*. Without being aware of it, the *Nisei* lived at the fringes of both the *Issei* subculture and the larger white community, vainly trying to interpret each to the other. Their cultural marginality was complicated by their age. In 1941 only 5,000 of the 13,600 Canadian-born Japanese were over twenty years of age. Shoyama, one of their principal spokesmen, was only twenty-three. To the *Issei*, the *Nisei* were only a bunch of kids. By the standards of both Canadian society and the Japanese subculture, the *Nisei* were still far too young to be consulted on matters of importance, let alone to serve as leaders. With their Canadian education and outlook and the arrogance of youth, however, the *Nisei* assumed that they understood the times and their society better than their parents.<sup>3</sup>

By November 1941 the times and their consequences for Japanese Canadians looked very grave indeed. Since 1932 Japanese aggression in China had been escalating, and in September 1940 Japan had openly allied itself with Germany and Italy. By the autumn of 1941 diplomatic negotiations between the still neutral United States and Japan were deteriorating. The United States was demanding the withdrawal of Japanese forces from occupied China, and Japan was beginning to feel the effects of the oil embargo with which the Americans were backing up their demands. If the United States went to war with Japan over China and if Canada were drawn into that war, the consequences for Japanese Canadians were potentially severe.

In late November 1941 Thomas Shoyama, English-language editor of the *New Canadian*, was both optimistic and pessimistic about those consequences. Recalling the experiences of German and Italian aliens in 1939 and 1940, Shoyama presumed that all Japanese aliens would be required to report regularly to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, that Japanese community associations and the Japanese-language press would be investigated, and that a few Japanese aliens would be interned. Pessimistically he presumed that the parallel to the Germans and Italians would end there. He doubted that the immunity granted Canadian nationals of German and Italian ancestry would be extended to the *Nisei*. Rather he expected that the *Nisei* and naturalized would be treated like aliens and required to report regularly to the RCMP. Shoyama also anticipated that Japanese Canadian fishermen, all of whom were Canadian nationals, would be treated harshly.<sup>4</sup>

The greatest danger, Shoyama felt, lay in vandalism and violence. The vandalism inflicted on German Baptist churches in Vancouver in the spring of 1940 had already shown how the irresponsible would behave in time of war. British Columbia's long history of anti-Japanese sentiment guaranteed Japanese Canadians similar treatment. Shoyama, however, was optimistic that such hooliganism would be deplored by decent British Columbians and by the press, which he was confident would be "strongly arrayed on the side of decency and law and order." He was equally sure that the federal government and its advisors could be counted upon to apply reason and good sense to the problem. Two weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Shoyama assured his readers that "inflamed public opinion will probably be far more serious and more injurious than official government policy."<sup>5</sup>



Shoyama had good reasons for all of his conclusions, especially the pessimistic ones. By November 1941 he was very familiar with the personalities and the arguments of those most opposed to Japanese Canadians. As a spokesman for the *Nisei*, he had read the half-truths, exaggerations and outright lies of the White Canada Association, the latest in a long line of nativist groups dedicated to combating the “evils” of the Asian presence in British Columbia. He had witnessed the federal election of 1935, when both Liberals and Conservatives sought votes by smearing the CCF\* party as pro-Asian. He had listened to the ranting of Alderman Halford Wilson as he enlivened the meetings of Vancouver’s city council with his many anti-Asian proposals. Most infamous was his proposal that Asians be segregated into ghettos, as the Jews were in Nazi Germany.<sup>6</sup>

Shoyama knew that Liberal and Conservative politicians, both provincial and federal, would jump on any anti-Japanese bandwagon. While their degree of enthusiasm would vary according to the personal standards of each man, no Liberal or Conservative politician questioned the tradition of exploiting the anti-Asian feelings of the B.C. electorate. Indeed some were zealots. Men like Thomas Reid, the Liberal M.P. for New Westminster, and A.W. Neill, an Independent representing Comox-Alberni, had consistently assumed an anti-Asian position, using arguments and literature supplied by the White Canada Association. Their styles were very different. Reid presented his irrational arguments with a shallow dignity that made them all the more powerful. Neill’s venom lent deep emotion to blunt statements based on distorted facts.<sup>7</sup> Since these men played on the kind of patriotism that vilifies a minority strongly identified with an enemy, Shoyama knew that they might incite violence against Japanese Canadians. He knew also that they would be incredibly difficult to stop, for arguments alone were useless against them. Such men were successful because they appealed not to logic, but to fear: fear of economic competition, fear of social disruption and intermarriage, and fear for personal and national security.<sup>8</sup>

For seventy years the anti-Asian movement had exploited the fears of those in real or imagined competition with Asians. The racists succeeded because Asians were paid lower wages than their white counterparts. By working for less, the racists argued, Asians undermined white living standards. At the same time the obvious solution – equal pay for equal work – was unthinkable since Asians, by definition, were inferior and therefore must be paid less. Yet while theoretically inferior, Asians were considered unfair competition because they were superior workers. To counteract the debilitating effects of their lower wage, Asians worked longer hours and had higher productivity than their white counterparts. To the labour agitators, compensating for a low wage with high productivity was an unfair tactic.<sup>9</sup> Damned for having a lower standard of living and damned for working hard in order to raise it, Asians were locked into a double standard. Their only escape required the cooperation of those who feared them most: their competitors.

For most of a century the economic argument had been reinforced by the claim that Asians were unassimilable. Assuming that only a racially homogeneous society could be stable, racists argued that the Asian was genetically incapable of commitment to the Canadian way of life and to British values and institutions. To the agitators, the Japanese-language schools and Japanese Canadian social, religious and economic associations were objects of suspicion and proof of Japanese unassimilability. Asians who professed loyalty to Canada and who by their actions demonstrated that they thought, felt and acted like other Canadians were ridiculed as cunning

\* Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, predecessor to the New Democratic Party

agents of the governments of their ancestral homelands. Because Asians did not look like whites, it was assumed that they did not feel or think like other Canadians.

As Japan's status as a world power rose through the 1920s and 1930s, B.C.'s racists added to their arsenal of charges the "big lie" that Japanese Canadians were part of a long term conspiracy by Japan to absorb British Columbia. Convinced that an interracial world war was inevitable and that Japan would be the aggressor in that war, B.C.'s racists often portrayed Canada's Japanese minority as a fifth column of spies and saboteurs. As proof for their charges the agitators used the dual citizenship of the *Nisei*. Ignoring the fact that almost every other first generation Canadian also held the right to citizenship in two countries, the agitators claimed that the dual citizenship of the *Nisei* meant that they would fight for Japan, not Canada, when put to the test, in the same way that an Englishman born in Japan would fight for England. The practice of sending children to Japan for part of their education and the use of Japanese government texts in the Japanese-language schools, they further charged, ensured the indoctrination of the young in preparation for the expected invasion by Japan. Similarly, the traditional role played by the Japanese consul in protesting discrimination against Japanese Canadians was cited as proof that he, as Japan's representative, controlled Japanese Canadians and directed a conspiracy to overthrow British Columbia society.

Even the Japanese Canadian settlement pattern was seen as part of a grand conspiracy. Only 54 per cent of B.C.'s 22,000 Japanese Canadians resided in urban centres. The rest were scattered throughout the Fraser Valley in farming communities, along the coast in fishing villages and pulp towns, and in the fruit, mining and lumbering areas of British Columbia's Interior. As a consequence, it was not difficult to find Japanese in proximity to some strategic facility like a road, a power dam, a telephone exchange or a port. To anti-Japanese agitators the perfectly normal Japanese Canadian settlement pattern became a Machiavellian attempt to control militarily strategic sites.<sup>10</sup>

The charges were absurd, but they hurt. In their pervasiveness they could not be ignored or dismissed as the mindless muttering of imbeciles. What perhaps hurt the most was that most of these racist lies contained a grossly distorted kernel of truth. It was true that Asians worked longer hours for lower wages than whites; it was equally true that the choice of equal pay for equal work was not theirs to make. It was true that the Asian minorities retained their own institutions and many of their customs; it was equally true that the institutions of the larger society were closed to Asians, necessitating the establishment of parallel social and economic arrangements. It was true that the *Nisei* attended Japanese-language school after regular classes and that they used textbooks from Japan; it was equally true that as long as they were restricted to employment within the Japanese community, the *Nisei* needed what little Japanese language they learned in those schools in order to earn a living. It was true that the Japanese consul in Vancouver was treated with respect and consulted on minority problems; it was equally true that until the formation of the CCF in 1932 Japanese Canadians had no other ally on which to call when faced with discrimination.<sup>11</sup>

Shoyama's pessimism in late November 1941 may also have been based on his knowledge of how unprepared Japanese Canadians were to cope with intense public anger. In 1941 the Japanese minority was a fragmented, dispersed and insecure group of people whose primary aim was making ends meet and who had little experience with general public anger. Historically, discrimination had been piecemeal, affecting only some Japanese Canadians at any one time. As a consequence, the response had also been piecemeal, undertaken by those most immediately affected and often with



the help of the Japanese consul. When the number of fishing licences issued to Japanese Canadians was severely cut back in the 1920s, the fishermen themselves decided who should give up their licences, helped those affected to start farms or businesses, and, with the help of the Japanese consul, successfully challenged the cutbacks in the courts. When Japanese Canadians found themselves excluded from the social and institutional life of the communities in which they lived, Japanese in each area formed their own small communities to supply the needed social, cultural and economic institutions. When Japanese in logging and mill work were denied access to white unions, they formed their own union. Denied the vote, those whose claim to it was strongest, the Canadian-born, formed the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League (JCCL) to seek it. The result of this piecemeal response was a plethora of uncoordinated organizations, which, while their leaders knew each other, were divided like any normal community by social, religious, geographical, ideological and generational differences. Before 1941 there had been no pressing need to reconcile those differences.

While the multitude of Japanese Canadian associations gave the appearance of a well-organized, tightly knit community, none could lead the minority by itself. The most successful, the Canadian Japanese Association (CJA), had several strikes against it. Its 4,000 members were almost entirely *Issei*, and much of its authority had traditionally rested in its relationship with the Japanese consul, who would be discredited in the event of war. The CJA, a conservative group dominated by urban businessmen, had defended Japanese aggression in China in the early 1930s. While it had compensated for this error in public relations with strong Victory Bond drives after 1940, it remained tainted in the eyes of those Japanese Canadians who opposed Japan's militarist government. Among the *Issei*, the strongest anti-militarist group was the socialist Japanese Camp and Mill Workers Union. The union, however, was too small and too ideologically radical to lead Japanese Canadians as a whole.<sup>12</sup>

The *Nisei* organizations were equally ill-coordinated. Only 5,000 of the, 13,600 *Nisei* in Canada were over twenty years of age in 1941. Those 5,000 *Nisei* belonged to fifty-three *Nisei* organizations, of which the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League (JCCL) was the most vocal although not necessarily the most representative. Its leaders were mostly highly acculturated *Nisei* like Shoyama, who had been raised in white neighbourhoods outside the Powell Street ghetto in Vancouver or the fishing villages along the coast. At the same time, the bulk of the membership came from the ghetto and places like Steveston and the Fraser Valley farming communities where the JCCL locals were run like traditional Japanese youth clubs.<sup>13</sup> Divided within by *Nisei-Kibei* cultural conflicts, and socially and economically dependent on their immigrant parents, the *Nisei* were too young and too inexperienced to lead the Japanese minority in time of crisis. Rent by ideological, cultural and generational divisions, Japanese Canadians were effectively leaderless in November 1941.

Although fearful of violence and vandalism, Shoyama was optimistic about the fate of Japanese Canadians because he believed the press and the government would act responsibly. Throughout 1941 the press in B.C. had assumed a low-key stance on the "Japanese question." Shoyama had no way of knowing that the new-found liberalism of the B.C. press was due in part to the intervention of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.<sup>14</sup>

Shoyama also had no way of knowing that neither Prime Minister King nor most of his

advisors on Asian matters could be depended upon to defend Asians. A subtle politician, King's prejudices remained hidden until revealed in his diaries after his death. At sixty-eight years of age in 1941, William Lyon Mackenzie King was a product of the late Victorian age. He carried in his psychological baggage all the prejudices and complexes of that age, concealed behind a carefully nourished public image of traditional Gladstonian liberalism: supportive of private enterprise, reverent of liberty and freedom, and tolerant of the "less advantaged." Privately King was without ideology. His principles at any given time were limited to those that would advance the cause of the Liberal party and were based in a firm conviction that only the Liberal party, with himself as its leader, was capable of governing Canada. His opinions, accordingly, were fluid. As Jack W. Pickersgill, his Executive Assistant from 1937 until King's retirement in 1948, recalled:

The one thing you can be fairly sure of about Mackenzie King was that the opinion he had today would not necessarily be the opinion he would have tomorrow. He was an intuitive politician. He was always measuring in his intuitive way...just how much traffic the public would bear. Mackenzie King was not the stuff of which martyrs are made.<sup>15</sup>

One of King's opponents in 1941, Tommy Douglas – CCF M.P. and future leader of the Saskatchewan CCF and the federal New Democratic Party – was more blunt in his recollections:

King's motto, both internationally and domestically, was: "You don't rock the boat. You never move until you know what everyone else is doing, and then you jump in with the majority." It is an excellent lesson in Machiavellian politics. He never in his life took a firm position on anything until he was sure that 75 per cent of the public was behind him, and then he would seize the flag and run to the head of the parade.<sup>16</sup>

By November 1941 such tactics had kept King in power for almost fifteen years. In that period of time his governments, over which he always had firm control, attempted to drive Japanese Canadians from the fishing industry, halted Chinese immigration, limited Japanese immigration to 150 persons per year, and continued to deny the right to vote to Asians despite a strong appeal by the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League.

Yet in spite of this record of discrimination, King's public image as a tolerant and reasonable man remained intact. In January 1941 Shoyama, like many Japanese Canadians, firmly believed that "the Prime Minister is not the type of man to be swayed by prejudice or irrational emotion."<sup>17</sup> In reality King was very susceptible, not to "prejudice and irrational emotion" *per se*, but to the voting power they represented. It is Jack Pickersgill's opinion that "King, in his heart, did not approve of the [Japanese] policies.... He recognized that opinion in British Columbia, that counted as far as votes were concerned, could not be ignored."<sup>18</sup> King's willingness to recognize prejudiced public opinion for the sake of the votes it represented was compounded by his own prejudices. His diary reveals a distaste for the admission to the Commonwealth of India "with its black [sic] leaders." King's attitude toward the Japanese is best shown by his comment following the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. "It is fortunate," he wrote in his diary, "that the use of the bomb should have been upon the Japanese rather than upon the white races of Europe."<sup>19</sup>

The public views of King's advisors, the Standing Committee on Orientals, whose members had impressed Shoyama with their "sincere desire to apply reason and good sense to meet this tragic and delicate issue,"<sup>20</sup> were also not as they appeared. The Standing Committee on Orientals had been created in 1940 to advise the federal government on Asian matters. It was composed of five British Columbians: Professor Henry F. Angus of the University of British Columbia, Assistant Commissioner Frederick J. Mead of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Lieutenant Colonel A.W. Sparling of the Department of National Defence, Mayor F.J. Hume of New Westminster, and Lt. Col. Macgregor Macintosh, a xenophobic Conservative. With the exception of Macintosh, whose anti-Asian sentiments were well known, Shoyama had reason to be satisfied with this committee. Angus was an outspoken liberal who had championed the *Nisei* cause throughout the 1930s at considerable personal risk. Mead was the RCMP's security expert, a highly regarded professional openly supportive of Japanese Canadians. Hume, while a politician, had a reputation as a moderate on Asian matters, as had Sparling.<sup>21</sup> With Angus and Mead to balance Macintosh's racist position, the Standing Committee on Orientals in November 1941 appeared sympathetic to the problems facing Japanese Canadians.

Unfortunately neither Hume nor Sparling were as benign as they appeared. Hume, as a politician, could not be depended upon to remain neutral if the fate of Japanese Canadians became a political issue. More importantly, Sparling had already played a significant role in preventing the enlistment of Asians into the armed forces in 1940. Despite his mild public posture Sparling was strongly opposed to the enlistment of Asian Canadians. His reasons remain unclear, although a statement to army intelligence in 1944 suggests that he believed Japanese Canadians to be disloyal and that the enlistment of Asians would lead to racial incidents in the armed forces. In 1940 Sparling had found himself the sole opponent to Asian enlistment on the federally appointed Special Committee on Orientals. The other members of that committee (Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, an Assistant Under-Secretary at the Department of External Affairs; Dr. George Sansom, a professor of Asian studies at Columbia University; and Asst. Comnr. Frederick J. Mead of the RCMP) all strongly supported the enlistment of Asians, Keenleyside and Sansom in principle, Mead because in his professional opinion Japanese Canadians were loyal and law-abiding. Indeed, as the RCMP officer responsible for security in British Columbia, Mead was principally concerned with minimizing the effects of rabble-rousing by extremists like Vancouver's Alderman Halford Wilson.<sup>22</sup> Sparling, representing the Department of National Defence on the committee, thought Keenleyside was pro-Japanese and that Mead was naive to judge Japanese Canadians by the impeccability of their past conduct. Aware that Keenleyside, Mead and Sansom would recommend that Asians be permitted to enlist, Sparling took his opinions directly to the one man he knew could stop the enlistment of Asians: the Minister of Pensions and Health and M.P. for Vancouver Centre, the Honourable Ian Alistair Mackenzie.<sup>23</sup>

Ian Alistair Mackenzie was a colourful figure. A proud Scot who spoke with an accent so thick that those who heard his maiden speech in Parliament joked that it had been made in neither of Canada's official languages, the fifty-one-year-old Mackenzie had had a distinguished career by 1941. Before immigrating to British Columbia in 1914, Mackenzie had been a prize-winning scholar of the classics and of Gaelic language and literature and had graduated first in his class from Edinburgh University's prestigious law school. He stayed in British Columbia for only a year before joining the Seaforth Highlanders of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, with which

he served with distinction at Ypres, Kemmel and the Somme. Joining the headquarters staff of General J.D. Stewart, Mackenzie remained on active service until his return to British Columbia in 1919.

Within eighteen months of his return, Mackenzie was elected to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, beginning a long political career. Nine years later, having served as Provincial Secretary in the B.C. Cabinet, Mackenzie switched to federal politics, accepting the post of Minister of Immigration, Colonization, Soldier Settlement and Indian Affairs in Mackenzie King's Liberal government. Although the Liberals were defeated in the 1930 federal election, Mackenzie won his Vancouver Centre seat and served in the opposition shadow Cabinet, where he showed a mastery of parliamentary tactics. Following the Liberal victory in the 1935 election, an election in which Mackenzie held on to his seat by less than 200 votes, he was appointed Minister of National Defence, a post he held until the outbreak of the Second World War when he was shifted to Pensions and Health.<sup>24</sup>

A personable bachelor, Ian Mackenzie had three flaws: he was fond of alcohol, he was not a strong administrator, and he was, in the words of his close friend, Conservative M.P. and future Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker, "somewhat unreasonable" about Asians.<sup>25</sup> David Lewis, CCF National Secretary in 1941 and future leader of the New Democratic Party, was more blunt in his recollections. "Ian Mackenzie," he recalled, "was a racist, pure and simple."<sup>26</sup> Mackenzie was the impetus behind the Liberal party's anti-Asian campaigns in British Columbia. He was a man who had no qualms about associating himself with hate literature that employed every lie and innuendo in the arsenal of the White Canada Association, literature with slogans like: "A Vote for ANY C.C.F. Candidate is a VOTE TO GIVE the CHINAMAN and JAPANESE the same Voting Right that you have!"<sup>27</sup>

By 1941 Mackenzie had been in politics for twenty-one years. In that entire time, with one notable exception,<sup>28</sup> he had endorsed every anti-Asian proposal raised in the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament and in Cabinet.

While blatantly anti-Asian in his election campaigns in British Columbia, Mackenzie took a more subtle tack in Ottawa. There he preferred to work behind the scenes on Asian matters, as befitted someone who wished to remain a close friend of Canada's most subtle Prime Minister, Mackenzie King. In the interwar years Mackenzie left the ranting and raving to men like Neill and Reid, affecting the posture among his fellow M.P.'s that his anti-Asian stance was simply a political requirement, an unavoidable aberration of B.C. politics. By not allowing his anti-Asian sentiments to intrude into social situations in Ottawa, Mackenzie was able to retain the friendship of men like Diefenbaker, who would later style himself a defender of minorities.

The views Mackenzie did express in Ottawa were often only more explicit versions of the underlying prejudices and presumptions of his colleagues. The fact that non-whites had fewer rights than whites in Canadian society does not appear to have unduly disturbed any of his Cabinet colleagues in 1941. It was a social fact and accepted as such. Most of his colleagues probably felt, as one would later argue, that the role of government was to conform to the existing social fact in racial matters, not to lead the campaign to change that fact.<sup>29</sup> In Ottawa, where Asians were considered only as a minor B.C. matter, Mackenzie was seen as a colourful war hero, a liberal in economic matters, a champion of veterans' rights, and, most importantly, a first-class player in the game of politics.

Mackenzie's successful use of anti-Asian tactics against the CCF in the 1935 election had convinced him that Asian enlistment must be quashed or he would lose his seat to the CCF in the next election. Mackenzie knew that Asian enlistment could undermine him in two ways. Not only would the enlistment of Asians enfranchise a portion of the Asians in his Vancouver Centre constituency, who could be expected to vote CCF, but Asian enlistment might well alienate his support among anti-Asian veterans' groups, diverting their votes to the equally anti-Asian Conservatives. As a political strategist Mackenzie was unwilling to expose himself, and his party, to the pro-Asian charges he had been levelling against the CCF. Consequently, in the privacy of the Cabinet, Mackenzie, reinforced by Sparling's expertise as a representative of the Department of National Defence, supported the political appeals of B.C. Liberal Premier T. Duff Pattullo,<sup>30</sup> to quash Asian enlistment.

Indeed, in the privacy of the Cabinet, Mackenzie virtually dictated Asian Canadian policy. His ability to do so did not derive from any power he might be said to have. Quite the contrary – in the ranking of power and prestige within Cabinet, Mackenzie was inhibited by the fact that he was not a strong administrator. His transfer from the Department of National Defence to the less demanding Pensions and Health at the outbreak of the Second World War was an acknowledgment by King of Mackenzie's administrative limitations. Mackenzie's influence can be attributed instead to his relationship with Prime Minister King, to whom he always deferred, to his reputation as a political strategist, and to the fact that he was the only minister from British Columbia. In a Cabinet that considered the Japanese question to be a minor B.C. problem with political overtones, who from their viewpoint could better guide them than a British Columbian who had a reputation for political astuteness and who, after all, was the only one who cared in the least about the "Japanese problem"?

Cabinet attitudes are perhaps best shown by the actions of the minister of fisheries, J.E. Michaud, in 1940. At that time Michaud asked Mackenzie whether he should continue to restrict the number of licences granted to Japanese Canadian fishermen, all of whom were Canadian nationals. Michaud wrote:

I have always found it difficult to justify this arbitrary legislation against British subjects of Japanese origin. This year in view of the reasons that we are giving for our participation in the European War, it would seem all the more difficult to explain why we are adopting against these British subjects of Japanese origin the technique that Hitler adopted against the Czechs, the Slovaks and the Poles.

Of course I am willing to be guided by your opinion with the assurance that when the time comes you will justify my arbitrary attitude.<sup>31</sup>

While offended by the racism behind the policy of denying fishing licences to Japanese Canadians, Michaud was unwilling to act on his moral convictions. Instead, he was content to accept an immoral but politically expedient policy where the responsibility for that policy was assumed by someone else. No doubt Michaud and his colleagues agreed with Prime Minister King that "it was necessary to have the fundamental principles but their application in relation to both time and space was the essence of politics."<sup>32</sup> In the politically sensitive area of Japanese Canadian policy, "liberals" like Michaud were content to shunt the moral responsibility onto Ian Mackenzie, the



main engineer of Japanese Canadian policy.

Mackenzie's influence strayed beyond the Cabinet through his duties as Minister of National Defence. For instance, in 1938 his civilian Deputy Minister, L.R. LaFleche, wrote to the Chairman of a federal Interdepartmental Committee on Orientals,<sup>33</sup> a committee of senior civil servants studying a number of questions affecting Asians, including internal security, and expressed the view that "it would appear doubtful" that the historical policy of exempting enemy aliens from internment on their own parole

could safely be followed with respect to Japanese nationals in British Columbia. Indeed there seems to be little reason for any assurance as to the peaceful behaviour of even Canadian nationals of Japanese origin at a time when racial feelings will be aroused. It is, therefore, quite possible that action will be required (it seems possible that public sentiment will so demand) to restrain the activities and, consequently, the liberties of such Canadian nationals of Japanese origin whose sympathies may be deemed hostile to this country.

...It follows that the Department of National Defence may someday find itself required to provide facilities for the detention of upwards of 10,000 persons in British Columbia alone.<sup>34</sup>

While acknowledging that enemy aliens were the concern of another department, the RCMP, LaFleche offers no explanation for his presumption that Japanese Canadians were disloyal. Given also that no internal security officer was appointed to the Pacific Command until 1940,<sup>35</sup> it appears that LaFleche was repeating his Minister's personal prejudices and that these prejudices served as a basis for government policy. Given also that there were only 2,000 adult male Japanese aliens in Canada in 1938, the 10,000-figure in the above letter suggests that the possibility of incarcerating Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry in the event of war had already crossed Ian Mackenzie's mind.

The same civil servants again discussed the possible fate of Japanese Canadians in February 1939. This time the forum was the Interdepartmental Committee on the Treatment of Aliens and Alien Property. Restricted by their mandate to discussing only aliens, that committee concluded:

If the enemy should be an Asiatic power, it might be necessary in that contingency, to recommend the internment of nearly all enemy nationals, since it is recognized that public feeling in that section of Canada [B.C.] on the part of Canadian citizens and other Asiatics might render this course necessary, not alone to avoid the danger of espionage and sabotage, but also for the protection of the person and property of enemy aliens.<sup>36</sup>

Even putting aside the question of how or by whom "public feeling" was to be determined, it is clear from the tone of this report that some of Canada's senior civil servants appear to have concluded almost three years prior to the Pearl Harbor attack that Japanese aliens should be interned.

However, the civil service was very much divided on the Japanese question. Some departments were strongly anti-Japanese. For instance, in 1938 the Department of Labour based a report on economic competition between Asians and whites on information supplied by the White Canada

Association, a virulently anti-Asian group. As a consequence, the report officially endorsed the undocumented allegations of the White Canada Association that Asians were “pushing” whites out of certain businesses and were “deliberately depressing the prices of berries, vegetables and poultry to do so.”<sup>37</sup> At the same time the Department of Fisheries proposed a four-year program to drive Japanese Canadians from the fishing industry by withholding fishing licences, even though all Japanese Canadian fishermen were Canadian nationals.<sup>38</sup>

Other departments championed Japanese Canadians. It is perhaps indicative of the attitudes of the government of the day, which did not perceive Japanese Canadians as Canadians, that their main defenders came from within the Department of External Affairs. Within that department the most vocal defender of Japanese Canadians was Dr. Hugh L. Keenleyside, in 1941 the forty-three-year-old Assistant Under-Secretary in charge of the American and Far Eastern Divisions at External Affairs. Keenleyside was a British Columbian. His parents’ Vancouver home had welcomed persons of all races. The liberal values Keenleyside learned as a child were reinforced by his studies at the University of British Columbia and Clark University in Massachusetts, and by his seven years experience in international diplomacy as first secretary at the Canadian legation in Tokyo between 1929 and 1936. That experience gave him an understanding and appreciation of Japanese culture that proved useful during his tenures as Chairman of the Board of Inquiry into illegal Japanese immigration in 1938 and of the Special Committee on Orientals that studied Asian enlistment in 1940.<sup>39</sup>

Both privately and officially Keenleyside sought to modify government policies affecting Asians and to promote equal rights for all Canadians. Prior to the war the forums in which he worked included, in addition to those just cited, the Interdepartmental Committee on Orientals and the Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board of Defence, a board of civilians and military officers that attempted to coordinate the defence planning of Canada and the United States.

In November 1941, as a member of the Permanent Joint Board of Defence, Keenleyside helped to defuse “a vigorous effort...by certain members of the Board to put through a resolution urging the Governments [of Canada and the United States] to deport or to place in custody those ‘elements in the population of Japanese racial origin’ [in the event of hostilities with Japan].”<sup>40</sup> When the “more moderate counsel” of men like Keenleyside prevailed, the board recommended merely that “the two governments should follow policies of a similar character” with respect to their Japanese populations and that a “coincidence of policy” would be useful.<sup>41</sup> Keenleyside’s insistence that governments should practice the principles to which they paid lip-service, however, did not always endear him to his superiors.

His immediate superior, fellow British Columbian Norman Robertson, sympathized with Keenleyside’s position but was not prepared to take such a firm stand. As Prime Minister King’s Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs,<sup>c</sup> in 1941, the thirty-seven-year-old Robertson was aware that King would not tolerate for long an underling who openly opposed his views – even on what King considered a minor matter like the Japanese question. Accordingly, Robertson used subtler methods than Keenleyside. Although the Japanese question was only a small part of his duties, Robertson took pains to arrange that the racists nominated by Ian Mackenzie for committees investigating Asians were balanced by liberals, and to advise King on Asian matters in a way that

\* An Under-Secretary is equivalent to a Deputy Minister. King held two portfolios in 1941: Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Party, and Secretary of State for External Affairs.

appeared to support King's views while injecting cautionary and moderating ideas.<sup>42</sup>

The liberals in the Department of External Affairs had important allies among the most senior officers of both the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the military. Within the RCMP the primary defender of Japanese Canadians was Asst. Comnr. Frederick John Mead. Mead was an Englishman who had joined the Royal North-West Mounted Police before the First World War, starting in the ranks and rising to assistant commissioner by 1938. A highly respected officer, Mead had experience in all aspects of police work and had seen service in all parts of Canada. By 1941 Mead was the force's specialist in security matters, in particular in Communist insurgency.<sup>43</sup>

It was probably in his capacity as an expert in Communist insurgency that Mead first met his main contact with the Japanese minority, Etsuji Morii. Morii was a controversial figure in the Powell Street ghetto in Vancouver. He had, Mead reported, thwarted an attempt by Communists to organize the Japanese fishermen in the 1930s.<sup>44</sup> Morii was an ideal contact as far as the RCMP was concerned. He had a great deal of influence within the ghetto community but was not so respectable as to be unwilling or unable to undertake distasteful tasks in order to protect Japanese Canadians. Morii was both respected and despised by his fellow Japanese Canadians, with the divisions usually falling along generational and ideological lines. The *Issei*, who had lived through the rough pioneer period of Vancouver's history around the turn of the century, usually treated him with respect. They saw him as a product of that age. Morii had arrived in Canada in 1906 at a time when the Japanese population was composed almost entirely of men who worked in seasonal labouring occupations and who had all too often gambled away their earnings in Chinatown. Reasoning that it was better that Japanese lose their money to other Japanese, Morii founded a social club where men could drink and gamble without the dangers that sometimes accompanied gambling in Chinatown.<sup>45</sup> With the arrival of women after 1910 and the evolution of the B.C. Japanese community into a respectable, family-based entity, Morii assumed the role of a "padrone" within the ghetto. He funded martial arts schools from the proceeds of his clubs to promote the Japanese warrior ethic of bushido among the young and to provide young men with a socially acceptable outlet for their energies. He contributed heavily to community drives and organized many of them. He gained a reputation among the *Issei* as a man who would send a portion of a gambler's losses to his wife so that the gambler's family would not suffer unduly. He made his clubs available at a nominal fee to groups like the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League so as not to tax their limited budgets.

Different factions within the Vancouver ghetto reacted to Morii's transformation from a gangster to a *padrone* in different ways. To Christian *Nisei*, who had been taught that gambling was a sin, Morii remained a gangster, out of step with the respectable Christian image they wished their community to have. To the socialist *Issei*, Morii was a fascist who promoted the Japanese warrior ethic. To most other *Issei* in the ghetto, who regarded gambling as a normal part of Japanese culture and the prohibition movement as an amusing aspect of white society, Morii was a man who had assumed useful and necessary roles within the community,<sup>46</sup> the most necessary probably being that of a protector. In this role he stood between the Japanese community and the larger society to prevent unpleasant situations from rebounding on Japanese Canadians. This was the role he assumed with the RCMP, a protecting intermediary contact.

How the role of protector worked is best shown by the way Morii handled Keenleyside's Board of Inquiry in 1938. That inquiry had been intended to defuse extremist charges that



a Japanese army was being smuggled into B.C. Complications arose from the fact that the Washington-British Columbia border had been extremely porous around the turn of the century. The immigrants, both Japanese and non-Japanese, often had no idea for some time after their arrival that Amerika contained two distinct nations. Since they intended to stay only a few years, the formalities of immigration seemed vague and unimportant. By 1938 – and the age of passports and tight immigration – however, *Issei* who had entered Canada from across the U.S. border were technically illegal immigrants.

It fell to Morii, as *padrone* of the community, to minimize the effects of the inquiry. Few *Issei* were prepared to trust that the government would allow them to stay, even though they had been in Canada for over thirty years. More importantly, B.C. racists would be sure to use the existence of an appreciable number of illegal immigrants, even middle-aged ones, as fuel for their anti-Japanese propaganda. Morii accordingly accepted the task of liaising between the inquiry and the Japanese community. In that capacity he supplied a number of the middle-aged illegal immigrants with the name and landing date of a ship whose manifest listed the number and not the names of the Japanese immigrants aboard. Other illegal immigrants chose to retire to Japan rather than try to persuade the authorities to let them stay. In the end only twenty-four were deported.<sup>47</sup>

The RCMP knew of Morii's gambling connections. They also knew that he had been acquitted of murder in the 1920s. It was more important to them that there had been no complaints against him since that time, and that he seemed to be held in high esteem by the Japanese community at large. That esteem was reflected in his position on the executives of the Canadian Japanese Association and the Japanese Welfare Society, and by his role as coordinator of the 1940 Red Feather and Victory Bond drives among Japanese Canadians. The RCMP also knew that Morii's influence among the *Issei* was such that he had been called in by the San Francisco Japanese community to mediate strife within that community in 1936. That fact, and the manner in which he had handled the Board of Inquiry, had impressed the RCMP.<sup>48</sup> What mattered most to them was that Morii appeared to know everything that went on in the Japanese community in B.C. and to be in a position to stop any potential subversion.

In dealing with the RCMP, Morii did not attempt to hide the facts. He acknowledged that there were veterans of the Japanese army and navy in Canada, but he reminded the police that they were former conscripts and should not be considered potential enemies because of their veteran status alone. He acknowledged that there were "hot-headed individuals who might be foolish enough to express their feelings in some way or other," but he guaranteed Mead that they would be "made incapable of committing any harm." Morii emphasized that Japanese Canadians had an impeccable record and had remained calm and quiet in the face of attacks by men like Alderman Wilson. In 1940 Morii assured the Commissioner of the RCMP, S.T. Wood, that "the Japanese believe that their future and that of their children are bound up in the fortunes of the Canadian people and for that reason Canadian interests are their interests."<sup>49</sup>

Mead concurred. "No fear of sabotage need be expected from the Japanese in Canada," Mead reported to RCMP Commissioner in 1940. "I feel this is a broad statement, at the same time I know it to be true." Mead was prepared to accept Morii's assurances that "no untoward incident would happen... should hostilities develop as a result of the strained relations now existing between Great Britain and the Japanese empire."<sup>50</sup> The greatest danger, Mead felt, lay in the "provocative and at times like these, downright dangerous agitation" by anti-Japanese individuals like Wilson.

In the military, the Chief of General Staff in 1940, Major General H.G.D. Crerar, agreed with Mead,<sup>51</sup> as did his successor, Maj. Gen. Ken Stuart, and Stuart's Vice-Chief, Lieutenant General Maurice A. Pope. "At no point during the war or before it," Pope would recall, "had I worried about the presence of the Japanese, fellow citizens or otherwise, on the Pacific Coast."<sup>52</sup> Stuart was equally convinced that Japanese Canadians were loyal. "From the army point of view," he informed Pope after the outbreak of the Pacific War, "I cannot see that Japanese Canadians constitute the slightest menace to national security."<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately the opinions of Canada's senior military officers did not count for much with the Prime Minister. As early as August 1940 King had scorned the General Staff's assessment that an invasion of the West Coast by Japan was impossible. When forwarding that assessment to B.C. Premier Duff Pattullo, King had commented: "This is an official estimate. Like you I am far from believing that we can take anything for granted, vis-a-vis the Orient."<sup>54</sup> By November 1941 King's mistrust of the military had deepened over the issue of conscription for overseas service. The Prime Minister had always considered that Canadian military policy should concentrate on air and naval forces, and on industrial production.<sup>55</sup> By 1941, however, British planners were roughing out plans for an invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe, assuming that it would have to be done without the help of the still neutral United States. Accordingly, they proposed to use large numbers of Commonwealth and colonial troops. Canada's expected contribution was four divisions. In July of 1941 the War Cabinet Committee had approved the mobilization of the required four divisions for overseas service and an additional two divisions for home defence, raising the question of how the men for the overseas divisions were to be supplied. The military and King's Minister of Defence, J.L. Ralston, favoured conscription.<sup>56</sup> But King knew that conscription for overseas service would destroy the Liberal party in Quebec. Since one-third of the Liberal Members of Parliament were from Quebec, King in November 1941 was determined that the military would be thwarted and overseas conscription avoided at any and all cost.

Also by November 1941 King had recognized that peril on the Pacific Coast would marginally facilitate his opposition to overseas conscription. A Pacific war, he is said to have commented in early November, would mean the mobilization of forces for deployment on the West Coast, thus precluding the sending of conscripts to Europe.<sup>57</sup> Obsessed with the conscription issue, King in the winter of 1941-42 was unlikely to act on the advice of his chiefs of staff if that advice conflicted with his political needs.

By November 1941 the stage was set. In a political climate where equal rights for non-white minorities was perceived as a politically dangerous proposition, Japanese Canadians had placed their trust in their government, unaware of the degree to which that government could already be expected to betray them, and equally unaware that government policy in regard to them was largely shaped by the opinions of a racist politician. Although supported by Canada's senior police and military officers, Japanese Canadians had no friends among the politicians who would determine their fate.

**Notes**

1. Shoyama remained English-language editor of the *New Canadian* until he joined the Canadian Army's S-20 Intelligence Unit in 1945. Following his discharge, he joined the Saskatchewan civil service as executive secretary to the Economic Development Council. In the 1960s he moved to the Department of Finance in Ottawa, rising to deputy minister in 1971. For a full account of the negative aspect of race relations in B.C. before World War II see W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1978.
2. See Patricia E. Roy, "The Oriental 'Menace' in British Columbia," *Studies in Canadian Social History*, edited by Michel Horn and Ronald Saborin. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974, p. 292.
3. For a full account of the *Nisei* dilemma, see Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976.; F.E. La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese in World War II*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948.; and C.H. Young, H.R. Reid and W.A. Carrothers, *The Japanese Canadians*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1939.
4. *New Canadian*, 21 November 1941.
5. *Ibid.*
6. For examples see: C.E. Hope and W.K. Earle, "The Oriental Threat," *Maclean's*; J.E. Sears, "Orientals and the C.C.F.: A Radio Address," 4 October 1935, Angus MacInnis Collection, Box 41, UBC Archives; and *New Canadian*, 14 February 1941.
7. The best examples of these men in action can be found in Canada, House of Commons, Special Committee on Elections and Franchise Acts, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 11 March 1937.
8. For a full discussion of the evolution of anti-Asian sentiment on the West Coast, see Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion*, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966; and John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, New York: Atheneum, 1975. Although both discuss the American case, their arguments are applicable to Canada. For a chronology of discrimination against Japanese Canadians, see Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*.
9. For a more complete development of the thesis that British Columbians feared Asians because they thought them superior, not inferior, see Patricia E. Roy, "British Columbia's Fear of Asians: 1900-1950," *Social History*, pp. 161-72.
10. For further discussion of the racist propaganda affecting the Japanese minority, see Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*; and La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese*.
11. For the historical role of the Japanese consul, see M.A. Sunahara, "Historical Leadership Trends Among Japanese Canadians: 1940-1950," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, pp. 1-16; Yuji Ichioka, "Japanese Associations and the Japanese Government," *Pacific Historical Review*, pp. 409-37; and Roger Daniels, "The Japanese," in John Higham, ed., *Ethnic Leadership in America*, pp. 39-45.
12. See Sunahara, "Historical Leadership Trends"; M.A. Sunahara, "Federal Policy and the Japanese Canadians," M.A. thesis; and J.M. Read, "The Prewar Japanese Canadians of Maple Ridge," M.A. thesis.
13. Interviews with former leaders of the JCCL.
14. Interview by Canadian Army Intelligence with Asst. Comnr. F.J. Mead, Microreel 629A, "Evacuation of Japanese," Provincial Archives of British Columbia (PABC).
15. Interview with J.W. Pickersgill, Ottawa, Ont.
16. Interview with Hon. T.C. Douglas, Ottawa, Ont.
17. *New Canadian*, 10 January 1941.
18. Interview with J.W. Pickersgill.
19. W.L.M. King Diary, W.L.M. King Papers, MG27J2, PAC, 6 August 1945.
20. *New Canadian*, 21 November 1941.

21. Macintosh had advocated the deportation of all Japanese Canadians in 1938. See Patricia E. Roy, "Educating the East," *B.C. Studies*, pp. 64, 68. Angus's views may be found in Henry F. Angus, "Liberalism Stoops to Conquer," *Canadian Forum*. For an assessment of the others I am indebted to Dr. H.L. Keenleyside.
22. Report, Mead to Comnr. S.T. Wood, RCMP, 21 August 1940. Department of National Defence Papers, RG 24, vol. 2730, file HQS-5199x, PAC.
23. Report, Mead to Comnr. S.T. Wood, RCMP, 21 August 1940. Department of National Defence Papers, RG 24, vol. 2730, file HQS-5199x, PAC.
24. *Who's Who in Canada*. 1945; King Diary, 19 January 1946; Bruce Hutchinson, *The Incredible Canadian: A Candid Portrait of Mackenzie King*, Toronto: Longmans, 1970, p. 216; Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King, 1924-1932*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963, pp. 332, 358; *Vancouver Sun*, 4 June 1938.
25. Interview with Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker, Ottawa, Ont.
26. Interview with David Lewis, Ottawa, Ont.
27. See *Vancouver Sun*, 7 October 1935; and Sears, "Orientals and the C.C.F." The latter is repeated in part in Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 27 February 1936, p. 575.
28. The exception was Mackenzie's support in 1929 for the extension of the provincial franchise to Asian veterans of the First World War. In this case Mackenzie voted in accordance with the policy of the Great War Veterans Association, of which he was a past president. For Mackenzie's views on Asians, see the Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIB5, vols. 24, 25 and 32, PAC. Many of these documents were written to political colleagues. For Mackenzie's private views, I am indebted to Robert England and Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker. For a public statement, see Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 17 December 1945, p. 3704.
29. Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour, as quoted in *Nisei Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 2, 28 August 1945.
30. For Pattullo's appeal against induction because it would enfranchise Asians in B.C., see the T.D. Pattullo Papers, Add MSS 3, vol. 75, PABC.
31. J.E. Michaud to Ian Mackenzie, 17 January 1940, Ian Mackenzie Papers MG27IIB5, vol. 19, file 29-7, PAC.
32. J.W. Pickersgill and D.F. Forster, *The Mackenzie King Record, Vol IV, 1947-1948*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970., p. 235.
33. The members of the committee were: F.C. Blair, Director of Immigration (Chair); Inspector Armitage, RCMP; Dr. R.H. Coats, Dominion Bureau of Statistics; Lt. Gen. M.A. Pope, National Defence; P.L. Young, Customs and Excise; A.J. Whitmore, Fisheries; R.A. Rigg, Labour; O.D. Skelton and Dr. H.L. Keenleyside, External Affairs.
34. L.R. Lafleche, Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence, to F.C. Blair, Director of Immigration, Ottawa, 2 June 1938, extract from HQS 7368, vol. 1, Microreel 629A, PABC.
35. W.L.M. King to T.D. Pattullo, 21 August 1940, T.D. Pattullo Papers, Add MSS 3, vol. 75, file 8, PABC.
36. Canada, Interdepartmental Committee on the Treatment of Aliens and Alien Property, *First Interim Report*, 9 February 1939, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 32, file X-52, p. 2., PAC.
37. Rigg to Interdepartmental Committee on Orientals, Extract from HQS 7368, vol. 1, folio 39 on Microreel 629A, PABC.
38. Report, Whitmore to Interdepartmental Committee on Orientals, extracted from HQS 7368, vol. 1, folio 50 on Microreel 629A, PABC.
39. *Who's Who in Canada*, 1945; interview with H.L. Keenleyside, Victoria, B.C. For the general view of Keenleyside's Division, see Escott Reid, "The Conscience of a Diplomat," *Queen's Quarterly*, pp. 574-89.
40. H.L. Keenleyside, "The Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board of Defence: 1940-1945," *International Journal*, vol. 16 (1960-61), p. 63.
41. Journal of the Permanent Joint Board of Defence, 23rd Meeting, 10 and 11 November 1941, King Papers, MG24J4, vol. 320, file 3370, PAC.
42. The best illustration of this tactic is the correspondence between Ian Mackenzie and Norman Robertson about appointments to the Standing Committee on Orientals in the spring of 1942. See External Affairs Records, 773-B-40C, EAA; interviews with Keenleyside, and Henry F. Angus, Vancouver, B.C.

43. Vernon A.M. Kemp, *Without Fear, Favour or Affection: Thirty-Five Years With the R.C.M.P.* (Toronto: Longman, Green and Co., 1958), pp. 235–36; Nora and William Kelly, *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police: A Century of History: 1873–1973* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1973), pp. 145, 149–150; Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Commissioner's Report, 1938–46* (Ottawa: 1939–47); interview with Keenleyside.
44. Mead to Wood, 21 August 1940, loc. cit.
45. For the early character of the Vancouver community, see Kazuo Ito, *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigration in North America*, Seattle: Hokubei Hyakunen Sakura Jikkoiin-kai, 1973; and Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*.
46. Interviews by the author.
47. Interviews by the author; Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Commissioner's Report, 1939*, p. 81.
48. Mead to Wood, 21 August 1941, loc. cit.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. Maj. Gen. H.G.D. Crerar, Chief of General Staff, to S.T. Wood, 2 September 1940, Department of National Defence Papers, RG24, vol. 2730, file HQS-4199x, PAC.
52. Maurice A. Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians: The Memoirs of Lt. Gen. Maurice A. Pope*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962, p. 177.
53. *Ibid.*
54. King to Pattullo, 21 August 1940, loc. cit.
55. C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government: The War Policies of Canada, 1939–1945*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962, p. 43.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 44. Ironically, neither Pope nor Stuart, who was appointed chief of general staff on 3 December 1941, favoured conscription.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 47.



## II: The Decision to Uproot Japanese Canadians

The Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and Hong Kong on 7 December 1941 devastated Japanese Canadians. They were shocked that a state of war existed, amazed at the tactic that had precipitated that war, and fearful of what war would mean for themselves, both as individuals and as a group. Some were proud that Japan had shown such strength and ingenuity, and thought it meant that Japan might emerge victorious. Most were appalled. It was one thing to take on a weak and divided China<sup>1</sup>. It was quite another to so directly confront the American colossus. Gathering in their homes in small groups of family and friends, Japanese Canadians on December 7 could only speculate on the meaning of the attacks, on the outcome of the war, and, most importantly, on how the government and the public in British Columbia would react.<sup>2</sup>

In both Ottawa and British Columbia the authorities responded with deliberate action. Within hours the federal Cabinet declared war on Japan for “wantonly and treacherously” attacking British territory at Hong Kong, attacks described as “a threat to the defence and freedom of Canada.” At the same time, the Cabinet issued a statement urging calm, counselling against anti-Japanese demonstrations in British Columbia, and expressing its confidence in the loyalty of Japanese aliens and Canadian-born Japanese in B.C.<sup>3</sup>

On December 8 Norman Robertson, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, discussed the Japanese question with the American ambassador to Canada, Jay Pierrepont Moffat. Moffat described that meeting in his journal. Robertson expressed the hope, Moffat wrote

that the two Governments would be able to concert as to their policies in regard to interning Japanese citizens. There would, of course, be a number of individual internments here, but the Government had hoped not to have to intern all Japanese. However that might be difficult in view of the treacherous nature of the Japanese attack, the evidence of premeditation, the news reports coming from Latin American countries that they had interned all Japanese residents, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Robertson seemed concerned that in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack the government might act precipitously and with undue harshness with respect to Japanese Canadians.

On the West Coast, defence decisions taken in conjunction with the Americans as early as 1938 were quickly implemented. Thirty-one Japanese aliens were taken into custody by the RCMP.<sup>5</sup> A further seven were subsequently picked up on the suggestion of unspecified Japanese Canadian leaders. The detained men were judo instructors, veterans of the Imperial Japanese Army and minor officials in local Japanese associations. Two RCMP officers visited the Secretary of the Japanese-language schools, Tsutae Sato, and obtained his ready agreement that the language schools and the vernacular press should close in order to minimize the danger of a white backlash



against the Japanese offensive. Like their German and Italian counterparts, Japanese aliens were ordered to re-register<sup>6</sup> with the RCMP. Finally, all fishing vessels operated by Japanese Canadians were ordered by radio into the nearest port.<sup>7</sup>

At dawn on December 8 the Royal Canadian Navy began to impound the 1,200 vessels in the Japanese Canadian fishing fleet. Preassigned naval vessels proceeded from outport to outport, disabling beached vessels and escorting the rest to assembly points at Prince Rupert, Nanaimo and New Westminster.<sup>8</sup> As Shoyama had predicted, the impounding of the Japanese Canadian fishing fleet was officially explained as a defensive measure.

The Japanese Canadian fishermen, all of whom were Canadian nationals, willingly cooperated in the roundup of their vessels. Their cooperation, however, was not without bitterness as they witnessed the mishandling of their craft during the long and difficult trips to the assembly points. Initially the inexperienced naval personnel lashed the vessels in double lines and towed them in a manner that caused them to collide together and to be swamped by the sea.<sup>9</sup> Ordered into their vessels without notice and uninformed of their destination, many of the fishermen were inadequately clothed and provisioned for the long, cold trip down the coast to New Westminster.

The bitterness of the fishermen deepened upon arrival in New Westminster. There they found that no provision had been made to transport them back to their waiting families, many of whom had no idea where they had gone. In addition, the facilities for holding the vessels were woefully inadequate. The vessels were arriving at a rate of 125 a day; in the absence of a supervising naval officer, the weary fishermen and their naval escorts were required to moor them as best they could. The result was a jumble in which the vessels were moored 14 abreast to the Annieville dyke, without regard to their respective size or relative draught at low tide. As a result, several hundred grounded at low tide, sustaining hull damage and forcing larger vessels over onto smaller ones. By the time they were re-moored six to eight weeks later, 162 had sunk.<sup>10</sup>

Within five days of the impounding of the fishing fleet, others felt the immediate effects of the war. The Canadian Pacific Railway began discharging its section hands and porters. The example of the CPR was quickly followed by the major hotels, the Vancouver Club and sawmills in Vancouver. Japanese Canadian businesses slumped, and vandals broke the windows of a few stores and made a clumsy attempt to burn down a Japanese rooming house, prompting insurance companies to cancel fire insurance policies on buildings owned by Japanese Canadians.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the growing unemployment, Japanese Canadians were both relieved and optimistic. Leading figures in the Vancouver Japanese community expressed their keen appreciation to the RCMP for the steps taken to protect them, as they had feared that irresponsible Caucasians might attack them.<sup>12</sup> The *Nisei* showed their optimism in letters to the Prime Minister in which they pledged their loyalty and again requested the privilege of serving in Canada's armed forces.<sup>13</sup> "We are taking it in our stride," a *Nisei* mother and reporter for the *New Canadian*, Muriel Fujiwara Kitagawa, informed her brother, a student at the University of Toronto, in mid-December 1941:

We are so used to wars and alarms, and we have been tempered by anti-feelings these long years.... The majority of the people are decent and fair-minded, and they say so in letters too, and in opinions in the editorials. The RCMP is our friend too, for they, more than anyone else, know how blameless and helpless we are.... I personally have had no change in my relationship with my neighbours.... Most of the *hakujin* [whites] deplore



the war but do not change to their known Japanese friends. It is the small businesses that are most affected, like dressmakers, the corner store, etc., because the clientele are rather shy of patronizing in public such places whatever their private thoughts may be.... We are Canadians and can expect decent treatment from decent people.... Let us not think of the dark side, but hope for the best.<sup>14</sup>

Even as Kitagawa emphasized the positive, she was painfully aware that the attack on Pearl Harbor had given those who hated Japanese Canadians an excuse to parade their hatred. While she could rationalize that such people were silly, absurd and uninformed, the lies, insults and attacks on Japanese Canadian loyalty galled her.<sup>15</sup> The renewed attacks were fuelled by the conclusions such people drew from the events following December 7. The fishing fleet had been impounded as a “defensive measure,” a measure which “proved” the fishermen were traitors. There were the almost daily warnings of impending Japanese attacks emanating from the panic-ridden and amateurish Western Defense Command Headquarters in San Francisco, warnings that “proved” that B.C. was in danger of invasion. Most importantly, there was the corroboration of the rumours of sabotage at Pearl Harbor by no less than the American secretary of the navy, Frank Knox. Returning on December 15 from a whirlwind inspection of the damages at Pearl Harbor, Knox unthinkingly and erroneously described the December 7 attack as “the most effective fifth column work that has come out of this war since Norway.”<sup>16</sup>

Knox’s remark stimulated an immediate change in the editorial policies of most British Columbia papers. After the Pearl Harbor attack the major newspapers, as Shoyama had predicted, had called for calm and tolerance. While conceding that some Japanese Canadians might be disloyal, they had assured their readers that the RCMP had the situation under control, and they had reminded them that Canada’s quarrel was “with Japan, not with the Japanese nationals here or people of Japanese blood.”<sup>17</sup> But following Knox’s statement, editorial attitudes changed. Typical of the ensuing articles was the Vancouver *Sun*’s December 16 editorial that warned that the fate of Japanese Canadians would depend on their own conduct and that, at the slightest evidence of sabotage or lack of cooperation, British Columbia’s Japanese should be interned.<sup>18</sup>

The B.C. press, unlike its American counterpart, exercised restraint through much of December. Its discussion of the Japanese problem centred on the question of whether Japanese Canadians should be allowed to continue fishing. Generally the press supported the demands of the United Federal Fishermen’s Union that the Japanese be expelled from the fishing industry. Demands for the internment of all or part of the minority were confined almost exclusively to the often unsigned letters-to-the-editor.<sup>19</sup>

With the fall of Hong Kong and the capture of two thousand Canadian troops on Christmas day, organized opposition to the Japanese minority crystallized. Throughout the 1930s, while Nazi propagandists had been promoting the “big lie” of a Jewish conspiracy to overthrow Germany, B.C.’s public figures had promoted the “big lie” of a Japanese conspiracy to overthrow British Columbia. As each victory made Imperial Japan seem more invincible and B.C.’s defences more inadequate, the same public figures fanned public prejudice and criticized the federal government for failing to take drastic measures against Canada’s Japanese minority. Vancouver’s Alderman Wilson not only personally demanded harsher measures against Japanese Canadians including expulsion but also organized the Pacific Coast Security League in order to better promote his

racist views.<sup>20</sup> B.C.'s new Premier, Liberal John Hart, and his Conservative Attorney General, R.A. Maitland, publicly demanded that Ottawa remove the menace of Fifth Column activity from B.C.<sup>21</sup> The mayors of five Vancouver Island communities demanded the internment of all Japanese Canadians. Several Members of Parliament from British Columbia ominously declared that both the federal government and the Japanese would suffer if drastic action were not undertaken immediately.<sup>22</sup> Even the bulk of the Standing Committee on Orientals aligned themselves with Premier Hart against the Japanese minority. No longer constrained by the moderating influences of Prof. Henry Angus, who had gone to Ottawa as a special assistant to the Department of External Affairs, Mayor F.J. Hume, Lt. Col. A.W. Sparling, and Lt. Col. Macgregor Macintosh announced on January 5 that they favoured the internment of all male Japanese Canadians of military age.<sup>23</sup>

The anti-Japanese propaganda had infected the military, notably Maj. Gen. R.O. Alexander, Commanding-Officer-in-Chief, Pacific Command. Alexander was in close personal contact with both Premier Hart and Lieutenant Colonel Sparling, whose prejudices against Japanese Canadians he shared. Following private discussions with Hart and Sparling, Alexander wrote the Chief of General Staff in Ottawa on December 30 in support of the position of B.C.'s anti-Japanese politicians. Alexander urged the internment of Japanese males of military age as a means of calming the local population and of preventing the "inter-racial riots and bloodshed" that he thought might follow scheduled anti-Japanese demonstrations.<sup>24</sup> Alexander did not tell his superiors that the demonstrations in question were being organized by the Canadian Legion.

Alexander's superiors in Ottawa, while aware of a certain potential for violence by the white population, were not impressed with Alexander's assessment. To the General Staff, punishing the victim was not the way Canadian justice was supposed to operate. In their opinion it was Alexander's duty "to block the holding of such demonstrations and parades. These things should not be allowed to get started and the most severe penalties provided by the appropriate laws should be invoked against any person or persons who insist on going ahead with such subversive and disloyal activities."<sup>25</sup>

Alexander's position was in direct opposition to that of the General Staff, who, unlike Alexander, possessed the entire defence picture. The attack on Pearl Harbor had indeed increased the dangers along Canada's coasts, but it had affected the east coast far more than the west coast. With the American entry into the war, the Pacific coast had gained the added protection of American naval and air patrols, while the East Coast was now exposed to the full fury of the German submarines, which had previously operated only in mid-Atlantic in accordance with Hitler's efforts to keep the United States neutral. The only danger to the Pacific Coast lay in the remote possibility of small harassment raids by Japanese forces landing from submarines.<sup>26</sup> Even Alexander admitted that at its worst the anticipated scale of attack by the Japanese would be limited to:

bombardment by one capital ship, by 2 8-inch gun cruisers or by one merchant raider mounting medium guns. Attack by minelaying craft, submarines, small surface craft and small underwater craft. Attack by small raiding parties, sea-borne or air-borne. Light to medium scale bombing by ship-borne aircraft on coastal and inland objectives. Slight risk of torpedo and gas attack from aircraft.<sup>27</sup>

British Columbia insecurities, as far as the General Staff was concerned, were totally unfounded. "At times," Lt. Gen. Maurice A. Pope would recall, "I almost hoped that the Japanese would attempt a raid of some kind, for this would have been repulsed and, most assuredly, our people would have recovered their balance."<sup>28</sup>

On 8 January 1942 those who believed in the loyalty of Japanese Canadians and those who hated them clashed in Ottawa. The occasion was the Conference on Japanese Problems, chaired by the ubiquitous Ian Mackenzie. Attending in support of the demands of B.C.'s politicians were Hume, Sparling and Macintosh of the Standing Committee on Orientals; B.C.'s Minister of Labour, George S. Pearson; and Comnr. T.W.S. Parsons of the B.C. Provincial Police. Before leaving British Columbia, all the B.C. delegates had pledged publicly to press for the suspension of Japanese Canadian fishing licences, the sale of Japanese Canadian fishing vessels to non-Japanese, and the internment of all male Japanese Canadians of military age. Supporting Japanese Canadians in Ottawa were Norman Robertson, under-secretary for external affairs; Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, head of the American and Far Eastern Divisions at External Affairs; H.F. Angus and Escott Reid, Keenleyside's special assistants; Col. S.T. Wood, commissioner of the RCMP, and Asst. Comnr. F.J. Mead; Lt. Gen. Maurice A. Pope, vice chief of general staff; Commodore H.E. Reid, deputy chief of naval staff; and representatives of the Departments of Labour and Fisheries, and the Office of the Press Censor.<sup>29</sup> Convinced that the measures already undertaken were more than adequate, and fearful that further discrimination might result in retaliations against Canadian prisoners of war in Japanese hands, the military, the RCMP and the civil servants hoped the conference would allay apprehensions in British Columbia.

They were to be disappointed. The British Columbia delegation absolutely refused to accept the RCMP opinion that Japanese Canadians were loyal. Unanimously they declared that they did not trust persons of Japanese racial origin and that they considered the continuing presence of Japanese Canadians in B.C. a menace to public safety. Even if the RCMP were correct and the minority harmless, they argued, it made no difference. Indoctrinated by years of anti-Japanese propaganda, the people of B.C. could not possibly be convinced that Japanese Canadians were not a menace. Declaring that anti-Japanese riots might well break out C a possibility the police did not deny C B.C.'s representatives demanded the removal of all Japanese from the Pacific Coast.<sup>30</sup> Besides, one B.C. delegate conceded privately to Maurice Pope, the war afforded a "heaven-sent opportunity to rid themselves of the Japanese economic menace for ever more."<sup>31</sup> (Pope's emphasis.) "They spoke of the Japanese Canadians," Escott Reid, a special assistant at External Affairs, would recall, "in the way that the Nazis would have spoken about Jewish-Germans. When they spoke, I felt in that committee room the physical presence of evil."<sup>32</sup>

The situation improved only slightly on the second day of the conference. That day started badly with the B.C. delegation rejecting the argument that racial discrimination was not only unjust but inefficient and, as such, detrimental to the war effort. British Columbia, they retorted, had a surplus of labour, and white workingmen, convinced of their untrustworthiness, would refuse to work with the Japanese despite any appeal the government might make. Only Keenleyside's appeal for moderation for the sake of British subjects in the hands of the Japanese had any effect on the B.C. delegates. Reluctantly they agreed to drop their demands for the internment of all adult male Japanese Canadians, demanding instead the internment of only the aliens. The internment

of male Japanese aliens, they argued, was the minimum necessary to satisfy the B.C. public and to prevent riots.<sup>33</sup> The RCMP, the civil servants and the military, however, rejected the idea that Japanese aliens should be sacrificed on the altar of B.C. public opinion.

The conference closed with bitterness and division. While able to agree on suspending Japanese fishing licences, selling the fishing vessels to non-Japanese, prohibiting shortwave radios to Japanese aliens, and forming a civilian service corps to employ Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry, neither side would give way on the issue of the internment of Japanese aliens. At the concluding meeting B.C.'s Provincial Secretary George Pearson reiterated the threats of the B.C. delegates. The federal government, he warned, "could not expect the government of British Columbia to be enthusiastic or very effective in trying to 'sell' " Japanese Canadian policies if the views of the B.C. delegation were ignored.<sup>34</sup> For most the conference left a bitter taste. As Lt. Gen. Maurice A. Pope later commented: "I came away from that meeting feeling dirty all over."<sup>35</sup>

The arguments of the members of the British Columbia delegation were based on their assessment of B.C. public opinion. They took no surveys but presumed that public opinion conformed with their own prejudices and with the rhetoric of their previous election campaigns. They therefore concluded that all British Columbians were smouldering with hatred for, and fear of, Japanese Canadians.

The records of Prime Minister King tell a very different story. Between 17 December 1941 and 10 January 1942, when the matter went to Cabinet, the Office of the Prime Minister received only forty-five letters and resolutions on the subject of Japanese Canadians, twenty-eight of which demanded the incarceration of all Japanese Canadians or of only Japanese aliens. Of the rest, six wanted Japanese Canadian fishing licences suspended, four wanted to use unemployed Japanese as labour in the interior of B.C., one wanted Japanese Canadians expelled from the food industry, and six wrote in support of the loyalty of Japanese Canadians.<sup>36</sup>

Although most of B.C.'s Japanese population lived on the Mainland, in or around Vancouver, of the twenty-eight letters and resolutions demanding the removal of all or part of the Japanese minority, only eight had come from the Mainland. The remaining twenty came from communities in and around Victoria, where the Japanese population was comparatively small. One town with a strong anti-Asian reputation, Duncan, B.C., by itself contributed four. Politicians and their riding associations were responsible for five letters and resolutions, while veterans and air raid precaution groups, mostly from the Victoria area, accounted for seven of the total.<sup>37</sup> Anti-Japanese agitation in January 1942, it would appear, was confined almost totally to certain specific and traditionally anti-Asian groups near Victoria, groups without contact with Japanese Canadians, groups whose support politicians sought, and groups that had similarly agitated against German Canadians in 1940. Letters and resolutions that demanded the removal of Japanese Canadians from people who actually lived among them were conspicuous by their absence.

In contrast to B.C.'s politicians, Ira Dilworth, the CBC's Vancouver representative and a more disinterested observer, felt that the public in general was calm but that self-seeking individuals were deliberately fomenting trouble. "Most people," he reported on 6 January 1942,

have been taking a reasonable attitude toward the Japanese residents in B.C., but there has been a concerted and organized attempt on the part of certain individuals to disturb the good relations which exist and to foment trouble between Japanese and White

Canadians.... Individuals such as Alderman Wilson and Capt. Macgregor Macintosh, who set themselves at the head of organizations to take direct action, are, it seems to me, in danger of wrecking the whole constitutional framework of our state.... I believe that their activities in most instances arise either from a desire to serve their own interests by gaining notoriety, or from a limited understanding of the situation.<sup>38</sup>

Concerned “that the minority be treated with justice and fairness,” Dilworth urged that the CBC “should not leave undone anything in our power which would help to stabilize the situation.” Within a few days, Wilson verified Dilworth’s worst fears by submitting to the *Victoria Daily Colonist* a “dangerous and entirely false report... of an alleged clash at Prince Rupert between personnel of the Canadian Navy and Japanese fishermen.”<sup>39</sup>

Now the federal Cabinet had to decide the fate of Japanese Canadians. They made their decision on the basis of the conference report written and presented by their acknowledged expert on Asian matters, Ian Mackenzie. As a man who believed that his political career depended on an anti-Asian stance, Mackenzie threw the full force of his considerable influence behind the demands of the B.C. delegation. His arguments were subtle. Submitting a report that masked the strong sentiments of the B.C. delegation, Mackenzie played up the danger of rioting by the white population. Diplomatically rephrasing B.C.’s blatant demands, he proposed that Japanese aliens be “transferred” to work camps “without necessarily being interned.” Such a policy, he urged, would remove the 1,700 male Japanese aliens from the West Coast, while the Canadian-born and naturalized would be “controlled” by the proposed Civilian Service Corps, a corps Mackenzie assumed they would readily join to prove their loyalty to Canada.<sup>40</sup>

To neutralize the expected objections of senior military and police officials, Mackenzie appealed to Prime Minister King’s distrust of the Ottawa military establishment. As noted earlier, King in the winter of 1941-42 was locked in conflict with the military establishment on the issue of overseas conscription. To King, conscription, like Japanese Canadian policy, was an issue to be decided in the political, and not the military, arena. As an ally of King’s in the conscription crisis, Ian Mackenzie was well aware of this bias. Mackenzie thus included in his presentation selected excerpts from a letter from Major General Alexander (the Officer-in-Command, Pacific Coast) to the Chiefs of General Staff that supported the B.C. arguments. At the same time Mackenzie, or his supporters in British Columbia, arranged for Alexander, to make a formal request for the internment of all male enemy aliens.<sup>41</sup> While the brass in Ottawa opposed B.C.’s demands, Mackenzie deftly implied, the soldier on the ground supported them.

Alexander’s formal request for the removal of all Japanese and Axis male aliens between sixteen and fifty mystified his superiors. Maj. Gen. Maurice Pope was “unable to agree to such a drastic step, as Vancouver is subject only to bombardment and the Japanese, of whom 80 per cent are Canadian nationals, are unarmed.”<sup>42</sup> Pope’s confidence was reinforced by the assurances of the American Federal Bureau of Investigation that “both in Honolulu and at Manila Japanese residents had behaved correctly from a U.S. point of view during the attacks on those places.” The position of West Coast Japanese Americans, FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover had assured RCMP Commissioner Wood “was entirely satisfactory.”<sup>43</sup>

In fact, the position of Japanese Americans was under attack. The removal of enemy aliens



from certain coastal areas became American policy in early January 1942. The new American policy had evolved from the dangerous mixing of traditional West Coast racism with the tactics of a military clique centred in the office of the Provost Marshall General, Maj. Gen. Allen W. Gullion. This clique, with the support of senior War Department officials, was attempting to build an administrative empire by transferring control over enemy aliens from the Justice Department to the War Department. In the Commander of the Western Defense Command in San Francisco, Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt, Gullion found a very confused and rabidly anti-Japanese commander who could be persuaded that enemy aliens should not be left under civilian control. He also found a West Coast populace with well-developed racist traditions and fearful of a Japanese conspiracy to overthrow the Pacific coast states. To force the transfer of jurisdiction over enemy aliens, Gullion had been using DeWitt and West Coast politicians to pressure the Justice Department for stronger measures against enemy aliens, a task many of the politicians were happy to undertake, if only for the publicity it afforded them for the 1942 elections. Aware that the Justice Department opposed the creation of a massive internal bureaucracy, DeWitt and Gullion's subordinate, Col. Karl R. Bendetsen, met on 4 January 1942 with federal and local officials to demand stronger measures against enemy aliens, including their exclusion from the Pacific Coast through a pass-and-permit system. The failure of Justice to comply with this demand, Gullion felt, would supply the leverage he needed to effect the transfer of responsibility for aliens to his own office in the War Department. To his surprise, however, Justice Department officials agreed to remove enemy aliens from whatever coastal areas DeWitt desired, effectively frustrating Gullion's ambition.<sup>44</sup>

The American position was important because Canada and the United States had previously agreed to follow parallel policies with respect to their Japanese minorities. The agreement did not require them to consult each other when deciding policy, but only to keep each other informed of policy changes in order to bring about "a practical coincidence of policy."<sup>45</sup> While the Americans never took this agreement very seriously, Prime Minister King did, at least as long as it served his purposes to use American policy to justify Canadian policy.

On 14 January 1942 the Cabinet appeased the demands of the British Columbia delegation in their entirety. "For reasons of national security," Japanese Canadians, although citizens, were to be prohibited from fishing for the duration of the war. Their vessels were to be sold to non-Japanese. Shortwave radios were denied to all Japanese aliens, and sales of gasoline and dynamite to any Japanese Canadian were to be strictly controlled. Most importantly, all male enemy aliens of military age were to be removed from the coastal defence zone before 1 April 1942 under an Order-in-Council that gave the Minister of Justice complete power over enemy aliens in Canada and the right to detain any resident of Canada without trial on the grounds of national security.<sup>46</sup> Although broad and unprecedented, the new powers were not intended to be used against German and Italian aliens. As in the United States, their sole purpose was to effect the removal from the Pacific Coast of all male Japanese aliens of military age and "between 800 and 1,000 Canadian citizens" of Japanese ancestry.<sup>47</sup>

British Columbia was pleased. The B.C. press and politicians heralded the new policies as wise policies that showed that Ottawa had finally understood B.C.'s Japanese problem. Congratulating the government on its "calm and common sense view of the situation," the press predicted a rapid

end to the Japanese “menace” in British Columbia.<sup>48</sup> The returning B.C. delegates assumed full credit for the new policies. Ottawa’s attitude, Mayor Hume reported to the welcoming crowd, “was that there was a lot of wild hysteria on the Pacific Coast and that the situation as far as the Japanese were concerned had been grossly exaggerated.”<sup>49</sup> Only with great difficulty and the help of George Pearson and Ian Mackenzie, he claimed, had B.C.’s views finally been accepted. Reassured that the federal government had finally understood the dangers they had long seen in the presence of the Japanese minority, B.C.’s press and politicians retired in expectation of immediate action.

Among Japanese Canadians the new policies were not entirely unexpected. After the Standing Committee on Orientals left for Ottawa on January 5, speculation and rumour had been rampant throughout the tense Japanese communities. In the fishing villages few retained any hope that their licences would be renewed and their vessels returned. Conscious that the fishing industry had long been the principal source of anti-Japanese agitation, the leaders in these villages hoped only to minimize the effects of that agitation on their own communities and on Japanese Canadians in general. At Steveston, the largest of the Japanese Canadian fishing villages, this desire took the form of a letter to the Prime Minister on January 8 that pledged the fishermen, as Canadians, to cooperate with whatever policy their government chose to set.<sup>50</sup> In Vancouver, Shoyama feared that the government would agree to remove all Japanese males, both citizens and aliens. On January 5, he warned his readers of the growing demand for the eastward dispersal of the Japanese minority, calling the proposal monstrous.<sup>51</sup>

In early January the strain on the Japanese minority was considerable. Unemployment continued to grow as Caucasians discharged their Japanese staff. The demands on the minority-funded Japanese Welfare Society increased daily as the unemployed sought relief within their own community, shunning, as they always had, the shame of becoming public charges. Many *Nisei* became cynical and negative. Instead of the British fair play they had been taught to expect, they were fired from their jobs because they were “Japs.” Even the University of British Columbia refused to recognize their Canadian status. In early January the *Nisei* at UBC were expelled without explanation from the Canadian Officer Training Corps. *Nisei* disappointment even pervaded the idealistic New Canadian. “It is a sorry day for all of us,” Shoyama wrote on learning of the COTC expulsions, “thus to see fear, even at the university, so warp the wheel of British justice that not only are the accused now convicted unless they can prove themselves innocent, they are not even given the chance to prove themselves not guilty.”<sup>52</sup> Buffeted from all sides, Japanese Canadians could only wait for some relief from the tensions induced by the uncertainty of their fate.

The announcement on 14 January 1942 of the intended removal of male aliens threatened the entire social and economic structure of the Japanese community. To remove the 1,700 male aliens was to remove many of the minority’s most influential leaders. Most of the *Issei* had made their commitment to Canada in the 1920s when they established their families and began their farms and businesses. After 1923, however, prejudice and policy changes made it almost impossible for *Issei* to become naturalized. As a consequence, by 1942 over 24 per cent of Japanese Canadian wage earners were still aliens, including the bulk of the employers within the Japanese minority.<sup>53</sup>

Like the Jews in Europe when confronted with anti-Semitic Nazi edicts, Canada’s Japanese in January 1942 sought only to find out what they could salvage from the growing tragedy. Accompanied by pleas for calm from the New Canadian, the Japanese Canadians sought clarification of the new policy. From how large an area would the male aliens be removed? How

many families would be separated? Who would qualify for the special permits that would allow some Japanese aliens to stay with their families? Would any special consideration be given to those aliens who had applied for naturalization? What would happen to the families of those removed, and to their homes, farms and businesses? Where were they to go? How were they to earn their living?

While the *Issei* waited for the answers to their questions, new complications arose. By announcing that the Japanese aliens were being removed in order to prevent sabotage and collaboration with potential landing parties,<sup>54</sup> the federal government had branded Japanese aliens as dangerous subversives. Some labour-short areas in the Interior of B.C., which had earlier viewed the unemployed Japanese fishermen as a source of cheap labour for road work and fruit picking, rapidly withdrew their proposals and demanded that Japanese aliens be kept in work camps under military guard. All provincial Premiers objected to the movement of Japanese aliens into their province. Demands arose from farming areas that the removed Japanese be prevented from purchasing farmland.<sup>55</sup> Handicapped by poor English, worried about their families and property, and aware of the growing hostility towards them, the aliens were understandably reluctant to leave the West Coast on their own. Although an adventurous one hundred quickly moved themselves and their families from the Coast, most chose to wait and see what the government proposed.<sup>56</sup>

The government's proposals were slow in coming. On both sides of the border the authorities were discovering that the definition of defence areas, and the removal of aliens from them, was no simple matter. Before Japanese aliens could be removed, employment had to be found for them and road camps constructed – both difficult tasks when winter hindered the construction of camps and the aliens were assumed dangerous by the public. Consequently, the details of the proposed removal of Japanese aliens were not clarified until February 9, over three weeks after the initial announcement.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, the formation of the proposed Civilian Service Corps for Japanese Canadian citizens languished. While the *New Canadian* had initially endorsed the corps as a solution to the unemployment problem caused by the war, the *Nisei*, like their parents, had adopted a cautious attitude. The more the press and politicians talked of the service corps as a means of “controlling” *Nisei* and naturalized Japanese Canadians, the more cautious they became. Sensitized by the mounting hate and prejudice against them, the increasingly disillusioned *Nisei* wanted full details before committing themselves. Such details, however, simply did not exist. Planning for the corps was neglected while the Minister responsible, Labour Minister Humphrey Mitchell, lacking a seat in the House of Commons, fought the by-election necessitated by his recent Cabinet appointment.

Ottawa's apparent inertia aggravated West Coast insecurities. By agreeing to remove the Japanese aliens “for reasons of national security,” the government had confirmed the “big lie” of a Japanese conspiracy to overthrow British Columbia. Having confirmed B.C.'s fears, Ottawa's disinclination to act only magnified those fears and reinforced B.C.'s traditional complaint that Ottawa really did not care about the West Coast.

West Coast insecurities were intimately related to the public's perception of the inadequacy of B.C.'s defences. Those defences were intended only to repel harassment raids by small forces, the only sort of attacks, besides air raids from aircraft carriers, the General Staff in Ottawa considered possible.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, defence consisted of air and sea patrols intended to find and intercept



raiding parties, and mobile army units to repel any landing forces. The greatest weakness in the defence plan lay in the inadequate number of anti-aircraft guns available to defend Victoria and Vancouver. Such weapons were unavailable, as military planners considered the need for anti-aircraft guns greater in Britain than in B.C., where the danger of air raids was minimal.<sup>59</sup> Conditioned since 1905 C when Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War C to expect an invasion by Japan, the public in British Columbia saw only that their defences were inadequate to halt such an invasion. They wanted greater protection against the hordes they assumed would invade, and they wanted removed from the province those they had been told would aid that invasion.

Throughout January and February B.C.'s invasion fears were further stimulated by fresh rumours of impending attack and sabotage. While many of these rumours were home-grown,<sup>60</sup> many had their origins in false reports originating in the United States. There DeWitt's Western Defense Command Headquarters continued to disseminate reports of non-existent sightings of Japanese craft, and of radio signals emanating from Japanese agents on the Mainland. These reports have since been demonstrated to have been patently false, but they were used by the Provost Marshall General, Maj. Gen. Allan Gullion, to convince civilian officials in Washington of the "military necessity" of the emergency measures he was proposing, measures that now included the incarceration of *all* Japanese Americans.<sup>61</sup> By the end of January DeWitt had also devised the perfect proof that Japanese Americans were disloyal. The fact that there had been no sabotage by Japanese Americans, he claimed, did not prove that they were loyal, but that they were being controlled by Japan in preparation for future coordinated sabotage.<sup>62</sup> It was an argument calculated to appeal to the irrational fears of many West Coast residents.

In Ottawa resurgent anti-Japanese sentiment took the form of an attack on the *Nisei* and the naturalized Japanese Canadians. Continuing to argue that all Japanese Canadians were disloyal, Liberal and Conservative Members of Parliament from B.C. now urged that male *Nisei* and naturalized Japanese Canadians should also be compelled to leave the protected area along the Pacific coast.

The attacks of the British Columbia M.P.'s disturbed the moderates at External Affairs. On January 23 they attempted to diffuse the issue by preparing a report for the B.C. M.P.'s on the progress of the policy to remove male Japanese aliens. In that report the moderates emphasized that the "Defence Department did not ask for the removal of either Canadians of Japanese race or Japanese nationals." They pointed out that the degeneration of the war with Japan into a racial confrontation would jeopardize the support of India and China. They expressed their concern that "persons acting from interested motives" were using the natural resentment over the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to "create an atmosphere very much like that which made possible the German action against the Jews." They urged that steps be taken to stop the "war nerves" of the West Coast and to cope with the "social welfare problem of some magnitude" likely to develop through the separation of alien males from their families.<sup>63</sup>

On January 26 Hugh Keenleyside, the primary defender of Japanese Canadians at External Affairs, appealed to Ian Mackenzie as chairman of the newly created Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions.<sup>64</sup> Keenleyside reminded him that at the January meeting careful distinction had been made between Japanese aliens and Canadian nationals of Japanese ancestry. The

compulsory removal of male Canadian nationals, Keenleyside argued, was not only unnecessary, it was downright dangerous. “*Enquiries have already been made by the Japanese government,*” he warned, “... *as to the meaning of recent decisions relating to the treatment of Japanese in Canada.*” (Keenleyside’s emphasis.) Any policy carried out on racial grounds, he stressed, “would be used for propaganda purposes throughout Asia, and would certainly be reflected in the treatment accorded Canadian and British prisoners in Japanese hands.” Keenleyside made no attempt to mask his contempt for the extremists in B.C. To satisfy a few know-nothing extremists, he concluded, the government was being asked to adopt a policy that was not only inherently unjust, but would place “some two thousand residents of Winnipeg and Quebec\* in jeopardy.”<sup>65</sup> In his appeal Keenleyside did everything but specifically point out to Mackenzie that should the more extreme policy be implemented, those who would suffer in both Asia and Canada would be Canadians.

Keenleyside’s appeal fell on deaf ears. Ian Mackenzie was in no mood to be reasonable. In attempting to convince the Cabinet to remove the enemy aliens, he had dropped all subtlety. While he had consoled B.C. Premier John Hart after that first success with the thought that “we went as far as we could possibly go in regard to the Japanese question,”<sup>66</sup> he was not about to pass up any opportunity to go further. Ever sensitive to the power of an Asian issue in the political arena, Mackenzie was angry with his political opponents and colleagues in B.C. who were claiming the credit for the removal of the Japanese aliens, credit that Mackenzie felt belonged to himself, George Pearson and A.W. Sparling.<sup>67</sup> Mackenzie was not prepared to allow a Conservative opponent to accuse him of being soft on the Japanese menace. On the contrary, Mackenzie was not only ready to join the clamour for the compulsory removal of all male Japanese Canadians of military age, he was ready to lead it.

Mackenzie began this undertaking the day he received Keenleyside’s letter. At a meeting he called of the Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions on January 27, Mackenzie had the Standing Committee on Orientals dissolved, killing its usefulness as a political platform for the Conservatives. At the same time he carefully drew attention to the lack of volunteers for the Civilian Service Corps, which had been intended to siphon off the bulk of the able-bodied *Nisei* and naturalized Japanese Canadians. Under this guise he introduced a recommendation that compulsion should be considered if Japanese Canadians failed to join the corps in sufficiently large numbers.<sup>68</sup> With the seed for the compulsory removal of Japanese male citizens planted, Mackenzie sought and received the public support of all fifteen Liberal and Conservative Members of Parliament from British Columbia,<sup>69</sup> setting in motion a concerted campaign of pressure and influence in support of the compulsory removal of all Japanese Canadians. While the most virulent of the British Columbia M.P.’s immediately demanded the removal of all Japanese Canadians, and even their deportation from Canada, the more subtle, like Mackenzie, began building support for the removal of all Japanese Canadians from around strategic installations, while intimating that the families of the male aliens already scheduled for removal would probably prefer to join their men east of the Rocky Mountains. For Mackenzie and his B.C. colleagues, the issue had never been whether or not to remove the citizen males of military age, rather whether that removal should be voluntary or compulsory.<sup>70</sup>

\* The two Canadian battalions captured by the Japanese at Hong Kong were the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada from Valcartier, Que.

The fall of Singapore on February 15 brought matters to a head. Psychologically the capitulation of Singapore could not have happened at a worse time. For a month British Columbians had been following the Malayan campaign with growing anxiety as the Japanese inflicted defeat after defeat on the British and Australian forces retreating to the safety of what they thought was an impregnable fortress at Singapore. At the same time municipal politicians in Victoria and Vancouver had been fighting their own battle with Ottawa over the funding of air raid precaution units. The politicians, reflecting the invasion fears of their constituents, wanted more funds, more men and more equipment. When those demands were rejected without explanation as Singapore surrendered, morale in British Columbia hit an all-time low. The ill-informed and chauvinistic public and press speculated that the fall of Singapore would free Japanese forces to attack the Pacific coast, a coast which Ottawa in its continuing neglect had left woefully unprotected from attack from without and sabotage from within. "There is a growing impatience," the editors of the Vancouver Daily Province warned, "with the seeming inability of Ottawa to tell the people on this coast quite frankly what has been done and what it is proposed to do."<sup>71</sup>

Ottawa's silence had its roots in the deep difference of opinion between the Prime Minister and the military over how the war should be conducted. To the military the needs of home defence were purely secondary. The presence of British and American naval forces in the Atlantic and American naval supremacy in the eastern Pacific precluded any invasion or large-scale attack on either coast. The Japanese could be expected to concentrate for some time to come on consolidating their gains in Southeast Asia and extending their operations into Burma and Australia. The Chiefs of Staff Appreciation of 19 February 1942 was explicit:

Under the present conditions an invasion on either coast is not considered to be a practicable operation of war.... The immense distances involved and the maintenance of superior United States naval forces in the American Pacific [preclude the possibility of a large-scale sea-borne expedition].... The consolidation of her gains in the southwest Pacific would produce more attractive results for Japan... with far less risk. Enemy strategical aims which affect the direct defence of Canada are limited to raids which may include carrier-borne air attack, sporadic naval bombardment, small landing parties for the destruction of selected objectives, and submarine activity.<sup>72</sup>

The present system for home defence, the General Staff was confident, was adequate to meet the expected small-scale nuisance raids. The greatest danger, in their opinion, lay in concentrating Canada's efforts on home defence, thereby leaving the enemy free to defeat Canada's allies abroad. As far as the military was concerned, the war in Europe and the supply of men and materials to that theatre should receive top priority. Home defence was adequate.<sup>73</sup>

The Prime Minister disagreed. Home defence, he had decided, was his best defence against overseas conscription, his paramount concern. English-speaking Canada demanded conscription; French-speaking Canada abhorred it; and King hoped he had found a means to satisfy them both. About the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, King had decided to defuse the situation with a half measure, a plebiscite in which the voters would be asked to release the government from its commitment against overseas conscription. His intention was not to impose conscription, but to lay

the question to rest.<sup>74</sup> Moving towards conscription would please English-speaking Canada, while refraining from actually imposing it would keep most of the sixty-one Liberal M.P.'s from Quebec in line. With the bill authorizing that plebiscite due before the Commons for its final reading on February 25, King was intent on promoting his best argument against overseas conscription: the needs of home defence. King recognized that peril on the Pacific Coast, whether real or imagined, would strengthen his position on home defence. On February 20 he lectured the Cabinet on the subject of home defence. Summarizing that lecture in his diary, he recalled:

I was glad to see the Defence Ministers come round to the point of view that we would have to take increasing account of the possibility, though not the probability of invasion. I pointed out the possibility of the Burma Road being closed; China dropping out if the Japanese continue to win; uprisings in India; strategic centres of the world in the hands of the enemy cutting off routes of supply, and the possibility of something more than mere raids on the coasts, resulting therefrom. Stressed the need of now regarding Japan as a potential aggressor in this continent; especially with Alaska a part of it.... Stressed from now on giving more attention to purely Canadian defences and to considering possible dangers from coastal air raids, all of which would necessitate increased numbers of soldiers in Canada.... The Japanese problem in B.C. itself might become a very difficult one to handle requiring more in the way of troops.<sup>75</sup>

With almost as many “ifs” as Rudyard Kipling’s poem, King sought to convince his opponents of “the possibility, though not the probability,” of an invasion of the West Coast. Just how much of King’s assessment was based on political considerations and how much on a genuine fear of the power of Japan will never be known. Military historian C.P. Stacey has commented on “that wishful exaggeration of the direct threats to Canada which was characteristic of King and his civilian advisors,” and which led them subsequently to order unnecessary reinforcements to the Pacific Coast for political reasons.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, King’s concern for the Pacific Coast vanished as soon as the plebiscite bill passed Parliament on 25 February 1942. By February 27, a week after his lecture to the Cabinet and three days after the Cabinet’s decision to uproot Japanese Canadians, King was disagreeing with Vancouver columnist Bruce Hutchison about the immediacy of any danger to the Pacific Coast. As he commented in his diary: “Hutchison seemed to think the Japanese invasion would come via the Aleutian Islands, Alaska and Canada. I told him that was my own view, if the Japanese succeeded in getting the whole of the Far East, but I thought that the immediate developments would be in India.”<sup>77</sup> Becoming obsessed with a “possible but not probable” problem was inconsistent with King’s political behaviour, which was always soundly based on the political reality of a situation. King was not a man given to panic unless that panic served his purpose, and in mid-February 1942 King’s purpose was to defuse the all-important conscription crisis. If the fiction that the West Coast was in extreme danger would marginally assist that purpose, King was not above using it to his advantage.

In the midst of the conscription crisis British Columbia’s anti-Japanese paranoia was a minor irritation to Ottawa. Agitation against the Japanese had been expected and had been handled in the usual manner: a conference followed by a Cabinet decision taken under the guidance of

the Minister assumed to be the best qualified to judge the situation, Ian Mackenzie. With the conscription crisis paramount, there was little inclination in Ottawa to seek an innovative answer to the seemingly unimportant “Japanese problem.” The traditional approach was followed: the advice of civil servants like Keenleyside was weighed against the political assessment of Ian Mackenzie. The latter assessment predominated in Cabinet where the tradition of buying political power at the expense of unpopular minorities was still considered a realistic and legitimate tactic.

By February 19 Mackenzie’s campaign for the removal of all male Japanese Canadians had borne fruit. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet had agreed that all adult male Japanese Canadians should be removed from the West Coast, but they were still divided on how and when that removal could be effected. King justified his support for compulsory removal with an ironic twist of Keenleyside’s warning that further discriminations might lead to retaliations on Allied POWs. If the male Japanese were not removed, King rationalized, interracial riots might occur that would themselves lead to repercussions on Allied prisoners of war in Asia.<sup>78</sup> As in the past, the civil rights of the disenfranchised Japanese Canadians simply did not matter. It was easier to solve the problem by punishing the defenceless victims of possible riots rather than by taking action against Alderman Halford Wilson and the other agitators who could retaliate against the government with their votes. The fact that Japanese Canadians were disenfranchised was fundamental in the opinion of Jack Pickersgill, King’s executive assistant in 1942. “I have always felt,” he recalled, “that if the Japanese had had the vote it would not have happened in the way it did.... I don’t think that any Liberal government in the 1940s would have dared to take the vote away from anyone.”<sup>79</sup> In addition King was unlikely to discriminate against anyone whose vote he wanted. Disenfranchised, however, Japanese Canadians were prime scapegoats for B.C.’s fears, fears that because of the conscription crisis King would not admit were totally unfounded.

February 19 was also a day of infamy for Japanese Americans. While the Canadian Cabinet vacillated over how to remove adult male Japanese Canadians, President Roosevelt, through Executive Order 9066, gave the War Department the powers it needed to remove the 110,000 men, women and children of Japanese ancestry in the Pacific coast states. Executive Order 9066 allowed any designated military commander to exclude “any and all persons” from any designated area within his command. Mass removal became official policy the next day when the Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, authorized rabidly anti-Japanese General DeWitt to use the broad powers of the new order. Those powers would be applied only to Japanese Americans, although DeWitt personally wished to include German and Italian aliens in the removal scheme. Because removing German and Italian aliens would have been unpopular, and hence politically unwise, Stimson quickly censored DeWitt’s zeal. To discriminate against the Japanese was all right; to discriminate against Yankee Joe DiMaggio’s parents was not.<sup>80</sup>

Roosevelt supported the War Department’s repressive proposal because of political considerations very similar to those influencing Prime Minister King. Like King, Roosevelt was preoccupied with a much larger issue: in his case the mobilization of the American war effort in the face of continuing defeats in the Pacific theatre. Under extreme pressure to get the formerly isolationist United States onto a wartime footing, Roosevelt wanted and needed the full cooperation of Congress and a unified effort from his bipartisan Cabinet. The removal of the Japanese minority would be a popular move. It would please both Congress and his Japanophobic Republican



Secretaries of War and the Navy. Removing the Japanese was not only politically expedient; it was also safe. Few Americans were likely to object to the racist action if it were clothed in the useful garment of “military necessity.”

Roosevelt had no qualms about discriminating against Japanese Americans. Although aware that some of his advisors felt strongly that Japanese Americans posed no threat to national security, Roosevelt personally harboured deep anti-Japanese prejudices and was convinced that the Japanese minority was dangerous. His prejudices – reinforced by the prodding of his Republican secretary of the navy, Frank Knox – would prompt Roosevelt to push for the internment of Hawaii’s 160,000 Japanese Americans until bluntly informed by his Chief of General Staff, General George C. Marshall, that neither Hawaiian nor Continental Japanese Americans ever posed a threat to American security.<sup>81</sup>

The American action sealed the fate of Japanese Canadians. The Cabinet had already decided to remove all male Japanese Canadians and had assumed that the dependents of those men would voluntarily join them outside the “protected” coastal area. To conform with the American policy, Canada had only to add a forced removal of those dependents to their existing plans. To assume responsibility for the wives and children of the relocated men would change only the means, not the end product, of existing Canadian policy. Both methods assured Mackenzie’s goal: the obliteration of the Japanese problem in British Columbia.

Five days later Mackenzie got the action he wanted. On the morning of 24 February 1942 the Cabinet passed an Order-in-Council almost identical to the American Executive Order.<sup>82</sup> P.C. 1486 empowered the Minister of Justice to remove and detain “any and all persons” from any designated “protected area” in Canada. As in the American case the powers were broad enough to be used against anyone – citizen or alien, white or non-white, as individuals or as a group – but would be applied only to the Japanese minority.

It is obvious that the Cabinet as a whole was never given all the facts. Their main source of information was Ian Mackenzie, who lied about the demands of public opinion in B.C. When Mackenzie informed his Cabinet colleagues on February 24 that he was being “besieged with telegrams and letters” demanding the uprooting of Japanese Canadians, he had in fact received only eighteen anti-Japanese resolutions and nine letters in the twelve weeks since the attack on Pearl Harbor. Similarly, Prime Minister King had received only one hundred letters and resolutions demanding the removal of all or part of the Japanese minority, less than forty of which were received in February. Most of these one hundred petitions came from the same groups that had demanded the incarceration of German and Italian aliens in 1940, demands that the federal government had wisely ignored.<sup>83</sup> Jack Pickersgill contends that fear of a pogrom, not fear of the Japanese, motivated the Cabinet:

I don’t think that there was a member of the Cabinet who really honestly believed [the Japanese were dangerous]. Most of them didn’t pay much attention. It was a British Columbian problem and a Justice problem.... I don’t think that any of the Ministers who dealt with this problem believed that the Japanese Canadian community was any real danger in itself, but they were afraid that there might be a pogrom.... Mackenzie King certainly was afraid. I know that.<sup>84</sup>

If Prime Minister King was motivated by a desire to protect Japanese Canadians, his public announcement of their impending removal from the Pacific Coast made no mention of it. Japanese Canadians, King announced on 25 February 1942, were being moved for reasons of national security, in order to safeguard the defences of the Pacific Coast.<sup>85</sup> To the ill-informed Canadian public, that meant only one thing. If the Japanese population were being uprooted for reasons of national security, then the charges of British Columbia politicians must be true. Japanese Canadians, therefore, must all be dangerous traitors.<sup>86</sup> Whether the government actually believed this or whether, as it later claimed, it was seeking only to protect the Japanese from the white majority, the effect of the compulsory removal of the innocent Japanese was to libel them as traitors.

The uprooting of Canada's Japanese minority from the Pacific Coast was not in reality based on national security. Indeed, the entire policy was strongly opposed by Canada's top military and police officers. The military again showed their disapproval on February 26. Rejecting the suggestion that the uprooting of Japanese Canadians be carried out by the army, National Defence Minister J.L. Ralston turned King's home defence priority against him. Men, he claimed, could not be spared from home defence for the purpose of moving Japanese Canadians. He stated that if Japanese Canadians were to be moved, they should be moved by a civilian agency, reiterating by implication that the removal of Japanese Canadians from the Pacific Coast was not a security matter.<sup>87</sup> As far as the military were concerned, the removal of Japanese Canadians was a political problem to be solved by civilians. The uprooting was, in the words of the Japanese Canadians' chief defender Hugh L. Keenleyside, "a cheap and needless capitulation to popular prejudice fanned by political bigotry or ambition or both."<sup>88</sup> The politically inspired demands of British Columbia's Liberal and Conservative Members of Parliament C demands that marginally supported the Prime Minister's position on the all-important conscription crisis C found ready sympathy in a government that was traditionally unconcerned with the rights of non-white minorities and that was unwilling to risk white votes to assure justice to non-whites. Unwilling because of the conscription crisis to allay British Columbia's unwarranted fears of invasion and sabotage, the Cabinet ignored the counsel of Canada's military leaders and civil servants, and appeased B.C.'s demands. As Escott Reid, a career diplomat with External Affairs, would later recall: "The politicians appealed to the Prime Minister against the civil servants. The politicians won and Canada committed an evil act."<sup>89</sup>



**Notes**

1. The on-going war between Japan and China had began in July 1937.
2. Interviews by the author with Japanese Canadians.
3. W.L.M. King Diary, 7 December 1941, W.L.M. King Papers, MG27J2, PAC.
4. Jay Pierrepont Moffat, "Diplomatic Journals," vol. 47, 13 June 1941 to 11 June 1942, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
5. Asst. Comnr. C.H. Hill, "E" Division, to Comnr. of RCMP, 8 December 1941, file 773-B-40, Historical Division, Department of External Affairs (DEA)
6. All Japanese Canadians, both *Issei* and *Nisei*, had been registered by the RCMP between March, 1941 and August, 1941: Adachi, Ken. *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, pp. 191-192.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Daphne Marlatt, *Steveston Recollected*, p. 58; "Plan of the Impoundment of Japanese Canadian Owned Vessels," May 1941, Pacific Command Records, RG24, vol. 11867, 10-7-1, PAC.
9. Report, Lt. A.R. Ascah, RCNR, to Comdr. A.S. Reed, RCNR, Prince Rupert, 31 December 1941, Pacific Command Records, RG24, vol. 11867, PAC.
10. Canada, Royal Canadian Navy, Board of Inquiry – Japanese Fishing Vessels, *Proceedings and Findings*, 6 March 1942, Pacific Command Records, RG24, vol. 11846, PAC.; Report, Lt. Geo. Armstrong, RCNVR, Security Intelligence, to Commanding Officer, Pacific Coast, 22 March 1942, Department of Fisheries Records, file 792-17-1, DFA; Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposal Committee, *Weekly Reports*, 30 January, 13 February 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27III B5, vol.19, file 29-7, PAC.
11. *New Canadian*, 12 December 1941; Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, p. 200.
12. Hill to CIB, Intelligence Section, 12 December 1941, file 7733-B-40, DEA.
13. Interdepartmental Committee on Japanese Service, Conclusions, 18 December 1941, excerpts from HQS 7368, vol. 1, microfilm 629A, PABC.
14. Muriel Fujiwara Kitagawa to Wesley Fujiwara, 21 December 1941, Muriel Kitagawa Papers, MG31E26, PAC.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.: Japanese Americans in World War II*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, pp. 35-38.
17. Vancouver *Daily Province*, 8 December 1941.
18. Vancouver *Sun*, 16 December 1941.
19. Prior to Christmas 1941, the Vancouver *Sun* printed 19 anti-Japanese letters and one letter deploring such letters.
20. Vancouver *Sun*, 29 December 1941, 5 January 1942.
21. On 9 December 1941 the Liberal government of T.D. Patullo fell from power and was replaced by a coalition government of Liberals and Conservatives. The CCF formed the opposition. Vancouver *Sun*, 3 January 1942; Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, p. 202.
22. Correspondence Re Japanese Canadians Received by the Office of the Prime Minister, External Affairs Records, file 773-B-1-40, pts. 1, 2, DEA.
23. Vancouver *Sun*, 5 January 1942.

24. Maj. Gen. R.O. Alexander, Commanding Officer in Chief, Pacific Command, to the Chief of General Staff, 30 December 1941, Defence Records, 322.099(D358), Directorate of History, Department of National Defence (DND).
25. H.L. Keenleyside to Lt. Gen. M.A. Pope, 3 January 1942, with Pope's agreement, file 773-B-40, DEA.
26. C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945*, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962. p. 48.
27. Joint Services Committee, Pacific Command, "Appreciation of the Situation as at the First of January 1942," Defence Records, 193.009(D3), DND.
28. Maurice A. Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians: The Memoires of Lt. Gen. Maurice A. Pope*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962, p. 179.
29. Conference on the Japanese Problem in B.C., *Report*, p. 1, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 32, file X-81, PAC. Also attending were Mackenzie, who chaired the meeting, Hon. J.E. Michaud, Minister of Fisheries, and Hon. J.T. Thorson, Minister of National War Services.
30. Conference on the Japanese Problem in B.C., *Minutes*, p. 6, file 773-B-40C, DEA.
31. Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians*, p. 177.
32. Escott Reid, "The Conscience of the Diplomat," *Queen's Quarterly*, p. 587.
33. Conference on the Japanese Problem in B.C., *Minutes*, loc. cit., pp. 6-8.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
35. Reid, "Conscience of the Diplomat," p. 587.
36. Correspondence Re Japanese Received by the Office of the Prime Minister, loc. cit., pt. 1.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Ira Dilworth to Gladstone Murray, 6 January 1942, External Affairs Records, file 773-B-1-40, pt. 1, DEA.
39. Joint Service Committee, Pacific Command, *Minutes*, 9 January 1942, Defence Records, 193.009(D3), DND.
40. Conference on the Japanese Problem in B.C., *Report*; Ian Mackenzie to W.L.M. King, 10 January 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 32, X-81, PAC. Mackenzie also received a little "spiritual" help. While working on the press statement announcing the removal of male Japanese aliens from the Pacific Coast, King noted that the hands of the clock were exactly at 3:15 P.M. To superstitious King, when the hands of the clock either perfectly coincided or were exactly opposite, it meant that God approved of whatever he was doing at the time. See King Diary, 13 January 1942.
41. Joint Service Committee, Pacific Command, *Minutes*, 9 January 1942, Defence Records, 193.009(D3), DND; Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians*, p. 178.
42. Summary of Memorandum, Vice Chief of General Staff (VCGS) to Chief of General Staff (Permanent), 13 January 1942, extracted from HQS 7368, vol. I, Defence Records, 322.009(D358), DND.
43. *Ibid.* Shortly after receiving this letter the chief of general staff, Maj. Gen. Ken Stuart, personally went to British Columbia "in an attempt to calm the fears out west" (Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians*, p. 179). Maj. Gen. R.O. Alexander was removed from his command on the Pacific Coast in early March 1942.
44. Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.*, pp. 40, 44-46.
45. Secretary of State for External Affairs, W.L.M. King, to the Canadian Minister in Washington, Hume Wrong, 14 January 1942, file 3464-B-40C, DEA. The letter in question refers to the Journal of the Permanent Joint Board of Defence, 23rd Meeting, 10 and 11 November 1941, para. 5, for the agreement.
46. Order-in-Council, P.C. 365, 16 January 1942.

47. Pierrepoint Moffat, American Minister to Ottawa, to Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, 3 February 1942, Department of State Papers, RG59, 740.00115PW/147, National Archives, Washington, D.C. The “800 to 1,000 Canadian citizens” referred to are presumably those Japanese aliens who became naturalized Canadians after 1922 and those *Nisei* holding dual citizenship by virtue of their birth before 1924. See “Memorandum on Problems with Relation to the Japanese in British Columbia,” 23 January 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 32, X-81(2), PAC.
48. Vancouver *Sun*, 13 January 1942.
49. *Ibid.*, 19 January 1942.
50. C.H. Hill to CIB Intelligence Section, 8 January 1942, file 773-B-40C, DEA.
51. *New Canadian*, 5 January 1942.
52. Vancouver *Sun*, 9 January 1942, quoting from the *New Canadian*
53. Census of Canada, 1941.
54. *New Canadian*, 9 February 1942.
55. Correspondence re. Japanese Canadians, External Affairs Records, file 773-B-I-40, EAA.
56. Between 15 January and 24 February 1942, 579 Japanese Canadians comprising roughly 100 families left the coastal area. Microreel 629A, Evacuation of Japanese, PABC.
57. *New Canadian*, 9 February 1942.
58. Canada, War Cabinet Committee, *Minutes*, 29 December 1941, Privy Council Office Records, RG2/16, vol. 7, 132, 5, PAC; Chiefs of Staff Appreciation, 19 February 1942, J.L. Ralston Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 37, PAC.
59. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government*, pp. 132-34.
60. See Gwen Cash, *A Million Miles From Ottawa*. Cash writes of expecting to be murdered in her bed by the invading Japanese and their local fifth column. Her venom against the Liberals in Ottawa equals her distaste for Japanese Canadians.
61. Roger Daniels, *The Decision to Relocate the Japanese Americans*, p. 24.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
63. Memorandum on Progress With Relation to the Japanese Problem in British Columbia, 23 January 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 32, file X-81(2), PAC.
64. The Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions consisted of Ian Mackenzie, Chair; Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour; and J.G. Gardiner, Minister of Agriculture. This committee was formed on 23 January 1942 to advise the Cabinet on Japanese Canadian policy. None of its members were friendly to Japanese Canadians; indeed both Mackenzie and Mitchell were strongly anti-Japanese.
65. Memo, Keenleyside to Mackenzie and King, 26 January 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 32, X-81(2), PAC.
66. Mackenzie to Premier John Hart, 15 January 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 32, X-81, PAC.
67. Mackenzie to Norman Robertson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 22 January 1942, file 773-B-40C, DEA, H.L. Keenleyside to Norman Robertson, 27 January 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 32, X-81(2), PAC.
68. Keenleyside to Norman Robertson, 27 January 1942, loc. cit.
69. Only the CCF member of Parliament for Vancouver East, Angus MacInnis, opposed the viewpoint of his colleagues from B.C.
70. Mackenzie to J.L. Ralston, 12 February 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 32, X-81(2), PAC.; King

Diary, 12 February 1942; La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese*, p. 49.

71. Vancouver *Daily Province*, 17 February 1942.
72. Chiefs of Staff Appreciation, 19 February 1942, loc. cit.
73. *Ibid.*; Draft of Speech to the Secret Session of Parliament, 24 February 1942, J.L. Ralston Papers, MGIIIB11, PAC.
74. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government*, pp. 399-400.
75. King Diary, 20 February 1942.
76. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government*, p. 48.
77. King Diary, 27 February 1942.
78. *Ibid.*, 19 February 1942.
79. Interview with J.W. Pickersgill, Ottawa, Ont.
80. Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.*, pp. 70, 82.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73. Marshall was not consulted by Roosevelt before he granted his Secretary of War the broad powers contained in Executive Order 9066.
82. King Diary, 24 February 1942; Order-in-Council, P.C. 1486, 24 February 1942.
83. For the letters and resolutions sent to Mackenzie, see Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIB5, vol.25, 70-25-1, 70-25-2 and 70-25-3, PAC. For those sent to W.L.M. King, see file 773-B-1-40, parts 1 and 2, DEA.
84. Interview with J.W. Pickersgill.
85. Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 25 February 1942, p. 180.
86. Such rationalizations were also common among German civilians when confronted with Germany's labour and concentration camps in the period before those camps became overt death camps. German civilians confronted with political prisoners before 1940 would assume that they had been incarcerated because of real crimes. See Bruno Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart*, pp. 164-65.
87. Canada, War Cabinet Committee, Minutes, 26 February 1946, Privy Council Office Records, RG2/16, vol. 8, PAC.
88. H.L. Keenleyside, "The Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board of Defence, 1940-1945," *International Journal*, vol. 16 (1960-61), p. 63.
89. Reid, "*Conscience of the Diplomat*," p. 588.



### III: Expulsion

The announcement that all Japanese Canadians were to be moved from the Pacific Coast stunned Canada's Japanese minority. Not even the most pessimistic had considered such an extreme measure possible. Rumours were rampant in February 1942 that the adult male *Nisei* and the naturalized would be forced to join the Civilian Service Corps and that they would be placed on dangerous projects.<sup>1</sup> Extremist demands that the women, the children and the aged also be uprooted, however, had never been taken seriously. Preoccupied with the unemployment produced by the war and the impending removal of male Japanese aliens, Canada's Japanese minority had trusted that the federal government would protect them from the absurd measures advocated by British Columbia's racists. It was a shock to realize that while Japanese Canadians had sought to minimize tensions by supporting the unemployed and by buying \$300,000 in Victory Bonds,<sup>2</sup> their government had, in effect, declared them traitors.

Shock quickly turned into feelings of impotent rage, and idealism into cynicism. Writing to her brother, Wesley Fujiwara, on 2 March 1942, five days after King's announcement, *New Canadian* reporter Muriel Kitagawa gave free rein to her feelings:

Oh Wes, the things that have been happening here are beyond words.... We are forced to move from our homes, Wes, to where we don't know.

Oh Wes, the *Nisei* are bitter, too bitter for their own good, or for Canada. How can cool heads like Tom [Shoyama]'s prevail when the general feeling is to stand up and fight.... You should see the faces here, all pinched, grey, uncertain. If the bank fails Eddie do you know what the kids and I will have to live on? \$39. For everything: food, clothing, rent, taxes, upkeep, insurance premiums, emergencies.... And also I get that \$39 only if Eddie joins the Chain Gang, you know, *forced* to *volunteer* to let the authorities wash their hands of any responsibilities. That's the likeliest interpretation of Ian Mackenzie's "Volunteer or Else".... Can you wonder that there is deep bitterness among the *Nisei* who believed so gullibly in the democratic blah-blah that's been dished out?

How can the *hakujin* face us without a sense of shame for their treachery to the principles they fight for? One man was so damned sorry, he came up to me, hat off, squirming like mad, stuttering how sorry he was. These kind of people too are betrayed by the [Halford] Wilsonites. God damn his soul! Yet there are other people who, while they don't go so far as to persecute us, are so ignorant, so indifferent. They believe we are being very well treated for what we are. The irony of it all is enough to choke me. [Kitagawa's emphasis.]<sup>3</sup>

Outraged and disillusioned, frightened of a forced separation from her husband, and worried about how she would care for her four children, Kitagawa reflected the feelings of both *Nisei* and *Issei*. King's announcement dashed the hopes of those Japanese aliens who had been seeking to



avoid separation from their families. Like the Jews of Europe who thought that the Nazis could be appeased by bribes or token cooperation, many Japanese aliens thought that the B.C. politicians could be appeased with the token removal of a few hundred aliens, preferably single men, to spare the majority the pain of family separation. Even as the hysteria mounted through February 1942, many had clung to the hope that through service or business connections they, as individuals, might be permitted to stay.<sup>4</sup>

With the announcement of a total uprooting, citizenship became irrelevant. Whether *Issei* or *Nisei*, Japanese alien or Canadian citizen, everyone had become an enemy alien. Everyone was now subject to the same regulations as German and Italian aliens. Like the German and Italian aliens, all Japanese Canadians had to register with and report bi-weekly to the RCMP, could not travel more than twelve miles from their residence or change their address without permission. In addition, all Japanese Canadians, unlike the German and Italian aliens, were required to observe a dusk-to-dawn curfew and to abandon their homes, farms and businesses for an unknown destination.

This time the government moved swiftly. In a flurry of telegrams initiated by Ian Mackenzie, the British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) was created and empowered to carry out the uprooting of over twenty thousand Japanese Canadians. Its duties included organizing and supervising the removal of Japanese Canadians from the coastal area, implementing programs to provide them with employment and housing, and administering the necessary social welfare programs, the temporary processing facility at Hastings Park (now the Pacific National Exhibition grounds) in Vancouver, and the camps to which Japanese Canadians were eventually sent.<sup>5</sup> Importantly, however, in matters of policy the BCSC could only advise the government. Only the Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions and the Departments of Labour and Justice in Ottawa could set policy.

The British Columbia Security Commission was administered by three men: industrialist Austin C. Taylor, RCMP Assistant Commissioner Frederick J. Mead, and John Shirras, the Assistant Commissioner of the B.C. Provincial Police. The fifty-two-year-old Taylor acted as chairman, a role for which he qualified by virtue of the administrative abilities he had demonstrated in his very successful business career and by virtue of his extensive contacts throughout the Interior of British Columbia. Those contacts had been built up through his business interests in oil, gas and mining resources. A wealthy man, Taylor could afford to donate his services to the war effort as he had done previously when coordinating the provincial Victory Bond campaign in 1940.

The Japanese assumed that Taylor was anti-Japanese. These presumptions arose from his gruff personal manner, his aloofness, his Liberal politics, and his past association with the Citizens' Defence Committee, a hastily formed committee of "leading citizens" that in February 1942 had petitioned the federal government for the removal of Japanese Canadians. The attitudes of the members of that committee varied from a strongly anti-Japanese stance to the feeling that protective custody was necessary to prevent riots on the West Coast. Taylor was among the latter.<sup>6</sup> Although his attitudes were somewhat paternalistic, Taylor held Japanese Canadians in high esteem. "The Japanese are a very clean, dependable, industrious race," he instructed his subordinates in April 1942, "and with kindly treatment can be guided most advantageously."<sup>7</sup> Taylor wanted the removal of Japanese Canadians to be carried out as kindly as possible. The Japanese also assumed that Asst.

Comnr. John Shirras was anti-Japanese. They believed that he held the same attitudes they had met many times before on the part of the British Columbia Provincial Police. Shirras was tarred with the same brush as his superior, Comnr. T.W.S. Parsons, who had gone to the Ottawa conference in January to lend the support of his position to the politicians who claimed that Japanese Canadians were a potential "Fifth Column" of spies and saboteurs. (In February 1942 Parsons had reiterated his position in a letter to Justice Minister Louis St. Laurent. "With these people," he wrote, "neither Canadian birth nor naturalization guarantees good faith. Something to remember in case of invasion or planned sabotage.")<sup>8</sup> John Shirras, unfortunately, left no public record of his own opinions.

To Japanese Canadians only Assistant Commissioner Mead seemed trustworthy and reasonably fair-minded. Mead, however, suffered from the general distrust of the police commonly felt by immigrant groups, especially those subjected to restrictive laws. Japanese Canadians had no way of knowing that while bound to carry out the instructions of the government, Mead and his superiors were insisting on the letter of the law where the spirit was offensive. By this tactic they had already frustrated Ian Mackenzie's demands for the removal of Japanese Canadians from what Mackenzie defined as "defence installations." By refusing to act without direct authorization from the very busy Minister of National Defence, J.L. Ralston, they had delayed the removal of any Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry until the Order-in-Council uprooting all Japanese Canadians prevented any further delays.<sup>9</sup>

Assisting the three commissioners was an Advisory Board of Liberals, like-minded Conservatives, and a token member of the CCF. The advisory committee was hand-picked by Ian Mackenzie in an effort to ensure the smooth implementation of Ottawa's policies. The selection of the Advisory Board and the formation of the BCSC was also an opportunity for Ian Mackenzie to dispense Liberal patronage. Most of the Advisory Board and all of the support staff and consulting lawyers were Liberals. In the case of support staff the ban on non-Liberals extended right down to the typists, to the chagrin of one young woman whom Mackenzie had dismissed because "her people" voted Conservative.<sup>10</sup> The presence of the few Conservatives on the Advisory Board was a gesture to the newly formed coalition government in B.C. Having been offended by the political mileage Conservatives had made of their positions on the Standing Committee on Orientals, Mackenzie made sure that the Conservatives on the Advisory Board were relatively inactive. The CCF member, Grant MacNeil, who became the Executive Secretary of the Board, was an appointment Mackenzie disliked, but probably made because it embarrassed the federal CCF,<sup>11</sup> who would not wish to be highlighted in a body involved with the removal of the Japanese Canadians.

MacNeil's presence on the Advisory Board and earlier, along with his provincial leader, Harold Winch, on the Citizens' Defence Committee, reflected the divisions within the CCF in the spring of 1942. David Lewis, CCF National Secretary at the time, recalled members of the B.C. CCF

arguing not so much about fear of attack as that "you cannot have these people here. There will be outbursts. There will be demonstrations and fights."... They were all concerned that the Japanese be treated fairly when they [were] moved out rather than just yanked out as was the case to start with.... I suppose socialists are human. They are

influenced by the same environment as other people.

Intellectually you would have to divide the CCF position into three: the position against the mishandling of the Japanese and their rights as Canadian citizens – that was Angus MacInnis's [CCF M.P. for Vancouver East] position, and that had the support of the majority of the CCF. The others [in B.C.] were divided into two: the hysterical, which included strangely enough... the left-wing Marxists, and then there were the people who were afraid of the local situation.<sup>12</sup>

MacNeil, Lewis remembered, was in the last group. He was a pacifist who joined the Advisory Board in order to try to assure fair treatment for the Japanese Canadians.

By 4 March 1942 the British Columbia Security Commission was functioning. By March 9, all adult male Japanese aliens had been ordered to report to the RCMP to learn the date of their removal to road camps. By March 16 the first of a steady stream of shocked and angry Japanese families from the fishing villages and pulp towns along the Pacific coast stumbled into the Livestock Building at Hastings Park in Vancouver.

Hastings Park Manning Pool was a holding pen for human beings. Expropriated in the first week of March, it had been converted from animal to human shelter in only seven days. The facilities were crude. In the former Women's Building and the livestock barns, rows of bunks had been erected, each equipped with a straw mattress, three army blankets and a small bolster. Each bunk was separated from its neighbour by only three feet of concrete floor, which still reeked of the animals that had recently been kept there. Toilets were open troughs and forty-eight showers had been hastily installed: ten in the building housing men and boys over thirteen years of age, the rest in the Livestock Building for the women and children held there. Eating facilities were equally crude – an army field kitchen hastily erected in the former poultry section of the Livestock Building. Designed to produce mass meals for able-bodied men, that kitchen could not provide the dietary needs of babies and the aged, especially the aged of a different culture. Most shocking to the inmates, whose culture demanded fastidious personal cleanliness, was the ever-present stink of animals and the maggots and the dirt that encrusted the buildings in Hastings Park.<sup>13</sup>

Work on improvements began almost immediately. Amy Leigh, the Director of Social Services for the City of Vancouver, was seconded to the Security Commission to set up social services within Hastings Park and the camps to which the uprooted Japanese were to be sent. To accomplish this task, Leigh drew on Japanese Canadian volunteers and recruited Caucasians through the Selective Service. In general Leigh was pleased with those she and other supervisors were able to recruit. "Of all the people I encountered on the staff," she recalled, "I think that there were only two that I really thought should change their attitude.... The rest were just simply breaking their necks to do the best job they could."<sup>14</sup> Like Grant MacNeil, the CCF Executive Secretary to the Advisory Board, Leigh believed that Japanese Canadians had to be moved for their own protection. She recalled:

It had to be.... It was a war emergency. You always have to remember that. It wasn't a normal situation.... We had nothing in the world against them, but they had to be evacuated.... None of us were happy that the job had to be done, but when we were in

it, we did it, and enjoyed and became friends with those we worked with.... It wasn't a pleasant time for them, no matter what we did; and we knew that. It was a shock.... We did the best we could. [The selling off of their property and deportation] *that* was Ottawa's policy. When the B.C. Security Commission was handling it there was all the consideration that was possible and as good a job done as possible. [Leigh's emphasis.]<sup>15</sup>

Leigh's objective was to make conditions more tolerable. Under her direction, welfare services were set up to provide the destitute with necessities and to attempt to alleviate some of the social problems created by the uprooting and separation of families.<sup>16</sup> On March 18 public health nurse Trena Hunter, working under BCSC medical advisor Dr. Lyall Hodgins, began to set up badly needed health facilities, including a laundry, a kitchen for the preparation of infants' formula, and a rudimentary hospital. The last task had to be done twice. No sooner had Hunter set up one 60-bed hospital, using discarded equipment from Vancouver's Shaughnessy Hospital, than she lost it to the Director of Vancouver's Tuberculosis Hospital. Anxious to free beds for use by Caucasian patients, the Director of the T.B. hospital shipped his Japanese patients to dusty Hastings Park at the first opportunity. Eventually Hunter created a second hospital, this one with 180 beds, staffed by Japanese Canadians and with wards for communicable childhood diseases, new mothers, and male and female patients.<sup>17</sup> In the crowded conditions of Hastings Park, which at its peak accommodated over three thousand people daily, hospital accommodations were prized. Only in the wooden stalls of the contagious diseases ward and behind the curtains defining the other wards could the inmates find a minimum of privacy.<sup>18</sup>

Much of the work was done by the inmates themselves. Faced with separation from their families, family heads scrambled to volunteer for work duties in the Park.<sup>19</sup> They hauled baggage, built partitions, set up additional accommodation in the Pure Foods Building, constructed rudimentary desks for a temporary school, organized recreational activities and served in dozens of other capacities to meet the needs of the steady stream of new arrivals. The inmates also set up a liaison committee between themselves and Superintendent E.C.P. Salt, a retired RCMP officer and former colleague of Asst. Comnr. Mead. Composed of camp workers and dormitory representatives, the Hastings Park Japanese Committee in time secured improvements in the diet of the inmates, partitions for the toilets, a separate dormitory for boys between thirteen and eighteen years of age, and the dismissal of unsympathetic Caucasian workers.<sup>20</sup>

The *Nisei*, denied most jobs in the larger society, discovered that their education and unused skills were suddenly badly needed in the administration of Hastings Park. Sometimes, however, their work placed them uncomfortably between the demands of the bitter and confused inmates and the policies of the British Columbia Security Commission. For one young *Nisei* woman, working for the BCSC meant breaking with her family. "They were so upset," she recalled. "They just felt when I started working for the B.C. Security Commission that I was a 'stool pigeon', an *inu*, a dog. If taking social work meant that I would sell myself to the government, they were not going to have anything more to do with me. I felt that there was something important I could do."<sup>21</sup>

No matter how hard everyone worked, nothing they could do would compensate for the traumatic effect Hastings Park had on the inmates. Conditions within the Park remained a sad contrast to the normal living standards of Japanese Canadians,<sup>22</sup> and only served to drive home

the contempt in which other British Columbians held them. Hastings Park was a degrading experience. Arriving by train still dazed from the task of reducing the accumulations of a lifetime to 150 pounds of baggage per adult and 75 pounds per child, families found themselves physically separated. On arrival the men, if they had not already been processed before shipment, were required to strip to the waist for a physical examination that would determine their suitability for road work, and to sign over to the Custodian of Enemy Property the right to administer any real or personal property they had not already disposed of in forced sales. Following assignment to a road camp, the men and their sons over thirteen years of age were held in a separate guarded building, where they would stay until shipment to a road camp. They were prohibited from entering the building housing their wives and young children.<sup>23</sup> The shipment of men to the road camps often meant a further fragmentation of families. Fathers who were aliens were shipped to camps near Jasper, while their adult *Nisei* sons went to camps near Hope or Princeton, B.C., or to Schreiber, Ontario. Boys between thirteen and eighteen years of age were left behind alone in the men's dormitory in Hastings Park, unsupervised by their mothers, who were confined in the livestock barns.<sup>24</sup> Unless they could find employment with the Security Commission, the men had no choice but to abandon their dependents to the chaos of Hastings Park, ignorant of whether they would ever see them again.

Hastings Park was hardest on the women. In the road camps, the men had a good diet and healthy, if crude, accommodations. At Hastings Park screaming children, distraught adults, dysentery, nervous tension, prying eyes and the stink of animals defined the women's existence. A wooden horse stall was a luxury; its walls provided limited relief from the tensions of living in full view of a thousand strangers. Only women with sick children or small babies could get such prime accommodation. The rest had to make themselves "homes," for periods ranging from a few days to several months, from the bunks allotted them and the three feet of space between bunks. New Canadian reporter Muriel Kitagawa described the Livestock Building to her brother five weeks after the first families had arrived:

The whole place is impregnated with the smell of ancient manure and maggots. Every other day it is swept with dichloride of lime, or something, but you can't disguise horse smell, cow smell, sheep, pigs, rabbits and goats. And is it dusty! The toilets are just a sheet metal trough, and up until now they did not have partitions or seats. The women kicked so they put up partitions and a terribly makeshift seat. Twelve-year-old boys stay with the women too, you know.... As for the bunks, they were the most tragic things there. Steel and wooden frames with a thin lumpy straw tick, a bolster, and three army blankets... no sheets unless you bring your own. These are the "homes" of the women I saw.... These bunks were hung with sheets and blankets and clothes of every hue and variety – a regular gypsy tent of colours, age and cleanliness – all hung in a pathetic attempt at privacy.... An old, old lady was crying, saying she would rather have died than have come to such a place.... There are ten showers for 1,500 women.<sup>25</sup>

To the inmates of Hastings Park the stink of the livestock barns was more than just an irritating smell. It was a constant reminder that to Canadian politicians and their white electors, Japanese Canadians were no better than animals.<sup>26</sup> The psychological effect of the stink only added



to the despondency of the inmates. Weight loss, headaches, skin rashes, dysentery, short tempers, and nervous anxiety affected almost everyone as they sat and waited, locked in a foul-smelling world.

On occasion inmate anxiety and misunderstandings by some Caucasian authorities led to clashes between staff and inmates. Such incidents were inevitable in a situation in which the staff, no matter how sympathetic, were straining to cope with chaos, and the inmates were under severe stress, disoriented and angry. It is a testimony to the calibre of the staff and the self-control of the inmates that these incidents were few in number.\*

One such incident occurred on the evening of 23 March 1942. Hastings Park had been in operation for only a week. The confused and disoriented inmates were the former inhabitants of Prince Rupert and of tiny and isolated coastal outposts. Some had been ignorant of the fact that Japan and Canada were at war when they were told they had only a few hours to pack what they could carry before being herded onto ferries for shipment to Vancouver. Bewildered, they faced Hastings Park in its rawest state, without any information about their fate but rumours.

Throughout this particular day Hastings Park had been rife with rumours. That evening, after the women had been shut into the Livestock Building for the night, yet another foreboding rumour swept through the building. Some frightened women became hysterical. Panicking, they rushed from the building and spilled down the steps of the livestock barns in a milling mass. Faced with the surging women, an RCMP officer on duty over-reacted. Wading in among them, he swung his truncheon, beating them and yelling, "Get the hell back in there!" Drawn from her office by the noise, *Nisei* camp worker Eiko Henmi was appalled. Striding up to the policeman, the diminutive Henmi blocked his blow and shouted: "You put that stick down! What do you think you are doing! Do you think these women are so much cows that you can beat them back into place!" Stung by her words, the officer stopped and retreated to his office while Henmi and other camp workers calmed the women and guided them back into their stinking horse stalls to sit and wait to learn what would be done with them.<sup>27</sup>

The fate of the women, the children and the aged plagued the Commissioners of the British Columbia Security Commission from the beginning. When he took the job as chairman of the BCSC, Austin Taylor assumed that Japanese Canadians would be uprooted and resettled in family units. On his first day on the job, however, he discovered that plans for shipping all able-bodied men to road camps had been worked out even before the decision to uproot all Japanese Canadians had been taken. More importantly, he learned that in the interests of quieting West Coast hysteria, Ottawa wanted the road camp scheme implemented immediately. Ian Mackenzie's instructions were explicit: "Male Japanese of adult years should be assembled immediately using any available buildings on [the] coast and transferring [sic] as soon as practicable."<sup>28</sup> The women and children could be held at Hastings Park until a more permanent solution was worked out. Taylor, accordingly, recruited Vancouver realtor E.L. "Len" Boulton to investigate the possibilities and costs of accommodating the women and children in the decaying mining towns of the B.C. Interior; others studied the feasibility of using Indian Residential Schools on the Prairies.

\* Aside from the following incident, the author has been able to discover only an incident in which the inmates threw their food at the cooks, demanding that it be improved, and a few incidents in which staff verbally abused inmates. Such staff were dismissed after the inmates complained.



Anxious to avoid separating families, Taylor also actively investigated requests from Alberta and Manitoba sugar beet growers who wanted to use farming families from the Fraser Valley as sugar beet labour.<sup>29</sup>

As Japanese Canadians from the coastal villages and Vancouver Island streamed into Hastings Park throughout March, 1942, Japanese Canadians in the Fraser Valley and Vancouver waited to learn when their time would come. With the Japanese-language press closed, their only sources of information were the highly censored *New Canadian* and the public notice boards in the Powell Street ghetto. For the majority, who did not live in the ghetto, rumours filled the communications void. Not all rumours were unwelcome. Some, like the rumour that racist Alderman Wilson had been beaten up, were welcomed and savoured. Most, however, only created more uncertainty and panic. In March the rumour mill told them that the men in the road camps were being deprived of food and were freezing in the mountains, that the *Nisei* who volunteered to go to the Ontario camps would never be allowed to return to the West Coast, and that the bad food at Hastings Park resulted from profiteering by camp administrators, both Japanese and Caucasian. The most chilling, however, was the rumour that all 13,000 women and children were to remain crammed within Hastings Park for the duration of the war as insurance against Japanese air raids.<sup>30</sup>

Unable to attack the source of their anxieties – the Canadian government – some Japanese Canadians took out their anger on the Japanese Liaison Committee. The Japanese Liaison Committee was comprised of three *Issei*<sup>31</sup> appointed by the BCSC to act as a liaison between itself and the Japanese community. The growing anger focussed on Etsuji Morii, the committee's Chairman who also managed two social clubs in the Powell Street ghetto. In his role as *padrone* of the Japanese ghetto, he had won the trust of RCMP Asst. Comnr. Frederick J. Mead. Through his association with Morii, Mead had become convinced of both the benign nature of the Japanese community and Morii's ability to ensure the peaceful behaviour of Japanese Canadians. Mead was aware of Morii's unsavoury past but considered it inconsequential. It was enough that Morii had been "honourable and cooperative in the extreme" in all his dealings with Mead.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, when Mead found himself faced with the distasteful task of uprooting the Japanese aliens in January 1942, he turned to Morii. Mead needed calm and cooperation from the Japanese community if violent incidents by white fanatics were to be avoided. Morii, Mead was confident, could not only handle such a distasteful task, but could carry it off without incident. Believing, like many *Issei*, that only a token uprooting would be necessary, Morii readily guaranteed the cooperation of the Japanese minority.<sup>33</sup>

Morii's selection in January 1942 seemed reasonable to much of the Japanese community. At the time, most Japanese believed that only the token uprooting of a few aliens would be necessary. Those who were not affected were content to leave negotiations with the authorities to Morii. As one *Issei* recalled:

Morii was running things because the *Nisei* and naturalized people thought they were safe.... They kept silent. "Let Morii do it." And Morii was doing good. The [Victory Bond] campaign was very successful and he was the chairman of the thing. Naturally if you were the B.C. Security Commission or the government, who would you pick?

Somebody you know and who gets the result. You are not going to put a big problem like that to teenagers.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, matters did not proceed as smoothly as Morii and the RCMP had hoped. When programs to employ the displaced Japanese aliens in private industry failed to materialize by mid-February, the federal government chose to implement its road camp program immediately. Morii was called upon to produce volunteers who would leave the coastal zone before the official deadline of 1 April 1942. Conscious of mounting hate, however, Japanese aliens were unwilling to volunteer. In the absence of guarantees that their families would receive the necessities of life, most had no intention of leaving the coast before the official deadline.

On February 22 Morii called a meeting to appeal for volunteers. At that meeting he stressed the Japanese virtue of self-sacrifice for the good of the majority. As one observer remembered:

So Morii explained to everybody, "If you will go voluntarily maybe I could save the *Nisei*, your family and other persons.... You have to go. [This way] you are more or less sacrificing yourself for the others." But some say, "It is a big thing for you to ask me. If I go to be a soldier to fight for Canada, I know the government will take care of my family. You ask me to go voluntarily... and you don't explain... how my family will be taken care of or how I am going to come out of this afterwards." Morii said, "If I fail at this I will commit *hara-kiri*."... He appealed to real Japanese emotion.... The meeting went back and forth but never came to a conclusion.<sup>35</sup>

Frustrated, Morii turned to force. Official notices for removal, enforced by Morii's "lieutenants," produced the required hundred men for the February 23 shipment to Rainbow, B.C. However, only half of those notified showed up at the railway station for the February 24 shipment to Red Pass.<sup>36</sup> With the announcement of a total uprooting on February 25 – an announcement that invalidated Morii's justification that a few should go to save the rest – the seeds of distrust planted by Morii's authoritarian methods began to germinate. When Mead asked Morii on March 5 to set up an official liaison committee and empowered him to police the Hastings Park Manning Pool, he was unaware that opposition to Morii as the primary representative of the Japanese community, with power over that community, was already building within the Powell Street ghetto.

The first to object openly were *Nisei* leaders Kunio Shimizu, secretary of the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League, and Thomas Shoyama, English-language editor of the *New Canadian*. By mid-February they were convinced that male *Nisei* and naturalized Japanese Canadians would be forced, like the Japanese aliens, to leave the Pacific Coast. Accordingly, Shoyama and Shimizu began agitating for greater *Nisei* participation in the affairs of the Japanese community. They were especially disturbed by the apparent power of Morii, whom they viewed as un-Canadian because of his emphasis on Japanese values and practices instead of on the "British" values and practices the *Nisei* had absorbed in the public schools.<sup>37</sup> At the February 22 meeting, Shimizu, a *Nisei* educated in Japan and at the University of British Columbia and fluent in Japanese, appealed strongly for *Nisei* input into community decisions but was rebuffed by Morii. On March 7 Shoyama and Shimizu tried again to have *Nisei* included on Morii's liaison committee but failed when the only candidate Morii would accept, Dr. George Ishiwara, declined, claiming he could not legitimately

represent all *Nisei*. On March 15 Shoyama and Shimizu had better luck when at a general meeting of *Issei* and *Nisei* in Vancouver the Japanese Liaison Committee was expanded to twenty-five members, including ten *Nisei*.<sup>38</sup> It was soon evident, however, that this larger committee was too cumbersome to be effective. It functioned solely to rubberstamp Morii's wishes.

By mid-March it was becoming increasingly evident to Japanese Canadians that Morii had lost much of his former influence. Japanese Canadians who had only tolerated him previously began openly to call him a collaborator. It was not long before the old charges against Morii resurfaced, and new charges were added. Morii was said to be taking bribes to arrange for deferments from the road camps. There were rumours of corruption at Hastings Park, and charges by the inmates of Hastings Park that Morii's subordinates were abusing their powers and making no effort to improve conditions in the Park.<sup>39</sup>

By the third week of March Shoyama and Shimizu had joined forces with a group of naturalized *Issei* who also resented the power Morii held over the community. Abandoning all hope of working with Morii, they created an alternative to the Morii committee and set out to try to persuade the government to change its policies and procedures. In mid-March anti-Morii *Issei* from thirty-eight organizations, including the Canadian Japanese Association (CJA) and the Japanese Camp and Mill Workers Union, united under CJA President Bunji Hisaoka to form the Naturalized Japanese Canadian Association, known colloquially as the *Kikajin-kai*. At the same time the JCCCL leaders, acknowledging that theirs was not a representative organization, met with the representatives of fifty-three *Nisei* groups to form the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Council (JCCC) to cooperate with the BCSC and the *Kikajin-kai* in organizing social services and easing the problems of removal.<sup>40</sup>

On March 29 the *Kikajin-kai* and the JCCC brought the feud with Morii into the open. In a letter to the BCSC they declared that "the present head of the Japanese Liaison Committee, E. Morii, does not represent the Japanese community of British Columbia," and they requested that the government take the necessary steps to form a representative committee. At the same time the *Kikajin-kai* put forward a plan under which the Japanese community would assume responsibility for its own uprooting. Asking the government for \$1.8 million in building supplies and Crown land on which to build accommodations, the *Kikajin-kai* offered to undertake the care and feeding of all Japanese Canadians until they could become established.<sup>41</sup>

The resolution condemning Morii and the *Kikajin-kai* plan were presented to Austin Taylor on 1 April 1942. Ignoring the Morii resolution, Taylor rejected the *Kikajin-kai* plan outright, pointing out that he lacked the authority to make expenditures over \$15,000 and that no Crown land existed on which nearby residents would permit the government to build a Japanese Canadian town for 20,000 people.<sup>42</sup>

The BCSC, Taylor informed the *Kikajin-kai*, had its own plans. Five "ghost towns" – Greenwood, Slocan, New Denver, Sandon and Kaslo – were to be rehabilitated to accommodate 5,000 do the women and children, with plans for the remainder to be developed later. A further 5,000 Japanese Canadians were to be sent in family units to work in the sugar beet fields of Alberta and Manitoba. Preference in the latter scheme would be given to farming families from the Fraser Valley who had four or more workers for every non-worker. Finally, Japanese Canadians capable of supporting themselves were to be allowed to move to locations outside the coastal area, provided that they received the consent of the civil authorities of the centres chosen.

Concluding that the separation of most families was inevitable, the *Kikajin-kai* offered a second plan on April 4. Under the second plan they stated that the men would be prepared to go to the road camp but only after all their dependents were safely settled in the ghost towns of the Interior. At the same time the *Kikajin-kai* reiterated that Morii's "character, his past record, and his principles make it impossible to accept" him as leader of the community and "guardian of our families during the period of separation." Again they requested that the government take steps to form a democratically elected Japanese liaison committee.<sup>43</sup>

On April 7, with the rejection by the B.C. Security Commission of this second proposal, the *Kikajin-kai* gave up. They announced their decision at a meeting at the Japanese-language school attended by Jitaro Charlie Tanaka, a forty-two-year-old naturalized *Issei* who had been appointed advisor to the Spanish consul, the "protecting power" under the Geneva Convention for Japanese aliens in Canada. Paraphrasing the proceedings, Tanaka recalled that the *Kikajin-kai* president, Bunji Hisaoka, said, "We have negotiated with the Security Commission for a family evacuation, but they refuse under these terms so it is no use for us to continue negotiations. If we do, who knows [our chance] will be shot forever. At this moment we can't do any more and we are planning our own family evacuation."<sup>44</sup> Hisaoka's opinion, Tanaka recalled, was reiterated by Kunio Shimizu, spokesman for the JCCC, who pointed out that in the road camps the men received a wage and their families an allowance. If they were interned for disobedience, Shimizu warned, their families would receive nothing from the government. Others, Tanaka remembered, pointed out that the *Kikajin-kai* had been negotiating for less than a week and urged them to restart negotiations "so at least we know you have done your best." As Tanaka recalled: "They didn't answer. None of the people on the platform answered. So the people just walked out.... That lost all the confidence of the people. [They said] 'You were just negotiating for your own families.'"<sup>45</sup>

The *Kikajin-kai* was successful in only one of its objectives: the undermining of Morii's power. While the Commissioners of the BCSC regarded the charges against Morii as "a campaign of vilification," they had recognized by early April that Morii's influence was limited to a group of personal supporters, principally urban *Issei*.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, on April 9 they announced that henceforth they would consider representations from any bona fide group of Japanese Canadians, while recognizing none as official. Morii's committee would continue to administer aspects of the uprooting,<sup>47</sup> but it would no longer be the only group cooperating with the BCSC. The JCCC, already working in Hastings Park on recreational and educational programs, and the *Kikajin-kai* would be equal to the Morii committee.

The feud with Morii became public only on one further occasion. In October 1942, Judge C.J.A. Cameron conducted a public inquiry into charges made against Morii by members of the Japanese minority, in particular the charge that he was a member of an association of Japanese fascists. Lasting twenty-three days and highlighted by florid rhetoric and colourful press, the inquiry found the vast majority of charges against him to be either unsupported by evidence or upheld only by hearsay. This public washing of Japanese community laundry, while sensational to Caucasian British Columbians, had little effect on Japanese Canadians. Morii's influence within the community as a whole was minimal after April 1942.<sup>48</sup>

The demotion of Morii in April 1942 left Japanese Canadians leaderless. Having successfully undermined Morii's authority but despairing of ever persuading the government to change its policies, the *Kikajin-kai* leaders turned their energies elsewhere. The wealthier among them

chartered special trains to move their families and friends to autonomous self-supporting communities at Christina Lake, Bridge River-Lillooet, McGillivray Falls and Minto City. Several *Kikajin-kai* leaders in the Fraser Valley and Steveston turned to the sugar beet program.<sup>49</sup> Grabbing at the opportunity to keep their families intact, Japanese communities in the Fraser Valley volunteered en masse for sugar beet work in Alberta and Manitoba. Within a month much of the *Kikajin-kai* leadership was gone, while those who remained were urging Japanese Canadians to cooperate completely with the British Columbia Security Commission for their own safety and the security of Japanese Canadians as a whole.<sup>50</sup>

Cooperation as promoted by the *Kikajin-kai* and the JCCC did not appeal to everyone. Angered and embittered by their government's betrayal of them, *Nisei* in Vancouver and Steveston watched silently through March as the women and children from the coastal outports were dumped into Hastings Park and increasing numbers of *Issei* were torn from their families and shipped to road camps. Kitagawa described their mood to her brother as follows:

There is a pall of ignorance and fear and uncertainty, which arouses defiant resistance and plain mulish balking.... Nobody knows the exact details of what is happening, but we know plenty happens every day and everyone that reports it to another gets a different version and this spreads like wildfire through the town.... There is great distrust of the R.C.M.P., and mostly a kind of helpless panic, not the hysterical kind, but the kind that goes round and round going nowhere.<sup>51</sup>

Beginning in the last week of March, the "helpless panic" of some began to harden into defiance. The event that tipped the scale was the announcement on March 23 that the first group of *Nisei* would be shipped to road camps in Ontario the next day. Finally realizing that this development meant that the government intended to ignore their Canadian nationality and to regard them as enemy aliens, the 135 *Nisei* involved sought assurances from the Security Commission that they would be treated as Canadians in the camps.<sup>52</sup> In the absence of definite assurances regarding their status, most elected to defy the road camp order, aware as they did so that they risked incarceration for disobeying an order of the BCSC. Their freedom was short-lived. The 86 who elected to sleep in the former offices of the *Tairiku Nippo* newspaper were quickly taken into custody, along with 17 others picked up elsewhere. Confined in the Immigration Shed in Vancouver, they were informed that they would be interned in a prisoner of war camp in Ontario unless they left immediately for road camp. Most chose internment.<sup>53</sup>

Legally, of course, the *Nisei* could not be "interned". They were Canadian nationals and internment under the Geneva Convention is a legal act applicable only to aliens, a fact Assistant Commissioner Mead quickly pointed out to Ottawa. Accordingly, the *Nisei* were legally never interned, but "detained at the pleasure of the Minister of Justice," Louis St. Laurent. Their legal status was equivalent to that of a criminal under psychiatric care. None of them, however, were aware of their unusual legal status. Nor were any aware that legally they had thirty days in which to appeal their detention. Isolated, friendless, angry and without legal counsel, the detained *Nisei* indeed considered their detention "internment" – as did the government, the press and the public of B.C.<sup>54</sup>

The seed of defiance planted, *Nisei* in Vancouver and Steveston began to split into two



camps. A small group of *Nisei* began circulating an illegal pamphlet urging defiance of the road camp orders until the government agreed to a mass evacuation; that is, a plan of removal in which family units remained intact, as in the American uprooting. Appalled at such open disobedience, the JCCC responded with a pamphlet of its own urging cooperation with the government “for the sake of the whole community,” and praising those who volunteered for road camps in Ontario.<sup>55</sup> Ironically, as the RCMP later noted, both pamphlets were typed on the same typewriter.

In fact, the two groups of *Nisei* had more than the typewriter in common. Both groups recognized that the uprooting could not be stopped and that open defiance could cause a violent backlash against all Japanese Canadians. They knew that they were too few, too scattered, and surrounded by too hostile a social atmosphere for overt defiance. They were divided only on how to persuade the government to change the means by which Japanese Canadians were to be moved from the Coast. To the dissidents, many of whom were married men with young children, confinement in an internment camp differed little from restriction to a road camp. In both cases they would be separated from their families. Indeed, internment had the glamour of self-sacrifice, of suffering for a noble cause. It was something positive and active, a way of showing their anger, rather than just going passively off to road camp in the hope that the government would change its policies. The government, many felt, had done its worst by separating families. There was nothing to lose and everything to gain by defying the road camp orders.<sup>56</sup>

The JCCC took a more cynical attitude. Its leaders had only limited confidence in the government, but they trusted it more than they trusted the riffraff of Vancouver. The almost tangible hate and paranoia that developed after the government announced the uprooting had made them doubly cautious. In such an atmosphere, JCCC spokesman Kunio Shimizu later recalled, he had operated on the principle that things could always get worse. A government that had betrayed its citizens in the way that the Canadian government had betrayed Japanese Canadians had to be handled with extreme caution and given no excuse to send in the army. That was also the opinion of the few Caucasians who openly supported Japanese Canadians. “Even people like Norman F. Black and Howard Norman of the Consultative Council,” Shimizu recalled, “felt that there would be a riot in Vancouver if there was any organized rebellion against the government order to evacuate.” Only by cooperating, by acting as loyal Canadians – which to the JCCC meant obeying every regulation no matter how absurd – could Japanese Canadians hope to convince the public of their loyalty and gain the concessions they desired from the government.<sup>57</sup>

By the second week in April the dissidents had organized. Under the leadership of expelled JCCC members Fujikazu Tanaka and Robert Y. Shimoda, they formed the *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group (NMEG) and set about making their demands known to the Security Commission and the Japanese community. “We have said ‘YES’ to all your previous orders, however unreasonable they might have seemed,” the NMEG wrote in an open letter on 15 April 1942,

but we are saying a firm “NO” to your last order which calls for the break-up of our families.

When we say “NO” at this point we request you to remember that we are British subjects by birth, and that we are no less loyal to Canada than any other Canadian, that we have done nothing to deserve the break-up of our families, that we are law-abiding Canadian citizens, and that we are willing to accept suspension of our civil rights – rights



to retain our homes and businesses, boats, cars, radios and cameras....

Please also remember that we are not refusing to go. Indeed if it is for our country's sake, we shall evacuate to whatever place Canada commands....

Family separation, the letter continued, would not contribute to the Canadian war effort. The revocation of this last human right, the right to live with their families, they argued, was "totally unnecessary."<sup>58</sup>

The Commissioners of the B.C. Security Commission were in a difficult position. Personally Taylor and Mead agreed with the dissidents and had wanted to remove Japanese Canadians in family groups from the beginning. Unfortunately, their hands were tied, since policy on such matters was set in Ottawa. Moreover, they too were afraid that open defiance would produce a backlash against Japanese Canadians. Accordingly, when refusing demands of the delegation that presented the open letter, Taylor warned that failure to obey the road camp orders would only lead to the internment of the resisters and a forced uprooting under martial law of the rest.<sup>59</sup> Given his gruff manner, it is not surprising that the delegation concluded that Taylor personally opposed removal in family units. The Security Commission, the dissidents decided, was responsible for the separation of men from their families.

Their request for removal in family units rejected, the *Nisei* dissidents proceeded with their plans. Seeking to publicize their position in the hope of receiving support from the B.C. public, Shimoda approached sympathetic editors at the Vancouver *Daily Province* and the *News Herald* and requested that they publish the open letter. While initially supportive, the *Province's* editor subsequently declined to publish it because he feared it would produce more hysteria than sympathy. The *News Herald* declined to publish the letter because the Security Commission refused to grant permission for its publication, permission required under wartime censorship regulations.<sup>60</sup>

Rebuffed by the press, the NMEG members turned their attention to Ottawa. They authorized Vancouver lawyer Paul Murphy to make enquiries there on behalf of Japanese Canadians. In Ottawa Murphy found a glimmer of hope. Humphrey Mitchell, the Minister of Labour, informed Murphy that he had funds with which to build family housing for Japanese Canadians but, apparently ignorant of the ghost town scheme, claimed he had nowhere to build them. Unaware of the true chain of command, Murphy decided that Mitchell would be amenable to a family uprooting to the ghost towns if the Security Commission were to request it. Returning to Vancouver, Murphy advised the *Nisei* dissidents to continue pressuring the BCSC.<sup>61</sup>

The success of the dissidents' protest was undeniable. By the end of April over 140 *Nisei* had disobeyed their road camp orders and gone underground, sleeping in vacant buildings or hiding with friends and relatives, and moving about at night under the impunity of an "I am a Chinese" button taken, sometimes violently, from its legitimate owner. In addition, groups of *Nisei* and naturalized Japanese Canadians had begun to intern themselves voluntarily rather than leave for road camp. The precedent had been set on April 25 when 66 young men from Steveston and Vancouver, bolstered by the cheers of 800 supporters, had demanded internment at the Immigration Shed in Vancouver. Refused by Austin Taylor, four spokesmen forced their way into the building, a task easily accomplished once they discovered that the guards had guns, but no bullets. The RCMP then called in Assistant Commissioner Mead, who, after deliberating with the spokesmen, granted their demand.<sup>62</sup> By May 13, 96 had been sent on to the POW Camp at Petawawa, Ontario, and a

further 106 were awaiting shipment.<sup>63</sup>

On May 13 the dissidents finally caught the attention of the Vancouver press by wrecking part of the Immigration Shed. The incident was precipitated by an order prohibiting the families and friends of the inmates from approaching the building to talk to them or pass them food. Unhappy with this latest prohibition, the inmates became restive and requested the opportunity to give their views to a higher authority. When the officer of the guard arrived at 1:30 P.M., the inmates sent him a letter demanding removal in family units and the rescinding of restrictions on visitors. At this point some frustrated inmates turned a fire-hose on a sentry and proceeded to wreck the room in which they were being kept, breaking down the wall between that room and the adjoining one in which the rest of the inmates were being held. At 4:00 P.M. the Officer-in-Command of the Vancouver defences, Brig. D.R. Sargent, arrived and offered to receive a delegation, only to be told by the inmates that he should come to them. Eighty men from the First Irish Fusiliers were then brought to the Immigration Shed and issued police batons. At 6:00 P.M. the inmates were ordered to clean up the glass and debris. When they refused, Brigadier Sargent ordered that no evening meal be served, thus precipitating further damage by the inmates and the use of tear gas by the military. By 9:00 P.M. the soldiers had been dismissed, and Austin Taylor was frantically calming the press, calling the incident “more playful than anything else.”<sup>64</sup>

The show of force by the military during the Immigration Shed incident did nothing to deter the growing protest. By May 26 another ninety-nine *Nisei* and naturalized had been detained for failing to obey their road camp orders, and over three hundred delinquents were still at large.<sup>65</sup> Defiance had become popular, although the reasons for supporting it varied from person to person. Some simply did not like being pushed around and were determined to make things difficult for the authorities. Some, who faced up to six months in Oakalla Prison for breaking the dusk-to-dawn curfew, decided that voluntary internment might accomplish something where prison would accomplish nothing. Some, who believed Japan would win the war, saw voluntary internment as a way of showing their loyalty to Japan and believed they would be rewarded after victory for their suffering. These were mostly *Kibei*, Japan-educated *Nisei*. Most balked because they had become convinced that disobedience was a legitimate protest against the inhuman separation of husbands from their wives and children.<sup>66</sup>

Self-internment in demonstration of loyalty to Japan was the result of the propaganda of Japanese Vice-Consul Miura. Jitaro Charlie Tanaka, advisor to the Spanish consul, explained:

The trouble with the Canadian system was it was the first time they had a war like that. They made the consul confined to his residence but they never did confine the other guys.... This guy [Miura], he is very pro-Japanese.... He was in Manchuria before.... and he gives a lot of talk to some *Nisei*, mostly *Kika* [*Kibei*], and *Issei*.... He says, “The war will be over in maybe half a year so why should you go like a bunch of dogs to whatever the Canadians say? When the thing is over in six months, you will be treated as a good guy [by Japan].” He did bad propaganda against the Canadian government.... A lot of *Issei* went there [internment camp] on the presumption the war would be over in six months.\*<sup>67</sup>

\* Only 296 *Issei* and 470 *Nisei* were interned by the authorities. The proportion of these who self-interned is unknown.

The presence of this pro-Japan element alienated *Nisei* who might otherwise have supported the *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group protest. “We were sympathetic with their cause,” JCCC President Kunio Shimizu explained, “but we felt firstly that it was a lost cause and secondly it was led by people we felt were not sympathetic with what we considered to be democratic causes.... Because a good number were... *Kibei* who were not too skillful in English,... we did help to present their views a couple of times.”<sup>68</sup>

Although an illegal underground organization bitterly opposed by the JCCC, the *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group had acquired some very respectable counsellors and allies. The most influential of these was Jitaro Charlie Tanaka, a naturalized *Issei* who had come to Canada as a child and had become a successful furniture manufacturer dealing with large Canadian department stores. A neutral figure in the prewar Japanese community, Charlie Tanaka had been selected after the outbreak of the Pacific War to act as an advisor to, and representative of, the Spanish consul, who under the Geneva Convention was charged with the task of protecting the human rights of Japanese aliens in Canada. In this role Tanaka had unimpeded access to the BCSC, and he willingly used his office to reinforce demands for a mass uprooting. The men in the road camps, he told Mead, should be sent to the ghost towns to build accommodation for the women and children; otherwise that accommodation would not be ready before winter. At the same time he advised the largely inexperienced NMEG leaders on the conduct of their program and retained the lawyers working on their behalf.<sup>69</sup>

By the beginning of June the uprooting of Japanese Canadians had effectively ground to a halt. While shipments of women and children into the Kaslo and Greenwood ghost towns continued, the movement of men had virtually stopped. In Vancouver five hundred delinquents roamed the streets of the Japanese ghetto largely untouched, as the authorities had nowhere to put them. There was room for only fifty more in the Immigration Shed and no opportunity to ship them out, since prisoner-of-war facilities in Ontario were filled to capacity.<sup>70</sup> More importantly, the federal government was reluctant to intern more Japanese Canadians, since holding them in POW camps was much more costly than confining them in road camps.

On June 2 the *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group, at Charlie Tanaka’s suggestion, held a press conference in the office of Vancouver lawyer Dennis Murphy to publicize the stalemate. Pointing out that there were currently more Japanese in Vancouver than ever before, spokesman Robert Shimoda asserted that the BCSC had refused to consider a family uprooting approach even though federal officials had given such a scheme “strong intimations of approval.”<sup>71</sup> Shimoda based his claim on the fact that Norman Robertson, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, had told lawyer Paul Murphy that requests for policy changes must come from the Security Commission, not the Japanese.<sup>72</sup> The *Nisei* dissidents assumed, therefore, that Taylor had only to ask to get a change of policy.

In fact, getting policy changed was not that simple. From the beginning the Commissioners of the British Columbia Security Commission had wanted Japanese Canadians moved in family units. Ottawa had favoured the road camp scheme, seeing it as the quickest means of removing Japanese Canadian males, while making effective use of their labour. Before the Commissioners could get that policy changed, they had to have a viable scheme for reuniting families, preferably one that would justify the expenses incurred in setting up the road camps and that would not arouse adverse public opinion – to which Ottawa was extremely sensitive.

The Commissioners had been working toward this objective for some three weeks prior to the NMEG press conference. In mid-May Dr. Lyall Hodgins, the medical advisor to the Security Commission, had been dispatched to the Interior to assess local public opinion and the work required to make the ghost towns suitable for housing reunited families. At the same time Taylor requested the expansion of ghost town accommodation through the construction of small houses on sufficient land to enable the inmates to grow some of their own food. In addition, the Commissioners continued to investigate using Indian Residential Schools on the Prairies to house Japanese Canadian family units, and they studied the possibility of an expanded farm labour program.<sup>73</sup>

The Commissioners were helped in their task by the fact that the road camp program had proved to be a dismal failure. In its desire to get as many Japanese Canadian males away from the Coast as quickly as possible, the government had sent large numbers of old men, teenage boys, and men who had never done physical labour in their lives to the largely unmechanized camps. To the inefficiency of such unfit labour was added the deliberate inefficiency of the fit.

The Japanese road camps were healthy places physically, but very unhealthy psychologically and emotionally. Despite the government's public stance that the Japanese in the camps were only labourers and were "not to be considered as internees or prisoners in any way,"<sup>74</sup> both Japanese Canadians and the B.C. public knew that the camps in fact were prisons. The inmates had come to them under RCMP guard and were legally unable to leave. The prison atmosphere was reinforced by the presence of four armed RCMP special constables in each camp. Officially these men were guarding the railway tracks beside which most camps were located. In the minds of the inmates and the B.C. public, however, they were guarding the Japanese, thereby giving credence to the idea that Japanese Canadians were all potential saboteurs.

In addition to the psychological problems of imprisonment, fears of impoverishment and worry over the fate of their families plagued the road camp inmates. Fear of impoverishment arose from the low wage paid in the camps. While the going rate for general labour in the B.C. Interior was 60¢ per hour,<sup>75</sup> the government paid the inmates 25¢ to 35¢ an hour, since they felt that "enemy aliens" should not earn more than the lowest-ranking soldier in the Canadian army. From that wage, \$22.50 per month was deducted for board and, in the case of married men, a further \$20.00 was deducted for family support. A married man earning 25¢ per hour, therefore, would net \$7.50 per month if he worked eight hours a day, twenty-five days per month. Very few men, however, worked eight hours a day. The average for the camps near Revelstoke, as United Church minister Rev. W.R. McWilliams discovered in June 1942, was only two to four hours a day. The road camp scheme, McWilliams concluded, was "creating indigents."<sup>76</sup>

Fear of impoverishment was inextricably linked to fears for what would happen to their families. Many of the men in the road camps had left their families in the chaos of Hastings Park. Others had been forced to leave their homes abruptly, abandoning their families with no visible means of support. Isolated from accurate information, bombarded by rumours based on their memories of the conditions in Hastings Park, and undistracted by meaningful labour, the men in the road camps grew worried and restless. By May 1942 they were ideal targets for the agitation of troublemakers.

Every camp had its small minority of troublemakers: pessimistic and demoralized men who preyed on the fears of their fellow inmates and disrupted camp routine. Their motives varied:

some were blatant pro-Japan agitators, while others were merely frustrated men seeking to vent their feelings.<sup>77</sup> By June the men in the Yellowhead road camps were ready to follow the lead of the troublemakers in a program of passive resistance. Complaints to the “protecting power,” the Spanish Consul, and petitions to camp officials and the Security Commission escalated to overt slowdowns and even strikes.

The strikes at Geikie and Decoigne, Alberta, and Gosnell, B.C., in mid-June 1942 paralysed those road camps. Unable to discharge the Japanese workers, and equally unable to meet their demands, the Department of Mines and Resources personnel running the camps could only wait out the strikes while complaining to Ottawa. The threat of internment, they quickly discovered, was no deterrent. It had not taken the men in the road camps long to realize that they could net more income per month at the rates paid in the internment camps than they could working in the road camps.<sup>78</sup> In fact, the threat of internment, the Security Commission soon realized, might prolong a strike, as group pressure and a sense of common identity preserved solidarity in the striking camps. As one inmate attempted to explain to Austin Taylor, the men in the camps “support the troublemakers for the simple reason that they are all in the same boat and therefore consider it necessary to stick together.”<sup>79</sup> By June it was evident that the road camp program would fail unless the men had some hope of rejoining their families.

By May 30 Taylor was in a position to push for the reunion of Japanese Canadian families, at least for the winter months. In order to convince the Associate Deputy Minister of Labour, Arthur MacNamara, Taylor used a letter written from the road camps by a Japanese alien, Kinzie Tanaka. Tanaka was a unique observer. Legally an alien because his mother had been visiting Japan when he was born, Tanaka was culturally a *Nisei* and had been a vice-president of the Japanese Canadian Citizens’ League. Assigned to a road camp for Japanese aliens, Tanaka found himself in a philosophical bind, aware of and sympathetic to the problems of both the *Issei* inmates and his Caucasian supervisors.<sup>80</sup> In late May Tanaka advised Taylor that he could expect considerable trouble in the road camps because morale was non-existent. “You cannot forcibly separate a man from his family and expect him to be a willing worker,” Tanaka wrote.

... When these men are separated from their families they cannot help but worry about them, it would not be human otherwise. And you must realize that men cannot work with any degree of efficiency when under such mental duress....

Look at the Japanese that went to the beet fields. It wasn’t because they were going to an easy occupation or a more lucrative one.... no, it was because the family was together. That is the most important point. Any plan that does not take that point into consideration will ultimately result in failure....<sup>81</sup>

Married men should be returned to their families, Tanaka urged, and young, single men, paid standard wages, should do the road work.

Taylor’s recommendation endorsing Tanaka’s opinions produced no results. Ottawa, apparently, was unconvinced that the expense of reuniting families was a necessary expense. Taylor tried again a week later. Frankly pointing out the stalemate created by the *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group’s protest, he reiterated that the road camp program was bound to fail because the men had



no hope of rejoining their families in the foreseeable future. In Ottawa the commissioner of the RCMP, Col. S.T. Wood, concurred. "Unrest will continue and increase... as the male Japs in these camps realize that this war may last for some years," he advised Justice Minister St. Laurent on June 5, 1942. Japanese families, Wood urged, should be reunited as soon as possible.<sup>82</sup>

On June 10 Assistant Commissioner Mead and the BCSC medical supervisor, Dr. Hodgins, were dispatched to Ottawa in an attempt to convince the government of the wisdom of family reunification. Hodgins was prepared to argue, on the basis of his trip to the ghost towns, that there would be little or no opposition from local residents should Japanese males join their families in the detention camps. "The white population of the Interior towns," Hodgins had reported on June 1, "almost without exception are pleased with the advent of the Japanese, are kindly, and have but one criticism which was expressed often and definitely – that the Commission was not treating these people well enough."<sup>83</sup> Mead's arguments centred on the problem of the road camp disturbances. He saw incidents like the strike at Gosnell in mid-June as "a forerunner of more of the same kind of trouble if we do not commence to keep these families united, and that is going to be our theme song when we see Mr. Mitchell and Mr. MacNamara."<sup>84</sup>

Mead and Hodgins succeeded in person where memoranda and letters had failed. At their urging the Department of Labour scrubbed its plans for housing the uprooted families in Prairie Indian Residential Schools and authorized the building of shack camps in the Slocan Valley and on the A.B. Trites Ranch near Hope, B.C.<sup>85</sup> The most inefficient of the road camps were ordered closed: the married men to be transferred to Slocan and Hope to build the shacks needed to house Japanese Canadians, the single men to continue building roads from the remaining road camps.

The reunion of families, however, was not announced immediately. Anxious to break the stalemate produced by the *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group protest, the commissioners wanted assurances that a family uprooting would, in fact, halt *Nisei* disobedience. Returning to Vancouver on June 28, Mead immediately contacted Charlie Tanaka, the advisor to the Spanish consul, and asked him to set up a meeting with the leaders of the dissidents. Meeting with Shigeichi Uchibori and E. Yoshida<sup>86</sup> on June 30, Mead asked them to draw up a list of conditions that, if met, would win their cooperation. Agreeing to meet with all three commissioners the next day, the NMEG leaders retired to prepare their terms. Charlie Tanaka vividly recalls the July 1 meeting. He arrived at ten o'clock with Uchibori and Yoshida and his brother Herbert Tanaka, who was to act as an interpreter for Uchibori, a Kibei whose English was poor. "First," Charlie Tanaka recalled,

Taylor and Shirras more or less reprimanded those Mass Evacuation boys. "This is wartime and if you are not careful we can put you away just like that," Taylor says.... So I thought, "Oh my gosh! ... These boys are going to be interned right away from here." It scared me.... But they [the BCSC] know that they are in trouble because nobody is moving.... At the same time the RCMP didn't want to push it too much. So after they lecture those boys for about fifteen minutes, ... those two [Taylor and Shirras] went out and Mead, he said, "We got word from Ottawa. We want to see what you [want]." So they [Uchibori and Yoshida] give Mead the seven points they have written on a paper.... So Mead ... reads the seven points and says, "The only thing we can't agree is that the single boys [leave the road camps] because other JCCC boys went out ... and you are supposed to be bad boys according to the government because you defy the order.... You



just use your head and don't shout to the public that 'We got the Security Commission where we want it!'"<sup>87</sup>

Reluctantly accepting that single men would have to continue to build roads, Uchibori and Yoshida agreed to call off the protest and to assist the Security Commission with the building of the detention camps in the Slocan Valley.<sup>88</sup>

With the announcement of family reunification, disobedience effectively died. A few continued to disobey, but the bulk of Japanese Canadians threw themselves into making the detention camps habitable. By mid-July the former protesters were leaving for Slocan in a desperate effort to prepare accommodations for 12,000 people before winter.

In Vancouver there was a corresponding flurry of activity as Japanese Canadians prepared themselves for life in the detention camps. Valuables were locked in churches, buried under back porches, or left with trusted friends in expectation that their detention would be short-lived. Warm, rough clothing, bedding, old dishes and household utensils were assembled for use in the camps. When the camp at Hope was announced, women whose husbands were in road camps along the Hope-Princeton highway scrambled to register for it, while others desperately tried to get in touch with husbands, friends and relatives in an effort to make sure that they would all be sent to the same camp. Aware that the sixteen-by-twenty-four-foot shacks were to house a minimum of eight people, Japanese Canadians awaiting shipment did their best to arrange that they would share with friends or relatives wherever possible. Somehow, while all the preparation for their uprooting was a considerable strain in itself, the activity it demanded helped to ease other strains by distracting Japanese Canadians from worrying about their uncertain future.<sup>89</sup>

By November 1942, 20,881 Japanese Canadians had been uprooted from their homes and processed through Hastings Park. Some 12,000 were housed in the shacks of the detention camps and the tenements of the ghost towns. A further 4,000 huddled in granaries and chicken coops in the Prairies, while the remainder resided in self-support communities in B.C. or had made the cross-country move to Toronto and Montreal.<sup>90</sup> For the West Coast racists the Japanese problem seemed solved. For Japanese Canadians their problems were just beginning.

**Notes**

1. Interviews by the author.
2. *New Canadian*, 9 March 1942.
3. Muriel Fujiwara Kitagawa to Wesley Kitagawa, 21 December 1941, Muriel Kitagawa Papers, MG31E26, PAC.
4. Interviews by the author.
5. Order-in-Council, P.C. 1665, 4 March 1942.
6. Interviews with Amy Leigh, Vancouver, B.C., and Jitaro Charlie Tanaka, Mississauga, Ont.
7. Austin Taylor to Wm. Andrews and Chas. Graham, April 1942, British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 29, file 1603, PAC.
8. T.W.S. Parsons, Commissioner BCPP, to Louis St. Laurent, Minister of Justice, 17 February 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27III B5, vol. 25, file 70-25, PAC.
9. Ian Mackenzie to J.L. Ralston, 12 February 1942; and S.T. Wood to Mackenzie, 23 February 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27III B5, vol. 32, X-81(c), PAC.
10. See Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27III B5, vol. 24, PAC.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Interview with David Lewis, Ottawa, Ont.
13. For details of Hastings Park, see Muriel Kitagawa Papers, loc. cit.; BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 11, PAC.
14. Interview with Leigh.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Interview with Leigh, November 1977. The first problem Leigh and her staff ran into was a reluctance on the part of the inmates to accept welfare because of cultural prohibitions against becoming public charges. Only by working with the Japanese Welfare Society were these difficulties overcome.
17. Interview with Trena Hunter, public health nurse, by Beverley Macpherson, Aural History Tapes 2004:1, PABC.
18. Kitagawa to Fujiwara, 20 April 1942, loc. cit.; interviews by the author.
19. *Ibid.*
20. For the work of the Hastings Park Japanese Committee and the day to day events of the Manning Pool see Rev. Yoshio Ono Papers, vol. 11-5, UBC Archives.
21. Interview with Kay Kyoshi Kato Shimizu, Ottawa, Ont.
22. Taylor to Andrews et al., April 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 29, PAC. The myths about Japanese living standards change during the war with the purpose of those who are telling them. For instance, when Ian Mackenzie wants to buy Japanese Canadian farms in the Fraser Valley, they are “productive.” When Japanese Canadians are seeking compensation for the sale of those farms, however, the B.C. M.P.’s argue that the same farms are “overworked” and the soil depleted.
23. For the administration of the uprooting process, see the BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vols. 2, 3, PAC.
24. The policy was to send Japanese aliens to camps along the Yellowhead highway, the *Nisei* and naturalized to camps west of Revelstoke, and *Nisei* only to Schreiber, Ont.
25. Kitagawa to Fujiwara, 20 April 1942, loc. cit.
26. The smell of animals remains the strongest memory of Hastings Park and is constantly referred to in both contemporary documents and oral accounts. See Kitagawa, 11, 20 April 1942, loc. cit.; Barry Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of Japanese Canadians in World War II*, Toronto: Doubleday, 1977., pp. 79-99; Shizuye Takashima, *A Child in a Prison Camp*, Montreal: Tundra Books, 1971. pp. 3-4.
27. Kitagawa to Fujiwara, 20 April 1942, loc. cit.; untitled manuscript on the uprooting, p. 30, Muriel Kitagawa Papers, loc. cit.
28. Taylor to Mackenzie, 4 March 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 174, PAC; Mackenzie to Taylor,

- 5 March 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 174, PAC.
29. See BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 3, PAC.
  30. Kitagawa to Fujiwara, 22 March 1942, loc. cit.
  31. The members of this committee were: Etsuji Morii; Arthur Nishiguchi, a New Westminster merchant and veteran of the Canadian Army from the First World War; and Ippio Nishio, a Vancouver merchant who was also a representative of the Spanish consul, the “protecting power” under the Geneva Convention for Japanese aliens in Canada.
  32. Asst. Comnr. F.J. Mead to Comnr. S.T. Wood, 21 August 1940, Defence Department Papers, RG24, vol. 2730, PAC.; and S.T. Wood to A. MacNamara, Associate Deputy Minister of Labour, 2 June 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 174, file 614.02:11-1, pt. 6, PAC.
  33. Interviews by the author.
  34. Interview with J.C. Tanaka.
  35. *Ibid.*
  36. Interviews with *Issei* and *Nisei* by the author.
  37. *Ibid.*
  38. *Ibid.* See also *New Canadian*, 30 December 1975. Eventually 200 *Issei* seeking deferments from road camp service were placed on this committee by Morii.
  39. See Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was, A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976., pp. 244-45, for examples of the charges against Morii.
  40. Interviews by the author; Grant MacNeil to Mead, 10 March 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 16, PAC.
  41. Naturalized Japanese Canadian Association, *Minutes*, 29 March 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 174, PAC.
  42. Sumiko Tanaka Papers, in possession of Sumiko Tanaka; Kitagawa to Fujiwara, 4 April 1942, loc. cit.; Mead to Commanding Officer, RCMP, Vancouver, 2 April 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 16, PAC.; interviews by the author.
  43. Naturalized Japanese Canadian Association, “Proposal,” 4 April 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 16, PAC.
  44. Interview with J.C. Tanaka.
  45. *Ibid.*
  46. S.T. Wood to MacNamara, 5 June 1942, loc. cit.
  47. The Japanese Liaison Committee under Morii’s direction coordinated the uprooting of the coastal communities through their local Japanese Associations, raised funds for the Japanese Welfare Association, assisted in processing requests for deferment from immediate uprooting, and later administered the registration of the Tashme camp near Hope, B.C., and supplied the labourers to build that camp.
  48. See Canada, Department of Justice, *Evidence Re the Japanese Inquiry at Vancouver, B.C.*, 1942.
  49. Interviews by the author.
  50. For the position of the *Kikajin-kai* and the JCCC, see *New Canadian*, 10 April 1942.
  51. Kitagawa to Fujiwara, 8 April 1942, loc. cit.
  52. RCMP, Enquiry No. V-J-8, 24 March 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIB5, vol. 24, PAC.
  53. Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, p. 240; interviews with Ryuichi Yoshida by Maya Koizumi, Aural History Tape 69:5-1, PABC.
  54. Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol. 24, PAC.
  55. *Ibid.*
  56. Interviews with dissidents by the author.
  57. Interview with Kunio Shimizu, Ottawa, Ont.; Kitagawa to Fujiwara, 9 and 20 April 1942, loc. cit.

58. *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group to Taylor, 15 April 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 24, PAC.
59. Robert Y. Shimoda Papers, vol. 12-9, UBC.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Paul D. Murphy, Report on Ottawa Trip, J.C. Tanaka Papers, UBCA; Murphy to Taylor, 15 May 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 3, PAC.
62. Robert Y. Shimoda Papers, vol. 12-9, UBC.
63. MacNamara to Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour, 14 May 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 175, PAC.
64. Memorandum, Brig. D.R. Sargent, Commander, Vancouver Defences, 13 May 1942, Microreel 629A, PABC; Vancouver Province, 14 May 1942.
65. RCMP Reports, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 2, PAC.
66. Interviews with dissidents by the author.
67. Interview with J.C. Tanaka.
68. Interview with Kunio Shimizu, Ottawa, Ont.
69. Interview with J.C. Tanaka
70. Mead to MacNamara, 3 June 1942; Taylor to MacNamara, 9 June 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 175, PAC.
71. Vancouver *Daily Province*, 2 June 1942; *New Canadian*, 30 December 1975.
72. Murphy, Report on Ottawa Trip, loc. cit.
73. Taylor to MacNamara, 13 May 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 3, PAC.
74. Memorandum, D/Sgt. W.S. Woods to Col. S.T. Wood, Commissioner RCMP, 29 June 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 175, file 614.02:11-1, pt. 6, PAC.
75. Based on Canadian Pacific Railway pay rates. Interviews by the author.
76. Report, Rev. W.R. McWilliams, June 1942, W.P. Bunt Papers, file 18, Vancouver Theological College Archives.
77. *Ibid.*; Memorandum, W.S. Woods, loc. cit. One of the myths about the uprooting of the Japanese is that the road camps were closed because of fear of sabotage by Japanese aliens. On May 26 the American members of the Permanent Joint Board of Defence had asked their Canadian counterparts to investigate the security of the Jasper camps through which supplies for the Alaska highway project had to pass. D/Sgt. Woods was dispatched to carry out this investigation but did not report until after the decision to reunite Japanese families had been taken, suggesting that the myth of military necessity played no part in the decision. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that single men continued to build the Yellowhead into 1943, while the Hope-Princeton project provided seasonal employment for the Tashme camp for three more years.
78. Mead to MacNamara, 3 June 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 175, file 614.02:11-1, pt. 6, PAC. In the internment camp at Angler, Ontario, the men received prisoner of war rates of 20¢ per day plus their board, netting them more than the road camps.
79. Kinzie Tanaka to Taylor, 26 May 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27111B5, vol.24, file 67-28, PAC.
80. Kinzie Tanaka Papers, in the possession of Kinzie Tanaka.
81. Kinzie Tanaka to Taylor, loc. cit.
82. Taylor to MacNamara, 9 June 1942; Wood to St. Laurent, 5 June 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 175, PAC.
83. Dr. Lyall Hodgins, Report, 1 June 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 3, PAC.
84. Mead and Hodgins to Taylor, 15 June 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 3, PAC.
85. The plan to build these towns was announced on 28 June 1942 and produced a great uproar in Hastings Park as the wives of men working on the Hope-Princeton highway hurried to register for Tashme. See Rev. Yoshio Ono Papers, UBC.

86. The original leaders of the NMEG had been interned – Fujikazu Tanaka for breaking curfew and Robert Shimoda for refusing to obey his road camp order.
87. Interview with J.C. Tanaka.
88. June Tanaka Papers, MG31H70, PAC; *New Canadian*, 30 December 1975.
89. Interviews by the author.
90. On 1 January 1943 there were 12,114 in the Interior detention camps and 4,390 elsewhere in B.C., while 3,925 had been moved to the Prairies, 1,850 to Ontario and Quebec, and 42 had gone to Japan on an exchange ship. Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada, 1944-1946* pp. 26, 27.

## IV: Exile

Throughout the spring and summer of 1942, special trains left Vancouver for the Interior mountains of British Columbia. To the casual observer the trains seemed no different from any other passenger train: an engine, day coaches, baggage cars, and a caboose. A more experienced train watcher might have noticed that the coaches were old, indeed sometimes overdue for retirement, and that while the trains left Vancouver fully loaded, they returned empty. Only those close enough to see the black-haired figures at the windows would have known for certain that those special trains were carrying Japanese Canadians into exile.

In March and April 1942 the trains carried only men whose ages varied according to their destination. If their destination lay west of the Caribou Mountains, most of the passengers would be young or middle-aged, *Nisei* and naturalized Japanese Canadians destined for road camps along the Hope-Princeton highway or what became the Trans-Canada Highway west of Revelstoke, B.C. If their destination lay along the Canadian National Railway between Blue River, B.C., and Jasper, Alberta, there would be many more old men and very few young men, since the camps along what would become the Yellowhead highway were reserved for Japanese aliens. If Ontario was the destination, most of the passengers would be young *Nisei*, destined either for the road camp at Schreiber, or for the internment camps at Petawawa and Angler, camps they would share with German prisoners-of-war.<sup>1</sup>

By late April 1942 trains filled with Japanese Canadian families had joined the trek east. To avoid the pain of family separation, over six hundred families from the Fraser Valley signed up to labour in the sugar beet fields of Alberta and Manitoba. Others – more fortunate Japanese Canadians with private financial resources – chartered special trains in May to move their families and friends to autonomous self-supporting communities in the Interior. These fortunate 1,400 thereby avoided most of the restrictions imposed on the rest and lived under minimal supervision at the resorts and on the farms they had leased with the government's permission.<sup>2</sup>

Also by late April, the wives and the children of the men in the road camps had begun moving from Hastings Park into the ghost towns of the Interior. The decaying buildings of Greenwood, Kaslo, Sandon, New Denver and Slocan City – relics of B.C.'s turn-of-the-century silver boom – were marginally better than Hastings Park. While the women and children were still overcrowded and were living and eating communally, they were at least free from the stink of the livestock barns and from the fear of violence by white British Columbians. In the ghost towns, at least there were doors on their cramped rooms, doors they could close against the world.

The sugar beet scheme was the result of a chronic farm labour shortage on the Prairies. Both Alberta and Manitoba had lost 44 per cent of their prewar farm labour to the war industries and the armed forces by 1942.<sup>3</sup> In Alberta the labour shortage was further compounded by the threat of a strike by the Alberta Sugar Beet Workers' Union. To the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers' Association, which strenuously opposed the union, the Fraser Valley Japanese were an ideal solution to their labour problems. They were experienced, were reputed to be cheap, and because they would be under



government control, could not be organized by the union – assuming the largely Eastern European union could overcome its prejudices against non-whites in the first place. Accordingly, in early February W.F. Russell, the secretary of the growers' association, approached the government about the possibility of using Japanese workers in southern Alberta.<sup>4</sup> To the beet growers the stereotype of Japanese Canadians as efficient farm labour overrode the “dangerous saboteur” stereotype promoted by B.C.'s politicians and press.

Others in Alberta, however, firmly believed the ravings of the B.C. press, if only because they had no other basis on which to judge the B.C. Japanese. As soon as the growers' interest in the coastal Japanese became public knowledge and a trickle of B.C. Japanese began arriving in Alberta to take refuge with friends and relatives among Alberta's 534 Japanese Canadians, opposition to the importation of Japanese labour rapidly escalated. Through March 1942 the beet workers' union, town, city and labour councils, Legion locals, Boards of Trade, and citizens' committees throughout southern Alberta passed resolutions demanding either the exclusion of the B.C. Japanese or their supervision by the army and their removal after the war. Even the small communities in which Japanese Albertans had lived since before the First World War were not immune. Making careful distinction between “their” Japanese and the B.C. Japanese, Raymond, Lethbridge and Taber all held public meetings to protest the importation of B.C. Japanese as beet labour. Such a program, they felt, would simply export British Columbia's “Japanese problem” to Alberta.<sup>5</sup>

The protests were based on a mixture of ignorance and the identification of British Columbia's “Japanese problem” with Alberta's “Hutterite problem.” The Hutterites were German-speaking pacifists who lived on communes in southern Alberta. In view of the war with Germany, local “patriots” damned the Hutterites as enemy aliens, shirkers of their patriotic duty, and because of their communal way of life, as unfair competition.<sup>6</sup> To Alberta nativists, the B.C. Japanese were worse than Hutterites. Not only were they unassimilable, economically competitive “enemy aliens,” like the Hutterites, but they were also damned as non-whites and potential traitors. To both the nativists and the public at large, whose only source of information was biased press accounts from the west coast, the fact that the federal government was moving Japanese Canadians from the west coast was proof that they really were as dangerous as the press reports claimed.

In March 1942 a committee of prominent Albertans<sup>7</sup> associated with the sugar industry took upon itself the task of explaining why the B.C. Japanese were enough of a threat to be moved from the Pacific Coast but not a threat to Alberta. The sugar representatives appealed to the patriotism of southern Albertans. The B.C. Japanese, they informed public meetings in Raymond and Lethbridge, were dangerous in B.C. because of a threat of a Japanese invasion. It was, therefore, the duty of patriotic Albertans to do whatever was required to alleviate that danger. Sugar beet production, they pointed out, was a necessary part of Canada's war effort, and the B.C. Japanese, while undesirable, were the only available source of experienced farm labour. In any event, they assured their audiences, the federal government had agreed to remove the B.C. Japanese after the war.<sup>8</sup>

Only Alberta demanded a written agreement guaranteeing the removal of the B.C. Japanese after the war. At the instigation of Alberta's Social Credit Premier, William Aberhart, the Alberta government demanded a contract stating that the federal government would assume all health and education costs and would remove the Japanese at the war's end. By contrast, Manitoba's

Premier, John Bracken, thought that a formal agreement was unnecessary, since constitutionally there was nothing Manitoba could do if the federal government decided to renege at a later date.<sup>9</sup> The existence of the Alberta contract, however, helped to convince southern Albertans to tolerate, if not accept, the B.C. Japanese.

The existence of an agreement to remove them after the war did not disturb the Fraser Valley Japanese. To them the sugar beet scheme was simply a means of avoiding family separation. Having made their living for years through stoop labour on their berry and vegetable farms, the Fraser Valley Japanese assumed that beet work on the Prairies would be a relatively stressless alternative to family separation and confinement in detention and road camps in B.C. They also assumed that their exile from B.C. would be temporary, a year or two at the most. Once West Coast paranoia had calmed or a treaty had been signed with Japan, they were confident that they would be allowed to return to their homes in the Fraser Valley. Promised decent housing, a reasonable standard of living, relative freedom of movement, and placement on farms in close proximity to one another, entire Japanese communities in the Fraser Valley volunteered for beet work in Alberta and Manitoba. By 11 April 1942 they were on their way: 2,664 to Alberta, 1,053 to Manitoba.<sup>10</sup>

The B.C. Japanese were moved directly from their homes in groups of 75 to 125 people, an arrangement that had several advantages. Group movement meant that experienced and respected leaders in each community handled the negotiations, freeing the majority to concentrate on the practical problems of moving 3,600 people. By cooperative effort, many of those practical problems were eased: baggage was assembled, goods were stored in churches and community halls, Caucasian tenants were found for the already planted farms, and agreements were negotiated with the tenants to assure the continued viability of existing cooperative marketing schemes. Group movement also meant that unqualified families could be smuggled into the scheme. In order to have the required ratio of four workers to every dependent, young couples with small children formed family units with their parents and unmarried siblings, while the youngest children of widows travelled with other families to give the impression that no one had too many dependents. The object, as far as the Fraser Valley Japanese were concerned, was to maximize the number who could benefit, while minimizing the trauma of the move.<sup>11</sup>

The move, however, proved far more shocking than expected. To begin with, the process by which farmers selected the Japanese labourers was very arbitrary and led to serious mismatching. Two *Nisei* sisters recalled their selection experience on arrival in Alberta:

They stopped [the train] at the elevators and we were just herded out. The baggage was just all dumped on the grass there. It was a windy day and sunny. And the farmers came and they saw a likely family that they wanted and they took them home.... The farmers didn't want families that had small children [or only girls].... They were just left at the station. The farmers took families that had more working people.... So we were there sitting on our baggage. We were all bawling because nobody wanted us – being four workers against ten of us.... This Hungarian farmer ... he says, "All right, I'll take a chance on you, on you girls." And he took us.<sup>12</sup>

Once they had been selected by a farmer, the real shock set in. The Fraser Valley Japanese had pioneered in the 1920s. By 1940 their farms were established and they had, in the words of

BCSC Commissioner Taylor, “been living under modern conditions.”<sup>13</sup> The conditions under which transient beet labour lived, however, were crude at best. As a consequence, the B.C. Japanese arrived to find that they were expected to live in old, uninsulated granaries and chicken coops, to wash in and drink alkaline water from the sloughs and irrigation ditches, and to perform stoop labour far more strenuous than that to which they had been accustomed. Sometimes they also had to work for growers who felt that the Japanese should suffer as the growers had when they were beet labourers in the 1930s, or for growers who regarded the B.C. Japanese as prisoners of war or slave labour, and treated them accordingly.<sup>14</sup>

The B.C. Japanese drowned their disappointment in hard work and complaints to the Security Commission representatives: William Andrews in Lethbridge and Charles E. Graham in Winnipeg. Fortunately, Austin Taylor had anticipated the housing problem. In April he had instructed Andrews and Graham

to see that these people are accommodated with habitable, clean houses such as our own class of worker would expect .... I may say, for your guidance, that the Japanese race cannot be compared, in any sense, with the average European worker that the Alberta beet growers have been accustomed to meeting. The Japanese are a very clean, dependable, industrious race and with kindly treatment can be guided most advantageously.<sup>15</sup>

Accordingly, Andrews and Graham were prepared to supply building materials with which the B.C. Japanese could improve the granaries and shacks assigned to them, or build new houses where the farmer was willing to bear the added cost.

Even improved housing remained woefully inadequate. Eleven people, including elderly grandparents and very small children, crammed into an uninsulated granary was not unusual. With one small stove at one end and sleeping platforms at the other, families ate, slept, washed, dressed, loved, fought and, in winter, shivered within inches of each other. The evacuation from British Columbia, a mother of ten asserted, “made you angry, very angry. But the anger killed the sorrow and the hurt, and the anger itself was destroyed by making a living. I became too busy to be angry.”<sup>16</sup>

The B.C. Japanese also threw themselves into improving the standard beet contracts under which they had come to Alberta and Manitoba. They soon discovered that those contracts were inadequate to support families with dependent children, especially in Alberta where the local school boards were demanding fees of seventy dollars per year from Japanese high school students. In addition, the opportunities for off-season employment open to the Eastern European beet workers were not available to the Japanese. Employment in Lethbridge and Calgary was closed to them under the agreements by which they had been brought to Alberta, agreements that the anti-Asian City Councils of both cities were in no mood to change. As a consequence, only 15 per cent of the 2,664 B.C. Japanese in Alberta found winter employment, mostly in logging, domestic service, or caring for livestock on or near the farms assigned to them. By the spring of 1943, 90 per cent of the uprooted Japanese in Alberta were in dire economic straits, with 42 per cent on relief, and more borrowing on their next beet contract to avoid the shame of accepting relief.<sup>17</sup>

Similar destitution could be found in Manitoba. There the Security Commission attempted to control access to Winnipeg because it feared reprisals against the B.C. Japanese by the relatives

of the Winnipeg Grenadiers captured at Hong Kong in December 1941. Accordingly, the first Japanese Canadians allowed into Winnipeg in the fall of 1942 were female domestics placed by the Young Women's Christian Association in the homes of influential Winnipeggers. The Security Commission hoped that these influential Winnipeggers would protect Japanese Canadians if trouble developed.<sup>18</sup> As the winter progressed and family savings were consumed, more and more *Nisei* sought work in Winnipeg and other centres in order to feed their parents and siblings. Although changing employment or residence without permission was forbidden, once the *Nisei* had illegally established themselves in Winnipeg, the Security Commission recognized that it was unwise to punish them, especially since North Winnipeg was CCF territory. The "infiltration" of Japanese into Winnipeg, nonetheless, was considered dynamite by the general supervisor of the Sugar Beet Projects, J. N. Lister. Fortunately, in Winnipeg, one of two centres in Canada where a substantial number of people had a genuine personal grievance against Imperial Japan, there were never any ugly incidents.<sup>19</sup>

The movement of entire Fraser Valley communities into Alberta and Manitoba had important implications for the subsequent organization of Japanese Canadians in those provinces. Although expressly forbidden to form any organizations, the B.C. Japanese did so clandestinely. Because they had been moved to Alberta and Manitoba in village units, much of the prewar social structure remained intact. The men who had led each Fraser Valley community before and during its uprooting were still trusted and available to speak for the people from their community. In addition, because the communities in the Fraser Valley were close to one another, the leaders already knew each other, easing organizational problems.

The B.C. Japanese also had among them experienced organizers. In Manitoba Shinji Sato, Ichiro Hirayama and Harold Hirose all had extensive experience in marketing cooperatives in the Fraser Valley or in the Japanese Fishermen's Association at Steveston. Appreciating the value of collective bargaining, they understood that demands from a Japanese association representing all Japanese in Manitoba were more likely to succeed than the efforts of individuals. In August they requested permission from the BCSC to organize such an association. While Charles Graham, the Security Commission's representative in Manitoba, thought the suggestion had merit, the authorities in Vancouver and Ottawa feared that local whites might be offended by Japanese meeting together.<sup>20</sup> Denied the right of assembly, Sato, Hirayama and Hirose began meeting secretly with other Japanese leaders in Chinese hotels in Winnipeg to work out the details of an association and the issues it would tackle. By spring Japanese in most of the areas around Winnipeg had secretly elected district leaders from whom the executive of the Manitoba Japanese Joint Committee was elected.<sup>21</sup> Presented with a *fait accompli*, the Department of Labour, which had taken over responsibility for Japanese Canadians in February 1943, could do little to oppose the Japanese committee. Aware that the illegal committee had raised Japanese morale and that the district leaders would lighten the administrative load by taking care of the small difficulties in their districts, the Department of Labour officially recognized the Manitoba committee in May 1943.

The Manitoba Japanese Joint Committee then plunged into the task of securing freedom of movement and freedom of employment for its members. Arguing that the original beet contracts had covered only the 1942 crop year, they contended that Japanese Canadians were under no obligation to continue in the beet fields if they could find other employment. Since most of the B.C. Japanese stayed in beet work in 1943 and since the beet farmers did not object to those who

left, the government chose to go quietly along with the Manitoba Japanese Joint Committee. By the fall of 1943 life for Japanese Manitobans began to seem relatively normal. Within the bounds of the government's restrictions, they had begun to rebuild their lives.

In Alberta much of the organizing fell to Seiku Sakumoto, the former English-language secretary of the Japanese Camp and Mill Workers Union. Arriving in Alberta on his own initiative in February 1942, Sakumoto immediately set about trying to improve the lot of the incoming coastal Japanese. He first tried to arrange for the B.C. Japanese to join a local vegetable cooperative in order to support themselves by growing vegetables as they had in the Fraser Valley. Frustrated in this attempt by local whites who objected to land being rented or sold to the B.C. Japanese, Sakumoto turned his energies to organizing the Japanese beet workers north of the Old Man River. In his efforts he was helped by Sadayoshi Aoki and Minoru Kudo, who had been highly respected Japanese-language school principals in Vancouver and Mission City before the uprooting.<sup>22</sup>

Sakumoto, Aoki and Kudo laid the groundwork for an organizational meeting for all Japanese beet workers in the Northern Irrigation District, a meeting held in an open field near Picture Butte. The meeting was both secret and illegal. Consequently, when the local RCMP constable and William Andrews, the BCSC representative in Lethbridge, arrived, the organizers were both surprised and apprehensive. Neither man, however, interfered with the meeting. Rather, both men quietly watched as Sakumoto was elected president of the Shogo Endo Kai or Beet Workers Association. Andrews, the B.C. Japanese discovered, was a reasonable man who recognized that elected spokesmen among the beet workers could ease many of the petty administrative problems.<sup>23</sup> Along with a similar organization, the Shinwa Kai or Benefit Association, organized among the uprooted Japanese south of the Old Man River, the B.C. Japanese plunged into the task of trying to improve their lot.

In Alberta the major problems facing the uprooted Japanese were poor housing, inadequate beet contracts, school fees, and off-season work. The first two problems were solved simultaneously in the spring of 1943. The original allocation of families to growers had resulted in some serious mis-matching. By the spring of 1943 some 175 families had requested transfers to other farms. The Growers' Association, however, chose to interpret its contract with the BCSC to mean that the B.C. Japanese must remain on their original farms for the duration of the war. Recognizing that arguing with the growers was useless, the Japanese beet workers calmly negotiated their 1943 beet contracts and then refused en masse to sign them until the growers agreed to allow a proper redistribution of misplaced families.<sup>24</sup> The Japanese, the growers painfully discovered, were not about to act like docile slave labour. By importing the B.C. Japanese, they had traded one union for another possibly tougher "union," tougher because without an alternative to beet work the Japanese had no choice but to maintain their solidarity.

The attempt to rectify the schooling problem was less successful. It arose because the agreement between the federal government and Alberta covered only primary education. The B.C. Japanese, however, had interpreted the government's promise of a "normal family life" to include public education for their high school-aged children. To avoid the whole issue, the federal and Alberta governments left the question of fees for high school students to the local school boards, who began by charging the Japanese parents seventy dollars per year per student. Arguing that as productive labourers they were already contributing to the tax base of the area and therefore deserved the same privileges as any other labourer in the area, the B.C. Japanese entered into



long negotiations with the school boards in each district. As the war progressed, they gained concessions, and most districts either halved or eliminated their fees. By 1946 only the Raymond School District still charged the full fee.<sup>25</sup>

The issue of off-season work was never satisfactorily settled during the war. The ban on working in Lethbridge, Edmonton and Calgary was the most damaging and produced a series of ugly encounters between Japanese trying to earn a living and anti-Asian city councillors. Every time Japanese Canadians, whether B.C. Japanese or Japanese Albertans, tried to work or study even temporarily in one of those centres, the city councillors, mouthing nativist rhetoric, vehemently protested. Systematically, city councils resisted and often rejected applications by Japanese Canadians, usually *Nisei*, and by their prospective employers for permits to work in the canning factory or the hospital at Lethbridge, to study at the Normal School in Calgary, or to work as domestics in all the major centres.<sup>26</sup> While in the last case the women usually ignored City Council and worked illegally, the Council's overt and publicized discrimination only served in the long run to win allies for Japanese Canadians in Alberta.

While many of those who helped the B.C. Japanese in Alberta were Caucasians, their most important allies were the "old timers", the 534 Japanese Albertans residing near Lethbridge and in Calgary and Edmonton in 1942. Japanese Albertans opened their homes, churches and associations to the uprooted B.C. Japanese. They helped them to find employment or better beet farms, to join the food cooperative at Raymond and to set up another in Coaldale, to establish Buddhist churches in Picture Butte and Coaldale, and to form new, or join existing, mutual assistance associations.<sup>27</sup>

For their efforts Japanese Albertans paid a price. By mediating between the B.C. Japanese and the general public, they were often identified by the public with the uprooted Japanese. This tendency to make no distinction between Alberta and B.C. Japanese was exacerbated by the policies of the federal government. Not content with libelling only the B.C. Japanese as traitors, the federal government extended the restrictions on the coastal Japanese to all Japanese in Canada on 8 September 1942.<sup>28</sup> Like their B.C. counterparts, Japanese Albertans could not travel more than twelve miles without a permit, could not sell their homes or move without permission, could not buy real estate or enter British Columbia, and had their mail and telephone calls censored. The pettiness with which these regulations were enforced is best illustrated by the case of a long-time Japanese resident of Raymond, with two sons on active service with the Canadian army, who waited from 1944 to 1946 for permission to buy a field adjoining his farm.<sup>29</sup>

In Manitoba the problems were less severe. The placing of *Nisei* domestics in the homes of Winnipeg's civic leaders had guaranteed the latter's support, or at least their neutrality. In addition, Winnipeg was a far more cosmopolitan city than any of the Alberta centres. Japanese Canadians in Winnipeg also had the assistance of the YWCA, the YMCA and influential individuals in that city's large Jewish community. In a pattern that would become common elsewhere, the first to employ Japanese Canadians and the first to rent to them in Winnipeg were Jews. To the Jews who helped Japanese Canadians, what was happening to the Japanese in Canada and to the Jews in Europe were two sides of the same coin.<sup>30</sup> Being Japanese Canadian in Winnipeg during the Second World War was not easy, but at least there they had friends.

In fact, Japanese Canadians had a few friends everywhere, although sometimes very few. While the hierarchies of the churches and the government had apparently turned their backs



on them, there existed individuals and small groups who knew the Japanese were innocent and were sympathetic to their problems. Within the British Columbia Security Commission, RCMP Assistant Commissioner Mead worked constantly to ensure fair and lenient enforcement of the restrictions imposed on Japanese Canadians. It was in part because of his efforts that Japanese Canadians were able to bend, and on occasion to break, those restrictions. Even as the BCSC was being dissolved in early 1943, Mead tried to ensure continued fairness by informing Ottawa of the men who, in his opinion, should not be placed in authority over Japanese Canadians because of their anti-Japanese attitudes.<sup>31</sup>

In general the RCMP tried to be as lenient as possible, enforcing the letter of the law where the spirit was repugnant. For instance, when enforcing the Department of Fisheries ban on fishing by Japanese Canadians – a ban that included even sport fishing – the law required that the officer confiscate the offender’s tackle. Often, however, the officer would take only token tackle: a stick, some line and a hook. The fact that the local RCMP constable was merely an agent of the Department of Justice and was required to carry out government policies was often lost on the inmates, to whom he was the symbol of the government. Often the inmates would attribute actions like the denial of travel permits to the local constable or the RCMP in general, unaware that it was the Departments of Justice and Labour in Ottawa that set policy and that the local constable could not change it.<sup>32</sup>

In the camps and the major centres, it was individual Jews and Christian ministers, and groups like the YMCA, YWCA and the Women’s Missionary Societies, who tried to help. The Jews were often the first employers and landlords of the Japanese at a time when employing or renting to “Japs” meant social condemnation by local patriots. As one *Nisei* who had relocated to Montreal explained to his wife in Kaslo: “The Jews are kicked around a lot in Eastern Canada and realize our situation more than you can imagine. Most of the Japanese here work for a Jewish firm, for they are the only ones fair-minded to employ us.”<sup>33</sup> The YWCA first coordinated the placement of Japanese domestics, then initiated social programs for the displaced *Nisei*. In addition, in Toronto the YMCA ran a hostel for *Nisei* males. The Women’s Missionary Society of the United Church helped right from the beginning. In March 1942 the WMS pledged to “stand behind any action taken in the field for the welfare of the Japanese in Canada.” The WMS then placed workers in the detention camps and the major centres, and funded a high school and two kindergartens in the Slovan Valley.<sup>34</sup> Often the WMS workers were missionaries repatriated from Japan after 1940, whose language skills were useful in dealing with the *Issei*. The high school they operated enabled some of the *Nisei* to finish their education. Working at the interface between the exiled Japanese and the communities in which they were trying to settle, the few friends who helped Japanese Canadians in 1942 were unknowingly the vanguard of a growing movement that in time would help to restore the civil liberties of Japanese Canadians.

In 1942, however, those who helped Japanese Canadians were not always appreciated by the government, other Caucasians, or indeed by those Japanese Canadians who blamed all whites for their problems. To some camp administrators, the WMS workers in the detention camps were a nuisance they would rather do without, especially after they joined the inmates in protesting the absence of schools, decent housing and recreational facilities.<sup>35</sup> Sometimes the friends of Japanese Canadians helped them at risk to themselves. When Rev. James Finlay of Toronto’s Carlton Street United Church took Muriel Kitagawa, her husband and their four children into the manse, kept

them there for the nine months it took Ed Kitagawa to find a decent job, and then opened a social centre at the church for the *Nisei* in Toronto, some of his wealthier parishioners objected, claiming Finlay was lowering the social standing of the parish. Finlay wisely left the issue to a vote of the entire congregation, who overwhelmingly rejected the idea that either Finlay or the *Nisei* should go.<sup>36</sup>

Ironically, one of the most important allies of the uprooted Japanese was the federal government. In order to avoid trouble from unions and criticism from other workers, the Department of Labour insisted that, except when employed by the Department of Labour itself, Japanese Canadians must be paid the going wage. While the government itself paid only twenty-five to forty cents per hour when the going wage in the B.C. Interior was better than sixty cents per hour,<sup>37</sup> it enforced equal pay for equal work elsewhere. In the summer of 1942, for instance, the government organized “swing crews” of uprooted Japanese to pick fruit in the Okanagan Valley. When one of the first crews arrived at its first location, however, the Japanese workers discovered that the fruit farmers had arbitrarily slashed their wages to half of those of their white pickers. While a few of the crew were willing to work as scabs, the crew leader, John Kumagai, persuaded most of them to walk the twelve miles back to their base camp with him. Kumagai had correctly assumed that Okanagan whites would be more alarmed if there were “Japs running loose in the Valley” than they would be if non-whites were paid the same wage as whites.<sup>38</sup> As he expected, in the ensuing uproar, the government insisted that the Japanese workers be paid the full rate. While some employers continued to try to exploit them, Japanese Canadians finally had a strong, if inconsistent, ally against the traditional double standard in wages.

In the Ontario internment camps, it was the Red Cross that helped, in accordance with the Geneva Convention. By supplying cigarettes, reading material and recreational equipment, the Red Cross eased some of the boredom of life in those camps. Intended for prisoners of war, the internment camps at Petawawa and later Angler, Ontario, were governed by rigid regulations and schedules: reveille at 6:30 A.M., muster parade, breakfast, parade for morning work parties, sick parade, inspection of the compound, lunch, parade for afternoon work parties, muster parade, supper, lock-up and roll call, and lights out at 11:00 P.M. Dusk until lock-up at 11:00 P.M. constituted the men’s free time. Their work duties included both maintaining the camp and voluntary outside work assigned by the elected camp leader, Tokikazu Tanaka. For outside work they were paid the same rates as the German prisoners-of-war, who were held separately in the same camp.<sup>39</sup>

In the closed world of the internment camp, hut-mates became surrogate family. Meals, work, recreation, lessons in German, Japanese, English, kendo, judo, woodworking, tailoring and so on were shared with hut-mates. The closeness eased the loneliness of separation from families, but it also meant that there was a great deal of social pressure to conform to the opinions of the majority or, at least, of the most vocal. If an inmate happened to be assigned to a hut where the men were bitter over their treatment, or for any number of reasons supported the Axis rather than the Allied cause, he might soon find himself under considerable pressure to resist leaving the internment camp to take employment in Ontario. As one young internee recalled: “Among the internees there were some very, very strong people there. So once you open your mouth, ‘I like to go out,’ they say you are anti-Japanese.”<sup>40</sup> To pro-Japan patriots there was honour in imprisonment in an internment camp. On occasion, however, the strongest pressure on an interned man to remain

interned came not from his hut mates, but from members of his immediate family. Isolated in the unreal world of the detention camps in B.C. and convinced that Japan would eventually be victorious, family members urged the interned men to remain imprisoned for the honour of the family.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, within a year 244 of the 470 *Nisei* detained for disobeying the orders of the BCSC had left the internment camps for employment in Port Arthur and Fort William (now the City of Thunder Bay) and southern Ontario, along with 71 of the 225 *Issei* interned in 1942.<sup>42</sup>

Only one incident marred the uneventful detention of the interned Japanese Canadians. On the night of 1 July 1942 the *Nisei* inmates of hut 10 at the Petawawa camp left their barracks in the early hours of the morning to discipline an inmate they felt was toadying up to the camp commandant. As one participant explained:

Dr. Hori... tried to cooperate with the government and the camp commandant... He was trying to talk to the young guys, "You should go out... because of the manpower shortage during the war." He was trying to work against us. So some of the Mass Evacuation Group went into [his hut]. I don't think that we meant to harm him in any way, but just to ... persuade him not to work against us. This was after the curfew in the camp. I suppose the guards thought we were trying to escape or something.... We could hear the shots coming.... It was a wonder nobody got killed.<sup>43</sup>

Without warning, the sentries fired three volleys at the internees as they moved between huts 10 and 11, aiming above their heads. The bullets penetrated the thin wall of hut 10, grazing the blankets of one bed and the pillow of another. Fortunately, both of the men who should have been in those bunks were among the men outside the hut. Shocked and furious, the inmates complained about the excessive zeal of the sentries to the camp commandant and the Spanish consul and reinforced their complaint by refusing to participate in roll call for three days.<sup>44</sup>

No explanation was ever officially given for the incident, although an inquiry was held three months later. It seems most likely that the incident resulted from the abnormal status of the Japanese internees. Ignorant of the fact that the Japanese in the camp were Canadian civilians, not Axis troops, the guards reacted as they had been trained to do. Perhaps because of this incident, the Japanese were transferred soon after to Internment Camp 101 at Angler, Ontario, where their status as Canadians "detained at the pleasure of the Minister of Justice" was made clear to their guards.<sup>45</sup>

The Petawawa incident, the resolution of the *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group protest in Vancouver on the same day and the boredom and black flies of northern Ontario all combined to compel some inmates to leave the internment camps. They were not permitted to return to their families in B.C., however, but were required to seek employment in Ontario or Quebec. Once they had found suitable housing, they were told, their families could join them in eastern Canada.

In seeking employment in eastern Canada, the released internees joined 467 single *Nisei* who had been recruited for the road camp at Schreiber, Ontario, in the spring of 1942. Most of the men at Schreiber were supporters of the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Council and had volunteered for Schreiber as an act of loyalty. The Schreiber *Nisei* went to Ontario looking for opportunity and found it. The labour-hungry forest and mining industries of northern Ontario quickly attracted the physically fit, seasoned labourers among them, while the city-bred men just as quickly abandoned

the black flies of northern Ontario for farm labour and factory jobs in southern Ontario.

The movement of *Nisei* into Ontario gave birth to a new social entity: a *Nisei* nucleus separated philosophically and geographically from the bulk of Japanese Canadians. Largely Christian in religious training, the Ontario *Nisei* were soon befriended by liberal Caucasians from organizations like the YWCA and the major churches. Within a year these *Nisei* would develop *Nisei* organizations headed by former members of the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League as well as a new network of social ties with concerned Caucasians in Ontario.

In the Interior of British Columbia, Japanese Canadians helped themselves. There is an expression in Japanese that is normally used to describe the attitude of Japanese Canadians during their uprooting: "*shikataga-nai*." *Shikataga-nai* is usually translated as "It cannot be helped" or "I must resign myself to my fate." Given this philosophy, past chroniclers of the wartime history of Canada's Japanese minority have assumed that the detention camps were filled with apathetic people resigned to their fate. In fact, while the resignation and apathy suggested by *shikataga-nai* existed from time to time, it was neither as permanent nor as pervasive as has been assumed. *Shikataga-nai* was a short-term reaction to an immediate situation over which the individual had no control. It helped the individual to cope with immediate tensions, but it, by no means, extinguished the resolve to do whatever could be done to improve the situation. In 1942 Japanese Canadians were resigned to the extent that they recognized that they were powerless to stop the uprooting. As the *Nisei* resistance demonstrated, however, they were not resigned to being moved without some input on their part or to remaining acquiescently in camps over which they had no control.

In the summer and fall of 1942 the principal concern of almost all Japanese in B.C. was shelter. The existing buildings in the ghost towns were too few to house everyone and required considerable repair. For example, in June 1942 Chiyo Umezaki, wife of the Japanese-language editor of the *New Canadian*, was sharing the dance hall portion of an old saloon with two other families. With thirteen children and four adults in one room, there was no privacy.<sup>46</sup> "Everybody who saw the place ...," she wrote her husband, "name[s] it No. 2 Hastings Park and it is worse than Hastings Park as we have to cook our own meals in [the] same room we sleep in and we can see the people in the toilet while we cook and eat as said toilet is right at the back of our so-called kitchen."<sup>47</sup> Yet Chiyo Umezaki was not immediately eligible for anything better. She had a roof over her head. Others were not so lucky. Hundreds of families spent the summer and early fall of 1942 in tents on the Popoff farm in the Slocan Valley, waiting for shacks to be constructed for them.

The shacks being thrown up through the summer of 1942 were rudimentary. Built from green wood, there were two types: small shacks, sixteen feet by sixteen feet, divided into a common room and two bedrooms; and large shacks, sixteen feet by twenty-four feet, divided into four bedrooms and a common room. The small shacks were to house a minimum of four people; the large ones, a minimum of eight. Where families had less than the quota of four or eight members, they were expected to share with strangers. The construction was simple and uninsulated: stud walls with one layer of green wood and a single sheet of tar paper for protection from the elements. Additional wood was supplied to the occupants to build beds, tables and benches. Since it was green wood, the furniture quickly warped, and moisture from the bed slats seeped into the mattresses. Apart from that green wood and a small stove, the inmates were to supply everything else themselves.<sup>48</sup>

After housing, the principal problems were food and income. While construction proceeded, the men could earn between twenty-five and forty cents an hour from which to support their families. For the women there was even less opportunity. Aside from the educated *Nisei* women who worked for the Security Commission as typists, store clerks or welfare workers, the only employment was sewing on a piecework basis or stoop labour on nearby farms.<sup>49</sup> The Doukhobors helped by selling produce and other goods to the Japanese at lower prices than those charged by the town merchants. Nonetheless, the cost of living in the detention camps was higher than it had been on the Coast, partly because the traditional methods of economizing were unavailable. In the Interior it was no longer possible to depend on the family vegetable garden, cheap fish unwanted by the canneries, shrimp and crab caught in English Bay, or fruit picked at the farms of friends in the Fraser Valley and preserved for winter. All food stuffs had to be bought out of salaries of twenty-five cents an hour or with food allowances supplied by the government to the unemployed, allowances that were grossly inadequate. Welfare workers in the camps estimated that food allowances needed to be increased by 55 per cent to meet basic dietary needs.<sup>50</sup> As unemployment climbed with the end of the harvest and the completion of the camps, the inadequate relief rates forced the unemployed to dig into their savings to purchase basic necessities.<sup>51</sup> In the summer and fall of 1942, as Chiyo Umezaki informed her husband, Japanese Canadians were “too busy thinking about where to live and how to eat and clothe themselves with so little money” to worry about other things like schools, recreation and community associations.<sup>52</sup>

As winter closed in – harsher than any Japanese Canadians had known on the Coast – the difficulties of camp life intensified. First there was the cold that penetrated the uninsulated cabins, freezing everything. Each morning ice was scraped from the walls, and the blankets and mattresses were hung near the stove to dry so that the inmates could sleep the next night. June Hirai Tanaka, a *Nisei* mother of four, still vividly recalls that first winter:

In Slocan we had this house, but there was no windows in the winter [because of the ice], and for fuel we had these ice-covered logs we had to melt first. It wouldn't burn. It just smoked. And the two older children got whooping cough by sleeping on those straw mattresses. They just got soaking wet because [the floors of the cabins were] just one board above the ground.... My job all day was to get enough heat to dry these mattresses for the night. That was an all-day job.... It was just dreadful.... In order to survive, just to be able to sleep, just those basic things, you worked all day at it. Even water we didn't have at first so we had to go someplace for it a mile away to get fresh water. By the time we got it home over the bumpy roads – we used our children's snow sleds – they were only half full. We had to do that kind of thing.<sup>53</sup>

Wood-burning stoves like June Tanaka's were the only source of heat in the uninsulated cabins. During the day eight or more people would crowd into the central common room to seek warmth, to cook, to eat, to carry out their household tasks. In cabins shared by two families, the normal confusion would be doubled as different families with different attitudes, rules, likes, dislikes and preferences tried to share the same space and facilities. The confusion was also multiplied by the fact that the children, denied access to the public schools by the province, had nowhere else to play when the weather was bad. Even the Women's Missionary Society workers in



the Interior camps were not spared the daily drudgery facing Japanese Canadian women. As they explained in their annual report:

The green clapboard with which the cabin was sealed, slightly warmed by our best efforts to create heat out of sizzling green wood, exuded a sticky moisture. This in turn whitened into a powdery frost which clung, chill and cheerless, on the walls and windows.

Until the rigours of that unusual winter were safely past my chief daily duty was homemaking, fire and food requiring most of my time.<sup>54</sup>

The arrival of winter marked the awakening of the community spirit of the inmates. The housing coordinator at Kaslo, Katsuko Hideka Halfhide remembered:

One of the reasons the Japanese people were able to adapt... was that they always had this tradition of working in groups.... They did this in Japan. Every little village had its council.... This was the whole background they could draw from: a great stability and a great sense of social values.... Mind you, they had their cliques. They had their divisions. Sometimes you could tear your hair out.... But underlying it all was the old tradition [of working together, *tonarigumi*].<sup>55</sup>

In each camp the inmates looked for leadership to the men who had been responsible for building that camp. At Tashme, located fourteen miles west of Hope, B.C., the leadership came from the remnants of Etsuji Morii's "national group", as the RCMP called them. Following the decline of Morii's influence in March 1942 and his departure for the self-supporting community at Minto City, the leadership of this group fell to Shieotaka Sasaki and Frank S. Shiraichi. Along with Rev. Yoshio Ono, an Anglican minister, they co-ordinated the work force for Tashme. At Kaslo and New Denver the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Council had assumed responsibility for coordinating the work force. The JCCC, like the national group, underwent a change in leadership while building was underway. In May 1942 a police informer charged that JCCC spokesman Kunio Shimizu was the real leader of the illegal *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group. While that accusation caused some mirth within the Japanese community, where Shimizu was known to strongly oppose the NMEG protest, the authorities promptly shipped Shimizu and several others off to the Schreiber camp in Ontario or to the Interior settlements.<sup>56</sup> By July Eiji Yatabe had assumed the task of coordinating the JCCC work force. Also by July the Security Commission had recognized the *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group. Led by Shigeichi Uchibori, the Mass Evacuation Group coordinated the work force in the Slocan City-Lemon Creek-Popoff camps.<sup>57</sup> The government had recognized the three groups because it assumed that they could be used without granting them any real powers.<sup>58</sup> In fact, by assigning different camps to different groups, the government had unwittingly helped to set up Japanese organizations in the camps, as each faction ensured that their supporters, friends and neighbours ended up in the camps they were building.

The method of removal also helped to preserve the local social ties among Japanese Canadians. Removal had been on a geographic basis: first Prince Rupert and the coastal outports, then Vancouver Island, then the Fraser Valley, and finally Vancouver itself. Passing through Hastings



Park at the same time, Japanese Canadians from the same areas were often sent to the same camps. Where groups were shipped directly to the camps, it was even easier to preserve social ties. In the case of Steveston, Ken Hibi, JCCL social worker, recalled that different organizations went to different camps. "A person never picked his ghost town," Hibi noted, "they were shipped by group." The United church people went to Kaslo, the Buddhists to Sandon, and the self-supporting to Minto.<sup>59</sup> In the camps, they stayed together. Katsuko Hideka Halfhide, recalled that "these sort of groupings, which are quite natural ... arrived as a group and so whatever accommodation was ready at the time, they would tend to go together to that particular [converted] hotel.... It helped because they were soon organizing themselves."<sup>60</sup> The existence of old community ties meant that Japanese Canadians from each area readily recognized their former community leaders as camp leaders. Consequently, most camp committees consisted of those leaders who had coordinated the construction of the camps, along with the prewar local leaders who had not gone to the self-supporting settlements.<sup>61</sup>

The continuity of leadership was comforting. It created a semblance of normalcy and implied that the social and economic relations within the minority group would be preserved until the expected return to the Coast. Continuity of leadership also meant that the duties the camp committees eventually assumed were carried out by experienced men. In time those duties included explaining government policy, mediating disputes between inmates or between the administration and the inmates, organizing camp social activities, including Victory Bond drives, and, in one case, assigning work duties in the camp. The leadership of experienced men also minimized tensions between the camp committee and the inmates. With long histories of service in their local communities or with their credentials established during the construction phase, camp leaders did not become symbols of the hated restrictions imposed on the inmates. It was difficult to accuse a man who had been leading his community for a decade of collaborating with the government.<sup>62</sup>

Although Japanese associations in general were forbidden in 1942, there were some events for which the Security Commission could not refuse permission to organize. In October 1942 the camps in the Slocan Valley organized around a Victory Bond drive. As the *Arrow Lakes News* at Nakusp, B.C., noted: "Many Japanese are Canadian-born and proud of it and they realize that their response in the campaign will be watched with close interest.... Many of them, making the most of the situation in which they are at present, welcome the opportunity to show what they can do."<sup>63</sup> The Victory Bond drive established both an organizational structure and good relations between the Japanese and the local white population. Soon relations became quite friendly. Churches were made available for Japanese services, missionary-run schools were set up in church basements and town halls and fund-raising bazaars were organized and attended by Japanese and whites alike. The local merchants were especially pleased with the advent of the Japanese. Businesses that had been marginal were suddenly profitable because of a steady stream of Japanese customers. Good business relations soon became good social relations.<sup>64</sup> In the absence of local opposition to Japanese organizations, and recognizing their utility, the Security Commission allowed the formation of legal Japanese committees in the camps. In time those committees would petition the Security Commission for increases in the relief allowance, for materials to winterize the cabins, for water systems and electricity, for the release of the interned men, for the dismissal of unsympathetic Caucasian workers, for improved recreation facilities and, perhaps most importantly, for schools for their children.<sup>65</sup>

The improvements negotiated by the Japanese committees did not come easily. While most camp superintendents – notably Walter Hartley at Slocan City and later Tashme, and Henry P. Lougheed at Kaslo and later New Denver<sup>66</sup> – made considerable effort to improve the camps, others were not so enthusiastic. E.L. “Len” Boulton, general manager of Interior housing in 1942 and 1943, opposed improvements to the camps on the grounds that improvements made it more difficult to get Japanese Canadians to move out of B.C. as the government wished. “Every move we make to improve these facilities,” Boulton complained in 1943 to George Collins, the commissioner of Japanese placement, “makes it just that much tougher on the Supervisor in getting these families moved elsewhere.... I feel that we should not provide further facilities but make them get along with what they have.”<sup>67</sup>

Some camp superintendents agreed with Boulton. In 1942 Lougheed’s successor at Kaslo, a retired military man, thought the camps should be run along military lines, complete with as much segregation of the sexes as possible. Accordingly, he refused to allow the men rejoining their families from the road camps to live with them, accommodating them instead in a separate bunkhouse. Angered, a few *Nisei* took matters into their own hands. Warning the other Caucasian camp workers that “anything that happens tonight has nothing to do with you,” they broke the windows of the superintendent’s house to show their displeasure. Within a few days the order preventing the men from residing with their families was rescinded.<sup>68</sup>

Similarly, at Lemon Creek, J.S. Burns became a very unpopular supervisor. Considered narrow-minded and uncooperative by the Japanese, Burns, like Len Boulton and George Collins, opposed improving the camps and made changes difficult to secure. In the summer of 1943, for instance, the Japanese committee at Lemon Creek wanted to alter one of the school buildings so that it would conform to the demands of the fire marshal for a recreation hall. The Japanese committee approached Burns and Boulton, offering to supply the labour if they would supply the \$150 worth of materials necessary. They refused. The committee then offered to reimburse the Security Commission for the materials from the proceeds collected from ticket sales for the films they proposed to show in the renovated building. Since it would cost the government nothing in the long run, the renovation was finally approved. Burns’s attitude is best shown by the fact that while he was refusing to spend \$150 to create a badly needed recreation hall, he spent over \$300 on materials for a fence between the camp and the road. The purpose of the fence, he claimed, was to prevent the Doukhobors from peddling their produce in the camp. Doukhobors, he claimed, were thieves and arsonists, who would burn down the camp.<sup>69</sup>

On only one issue did the Japanese committees in the camps have outside help: the issue of schools for their children. In September 1942 the provincial government of British Columbia refused to be responsible for the education of the uprooted children. Since education was a provincial responsibility, the federal government also refused to act on the matter. A stalemate developed. To the Japanese Canadians, who attached great value to education, the situation was alarming. Temporary schooling had been set up right at the beginning, but everyone recognized that it was inadequate. Camp worker Katsuko Hideka Halfhide described the initial set-up at Kaslo:

When we first got to Kaslo [in May 1942] these children were just playing around. So what Kay Oda did was to collect them all and take them down to the park by the lake where there were a few tables. She sort of rustled together the rudiments.... The older

girls were appointed to take charge.... You had to beg and borrow and steal. It was really a wonderful test of their resourcefulness.... and it was really very interesting how girls who were still in high school could do it.<sup>70</sup>

While high school girls guided by Women's Missionary Society workers supplied stopgap measures, Japanese Canadians appealed for help to the churches and the CCF, and made direct demands to the government. The provincial CCF as a whole remained silent on the Japanese question. Grace Woodsworth MacInnis, wife of Angus MacInnis, the CCF Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, however, undertook a speaking tour through the Interior to drum up local support for schools in the camps.<sup>71</sup> The Roman Catholic, Anglican and United churches all responded to the situation by setting up stopgap schools while pressuring the Security Commission to provide proper schools.<sup>72</sup> The teachers from the Vancouver school system who had voluntarily worked at the temporary school at Hastings Park in the summer of 1942 also deplored the denial of education to Japanese Canadian children.<sup>73</sup>

From the government's perspective, the establishment of schools would be counterproductive. By the fall of 1942 the federal government had no intention of allowing Japanese Canadians to return to their homes on the Pacific Coast. It was not yet prepared, however, to tell that to the Japanese. Rather, the government was leaning toward the dispersal of Japanese Canadians across Canada, at least for the duration of the war. With workers and their families dispersed and employed, the government would be spared the expense of keeping them in camps. Schools in the camps would inhibit dispersal because, as Len Boulton, the general supervisor of the camps, told his superiors, "Had we not set up the school facilities we now have I am quite certain many of these families would have gone elsewhere where school facilities are available"<sup>74</sup>

Recognizing that denying schooling to children would only alienate the churches, the federal government reluctantly agreed in the spring of 1943 to fund primary schools in the camps. High school students would have to make do with correspondence courses and the tutoring of Women's Missionary Society teachers.

The schools that evolved were rudimentary. They were staffed by under-trained teachers drawn from among the inmates. Housed in the same type of shack as the inmates – or in the case of the Tashme camp, in the barns that had formerly housed the single men – the schools used discarded textbooks donated by the Vancouver School Board. Since only two Japanese Canadians had ever been allowed to obtain provincial teaching certificates, the staff of the Vancouver Normal School developed and gave short training programs in the summer of 1943 and 1944 to the high school-educated *Nisei* who staffed the schools. Supervised by Hide Hyodo and Terry Hidaka, the two certified Japanese Canadian teachers in B.C., the classes were kept small both because of the inexperience of the teachers and because the shacks housing the schools would not hold more than twenty pupils.<sup>75</sup> The 140 *Nisei* who became teachers represented something of a setback to the government's plans. As single persons, they would normally have been denied employment in the camp unless they were the sole support of their family. Thus denied, they would have been prime candidates for resettlement east of the Rocky Mountains.

The schooling victory announced early in 1943 added to the post-crisis euphoria in the camps in the spring of that year. As the days lengthened through February and March, activity in the camps

increased. The melting snow raised the spirits of the inmates as they turned their attentions from the never-ending task of keeping warm to planning gardens and getting ready for spring bazaars and the traditional spring festivals: Boys' Day and Girls' Day. The worst, they were sure, was over. They might need to spend another year in the camps, but this time they were determined that they would be ready for winter. The mountains, they consoled themselves, were a crude but not a totally unpleasant place to pass a temporary exile. Within a year, most believed, they would return to their homes on the Coast. Isolated in the mountains, euphoric over having met and overcome the crisis of their uprooting, few were aware of events outside the camps. None realized that shortly there would be nothing to return to on the Coast.<sup>76</sup>

**Notes**

1. Initially, Japanese Canadians were interned at Petawawa, Ont. In July 1942 they were transferred to Internment Camp 101 at Angler, Ont. In 1942, 254 Japanese aliens, 42 naturalized Japanese Canadians and 470 *Nisei* were interned. Tokikazu Tanaka Papers, UBC.
2. For detailed statistics, see the British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) Papers, RG36/27, vol. 9, PAC.
3. David Iwassa, "Canadian Japanese in Southern Alberta, 1905-1945," Research paper, University of Lethbridge, 1972. p. 65.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
5. For local reaction to the B.C. Japanese, see Report, Const. V. Carter, Lethbridge CID, 5 March 1945, Premiers' Papers, Acc. 69.209, PAA; *Raymond Recorder*, 20 March 1942; *Lethbridge Herald*, 10, 12 and 14 March 1942; and *Taber Times*, 19 March 1942.
6. The best study of nativism in Alberta vis-a-vis Asians is Howard D. Palmer "Patterns of Racism: Attitudes to Chinese and Japanese in Alberta, 1920-1950." *Social History*, vol. 13, no. 25 (May 1980), pp.138-60. See also Iwassa, *Canadian Japanese in Southern Alberta*, p. 96. The Raymond meeting on 15 March 1942 first discussed the Japanese question, then, after a musical and social interlude, the Hutterite question in the area.
7. The Albertans were: Phillip Baker, President of the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers' Association; Frank Taylor of the Canadian Sugar Factories; A.E. Palmer of the federal Department of Agriculture; and Alderman J.A. Jardine of Lethbridge. Iwassa, *Canadian Japanese in Southern Alberta*, p. 66.
8. *Raymond Recorder*, 20 March 1942.
9. For negotiations and agreements with the provinces, see Canada, House of Commons, Sessional Paper 126i, 1943/44.
10. Interviews in Alberta by the author.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Interview with Aki Moriyama and Cheiko Nishiyama, Lethbridge, Alta.
13. Austin C. Taylor to Wm. Andrews and Chas. Graham, April 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 29, file 1603, PAC
14. See Iwassa, *Canadian Japanese in Southern Alberta*, pp. 71-73; and interviews by the author.
15. Taylor to Andrews and Graham, loc. cit.
16. Interview with Asano Shigehiro, Calgary, Alta.
17. *New Canadian*, 10 April 1943; Iwassa, *Canadian Japanese in Southern Alberta*, p. 73; interviews in Alberta.
18. Interview with Frank Ernst, Field Supervisor, Winnipeg, Man., 1943-46.
19. J.N. Lister to W.A. Eastwood, 23 October 1943, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 31, file 1713, PAC. The other city was Valcartier, Quebec, the home base of the Royal Rifles of Canada.
20. See Report, Graham, 24 August 1942; Eastwood to R.C. Brown (Graham's successor), 28 August 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 31, file 1713, PAC.
21. Interviews with Ichiro Hirayama and Harold Hirose; Report, May 1943, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 31, file 1713, PAC.
22. Interviews with Seiku Sakumoto and Mrs. Minoru Kudo.
23. Interview with Sakumoto; Report, Supt. J.D. Bird, "K" Division CID, 20 December 1943, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 30, file 1613, PAC.
24. Forrest E. La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese in World War II*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948. pp. 130-31; *New Canadian*, 5 March 1943.
25. For a full discussion of the schooling issue, see Christopher Liebich, "The Coming of the Japanese Canadians to Alberta, 1942-1948," B.A.(Hons.) essay.
26. See La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese in World War II*, pp. 131-34.

27. Interviews by the author; Iwassa, *Canadian Japanese in Southern Alberta*, p. 84.
28. Order-in-Council, P.C. 8173, 8 September 1942.
29. Order-in-Council, P.C. 1457, 24 February 1942. For requests to buy land, see the Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vol. 642, file 23-2-2-12-1, PAC.
30. Interviews by the author.
31. See H.T. Pammett to A. MacNamara, 5 December 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 644, PAC, for Mead's recommendations.
32. Interviews by the author.
33. Herbert Tanaka to June Hirai Tanaka, 14 October 1945, in the possession of Herbert and June Tanaka, Toronto, Ont.
34. See Gwen Suttie, "With the *Nisei* in New Denver," *B.C. Historical News*, p. 19. The Anglican and Roman Catholic churches also ran schools in the camps.
35. Interviews with former inmates. At Tashme, for instance, the Security Commission was initially reluctant to supply a cabin for the WMS workers.
36. Interviews with Rev. James Finlay and Ed Kitagawa, Toronto, Ont.
37. The Canadian Pacific Railway paid a standard rate of 60¢ per hour to its labourers. The rates paid in the detention camps were intended to be lower than the wage received by the lowest-ranking Canadian soldier.
38. Interview with John Kumagai, London, Ont.
39. Tokikazu Tanaka Papers, UBC. For life in the Angler camp, see Barry Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of Japanese Canadians in World War II*, Toronto: Doubleday, 1977. pp. 121-42.
40. Interview with Ken Hibi, Thunder Bay, Ont.
41. See the Intercepted Letters to Angler, Ont., in the Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vols. 1527-29, PAC.
42. Tokikazu Tanaka Papers, loc. cit.
43. Interview with Fred Nishikawa, Thunder Bay, Ont.
44. Tokikazu Tanaka Papers, loc. cit.
45. For copies of the orders sending the *Nisei* to Petawawa and Angler, see BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 2, file 53, PAC.
46. Chiyo Umezaki to Takaichi Umezaki, 25 June 1942, Takaichi Umezaki Collection, 17-4, UBC
47. *Ibid.*, 16 August 1942.
48. Interviews. For conditions in the detention camps, see also Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame*, pp. 181-238.
49. C. Umezaki to T. Umezaki, 28 June 1942, 7 July 1942, loc. cit.
50. *Ibid.*, 7 July 1942, 9 September 1942; BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 22, file 805, PAC.
51. See Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow Years of Shame*.
52. C. Umezaki to T. Umezaki, 16 August 1942, loc. cit.
53. Interview with J.H. Tanaka, Toronto, Ont.
54. Helen Hurd and Gertrude Hamilton, United Church of Canada, Women's Missionary Society, *Annual Reports, 1941-1946* (Toronto: 1947), p. 154.
55. Interview with Katsuko Hideka Halfhide, Ottawa, Ont.
56. Report, Asst. Comnr. C.H. Hill, "E" Division, 8 May 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 2, file 53, PAC. Hill's report lists 21 persons named by "Secret Agents and other confidential Japanese contacts" as *Nisei* Mass Evacuation Group supporters. Within the Japanese minority this was assumed to be a ploy by the "national group" to get rid of leaders of their opposition. The list would substantiate that charge. Among the men named are some of the most respected leaders of the Japanese minority, including: Bunji Hisaoka, President of the Canadian Japanese Association and the Naturalized Japanese Canadians Association; Rev. Kosaburo Shimizu, a United



church minister; newspaper publisher Yoriki Iwasaki; and Ryuichi Yoshida, a leader of the Japanese Camp and Mill Workers Union.

57. Eastwood to F.E. Desbrisay et al., 16 July 1942, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol.3, file 79, PAC.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Interview with Hibi.
60. Interview with Halfhide.
61. The tendency for leaders to represent their former communities was carried over into the women's associations. See United Church of Canada, Women's Missionary Society, op. cit., p. 113.
62. Interviews by the author. See also BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vols. 2, 9, PAC.
63. *Arrow Lakes News*, 22 October 1942.
64. See Suttie, "Nisei in New Denver"; *Arrow Lakes News*, 1 April 1943; Neta Sadler in United Church of Canada, Women's Missionary Society, op. cit., p. 115.
65. For examples of the petitions submitted by the Japanese committees of the various camps, see BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 22 and 26, PAC.
66. Interviews by the author. For Hartley's efforts at Slocan City, see BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 22, PAC.
67. E.L. Boulton to George Collins, 10 and 20 August 1943, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 1, file 20, PAC.
68. Interviews by the author.
69. For the negotiations over improvements to Lemon Creek, see BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 26, PAC.
70. Interview with Halfhide.
71. *Arrow Lakes News*, 1 October 1942. While Grace MacInnis and poet Dorothy Livesay worked actively for Japanese Canadians, the provincial CCF party as a whole failed to address the Japanese question publicly in 1942 and 1943.
72. For a more complete account of the work of the churches in the camps, see W.P. Bunt Papers at the Vancouver Theological College Archives; and Tadashi Mitsui, "The Ministry of the United Church of Canada Amongst Japanese Canadians in British Columbia, 1892-1949," M.S.Th. thesis.
73. See G. Lyall Hodgins, "Administration C British Columbia Security Commission," 10 November 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 644, PAC.
74. Boulton to Collins, 10 August 1943, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 1, file 20, PAC.
75. Interview with Hide Hyodo Shimizu. For details of the schooling issue in B.C., see Suttie, "Nisei in New Denver"; and La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese in World War II*, pp. 110-16.
76. Interviews with former inmates by the author.

## V: Dispossession

The dispossession of Japanese Canadians was an accomplishment of Ian Mackenzie, the Minister of Pensions and Health and the Member of Parliament for Vancouver Centre. In April 1942, Mackenzie had journeyed to the West Coast to accept the gratitude of his constituents for his role in the uprooting of British Columbia's Japanese population and to assure them that he would continue his efforts to obliterate what he called the Japanese menace. "It is my intention," he declared on 4 April 1942, "as long as I remain in public life, to see they never come back here."<sup>1</sup> Among those applauding Mackenzie in April 1942 were men who, while pleased about the impending removal of Japanese Canadians, were worried about the economic impact of that removal. While comprising only 3 per cent of the province's work force, Japanese Canadians in B.C. in 1942 were concentrated in relatively few occupations, notably fishing and agriculture.<sup>2</sup> In agriculture, Japanese Canadians dominated the berry and vegetable industries. By 1942 the hard-working Japanese immigrants had turned marginal lands in the Fraser Valley and near the urban centres of British Columbia into productive farms supplying 83 per cent of British Columbia's strawberries and 47 per cent of its raspberries.<sup>3</sup> The jam cannery owners and the berry marketing agents feared that the removal of these berry farmers would produce a large decline in, or the failure of, the 1942 berry crop. Afraid that large numbers of productive farms would be abandoned, they appealed to Ian Mackenzie to take whatever steps were necessary to assure continued production.

The most obvious solution, to anti-Japanese British Columbians, was to force the Japanese Canadian farmers to sell their farms in the same way that the fishermen had been forced to sell their fishing vessels. Indeed, the success of the latter program, from the buyers' point of view, was considerable, as the federally appointed Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposal Committee was selling the vessels on the basis of appraisals made after three months of neglect and abuse. The selling prices, consequently, were much lower than the Japanese Canadian owners felt their vessels were worth.<sup>4</sup> Productive farms sold in a similarly saturated "buyers' market" could also be expected to sell cheaply.

Selling Japanese Canadian-owned farms appealed to Ian Mackenzie. Not only would such sales impede the return of the uprooted Japanese to the Pacific Coast, but they would also solve a problem Mackenzie was facing as Minister of Pensions and Health. In that capacity, Mackenzie was concerned with the problems of reconstruction after the war. Anxious to avoid the depression and labour unrest that had followed the First World War, the federal government was already considering possible postwar programs. Among these was a *Veterans' Land Act* (VLA) program, designed to assist veterans to become farmers but limited in scope so as to avoid the excessive indebtedness and subsequent bankruptcy that had resulted from a similar scheme after the First World War. Indebtedness under the new VLA scheme was to be limited to \$4,800, including land, livestock and equipment. Wartime inflation, however, was rapidly increasing the price of much of the land available for soldier settlement. As a consequence, the government was anxious to control suitable lands for veteran settlement before inflation pushed the land costs over the VLA limits.<sup>5</sup>

The Japanese Canadian farms, Mackenzie quickly decided, would be ideal for the VLA scheme. They were well located and productive, and if bought soon, they could be acquired cheaply in a buyers' market. Assured by the jam cannery owners and the local berry farmers that tenants should be capable of maintaining the farms until they could be settled by veterans, Mackenzie took steps to acquire the farms.<sup>6</sup>

Mackenzie's first difficulty was that the *Veterans' Land Act* did not yet exist. However, the Soldier Settlement Board, a similar First World War scheme, still existed under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Mines and Resources, Thomas A. Crerar. Accordingly, Mackenzie wrote to Crerar on 14 April 1942, praising the Japanese-owned farms and pointing out that it would be unfortunate to miss the opportunity of acquiring them simply because the *Veterans' Land Act* had not yet become law. Mackenzie then suggested that Crerar get an Order-in-Council under the *War Measures Act* that would enable the Soldier Settlement Board to buy and hold the farms until the *Veterans' Land Act* had passed Parliament. Haste was vital, Mackenzie urged, Aotherwise the properties will have been [sic] disposed of in various unsatisfactory ways and the opportunity to develop sound soldier settlement in [B.C.] will be lost."<sup>7</sup> Mackenzie recognized that cheap land for veterans, and through this a minimizing of postwar unemployment, would be a political coup for the government.

Crerar and his Soldier Settlement Board administrator, Gordon Murchison, were not as enthusiastic as Mackenzie. Murchison was very conscious of the administrative pitfalls in Mackenzie's proposal, notably the possibility that tax obligations on the farms might exceed the revenues collected should suitable tenants fail to materialize. However, neither was morally averse to forcing the Japanese Canadian farmers to sell. Cautiously Murchison suggested that his department survey all Japanese Canadian farms to determine the suitability for veteran settlement and their approximate value.<sup>8</sup> Agreeing with Murchison, Crerar and Mackenzie then sought an Order-in-Council under the *War Measures Act* prohibiting the sale of Japanese-owned farms without Murchison's permission, ostensibly in order to protect the Japanese owners from exploitation by non-Japanese buyers.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the freeze on the sale of Japanese Canadian farms merely assured that they would still be available for purchase when the *Veterans' Land Act* became law in August.

Throughout the summer of 1942, while Japanese Canadians were being shipped through the livestock barns at Hastings Park to detention camps in the Interior of British Columbia, Murchison's men appraised Japanese-owned farms. Trained to assess the drought-ravaged farms of southern Saskatchewan in the 1930s, the appraisers applied the same conservative, Depression-based criteria employed in Saskatchewan to the fertile and productive Japanese farms in British Columbia. No consideration was given to the value of the current crop or to the possible use of the farm for non-agricultural purposes, such as residential development. In addition, the value of the existing buildings was discounted to 70 per cent of their apparent value. Along with his assessment, each appraiser also noted separately whether the farm was suitable for the postwar settlement of veterans and their families.<sup>10</sup>

When the results of the survey reached Murchison in September 1942, he became an enthusiastic advocate of Mackenzie's scheme. Murchison had been appointed Director of the *Veterans' Land Act* program in August and was now anxious to acquire some 60 per cent of the 939 appraised farms that had been deemed suitable for veteran settlement. In September Murchison

began urging Crerar to sell Japanese-owned farms “to approved persons as soon as possible under the best terms possible,”<sup>11</sup> while compensating the Japanese owners on the basis of his appraisals, which he acknowledged were conservative and made no allowance for the speculative value of the farms. His proposal, he argued, would be “the most clean cut and equitable arrangement as far as the Japanese” were concerned.<sup>12</sup>

The genuineness of Murchison’s concern for the Japanese Canadian owners is open to question. Like many Caucasians during the Second World War, Murchison had assumed that the incarceration of Japanese Canadians meant that they had, in fact, harboured sinister and traitorous intentions. His prejudices are evident in his remarks to Crerar about Japanese poultry farms located on the south bank of the Fraser River. “One wonders”, Murchison commented,

where the Japanese got the money for this new construction at a time when the average white man was having pretty tough sledding in the poultry business. Located as they are in relation to the Fraser River, there may be some justifiable suspicion that these buildings were not erected without an eye to their use for purposes other than poultry.<sup>13</sup>

As Murchison would later admit, his sole interest in the Japanese farms lay in getting “the best buy I could on behalf of the department and the boys who were fighting overseas.”<sup>14</sup>

In late November, 1942, Crerar and Mackenzie began the final phase of the campaign to buy the Japanese farms. A forced sale of Japanese farms required another Order-in-Council under the *War Measures Act*, since the powers of the Custodian of Enemy Property were restricted by law to only protecting and administering the property of the uprooted Japanese Canadians. An Order-in-Council expanding the Custodian’s powers could only be initiated by Norman McLarty, the Secretary of State and the legal “custodian” of enemy and Japanese Canadian property. Consequently, in late November 1942 Crerar wrote to McLarty urging the sale of all Japanese Canadian property because of the “uncertainty as to the time and circumstances under which these people may ever return to their homes.”<sup>15</sup> That uncertainty raised questions about the depreciation of Japanese Canadian property.

While Crerar was concerned about the depreciation of such property, the Department of Labour was concerned about how Japanese Canadians were to be supported while living in the government detention camps. The liquidation of Japanese Canadian holdings on the Pacific Coast would solve that problem by generating funds to support the inmates of the detention camps, thereby sparing the government the expense. Minimizing the cost of running the detention camps was politically necessary, since opposition Conservatives were highly critical of anything above the bare minimum being spent on Japanese Canadians.

McLarty was already under pressure from Pacific Coast politicians who saw the sale of Japanese property as a means of discouraging the return of the uprooted Japanese after the war. Alderman George Buscombe of Vancouver stated their position clearly in September 1942: “We want all of their property sold the same as their fishing fleet.... We don’t want the Japanese to return here after the war. They are going to outbreed the whites and eventually outnumber us.”<sup>16</sup> Claiming they wished to redevelop the Powell Street ghetto depopulated by the expulsion of Japanese Canadians, Vancouver’s City Council had been urging the Custodian’s representative in Vancouver, G.W. McPherson, to sell the homes and businesses in that area.

Classified as a “Jap hater” by the RCMP, McPherson supported the ambitions of Vancouver’s City Council. In mid-December he wrote to Ottawa recommending the sale of all Japanese property, using as his excuse the difficulties involved in handling that small portion that was substandard, or uneconomical. In addition, McPherson wanted to pursue “confidential negotiations” with the Canadian Pacific Railway, which had expressed an interest in redeveloping as an industrial site the Powell Street area that had housed most of Vancouver’s pre-expulsion population.<sup>17</sup>

By mid-December McLarty was sympathetic with Crerar and Mackenzie’s plan but was still worried about the implications of selling Japanese Canadian property. He was disturbed that the sale of Japanese property was tantamount to declaring that Japanese Canadians would never be allowed to return to the Pacific Coast. While he had few qualms about excluding Japanese Canadians from the Pacific Coast, McLarty wanted to be convinced that dispossession, in fact, was the best policy.<sup>18</sup>

Ian Mackenzie undertook the task of convincing him. In late December Mackenzie invited McLarty to join the Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions, where the dispossession of Japanese Canadians could be thrashed out in all its aspects. Meeting with that committee in early January, McLarty learned that the Department of Labour and the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property were both anxious to have Japanese property liquidated: the former to minimize the cost of keeping Japanese Canadians in the detention camps and to encourage them to leave the camps and move east of the Rocky Mountains; and the latter ostensibly for administrative reasons. He undoubtedly also learned that Ian Mackenzie felt that allowing the Japanese to return to the Pacific Coast would be politically disastrous for the B.C. Liberals.<sup>19</sup>

McLarty was quickly convinced. On 19 January 1943 he joined Mackenzie, Crerar and Labour Minister Mitchell in seeking Cabinet approval for the dispossession of Japanese Canadians. On January 23 the Cabinet agreed to this and passed an Order-in-Council under the *War Measures Act* that granted the Custodian of Enemy Property the right to dispose of Japanese Canadian property in his care without the owners’ consent. Henceforth Japanese Canadians would pay for their own incarceration.

The announcement of the Custodian’s new powers went unnoticed in the press euphoria over the war news. For the first time since 1939, it was good. In Africa, British General Bernard Montgomery was routing Rommel’s Afrika Corps. In Russia, the German Sixth Army had been encircled at Stalingrad. In Asia, the American and Anzac offensive at Guadalcanal had begun. The tide of the war had turned. The power of the Axis nations was beginning to wane.

When the Custodian’s new powers were finally noticed, the press and Japanese Canadians both assumed that those new powers would only mean minor administrative changes. Some Canadians, however, became immediately suspicious and concerned about the potential for abuse in those new powers. Among the first was Rev. Howard Norman, president of Vancouver’s Consultative Council for Cooperation in Wartime Problems of Canadian Citizenship.<sup>20</sup> Suspicious that an extreme application of the new powers was in the making, Norman complained to his fellow British Columbian, Dr. Henry F. Angus, who was a seasoned defender of Japanese Canadians and who worked for the Department of External Affairs for the duration of the war.

Alerted, Angus protested the expansion of the Custodian’s powers to Prime Minister King. The dispossession of Canadian citizens, Angus wrote King, was contrary to British principles



of justice and to the Atlantic Charter, and might well prompt an abuse of Canadian property in Japanese hands in Asia. Urging that the Custodian's powers be amended to allow sales only in those cases where such sales would be in the best interests of the Japanese owner, Angus reminded King that Reverend Norman and his associates already regarded the new order as comparable to the Nazi Nuremberg laws dispossessing Jews in Germany.<sup>21</sup> The Prime Minister did not reply.

The fiction that only unprofitable properties would be sold persisted through March.<sup>22</sup> It was not until March 28 that the rumours of a total dispossession were finally confirmed when G.W. McPherson, the Custodian's Vancouver Director, outlined the duties of the Advisory Committee that was set up to assist him in administering the Japanese properties in Vancouver. McPherson's instructions made it clear that it was his intention to sell not only all Japanese Canadian real estate, but also all the personal possessions left in his care by the uprooted Japanese.<sup>23</sup>

The shock of total dispossession rocked Japanese Canadians. Even Tom Shoyama, the editor of the *New Canadian*, dropped his carefully maintained professional control to rage at this latest betrayal:

While the most staunchly loyal and tolerant of us may do their best to swallow with good grace this last dose of bitter medicine from their own government, a policy as indefensible as this from any point of view except the dictates of a race war, is certain to provoke a strong reaction.... In many cases it may well be the last straw which can be added to a war burden which has mounted higher and higher and heavier and heavier upon the backs of Japanese Canadians since Pearl Harbor.... [It] has yet to be shown to the satisfaction of any informed and thinking person that that burden has not long exceeded the bounds of justice, of reason or even of necessity.<sup>24</sup>

Dispossession was incomprehensible except as a racist move toward something more sinister.

While the initial reaction was anger, the ensuing protest was orderly and legalistic. Recognizing that there was strength in unity, the Japanese property owners organized. On March 31 the inmates at Kaslo set up the Japanese Property Owners' Association, under the leadership of Dr. Kozo Shimotakahara, a respected physician. Within a week every detention camp and self-support project in British Columbia formed a similar group and affiliated with the Kaslo group. The Kaslo group then initiated a survey of all Japanese property owners to determine whether they opposed the sale of their property. Engaging legal counsel, they inquired into the feasibility of challenging the forced sales in the courts and began collecting money for legal action.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout May 1943 angry Japanese Canadians raised money for the expected court case, a case they were certain would bring justice. Their confidence in British justice was complete. In the past when the federal government had tried to drive Japanese Canadians from the fishing industry, the courts had defeated the government.<sup>26</sup> To the uprooted Japanese, it seemed only logical that the courts would also defeat so patently unjust a policy as the forced sale of the property of a people who had committed no crime except the "crime" of having the same ancestry as one of Canada's enemies. British justice had defeated the government before, and Japanese Canadians, like most Canadians still ignorant of the vast powers of the *War Measures Act*, were confident it would do so again.



While Japanese Canadian property owners organized, Murchison bought the Japanese farms. In May 1943 the *Veterans' Land Act* Superintendent in Vancouver, Ivan T. Barnet, approached the Rural Advisory Committee,<sup>27</sup> in charge of selling Japanese property outside Vancouver, and offered \$750,000 for 769 farms, which were assessed for taxes at over \$1,200,000. Barnet alleged that his offer was based on government appraisals made “without a view to purchasing this property”, appraisals he would not permit the committee to see.<sup>28</sup> Suspicious, the Rural Advisory Committee decided to check Barnet’s values by means of spot checks by qualified committee members. When the seventeen spot-checked farms were found to have a cumulative value some \$15,000 in excess of Barnet’s appraisals, the Rural Advisory Committee rejected Barnet’s offer.<sup>29</sup> They did not, however, reject the idea of selling the farms to him. The quick sale of the bulk of Japanese Canadian farms to the government for eventual use by veterans appealed to most committee members. The committee chairman, Judge David Whiteside, invited the Regional Board of the *Veterans' Land Act* to continue negotiations.

The ensuing negotiations disturbed the Japanese Canadian member of the committee, Yasutaro Yamaga. A respected farmer and cooperative manager from Maple Ridge, B.C., Yamaga had agreed to serve on the committee because its purpose was to protect the interests of the Japanese Canadian owners.<sup>30</sup> On 24 May 1943, when Judge Whiteside indicated a willingness to accept as little as \$850,000 for the farms,<sup>31</sup> however, Yamaga realized that everyone else on the committee considered the opportunity to get farms for veterans more important than the interests of the Japanese owners. Given that \$850,000 was less than 70 per cent of the assessed value of the farms – and the spot checks had shown that assessed values were usually lower than market values – Yamaga quickly concluded that the final selling price was certain to be grossly unfair to the Japanese owners. Yamaga resigned in protest.<sup>32</sup> Three days later, as Yamaga had feared, Barnet agreed to pay \$850,000 for the farms. On June 23 Norman McLarty and Thomas Crerar finalized the deal in Ottawa, a deal that granted the *Veterans' Land Act* Board, not only 769 Japanese farms, but the \$43,000 of net income from those farms for the 1943 crop year.

Just how aware Crerar was of the role he and his department played in the dispossession of Japanese Canadians is open to question. The *Veterans' Land Act* Board was a very minor part of his multiple portfolio. As Minister of Mines and Resources, Crerar’s primary concern was assuring that Canada’s natural resources were extracted fast enough to meet the demands of wartime production. Crerar never attended any of the meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions. His letter to McLarty, a letter probably drafted by Murchison in terms he would expect his superior to support, stresses the question of the depreciation of Japanese-owned property. Crerar may not have been aware that the Order-in-Council presented in his name was intended as a means of selling off all Japanese Canadian property. He probably assumed that the Custodian of Enemy Property would sell only depreciating properties. He was probably unaware that the Department of Labour intended Japanese Canadians to live on the proceeds of those sales while confined in the government’s detention camps.

Crerar’s subsequent actions, once he finally realized what was really being done to Japanese Canadians, verify he was not a willing participant in Mackenzie’s plans to strip Japanese Canadians of their West Coast property. Philosophically, Crerar was a true liberal, a product of the Prairie progressive movement of the 1920s. His CCF opponents in Parliament are of the opinion that by 1944 Crerar “was genuinely bothered about the business, but he was in

the Cabinet so he had to go along with it.”<sup>33</sup> Stanley Knowles, a veteran CCF and NDP Member of Parliament, recalled:

M.J. Coldwell [CCF leader during the war] told the caucus ... that Tom Crerar would speak with him ... about some of the things that were going on [with respect to Japanese Canadians]. He [Crerar] felt that they [the government] were being terribly illiberal in what they were doing.... He was spiritually and philosophically on the other side, and he was bothered by it.<sup>34</sup>

Once released from the restraints of Cabinet solidarity by his elevation to the Senate in April 1945, Crerar openly sided with the CCF on the Japanese question. Joining with Liberal Senators Cairine R. Wilson and Arthur W. Roebuck, Crerar voted against every extension of the restrictions on Japanese Canadians in the postwar period and lobbied within the Liberal caucus, even when such lobbying earned him the scorn of Prime Minister King.<sup>35</sup>

It is perhaps to McLarty's credit that he also had doubts about the legality of the *Veterans' Land Act* purchase. In June 1943, before he finalized the VLA deal, he expressed those doubts to Ian Mackenzie. Mackenzie, however, was supremely confident. “I am entirely in favour of this purchase,” he informed McLarty, “and we should not be deterred by any representations by Japanese. Any action we take under the *War Measures Act* cannot be challenged in the courts.”<sup>36</sup>

The solicitors for the Japanese Property Owners' Association were equally confident that the dispossession Order-in-Council could be challenged in the courts. In late July T.G. Norris and J.A. MacLennan filed Petitions of Right with the Exchequer Court of Canada in the names of a Japanese national, a naturalized Japanese Canadian and a *Nisei*. They soon ran into frustrating difficulties. While petitions to the Exchequer Court in 1943 normally were heard in four to six weeks, the Japanese Canadian petitions were delayed until 29 May 1944, almost a year later. At the hearing, things went from bad to worse. Before Norris and MacLennan could present their carefully prepared arguments, the case became bogged down on the legal question of whether the Custodian of Enemy Property was in fact a servant of the Crown and therefore accountable in the Exchequer Court. That legal impasse allowed the judge, Mr. Justice J.T. Thorson C who as the Hon. J.T. Thorson M.P., Minister of National War Services, had been part of the 1942 Cabinet that had uprooted the Japanese Canadians C to adjourn the case indefinitely while he decided the question. True to the obstructionist policy of the federal government, it took him three years to make up his mind. In 1947, two years after the end of the war, Thorson finally decided that the Custodian was not a servant of the Crown and therefore not accountable before the Exchequer Court.<sup>37</sup>

While the lawyers argued and Justice Thorson procrastinated, the federal government dispossessed Japanese Canadians. The process was strictly businesslike. Two advisory committees, the Greater Vancouver Advisory Committee and the Rural Advisory Committee, set the methods of appraisal, and the prices and terms of sale or lease. Real estate was sold by public tender in a flooded market, while those chattels that had not been stolen or destroyed by vandals were auctioned off over a period of three years. By 1947 an estimated \$11.5 million of Japanese Canadian property had been disposed of for \$5,373,317.64.<sup>38</sup>

For the general public on the West Coast there were thousands of bargains. Furniture, farm implements, household goods, clothing, art objects, business and farm machinery, appliances, sewing machines, pianos, tools, and trunks filled with personal possessions found new owners. The last were often sold unopened and unvalued. The buyers gambled that their two dollars would buy them not only a useful trunk, but also valuable contents. While some found only books and personal papers in their purchases, others found china and silver, silk kimonos, Japanese art, and festival dolls. The enterprising among the latter promptly took their windfalls into the Interior and tried to sell them to any Japanese Canadian who could afford to buy them.<sup>39</sup>

As the sales progressed, however, the number of Japanese able or willing to buy such treasures rapidly diminished. Those with savings had their personal possessions shipped to them at their own expense – if those possessions could be found and remained undamaged. It was not unusual in such cases for the trunks and boxes left in locked churches and community centres to arrive either empty or filled with the tattered remains of someone else's possessions.<sup>40</sup> The dispossession of Japanese Canadians also meant that there was less, not more, cash available in the camps. The real estate sales meant that families who had depended on rental income had to live on their capital on deposit with the Custodian of Enemy Property, who paid no interest. In addition, the amounts paid out to the inmates of the detention camps were strictly controlled. No family could draw more than a hundred dollars per month for family support. Nor could any family with capital on deposit with the Custodian obtain employment in the detention camps. Both restrictions were intended to force families with capital to move east of the Rocky Mountains, where they could receive their capital in full.<sup>41</sup>

While Japanese Canadians who moved east of B.C. could regain control of their capital, there was little they could do with it. Since February 1942, buying or leasing land or business premises had been prohibited without special permission from the Minister of Justice, Louis St. Laurent.<sup>42</sup> St. Laurent was very reluctant to issue any permits as long as the postwar fate of Japanese Canadians remained undecided. Should Japanese Canadians buy and during the war and should the government decide to deport them after the war – a policy St. Laurent strongly favoured – then the government would face the embarrassment of dispossessing Japanese Canadians a second time. As a result, even *Nisei* living outside B.C. before the start of the Pacific War were forbidden to purchase or lease land. Beginning in January 1944, however, St. Laurent permitted Japanese Canadians to lease business premises for periods not exceeding one year. This new regulation was of little use to Japanese Canadians who had relocated to cities like Toronto, or areas like southern Alberta, where municipal bylaws prevented Japanese Canadians from holding trade licences or residing in the major centres.<sup>43</sup>

For many Japanese Canadians, dispossession meant destitution. All too often the capital produced from property sales was almost wiped out by the realtors' and auctioneers' fees, the storage and handling charges, and the repayment of past relief benefits. The little that was left rapidly disappeared, since the elderly who could not work and families with many dependents drew upon their capital to obtain the necessities of life. Unemployment in the detention camps was high, and the work that was available paid poorly and was denied to anyone with any capital. Employment in the camps was also denied to single adults unless they were the sole support of their family. Single adults in the camps were also ineligible for relief benefits. It was not long before many found that they had nothing on which to subsist and nothing with which to build a

new life, assuming, of course, that they were still young enough to rebuild.<sup>44</sup>

As the property sales continued, the character of the detention camps changed. Inmates with capital, recognizing that there would be nothing to return to on the West Coast, began to move to Montreal, Winnipeg and southern Ontario. Young, single men also began moving east in greater numbers, seeking employment with which to support their parents and siblings in B.C. Sometimes they were joined by their adult sisters, although in general the migration of single females was discouraged, both because it was culturally repugnant and because of fears that the family might never be reunited. By late 1944 the camps were populated largely by the elderly, the sick, young families with several children and few marketable skills, pro-Japan patriots, and those who despaired of re-establishing themselves or simply wanted to stay where they were until peace could bring normal conditions again.

The atmosphere in the camps also changed. The optimism and hope for a quick return to prewar normalcy prevalent in the spring of 1943 was gone forever. Pessimism and cynicism grew, fed by poverty and disillusionment. To the pro-Japan fanatics, the growing bitterness of the inmates provided a fertile ground. Canada, they argued, was a racist nation. Only in Japan could Japanese live as human beings. Trapped in the camps by inertia, poverty, uncertainty and fear, the inmates slipped further and further into a “reserve” mentality, living their lives from day to day with little hope for any improvement in their situation.<sup>45</sup>

**Notes**

1. Vancouver *Daily Province*, 4 April 1942.
2. 18.8% of employed Japanese Canadians worked in agriculture and 16.3% in fishing in 1941. See Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Administration of Japanese Affairs, 1942-1944*, p. 3.
3. Kimiaki Nakashima, "Economic Aspects of the Japanese Evacuation from the Canadian Pacific Coast," M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1946. pp. 28, 37, 38.
4. The prices set by the Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposal Committee were 9% to 25% lower than the owners' asking prices. A.E. McMaster, Executive Assistant, JFVDC, to Dr. D.B. Finn, Deputy Minister of Fisheries, 24 April 1942, Department of Fisheries Records, 792-17-1, vol. 1, DFA.
5. Ian Mackenzie to T.A. Crerar, 14 April 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 25, 70-25-3, PAC; Mr. Beauchesne to Mackenzie, and W.S. Woods, Assoc. Deputy Minister, Department of Pensions and Health, to C.N. Senior, 31 January 1942; H. Leader to Mackenzie and reply, 5 March 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 60, PAC.
6. Mackenzie to Crerar, 14 April 1942, loc. cit.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Memorandum, Gordon Murchison to Crerar, 22 April 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 25, PAC.
9. Crerar to Mackenzie, 27 April 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 25, PAC; Order-in-Council P.C. 5523, 26 June 1942.
10. Murchison to Crerar, 8 and 16 September 1942, loc. cit.
11. *Ibid.*, 8 September 1942.
12. *Ibid.*, 16 September 1942.
13. *Ibid.*, 8 September 1942.
14. Canada, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, 1947*, p. 189.
15. Crerar to N.A. McLarty, 30 November 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 25, file 70-25(c), PAC.
16. *New Canadian*, 2 September 1942.
17. G.W. McPherson to Dr. E.H. Coleman, Under-Secretary of State, 9 December 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 25, PAC. McPherson was labelled a "Jap hater" by Asst. Comnr. F.J. Mead following his contact with McPherson when Mead was a commissioner of the BCSC. In December 1942 Mead recommended that McPherson not be placed in any position of authority with respect to Japanese Canadians. H.T. Pammett to A. MacNamara, 5 December 1942, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 644, PAC.
18. McLarty to Mackenzie, 21 December 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 25, PAC.
19. Mackenzie to Crerar, 12 December 1942; Memorandum, McPherson to Coleman, 5 January 1943, loc. cit.; memorandum to the Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions, Reference Document "E," undated [1946], Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 79; Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions, *Minutes*, 11 January 1943, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 24, PAC.
20. The Consultative Council for Cooperation in Wartime Problems of Canadian Citizenship was a Vancouver organization concerned with real and potential abuses of Canadian citizenship in time of war. Several members of the council had formerly been involved in the unsuccessful attempt to enfranchise Japanese Canadians in the 1930s.
21. H.F. Angus to W.L.M. King, 15 March 1943, Department of External Affairs Papers, vol. 3464-R-40, External Affairs Archives.
22. *New Canadian*, 3 April 1943.
23. Greater Vancouver Advisory Committee, Minutes, 28 March 1943, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Papers, RG117, microreel 177, PAC.
24. *New Canadian*, 10 April 1943.
25. *New Canadian*, 3, 10 and 17 April 1943; Sgt. J.K. Barnes, Intelligence Section, "E" Division, RCMP, Report, 8 April 1943, BCSC Papers, RG 36/24, vol. 9, PAC.

26. In 1923 the first King government attempted to eliminate Japanese Canadians from the fishing industry by reducing the number of licences allowed to Japanese, while increasing those allowed to whites and Indians. In 1930 the Privy Council declared that refusing licences to British subjects was beyond the powers of the Minister of Fisheries. See C.H. Young, H.R. Reid and W.A. Carrothers, *The Japanese Canadians*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1939. pp. 38-39.
27. The Rural Advisory Committee was composed of Judge David Whiteside (Chairman), Mayor W. Mott of New Westminster, Hal Menzies, D.E. MacKenzie and Yasutaro Yamaga. The Greater Vancouver Advisory Committee was composed of Mr. Justice Sidney Smith (Chairman), Alderman Charles Jones and Kishio Kimura.
28. See Canada, The Royal Commission to Investigate Complaints of Canadian Citizens of Japanese Origin (Bird Commission), Evidence, BCSC Papers, RG 36/24, vol. 76, PAC; and Canada, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, op. cit., p. 211.
29. The members of the spot-check committee were Yasutaro Yamaga, Hal Menzies and D.E. MacKenzie, all of whom were involved in either the berry industry or in real estate. For the findings of the committee, see Canada, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, op. cit., p. 114.
30. Yamaga also agreed to serve because he felt that many of the farms were depreciating in the hands of the tenants. Barnes, Report, 8 April 1943, loc. cit.
31. The fact that the land was intended for veterans was one of the justifications cited by the Rural Advisory Committee when it approved the sale officially on 1 June 1943. See Canada, Standing Committee on Public Accounts. op. cit., p. 216-18.
32. Ibid , pp. 211-16
33. Interview with Stanley Knowles, Ottawa, Ont.
34. *Ibid.*
35. J.W. Pickersgill and D.F. Forster, *The Mackenzie King Record*, Vol IV, 1947-1948. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970 p. 235.
36. Mackenzie to McLarty, 5 June 1943, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 25 PAC.
37. *New Canadian*, 3 June and 31 July 1944; *Vancouver Sun*, 29 May 1944; Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, pp. 322-23; *Nakashima et al. v. R.* [1947] 4 D.L.R. 487.
38. Japanese Canadian property was estimated at \$11,525,000 by the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property in January 1943. See McPherson to Coleman, 19 January 1943, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Papers, RG117, vol. T95, PAC. Cash realizations as of 31 March 1947 were \$5,373,317.64. Memorandum to Cabinet, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIIIB5, vol. 79, PAC.
39. Interviews with Japanese Canadians. See also Barry Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of Japanese Canadians in World War II*, Toronto: Doubleday, 1977, pp. 100-20.
40. Interviews with Japanese Canadians.
41. Nakashima, "Economic Aspects," pp. 28, 30, 33; Canada, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, op. cit., pp. 158, 246.
42. Order-in-Council P.C. 1457, 24 February 1942. Between 1942 and 1944 the Justice Department refused all requests to purchase property except where the purchase had begun before February 1942. See Department of Labour Records, RG 27, vol. 642, file 23-2-12-1, PAC.
43. Forrest E. La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948 pp. 146-47; *New Canadian*, 1 July 1944, 17 October 1945. For St. Laurent's views on Japanese Canadians, see the W.L.M. King Diary, 19 January 1947, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J3, PAC.
44. Interviews with Japanese Canadians. In April 1945, 50% of working-age inmates of the detention camps were either unemployed or unfit for employment. 50% of the inmates were also on relief by 1943. See the welfare reports in the BCSC Papers, RG 36/24, vol 22, file 805, PAC.
45. Interviews with inmates by the author.





## VI: Deportation

**D**ispossession was a necessary first step toward deportation, and the deportation of Canada's "Japs" was Ian Mackenzie's ultimate objective. In 1942, as soon as the government had announced the removal of Japanese Canadians "for reasons of national security," Mackenzie and his supporters in British Columbia resurrected the time-worn charge that Japanese Canadians were a danger to B.C. in peace as well as in war. British Columbia, they warned, would never be secure as long as any Japanese Canadian, citizen or alien, remained within its boundaries.<sup>1</sup> On the West Coast, where the public readily accepted Mackenzie's contention that Japanese Canadians were dangerous traitors, deportation quickly became a popular cause among B.C.'s traditionally anti-Japanese leaders. Such enthusiasm, however, was less easily aroused in Ottawa where, Mackenzie acknowledged, there would be "a great many bad days ahead of us all before we can get [deportation] implemented."<sup>2</sup>

By 1943 Mackenzie and his supporters appeared to have good reasons to hope for eventual success. In Ottawa the most vocal opponents within the civil service to the government's repressive policies, Hugh L. Keenleyside and Henry F. Angus of External Affairs, had been virtually muzzled. Their blunt comments on policies they considered "unjustifiable on any basis of decency or humanity"<sup>3</sup> had annoyed those among their superiors who had supported those policies. By the spring of 1943 Keenleyside and Angus had been squeezed from the decision-making process.<sup>4</sup> Ignored, they soon found themselves assigned to a series of odd jobs, which kept them largely isolated from questions involving Japanese Canadians.<sup>5</sup>

On the West Coast only a few members of the clergy and the tiny Consultative Council for Cooperation in Wartime Problems of Canadian Citizenship opposed the racists.<sup>6</sup> Condemning mass deportation as fascistic, the Consultative Council by 1943 was urging the government to disperse Japanese Canadians across Canada in order to accelerate their assimilation into Canadian society, and to assist those who wished to go to Japan after the war to do so. Only those Japanese Canadians who "manifest disloyalty to Canadian institutions," they argued, should be deported.<sup>7</sup> A just policy, in their opinion, required a truly voluntary choice between going to Japan and remaining in Canada, and a fair definition of disloyalty.

In 1943 Ottawa still leaned more toward the position of the Consultative Council than toward that of B.C.'s extremists. A policy of encouraging the resettlement of Japanese Canadians east of the Rocky Mountains – for the duration of the war at least – had been introduced in the winter of 1942-43.<sup>8</sup> Permanent resettlement, however, was uncertain because of the agreement between Ottawa and Alberta that pledged to remove after the war the B.C. Japanese relocated there in 1942. Ottawa was already considering a program of voluntary "repatriation," while the deportation of the disloyal was presumed.<sup>9</sup>

The main problem lay in defining the term "disloyal." By 1943 Norman Robertson, one of Prime Minister King's principal advisors, favoured regarding as disloyal all Japanese Canadians who had been interned at Angler, or who had at any time placed themselves under the protection of the Spanish consul.<sup>10</sup> Since simply applying to see the Spanish consul in order to place a

complaint before him was sufficient to put a Japanese Canadian into this category, almost all the wartime leaders in the camps in B.C. and in the sugar beet fields of Alberta and Manitoba would be deported, as would the *Nisei* who had been interned for protesting the denial of their civil liberties.<sup>11</sup> (See [Chapter 3](#))

Other civil servants<sup>12</sup> favoured a loyalty survey similar to that undertaken in the American concentration camps in early 1943.<sup>13</sup> The Canadian survey, it was suggested, should require all Japanese aliens to swear to abide by Canadian laws and to refrain from interfering with the war effort. The naturalized and the *Nisei* should be required to swear allegiance to Canada and to deny their loyalty to Japan. Those who refused, along with their families, should then be segregated into special camps and deported after armistice together with the men interned at Angler and any Japanese Canadian whose behaviour was deemed disloyal. The last category would include anyone who broke Canadian laws or incited others to disobey Canadian authorities. Deportation, the senior civil servants contended, was justified on the grounds that it was necessary in order to convince the provinces to accept Japanese Canadians as permanent residents. Deporting a few to gain permanent resettlement for the majority, they hoped, would result in postwar policies “not too flagrantly unjust” to those Japanese Canadians “who have been blameless.”<sup>14</sup> In their estimation, the end justified the means.

Although approved by the Cabinet War Committee in April 1944, the loyalty survey and the segregation of “loyal” and “disloyal” Japanese Canadians was delayed because of uncertainties about American policy. Canadian officials were anxious to develop postwar policies on Japanese Canadians that were consistent with those adopted in the United States regarding Japanese Americans. A joint policy, Robertson felt, would stabilize internal political opinion on the Japanese question.<sup>15</sup> Strong objections from either liberals or racists could be blunted by pointing out the need for international consistency.

Robertson’s tactic of arguing for continental conformity was a backhanded way of urging moderation. Robertson knew from communications with the Canadian ambassadors in Washington, first Hume Wrong and then Lester Pearson, that the American policies were more liberal than Canadian policies. This phenomenon occurred not because the American authorities were any less willing to discriminate than the Canadian authorities, but because the American Constitution protected the *Nisei*, the American-born Japanese Americans. There had been no wholesale dispossession of Japanese Americans because the *Alien Land Laws* of the Pacific coast states meant that Japanese American property was owned not by the immigrant *Issei*, but by their *Nisei* children, in name at least. The property rights of the *Nisei* were protected by the U.S. Constitution. Similarly, the Constitution of the United States prohibited the deportation of citizens. It was unlikely, therefore, that the Americans would be able to stage any large-scale deportations even if they wished to do so.

When the Americans were approached in November 1943 for information on their plans for deporting Japanese Americans, they replied that the matter was “under consideration.” The American silence arose from the fact that congressional sentiment favoured getting “rid of Japanese Americans when the war ended.”<sup>16</sup> The American authorities, accordingly, were in the process of creating legislation intended to circumvent the Constitution by making the renunciation of American citizenship in time of war relatively easy. The new law, they reasoned, would be used by the most strident Japanese American dissidents so that they might protest their uprooting

by renouncing their citizenship. Once having denied their citizenship, they could be deported as aliens. In the end the American authorities would fail. Japanese American renunciations, the Supreme Court would later rule, were made under duress and were, therefore, unconstitutional and invalid.<sup>17</sup> In the spring of 1944, when the *Denaturalization Act* was before Congress, however, the Americans could not commit themselves to a joint policy with Canada. Thus, the matter was shelved in Ottawa.

While Ottawa procrastinated, B.C.'s racists demanded the deportation of Canada's Japanese minority. In the week preceding the Allied invasion of Normandy, the annual convention of the B.C. Canadian Legion and Vancouver's Mayor J.W. Cornett demanded that the "Japanese and their children be shipped to Japan after the war and never be allowed to return here."<sup>18</sup> Applauded by Ian Mackenzie, Legion representatives from Lillooet and Rossland argued that Japanese Canadians "had betrayed the trust placed in them by the Canadian government," and were "a serious threat to the existence of other Canadians" because of their low standard of living and high birthrate.\* Endorsing the anti-Japanese resolutions, Mayor Cornett pledged his wholehearted support and lamented that some of his fellow council Members felt that the *Nisei* should be allowed to stay in Canada. "But I say," he informed the enthusiastic crowd, "they have Japanese nationals for wives and how are you going to split them up?"<sup>19</sup>

Contrary to the headlines in the press, however, the legionnaires lacked solidarity on the deportation question. Some of the recently returned veterans saw the resolution as a denial of everything they had fought for, and said so. One such soldier, Eric S. Flowerdew of Langley Prairie, protested the resolution, pleading to no avail that the *Nisei* were loyal.<sup>20</sup> While rejected by most of his fellow legionnaires, Flowerdew's opinions, in fact, conformed with those of most British Columbians. In February 1944, a Gallup poll had indicated that while 80 per cent of Canadians favoured the deportation of Japanese aliens, only 33 per cent favoured the deportation of the Canadian-born and the naturalized. Opinion in British Columbia did not differ significantly from the national opinion.<sup>21</sup> While some public figures like Ian Mackenzie ignored this poll and clung tenaciously to their anti-Japanese prejudices, others had begun to adjust their stance. Among these were the majority of Vancouver's aldermen, who rejected Mayor Cornett's mass deportation resolution on 5 June 1944.<sup>22</sup>

The rights of Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry were also being debated in the House of Commons in June 1944. The occasion was the introduction of the *Soldiers' Vote Act*, which set up the machinery by which Canadian soldiers serving overseas could vote in the forthcoming general election. After the bill had passed the Commons, it was discovered that one clause within it disenfranchised "any person whose racial origin [was] that of a country at war with Canada."<sup>23</sup> Since that clause would disenfranchise considerable numbers of German and Italian Canadians, opposition to the bill rapidly escalated. Amid charges that the clause embodied Nazi principles of racial hatred, Senators J.J. Bench and Norman Lambert of Ontario attempted to have it deleted. They only succeeded in changing the wording so that it applied to Japanese Canadians alone. Returned to the Commons for approval as amended, the offending clause was further modified, amid heated and well-publicized debate, to leave disenfranchised only those Japanese Canadians

\* In fact, in the interwar years the Japanese Canadian birthrate was the same as or below the Caucasian birthrate. Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Administration of Japanese Affairs, 1942-1944* (mimeo., 1944), p. 3.

who had previously been without the franchise by virtue of their residence in British Columbia in 1940. This meant that Japanese Canadians who had already moved east of the Rocky Mountains remained disenfranchised. The bill was just, Prime Minister King argued, because it avoided the racial discrimination of disenfranchising those few Japanese Canadians who had previously enjoyed the franchise, while also avoiding the “racial favouritism” of granting Pacific Coast Japanese privileges they had not previously enjoyed.<sup>24</sup> King was not about to acknowledge that the bill also prevented the uprooted Japanese from voting against the Liberal government and for the only party that had publicly defended them, the CCF.

King’s “racial favouritism” rationalization was promptly ridiculed by the CCF Members of Parliament, who continued to ask pointed questions about the postwar fate of Japanese Canadians. Under CCF pressure, Prime Minister King finally acknowledged on 4 August 1944 that no acts of sabotage had been committed by any Japanese Canadian. Despite this unblemished record, King continued, the government had decided that Japanese Canadians could remain in Canada only if they were judged loyal by a loyalty commission and if they dispersed themselves across Canada. Those judged to be disloyal, King informed the Commons, would be “deported to Japan as soon as that is physically possible,” and any Canadian nationals among them would be stripped of their citizenship. In addition, Japanese Canadians who wanted to go to Japan after the war would be “encouraged” to do so, while postwar immigration from Japan was to be prohibited.<sup>25</sup> Although King acknowledged that to do other than “deal justly with those who are guilty of no crime or even of ill-intention” would be to accept “the standards of our enemies,”<sup>26</sup> the policies he outlined were based on the assumption that the only people in Canada who were to be considered guilty until they had proven their innocence were people with Japanese faces.

While repressive in the eyes of the CCF, King’s new policies were far too liberal for Ian Mackenzie and the Liberal Members of Parliament from British Columbia. Having vowed publicly that he would not remain part of a government that allowed Japanese Canadians to return to the Pacific Coast, Mackenzie, along with B.C. Liberal M.P.’s Tom Reid and George Cruickshank, took the question of deportation to the people of British Columbia in an attempt to convince Ottawa to take a harder line. Campaigning under the slogan “Not a Japanese from the Rockies to the Sea,” Mackenzie fanned the embers of racial hatred and called on his audiences to “serve notice on the rest of Canada that we will not have Japanese in this fair province.”<sup>27</sup> His success, however, was minimal. Over the next eleven months, Prime Minister King received only nineteen submissions demanding the mass deportation of Japanese Canadians, while also receiving eighty-five submissions urging a moderate policy.<sup>28</sup> In late 1944 it appeared that moderation might prevail.

In December 1944, however, the federal government panicked. The United States Constitution had finally freed Japanese Americans. Ruling on a petition of *habeas corpus* filed by civil rights lawyer James Purcell on behalf of a former California state employee, Mitsue Endo, the United States Supreme Court ruled that loyal Americans could not be denied freedom of movement. Neither Mitsue Endo nor any other Japanese American could be denied access to any area open to other Americans. Anticipating this judicial decision, the American authorities announced in December 1944 that Japanese Americans could return to their homes on the Pacific Coast as of 2 January 1945.<sup>29</sup>

Unwilling to allow Japanese Canadians the same freedom of movement, the federal government hurriedly set postwar policies affecting Canada's Japanese minority. The policymakers' objectives were twofold: to repatriate or deport as many Japanese Canadians as possible, and to disperse the rest across Canada. In their haste they decided that a repatriation survey would be the quickest way to separate those who wished to go to Japan from those who wished to stay in Canada. Anyone selecting Japan would be considered "disloyal," while the loyalty of those selecting Canada was to be further tested by a loyalty commission.

The man selected to coordinate the repatriation survey and the accompanying dispersal of Japanese Canadians was T.B. Pickersgill. Pickersgill was a former executive of the Northwest Line Elevators whose services had been loaned to the Selective Service for the duration of the war. Jack W. Pickersgill, King's Executive Assistant from 1937 to 1948, recalled that his brother accepted the position of Commissioner of Japanese Placement with extreme reluctance. When offered the appointment, Jack recalled, T.B. commented, "I disapprove of this policy. I think it is something we are not going to be proud of." He finally accepted after Jack pointed out that

it is going to be done. The government has made its decision. It would be just the kind of job for some insensitive, sadistic person to take and enjoy himself and probably cause real trouble. It's far better for this job to be done by someone who disapproves, but who knows it is going to be carried out and will carry it out to the letter, but not one step beyond the letter.<sup>31</sup>

From the beginning the job was distasteful. The repatriation survey did not offer a truly voluntary choice between Japan and Canada. Rather the choice was between repatriation to Japan at some unspecified future date, and immediate, although not necessarily permanent, resettlement east of the Rocky Mountains. It was a choice calculated to induce the bitter and confused inmates of the detention camps in B.C. to choose Japan. Repatriates, the inmates were told, could continue to live and work in British Columbia until transportation to Japan was arranged. They would receive relief without first having to use up their capital on deposit with the Custodian of Enemy Property and, upon reaching Japan, they would receive, in addition to their free passage, funds equivalent to the value of their capital in Canada. Those lacking property would receive \$200 per adult and \$50 per child to sustain them until established in Japan.

In contrast, those who chose to stay in Canada could expect considerable difficulty. Firstly, they would be moved to the camp at Kaslo, B.C., from where they would be shipped at some unknown future date to any place east of the Rocky Mountains designated by the government. The failure to take government-assigned employment would be "looked upon as evidence of a lack of willingness to cooperate,"<sup>32</sup> and presumably would be noted on an individual's file for the attention of the proposed loyalty commission. Refusal would also disqualify the inmate and his family from receiving relief benefits. In addition, the placement allowance for resettlers was only \$60 per couple and \$12 per child, a paltry sum the federal government considered adequate because the resettlers were being sent from the camps to "definite employment."<sup>33</sup>

The federal government, however, could not guarantee that "definite employment" would last longer than a few weeks. Nor could it guarantee adequate housing. In fact, the inmates at the Lemon Creek camp were warned that veterans would undoubtedly receive preference in housing



and employment. The government could not even guarantee the resettlers that their resettlement would be permanent. The original agreements with the provinces had specified that the federal government would remove the resettled Japanese after the war. While new agreements were under negotiation, no provincial government, except Saskatchewan's, had expressed a willingness to accept Japanese Canadians.<sup>34</sup> That is why, Japanese Canadians were told, the government was offering such generous terms "to those who come to the conclusion that conditions might be too difficult for them in Canada and the opportunity might be better... in Japan."<sup>35</sup>

The manner in which the survey was presented only reinforced what Japanese Canadians already knew. Everyone knew of someone who had gone east and met with difficulty. They knew that the eastern cities were over-crowded with war workers and that housing was often poor, very expensive and very difficult for Japanese to obtain. They knew that many of the *Nisei* who had gone east were working in dirty, low-paying jobs, and that they had met with discrimination in public places and even in some churches. Most also knew of the hostility and violence the Japanese Americans were experiencing on their return to the Pacific Coast. They feared that similar violence might erupt in Canada once the war in Europe was over and Canada's full attention was focussed on the war with Japan.

The recent acceptance of 150 *Nisei* into the Canadian army also raised the spectre of a different kind of violence. The *Nisei* enlistments created fears that *Nisei* men who moved east would be drafted into the army. After three years in government detention camps, the prospect of their sons being drafted to fight against their ancestral homeland disturbed most *Issei*. In addition, rumours were rampant that the *Nisei* were to be used as cannon fodder. Such rumours were reinforced by the tremendously high casualty rates experienced by the U.S. 442 Regiment, the largely Japanese American unit that had fought in Italy and France.<sup>36</sup>

In addition, morale in the camps was at an all-time low in the spring of 1945. The classic signs of failing morale were everywhere: neglected homes and gardens; an upsurge in petty quarrels, some of which became violent; rising consumption of alcohol; increased gambling; fewer community activities; a sullen restlessness among the young.<sup>37</sup> Battered by the triple shocks of uprooting, dispossession and destitution, some of the inmates had slipped into a reserve mentality. Their poverty, combined with three years of obeying orders they despised, had stripped some of any hope of regaining control over their own lives. Apathetic, some inmates were ripe for manipulation by anyone with strong views, and in the detention camps the strongest views were held by the pro-Japan patriots. The patriots firmly believed that Japan must inevitably defeat the Allies. Relying on shortwave broadcasts from Tokyo, they had formed very unrealistic ideas about the progress of the war. They dismissed the victories reported in the Canadian press as propaganda, and countered that Japan's apparent retreat was a strategic move "to draw her enemies into one spot and defeat them."<sup>38</sup> Bolstered by their belief in Japan's imminent victory, the pro-Japan element welcomed the repatriation survey and attacked any who championed resettlement.<sup>39</sup> By coercing friends, neighbours and family members into signing for repatriation, the pro-Japan element unwittingly helped the Canadian government.

The number of Japanese Canadians signing up for repatriation was further inflated by misunderstandings, administrative errors and practical considerations that the federal government refused to acknowledge. In outlining the program, the Commissioner of Japanese placement, T.B. Pickersgill, had incorrectly assumed that those signing for repatriation would not lose their

Canadian nationality unless, and until, they were actually deported. Consequently, he informed the inmates of the Tashme camp that “there was no suggestion of disloyalty because of signing the form” for repatriation.<sup>40</sup> Pickersgill’s error was probably due to his newness on the job and his unfamiliarity with both the survey and the policymakers who designed it. That error, when combined with some administrators telling the inmates that they could revoke their requests at a later date, led many to believe that they could apply for repatriation in order to keep their jobs in British Columbia and later revoke their request if the likelihood for permanent settlement elsewhere improved.<sup>41</sup> In view of the uncertainties emphasized by the federal government, many felt that a steady, if low-paying, job in B.C. was infinitely preferable to indefinite employment in a hostile atmosphere where housing was scarce and expensive. The fact that the resettling families would also have to abandon the shacks they had improved at their own expense for uncertain quarters in Kaslo’s decaying tenements made many inmates determined to stay where they were, in the homes and jobs they had, until peace could bring normal conditions again.<sup>42</sup>

Many also believed that there was no need for hasty resettlement. Like most Canadians and Americans, they believed that the war with Japan would go on for years, a belief reinforced by Japanese propaganda that claimed Japan could fight for another twenty years.<sup>43</sup> In 1945, given the tenacity with which the Japanese army was defending the Pacific islands, this was not unreasonable. Indeed, fear of a long and costly campaign against Japan is assumed to have been one element in President Truman’s decision a few months later to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The number signing for repatriation was also inflated by those who simply could not move. These included the sick, the disabled, the unemployable and their families. Most of the unemployable were *Issei*, nearly all of whom were over sixty by 1945. Their age and their poor English made it virtually impossible for them to find decent employment. Yet, because they had often married late in life, many still had school-aged dependents. The farms, businesses or fishing vessels with which they had intended to support those dependents were gone, and the capital from their sale had long since been spent on the necessities of life. Unable to re-establish themselves in Canada, such families sought to remain in the security of the detention camps until the children became old enough to support their parents.<sup>44</sup>

The confusion, the indecision, the anger, the fear, the misunderstandings and the very real practical problems were all reflected in the letters Japanese Canadians wrote in the spring of 1945. “Such a hubbub as you cannot imagine at the time of registration here,” an inmate at New Denver wrote. “Some took the attitude that if relocation was forced, they would rather repatriate. So much confusion and uncertainty.... Almost as bad as the turbulent days of pre-evacuation when the destination of folks was so uncertain.”<sup>45</sup> “If I don’t go to Japan,” an elderly man interned at Angler, Ontario, informed his sister, “there is no other place for me to go. My wife has been sick over a year and a half,... I have two children in school in Japan. My house where I lived for so long is sold for almost nothing.”<sup>46</sup> For two families at Greenwood, worries about jobs and family separation were the deciding factors. “Mrs T. and her son decided [to sign] to go to Japan,” a woman wrote her husband at Angler,

because if they do not the daughters will lose their jobs, and also they did not know where they would be forced to go and did not want to be all separated, so they could

not help but sign to go to Japan.... No one wants to sign by their own choice. However, when one thinks of the present situation it is better to sign so that we can all be together rather than being separated. So I am one of those who signed because I want my family to be together.<sup>47</sup>

For a family at Cascade, it was future – not present – employment opportunities that decided their fate. “Yesterday we thought it over,” the wife reported to a friend in Ontario. “My husband said it would be better to go back to Japan because he is too old to get any work in this country. Therefore our whole family has decided to go back to Japan after the war.”<sup>48</sup>

That whole family probably included some *Nisei* who may not have been willing to “go back” to Japan. While some *Nisei* quietly accepted their parents’ decision, others made up their own minds, making their decisions sometimes in anger, sometimes in confusion, sometimes in optimism. For a *Nisei* at Oyama, B.C., anger won out:

All this stinking system gets stinkier every moment.... Those God-damned so-and-so’s don’t give a hoot as to what happens to us so long as they get paid for asking or rather telling us to do radical things.... If it isn’t one thing, it’s something else, namely the cussed Custodian. All this junk about a so-called democracy, racial equality and toleration, all men are born equal. Like the devil they are. Chase us from one place to another, stick us into places worse than pig pens or cow stalls....<sup>49</sup>

For a relocated *Nisei* in Montreal whose family still lived in New Denver, the decision was harder. “What is your real opinion?” he demanded of his sister:

... My way of thinking is that it is going to be tough wherever we are at. Japan ain’t going to be a bed of roses. You can bet on that.... On the other hand if we stay here there is going to be tough monetary discrimination, but at least we know what we are in for.... What is in store for us if we do go to Japan? What chances have I or we got? That is what I am afraid of. What chances for survival have we got there? ... I know it is going to be tough wherever we go. I figure we are worse thought of than Jews are. Canada or Japan won’t accept us into the society of the human....<sup>50</sup>

Others based their decisions only on their recent experiences. “I remember Mom and Dad talking about never wanting to go back to Japan,” a *Nisei* at Okanagan Centre reminded a friend in the Lemon Creek camp:

In a way I don’t blame them for making a decision like that [repatriation] after hearing of our loss in Vancouver. I am getting disgusted with the life we are now leading. After all the hard times we came through trying for a decent home and then to lose everything. I guess I may as well sign up like the folks. It is no use of us fellows going out of B.C. It will be the same old thing. As soon as you get settled down they don’t want you.<sup>51</sup>

Still others had no doubts about their decision; they were staying in Canada. “In spite of the fact

that we have not had the vote, we have been pretty lucky so far,” one particularly optimistic *Nisei* living in Toronto reminded a friend in Vernon, B.C. “We have had our rough spots but when one thinks about it we have been pretty lucky too. I know in comparison to the Canadians we have had one hell of a time, but compared to the Jews and the Chinese boys we are doing all right.”<sup>52</sup>

The government knew of the stresses and strains dividing the camps and influencing the repatriation decisions, but chose to ignore them. Government officials privately admitted that loyal Japanese Canadians who would prefer to remain in Canada would probably sign for repatriation out of “discouragement” with their wartime experiences, or to avoid family separation. Publicly, however, they stated that signing for repatriation was “strictly voluntary” and that “no pressure whatsoever was being exerted” on Japanese Canadians to do so.<sup>53</sup> The repatriation survey, they rationalized, was “reasonably fair in terms of what is politically feasible at the moment.”<sup>54</sup>

Politically the results of the survey looked very good, at least to Ian Mackenzie and the anti-Japanese B.C. Members of Parliament. By August 1945, 6,884 Japanese Canadians over sixteen years of age had signed for repatriation. With their 3,503 dependents, they represented almost 43 per cent of the Japanese population of Canada. More importantly, 86 per cent of those 10,347 potential repatriates resided in British Columbia. Should they all go to Japan, British Columbia would be left with less than 4,200 Japanese Canadians, a number that would be further reduced by the resettlement program. To anti-Japanese British Columbians the survey results must have been heartening. (See [Table 3](#).) They now had only to ensure that the “voluntary repatriates” actually repatriated in order to virtually obliterate the “Japanese problem” in British Columbia.

The sudden end of the Pacific War in August 1945 surprised both the federal government and the voluntary repatriates. With Japan’s capitulation came the realization that life in Japan would be far more difficult than resettling east of the Rocky Mountains. Japan’s defeat also totally undermined the power of the pro-Japan patriots over their relatives and neighbours. People who had signed for repatriation under family, religious or neighbourhood pressure, in anger, or to keep their jobs, soon sought to revoke their signatures. By April 1946, 4,527 of the 6,844 adult repatriates had applied to remain in Canada.<sup>55</sup>

Beginning in September 1945, the federal government sought to make those signatures binding. On September 5 Labour Minister Humphrey Mitchell called a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions, now re-titled the Special Cabinet Committee on Repatriation and Relocation. At that meeting Mitchell submitted the most repressive deportation program yet proposed. His new plan called for the deportation of all Japanese aliens, except a few who would be allowed to remain on compassionate grounds; of all naturalized Japanese Canadians who had signed repatriation requests; and all *Nisei* who had not revoked their repatriation requests before the surrender of Japan on 2 September 1945, three days previously. To implement his program, which he wanted completed in three months, Mitchell asked for the committee’s support for three Orders-in-Council under the *War Measures Act*: one declaring the repatriation requests binding on the persons signing them and their dependents; a second stripping the repatriates of their status as Canadian citizens; and a third setting up a loyalty commission to decide which Japanese aliens could remain on compassionate grounds.<sup>56</sup>

If Mitchell had expected the Special Cabinet Committee on Repatriation and Relocation to rubberstamp his proposals as the old Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions had, he was in

for a rude surprise, for more than the name of the committee had changed. While still chaired by Mitchell, dominated by Ian Mackenzie and advised by Norman Robertson, the new committee had gained three more members: Douglas G. Abbott, the Minister of National Defence; Joseph Jean, the Solicitor General; and Colin Gibson, the Minister of National Defence for Air. Abbott, Jean and Gibson did not have the strongly anti-Japanese opinions of Mitchell and Mackenzie. They were far less willing to use racism for political gain. Moreover, their ministries put them in daily contact with Canada's senior military and police officers, men who had remained convinced throughout the war of the loyalty and innocence of Japanese Canadians. In addition to the presence of these more broad minded M.P.'s, Norman Robertson was becoming less willing to go along quietly with the repressive measures against Japanese Canadians. Robertson explained his feelings to Prime Minister King a few months later:

We do discriminate against the Japanese, against the Chinese, and against the British Indians, in our immigration laws and indirectly in our electoral laws, but until my native province of British Columbia achieves some change of heart, I do not see what we can do about it except to strive to limit and lessen the discriminations every time an opportunity offers.<sup>57</sup>

The meeting on 5 September 1945 proved to be just such an opportunity, as the new committee members rejected the idea that all Japanese aliens should be summarily deported.<sup>58</sup>

Because of the division within the Special Cabinet Committee it was almost two weeks before that committee could make any recommendations to Cabinet. The compromise they reached, however, was only marginally more moderate than Mitchell's original proposal. The Special Cabinet Committee had agreed to recommend that everyone who had requested repatriation, except those among the Canadian-born and naturalized who had revoked their requests before the surrender of Japan, should be deported along with all Japanese Canadians interned at Angler. In addition, they recommended that no action be taken until General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Allied Commander in occupied Japan, had indicated when the repatriation of Canadian Japanese could begin.<sup>59</sup>

MacArthur's approval was not likely to be immediate. Conditions in Japan were desperate. In the fall of 1945 Japan was a starving nation. Disease, malnutrition and starvation were commonplace. Faced with the problem of feeding Japan, MacArthur was understandably reluctant to increase the number of hungry mouths unnecessarily.<sup>60</sup> It was soon clear that the deportations would have to wait until 1946.

The delay was a considerable inconvenience to the federal government. Mitchell had intended using the all-encompassing powers of the *War Measures Act* to make the deportations legal. The *War Measures Act*, however, was due to expire on 1 January 1946, when it would be replaced by the *National Emergency Powers Act*, which in late 1945 was before Parliament as Bill 15. Bill 15 was a transition measure that would permit the gradual removal of wartime economic controls. While Parliament had been unable to censor orders-in-council passed under the *War Measures Act*, Orders-in-Council passed under Bill 15/*National Emergency Powers Act* could be annulled by Parliament. Aware that the deportation of Japanese Canadians would become a sensitive issue in Parliament, where the CCF would almost certainly seek to annul any deportation orders, King and



his Cabinet wanted the power to deport Japanese Canadians without a confrontation in Parliament. In October 1945 they took steps to ensure that power.

The method used reflected the Cabinet's mastery of parliamentary techniques. To avoid discussion of deportation, the federal government quietly inserted a clause into Bill C-15, which gave the Governor-in-Council (in fact the Cabinet) power over "entry into Canada, exclusion and deportation, and revocation of nationality." As written, paragraph 3(g) would give the federal Cabinet a year in which to revoke the Canadian nationality of, and to deport, any resident of Canada. Further the deportations could not be challenged by Parliament, since no Orders-in-Council would be involved. Rather, the deportations could be effected by a Ministerial Order.

The bill was introduced in the House of Commons at the beginning of October, but it was not until mid-October that anyone noticed paragraph 3(g). Once it was noticed, however, opposition was immediate. Damned by the CCF as racist, paragraph 3(g) was condemned by the press as contrary to the principles for which Canadians had so recently fought and died. At the same time the Liberal and Conservative Members of Parliament from British Columbia supported it with equal passion. Through November, as Bill C-15 moved through the parliamentary process, both sides vented their feelings. The B.C. M.P.'s who supported Bill C-15 trotted out the old lies and innuendos that had been used against Japanese Canadians for fifty years. The CCF countered by continually reiterating that no Japanese Canadian had been convicted of, or even charged with, any treasonable crime.<sup>61</sup> Apparently embarrassed by the furor over paragraph 3(g), the government quietly withdrew it on December 6. With paragraph 3(g) deleted, the House of Commons quickly approved Bill C-15 on 7 December 1945.

The withdrawal of paragraph 3(g), however, did not alter the government's goal. It changed only the means by which that goal would be achieved. In their euphoria over the defeat of paragraph 3(g), the anti-deportation Members of Parliament overlooked the implications of section 4 of the same bill. Section 4 provided that all Orders-in-Council extant under the *War Measures Act* on 1 January 1946 would automatically be extended for one year under the powers of Bill C-15. Further, while Parliament could annul Orders-in-Council passed under Bill C-15, Parliament could do nothing about Orders-in-Council passed under the *War Measures Act* and subsequently extended by Bill C-15. To grant itself the power to deport Japanese Canadians, therefore, the Cabinet needed only to pass an Order-in-Council under the *War Measures Act* before it expired on 1 January 1946.

Accordingly, while Justice Minister St. Laurent was withdrawing paragraph 3(g) on 6 December 1945 and assuring the Commons that they would be consulted on any further deportation legislation<sup>62</sup> the Orders-in-Council circumventing Parliament were being prepared. There was, however, a great deal of uncertainty as to how broad they should be. Ian Mackenzie and his supporters were pushing for the broadest terms possible, even though they knew that deportation had been ignored during the October 1945 provincial election in B.C., a fact that suggested it was a dead issue politically. Some Ministers, notably J.L. Ilesley, Minister of Finance, Brooke Claxton, Minister of Health and Welfare, and Paul Martin, the Secretary of State, were opposed to the deportation policy on philosophical and ideological grounds.<sup>63</sup> Others feared that a harsh policy would only serve to fuel CCF attacks on the government. None, however, seemed to be aware, as Prime Minister King was, that public submissions to King on deportation favoured moderation by a margin of 4 to 1.<sup>64</sup>



On December 13, in the absence of Ian Mackenzie, the draft Orders-in-Council were discussed by the Cabinet. The major issue under discussion was how the deportation policy should be applied to the *Nisei*. The majority of the Cabinet wanted to give the *Nisei* the absolute right to remain in Canada, regardless of whether they were considered loyal or disloyal, in accordance with the rights of every other Canadian. The Cabinet was persuaded to postpone its decision, however, until Mackenzie could be present, since he would have to cope with the B.C. backlash that a lenient policy was expected to produce.<sup>65</sup>

Mackenzie's presence at the December 15 Cabinet meeting, however, changed nothing. Rejecting the idea that *Nisei* should be forcibly deported, the Cabinet approved an Order-in-Council deporting four classes of Japanese Canadians: all Japanese aliens who had signed for repatriation or who had been interned at Angler; all naturalized Japanese Canadians who had not revoked their repatriation requests before 2 September 1945; all *Nisei* who did not revoke their repatriation requests before their actual deportation; and the wives and minor children of the above three classes.<sup>66</sup> A second stripped the deported naturalized Japanese Canadians of their Canadian status, while a third set up a loyalty tribunal to review the loyalty of any Japanese Canadian referred to it by the Minister of Labour. The three Orders-in-Council, the majority of the Cabinet felt, would limit the "repatriation [sic] of Canadian-born Japanese to those who wish to be sent to Japan," while at the same time protecting the Canadian status of those who were deported, since only the naturalized were to be stripped of their Canadian citizenship.<sup>67</sup>

Two days later Prime Minister King told a House of Commons depleted by the impending Christmas recess about the new Orders-in-Council. "The circumstances of war and the peculiar character of the present problem," King told the Commons, "require more expeditious and broader action than the present statutes allow." The new Orders-in-Council, he contended, "raise no new principles, nor do they depart from any established principles."<sup>68</sup> It was still legitimate, in the eyes of King and his Cabinet, to discriminate against a non-white minority if they thought public opinion in British Columbia demanded it.<sup>69</sup>

The CCF Members of Parliament were outraged. In a sharp exchange with the Prime Minister, Alistair Stewart, M.P. for Winnipeg North, branded the Orders-in-Council as hypocritical and an official endorsement of racial discrimination. To assume that Japanese Canadians were disloyal because they signed repatriation requests was not a legitimate argument, he protested, since coercion was used to obtain the signatures. Denying again that any coercion was involved, Labour Minister Mitchell replied that the repatriates "had backed the wrong horse."<sup>70</sup> Signing a request to go to Japan when Canada was at war with Japan, Prime Minister King countered, was "*prima facie* evidence that their naturalization should be revoked" and the signers should be deported.<sup>71</sup>

Caught unprepared by the *fait accompli* of the government, the House of Commons dissolved for Christmas. It remained for future Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker to put the whole matter into perspective during the next session. "Under the Emergency Powers bill," Diefenbaker reminded the Commons in March 1946,

...the government endeavoured to get power to deport and to exclude Canadian citizens, or to revoke nationality.... Parliament spoke on that occasion in words which could be understood by the government. Parliament pointed out that to deport Canadian citizens was the very antithesis of the principles of democracy, one of the first of which is that

minorities are entitled to protection.

What did the government do? It could not get that iniquitous piece of legislation through Parliament; so, while Parliament sat, on December 15, 1945, the Governor-in-Council passed an Order-in-Council to do that which Parliament would not allow it to do between October 5 and December 15, 1945.<sup>72</sup>

Japanese Canadians, it appeared, were to be deported against the will of Parliament.

**Notes**

1. See the Vancouver *Sun*, 3 and 6 April 1942; minutes of a meeting on 21 July 1942 of the B.C. M.P.'s with Minister of Labour Humphrey Mitchell, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, vol. 175, PAC; Cornett Resolution, *New Canadian*, 5 September 1942, Ian Mackenzie to Wm. Douglas, Secretary Saanich Branch, Canadian Legion, 9 October 1942; and Mackenzie to F. Howlett, City Clerk, Vancouver City Council, 26 October 1942, Ian Mackenzie Papers, MG27IIB5, vol. 25, 70-25(3), PAC.
2. Mackenzie to Douglas, 19 October 1942, loc. cit.
3. Memorandum, H.L. Keenleyside to Norman Robertson, 16 July 1943, p. 2., Department of External Affairs Papers, 3464-3-40(2), Historical Division, Department of External Affairs (DEA).
4. *Ibid.*
5. Interviews with Keenleyside and Dr. H.F. Angus, November 1977; Keenleyside to Ann Sunahara, 29 June 1978.
6. Memorandum, Consultative Council for Cooperation in Wartime Problems of Canadian Citizenship to Vancouver City Council, 9 September 1942, W.P. Bunt Papers, file 11, VTCA.
7. *Ibid.*
8. British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 9, PAC.
9. Sic. "Repatriation" is an erroneous term reflecting Robertson's tendency to think of Japanese Canadians solely in terms of Japan. The "patria" of the Canadian-born Japanese was Canada. Norman Robertson to W.L.M. King, 20 August 1943, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol 283, C194881-83, PAC.
10. *Ibid.* Spain was the neutral power designated under the Geneva convention to police the treatment of Japanese aliens in Allied nations during the war.
11. BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol 16, PAC.
12. The interdepartmental committee studying deportation was composed of the Under-Secretary of State, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Deputy Ministers of Justice and Labour, the Director of Immigration, and the Deputy Commissioner of the RCMP. R.G. Robertson to Cabinet War Committee, 18 April 1944, External Affairs Papers, 104(5)-1, DEA.
13. See Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.: Japanese Americans in World War II*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971. pp. 104-29.
14. R.G. Robertson to Norman Robertson, 20 March 1944, A.R. Menzies to Norman Robertson, 22 March 1944, Norman Robertson to King, 27 March 1944, R.G. Robertson to Cabinet War Committee, 18 April 1944, External Affairs Papers, 104(5)-1, DEA; Memorandum, unsigned and unaddressed, 3 August 1945, Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vol. 658, PAC.
15. Memorandum, Norman Robertson to King, 20 August 1943, loc. cit.
16. Memorandum, Beckenridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State, to Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, 17 December 1943, Department of State Files, 740.00115 PW/2170, National Archives (NA) Washington, D.C.; Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.*, pp. 155-57.
17. Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.*, pp. 112-16.
18. Vancouver *Sun*, 1 June 1944.
19. *Ibid.*, and 2 June 1944.
20. Vancouver *Sun*, 3 June 1944. The bigots rebutted Flowerdew with the charge that the best-educated *Nisei* were serving in the Japanese army. This charge arose from the fact that a few of the educated *Nisei* who had been unable to find employment in Canada in their field of training had accepted employment in Japan or in Japanese-occupied Asia in the late 1930s. Some Japanese Canadians and Japanese Americans who were in Japan at the outbreak of the Pacific War were subsequently conscripted into the Japanese army. See J. Yoshida and Wm. Hosokawa, *The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida*, New York: Wm. Morrow, 1972.
21. See Forrest E. La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948. p. 154.

22. Vancouver *Sun*, 5 June 1944.
23. As quoted in Carol F. Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia." *B.C. Studies*, no. 30 (Summer 1976). p. 52.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
25. Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 4 August 1944, p. 6062.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Lee, "Road to Enfranchisement," pp. 55-56.
28. Memorandum, R.G. Robertson to H.H. Wrong, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 24 October 1945, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 361, C249600-6, PAC.
29. See Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.*, p. 157.
30. The major "policymakers" were Prime Minister King and the Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions consisting of Humphrey Mitchell, the Minister of Labour (Chair); Ian Mackenzie, the Minister of Veterans Affairs; and Norman McLarty, the Secretary of State. They were assisted by Norman Robertson, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs; Arthur MacNamara, Deputy Minister of Labour; and R.G. Robertson, Office of the Prime Minister.
31. Interview with J.W. Pickersgill, Ottawa, Ont.
32. Memorandum, Norman Robertson to King, 21 February 1945, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 361, C249584, PAC.
33. T.B. Pickersgill to R. Shirakawa, Chairman, Japanese Committee, Tashme, B.C., 10 April 1945, Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association (JCCA) Papers, MG28V7, D278, PAC.
34. Only the agreement with the Province of Alberta actually contained the clause calling for the removal of the B.C. Japanese after the war. Because this clause had been mentioned in all negotiations with the provinces and only explicitly refused by Manitoba, the federal government considered itself bound by it until new contracts could be renegotiated. See Canada, House of Commons, 7-8 George VI, Sessional Paper 126i, 1943/44.
35. T.B. Pickersgill, as quoted in Memorandum, R.G. Robertson to King, 23 April 1945, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 361, C249590, PAC.
36. See the Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vols. 1527-29, for the perceptions of Japanese Canadians in 1944 and 1945. For the details of the Nisei inductions see Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was, : A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976. pp. 292-96.
37. *Ibid.*, Barry Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of Japanese Canadians in World War II*, Toronto: Doubleday, 1977., pp. 194-97, 201-6, 223-24. See Diasuke Kitagawa, *Issei and Nisei: The Internment Years* (N.Y.: Seabury, 1967), for the American parallel.
38. Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi, *A Man of Our Times: The Life-History of a Japanese Canadian Fisherman*, Vancouver: New Star Books, 1976., p. 81. See also the Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vols. 1527-29, PAC.
39. *Ibid.*; Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame*, pp. 313-16.
40. T.B. Pickersgill, Commissioner of Japanese Placement, to A.H. Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister of Labour, 9 October 1945, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 16, file 622, PAC; transcript of an interview between T.B. Pickersgill, and the Japanese committee, Tashme, B.C., 31 March 1945, JCCA Papers, MG28V7, file D278, PAC.
41. See Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vols 1527-29, PAC.
42. *Ibid.*; interview with Marion Hoshino Sunahara, London, Ont.
43. Intercepted Letter, nephew to uncle, Slokan, B.C., to Little Britain, Man., 10 April 1945, Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vol 1528, PAC. Access to these documents was predicated on the preservation of the anonymity of the authors and recipients of the retained letters.
44. Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame*, p. 322; interview with Hanaye "Bunny" Nagamori, Winnipeg, Man., October 1977.

45. Intercepted Letter, between friends, New Denver, B.C., to Toronto, Ont., 14 May 1945, Department of Labour Papers, loc. cit.
46. Intercepted Letter, brother to sister, Angler Internment Camp to Lemon Creek, B.C., 16 May 1945, Department of Labour Papers, loc. cit.
47. Intercepted Letter, wife to husband, Greenwood, B.C., to Angler Internment Camp, 23 May 1945, Department of Labour Papers, loc. cit.
48. Intercepted Letters, between friends, Cascade, B.C., to Hamilton, Ont., 15 May 1945, Department of Labour Papers, loc. cit.
49. Intercepted Letter, between friends, Oyama, B.C., to Roseberry, B.C., 16 April 1945, Department of Labour Papers, loc. cit.
50. Intercepted Letter, brother to sister, Montreal, Que., to New Denver, B.C., 15 May 1945, Department of Labour Papers, loc. cit.
51. Intercepted Letter, between friends, Okanagan Centre, B.C., to Lemon Creek, B.C., 13 May 1945, Department of Labour Papers, loc. cit.
52. Intercepted Letter, between friends, Toronto, Ont., to Vernon, B.C., May 1945, Department of Labour Papers, loc. cit.
53. Memoranda, Norman Robertson to King, 21 February 1945, loc. cit.; and R.G. Robertson to King, 23 April 1945, loc. cit.; Norman Robertson to King, 5 January 1945, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 283, C194932, PAC.
54. Memorandum, Norman Robertson to King, 21 February 1945, loc. cit.
55. Statistics from Memorandum, Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vol. 658, 23-3-17-1 (pt.4), PAC.
56. Memorandum, Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vol. 658, PAC. Mitchell felt that restrictions on Japanese remaining in Canada should not be lifted until the repatriates had been deported.
57. Norman Robertson to King, 5 January 1945, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 283, C194932, PAC.
58. Cabinet Conclusions, 5 September 1945, Privy Council Office Records, RG 2/16, vol. 2, PAC.
59. Cabinet Conclusions, 19 September 1945, Privy Council Office Records, RG 2/16, vol. 3, PAC.
60. Cabinet Conclusions, 19 September 1945, Privy Council Office Records, RG 2/16, vol. 3, PAC.
61. See Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 21-23 November 1945, pp. 2376-457; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 22 October 1945.
62. Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 6 December 1945, p. 3031.
63. Interview with J. W. Pickersgill.
64. Memorandum, R.G. Robertson to Wrong, 24 October 1945, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 361, C249600-8, PAC.
65. Memorandum, A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, to King, 13 December 1945, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J2, vol. 361, C249646, PAC.
66. Order-in-Council, P.C. 7355, 15 December 1945.
67. Orders-in-Council, P.C. 7356, P.C. 7357, 15 December 1945.
68. Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 17 December 1945, p. 3697.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 3702-4.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 3703.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, 21 March 1946, p. 139.

## VII: Fighting Deportation

When choosing to defy Parliament and deport Japanese Canadians, Mackenzie King and his Cabinet made two important errors. Deafened by the clamour of Ian Mackenzie and his B.C. supporters, King and his Cabinet failed to realize that the fate of Japanese Canadians was no longer just a British Columbia concern. They also failed to realize that the position of the Japanese minority in 1945 was very different from their position in 1942 and 1943. Then Japanese Canadians had been virtually friendless, pariahs labelled as traitors. By 1945, however, they had made some very determined friends.

While King and his Cabinet were aware of the most vocal of those friends, the twenty-eight CCF Members of Parliament, they underestimated the quieter but growing pro-Japanese Canadian lobby centred on the Toronto-based Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians. The Cooperative Committee had evolved from a Young Women's Christian Association project set up in 1943 to assist with the resettlement of single Japanese Canadian women.<sup>1</sup> Within a few months, the YWCA coordinators in Toronto joined with representatives from a number of religious groups to form a cooperative committee to develop social services for incoming Japanese Canadians. Acting individually, the committee members did what they could to ease the adjustment of the resettlers.<sup>2</sup> The resettlement of Japanese Canadians east of the Rocky Mountains appealed to the assimilationist social ideals of the committee members. Before the advent of multiculturalism,<sup>3</sup> most Canadians thought that the complete assimilation of non-Anglo-Canadians to the Anglo-Canadian ideal was not only desirable but necessary. Most believed that cultural homogeneity was necessary for the stability of the nation and expected immigrants to shed their old-world cultures. The difference between racists and liberals in that period lay primarily in the fact that racists believed non-white minorities could never assimilate, while liberals believed they could and should.<sup>4</sup>

Liberals also believed that to be assimilated, minorities must be geographically dispersed. Geographic concentration, they thought, inhibited assimilation by perpetuating the immigrant culture, which was seen to be the cause of racist reactions by whites. Racism and discrimination, to Canadian liberals, were largely the fault of the non-white minorities, the result of their failure to assimilate. Once they had dispersed themselves and assimilated, liberals believed, racism would disappear. It was, therefore, the duty of good Japanese Canadians to solve the Japanese problem by rapidly assimilating to the Anglo-Canadian ideal. While later sociologists would label programs aimed at the victims rather than at the causes of social ills as programs that "blamed the victim,"<sup>5</sup> many Canadian liberals in the 1940s readily accepted that the onus was on the victims to solve the social problems facing them.

Significantly, the victims agreed. Influenced by the intensive assimilationist propaganda in Canadian public schools, the media and the Christian churches in the interwar years, the *Nisei* leadership and some *Issei* had actively promoted assimilation in the 1930s. They had urged ambitious *Nisei* to move to central and eastern Canada where, it was thought, discrimination would be less severe.<sup>6</sup> The outbreak of the Pacific War, and the condemnation of all things Japanese



that accompanied it, increased the social pressure on Japanese Canadians to deny their cultural heritage. Under such pressures, it is not surprising that many resettlers, especially the *Nisei*, came to believe that dispersal and assimilation were necessary to solve the Japanese problem.<sup>7</sup>

By 1944 both Toronto's Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians and its *Nisei* advisors realized that the dispersal of Japanese Canadians required a far more intensive program than that which currently existed. Moreover, they felt that the resettlement of Japanese Canadians should begin immediately in order to counteract the debilitating influences of the detention camps. The dominance of Japanese language and customs in the camps, the presence of the pro-Japan patriots, the isolation of Japanese Canadians from interaction with non-Japanese and the growing poverty and apathy of both *Issei* and *Nisei* inmates greatly disturbed them.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in 1944 the Toronto committee decided to organize a petition urging the federal government to disperse Japanese Canadians across Canada and to restore their civil rights, especially the right to own property.

The petition quickly ran into difficulties. Eastern Canadians, they soon discovered, knew little about the wartime treatment of Japanese Canadians. The few who had heard of the events of the previous few years usually assumed that the federal government had valid reasons for its actions.<sup>9</sup> The organizers realized that only people like themselves, who had been in direct contact with resettled *Nisei*, had any real understanding of what had been done, and was still being done, to Japanese Canadians.

To counteract the widespread ignorance in eastern Canada, the Toronto committee initiated a publicity campaign. Using their connections with the major churches, they joined with Vancouver's Consultative Council to print and distribute 10,000 copies of a pamphlet, *A Challenge to Patriotism and Statesmanship*. That pamphlet attempted to explode some of the myths surrounding Japanese Canadians, to describe the conditions in the detention camps, and to urge the dispersal of Japanese Canadians across Canada. The government, the pamphlet argued, should not be peddling Japanese Canadian property in B.C. to "private buyers who look upon the Tenth Commandment<sup>10</sup> as suspended 'for the duration'" of the war. Rather, the government should be taking steps to make the dispersal of Japanese Canadians "not only economically possible, but economically attractive."<sup>11</sup> These steps should include the expropriation of Japanese Canadian property in B.C. at a fair price, the restoration of the right to buy property, and the creation of a special fund to re-establish Japanese Canadians outside British Columbia. The ownership of property scattered throughout Canada, the pamphlet concluded, was the best way to ensure that Japanese Canadians would neither return *en masse* to B.C. after the war, nor collect in ghettos elsewhere in Canada.<sup>12</sup>

In June 1944 the publicity campaign<sup>13</sup> received some unintended help from the federal government. By attempting to disenfranchise "all persons whose racial origin is that of a country at war with Canada," the government unwittingly publicized the plight of Japanese Canadians. The overt discrimination in the *Soldiers' Vote Act*, followed only one month later by King's public acknowledgement that no Japanese Canadian had committed any disloyal act, disturbed both the liberal press and the newly formed Ontario Civil Liberties Association. In 1944 both the press and the civil libertarians finally began to understand the innocence of Japanese Canadians and the extent to which their civil liberties were being abused. While disturbed, neither the press nor the civil libertarians were prepared as yet to do anything about that abuse. There was a war to be won. The Japanese problem could wait.

The *Soldiers' Vote Act* debate also marked the emergence of a new Japanese Canadian

leadership centred in Toronto. Until 1944 *Nisei* in Toronto were primarily concerned with their own adjustment. They lacked both the inclination and the confidence to assume a public role. Acutely conscious that any adverse public reaction to them could jeopardize the resettlement of other Japanese Canadians, the *Nisei* in Toronto prior to 1944 were extremely reluctant to draw attention to themselves. They made a conscious effort to avoid living on the same street, to speak only English in public, and to work in different businesses and factories. Some were even reluctant to form a *Nisei* social group at the Carlton Street United Church for fear that they would be branded as clannish and unassimilable. By 1943, however, they had recognized the need for a Japanese Canadian organization in Toronto to work with concerned Caucasians for the resettlement of Japanese Canadians and the restoration of their civil rights. Accordingly, several former members of the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League organized the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy in Toronto. By June 1944 the *Nisei* involved with the JCCD had recovered enough self-confidence to submit a brief to Parliament in a fruitless attempt to have the clause denying them the right to vote removed from the *Soldiers' Vote Act*.<sup>14</sup> Although small and as yet unknown to the majority of Japanese Canadians, the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy was ready by 1944 to act as a spokesbody for Japanese Canadians should the opportunity arise.

That opportunity finally presented itself in the spring of 1945. Within days of the beginning of the government's repatriation survey in B.C., rumours of coercion in the taking of repatriation applications began to reach Toronto. It was sign or lose your job, sign or be separated from your family, Toronto *Nisei* were told by friends in the detention camps.<sup>15</sup> Worried and suspicious of the government's motives, the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy and its Caucasian allies began to organize.

In late May 1945 the JCCD and representatives of twenty Caucasian organizations met to form the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians. Officially incorporated on June 19, the Cooperative Committee quickly grew to include representatives from over thirty organizations, including the major churches, labour unions, civil liberties and professional associations, the National Council of Women and the Canadian Jewish Congress.<sup>16</sup> Chaired by Rev. James Finlay of Carlton Street United Church, the Cooperative Committee sought to demonstrate that all Canadians were not anti-Japanese and that many were very disturbed by the wartime treatment of Japanese Canadians. They circulated a petition deploring the repatriation survey and the continuing restrictions on Japanese Canadians. In July they sent a delegation to Ottawa to try to persuade the government to change its stance on deportation and to allow Japanese Canadians to again buy property. They accelerated their public education campaign with the distribution of 50,000 copies of a pamphlet, *From Citizens to Refugees – It's Happening Here!* They established contact with similar groups scattered across Canada, groups who tried to use their local media in order to get the truth about Japanese Canadians before the Canadian public.<sup>17</sup>

On its own the JCCD organized the Japanese minority. Working through established Japanese committees in the camps and on the Prairies, the JCCD began to collect sworn statements from the unwilling signers, statements that detailed why they had felt compelled to sign to go to Japan.<sup>18</sup> At the same time the JCCD founded a magazine, *Nisei Affairs*, to link *Nisei* across Canada and to discuss Japanese Canadian issues in a more forthright manner than was possible in the *New Canadian*, which was still located in Kaslo and subject to censorship.

The role the JCCD was able to play, however, was limited by its geographic remoteness

from the majority of Japanese Canadians and by its manpower shortage in 1945. In the spring of 1945 the Canadian government had finally allowed a handful of *Nisei* to enlist as interpreters in the Canadian Army for service with British and Anzac forces in Asia. Not surprisingly, among the first to volunteer were the men who had formed the backbone of the JCCD, men who as leaders in the prewar Japanese Canadian Citizens' League had clamoured to enlist in 1940. The bulk of the work, therefore, fell to the JCCD's overworked president, Kinzie Tanaka, who as a Japanese alien could not enlist.

The JCCD was not the only active group. In the Slocan Valley of B.C. the Japanese committees of the five camps in that area (New Denver, Bay Farm, Lemon Creek, Slocan City and Popoff) united to attack the repatriation issue by authorizing Vancouver lawyer Dennis Murphy to contest the validity of the repatriation survey in the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Murphy, however, made a fundamental legal error. Failing to check which Orders-in-Council affecting Japanese Canadians were still in force, he sued the British Columbia Security Commission, arguing that the repatriation survey was beyond its powers. Once in court, however, he was rudely awakened to the fact that the BCSC had not existed since February 1943 when the Order-in-Council creating it was repealed and its duties were taken over by the Department of Labour. The case was dismissed since the defendant did not exist.<sup>19</sup>

Although disappointed by the failure of the court case, the Japanese committees across Canada forged ahead. The Tashme Japanese Committee not only won the support of Dr. J.H. Arnup, the moderator of the United Church, during his visit to Tashme in August 1945, but also organized a petition to the federal government. At the suggestion of an editor of the *New Canadian*, the Tashme organizers began to collect funds for a possible second court case, and to consider as a last resort a policy of *gambari*, or passive resistance. Large-scale passive resistance to deportation, the editor acknowledged, would not prevent the government from forcibly deporting Japanese Canadians, but it would certainly gain a great deal of publicity.<sup>20</sup> In Winnipeg, the Japanese committees concentrated on organizing petitions to the government. They were undoubtedly helped by the strong anti-deportation stance of the influential *Winnipeg Free Press*. In Toronto, where the press took a weaker but still generally favourable stance, a committee composed of both *Issei* and *Nisei* coordinated fund-raising activities. Lastly, the Slocan District Committee continued its campaign against deportation with a petition to Prime Minister King signed by some 2,010 unwilling repatriates. Ironically, that petition reached Ottawa on 15 December 1945, the very day the Cabinet made the deportation Orders-in-Council.<sup>21</sup>

The efforts of the JCCD, the Cooperative Committee and their confederates across the country proved fruitless. While the publicity undoubtedly helped to tone down the deportation policy in the fall of 1945, it had not been appreciated by Cabinet. Deafened by the clamour of Ian Mackenzie and Humphrey Mitchell, the Cabinet largely ignored pleas for moderation and ordered the deportation of 10,000 Japanese Canadians.

The announcement of the deportation Orders-in-Council shocked but did not surprise the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians. They had been expecting the worst since their July meeting with Labour Minister Humphrey Mitchell when he made it very clear that the government intended to follow the demands of public opinion in British Columbia in Japanese matters.<sup>22</sup> Aware that the first shipment of deportees was scheduled for mid-January, the Cooperative Committee,

along with Vancouver's Consultative Council, knew they must act quickly if they were to stop those deportations. Their first impulse was to challenge the deportation orders in the Supreme Court of Canada. A reference to the Supreme Court, however, carried with it two major problems: it required the consent of the federal government, and it did not prevent the government from deporting Japanese Canadians while the case was in progress.<sup>23</sup> What the anti-deportation lobby needed was a way to force the government to cooperate.

It was quickly apparent that, far from cooperating, the federal government had every intention of making the work of the anti-deportation lobby very difficult. In the week following the deportation announcement, the commissioner of Japanese placement, T.B. Pickersgill, presumably on orders from Ottawa, denied entry into the Tashme camp at Hope, B.C., to anyone attempting to help the unwilling repatriates. On December 28, Robert J. MacMaster, counsel for Vancouver's Consultative Council, was prevented from entering Tashme when he sought to meet with his clients there. Pickersgill's obstruction surprised MacMaster, who had previously had ready access to Tashme. Angered, MacMaster threatened to inform the press that Japanese Canadians were being denied the right to legal counsel. That threat prompted a quick consultation between Pickersgill and the Department of Labour in Ottawa, and it was decided that MacMaster must be allowed to see his clients but that he should apply to do so in an "orderly manner." In bureaucratic terms that meant that MacMaster had to apply in writing to see his clients, specifically naming them and submitting proof that they had in fact engaged him. At the same time, Pickersgill prohibited all general meetings in Tashme. Such bureaucratic obstruction not only made it difficult to organize within Tashme, but also cost MacMaster two precious days of the short time he had to stop the deportation of the unwilling repatriates.<sup>24</sup>

In the end MacMaster had the last laugh. On December 31 he discovered the legal means to bring the federal government to heel. Deportation, MacMaster noted, was a two-step process: first the deportee was detained in legal custody; then he was deported. While the second part of the process, actual deportation, could not be challenged without the consent of the government, the first step could be. The *War Measures Act* permitted detention without recourse to the courts only during time of war. The war was now over, which meant that the detention of the deportees prior to their deportation could be challenged in the courts by a writ of *habeas corpus*.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, even if unsuccessful, *habeas corpus* proceedings would delay the sailing of the deportee. Since the deportation of Japanese Canadians depended heavily on a tight shipping schedule, *habeas corpus* proceedings for each unwilling deportee would completely disrupt the deportation program.

Faced with the threat of hundreds of *habeas corpus* proceedings, the federal government agreed to negotiate with the anti-deportation lobby through Toronto's Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians. Meeting with Justice Minister St. Laurent on January 4, lawyer Andrew Brewin outlined the position of the Cooperative Committee. The deportation Orders-in-Council, he told St. Laurent, were a threat to civil liberties in Canada and an anathema to the organizations allied with the Cooperative Committee. Further, the committee was of the opinion that the deportation order was unconstitutional, since, they felt, the power of the federal government was limited to the deportation of aliens. Reminding St. Laurent that the deportation of citizens was not only contrary to international law but had recently been declared a war crime by the newly formed United Nations, Brewin requested that the Orders-in-Council be referred to the Supreme Court of Canada.<sup>26</sup>

St. Laurent and his Deputy Minister, F.P. Varcoe, were not impressed by Brewin's legal arguments. Both men were well aware that the *War Measures Act* gave the Cabinet virtually unlimited power to legislate for the "security, defence, peace, order and welfare of Canada." With such a broad mandate, no appeal against an order under the *War Measures Act* had as yet been successful. There seemed no reason to assume that this case would be any different. While unimpressed with Brewin's legal arguments, St. Laurent and Varcoe were impressed with the people backing him. An organization that had the support of such influential Canadians as the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, Rev. J.H. Arnup, labour leader George J.A. Reany, publisher B.K. Sandwell, Liberal Senators A.W. Roebuck and Cairine Wilson and Saskatchewan's Premier T.C. Douglas was not an organization a prudent government could ignore. Because such influential people opposed deportation, it would be best, Varcoe counselled, to refer the Orders-in-Council to the Supreme Court for a quick decision, following which the deportations could begin in earnest.<sup>27</sup> The Cabinet concurred.

This time there was no delay in arranging a hearing as there had been with the dispossession Order-in-Council. The government wanted the issue cleared up as quickly as possible. Consequently, a mere twenty days after meeting with St. Laurent, Andrew Brewin and constitutional lawyer J.R. Cartwright found themselves arguing against the deportation orders before the seven Justices of Canada's Supreme Court. The powers of the *War Measures Act*, they argued, were restricted to "arrest, detention, exclusion and deportation" where deportation was defined as "the return of an alien to the country from whence he came." The government, therefore, lacked the power to deport citizens of Canada. Moreover, the deportation of citizens for any reason other than the conviction of a felony is expressly forbidden by the principle of *habeas corpus*. On the humanitarian level, Brewin and Cartwright reminded the justices, the deportation of citizens was contrary to the accepted principles of international law and had been declared a "crime against humanity" by the United Nations. The government lawyers replied that the government was empowered to deport under the all-encompassing power of the *War Measures Act* as extended by section 4 of the National Emergency Powers Act. Those acts, they contended, gave the federal government the power to deport both citizens and aliens and to strip the deported citizens of their Canadian status without interference from the courts.<sup>28</sup> The arguments took only two days. On January 25, 1946, the Justices retired to write their opinions.

While MacMaster, Brewin and Cartwright used the law to try to halt the deportations, the Cooperative Committee and its allies used the press and the pulpit. Recognizing that the deportation issue was basically a political one, the anti-deportation lobby worked through January and February 1946 to create an anti-deportation clamour that would make the shouts of Ian Mackenzie and his supporters seem like whispers. Across Canada a myriad of organizations raised money, distributed pamphlets, organized public meetings, delivered sermons, talked to any individual or group who would listen, wrote Prime Minister King and their Members of Parliament, and sought and received the wholehearted support of the Canadian press. Their message was simple. The deportation of Canadian nationals of Japanese ancestry was an assault on Canadian democracy and must not be allowed to occur.<sup>29</sup> They discovered that the Canadian public agreed.

Why Canadians who had remained silent through the uprooting and dispossession of Japanese Canadians should finally break their silence to oppose their deportation remains unclear. Perhaps they saw the deportation of Japanese Canadians as a threat to their own personal rights



and privileges, or they had suddenly reached some new level of tolerance, or they were reacting to the news of the Nazi death camps. In the final analysis, the motive behind the response of the Canadian public was not all that important. It was sufficient that the anti-deportation campaign of January and February 1946 produced the strongest outburst of spontaneous public reaction in the long career of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, an outburst King knew better than to ignore.<sup>30</sup>

The anti-deportation campaign was also helped by the political decline of Ian Mackenzie in early 1946. Mackenzie's political influence had always hinged on his close relationship with Prime Minister King. In January 1946 that relationship was shattered by Mackenzie's vanity. While in England in 1945, Mackenzie had become convinced that he would be made a Member of the Imperial Privy Council in the 1946 New Year's Honours. When that honour failed to materialize, Mackenzie blamed King and sent him a scathing telegram, creating an irreparable rift between the two men. King decided Mackenzie's behaviour was that of an overwrought, war-weary politician no longer equal to the business of his office,<sup>31</sup> and over the next few days his evaluation of Mackenzie, who had been drinking heavily, deteriorated even further. "The impression I get of him," King confided to his diary, "is that he is like a drowning man catching at straws. That he is breaking up completely but trying to keep a certain assurance before the public.... It is clear however that his usefulness as a Minister of the Crown is at an end.... I shall also let Mackenzie go at the first opportunity."<sup>32</sup>

On February 20, as Mackenzie's influence declined and the anti-deportation forces grew, the Supreme Court Justices handed down a badly divided decision. The deportation of Japanese aliens and naturalized Japanese Canadians was unanimously declared legal. The Justices, however, were split 5 to 2 in favour of deporting the *Nisei*, and, importantly, 4 to 3 against deporting the unwilling dependents of the male deportees.<sup>33</sup>

This judicial division embarrassed the government. They were now in a position to legally deport the 6,844 adults who had signed repatriation requests but not their 3,500 dependents. Faced with a growing anti-deportation movement and demands from the Cooperative Committee for deportation hearings complete with counsel and legal evidence for the 4,527 unwilling repatriates, the matter was referred to the Special Cabinet Committee on Repatriation and Relocation. On 23 February 1946, in the absence of Ian Mackenzie, that committee recommended that the offending Orders be referred to the Privy Council in England for a final ruling. On March 8 the Cabinet concurred.<sup>34</sup> Deportation was now too hot an issue. A Privy Council appeal would buy the government time to correct what was now an obvious political mistake.

By April 1946 the divisions in the Cabinet on the deportation question were marked. Mackenzie and Mitchell still promoted a hard line, but the public posture of the Cabinet was changing quickly. Prime Minister King set the new tone in a meeting with a delegation from the Cooperative Committee on March 26, 1946 when he publicly scolded Mitchell for calling Japanese Canadians "yellow bastards."<sup>35</sup> King blamed Ian Mackenzie and the "silent majority" for the deportation fiasco. "Now that the dust is beginning to settle," *Maclean's* Ottawa correspondent noted,

government people are expressing some resentment of what they call the "belated" criticism of their policy toward the Japanese. As it finally came out that policy was



greatly watered-down away from the extreme “Damn the Japs” line on which Ian Mackenzie boasted he could have “won every seat in British Columbia”.... But [the small “l” liberals in the Cabinet] say that if half the pro-Japanese clamour had been raised then that was raised later, they could have backed Ian right off the map.<sup>36</sup>

Relief for the potential deportees, however, was not immediately forthcoming. The Cabinet wanted the Japanese problem solved. To do so, King returned to the policies he had first outlined in August 1944. Japanese Canadians would be encouraged to voluntarily repatriate to Japan and to disperse themselves across Canada under an accelerated resettlement program.

There is often a very fine line between encouragement and coercion in government programs. The second uprooting of Japanese Canadians in the summer of 1946 contained elements of both. New policies, such as setting up hostels east of Alberta, increasing the resettlement allowances, making permits to buy property outside British Columbia easier to obtain and permitting “deportable” Japanese aliens to move east with their Canadian-born children, encouraged resettlement by easing the practical problems and the fear of family separation. Nonetheless, resettlement was not voluntary. Only the sick, the unemployable, the veterans, their families and those who lived in self-supporting communities were “free to remain in B.C.”<sup>37</sup> The rest, the so-called “relocateables,” were forced to leave. Denied the right to employment in B.C., the relocateables who chose not to go to Japan were required to choose a hostel east of Alberta from which they would be channelled into employment and housing, or have one chosen for them by the commissioner of Japanese placement, T.B. Pickersgill.<sup>38</sup>

The hostels in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan; Transcona, Manitoba; Neys, Hearst, Summerville and Fingal, Ontario; and Farnham, Quebec, were purposely crude. To discourage long-term residence, the facilities in these airbases and POW camps were altered only to the extent of partitioning the open barracks into four-bed cubicles and, in the case of Neys, adding extra heaters for winter. As expected, the communal dining, laundry and sanitary facilities and the minimal privacy in the quarters stimulated rapid searches for jobs and housing on the part of the resettled.

In manpower-hungry Northern Ontario, the men quickly found employment in the mines and the forest industry, sheltering their families in company housing where possible. Elsewhere most resettlers started their new life as domestics, farm labour or factory workers. While the domestics and farm workers were usually supplied with housing, the factory workers often had to cope with the severe housing shortage resulting from rapid urbanization and the freeze on home construction that had accompanied the war. The housing problem was particularly acute in Montreal, where fees of up to \$1,000 were commonly demanded as “key money” when renting an apartment. Herbert Tanaka, a *Nisei* father of four who had left his family in Kaslo while he went to Montreal to find a job and housing, explained the situation to his wife, June, in the autumn of 1945:

Any house that is for rent now will ask the applicant to buy the furniture, old pieces of furniture and at an enormous price. But if you don't, there will be no house. I saw in the paper the other night where a returned soldier tried to rent a house but the owner asked him to buy the furniture for \$1000.... The rents seem to be quite normal in these cases because the Wartime Prices and Trades Board has frozen the rent.

Often owners will ask for key money. Just to use the key to look the place over they want \$250 before he hands you it. Then he might refuse to let you have the house.<sup>39</sup>

Housing was actually a double problem. Not only did Japanese Canadians have to find vacant, habitable homes whose owners would be willing to rent or sell to non-whites, but they also had to ensure that those homes were not clustered in the same area as those of other Japanese Canadians. The latter requirement was government policy, as placement officers continued to assume that a visible concentration of Japanese Canadians would generate a racist reaction. Throughout 1946, therefore, the government continued to use its regulatory powers to restrict the number and distribution of Japanese Canadians in Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal.

For the most part, Japanese Canadians cooperated with this second uprooting. A few tenacious individuals continued to protest their wartime treatment by refusing to leave the detention camps and, later, the hostel at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.<sup>40</sup> Most recognized the futility of resistance. Some resettlers saw their second uprooting as an acceptable solution to the problems they had experienced in B.C. Others saw it as an alternative to deportation, and dared not object. Still others saw dispersal as the price of their freedom, a price they were willing to pay to return to a normal life. Slipping quietly into their new jobs and communities, the resettlers were often pleasantly surprised and reassured by the indifference toward them in most of those new communities.<sup>41</sup>

Only in Alberta did resettlement become an issue. A province, like British Columbia, with a strong nativist tradition, Alberta alone had demanded in 1942 that the B.C. Japanese be removed after armistice. Identifying the B.C. Japanese as unassimilable enemy aliens, Alberta nativists began pressuring the Social Credit premier, Ernest Manning, to hold the federal government to its original agreement. The solution to the Japanese problem, the nativists felt, was to deport all Japanese Canadians. Premier Manning largely concurred. A fundamentalist minister, Manning believed that Japanese Canadians were loyal to Japan, with that loyalty cemented by religious beliefs. "In the majority of cases," he told pro-dispersal Protestant church groups in 1945,

the Japanese' first allegiance, due primarily to their religious traditions, is to the Emperor of Japan, to whom they regard their tie as spiritual. It seems to me that as long as these people embrace this philosophy... we must recognize that their first allegiance in an hour of crisis is to the Emperor of Japan rather than to the land adopted by them or by their parents.... I do not feel that they can be regarded in the same light as citizens whose tie to their homeland was an allegiance of a similar character to that which they now have to Canada as their home.<sup>42</sup>

Manning's personal views were reinforced by political pressure from labour and civic groups and other Social Credit politicians. Both the Union of Alberta Municipalities and the Alberta Federation of Labour believed the anti-Japanese propaganda from B.C. and feared that Japanese Canadians would undermine labour relations in the province. Solon Low, M.P. for Peace River and national leader of the Social Credit party, believed Japanese Canadians should be deported "for their own good." Paternalistically he concluded that as an unassimilable minority they would never be accepted in Canada and therefore never be truly happy. It would be best, he argued, to deport them.<sup>43</sup> As the leader of a party that had been blatantly anti-Semitic in the 1930s, it was not

surprising that Low also espoused the same anti-Japanese views as his colleagues from British Columbia.

Opposing the Alberta nativists were the churches and the press. The former condemned Manning's position as "unjust and un-Christian," urging that "it is our duty as Christians to win their first loyalty to Christ through Christian treatment."<sup>44</sup> The Alberta press argued that "if we had the slightest conscience at all we would release them from bondage, restore their full civic rights and recompense them for the economic loss they have suffered."<sup>45</sup>

In the end economic considerations decided the fate of the B.C. Japanese in Alberta. The Japanese beet workers, who had already been credited with saving the sugar beet industry during the Second World War, were virtually the only source of beet labour in 1946. The German and Italian prisoners-of-war, who had supplied a good portion of the labour in the 1945 season, were being repatriated to Europe, while displaced persons from Europe had not yet begun to arrive. Anxious to retain their reliable Japanese labour, the southern Alberta sugar interests began exerting pressure on Manning to keep the Japanese in Alberta. In March 1946, they learned that Manning sympathized with their problem. He recognized the futility of opposing dispersal, whatever his personal feelings, if the other provinces accepted that policy. Alberta would take its quota of Japanese, Manning informed the sugar interests privately, if and only if British Columbia also did its part. However, in view of how controversial the issue was in the southern Alberta heartland of Social Credit support, Manning refused to take a public stand favouring Japanese Canadians. He preferred to procrastinate until the issue died a natural death.<sup>46</sup>

While Manning's procrastination was good enough for the growers, it undermined the confidence of some of the B.C. Japanese in Alberta. Anxious for the security of permanent residence, a number of the uprooted Japanese took advantage of the resettlement program to move to the fruit and vegetable districts of southwestern Ontario. Relatively few retained any interest in returning to the Pacific Coast. As one petition urging the lifting of travel restrictions noted: "We are not stupid enough to want to rush into a province which seems to be crammed with racial intolerance and where we would only suffer discrimination of every sort.... We are smarter than most people give us credit for and will not rush back to B.C."<sup>47</sup>

Throughout the summer of 1946, Japanese Canadians trekked east. The camps in B.C. contributed 4,700 to the flow, while several hundred others left Alberta for the fruit-growing districts of southwestern Ontario. The bulk of the movement ended up in Ontario, which by December 1946 had a larger Japanese Canadian population than British Columbia.

While the resettlers moved through the hostels into new jobs and communities, five ships left for Japan. The 3,965 people on those ships ostensibly went voluntarily.<sup>48</sup> In fact, most went because they felt that they had no alternative. Elderly *Issei*, who had lost everything during the war and who despaired of reestablishing themselves, left hoping their families in Japan would support them in their old age or, at least, until their dependent children were old enough to assume that responsibility. Those whose parents, children or spouses had been trapped in Japan by the advent of the Pacific War had no alternative except to go to Japan if they wished to be reunited with them. In 1946 the Canadian government was bringing back to Canada only the Caucasians among the Canadians trapped in Japan during the war. Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry in Japan were ignored by Ottawa until 1947 when they were finally allowed to obtain documentation of their

Canadian birth but were allowed no other assistance, not even a passport.<sup>49</sup> The despair of many of the repatriates was evident in the comment of one repatriating Angler internee who, when asked why he was going to Japan, replied: “The white people hate us and we have no other place to go.”<sup>50</sup>

Repatriation, for whatever reason, soon produced considerable hardship. The destruction resulting from the bombing raids on Japan was only the first shock. The second was the lack of food and the high price and poor quality of what was available. Allowed only 1,000 yen – exchanged by the occupation authorities at the rate of 13.5 yen to the dollar, one-third the going rate – the deported Canadians soon found themselves in dire straits in a country where rice was over 2 yen a kilogram and fish was 5 yen a pound. With the extra funds they had brought from Canada frozen in bank accounts that they could not touch, a great many of them found it difficult to get enough food.<sup>51</sup>

The third shock was cultural. The returning *Issei* who had not seen Japan for twenty or thirty years either found that Japan in 1946 was vastly different from the country they remembered or were disappointed to discover that the tiny villages in which their relatives lived had the same problems and inadequacies that had prompted them to emigrate thirty years before. The cultural adjustment of the *Issei* was sometimes compounded by rejection by their relatives in Japan, relatives who resented the fact that they had come begging from a fat and well-fed country like Canada. For the *Nisei*, postwar Japan was a society completely foreign to them and in which they were seen and treated as aliens.<sup>52</sup>

For some, repatriation proved a death sentence. One such case involved a sixty-six-year-old Fraser Valley farmer and his wife, who in 1945 found themselves destitute with seven children to support. Their farm had been sold in 1943 to the Veterans’ Land Act Administration, and the proceeds had been taken by the government in repayment of the relief they had accepted in order to feed their children in the winter of 1942. Aware that as agricultural labourers they could never support their children in Canada, the farmer and his wife took their children to Japan, intending to claim and work a portion of the family farm outside Hiroshima. On arrival, however, they discovered that much of the family land, small to begin with, had been sold and that they had no legal claim to what remained. To try to survive, the family split up: the teenage children took employment with the occupation forces, the parents worked as day labourers in the coal mines. The children were lucky. While work for the occupation forces paid poorly, it assured them one full meal a day and gave them access to drugs like penicillin denied to the general Japanese population. The parents were not so lucky. Within a few months they had both died of malnutrition.<sup>53</sup>

By December 1946 the camps were virtually empty. Only a residue of 900 sick and elderly and their families remained at New Denver in the Slocan Valley. Over 13,000 Japanese Canadians had resettled east of British Columbia. By January 1947 only 6,776 Japanese Canadians remained in B.C., less than one-third of the 1942 population. (See [Table 4](#) for the redistribution of Japanese in Canada during the Second World War.)

In December 1946 the Privy Council ruled that the deportation Orders-in-Council were legal. The federal government, however, was no longer interested in enforcing them. The overwhelming public reaction opposing deportation and the dispersal of Japanese Canadians across Canada had

made such a policy not only politically unnecessary, but politically unwise. Nonetheless on 22 January 1947 the pro-deportation faction in the Cabinet, led by Justice Minister Louis St. Laurent, made one final plea – urging that the deportation Orders-in-Council be implemented in their broadest legal sense. Japanese Canadians, St. Laurent contended, “would increase the population, and demands would be made later when Japan was a settled country to have the Japanese in Canada given the same rights as the white population.”<sup>54</sup> Opposed to the idea of racial equality, St. Laurent was convinced that Japanese Canadians would again become “troublesome” if allowed to remain in Canada. Others, including Prime Minister King, argued that the government would be looked upon as inhuman and criminal if it sent to Japan people who had behaved themselves throughout the war and who had done nothing except to ask, under duress, to be sent to a now-devastated country. To King the political dangers of the issue were paramount. “We already as a Liberal party were [sic] in a false position in the minds of many people through our ill-Liberal treatment of different persons,” King warned the Cabinet. A major issue could develop if the matter was not immediately dropped. Dropping deportation, but keeping restrictions on Japanese Canadians for a further two years in order to ensure their permanent resettlement, King urged, was the only policy “we could really hope to get successfully through Parliament and which, on humanitarian grounds, is right.”<sup>55</sup>

**Notes**

1. The YWCA became involved because of a program to place Japanese women as domestics in Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg. The YWCA coordinator checked out the prospective employer to ensure that the women were properly housed and paid the going rate.
2. The informal "cooperative committee" was composed of representatives of the YWCA, the YMCA, the Women's Missionary Societies of the United and Anglican churches and the Church of All Nations, the Student Christian Movement, the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, the Catholic Diocese of Toronto, and the Metropolitan Church. See Edith Fowke, *They Made Democracy Work*, pamphlet, p. 75.
3. Multiculturalism as a policy officially began about 1967.
4. See David R. Hughes and Evelyn Kallen, *The Anatomy of Racism: Dimensions*. Montreal: Harvest Books, 1974, pp. 183-89; and Norman Black, *A Challenge to Patriotism and Statesmanship*, Toronto: Christian Social Council of Canada, 1944. pp. 3-5.
5. William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim* (N.Y.: Pantheon, 1971).
6. One of the founding purposes of the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League was to promote the assimilation of the *Nisei*
7. See *New Canadian*, 26 January 1946.
8. See Black, *Challenge to Patriotism*, pp. 6, 13-15. Interview with Thomas Shoyama, September 1976.
9. Such assumptions were also common among German civilians who assumed that the inmates of Germany's labour and concentration camps had committed real crimes. See Bruno Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart*, pp. 164-65.
10. Black, *Challenge to Patriotism*, p. 13. The Tenth Commandment is "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. As quoted in Carol F. Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia." *B.C. Studies*, no. 30 (Summer 1976), p. 52.
14. Interviews with Toronto *Nisei* leaders; Fowke, *They Made Democracy Work: The Story of the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: 1951, pp. 5, 6, 8; Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976., pp. 291-92.
15. For examples, see the Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vols. 1527-29, PAC.
16. The Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians had branch organizations in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Guelph, Brantford, Hamilton and London. The organizations that lent their support included: Baptist Federation of Canada, Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, Church of England in Canada, Church of Christ (Disciples), Evangelical Church, Fellowship of Reconciliation of Canada, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, National Inter-Church Advisory Committee on Japanese Canadians, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Religious Education Council of Canada, Society of Friends, Student Christian Movement of Canada, United Church of Canada, Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, Canadian Association of Scientific Workers, Canadian Association of Social Workers, Canadian Jewish Congress, Canadian United Nations Organization, Canadian Welfare Council, Civil Liberties Association of Toronto, National Council of Women, Toronto Labour Council, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, United Steelworkers of America, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Northern Alberta Young People's Union, Presbyterian Young People's Organizations, university student organizations in all the leading Canadian universities, women's associations and missionary societies of all the leading denominations both local and provincial, Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy, and the Japanese Canadian Citizenship Defence Committees.
17. Fowke, *They Made Democracy Work*, pp. 10-13.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 14. For copies of some of these statements, see the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association (JCCA) Papers, file D 273, PAC.



19. *New Canadian* 19 July, 8 and 18 August, and 19 September 1945. The Department of Labour took over the administration of the camps under P.C. 946, 5 February 1943. Both the camp administrators and the inmates, however, continued to use the expressions “the commission” or “the BCSC” throughout the war, hence Murphy’s confusion.
20. Editor of *New Canadian* to the Tashme Japanese Canadian Association, 10 November 1945, JCCA Papers, file D 278, PAC.
21. *New Canadian*, 15 December 1945.
22. *Nisei Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 2, 28 August 1945.
23. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 5, 15 December 1945.
24. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 6, 19 January 1946. R.J. MacMaster to F.A. Brewin, 28 December 1945, Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, vol. 1, PAC.
25. R.J. MacMaster to Brewin, 31 December 1945, Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, PAC.
26. Memorandum, F.P. Varcoe, Deputy Minister of Justice, to Norman Robertson, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, 4 January 1946, W. L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 283, file 2965, PAC.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians v. A.G. for Canada* (1946) 3 D.L.R. 321 (S.C.C.): [1947] 1 D.L.R. 577 (P.C.).
29. See Fowke, *They Made Democracy Work*, p. 20; and *New Canadian*, January and February 1946; *Nisei Affairs*, vol. I, no. 6, 19 January 1946, and no. 7, 9 February 1946.
30. Interview with F.A. Brewin, September 1976; Memorandum, R.G. Robertson to Prime Minister W.L.M. King, 4 March 1946, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 283, file 2965, PAC. Robertson notes that the Prime Minister received 700-1000 letters on the subject of the deportation of Japanese Canadians between December 1945 and March 1946.
31. W.L.M. King Diary, 17 January 1946, MG26J3, PAC.
32. *Ibid.*, 18, 19 and 20 January 1946.
33. Reference Re Deportation of Japanese [1946] 3 D.L.R. 321 (S.C.C.).
34. Humphrey Mitchell to Louis St. Laurent, 23 February 1946, Cabinet Document 194; and A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, to Humphrey Mitchell, 8 March 1946; and Memorandum, Norman Robertson to King, 27 February 1946, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J4, vol. 283, file 2965, C194949-51, PAC.
35. Interview with Brewin.
36. “Backstage in Ottawa,” *Maclean’s*, 15 April 1946, pp. 65-66.
37. Memorandum, T.B. Pickersgill to A.H. Brown, Assistant to the Deputy Minister of Labour, 5 August 1946, Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vol. 647, 23-2-3-17, PAC.
38. For an example, see Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians, *Report of the Sub-Committee on Restrictions and Property Losses* (Typescript, 26 October 1945), JCCA Papers, MG28V7, D283, PAC.
39. Herbert Tanaka to June Tanaka, 30 September 1945 and 2 December 1945, in the possession of June Tanaka, Toronto, Ont.
40. For details, see Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, pp. 340-43.
41. *New Canadian*, 26 January 1946, and interviews with resettlers.
42. Ernest Manning, Premier of Alberta, to Rev. C.C. Kitney, 17 April 1945, Premiers’ Papers, 69.289, file 1207, PAA.
43. See House of Commons, *Debates*, November 1945, pp. 2429-31.
44. As quoted in Chris Liebich, “The Coming of the Japanese Canadians to Alberta, 1942-1948,” unpublished B.A. (Hons.) essay, p. 106.
45. *Calgary Herald*, 26 July 1946.

46. Report of J.S. Connors, CID Lethbridge, 21 June 1946, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 30, PAC.
47. *Ibid.*, 2 February 1947.
48. Of this number 34% were Japanese aliens, 15% were naturalized Japanese Canadians, and 51% were Canadian-born. Over 1,300 of the repatriates and most of the Canadian-born were children under the age of 16 years of age. Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada, 1944-1946*, p. 15.
49. Memorandum to the Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions, Reference Document JAP 3, 16 April 1947, Department of External Affairs Papers, vol. 1868, 263-38, pt. 4, PAC.
50. As quoted in Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, p. 317.
51. Reports by Officer-in-Charge, War Crimes Liaison Detachment, Japanese Theatre, Lt. Col. O. Orr, 20 June 1946, and 17 December 1946, in Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Documents: External Relations*, Volume 12, 1946, pp. 345-48.
52. See Pierre Berton, "Marie Went Back to the Dark Ages," *Maclean's*, pp. 20 48-49.
53. Interviews with repatriates.
54. King Diary, 22 January 1947, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J3, PAC.
55. *Ibid.*



## VIII: Seeking Civil Rights and Compensation

The tide had turned. The time had come for Japanese Canadians to build anew. The time had come to seek compensation for the pain and trauma they had experienced, for the economic losses they had suffered and for the lies that had libelled them as traitors in the minds of their fellow Canadians. Canada's Japanese minority realized that their wartime experiences must not be ignored. The Canadian government must be made to acknowledge the injustice they had suffered, to restore their civil liberties, and to pay compensation for their losses; to fail to do so, they knew, would mean that the wartime myths of Japanese Canadian disloyalty would continue.

In January 1947 the federal government had no intention of either immediately granting Japanese Canadians full rights and privileges or of compensating them in any manner. Publicly the federal government still clung to the stance that Japanese Canadians had suffered no injustice. The government maintained that the wartime measures imposed upon them were nothing more than necessary measures to alleviate the wartime emergency created by their presence on the Pacific coast. There was, therefore, no obligation to compensate them for any inconvenience they may have suffered.<sup>1</sup>

The federal government wanted the Japanese question to die, and so sought to trivialize the remaining issues. On 24 January 1947 Prime Minister King explained to Parliament that restrictions on the movement of Japanese Canadians to and within British Columbia were being continued only to ensure the success of the resettlement program. The government was satisfied, King reiterated, that the sale of Japanese property in B.C. had been made at a fair price since the total amount obtained from those sales exceeded the government's appraised values.<sup>2</sup> The government chose not to disclose that its appraised values were arbitrarily low.

King's rationalizations, however, did not appease the CCF. The war was over. The CCF saw no justification for continuing to prohibit Japanese Canadians from returning to the Pacific Coast as the Japanese Americans had been allowed to do two years before. Accordingly, when Bill C-104 was introduced in April 1947 to extend the life of the National Emergency Powers Act of 1945 for another year, the CCF attempted to have the Order-in-Council denying Japanese Canadians freedom of movement annulled by Parliament. The debate on Bill C-104 revealed subtle but important changes in attitudes toward Japanese Canadians. When replying to the CCF arguments, the B.C. M.P.'s showed uncharacteristic restraint. Carefully acknowledging liberalizing postwar attitudes, several M.P.'s denied that racial prejudice underlay their opposition to Japanese Canadians. They claimed that the security of British Columbia demanded the continued exclusion of Japanese Canadians. The repatriation requests of two years previously, they argued, were proof that Japanese Canadians were loyal to Japan, not to Canada. Ian Mackenzie, soon to be ousted from the Cabinet, argued that the rest of Canada had no right to interfere with British Columbia policies on Japanese matters. To deny British Columbia "the right to adequate internal security," he charged, "would be striking a blow against Confederation."<sup>3</sup> Arguing for the government, Labour

Minister Humphrey Mitchell claimed that the restrictions on Japanese Canadians were “in the best interests of the Japanese themselves,” and were not harsh compared with what Canadians trapped in Japan by the war had suffered.<sup>4</sup> Mitchell still could not understand that Japanese Canadians were as Canadian as the Caucasians trapped in Japan by the outbreak of the Pacific War.

While the restraint of the B.C. M.P.’s was encouraging, the response of most Members of Parliament was discouraging. After two days of debate, the CCF motion was defeated. Only 2 Conservatives and 4 Liberals supported the CCF, while 107 M.P.’s failed to be present for the vote.<sup>5</sup> In the aftermath of the deportation furor, it appeared that both Parliament and the federal government were slipping back into their traditional methods and prejudices when dealing with the Japanese question.

The shallowness of Prime Minister King’s liberalism was revealed again in the spring of 1948. At that time King found himself in what he considered to be a tight political situation. The 1945 election had given him only a 5-seat majority over the combined opposition, an opposition that was working well together in 1948. In late 1947 two vacancies occurred through the death of a Liberal member from Ontario and the resignation of a Conservative from Yale, British Columbia. In mid-January 1948 King also finally decided that Ian Mackenzie’s alcoholism had become so aggravated that he was neglecting his ministry and had lost the respect of Cabinet.<sup>6</sup> Removing Mackenzie through promotion to the Senate, however, raised the spectre of a by-election for his Vancouver Centre seat, a seat he had only narrowly held against a strong CCF assault.

After carefully weighing the odds, King decided to risk Mackenzie’s seat and sought advice on how to minimize that risk. Would a repeal of the Order-in-Council prohibiting Japanese Canadians from returning to the Pacific Coast affect the by-election, King asked B.C.’s Liberal Premier Byron “Boss” Johnson on 25 January 1948. Repealing that Order, Johnson replied, would make losing the Vancouver Centre seat a certainty. King decided that in a choice between Japanese Canadian civil liberties and winning a by-election the civil liberties must suffer; he sought Cabinet approval for an extension of the restrictions on Japanese Canadians.

Cabinet approval, however, was not automatic. Japanese Canadians now had a friend in Cabinet, Justice Minister J.L. Ilsley. “History,” Ilsley informed King, “would denounce the party for having continued those orders.” “History,” King replied, “would condemn a Government standing for certain principles if it allowed itself to be defeated and an enemy government take its place, when it has within its power to carry on.... One had always to take the larger view.”<sup>7</sup> Principles, he thus implied, were secondary in politics. Staying in power was more important.

The position of liberals like Ilsley, however, could not be ignored. Nor could the Canadian public be given a political explanation for the unwillingness of the Liberal government to allow Japanese Canadians the same freedom of movement as their American counterparts. Accordingly, a compromise was reached. The restricting Order-in-Council was replaced by an Order-in-Council that revoked the restrictions on Japanese Canadians on 31 March 1949 a full year later and seven years after their initial uprooting.<sup>8</sup> The new order meant that the restrictions would still be in force during the by-election but that Ilsley and the liberals in the Cabinet could console themselves that these would soon be abolished.

King now had to convince the Liberal caucus to support the new Order-in-Council. Meeting with the caucus on 18 February 1948 King began by endorsing the principle of minority rights.

However, he asked rhetorically, which minority should be first protected: Japanese Canadians or British Columbia's Liberals? King informed the caucus that every one of the last group, "felt that the order should be extended and that if it were not, the consequences would be very serious for the party in British Columbia."<sup>9</sup> The choice, in King's opinion, was between the Japanese minority and the Liberal Party, and the Party came first. The caucus concurred. To further assure that the new Order would not be annulled by Parliament, it was presented to Parliament at a poorly attended Saturday session. It passed, over CCF objections, by a vote of 73 to 23. The Liberal candidates in Yale and Vancouver Centre, in whose interests the restrictions on Japanese Canadians had been extended, subsequently lost to CCF candidates.<sup>10</sup> Restricting the civil liberties of Japanese Canadians for a seventh year, in the final analysis, accomplished nothing.

In 1948 B.C.'s provincial politicians were also learning the hard way to re-evaluate the racial attitudes of the general public. Three days after Premier Johnson had advised King to continue the restrictions on Japanese Canadians, he was chastised by the B.C. public for his racism. The occasion was the re-institution of a regulation prohibiting the use of Japanese labour in the logging industry, a regulation that had been suspended during the war in the interests of wartime production.<sup>11</sup> Its re-institution meant that 800 Japanese Canadian forest workers faced unemployment, and the companies employing them – mostly small companies in the labour-short Interior – faced bankruptcy.

Public reaction took the provincial government by surprise. Instead of quiet agreement, the government found vocal opposition. The International Woodworkers of America charged that owners dismissing their Japanese employees because of the regulation would be violating their contracts with that union. The operators affected by the regulation quickly and strongly protested the ban, both individually and through the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. At the same time, the Vancouver branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union, the provincial executive of the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association and the opposition CCF party all publicly condemned the regulation and sought to interview the provincial Cabinet. In addition, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council and unions in other industries all supported the protesters. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, British Columbia's formerly anti-Japanese press condemned the regulation as "an act of deplorable discrimination."<sup>12</sup> In the absence of corresponding public support for retaining the regulation, the Government of British Columbia wisely bowed to liberal pressure and abolished the offending regulation.<sup>13</sup> Growing public pressure, liberal in nature, had finally succeeded in discrediting B.C.'s traditionally racist employment policies.

The forest workers incident in January 1948 and the by-election defeats in May finally convinced the B.C. Liberal machine of the futility of an anti-Japanese stance. By June 1948 only one Member of Parliament from British Columbia bothered to object to Bill C-138, which granted the federal franchise to Japanese Canadians in British Columbia. Unsupported, even he dropped his objections and Bill C-138 passed unopposed on 15 June 1948.<sup>14</sup> Recognizing the futility of continuing to deny Japanese Canadians the provincial franchise, Premier Johnson presented a similar bill to the provincial legislature on 7 March 1949. Passed amid minimal resistance, the bill became law on 24 March 1949, thereby destroying the legal basis for all discriminatory laws against Japanese Canadians in British Columbia.<sup>15</sup>



By the spring of 1949 only the question of compensation remained, and a partial solution to it was in progress. While the first impulse of the federal government had been to deny that any losses had occurred, federal officials knew as early as 1944 that that fiction would be impossible to maintain. By 1944 the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property had begun to doubt the fairness of the bulk sale of Japanese Canadian farms to the *Veterans' Land Act* administration. By 1944 farms withdrawn from that sale because of title difficulties had begun to sell for amounts considerably in excess of the VLA offer. By June 1946 sixty-five such farms had been sold to private buyers at an average price of more than double the VLA offer, an increase that could not be explained by wartime inflation alone.<sup>16</sup> Japanese Canadians had less specific data on which to base their doubts about the propriety of the sale of their property. They knew only that their farms, homes and businesses had all too often been sold by the Custodian for less than the owners had been offered by neighbouring farmers when they were uprooted in 1942. Moreover, the disappointment over the low sale prices had been compounded by the fact that the government had deducted relief payments from the proceeds before forwarding the residue to the owner. The paltry sums reaching the owners only reinforced rumours of profiteering, graft, and mismanagement by the government.<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 1946 the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy in Toronto tried to determine just how true the rumours of unfair sales were. To find out, they undertook a comprehensive survey of the economic losses of the 198 family heads who had resettled in Toronto. The respondents were asked to list all possible types of losses, keeping their estimates as accurate and as conservative as possible. To ensure accuracy, the JCCD enlisted the assistance of knowledgeable Issei who had known the properties or had been in the same businesses.<sup>18</sup>

The results surprised even the most cynical Japanese Canadians. The 198 Toronto families estimated the aggregate value of their prewar property at over \$1.6 million. Of that property, fully \$1.3 million had been sold off by 1946, netting the owners slightly over \$500,000. The portion that the owner recouped varied according to the type of property. The best returns, 55 per cent, were obtained on automobiles; businesses, personal property and Fraser Valley farms returned the least to their owners. Returns on businesses were highest when the owner sold it himself, presumably because such sales occurred during or shortly after the uprooting, and before the business had suffered the neglect of an absentee owner or overworked administrator. Similarly, those who liquidated their personal property on uprooting fared slightly better than those who, hoping to return soon, stored their belongings. By contrast, trucks and cars sold by their owners into the flooded market of the spring of 1942 returned slightly less than vehicles sold later by the Custodian of Enemy Property. Only 16 per cent of the Japanese Canadian property surveyed, however, had been sold in forced sales. The rest, some 84 per cent, was sold by the Custodian or, in the case of fishing vessels, by the Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposal Committee.

The overall losses were staggering. The estimated losses on sold property approached \$800,000, while an additional \$300,000 worth of property remained unaccounted for or had been lost, stolen or destroyed. When combined with the estimated lost revenue and wages, and sundry other losses, gross losses for the 198 families surveyed approached \$4 million for the five years between 1942 and 1946. (See [Tables 5, 6, and 7.](#))

The Economic Losses Survey gave the JCCD and their Caucasian allies well-documented proof that there had indeed been unfair sales of Japanese Canadian property. Armed with the

results of the survey and with a copy of the *Evacuation Claims Act* that was before the U.S. Congress in 1946, the JCCD and the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians approached Ottawa seeking an inquiry into Japanese Canadian losses. Diplomatically they acknowledged the impossibility of a fair return when so many properties had been dumped so quickly into a flooded market.<sup>19</sup> They asked only that the federal government correct the inherent injustice built into the circumstances of the sales.

The government, however, was defensive. To acknowledge any injustice was to leave the government open to the charge that the whole wartime experience of Canada's Japanese minority had been unjust, an admission it was not prepared to make. While the government was reluctant to fuel public (and political) sentiment with a potentially embarrassing public inquiry, the popularity of some compensation was undeniable. Even the most anti-Japanese of British Columbia's politicians acknowledged that some losses must have occurred, losses that should be compensated.<sup>20</sup> The main problem, therefore, lay in deciding which kinds of losses the federal government could afford to acknowledge. There were six potential sources of direct losses alone: losses from sales by the Custodian for less than the market value; from theft; from forced sales in a flooded market; from lost revenue; from lost insurance because of the uprooting; and from lost income because of the uprooting.<sup>21</sup> To acknowledge all direct losses would not only be expensive but, by inference, would suggest that the policy creating the losses – the uprooting – had itself been wrong. Anxious to minimize costs, the Special Cabinet Committee on Repatriation and Relocation decided to confine the inquiry to only the first two types of direct losses. On 21 April 1947 they drafted an Order-in-Council confining the inquiry to losses through sales by the Custodian at less than the market value, and through theft of property in the care of the Custodian.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, that draft Order-in-Council was then temporarily shelved. In April 1947, while it was being drafted, the CCF had succeeded in getting the fiscal conduct of the Custodian of Enemy Property referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for investigation. Concentrating on the *Veterans' Land Act* sale, the Public Accounts Committee concluded that administrative irregularities had occurred that merited further investigation. Accordingly, on June 17 the Public Accounts Committee recommended that a royal commission be appointed to investigate the alleged losses incurred by Japanese Canadians when their property was lost or sold at less than the "fair market value."<sup>23</sup>

The recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee made it certain that there would be a Royal Commission into Japanese Canadian losses. The Royal Commission as announced on 18 July 1947, however, was totally ineffectual. Some time between April and July, the draft Order-in-Council defining the terms of the commission had been changed without explanation. Under the new terms, compensation would be paid only in cases where neglect or lack of care by the Custodian or his staff could be legally proved, an impossible task.<sup>24</sup>

The terms of the proposed Royal Commission angered Japanese Canadians and their Caucasian allies. In late August they again laid siege to Ottawa. Arguing that Canada should do no less than the United States to compensate the uprooted Japanese, and pointing out that the terms of the Royal Commission were narrower than those recommended by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the Cooperative Committee's lawyer, Andrew Brewin, warned the government that Japanese Canadians were likely to boycott the Royal Commission and to publicize why they were doing so.<sup>25</sup> Justice Minister Ilsley quickly assured Brewin that he would take the matter up in

Cabinet. On September 17 he kept that promise and persuaded the Cabinet to expand the terms of the Royal Commission to include all property disposed of by the Custodian or stolen while in the custody of the Custodian or of an agent appointed by him.<sup>26</sup> By inference the new terms censored the Custodian, not the government. Only the administration of the dispossession policy – not the policy itself – would be under scrutiny. With such narrow terms, there was no danger that the findings of the Royal Commission would be politically embarrassing.

The new terms of reference were far from ideal. They would, however, allow the bulk of the property owners to seek very limited compensation. Resolving to continue to seek further expansion of the terms of reference, the Cooperative Committee and the newly created National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association agreed to participate in the Royal Commission on evacuation claims. The evidence collected for that commission, they hoped, would show the need for broader terms of reference.<sup>27</sup>

With the appointment of B.C. Justice Henry Irving Bird as the presiding Commissioner, the Cooperative Committee and the National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association (NJCCA) plunged into a judicial process without precedent in Canadian history. Although judicial commissions had previously investigated compensation claims, no commission ever had been required to examine so many claims on so many different types of property sold under such unusual conditions and owned by people scattered across Canada. To the practical difficulties were added complicated legal questions and the difficulties inherent in establishing the value of property abandoned in the turmoil of a forced uprooting and sold one to four years later.

Many of the practical problems were rendered manageable only because of cooperative effort on the part of Japanese Canadians, facilitated by the existence of a national network linking the scattered pockets of Japanese Canadians. That national network had evolved during the deportation crisis when the largely Nisei leadership in Toronto had assumed the role of spokesmen for the Japanese minority. By 1947 Japanese associations across Canada had come to realize that the postwar battles for equal rights would require a unified effort. Therefore, in September 1947 the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy dissolved itself, and its members joined the Toronto chapter of the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association (JCCA). Across Canada similar changes were made by other Japanese committees as they united under provincial and national executive committees. The latter, not surprisingly, was Toronto-based and composed largely of former members of the JCCD. Through its full-time executive secretary, George Tanaka, the National JCCA assumed responsibility for the coordination of the claims procedure.

Working with the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians, the NJCCA set up the needed legal, technical and financial machinery. To cut the legal costs and assure an adequate presentation of all claims, the NJCCA set up a common fund into which the claimants paid, where possible, 1 per cent of their gross claim. In this way, those who had financial resources could subsidize the expenses incurred in preparing and presenting the cases of destitute persons. Once the fund had been established, the NJCCA-Cooperative Committee engaged lawyers in the major centres of Japanese Canadian population, and with the help of local chapters of the JCCA, printed, distributed, collected and processed claims forms from across Canada. Continuing an association begun during the deportation crisis, Andrew Brewin in Toronto and Robert J. MacMaster in Vancouver worked out the legal and logistical aspects of the inquiry. Professional appraisers,

statisticians and agricultural experts compiled data to buttress the claimants' testimony as to the value of their property. Of the 1,434 claims involving 7,086 parcels of real estate and personal property considered by the inquiry, fully 1,100 were handled by NJCCA-Cooperative Committee counsel. A further 200 claims were handled by Gladstone Virtue, counsel for the Southern Alberta Japanese Committee, an Issei-dominated group that had hired Virtue to make property claims on behalf of southern Alberta Japanese prior to the announcement of the Royal Commission. The remaining claims were largely corporate claims and were usually handled by the prewar lawyers for those corporations.<sup>28</sup>

The appointment of a British Columbia Justice as the presiding Commissioner had initially disturbed the Cooperative Committee. They quickly discovered that while Justice Bird made narrow rulings and was impatient with the length of the inquiry, his understanding of the special circumstances surrounding the dispossession of Japanese Canadians gave him a flexibility decidedly lacking in the Sub-Commissioners appointed to hear cases in isolated settlements with small Japanese Canadian populations. By the time the legal arguments were completed in December 1947, a strong working relationship and mutual respect had been established between Justice Bird and the claimants' counsel.

Respect for claimants' counsel did not mean that Justice Bird agreed with the legal interpretations of that counsel. When arguing the meaning of "fair market value," for instance, claimants' counsel wanted the conditions of the properties at the time of uprooting to determine the sale price, not their condition at sale after one to four years of neglect and abuse. Justice Bird, however, ruled that the "fair market value" would be determined at the date of sale regardless of the intervening conditions. Also contrary to the arguments of claimants' counsel, Bird ruled that the "goodwill" value of the businesses, and the failure of the Custodian to collect accounts due to businesses, were beyond the inquiry's terms of reference. However, Bird did accept counsel's contention that actual physical possession of chattels by the Custodian was not necessary for claims on lost, destroyed or stolen property. Bird also assisted claimants' counsel in their efforts to have the terms of reference expanded by forwarding to Justice Minister Ilesley the question of corporate claims and claims for fees deducted by the Custodian. Both of these classes of claims were subsequently included in the final settlement.<sup>29</sup>

While claimants' counsel was disappointed with the arguments they lost, the Department of the Secretary of State was disturbed by the arguments that the claimants won. As a consequence, in January 1948 G.W. McPherson, the former head of the Custodian's Vancouver office, was dispatched to the Kamloops hearings to discipline Crown counsel, J.W.G. Hunter, who was well liked for his honesty and fairness. McPherson, who had been described in 1942 by RCMP Asst. Comnr. F.J. Mead as a "Jap-hater", had changed little. Calling McPherson "a great rationalizer; ... interested in the political aspects of this deal, not in justice," Robert J. MacMaster concluded that the Department of the Secretary of State was afraid that "instead of whitewashing the Custodian, the inquiry might whitewash the Japanese."<sup>30</sup>

As the inquiry plodded on through 1948, it became obvious that if each case was argued individually the inquiry might last several years. Neither Justice Bird nor claimants' counsel was happy with this prospect. Bird wished to return as soon as possible to his duties as a B.C. justice. Claimants' counsel was aware that lengthy proceedings would mean larger costs and hence lower returns for their clients; in addition, the advanced age of many of those clients meant that many

might very well die before receiving compensation.

Throughout 1948 several proposals were advanced in an attempt to shorten the proceedings. The first came from Justice Bird. In March 1948 Bird proposed that he should give Crown counsel a list of cases in which, in his opinion, there was no claim. Crown counsel, Bird suggested, could then argue a question of non-suit to eliminate those cases. Shocked that Bird should have reached such a conclusion before the presentation of evidence was completed, claimants' counsel strongly objected. The proposal was therefore dropped.<sup>31</sup> The fact that such a proposal had been forthcoming, however, reinforced the idea that a means of shortening the proceedings was desirable.

By June 1948 the germ of the solution had been found. No longer resisting the idea that losses had in fact occurred, Bird proposed that an overall percentage award be made in the case of farms sold in the obviously unfair Veterans' Land Act sale. While claimants' counsel discouraged the proposal in such a simplified form, the idea of category settlements began to take hold. In August, Bird expanded his proposal, suggesting that a sample method be used to set up standards against which claims in each type of category could be judged. This time the veto came from the National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association. Suspicious of the sampling method, the executive of the NJCCA expressed the wish that each claim should be upheld on its own merits. The final proposal made in September 1948 assured a thorough review of each case, although not necessarily in the open inquiry. Counsel, Bird proposed, should select and argue a number of cases in each category. He would then make recommendations for each category. Counsel would then review, in private, all the cases in a category using the principles and decisions recommended by Bird. They would then bring forth joint submissions as to the category into which each case fell and the amount they thought should be recommended. In the event of special features, counsel would make application to Bird to argue each special case individually.<sup>32</sup>

With the approval of the NJCCA and the Cooperative Committee, claimants' counsel accepted Bird's last proposal and plunged into the task of arguing the merits of each type of claim. Their success depended largely on the strength of their technical arguments, which were strongest in the Veterans' Land Act cases and weakest in the Vancouver real estate category. In the VLA case, claimants' counsel was able to convince Bird that the VLA appraisers had prior knowledge of the reason behind the survey of Japanese farms, were inexperienced with appraising that type of farm, and had given no consideration to the agricultural value of the farms. Claimants' counsel also produced strong statistical evidence of the actual agricultural value of the farms and, in some areas, comparative selling prices of Caucasian-owned farms. Gladstone Virtue of Lethbridge convinced Bird that VLA farms in residential areas had additional residential value that had to be taken into account.<sup>33</sup>

Evidence in favour of the Vancouver properties was by comparison very weak. The Greater Vancouver Advisory Committee had been very thorough in its work. It had employed almost all the experienced appraisers in Vancouver, appraisers known to Justice Bird as reputable men. Since the professional qualifications of these men could not be questioned, claimants' counsel could only fall back on the findings of its own appraiser and the argument that because the properties had been rented to tenants, their values had been artificially lowered by as much as 10 per cent. Since many Japanese Canadians had rented their homes at low rates to people they trusted and since wartime controls prohibited the eviction of tenants and drastic increases in rent, counsel argued, the presence of the tenants had depressed buyer interest and selling prices. Bird's rejection of that



argument and the conservative appraisals of the claimants' appraiser combined to give a very low return on Vancouver real estate. Rejecting even the Crown counsel's suggestion of a 10 per cent award, Bird allowed only a refund of 5 per cent agent's commission on those sales.<sup>34</sup>

By February 1949, Bird was ready to propose tentative settlement figures. The compensation he proposed varied from a high of 125 per cent for farms in the village of Mission, to a low of 10 per cent for chattels sold by tender. Bird also proposed several special awards for unusual cases in each category, while an additional \$300,000 was forthcoming to Japanese Canadian corporations. Bird was also prepared to recommend that a contribution to the expenses of the claimants' counsel be made by the federal government in view of the claimants' role in shortening the inquiry.<sup>35</sup>

The proposal had obvious advantages. Bird's recommendations for the VLA properties, fishing vessels, nets and fishing gear corresponded to the evidence produced by claimants' counsel. Where the proposed percentages were disappointing, especially with the Vancouver properties, claimants' counsel had been unable to secure strong evidence in support of their position. The recommendations also included awards that, in Bird's view, were actually outside the terms of reference. In his opinion, the Vancouver properties, fishing vessels and chattels had been properly handled, and hence reflected the market value. In practice, the percentages he allowed were equivalent to the realtor and auctioneer fees charged to the Japanese owners in each of these transactions.<sup>36</sup>

Undoubtedly the most important advantage lay in the time Bird's proposal saved, and the way in which it bolstered weak cases. Individual proceedings would have taken many years and would have produced a lower overall recovery. In Brewin's estimate, up to 25 per cent of the claims, while valid, might have been nullified under the close scrutiny of individual examination simply because of the difficulty of securing corroborating evidence. When these factors were considered in conjunction with Bird's proposal that the government contribute to the expenses incurred in preparing the cases and with the high death rate of the aging Issei, the National JCCA and the Co-operative Committee decided that they had no choice but to recommend the acceptance of Bird's proposal.<sup>37</sup>

The acceptance of the proposal, however, included reservations. The Co-operative Committee and the NJCCA had never considered that the Bird Commission should be the end of the compensation issue. Nor was either organization entirely happy with all of Bird's proposals, especially with the 5 per cent Vancouver property proposal or with the terms of reference under which he had operated. Throughout the inquiry both organizations had tried publicly and privately to have the terms of reference modified and the Vancouver property award increased. Interest on Japanese accounts with the Custodian, losses through forced sales and cancelled policies and contracts, uncollected accounts receivable, and the sale of fishing vessels by the Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposal Committee had all been the subject of letters and briefs to Bird and to Ottawa.<sup>38</sup>

The Cooperative Committee and the NJCCA were both under pressure from a sub-group of claimants, the Toronto Claimants' Committee. Composed of the owners of some 175 Vancouver properties who were dissatisfied with the 5 per cent proposed award, the TCC wanted to boycott any settlement until the Vancouver awards were increased. Highly critical of Justice Bird, the TCC tried to gain the support of the Japanese minority through the *New Canadian* and public meetings. When polled, however, the claimants at large overwhelmingly supported the position of the NJCCA and the Cooperative Committee. Accordingly, Bird's proposal was accepted in mid-May



1949, with a strong protest against the Vancouver awards.<sup>39</sup>

The conclusion of the special cases and the preparation of the final report took yet another year. Finally submitted to the Cabinet in April 1950, Bird's report was tabled in the House of Commons on June 14, on which day the government announced that it would pay \$1,222,829 in awards. A further \$150,000 in special awards was later paid on Bird's recommendation: \$57,000 to the Cooperative Committee for expenses exclusive of legal fees, and \$93,000 in claims outside the terms of reference.<sup>40</sup> Excluding corporations, the overall recovery on the claims was estimated at 56 per cent of the gross value claimed, from which, however, the claimants had to pay the legal costs the government refused to assume.<sup>41</sup>

The very success of that recovery proved to be the death of the claims issue. In the spring of 1950, while awaiting the approval of Bird's report, the National JCCA had approached the Ontario Civil Liberties Association in an attempt to keep the claims issue alive. They met with a cool reception. The fact that a Royal Commission had already studied the question, albeit under restricted terms, they were warned, normally meant that the general public would consider that justice had been done. The stimulation of public opinion in favour of further compensation, therefore, would be extremely difficult, if not impossible.<sup>42</sup>

When the awards were announced in June 1950, the National JCCA and the Cooperative Committee, now reduced to a small executive committee, tried again. In a statement to the press, they urged the government to pay interest on the awards just granted. Although their request elicited a sympathetic response from the powerful *Globe and Mail*, the general public failed to take notice.<sup>43</sup> In September the NJCCA tried again, submitting a brief to the Cabinet outlining the limitations of the Bird Commission and urging the government to "remedy the injustice suffered by the claimants."<sup>44</sup> The NJCCA proposed an indemnity for general losses, interest on all awards, the creation of an agency to adjust losses on forced sales, and percentage settlements for a variety of losses.<sup>45</sup>

Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's reply to the NJCCA effectively killed the issue. St. Laurent considered that the findings of the Bird Commission should be the end to the now embarrassing wartime experience of Canada's Japanese minority. "The government," St. Laurent wrote, "has concurred in the recommendations [of the Bird Commission] and money has been made available to meet the claims. In carrying out the recommendations of Mr. Justice Bird we feel we have discharged our obligation to both the Japanese Canadians and to the general public."<sup>46</sup> The matter, as far as the government was concerned, was closed. In the absence of strong public demand, there was no political need for the government to compensate the innocent victims of its politically inspired policies. Efforts aimed at changing the government's mind have continued to the present day. The legal releases signed by the claimants on receipt of their settlements have been upheld in the Supreme Court of Canada.<sup>47</sup> The 1,434 Japanese Canadians who made claims through the Bird Commission cannot legally make another claim on the government. Only a moral basis for compensation remains. In the absence of overwhelming public support for compensation, however, morality has proved insufficient grounds for justice.

**Notes**

1. Press Release, Office of the Prime Minister, 24 January 1947, in Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada, 1944-1946*, p. 23.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 22 April 1947, p. 2315; Vancouver Sun, 23 April 1947.
4. *Debates*, 22 April 1947.
5. Carol F. Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia." *B.C. Studies*, no. 30 (Summer 1976), p. 66; Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians, *Bulletin*, no. 10, Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association (JCCA) Papers, MG28V7, file B101, PAC.
6. J.W. Pickersgill and D.F. Forster, *The Mackenzie King Record*, Vol IV, 1947-1948. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970., pp. 198-201, 206.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34.
8. Order-in-Council, P.C. 804, 2 March 1948.
9. Pickersgill and Forster, *The Mackenzie King Record*, p. 234.
10. Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976., p. 337.
11. The reinstated regulation was a modified regulation. Prior to the Second World War the employment of any "Oriental" was prohibited. With the granting of the franchise to Chinese Canadians in 1947, the regulation had been revised to exclude non-British subjects of Chinese ancestry and all persons of Japanese ancestry. Vancouver *Sun*, 28 January 1948.
12. Vancouver *Sun*, 28 January 1948.
13. *Ibid.*, 27-29 and 31 January 1948; *New Canadian*, 31 January 1948; Lee, "Road to Enfranchisement," pp. 68-69.
14. Lee, "Road to Enfranchisement," pp. 70-73.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
16. Memorandum, G.W. McPherson, Executive Assistant, to Dr. E.H. Coleman, Under-Secretary of State, 29 May 1944, Custodian of Enemy Property Records, RG117, file T95, PAC; Cabinet Document 397, K.W. Wright, Counsel, to Colin Gibson, Secretary of State, 17 February 1947, British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 35, file 2203, PAC; Canada, Royal Commission to Investigate the Complaints of Canadian Citizens of Japanese Origin (Bird Commission), *Evidence*, Exhibit 37, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol. 78, PAC.
17. For examples of losses, see Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 1947, 27 May 1947, pp. 245-47.
18. The types of property and assets surveyed were: real estate, businesses, farms, fishing vessels, fishing gear, automobiles, furniture, personal and household property, lost revenues and wages, uncollected accounts, expenses incurred during uprooting, deductions taken for relief accepted during and after uprooting, and personal losses due to cancelled contracts, insurance policies, etc. See *Ibid.*, pp. 257-58, for a copy of the survey; and Executive Committee, Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy, *Minutes*, November 1946, JCCA Papers, MG28V7, file D291, PAC, for survey procedures.
19. F.A. Brewin, *A Review of Property Claims* (Toronto: 1948), JCCA Papers, MG28V7, file B110, PAC.
20. *Debates*, 22 April 1947, p. 2321.
21. Cabinet Document JAP 5, F.P. Varcoe, Deputy Minister of Justice, to Coleman, BCSC Papers, RG 36/27, vol 34, file 2201, PAC
22. Canada, Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions, *Minutes*, 21 April 1947, Department of Labour Papers, RG27, Acc 70/383, Box 14, PAC. The Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions now consisted of: Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour (Chair); Colin Gibson, Secretary of State; Ian Mackenzie, Minister of Veterans Affairs; J.L. Ilsley, Minister of Justice; James A. Glen, Minister of Mines and Resources; H.F.G. Bridges, Minister of Fisheries; and Douglas G. Abbott, Minister of Finance.

23. Canada, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, op. cit., p. 302.
24. Order-in-Council, P.C. 1810, 18 July 1947.
25. Report, Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians, 26 August 1947, JCCA Papers, MG28V7, file B92, PAC.
26. Order-in-Council, P.C. 3737, 17 September 1947.
27. Report, Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians, 26 August 1947, loc. cit.
28. For a full account of the inquiry procedures, see the *Minutes* and *Bulletins*, JCCA Papers, MG28V7, files A1-59, PAC; and Canada, Bird Commission, Report.
29. JCCA, *Bulletin*, no. 5, 21 January 1948, JCCA Papers, MG28V7, file A50; Canada, Bird Commission, Report, pp. 6-7.
30. R.J. MacMaster to Brewin, 14 February 1948, Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, vol. 1, PAC.
31. T.C. Norris to Brewin, 16 March 1948, Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, vol. 1, PAC.
32. Memorandum, MacMaster to Brewin, 28 September 1948; MacMaster to the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians, 13 September 1948; Brewin to MacMaster, 1 June 1948, Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, vol. 1; Executive Committee, National JCCA, *Minutes*, 9 August 1948, JCCA Papers, MG26V7, file A7, PAC.
33. MacMaster to Brewin, 11 December 1948, 15 February 1949, 7 March 1949, 6 October 1949, Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, vol. 1, PAC; Canada, Bird Commission, Report, p. 39. For the evidence presented, see Canada, Bird Commission, Exhibits, nos. 96, 117, BCSC Papers, RG36/27, vol. 75, PAC.
34. Memorandum, George Tanaka, National Executive Secretary, to the Provincial Executive Committees, JCCA, 14 March 1949, JCCA Papers, MG26V7, file B112; Executive Committee, NJCCA, *Minutes*, JCCA Papers, MG26V7, file A11, PAC.
35. Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians to Claimants, 16 April 1949, JCCA Papers, MG26V7, file B115; Brewin to the Cooperative Committee, 13 April 1949, JCCA Papers, MG26V7, file B113, PAC.
36. *Ibid.*, files B113, B115.
37. *Ibid.*, file B113; Executive Committee, NJCCA, *Minutes*, 2 February 1949, JCCA Papers MG26V7, file A9, PAC.
38. See JCCA Papers, MG26V7, files B98, B141; and Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, vol. 1, PAC.
39. F.A. Brewin to Mr. Justice H.I. Bird, 16 May 1949, Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, vol. 1, PAC.
40. Toronto *Globe and Mail*, 14 June 1950; *New Canadian*, 5 July 1950. The claimants had to absorb over \$87,000 in legal fees for the 9,500 hours of legal work carried out by their counsel. This was less than the standard rate of \$10 per hour because R.J. MacMaster cut his fees by \$12,000 in order that his clients might receive more of what was justly owed to them. To cover legal costs, each claimant paid a fee amounting to 1% of his gross claim plus 5.78% of his award. Charges were limited so that the total paid by any claimant was less than 25% of his award. Report of P.S. Ross and Sons, Auditor, 31 May 1950, Andrew Brewin Papers, MG32C26, vol. 1, PAC.
41. G. Tanaka to Claimants, 28 February 1950, p. 3., JCCA Papers, MG26V7, file B128, PAC.
42. G. Tanaka, "Interim Report on the Claims Issue," 22 March 1950, JCCA Papers MG26V7, file A59, PAC.
43. Toronto *Globe and Mail*, 15 June 1950.
44. G. Tanaka to Louis St. Laurent, 23 September 1950, JCCA Papers, MG26V7, file B120, PAC.
45. *Ibid.*
46. St. Laurent to Rev. James Finlay, 3 August 1950, Department of Finance Papers, vol. 506, PAC.
47. Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, p. 334.

## Conclusion: The Seeds of Repression

**A**buse of Japanese Canadians did not begin with the Second World War. Rather, the uprooting, confinement, dispossession, dispersal and attempted deportation of Japanese Canadians were the culmination of a long history of discrimination resulting from Canadian social norms that cast Asians in the role of second-class citizens. Stripped of their political rights, Asians had traditionally been politically castrated targets for the rhetoric of B.C. politicians seeking scapegoats for the province's ills. The war only provided an ideal atmosphere for the seeds of repression to flourish.

It only took twelve weeks for those seeds to flower. Exploiting the normal insecurities following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, traditionally intolerant elements in B.C. society – and the politicians who sought their support – resurrected every racist charge ever made against Japanese Canadians, emphasizing that Japan intended to invade British Columbia with the help of B.C.'s Japanese. Significantly, the groups making these charges did not reside on the Mainland where most Japanese Canadians lived. Nor did they have any basis for their allegations. What they had was the support of B.C.'s non-CCF politicians. Assuming that the prejudices of this vocal minority were representative of the attitudes of all British Columbians, B.C.'s politicians quickly demanded the removal of Japanese Canadians from the Pacific Coast. The war with Japan provided an ideal opportunity to rid B.C. of the Japanese “economic menace” forever.

B.C.'s politicians were opposed by Canada's senior military and police officers and by senior civil servants. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, aware that Japanese Canadians were controlled from within by their own leaders, was confident that they presented no danger of sabotage. The military in Ottawa were equally confident, having long recognized the practical impossibility of an invasion of Canada's Pacific coast.

In Ottawa, Asians, long considered second-class citizens, were a secondary and very unimportant matter to federal politicians. It was not the role of government to champion a despised minority, especially when doing so could unleash a backlash against the government by politicians from the opposing Party, the Conservatives. Asians were only significant as a political thorn in the side of the B.C. Liberals. Thus, Asian matters were left to the “expertise” of the only member of the Cabinet from British Columbia, the rabidly anti-Asian Ian Alistair Mackenzie.

The Cabinet in Ottawa, preoccupied by the larger war issues, chose a simplistic and politically safe solution to the Japanese problem, against the counsel of Canada's senior police and military officers and of experts within the civil service. Unwilling because of the conscription crisis to acknowledge that the invasion fears of West Coast residents were unfounded, the Cabinet chose to uproot an innocent but despised minority because their in-house expert told them only that would satisfy the apparently hysterical people of B.C. The fact that the American president had chosen the same solution only made the decision to uproot 20,881 men, women and children that much easier and plausible.

The government's excuse of “national security” used to justify the uprooting of B.C.'s Japanese Canadians branded them traitors, making it impossible for them to appeal to their fellow

Canadians for help to combat that libel and the injustice attending it, and leaving them virtually friendless. To Japanese Canadians, unaware that the military had opposed the entire policy, the excuse of “national security” raised the spectre of military intervention should they try to resist.

Powerless to stop their uprooting, Japanese Canadians sought to mitigate the attending conditions. Some cooperated with the authorities and rendered social assistance to their fellow Japanese Canadians. Some volunteered as sugar beet labourers in Manitoba and Alberta in an attempt to keep their families intact. Others moved themselves, their families and friends to self-support settlements in the Interior of British Columbia. Still others, mostly married *Nisei* and *Kibei*, disobeyed the orders sending them to road camps to protest the separation of men from their families. Although their protest was tainted by the participation of pro-Japan elements, their disobedience eventually secured the reunification of married men with their families.

In the detention camps of the Interior and the sugar beet fields of Alberta and Manitoba, Japanese Canadians worked together to solve the problems facing them: poor housing, inadequate sugar beet contracts and relief allowances, unsympathetic staff or sugar beet farmers, and the lack of schooling for their children. Organization was possible because the prewar social ties remained largely intact. The mechanism of removal had situated together people from the same factions and communities, and had also created a nucleus of maturing *Nisei* in Ontario, who would quickly make contact with sympathetic Caucasians to build a power base for protest.

Having uprooted 20,881 Japanese Canadians from the Pacific Coast, the federal government was faced with the problem of compensating for the economic effects of their removal and the cost of confining 12,000 of them in detention camps. The Cabinet recognized the opportunity for veteran settlement afforded by Japanese Canadian farms in the Fraser Valley: it froze the sale of those farms, stripped the uprooted Japanese of all property, and reserved the 769 most suitable farms for veterans. The funds derived from the subsequent property sales – after deductions for the expenses of the sale and the repayment of relief benefits – were used by the inmates to buy the necessities of life within the detention camps.

Stripping Japanese Canadians of their property was a politically inspired act. It retarded the return of Japanese Canadians to the Pacific Coast and accelerated their dispersal eastward. Liberal politicians in B.C. could claim credit for having rid B.C. of the Japanese menace. Veterans falling heir to Japanese Canadian property could be expected to vote for the Liberal party. Lastly, the funds derived from the sales minimized the cost of detaining Japanese Canadians by forcing them to pay for their own incarceration.

When the policy of voluntary resettlement east of the Rocky Mountains proved too slow, the federal authorities implemented a deportation policy. In April and May 1945, they forced the inmates of the detention camps to choose between immediate, but not necessarily permanent, resettlement in eastern Canada, and repatriation to Japan at some unspecified future date. To keep their jobs, to avoid another move, to hide from hostile Caucasians, in despair, in confusion, and in ignorance, 6,884 Japanese Canadians, sixteen years of age and over, signed repatriation requests. With their 3,500 dependents, these potential deportees represented 43 per cent of Canada’s Japanese minority.

With the capitulation of Japan in August 1945, the federal government sought to make those repatriation requests binding. In November 1945 the Cabinet sought from Parliament the power to deport any resident of Canada, and were refused. Six weeks later C two weeks before the powers of



the *War Measures Act* were to expire – the Cabinet granted itself that power by Order-in-Council under the *War Measures Act*, and ordered the deportation of 10,000 Japanese Canadians.

This most blatant abuse of the powers of the *War Measures Act* did not pass unnoticed or uncensored. Canadians had believed the government's claim that the uprooting of Japanese Canadians was a national security measure. Most Canadians outside B.C. had never learned of the sale of Japanese Canadian property. Once aware of the fact and of the impending deportation of 10,000 Japanese Canadians, the Canadian public told their government to halt its deportation of Japanese Canadians.

While the deportation issue continued in the courts, Japanese Canadians underwent a second uprooting. The right to employment in British Columbia was denied to all unemployed and "relocateable" Japanese Canadians. They had two choices: shipment to a starving Japan or resettlement in eastern Canada. Four thousand chose Japan; 4,700 resettled in the provinces east of Alberta. By the time the federal government withdrew the threat of deportation in January 1947, only 6,776 Japanese Canadians remained in British Columbia.

The time had come to rebuild. By 1949 Japanese Canadians would achieve full citizenship, but not before their exile from the Pacific Coast was extended for a seventh year, in the mistaken belief that this final act of discrimination was necessary to ensure the election of Liberal candidates in B.C. by-elections. Not only did those candidates lose, but the press and people of B.C. chastised the B.C. government in 1948 for attempting to reimpose racial discrimination in employment. Perhaps the people of British Columbia never were quite as racist as their politicians had assumed.

Full citizenship, however, did not mean an end to the battle for justice. The legacy of the *Issei* was gone, sold on the auction blocks by order of Cabinet. The direct economic losses sustained by Japanese Canadians were heavy. The social losses, the cost in pain, sorrow, shame and mental anguish, were even greater. To Japanese Canadians it was only just that they be compensated.

The federal government preferred to avoid publicly acknowledging any losses, economic or social, since that would reflect upon governmental policies. However, since some losses had to be acknowledged, the federal government sought to minimize the amount of compensation and, hence, the implication of injustice. With the restriction of the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Japanese Canadian losses to those occurring in sales by the Custodian of Enemy Property at less than the "fair market value" and to theft, the administration of the dispossession policy, not the policy itself, would be open to public censure. With this tactic, the compensation paid was reduced to a mere \$1.2 million, and the issue was effectively killed.

The abuse of Japanese Canadians in the Second World War had its villains and its heroes. Some of the villains are obvious: Ian Mackenzie and the B.C. M.P.'s, Halford Wilson, Humphrey Mitchell and their confederates. These obvious villains succeeded to the extent they did, not because they were clever or powerful but because, until very late in the game, they were unopposed in Cabinet, the forum in which the policies abusing Japanese Canadians were ultimately decided. The obvious villains supplied merely the ideas, or, in Mackenzie's case, husbanded those ideas through the policy-making process. The ultimate responsibility for the abuse of Japanese Canadians rests with the Cabinet. Without the tacit consent of the Cabinet as a whole, none of the proposals of the B.C. racists could have become law and none of the abuses of Japanese Canadians could have been carried out.



As with the villains, there were several levels of heroes. For the most part, the heroes fought losing battles and came dangerously close to losing the war. There were public heroes like Hugh Keenleyside, Henry Angus and Frederick J. Mead who did not hesitate to say what their political superiors did not wish to hear, and who, as in Keenleyside's case, put their careers on the line for Japanese Canadians. At another public level, Andrew Brewin and Robert J. MacMaster fought long legal battles for Japanese Canadians, in MacMaster's case at considerable financial cost. Other heroes intervened at the administrative level. People like Amy Leigh, Walter Hartley and Henry Lougheed, who did their best to ease the shock and discomfort of uprooting and exile, fall into this group. With them are the Women's Missionary Society workers and the individuals and social agencies who helped Japanese Canadians in the camps and upon resettlement. The most effective heroes were the anonymous ones: the hundreds of men and women who as private citizens in 1946 told their government to stop abusing Japanese Canadians.

Throughout it all the greatest heroes were the Japanese Canadians themselves. Libelled as traitors, caught up in events over which they had no control, divided, confused and frightened, they won in the end. The cost was terrible. The world the *Issei* had known was gone. The social ties and economic security they had built up through forty years of labour had vanished. Yet they were not broken. Japanese Canadians have been compared to a stand of bamboo that bends in a storm but straightens up once the storm has past, quickly regenerating its broken shoots and continuing to thrive. Like the bamboo, Japanese Canadians absorbed the blows directed at them. Uprooted, stripped of their property, scattered across Canada, rejected, insulted and abused, Japanese Canadians stood once the storm was past and, like the refugees from Europe's holocaust, rebuilt their lives.

Apologists looking at the dramatic rise in the socio-economic status of Japanese Canadians between the 1930s and the 1960s have called the wartime experience of Japanese Canadians a blessing in disguise. By attributing the cause of the postwar success of Japanese Canadians to their uprooting, dispossession and mandatory dispersal, the apologists ignore the fact that they are comparing two very different populations, having only their Japanese ethnicity in common. They are comparing the income and status of a poorly educated group of immigrants, inhibited by language difficulties, racial discrimination and a worldwide economic depression, with the income and status of well-educated, English-speaking Canadians living in a healthy economy and in a society in which discrimination has been severely reduced. By comparing the success of the *Issei* with the success of the *Nisei*, the apologists are comparing apples and oranges.

Japanese Canadians did not become Canada's third most highly educated and prosperous minority – right behind the Jews and the Chinese – because of the war.<sup>1</sup> Japanese Canadians succeeded for the same reasons that the Jews and the Chinese succeeded. They succeeded because they had the cultural and moral strength to overcome the setbacks of the war and prewar periods. They succeeded because the *Nisei* were able to take their Canadian educations into a booming postwar economy and, through culturally valued hard work and thrift, rebuild their lives. They were not alone. The displaced persons from Europe and the Hungarian refugees of the 1950s did the same. Moreover, the fact that Chinese Canadians did better than Japanese Canadians after the Second World War suggests that the war, by destroying the economic legacy of the *Issei*, actually inhibited Japanese Canadians.

Although outwardly they appear to have recovered, Japanese Canadians still carry the scars of their wartime experience. The poverty of the *Issei*, the social silence of the *Nisei*, and the cultural ignorance of the *Sansei*\* are all legacies of the war. The *Issei* are poor because they were dispossessed. The *Nisei* are silent because they are good Canadians, and as such they want to believe that their government is benign, that it embodies the British fair play in which they were taught to believe in the public schools of their childhood. They would prefer to think that they were not betrayed, but that the federal government did what it did for good reasons.

The reasons the *Nisei* were given in the 1950s reinforce their silence. Japanese Canadians, they were told, were uprooted, dispossessed and dispersed because they had failed to assimilate – that is, failed to deny their Japanese heritage and to submerge themselves in the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture. By clustering visibly on the Pacific Coast in culturally separate communities, they became the target of West Coast fears.<sup>2</sup> In the explanations of the 1950s, the West Coast populace was the villain; the federal government was only trying to protect Japanese Canadians.

In the 1950s there were no other explanations. In the midst of postwar idealism and under the shadow of McCarthyism, few were prepared to closely scrutinize the actions of the Canadian government. It is not surprising, therefore, that the *Nisei* blamed themselves for what had happened to them. Like the rape victim who has been told that she lead her attacker on by simply being there to be raped, Japanese Canadians were confused and ashamed. They sought refuge from the trauma of their experience in the safety of middle-class Canadian culture. Avoiding the public eye and cutting back to the social level their ties to the Japanese minority, the *Nisei* plunged into acquiring the outward manifestations of success: suburban homes and jobs in middle management. Their organizations, surviving only in a very weak form, kept a low profile, going public only on motherhood issues like human rights and more liberal immigration laws – and always in the company of other ethnic and religious groups.<sup>3</sup> In the 1950s and early 1960s, Japanese Canadians were principally concerned with ensuring that doubts about their Canadian loyalty were eradicated so that they would never again be victims of public insecurity.

It is also not surprising that many *Nisei* have swallowed the blessing-in-disguise argument without question.<sup>4</sup> They know that they are doing better economically and socially than their parents did. They know that the overt racism that inhibited their parents and themselves in the 1930s and 1940s has virtually disappeared. They have been told that the reason for that racism was the alien presence of the Japanese subculture in British Columbia. The destruction of that subculture in the war, they conclude, is the reason for the success of the *Nisei*. The *Nisei* who accept the blessing-in-disguise rationale overlook the fact that their postwar success comes, not from the shattering of the prewar Japanese subculture, but from the cultural values they learned from the *Issei*. The qualities of *enryo* (reserve or restraint), *gamen* (patience and perseverance) and *shikataga-nai* (resignation) allowed the *Nisei* to bend rather than break under the restrictions of the war. The same qualities made it possible for them to await opportunity through the 1950s without feelings of defeatism and then to grasp that opportunity, making their claims for promotion and status on culturally based records of hard work and educational achievement. The qualities that made the *Nisei* good middle managers were ultimately Japanese qualities.<sup>5</sup>

The *Nisei* who accept the blessing rationale also overlook the fact that the postwar reduction

\* The *Sansei*, or the third (*san*) generation (*sei*), are the children of the *Nisei*.

in discrimination is not attributable to their wartime experience. After the Second World War traditional racial prejudice and colonial attitudes were rejected by most free world nations, at least in theory. The legacy of the Nazi death camps and the emergence of colonial states into independent nations demonstrated the inherent flaws of “white supremacy.” Overt racism, practised by a loud minority, became socially and, more importantly, politically unacceptable in Canada.

Wanting only to forget their wartime experiences, the *Nisei* felt no pressing need to emphasize things Japanese in the rearing of their children. As a consequence, the *Sansei* grew up knowing little and caring less about their heritage. They also grew up ignorant of the wartime experience of their parents and grandparents. There seemed no need to teach them. It was enough to give them middle-class advantages to ensure their success in Canadian society. Indeed, some felt that the exposure of the *Sansei* to the bitterness of the war might be counterproductive, undermining the assumption of the *Sansei* that they were no different from their Caucasian friends.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, to teach the *Sansei* about the war, the *Nisei* had to understand it themselves, in itself an impossibility. To question the explanations of the 1950s was to question the ideas that had shaped the way they had built their lives. To deny the blessing-in-disguise rationale was to admit that their youth had been wasted in the detention camps of British Columbia, and their heritage sold on the auction blocks along with everything the *Issei* owned. To deny the blessing rationale was to admit that they were betrayed by their government, something which, as Canadians, they do not wish to admit.

The ability of a victim to recover, at least outwardly, from an assault or a rape does not undo the crime. Nor does slapping a Band-Aid on part of the wound absolve the assaulting party of guilt. Unrepentant and unreformed, the guilty party remains capable of committing the crime again. Forty years after the abuse of Japanese Canadians, there still exists no insurance against its happening again. There is still no means of preventing unscrupulous and self-seeking politicians, like Ian Mackenzie, from using a “real or apprehended” emergency to effect a political end. The powers of the *War Measures Act* under which Japanese Canadians were uprooted, detained, dispossessed, dispersed and almost deported remain unaltered. It is still possible for the Cabinet to deny without censure the rights of any individual or group in Canada in the name of national security.

Only one effort has been made to curb the powers of the *War Measures Act*. In 1960, during the debate on the Bill of Rights, Lester B. Pearson, Liberal leader of the opposition, urged that the bill be given teeth by giving it precedence over the *War Measures Act*. Pearson wanted the power of the Cabinet to detain people under the *War Measures Act* made subject to review by a Supreme Court justice. He was unsuccessful. Arguing that when Canada’s national security was threatened, the rights of the individual were secondary, the former opponent of the deportation of Japanese Canadians, Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker, joined with his fellow Conservatives to defeat Pearson’s amendment.<sup>7</sup>

The *War Measures Act* has been used only once since the Second World War: in the October Crisis of 1970. Citing an “apprehended insurrection,” the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau invoked the *War Measures Act* with the apparent approval of 87 per cent of Canadians.<sup>8</sup> No proof of insurrection was offered. As in 1942, Canadians, including Japanese Canadians, simply assumed that the claims of their government were true and that the French Canadians detained under the *War Measures Act* were potential revolutionaries. Most probably still hold these assumptions, although none of the detained French Canadians were ever convicted of a crime. Not

personally affected, most Canadians remain unconcerned that their government used the axe of the *War Measures Act* rather than the scalpel of the Criminal Code to solve a kidnapping.

There is no way of ensuring that the Ian Mackenzies of this world are never placed in positions of power. There are ways of ensuring that their power is limited. At present Canadians do not possess that protection; the civil liberties of every Canadian may be peremptorily suspended at Parliament's whim. In a country that prides itself on its democratic tradition, it is sobering to note that everything done to Japanese Canadians was, and still is, legal under Canadian law.

**Notes**

1. For an analysis of the current status of Japanese Canadians, see Tomiko Makabe, "Ethnic Group Identity," Ph.D. thesis.
2. For the assimilation thesis, see Forrest E. La Violette, *Canadian Japanese in World War II*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948.
3. For the postwar activities of Japanese organizations, see Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association Papers, PAC.
4. For example, see Makabe, "Ethnic Group Identity."
5. Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, pp. 355-58.
6. See Japanese Canadian Centennial Project, *A Dream of Riches: The Japanese Canadians, 1877-1977*, Vancouver: 1978., pp. 4-6, for the *Sansei* view.
7. Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, p. 368.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 369.

## Afterward: Redress

In the seven years after this book was published in 1981, new laws and political developments altered the entire landscape of human rights in Canada. On April 17, 1982, the legal and equality rights of Canadians were enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*<sup>1</sup>. Section 15 expressly acknowledged the equality of all Canadians before and under the law and prohibited discrimination on the basis, among others, of race<sup>2</sup>. In July, 1988, the *War Measures Act* was replaced by the *Emergencies Act*<sup>3</sup>. Finally, on September 22, 1988, the government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney acknowledged the wartime wrongs experienced by Japanese Canadians and sought Parliamentary approval for an Order in Council<sup>4</sup> providing compensation of \$21 000 for each individual wronged. The Redress agreement also included a community fund to rebuild the infrastructure of the destroyed community, pardons for those convicted of disobeying Orders made under the *War Measures Act*, Canadian citizenship for those wrongfully deported to Japan in 1946 and for their descendants and \$24 million in funding for a Canadian Race Relations Foundation<sup>5</sup>. Significantly, that redress agreement was a negotiated settlement, not an imposed settlement.

The importance of constitutional protections for human rights is evident from the experience of Japanese Americans. Although the Constitution of the United States did not prevent their uprooting from the Pacific coast, it provided Japanese Americans with the legal tools that liberated them from their similarly unjust detention on January 5, 1945, over four years before Japanese Canadians regained their civil liberties on April 1, 1949. Pierre Trudeau, the Prime Minister responsible for the *Charter*, saw it as a way of preventing any other group from suffering similar discrimination.<sup>7</sup>

Pierre Trudeau's confidence in the *Charter* as the means of preventing a reoccurrence of what was done to Japanese Canadians, however, is debateable<sup>8</sup>. As in the United States, the constitutional protections for human rights in Canada are not perfect. While section 15 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* makes every individual equal before and under the law and grants them the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, section 33 permits Parliament to expressly declare that an Act of Parliament shall operate "notwithstanding" a provision included in section 2 (the fundamental freedoms) or sections 7 to 15 (the legal and equality rights) of the *Charter*. Where Parliament declares that an Act operates despite the equality provisions in the *Charter*, then the Act and any regulations made under it can discriminate on the basis of one or more of the prohibited grounds of discrimination; for example, race. This flaw is compounded by the fact that some rights, like the mobility provisions in section 610 of the *Charter*, apply only to Canadian citizens. But there is nothing in the *Charter* to protect the right of an individual to remain a Canadian citizen. Given that among the first steps taken by the Nazi's against Germany's Jews was to deprive them of their German citizenship, this omission may be critical in any future governmental action against a minority.

The second development, the repeal of the *War Measures Act*, was a fundamental part of the campaign by Japanese Canadians in the 1980s for redress of the wrongs suffered at the hands of racist politicians during Second World War. Armed with recently published histories of their



wartime experiences<sup>11</sup>, the National Association of Japanese Canadians – the successor to the National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association – sought to persuade the federal government to acknowledge those wartime wrongs, to negotiate compensation for those who were wronged and, most importantly, to make changes to Canada's laws to prevent other Canadians suffering similar wrongs.

The campaign initially divided Japanese Canadians. One group, centred in Toronto, wanted to accept a token group settlement of \$6 million offered in 1984 by the Mulroney government. They saw this settlement as politically realistic and feared retaliation against Japanese Canadians if they demanded more. A second group, led by NAJC President Art Miki, saw that token offer as a continuation of the wartime attitude that Japanese Canadians could be treated as a weak, amorphous group on whom a settlement could be imposed. To Miki and the other leaders of the NAJC, a just process of negotiation was as important as the achievement of redress. They wanted a negotiated, not an imposed, settlement and a monetary acknowledgement that the human rights of individuals had been abused, not just group rights.

Success, they knew, required educating all the parties involved: politicians, the media, Japanese Canadians and the general public. To this end, between 1984 and 1988, the NAJC held a series of publications, seminars, house meetings and conferences; lobbied and petitioned the government and ethnic, religious and human rights groups; and composed and distributed studies and press materials<sup>12</sup>. Much of the material was compelling. Running the gambit from emotional personal recollections to cold academic studies, the material documented the price of the uprooting and the need for redress. Joy Kogawa's best selling fictional account of the uprooting, *Obasan*<sup>13</sup>, introduced thousands of ordinary Canadians to the wartime history of Japanese Canadians by putting them vicariously inside the experience. At the other extreme was a study conducted by the respected accounting firm, Price Waterhouse, which revealed that the economic losses from the wartime property confiscation were \$443 million in 1986 dollars<sup>14</sup>. By 1986, polls showed that 63% of Canadians supported redress and 45% favoured individual compensation.<sup>15</sup> However, despite these polls the responses from the government of Brian Mulroney continued to refuse to consider anything but a lump sum group settlement.

But in the 1980's Japanese Canadians were not the only group seeking redress. Importantly, the Japanese American Citizens' League was conducting a similar campaign in the United States. In 1982 a bipartisan Congressional Commission studied and reported on the uprooting of Japanese Americans, roundly and unanimously condemning it as unjust<sup>16</sup>. Following that report the JACL had lobbied Congress heavily for individual compensation for the violation of the constitutional rights of Japanese Americans. On September 17, 1987, they achieved their first victory. In honour of the 200th anniversary of the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, the US House of Representatives passed House Resolution 442, the *Civil Liberties Act of 1987*. Under this Act, each Japanese American who had been detained in the U.S. concentration camps during the Second World War, and who was alive on the day that the Bill became law, would receive individual compensation of \$US 20 000<sup>17</sup>. To make HR442 law, however, the JACL had to get a similar Bill passed by the Senate and to persuade U.S. President Ronald Reagan to sign the joint Bill into law. Neither was an easy task.

Also in 1987, the government of Brian Mulroney decided to replace the *War Measures Act* with more modern legislation that would permit graduated responses to different kinds of

emergencies. The NAJC's legal committee examined the Bill tabled in June 1987 and found it to be very wanting. As first tabled, they concluded, it would permit the government in time of emergency to do everything that had been done to Japanese Canadians under the *War Measures Act*. In one way, it was worse than the *War Measures Act*, since it permitted secret Orders-in-Council. The Vice-Chair of the Committee, lawyer and historian Ann Sunahara, prepared a 65 page brief in which the proposed new Act was tested for practicality using actual events from the history of Japanese Canadians. Prepared, the NAJC petitioned to appear before the Legislative Committee that was tasked with consulting with interested persons on its content. Appearing before a Parliamentary committee is not a right; nor is it automatic. When the request of the NAJC was initially refused, the NAJC sought the intervention of the New Democratic Party M.P.'s on the Committee. Derek Blackburn argued that the victims of the *War Measures Act* should be consulted on the content of its successor Act. On that basis the NAJC was invited to appear on March 15, 1988, the final day of presentations.<sup>18</sup> Using the brief<sup>19</sup>, presenters Roy Miki and Ann Sunahara demonstrated to the committee and to the bureaucrats who designed the Act how the injustices of the past could be repeated under the existing draft of the Bill. Both the Legislative Committee and government officials listened carefully.

Over the next three weeks, Legislative committee considered 85 amendments directed at correcting the problems identified by the NAJC. In the end 65 were adopted. Among them were further restrictions on when the emergency powers could be used, expansion of Parliament's ability to supervise the Cabinet's use of emergency powers, expanded powers for Parliament to revoke an Order-in-Council, a mandatory post-emergency inquiry into how the emergency powers had been used, mandatory compensation for any abuse of emergency powers and, most importantly, section 4, which reads:

4. Nothing in this Act shall be construed or applied so as to confer on the Governor in Council the power to make orders or regulations
  - (a) altering the provisions of this Act; or
  - (b) providing for the detention, imprisonment or internment of Canadian citizens or permanent residents as defined in the Immigration Act on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Section 4 is an attempt to prohibit a future Cabinet from amending the *Emergencies Act* by Order-in-Council. Specifically, section 4 is intended to prevent a future government from using section 33 of the *Charter* to override the equality rights set out in section 15 of the *Charter*. The *Emergencies Act* is a great improvement over the *War Measures Act*. However, it is only an Act of Parliament. It can be abolished or amended at any time.

The spring of 1988 was also active on other redress fronts. On April 14, the NAJC held a high profile, well-publicized redress rally on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Attended by representatives from Japanese Canadian communities across Canada, Nisei veterans and representative of ethnic, religious and civil liberties groups that supported redress, the organizers were pleasantly surprised when the Minister for State for Multiculturalism, Gerry Weiner, also attended. His speech rehashed the old policies but he offered a ray of hope: an offer to reopen redress talks with the NAJC<sup>20</sup>. This offer was followed on April 20th by the news that the U.S. Senate had approved its version of

HR44221.

By mid-June 1988 the Mulroney government had recognized the groundswell of support for redress and tentative negotiations began with the NAJC. But, to the disappointment of the NAJC, the scheduled July meeting was cancelled by the government without explanation. On August 10, 1988, US President Ronald Reagan signed HR442 into law. Japanese Americans had achieved redress. A week later, on August 18, 1988, after learning that the NAJC was planning to hold a press conference in Ottawa on August 28th, the Minister Weiner's office finally contacted the NAJC President, Art Miki, to recommence discussions. On August 25th, the negotiations recommenced in Montreal with an added surprise: Minister Weiner was no longer the decision maker. That role had been given to Lucien Bouchard, a Minister of State and close confidant of Prime Minister Mulroney. It was soon clear that the government was willing, in principle, to agree to individual compensation. What had to be decided was the amount of individual redress and the non-monetary compensation. On August 27, 1988, after 17 hours of negotiations, an agreement was reached and the negotiators sworn to secrecy<sup>22</sup>.

On 22 September 1988, Prime Minister Mulroney announced the agreement between the NAJC and the federal government. Speaking in the House of Commons, he acknowledged the wartime wrongs and announced compensation of \$21 000 for each individual directly wronged, a community fund to rebuild the infrastructure of the destroyed community, pardons for those wrongfully convicted of disobeying orders under the *War Measures Act*, Canadian citizenship for those wrongfully deported to Japan and their descendants and \$24 million in funding for a Canadian Race Relations Foundation<sup>23</sup>. By 1993, 17,948 survivors had received individual compensation and a \$12 million community fund had been used to build community centres in most major centres between Montreal and Victoria and to fund a variety of cultural and educational and civil rights projects, programs and conferences.

The full story of the redress campaign cannot be told for some time. Access to the necessary government documents is closed for 20 years<sup>24</sup>. That material will only become fully available in 2008. The long term effects of the redress settlement also remain unknown. Will knowledge of the history of Japanese Canadians prove an effective deterrent against racism in Canada? While the experience of Japanese Canadians is not the worst example of the effects of racism, it may be the best known and best documented. It is also the first example in Canada of a victim minority exposing the perfidy of the actions against them and achieving acknowledgement of the wrongs committed and individual redress for those wrongs. If the compelling story of Japanese Canadians were not a sufficient deterrent, the knowledge that the perpetrators of the wrongs against them were exposed in the public record may yet help to deter those who use bigotry as a political tool.

**Notes**

1. The *Charter* is set out in Part I of Schedule B to the Constitution Act, 1982. It was enacted as Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982, (U.K.) 1982, c. 11, which came into force on April 17, 1982. Section 15 came into effect three years after the *Charter* came into force; that is on April 17, 1985.
2. Subsection 15. (1) states: Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.
3. Statutes of Canada 1988, c. 29, assented to 21 July, 1988.
4. P.C. 1988-9/2552, October 31, 1988.
5. Established by the *Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act*, 1991, c. 8, [C-21.8], assented to February 21, 1991, in force October 28, 1996, see SI/96-98.
6. For the Japanese American cases see Peter Irons, *Justice at War: The Story of the Japanese American Internment Cases*, Oxford University Press, 1993. The content of this book is summarized in Sunahara, M.A. "Justice at War: a Review Essay", 1985 *Supreme Court Law Reports*, Vol 7, pp. 559-568.
7. House of Commons, *Debates*, June 29, 1984.
8. For a full discussion of this issue see: Sunahara, M.A. "Justice at War: The Story of the Japanese American Internment Cases", 1985 *Supreme Court Law Reports*, Vol 7, pp. 559-568. This review essay tests the hypothesis that the *Charter* would prevent a similar uprooting by using a study of the U.S. constitutional cases.
9. 33. (1) Parliament or the legislature of a province may expressly declare in an Act of Parliament or of the legislature, as the case may be, that the Act or a provision thereof shall operate notwithstanding a provision included in section 2 or sections 7 to 15 of this *Charter*.
10. 6. (1) Every citizen of Canada has the right to enter, remain in and leave Canada.
11. The histories included this book and Kitagawa, Muriel, *This is My Own: Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians 1941-1949*, Roy Miki ed., Talonbooks, Vancouver, 1985 and Ito, Roy, *We Went to War: The Story of the Japanese Canadians Who Served During the First and Second World Wars*, Canada's Wings, Stittsville, Ontario, 1984.
12. For a summary of the redress campaign from the Japanese Canadian point of view see: Miki, Roy and Kobayashi, Cassandra, *Justice in Our Time: The Japanese Canadian Redress Settlement*, Talonbooks, Vancouver, 1991 and Kobayashi, Cassandra and Miki, Roy, eds, *Spirit of Redress: Japanese Canadians in Conference*, JC Publications, Vancouver, 1989; Miki, Roy, ed. *Redress for Japanese Canadians: A Community Forum*, Vancouver, JCCA Redress Committee, 1984. For a fictional view of the redress campaign see Koyawa, Joy, *Itsuka*, Viking Press, 1992.
13. Lester & Orphen Dennys, Toronto, Ontario, 1981.
14. National Association of Japanese Canadians, *Economic Losses of Japanese Canadians After 1941: A Study Conducted by Price Waterhouse*, Vancouver, BC, Winnipeg: NAJC, 1985.
15. Miki, Roy and Kobayashi, Cassandra, *Justice in Our Time*, pg. 94.
16. United States, Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: The Report of the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*, U.S. Government Printing Office, December, 1982.
17. *Ibid*, pg. 110.
18. The NAJC appeared together with a delegation from the Ukrainian community, who had been similarly victims of the *War Measures Act* during the First World War.
19. "Submission to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-77", the National Association of Japanese Canadians, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-77*, March 15, 1988
20. Miki, Roy and Kobayashi, Cassandra, *Justice in Our Time*, pp. 118 - 132
21. *Ibid*, pg. 110

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 134 to 137 and interviews by the author with Art Miki, Roy Miki and Maryku Omatsu.
23. The redress settlement cost the government \$405,908,000. \$376,908,000 was paid out in individual compensation to the 17,948 survivors who were alive on September 22, 1988; \$24 million was allocated for the establishment of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, \$12 million for a fund to rebuild Japanese Canadian community institutions and ties and \$3million for the administration of the redress settlement. Ironically, Japanese Americans have not done as well. Although 64,000 survivors registered with the Office of Redress Administration, the compensation money was not forthcoming. The U.S. legislation provided that the payments would be made over 10 years but did not include entitlement funding. Only in 1990 did Japanese Americans obtain that entitlement funding. The first cheques were issued on October 9, 1990 to the oldest qualified persons, all of whom were over 100 years of age: *Ibid.*, p. 110 Because the US compensation is issued in order of age, by the time Japanese Canadians had been fully paid out in 1993, only Japanese Americans over the age of 80 had received their share – and the survivors are reportedly dying off at a rate of 200 per day.
24. *Access to Information Act*, subsection 21(1).

# Tables

**TABLE 1: Japanese in Canada in 1941 by Age and Nationality**

Age	Total %	Canadian %	Naturalized %	Japanese %	N Size
Under 20	44	71	8	2	10,100
20-34	24	28	12	27	5,850
35-59	23	9	68	63	6,500
Over 60	4	1	12	8	1,000
	100	100	100	100	
N Size	23450	13600	3650	6200	23450

Source: Calculated from Census of Canada, 1941

**TABLE 2: Economic Distribution of Japanese Canadians**

Category	% of employed Japanese Canadians 1941	% of employed Japanese Canadians 1946
Agriculture	18.8	44.8
Fishing	16.3	0.8
Labourers	14.7	—*
Manufacturing	13.4	15.4
Service	12.9	10.0
Trade	8.4	7.7
Lumbering	8.3	10.7
Transportation	2.9	—*
Professional & clerical	2.1	2.7
Miscellaneous	2.2	7.8
	100	100

Note: Japanese Canadians constituted 2.8% of the total work force in British Columbia in 1941

\* Included in miscellaneous in 1946

Sources: Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Administration of Japanese Affairs, 1942-1944* (mimeo., 1944), p.3; *Report of the Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada, 1944-1946* (mimeo., 1947), p. 28.



**TABLE 3: Repatriation Survey Results at August 31, 1945**

	Japanese nationals		Naturalized Canadians		Canadian-born		Adults* signing		Children under 16		Total affected		Japanese in area	% Japanese Canadians affected
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
Interior housing	2026	69	1090	74	1488	61	4605	67	2668	76	7272	70	10000	72
Rest of B.C.	575	20	243	16	374	15	1189	18	479	14	1668	16	5100	33
Rest of Canada	312	11	137	10	514	21	965	14	356	10	1321	13	8500	16
Internment	12		3		70	3	85	1	85	1	85	1	200	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>2922</b>		<b>1474</b>		<b>2446</b>		<b>6844</b>		<b>3503</b>		<b>10347</b>		<b>23800</b>	<b>43</b>

\* Adults are persons 16 years of age and over

Source: Memorandum B Repatriation Survey Results as of August 31, 1945, Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, vol. 658, file 23-27-1 (pt 2); and Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada, 1944-46* (mimeo., 1947)

**TABLE 4: Distribution of Japanese in Canada – 1942 to 1 January 1947**

Province	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947/01/01
B.C.	21,975	16,504	16,103	15,610	14,716	6,776
Alberta	534	3,231	3,469	3,559	3,681	4,180
Saskatchewan	100	129	153	157	164	505
Manitoba	30	1,084	1,094	1,052	1,052	1,186
Ontario	132	1,650	2,424	2,914	3,742	6,616
Québec	25	96	344	532	716	1,247
New Brunswick	—	—	—	—	10	10
P.E.I.	—	—	—	—	—	6
Nova Scotia	2	1	1	1	1	1
Yukon & N.W.T.	39	30	29	30	30	31
	<b>2,837</b>	<b>22,725</b>	<b>23,617</b>	<b>23,854</b>	<b>24,112</b>	<b>20,558</b>
Repatriated to Japan	42	61	—	—	3964	—

Sources: Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada, 1944-46* (mimeo., 1947), pp. 11, 15, 25; Canada, Department of Labour, *Report on the Administration of Japanese Affairs, 1942-1944* (mimeo., 1944), pp. 28,29.

**TABLE 5: Economic Losses Survey, Toronto, 1946: Real and Personal Property**

	Total number surveyed	Total estimated value \$	Number sold	Estimated value of sold property \$	Sale price \$	Percentage recouped on sale %
Real estate Total:	54	307,460	483,214	300,785	159,000	53
Smith Comm:	33			190,035	105,954	55
Rural Comm:	20			94,625	47,766	49.5
Businesses	57	793,542	38	505,825	132,030	26
Farms Total:	24	347,238	24	347,238	161,845	47
Fraser Valley:	13	91,619	13	91,619	19,993	22
Elsewhere:	10	249,788	10	249,788	140,785	56
Fishing vessels	30	62,150	30	62,160	33,700	54
Fishing gear	22	11,891	8	5,861	2,511	45
Automobiles	20	27,983	19	25,984	14,301	55
Personal property	125	77,620	80	57,319	13,813	24
Total:		1,627,884		1,305,162	517,832	39.6

Source: Calculated from the original data

**TABLE 6: Economic Losses Survey, Toronto, 1946: Percentage Recouped by Seller**

	Sales by Custodian		Sales by Owner	
	Number	% Recouped	Number	% Recouped
Real Estate	46	54	1	
Businesses	13	20	25	40
Farms	24	47	—	—
Vessels	30	54	—	—
Gear	6	44	1	53
Automobiles	7	59	12	28
Personal Property	39	22	43	28
Total	166	41	82	39

Source: Calculated from the original data

**TABLE 7: Economic Losses Survey, Toronto, 1946: Summary of Losses**

Losses:	Amount \$
Estimated losses from sold property	787,330
Value of property lost, stolen or unaccounted for	322,722
Lost revenue and wages	2,596,344
Other losses	144,693
Fees retained by the Custodian of Enemy and Evacuee Property	76,592
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,928,181</b>

Source: Calculated from the original data

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##### *By the Author:*

Tsunebaru and Grace Amadatsu, Winnipeg, Man.  
 John Aihoshi, St. Thomas, Ont.  
 Tak and Rose Aihoshi, Montreal, Que.  
 Dr. Henry F. Angus, Vancouver, B.C.  
 F. Andrew Brewin, Q.C., M.P., Ottawa, Ont.  
 The Rt. Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker, M.P., P.C., Ottawa, Ont.  
 The Hon. Thomas C. Douglas, M.P., P.C., Ottawa, Ont.  
 Robert England, Victoria, B.C.  
 Frank Ernst, Winnipeg, Man.

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Rev. James Finlay, Toronto, Ont.  
Kiyoshi Hara, Geraldton, Ont.  
Katsuko Hideka Halfhide, Ottawa, Ont.  
Chu Hayashi, Thunder Bay, Ont.  
Rintaro Hayashi, Richmond, B.C.  
Ken Hibi, Thunder Bay, Ont.  
Ichiro Hirayama, Winnipeg, Man.  
Harold Hirose, Winnipeg, Man.  
Mark Honkawa, London, Ont.  
Tosh and Sumi Hoshino, Geraldton, Ont.  
Hiro Kanashiro, Calgary, Alta.  
Min Kanashiro, Lethbridge, Alta.  
Kiyozo Kazuta, Vancouver, B.C.  
Dr. Hugh L. Keenleyside, Victoria, B.C.  
Sachi Kishimoto, Coaldale, Alta.  
Edward Kitagawa, Toronto, Ont.  
Stanley Knowles, M.P., Ottawa, Ont.  
Thelma Kojima, Winnipeg, Man.  
Mrs. Minoru Kudo, London, Ont.  
John Kumagai, London, Ont.  
Amy Leigh, Vancouver, B.C.  
Helga Lougheed, White Rock, B.C.  
John Maeba, Geraldton, Ont.  
Aki Moriyama, Lethbridge, Alta.  
Hanaye "Bunny" Nagamori, Winnipeg, Man.  
Yuki Nakamura, Toronto, Ont.  
Kimaki Nakashima, Montreal, Que.  
Rei Nishio Nakashima, Montreal, Que.  
A. M. (Sandy) Nicholson, M.P., Toronto, Ont.  
Fred Nishikawa, Thunder Bay, Ont.  
Cheiko Nishiyama, Lethbridge, Alta.  
George Obokata, London, Ont.  
Tosh and Irene Omoto, Winnipeg, Man.  
Ayako Otsuka, Lethbridge, Alta.  
Kasey and Sachi Oyama, Montreal, Que.  
The Hon. Jack W. Pickersgill, M.P., Ottawa, Ont.  
William T. Sakamoto, Montreal, Que.  
Seiku Sakumoto, Vancouver, B.C.  
Asano Shigehiro, Calgary, Alta.  
Hide Hyodo Shimizu, Toronto, Ont.  
Kay Kyoshi Kato Shimizu, Ottawa, Ont.  
Kunio Shimizu, Ottawa, Ont.  
Dr. George and Sachi Shimotakahara, Montreal, Que.



Thomas K. Shoyama, Ottawa, Ont.  
 Miyoko Sunada, Raymond, Alta.  
 Dr. Fred and Grace Sunahara, Toronto, Ont.  
 Marion Hoshino Sunahara, London, Ont.  
 Carr and Sue Suzuki, Vancouver, B.C.  
 Mary and Hide Suzuki, London, Ont.  
 Setsuko Sunahara, Vancouver, B.C.  
 Toyo Takata, Toronto, Ont.  
 George Tanaka, Mississauga, Ont.  
 Jitaro Charlie and Sumiko Tanaka, Mississauga, Ont.  
 Herbert and June Tanaka, Toronto, Ont.  
 Kinzie and Terry Tanaka, Toronto, Ont.  
 Sumi Tomonaga, London, Ont.  
 Marge Tsujiura, Coaldale, Alta.  
 William S. Wallace, White Rock, B.C.  
 Seiji Yabuki, London, Ont.  
 George Yamashita, Montreal, Que.

*By Others:*

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