

The Triumph of Citizenship

Patricia E. Roy

The Triumph of Citizenship
The Japanese and Chinese
in Canada, 1941- 67



UBCPress · Vancouver · Toronto

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16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada on ancient-forest-free paper (100% post-consumer recycled) that is processed chlorine- and acid-free, with vegetable-based inks.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Roy, Patricia, 1939-

The triumph of citizenship : the Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1941-67 /
Patricia E. Roy.

Includes bibliographical references and index

ISBN 978-0-7748-1380-8

1. Chinese – British Columbia – History.
2. Japanese – British Columbia – History.
3. British Columbia – Race relations.
4. British Columbia – Politics and government.
5. British Columbia – Emigration and immigration – History.
6. British Columbia – Emigration and immigration – Economic aspects.
7. Immigrants – British Columbia – History. I. Title.

FC3850.C5R688 2007 971.1'004951 C2006-906282-X

Canada

UBC Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our publishing program of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), and of the Canada Council for the Arts, and the British Columbia Arts Council.

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Printed and bound in Canada by Friesens

Set in Fairfield by Blakeley

Copy editor: Dallas Harrison

Proofreader: Gail Copeland

Cartographer: Eric Leinberger

Cover design: Blakeley

UBC Press

The University of British Columbia

2029 West Mall

Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2

604.822.5959 / Fax 604.822.6083

www.ubcpress.ca

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Acknowledgments

Researching and writing a monograph only seems like a solitary occupation; it's a collective effort. This book would not have been possible without the archivists and librarians who collected, arranged, and made available a wide variety of manuscript and printed sources. My thanks go to all of them; alas, including some who are no longer with us. I thank the "anonymous" readers of the manuscript who offered some excellent suggestions to improve it. Not so anonymous are the fellow miners of the archives who passed on little gems to me. They will find themselves thanked individually in the endnotes but I must give a separate thanks to Charles Hou, who shared some of his cartoon collection with me. Thanks too to the University of Victoria, where students asked stimulating questions and colleagues provided a congenial environment.

Like many Canadian scholars, I am indebted to the Aid to Scholarly Publications Program of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, which expeditiously handled the manuscript and generously subsidized its publication.

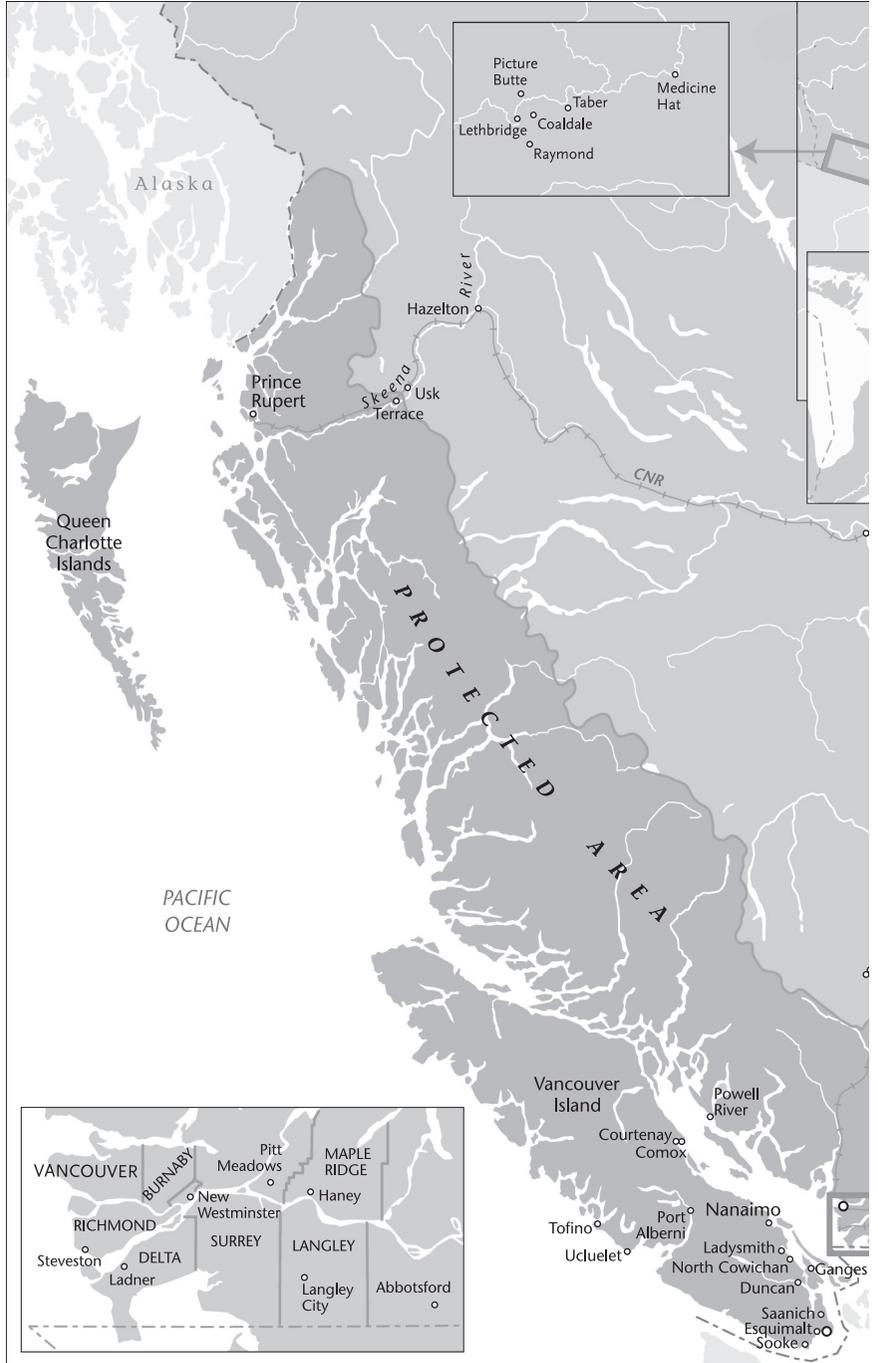
Last but not least I must thank my friends at UBC Press beginning with Jean Wilson, who took a warm interest in the project over many years and did not demur when a projected two volumes became three. More recently, I have enjoyed working with the equally professional and co-operative Camilla Blakeley, who has seen the book through the production process; the copy editor, Dallas Harrison; and the members of the management and marketing team.

A rigorous attempt has been made to find copyright information for all illustrations and to obtain permission to reproduce them. If there are any omissions these are inadvertent and I will be grateful to learn of them.

Abbreviations

ARP	Air Raid Protection
BCFGA	British Columbia Fruit Growers Association
BCSC	British Columbia Security Commission
BESL	British Empire Service League
BNA	British North America
CBA	Chinese Benevolent Association
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
CCJC	Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians
CCNC	Chinese Canadian National Council
CIPO	Canadian Institute of Public Opinion
CNR	Canadian National Railway
CP	Canadian Press
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railway
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
IODE	Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire
IWA	International Woodworkers of America
LPP	Labour Progressive Party
NAJC	National Association of Japanese Canadians
PC	Privy Council
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
SSB	Soldiers' Settlement Board
TLC	Trades and Labour Congress of Canada
UBCM	Union of British Columbia Municipalities
UN	United Nations

The Triumph of Citizenship



Primary locations and destinations of Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1942-67



Introduction

In 1968 Premier W.A.C. Bennett of British Columbia took Mayor Peter Wing of Kamloops, the president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, to a federal-provincial constitutional conference. While in Ottawa, Wing may have met another Kamloops native and fellow graduate of its high school, Thomas Shoyama, a senior economic adviser to the government.¹ A quarter-century earlier their presence in any governmental role would have been unlikely. In 1941 Wing, born in 1914, was an active member of the Kamloops Board of Trade; Shoyama, born in 1916, had graduated from the University of British Columbia with a degree in economics and commerce, but until fellow Japanese Canadians appointed him editor of their newspaper in Vancouver he had worked as a labourer in a pulp mill.

In 1941 neither Wing nor Shoyama could have worked on a government contract or crown land or practised as a lawyer, pharmacist, or accountant. Many barriers, legal or customary, barred their entry to other occupations. Moreover, neither man could have voted, let alone held public office. The reasons were simple: Wing's ancestors had emigrated from China, Shoyama's from Japan, and both lived in British Columbia. There was no chance that any relatives from China might join the Wing family in Kamloops because of the exclusionary Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, and it was unlikely for the Shoyama family because of the strict limits of the Gentlemen's Agreement between Canada and Japan. By 1941 there was some acceptance of the Chinese in British Columbia, as shown by Wing's membership in the Board of Trade, but after the attack on Pearl Harbor, suspicions of the loyalties of all Japanese in the province escalated, and they were soon ordered to move at least 100 miles inland. Shoyama went with his newspaper, the *New Canadian*, to Kaslo, British Columbia. Until after the Second World War, people of Asian descent lacked the franchise and many other civil rights in British Columbia, the province where most of them lived. How and why the status of Wing and Shoyama changed, and how citizenship triumphed over "racist" ideas, constitute the subject of this book.

Like the two previous titles in this trilogy, this volume emphasizes politics and public opinion.² The earlier books, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*, and *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41*, traced the history of discriminatory laws and how politicians fomented and exploited the prejudices of British Columbians. Those books showed that hostility to Asians in British Columbia – and in Canada generally – had multiple causes and that, while many arguments applied to both Chinese and Japanese, British Columbians also distinguished between them. The story of the easing of hostility and the gradual inclusion of Chinese and Japanese into full Canadian society was equally complex.

Objections to both Asian groups began largely as a complaint against “cheap labour” that allegedly undercut white wages, took jobs from white women and men, and did not contribute to the growth of the local economy. Given the notions of “race” that prevailed in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, another objection to Asians was based on the notion that they were inassimilable. That word had several meanings; it could refer to miscegenation – a concept that was as repugnant to most Chinese and Japanese as it was to Caucasians – or to a perceived failure of Asians to adapt to Canadian customs. The latter aspect of the inassimilability argument applied particularly to the Chinese. Because of Chinese migration customs, the head tax imposed on Chinese immigrants between 1886 and 1923, and exclusion from then to 1947, few Chinese established families in Canada. Many sent significant portions of their earnings to families in China and lived in crowded and allegedly unsanitary Chinatowns. Their white critics claimed that they did not contribute to the development of British Columbia and to Canada generally and endangered public health and morality. Given the absence of family life, it is not surprising that some Chinese found companionship in gambling dens or solace through opium. Not only did Caucasians regard both habits as immoral, but they also feared that corrupt Chinese might spread the drug habit to vulnerable young whites, especially young women who would resort to prostitution to support their addictions. The lack of Chinese women also meant that the Chinese population began to decline in the 1920s since few Chinese were born in Canada and older men died or returned to China. Since Western nations regarded China as a populous but weak state with little ability to protect its emigrants, Canada could unilaterally impose immigration barriers on the Chinese.

The same widely held Canadian fear that impelled these immigration policies – that the Chinese by their sheer numbers could overwhelm white society – also applied to the Japanese. Canada, however, saw Japan as a powerful nation and sometime ally that would effectively protest any challenge to its status or insult to its people. Thus, Canada limited, but did not halt, Japanese immigration by diplomatic means. Until its revisions in the 1920s, the

Gentlemen's Agreement negotiated in 1907 placed few restrictions on female immigrants. The Japanese could form families. Japanese women took pride in keeping their children and homes clean, tidy, and moral, so complaints about the Japanese threatening the physical or moral health of Caucasians were rare. By the 1930s a generation of Canadian-born and -educated Japanese, the Nisei, had reached their majority and sought reversal of an 1895 amendment to the British Columbia Registration of Voters Act that added Japanese to Chinese and Native Indians as those who were disfranchised. Since the federal government relied on provincial voters' qualifications, these groups were also disfranchised federally. The Nisei campaign for full citizenship gained some sympathy, but the strength of Japan that had led Canada to treat it diplomatically in immigration matters redounded to the disadvantage of Japanese Canadians as Japan extended its search for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in the 1930s. Many British Columbians ceased to distinguish among the Canadian-born naturalized Canadians of Japanese origin, Japanese nationals, and the government of Japan. By 1938 war scares were endemic: rumours of illegal Japanese immigration and Japanese plans for sabotage circulated widely, and Canadian government officials warned of riots against Japanese Canadians in the case of war.

This volume is organized in both a chronological and a thematic manner. Because most experiences of the Chinese and Japanese were different, they are generally treated separately. The book begins with the outbreak of the Pacific War on 7 December 1941. Following the shock of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and the rapid advance of its military juggernaut southward through Asia, as Chapter 1 documents, panicky British Columbians demanded the removal of all Japanese from the coast. Due to the anti-Japanese propaganda that had long emanated from the coast and because of the war, as Chapter 2 shows, British Columbia's interior and the other provinces were generally reluctant to accept Japanese Canadian relocatees except under strict conditions. In fact, the BC cry that "the east" did not understand its "Oriental problem" reflected ancient rhetoric more than reality. Although few other Canadians had much direct contact with Asians before the war, they shared many prejudices with British Columbians. They readily accepted immigration restrictions, legislatures in Ontario and Saskatchewan tried to prevent Asians from employing white women, and Saskatchewan disfranchised Chinese. By 1941 almost half the Chinese in Canada lived elsewhere than British Columbia but were scattered. Most cities had small Chinatowns, and handfuls of Chinese lived in small towns, especially in the Prairie provinces. Outside British Columbia, however, only Toronto and Montreal, Canada's two largest cities, had more than 1,000 Chinese residents each. In 1941, in contrast, 22,096 of the 23,149 Japanese in Canada resided in British Columbia, and almost all were at the coast.³

Because of the war and the government's plan to disperse the Japanese,

a provincial question became a national one. Yet after initial hostility, the Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario communities and the city of Montreal that received the relocated Japanese found them to be good citizens and worthy additions to their populations. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, despite opposition in British Columbia to their return, the revulsion of many Canadians to forcing Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry to go to Japan after the war stimulated interest in human rights and the value and rights of Canadian citizenship. One of the most telling arguments against “repatriating” Japanese to Japan was its implication for Canadian citizenship since so many had been born in Canada.⁴

The war that brought such upheavals to the Japanese increased the sympathy that other Canadians felt toward China and the Chinese. Since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Canadians contributed, for example, to Chinese War Relief. That support continued throughout the war. Meanwhile, the Chinese in Canada bought Victory Bonds, donated money to the Red Cross, and worked in the munitions industry. A few were able to join the armed forces. And despite some concern in British Columbia about the implications for enfranchisement, the army in 1944 began to call up Chinese Canadian men in eligible age groups for military service. The gradual inclusion that led to enfranchisement in British Columbia and the repeal of the exclusionary Chinese Immigration Act in 1947 is described in Chapter 4.

Canada’s experience from 1941 to 1967 illustrates how racist ideas can change. In the early 1940s, few Canadians questioned the removal of Japanese Canadians from the coast, the disposal of their property, and the involuntary dispersal throughout the country of those who did not accept “repatriation.” Late in the war other Canadians began to pay attention to the civil disabilities imposed on the Chinese, especially their inability to bring wives and children to Canada. With little fuss, British Columbia repealed most of its discriminatory laws and practices affecting the Chinese by 1947; that year Canada repealed the exclusionary Chinese Immigration Act, though it was little more than a token gesture. With memories of the war still fresh in many minds, however, Japanese Canadians, for reasons explained in Chapter 5, had to wait until 1949 to return freely to the coast and enjoy basic civil rights such as the franchise. Even then they did not receive adequate compensation for their wartime property losses. By then Asians within Canada had the same civil and political rights as any other Canadians except in matters of immigration. Gaining equality in that department was a slow process, but as described in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively the Japanese and Chinese communities used their newly acquired political voices to help replace a Canadian immigration policy that depended largely on country of origin with one that privileged skills and the ability of an individual to contribute to Canada. Together the last three chapters show how the Chinese and Japanese who were once excluded gained inclusion as full Canadian citizens.

The reasons for this change vary and, like the reasons for the original antipathy toward Asians, were multifaceted or intertwined. Some years ago in “British Columbia’s Fear of Asians, 1900-1950,” I argued that “the feelings of insecurity and inferiority underlying the assorted anti-Asian arguments” could be listed under headings such as “the challenge to morality, overwhelming numbers, the Japanese military threat, ‘unfair’ economic competition, and, especially, inassimilability.”⁵ By the time the Pacific War broke out, British Columbians had for the most part, except for the external threat from Japan, overcome those fears through legislation and practices that regulated morality, the labour market, and immigration. By the summer of 1945, a badly beaten Japan was no longer a military threat; once it regained its independence, it was a demilitarized ally and an important trading partner.

The concept of inassimilability was still alive in 1941 but gradually disappeared. Chinese Canadians by their contributions to Canada’s war effort and Japanese Canadians by their determined loyalty to Canada despite the harsh treatment inflicted on them proved that they were good, loyal Canadians. Dispersal – whether voluntary in the case of the Chinese or enforced in the case of the Japanese – eased pressure points in coastal British Columbia. Moreover, in their day-to-day encounters with Caucasians in many parts of the country, the Chinese and Japanese demonstrated that they were capable of being full, contributing members of Canadian society. The atmosphere for including them in the Canadian polity was eased by the revulsion that the Western world had developed to racist ideas, the growing appreciation of the importance of human rights, and the pride of Canadians in their new citizenship. Thus, people who were once excluded could be included.

That openness of spirit, however, did not immediately extend to potential immigrants from Asia; old fears that their countless numbers could overwhelm Canada revived after the war. Both Japanese and Chinese Canadians had to exercise their new political rights and, in association with sympathetic Caucasians, lobby for changes in immigration laws to permit family reunification. Although made easier by the fact that the Chinese voters were a factor in several federal constituencies, it was a long process. In the meantime, some Chinese resorted to creating fraudulent documents and “paper families” to circumvent the law. By the 1960s, a prosperous and confident Canada could afford to be generous. After permitting illegal Chinese immigrants to “adjust” their status, Canada undertook a general review of its immigration policy and in 1967 removed its racial barriers. Now Asians who had once been excluded could, if they had the necessary skills, be included as Canadians.

These changes were part of a sea change in Canadian attitudes that had been developing for some decades but whose denouement was accelerated by the Second World War. That change can be seen in the greater concern for the collectivity of Canadians as demonstrated by the introduction of a variety of new social security measures, including unemployment insurance,

the family allowance, the universal old age pension, and the beginnings of medicare. In addition Canadians relaxed many of their ideas about morality, easing liquor laws in many provinces and allowing gambling. They once regarded gambling as an immoral habit and cited the proclivity to play games of chance as a reason for halting Chinese immigration; by the 1960s, governments were sponsoring lotteries!⁶

Constance Backhouse, a legal historian who defines the term “racism” as “the use of racial categories to create, explain, and perpetuate inequalities,” argues that racism “remained hauntingly static.”⁷ For the years before the Second World War, the period on which her study concentrates, she is largely correct; however, as the waning of discrimination and the acceptance of Chinese and Japanese as full citizens after the war demonstrate, racism ceased to be static at least in these circumstances. Indeed, like others throughout the Western world, Canadians realized that “race” was a social construct rather than a biological fact. As historian James St.G. Walker observed, Canada saw “an apparent watershed, even a ‘paradigm shift,’ during and just after World War II.”⁸ This volume has many examples of how “race” or more specifically concepts of “race” were mutable. How else does one explain such diehard “racists” as H.H. Stevens appealing to Chinese voters or Halford Wilson working with the Chinese to preserve Vancouver’s Chinatown from redevelopment? Or columnist and later politician Elmore Philpott describing the Japanese as potential fifth columnists in 1943 but championing their civil rights after the war or Victor Odlum, who ran (unsuccessfully) on a White Canada platform in the 1921 federal election, urging an end to Chinese exclusion in 1945 when he was Canada’s ambassador to China?

Before the war ended, Canadians were questioning notions of racial superiority and expressing concern about the need to protect human rights. Asians, especially the Japanese, became the focus of this shift. Historian Ross Lambertson has shown how the Co-Operative Committee on Japanese Canadians (CCJC), a group formed to assist Japanese Canadians resettle in Toronto, evolved to become “the first major human rights coalition of the immediate post-war period” and an exemplification of “the new interest in human rights that was emerging out of the struggle against totalitarianism.”⁹ In educating the public and the politicians, Canadian civil libertarians made good use of references to “universal human rights” in the Charter of the United Nations (1945) and the subsequent Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The sentiment in those documents – that there were “fundamental human rights” – built on the Atlantic Charter that Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued in 1941. The Canadian government, though sympathetic to human rights, had problems with the Universal Declaration. Its concerns included the limited powers of federal states to deal with such matters, the tradition of relying on statute law and judicial interpretation rather than general declarations of principles,

the lack of precision in the document, and the inclusion of economic and social rights in a document protecting political and civil rights. Nevertheless, Canada believed in its general principles and, facing the embarrassment of being grouped with Communist nations and some others with repressive regimes, did sign.¹⁰

While concern for human rights is an overarching theme in the story of changing Canadian attitudes to Asians, a strong economy and labour shortages rather than unemployment made it easier to accept Asians as equals. By the time the Pacific War began, the Canadian economy was generally operating at near-full capacity. Jobs were plentiful, and wages were good. Old arguments about “cheap Asian labour” no longer had any basis. In the immediate postwar years, despite some short-term unemployment as soldiers returned and industry converted to peacetime production and a continuation of some wartime economic controls, Canada as a whole prospered. Employment and the national income were at high levels. The *Canada Year Book* described the 1.5 percent unemployment rate in 1947 as “close to an irreducible minimum.” During the war, Canada had become highly industrialized; afterward, with wartime savings in their pockets, Canadians were keen to buy consumer goods that had been unavailable during the war or unaffordable during the Depression. In addition exports were high as Europe needed Canadian raw materials to rebuild its economy. The population was growing with the beginning of the “baby boom” and the resumption of immigration, mainly from Britain and continental Europe. Indeed, when the press criticized immigration policy, it was to complain that the government was not doing enough to bring in new immigrants, but it insisted on a selective policy. Canadians wanted to choose their immigrants, though as described in Chapters 6 and 7 the public and many elected politicians were more willing than the officials in the Department of Immigration to include Asians.¹¹ The campaigns for a relaxation of immigration laws and against Japanese repatriation nicely illustrate how governments respond to public pressure. Indeed, the interplay between elected politicians and the public and between the government and its civil service advisers is a secondary theme throughout this volume.

Historiography, Sources, and Nomenclature

Historiographically, this volume breaks new ground in that it brings the stories of both the Chinese and the Japanese and of both the war and the postwar periods between a single set of covers. Several scholars have examined the wartime experiences of the Japanese. The first book-length study, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II: A Sociological and Psychological Account* by sociologist Forrest E. La Violette, was based largely on readings of the public press and observations of the Japanese community itself.¹² As Japanese Canadians concentrated on re-establishing themselves, their wartime story faded from public memory. The BC centennial of 1958 encouraged

the national Japanese Canadian Citizens Association (JCCA) to sponsor the writing of a history of the Japanese in Canada. The association commissioned Ken Adachi, a journalist, to write it and sent him across Canada to interview Japanese Canadians. The process was time consuming, and funding was often a problem, so the book did not appear until 1976. Relying almost entirely on interviews and published sources, Adachi produced what is still the definitive history of the Japanese in Canada.

A few years later a young scholar, Ann Gomer Sunahara, intrigued by the reasons for the removal of her husband's family from British Columbia to Ontario, delved into the rich resources of the National Archives of Canada to produce *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War*. Her work gained more than scholarly attention since the JCCA relied to a large extent on her research to document its case for what became the successful campaign for redress. Although his main interest was the prewar period, W. Peter Ward included a chapter on the Japanese evacuation in *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia*. The first edition had only a brief overview of the postwar era; the second has a short preface further analyzing that period. His conclusions are not dissimilar from mine. Several works on the Redress Movement, of which the most important is Roy Miki's *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice*, include some historical background.¹³

In collaboration with two scholars from Japan, Masako Iino and Hiroko Takamura, and Canadian historian J.L. Granatstein, I was one of the authors of *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War*. Although that book describes the rising hysteria in British Columbia immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, some reviewers seem to have based their comments on an earlier article by Granatstein that they interpreted as suggesting that there were doubts about the loyalties of Japanese Canadians. It is true that Canadian officials had limited knowledge of the Japanese in Canada, but the police and military were quite convinced that by interning fewer than forty Japanese nationals immediately after Pearl Harbor they had put everyone of doubtful loyalty out of circulation. *Mutual Hostages* argued that the fear of physical attacks on the Japanese in Canada might have given the Japanese military an excuse to take reprisals against Canadian and British prisoners of war and, that this concern, rather than doubts about the loyalty of Japanese Canadians, explains the removal of the Japanese from the coast. That is also argued here.¹⁴

Readers seeking a detailed study of the wartime experiences of the Japanese in Canada here will be disappointed. Because those experiences have been well documented and memoirs continue to appear, Japanese "voices" appear only occasionally, but references appear at appropriate points. In the postwar era, when Japanese Canadians actively sought full civil rights and a relaxation of immigration restrictions, their voices became an important part of the

story through important sources such as the *New Canadian* and the records of the JCCA and related organizations.

Since the story of the Chinese is less well known, I have included as much English-language evidence of their views and actions as I have been able to find. Perhaps because their experience was less dramatic – though separation was painful for the Chinese men in Canada whose families were in China – the Chinese in Canada so far have been less well served by historians, though younger scholars such as Lisa Rose Mar are doing promising research. In *The Concubine's Children: Portrait of a Family Divided*, Denise Chong described her own family, which had members in both China and British Columbia. Both historian Anthony Chan and sociologist Peter Li have written brief overviews that are strongest on the prewar and post-1967 years. Several prominent members of Vancouver's Chinese community produced the most thorough overview, *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, under the editorship of Edgar Wickberg. It focuses on organizations within Canadian Chinese communities. Two historical geographers have also studied Chinatowns. David Chuenyan Lai has examined the physical features of a number of Chinatowns within Canada; Kay Anderson, who has a strong theoretical bent, has written a well-researched study of how outsiders saw Vancouver's Chinatown. In *The Chinese in Vancouver, 1945-80: The Pursuit of Identity and Power*, Wing Chung Ng used Chinese- and English-language sources in a study of the internal politics of Vancouver's Chinese community in the postwar years. A more popular history is Paul Yee's *Saltwater City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver*.¹⁵

As Ng's work demonstrates, it is wrong to assume, as Caucasians often did, that the Chinese community thought as one. While Caucasians tended to think of Foon Sien, who made many pilgrimages to Ottawa in search of a relaxation of immigration laws, as the chief spokesman for Chinese in Canada, within his own community he was controversial. Some of this internal division appears in Chapter 7 in the discussion of Douglas Jung's political career, but a study of the internal politics of the Chinese communities in Canada would require another book or books. Similarly, Caucasians erroneously saw the Japanese Canadian community as monolithic and failed to distinguish between those who were legally, though not necessarily intellectually, enemy aliens and those who were proud Canadian citizens. Moreover, there were social and economic divisions within Japanese Canadian communities, but that too is the subject for another study.

In the earlier volumes, I drew heavily on newspapers as a source of public opinion. While editorials represent only the opinions of the editor and publisher, most newspapers want to stay in business and are unlikely to offend large segments of their potential readership. Whether the newspapers made or reflected public opinion is, of course, a moot point, but in some cases the influence seems to be clear. The liberal *Toronto Daily Star* and the *Winnipeg*

Free Press, for example, probably deserve considerable credit for generating opposition to the postwar “repatriation” of Japanese Canadians, and Foon Sien suggested that only after Canadian newspapers and periodicals “took up the struggle” did the campaign for the repeal of the exclusionary Chinese Immigration Act go well. At the same time, in expressing opposition to the return of the Japanese Canadians to the Pacific coast, Vancouver and Victoria papers reflected public opinion. Yet we must also remember that in the first weeks after Pearl Harbor the public paid scant attention to their calls to “keep calm.” The fact that many people wrote letters to the editors, however, suggests that they believed the press did influence opinion.¹⁶

This time I have again drawn on the press, but because this volume deals with the Chinese and Japanese nationally rather than solely provincially I have had to sacrifice comprehensiveness of coverage in order to provide some regional breadth. In researching *A White Man's Province* and *The Oriental Question*, I was able to read most BC newspapers in their entirety. Most were weeklies, and many early ones were essentially advertising sheets with only a page or two of news and editorial comment. For this volume, and particularly after 1945 or so, I have relied largely on the major provincial dailies. That, however, is not the problem that it might appear to be. With better transportation, the metropolitan dailies circulated widely in the hinterland, and hinterland journals focused largely on purely local issues or merely carried wire service reports of national and international news. As for the press outside British Columbia, I have dipped into representative major newspapers at times when there was reason to believe that some issue relating to Chinese or Japanese Canadians would elicit a comment. I sampled the French-language press, but the few examples of opinion that I found tended to be similar to those in the English press.

As the notes reveal, I have benefited from the selected translations from Chinese-language newspapers, especially the *Chinese Times*, prepared by the team headed by Edgar Wickberg that did the research for *From China to Canada*. The Chinese Canadian Research Collection at Special Collections in the library at the University of British Columbia also includes transcripts of interviews, questionnaires, and translations of some other Chinese-language sources. The papers of Foon Sien, who long acted as a spokesman for Chinese Canadians, are also at UBC, but many of the boxes are filled with clippings and other printed matter available elsewhere.

Most of the records relating to Japanese Canadians apart from personal diaries, memoirs, and the like are in English. The *New Canadian*, which began as the Nisei newspaper, was published once or twice a week during the war, when it operated under censorship (the records of the press censor at Library and Archives Canada [LAC] are interesting in their own right) but was able to express editorial opinions and report the activities of Japanese Canadian organizations. It continued to publish for many years after the war.

The records of the JCCA located at LAC include some files from predecessor organizations and are especially strong on the post-1947 period. Because the files include correspondence as well as reports from its branches and records of conventions, they offer excellent insight into the Japanese Canadian community and clearly demonstrate divisions within it. The records of the CCJC and of F. Andrew Brewin at LAC supplement them.

As the notes indicate, this book also draws heavily on government records, the papers of politicians, and the files of various organizations. The published debates of the House of Commons and, to a lesser extent, the Senate are a very useful and easily accessible source of political opinion. Since provincial governments had relatively little to do with Asians or immigration, most of the relevant manuscripts are located in LAC. Before the day of the photocopier, the government used the mimeograph machine, copy typists, and carbon paper to generate copies of many of its documents. Thus, the same letter or report often appears in more than one collection, but usually I have provided only one citation.

Records of the federal government's major policy decisions, including some background information, can be found in the Records of the Privy Council Office, especially the Cabinet War Committee. For Japanese Canadians, the records of the Department of External Affairs are important since it coordinated many aspects of policy relating to their wartime and immediate postwar treatment. And because Prime Minister King was also the secretary of state for external affairs until 1947, much correspondence that passed through that department often also appears in his own papers. The day-to-day administration of matters relating to Japanese Canadians during the war and for several years after is recorded, sometimes in great detail, in the records of the relevant divisions of the Department of Labour, which took over the duties of the British Columbia Security Commission, the agency responsible for moving the Japanese from the coast. Information about external security during the war can be found in records of the Department of National Defence. The most concentrated collection of material opposed to the presence of Japanese Canadians in British Columbia is found in the papers of Ian Mackenzie, but there is material along the same lines in the Halford D. Wilson papers at the British Columbia Archives and the Howard Green papers at the City of Vancouver Archives.

Immigration policy and practice are recorded in the files of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and its predecessor, the Department of Immigration. Unfortunately, because of privacy legislation, many of the files listed in the Finding Aids are not open, but the file titles suggest that many of these are individual cases. General policy and practice can be discerned from the open files. Departmental records can be supplemented by the papers of several cabinet ministers responsible for immigration (J.W. Pickersgill, Ellen Fairclough, and E. Davie Fulton) and especially those of

Prime Ministers W.L. Mackenzie King, John Diefenbaker, and Lester B. Pearson. These papers, along with those of leaders of opposition parties such as John Bracken and M.J. Coldwell, often include letters from constituents with opinions on policy generally and occasionally poignant concerns about individual would-be immigrants. The Louis St. Laurent papers are disappointingly thin both for the period of his prime ministership and for his earlier career as minister of justice and secretary of state for external affairs. Despite the wealth of documentary material, historians have only begun to scratch the surface of the many aspects of the fascinating subject of immigration policy.

Increasingly, scholars have used the Japanese word *Nikkei* to refer to the Japanese people collectively whether they be of the immigrant generation (Issei) or Canadian born (Nisei), Japanese nationals, or Canadian citizens. During the war and immediate postwar years, the common term was simply “Japanese” or more pejoratively “Jap,” a favourite term of headline writers, without regard to birthplace or national status.¹⁷ Unless context makes such distinctions necessary, I have often simply used the word *Japanese*. Throughout the war years, the removal of the Japanese from the coast was referred to as an “evacuation,” and this term is still in common usage. Like others, Roy Miki has noted that it was a euphemism. He is partially correct; the Canadian government did not expect to return Japanese Canadians to the West Coast after the danger had passed; however, as Chapter 1 argues, the term was correct in the sense that Japanese Canadians were being removed from potential danger. That danger, of course, was not an external military threat but the fear that frightened and angry white British Columbians might violently attack Japanese Canadians and their property. I have generally used the terms “evacuation” and “evacuee” for the war years and “relocation” and “relocatee” for the postwar years. By 1945, when it seemed to be unlikely that the Japanese would be permitted to return to the coast, “evacuation” and “evacuee” were no longer appropriate terms, though contemporaries did not always appreciate that. The word *internment* has been loosely used; even the formal apology of the Canadian government to Japanese Canadians in 1988 referred to their “internment.” In fact, only about 800 men were interned because, in a few cases, the Canadian government had reason to suspect their loyalty to Canada and more commonly because they refused to co-operate with the evacuation process to protest the breakup of family groups.¹⁸

The apology and redress payments to Japanese Canadians in 1988 and to Chinese head tax payers in 2006 epitomize the theme of this volume. From 1942 to 1949, Canada excluded Japanese Canadians from coastal British Columbia, and excluded Chinese immigrants from 1923 to 1947. How these once-excluded peoples were gradually included in the Canadian polity demonstrates the triumph of citizenship.

A Civil Necessity: The Decision to Evacuate

It is going to be a very great problem to move the Japanese and particularly to deal with the ones who are naturalized Canadians or Canadian born. There is every possibility of riots. Once that occurs, there will be repercussions in the Far East against our own prisoners. Public prejudice is so strong in B.C. that it is going to be difficult to control the situation.

W.L.M. King, Diary, 19 February 1942

That comment of Prime Minister Mackenzie King followed Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and quick military successes in Asia, which stimulated white British Columbians' long-standing fears of Japanese aggression. Within days of that observation, King's government ordered all people of Japanese ancestry, including those born in Canada, to leave the coast of British Columbia. In 1947, in its final report on the re-establishment of Japanese in Canada, the Department of Labour attributed "the decision to evacuate persons of the Japanese race from the coastal areas of British Columbia" to "considerations of military necessity." "Military grounds" were also the official reason Canada gave to Spain, the protecting power for Japan's interests in Canada. That interpretation persisted. In 1961, Louis St. Laurent, who had been justice minister in 1942, claimed that there was reason to fear that Japanese forces might try to land on the BC coast and doubt about the "loyalty of persons of Japanese descent in B.C."¹

The explanation was deceptive; military authorities did not demand the removal of *all* Japanese from the coast. The chiefs of staff in late February 1942 did not consider an invasion from the Pacific "a practicable operation of war," though raids or bombing attacks "to contain North American forces in America" were possible. They made no mention of the Japanese in British Columbia, though the Joint Services Committee, Pacific Coast Command, was anxious to remove Japanese men from certain defence areas, namely Ucluelet-Tofino, Prince Rupert-Skeena River, the Queen Charlotte Islands,

and Quatsino Sound. Many civilians appreciated that moving the Japanese was not a military necessity. In mid-February 1942, the Vancouver *Daily Province* frankly conceded that “a good deal of the agitation for the removal of the Japanese had nothing whatever to do with the war or the necessities of defence, but was promoted by agencies that had political axes to grind or self-ish interests to serve.” Given the nervousness of coastal British Columbians about a possible Japanese attack, especially after the fall of Singapore, their long-standing suspicions of the Japanese, complaints of economic competition, and the vociferousness of the province’s politicians, Prime Minister King had reason to fear trouble. His government ordered the evacuation of *all* Japanese not for any real military reason but to prevent a greater evil, hysterical attacks on Japanese residents of coastal British Columbia. Of that likelihood, there was ample evidence.²

ON 6 DECEMBER 1941, the *Trail Daily Times* asked rhetorically, “how will Canada react to the war in the Pacific which now seems inevitable?” Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor was a shock but not a surprise. After discussing the wording of the order in council declaring war on Japan, the Cabinet War Committee considered the “desirability” of “counselling against any anti-Japanese demonstration in B.C.” and, in line with a recommendation of the Special Committee on Orientals in British Columbia (the committee, set up in 1940, was composed of Ottawa-based officials), expressed its belief in the loyalty of the Japanese in British Columbia. General K.C. Stuart, chief of the general staff, assured cabinet that coastal defences were in order and that the RCMP had the situation “in good control.” The original plan was to ask Premier T.D. Pattullo to warn British Columbians of the danger of “irresponsible anti-Japanese demonstrations,” but Pattullo was in the process of resigning, so the Cabinet War Committee decided not to send a message to him. Despite his lame duck status, Pattullo issued a press release about Japan’s “treacherous surprise attack” and exhorted British Columbians to “completely defeat the enemy abroad” and co-operate with the authorities to defend “our country.” It said nothing of Japanese Canadians. Similarly, in a fifteen-minute-long speech that was broadcast in both Canada and the United States on 8 December, King stressed Canadian co-operation with Britain, the Commonwealth, and the United States. His only mention of the Japanese in Canada was to the effect that “competent authorities are satisfied [that the] security situation is well in hand and are confident of the correct and loyal behaviour of Canadian residents of Japanese origin.” He noted that the Japanese had been registered and fingerprinted and the “dangerous” ones interned. As for Japanese nationals and those naturalized after 1922, he said that, like Germans and Italians, they would be required to report regularly to the RCMP. He made no special mention of the Canadian born.³

More calming was RCMP Commissioner S.T. Wood, who broadcast a plea to British Columbians to treat local Japanese with “courtesy and fair play.” To reassure the public, the RCMP publicized the detention of thirty-one “Japanese nationals who had been previously listed as potentially dangerous.” Wood reported that, despite thorough investigations, the RCMP had found no evidence of subversive activity among Japanese in British Columbia who could not be blamed for the war. Following advice from the Standing Committee on Orientals⁴ that “over enthusiastic or irresponsible Occidentals” might cause disturbances, the RCMP encouraged Japanese-language schools and newspapers to close lest their existence cause “suspicion and irritation” among people unable to read or speak that language. When the press implied that the government had ordered the closures, the white population seemed to be pleased. The Standing Committee’s most sweeping recommendation was to immobilize the Japanese fishing fleet. The navy began doing this on 8 December. Cecil E. Hill, in charge of the RCMP in British Columbia, believed that this action had avoided a “public uproar” and protected the BC coast from small boats that “were undoubtedly a menace.”⁵

On 12 December, Hill reported that “public reaction” had not “crystallized,” but despite police patrols in Vancouver and New Westminster “alarmed” Japanese feared “irresponsible Occidentals.” Apart from a brick thrown through the window of a West End store and a blazing oil-soaked rag tossed into a boarding house on Powell Street, there was no violence. Mayor J.W. Cornett urged citizens “to keep their feet on the ground”; General R.O. Alexander took the emergency calmly and assured Ottawa that “his forces were not ‘panicky.’” Japanese Canadians publicly reaffirmed their loyalty to Canada, but the Okanagan resident who said “pretty soon this will be all Japan” undercut their work. He was fined \$200 and jailed for two months under the Defence of Canada Regulations for uttering statements likely to be prejudicial to His Majesty.⁶

Much of the press heeded the censor’s request to “do nothing to promote over-excitement.” All three Vancouver dailies urged readers to “Be Calm!”; they recognized that most local Japanese residents were Canadians and were not responsible for the actions of Japan, and warned of the dangers of “hot-headed activity of a minority among the Japanese and among our own people.” Under the headline “Show Them Consideration,” the Vancouver *Daily Province* stressed that “our quarrel is with Japan, not with Japanese nationals here or people of Japanese blood,” and it urged people to “abide by the law.” The *Federationist*, the CCF paper and the voice of the BC Federation of Labour, admonished that “encouraging racial or color prejudice or . . . vandalism of any kind” would hinder the war effort. Outside Vancouver, the *Comox District Free Press* urged “Let’s Keep Our Heads” and let the authorities, not “rash souls,” take any necessary action against local Japanese who had no part in starting “such an unprovoked war.” When the postmaster at Oliver said

that the arrival of two Japanese families affronted “our long standing policy of no Orientals,” the *Vernon News* hoped that “none of the hatred for their Imperial cousins will be visited on these hardworking, industrious people.” Kelowna’s acting mayor, O.L. Jones, was confident that the 332 local law-abiding Japanese would enjoy the benefits of British justice. The *Kelowna Courier* urged, “let them alone, give them a little sympathy, and let the police handle the bad actors whom undoubtedly they are watching closely.”⁷

Japanophobes, however, did not distinguish between Japanese Canadians and the government of Japan. Thus they interpreted assertions that “most local Japanese were loyal to Canada” as implying that some might not be. That theme ran through newspapers from Prince Rupert to Penticton. The *Nanaimo Free Press* hoped that the loyalty of the Nisei, the Canadian-born Japanese, would be “equal to the strain.” Other editors did not give Japanese Canadians the benefit of the doubt. The *Kamloops Sentinel* asserted that “any representative of a nation that would act as Japan has acted in relation to the United States is not to be trusted; not at any price.” The *Ladysmith Chronicle* hoped that “the horror of war may clear the air ... by sending these to the third and fourth generation back to the Japanese gardens where they can do least harm.” Mincing no words, the *Creston Review* admitted that interior residents had had “very little contact with these apes [who are] ... sly, treacherous, dishonest, and hate white men.” More politely, the *Victoria Daily Times* declared that Japan’s recent “treachery” meant that the Canadian government must “re-examine the status of all Japanese in this country.” Apart from warning of incendiary bombs, its local rival, the *Daily Colonist*, said nothing on the Japanese until late December.⁸

Efforts to assure British Columbians that police and the military had the situation in hand were thwarted on 8 December when Western Air Command warned of surprise Japanese attacks “directed by lights.” As one of his last acts as premier, Pattullo announced an indefinite blackout. Radio stations went off the air at 5:30 p.m., night shifts were cancelled, air raid wardens went to their posts, and householders scrambled to buy blackout curtains, plywood, flashlights, and candles. In Prince Rupert, it was said that nearly fifty enemy planes had been seen near San Francisco, but a story that nearby Sitka, Alaska, had been bombed was quickly denied. Mayor Andrew McGavin of Victoria announced that “the Japanese are reported off the Aleutian Islands. We expect them here any time. The situation is very grave.” G.W. McPherson, who arrived in Vancouver on 10 December to act as custodian of Japanese property, found that the blackout had caused more concern about an “immediate attack” than the presence of Japanese. The censor blamed emphasis on an “imminent” air raid for the “jittery state.” Nevertheless, the next morning a resident recalled that “the sun came up to find us all intact and unmolested, but panic did not diminish immediately.”⁹

On 10 December, on request of the provincial police, the federal government

declared the “entire province” a vulnerable area. Ian Mackenzie, the only BC member of the federal cabinet, told the new premier, John Hart, that areas around Prince Rupert, Vancouver, and Vancouver Island south of Port Alberni were “in greatest hazard,” but the whole coast and much of southern British Columbia east to Fernie was “liable to a lesser degree to enemy attack.” That was worrisome given the state of defences. G.G. McGeer (Liberal MP, Vancouver-Burrard) facetiously suggested that, knowing there were no air raid defences, the Japanese were unlikely to raid “at night when they could do so with much more safety in the daytime.”¹⁰

A few days later, while inspecting Pacific coast defences, General Stuart told the press that an invasion was an “extremely remote” possibility and that his forces could cope with “hit and run” attacks. Those calming words were overshadowed when the naval provost marshal at Halifax said, “the impossible has happened too often in this war to consider a Japanese invasion of the west coast of Canada impossible.” Mayor Cornett and Vancouver’s ARP (air raid protection) committee sought federal funds to plan the evacuation of civilians and the care of bombing victims. The censor suppressed such stories as tending “to nervousness, in some cases frenzy, and toward mass hysteria.” The *Vancouver Sun* called for co-ordinated efforts to arrange emergency shelters and sandbagging but saw “wholesale evacuation, or a desertion of our cities and countryside,” as “a miserable, contemptible theory.” Well inland, residents of Prince George and Kamloops complained of inadequate protection. In Prince Rupert, the most exposed city, the *Daily News* concluded, “military and naval authorities are fully entitled to warn” civilians of an imminent attack on the Pacific Northwest. The next day it published a full page of photographs of Canada’s Pacific coast defences.¹¹

Many worried about local Japanese acting as fifth columnists. R.H.B. Ker, a prominent Victoria businessman, complained, “we can’t trust these yellow devils one foot ... they ought to be behind barbed wire ... in a place where they can do no harm.” As a postscript, he added, “we must purge this country of all Japs after we have won the war!” A Vancouver school principal advised the prime minister that the Japanese “are not thinking or working for Canada ... They are not to be trusted.” Letters to the editor included an almost daily dose of suggestions about fifth columnists. The false claim of US Secretary of the Navy F.A. Knox that “the most effective fifth column work of the entire war was done in Hawaii, with the possible exception of Norway,” reinforced the idea. A few British Columbians proposed repatriating all Japanese who were registered with the Japanese consulate; others proposed interning all Japanese or at least strictly supervising their activities or shipping them to Ontario and Quebec for the duration of the conflict. McPherson reported “a rather explosive situation as between the Japs and the whites” and thought even “reasonable thinkers ... generally feel that the security of the Province is in grave danger from a fifth column.” One Vancouver resident claimed that

80 percent of the people wanted the “immediate internment of all Japanese nationals” and warned that, “when Hong Kong falls, or we lose any big battles or if Japanese bombers ever come over B.C.,” there “will certainly be rioting and bloodshed in Vancouver.” The head of the Pitt Meadows ARP wrote of “courting disaster” by not dealing with “the internal Jap situation.” Saying that it was impossible to distinguish between loyal and disloyal, he proposed interning all adult males, with the “repatriation of all” as the final goal.¹²

General Alexander informed the Joint Services Committee, Pacific Coast, of growing demands for interning “the entire Japanese-born community” and the “obvious” “dangers of such agitation.” He asked F.J. Hume, chairman of the Standing Committee, “to explain the situation” and seek the co-operation of Vancouver newspapers. Hume privately told the prime minister that Japan’s military successes “inflamed public opinion against the local Japanese” and that “a very small local incident” could cause “most unfortunate conditions between the whites and Japanese.” In a joint press release, the Standing Committee, army, navy, and RCMP said that they had taken “adequate measures” such as closing Japanese-language schools and newspapers, registering Japanese, restricting the movement of Japanese nationals, and immobilizing the fishing fleet. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) advised radio stations that the Japanese “have so far proved themselves to be loyal Canadian citizens” and that “inflammatory statements in regard to them are not in the general interest.”¹³

The press garbled the joint statement and gave it little prominence. Not all editors were convinced that the situation was in hand. The *Victoria Daily Colonist* observed Japanese nationals with short wave radios; the *Chilliwack Progress* noted that countries that had “been over-run by Axis gangsters felt the same way about their security until it was too late.” Possibly because the Standing Committee approached them directly, the Vancouver papers counselled against violence. The *Vancouver Daily Province* agreed with the difficulty of forgiving fifth column work at Pearl Harbor, in Thailand, and in Malaya or the Nazi-like methods of the Japanese government, but it agreed that it was “neither logical nor wise to indulge in the same resentment” against the local Japanese. The *Vancouver Sun*, sensibly observing that putting 23,000 people behind barbed wire would require “colossal” effort and expense, advised against interning Japanese who “behaved well.” It repeated advice “to be calm” and warned that “violence ... will be repaid by worse measures applied to our own people in Japanese prisons.” Jack Scott of the *Vancouver News-Herald* urged treating local Japanese with intelligence, not hatred.¹⁴

After Hong Kong fell on Christmas Day, the public needed more assurance. Having been told that Hong Kong could be defended for months, the *Victoria Daily Times* asked if there were sufficient defences to “discourage the common enemy from an attack on say, Victoria, Prince Rupert, Vancouver,

New Westminster, or even on such communities as Kamloops and Nelson.” The Vancouver *News-Herald* reprinted a Dr. Seuss cartoon that had originally appeared in New York’s *PM*. It showed a long line of stereotypical Japanese coming down the coast from Washington and Oregon to California, where another stereotyped Japanese, complete with buck teeth and round eye-glasses, was standing at a counter handing out packages of TNT. Over his head was a sign reading “Honorable 5th Column,” and on top of his little warehouse another Japanese looked out over the ocean with a spyglass. The *News-Herald* added its own caption: “B.C. Is Further North...” Mackenzie reported “restlessness and disquiet” and “a feeling” that the government was “not taking a sufficient interest in this problem.” Howard Green, the Conservative MP for Vancouver South, told his father at Kaslo, “I am getting hotter under the collar every day about Canada’s attitude to this Pacific war – by the time I reach Ottawa I will have a sizzling speech under my belt. We are sitting here like a lot of pheasants the day before the hunting season opens.” News of a Japanese naval attack on five ships off the California coast compounded fears.¹⁵

Military and police officials thought that the situation was “well in hand” but worried about “the danger of serious anti-Japanese outbreaks by the white population.” On 30 December, General Alexander noted that “public feeling is becoming very insistent, especially in Vancouver.” He cited letters to the editors, individuals – “both calm and hysterical” – who were bombarding him to do something, and conversations with Premier Hart and Lieutenant Colonel A.W. Sparling of the Standing Committee. More ominously, Alexander noted that planned “public demonstrations and street parades against the Japanese” could “lead to very serious inter-racial clashes involving considerable damage, bloodshed and possibly fatal casualties.” Recognizing the need to treat local Japanese humanely and “in conformity with the Geneva Convention” and to protect Canadian prisoners of war, he urged interning Japanese males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, removing them from the coast, and organizing them for paid employment on public works or similar projects. In the meantime, he arranged for a mobile reserve and for troops to assist the police if needed to protect “the Japanese against those who wish to do them violence.” Because he could not protect Japanese in isolated places, he endorsed the recommendation of the commanding officer, Pacific coast, to remove all Japanese from the Queen Charlotte Islands. Premier Hart concurred and wired Prime Minister King about a “very serious” situation. H.L. Keenleyside, the Department of External Affairs specialist on the Japanese Canadian situation, feared “public demonstrations against the Japanese” in Vancouver and asked the chief of the general staff to instruct Alexander to co-operate with the police to make “absolutely certain” that no such demonstrations developed.¹⁶

While the military was concerned mainly about the Vancouver area, the

RCMP on Vancouver Island predicted “very strong demands ... for the complete internment of all Japanese, irrespective of their place of birth.” Although only slightly more than 1,000 Japanese lived on southern Vancouver Island, and only 275 were in greater Victoria, that city’s residents believed that geography made them especially vulnerable. Moreover, many British expatriates in Asia sent their children to boarding schools on the island and, since the Sino-Japanese war, often sent their wives. Others, retired in the area, claimed special knowledge of Asian affairs and had time to write letters. A legislative reporter observed, “the war has come so close to Victoria, there’s a new rumour about submarines, air planes or sabotage every day.”¹⁷

After hearing a suggestion that 5,000 enemy troops might attack British Columbia, the Victoria Kiwanis club circulated a resolution to other service clubs, public bodies, and the government. It cited old stories of fishermen being Japanese naval officers, fifth column activities at Pearl Harbor and in the South Pacific, the likelihood of local Japanese aiding invaders, the danger of sabotage, and difficulties in distinguishing “between the loyal and disloyal” among “people who have recently given ample demonstration of their treachery and deceit.” The Kiwanians claimed that the only way “to overcome the menace” was “to intern the entire Japanese population of British Columbia ... preferably east of the Rockies, where it would be impossible for them to engage in fifth column activity.” In a slightly less sweeping manner, Esquimalt Municipal Council called for interning “all enemy aliens, especially the Japanese population of the coastal regions.” Other organizations on southern Vancouver Island, including the Native Sons of British Columbia, the Native Sons of Canada, Oak Bay and James Bay ARP wardens, Britannia Branch No. 7, the Canadian Legion, the Saanich Board of Trade, the Capital City Commercial Club, Saanich Conservatives, the Victoria Rotary Club, and the Local Council of Women, demanded the removal of all Japanese from the coast, interning or placing them in protective custody and in some cases removing them from Canada after the war. In Duncan, the Legion, Elks, and Rotary Clubs sent wires to Prime Minister King. At a mass meeting sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, 250 people demanded the immediate removal of all Japanese. The *Ladysmith Chronicle* warned that, if they were not moved to inland provinces under supervision, wartime conditions might “arouse greater prejudice against Japanese in B.C. and lead to attacks against them.”¹⁸

Both Victoria daily newspapers published letters to the editor favouring the removal of Japanese from the coast. Editorially, the *Victoria Daily Times* questioned the state of coastal defences and warned of sabotage. Columnist Elmore Philpott suggested that forest fires made great “potential opportunities for fifth column sabotage.” H.T. Matson of the *Victoria Daily Colonist* avoided “taking much of an editorial stand” because “it would not require much to detonate a physical explosion against local Japs.” Nevertheless, his paper asserted that after Pearl Harbor, Thailand, and Hong Kong “it would

be folly to leave free and untrammelled in a vital defence zone those who, though friendly enough on the surface, may in fact be enemy aliens under orders to create mischief." The *Daily Colonist* urged "decisive action now." Major General E.C. Ashton, retired chief of the general staff, who lived in Victoria, told Minister of Defence J.L. Ralston, "men who know the Japanese" said that they could probably raise 6,000 or 7,000 trained fighting men from among the Japanese born. "This," he said, "is a real fifth column." R.W. Mayhew, the Liberal MP for Victoria, recommended moving "all Japanese except Canadian born to the interior of the province [and] giving them work to support their families." King agreed that "their own safety as well as ours is at stake."¹⁹

Few voices spoke for the innocent Japanese. Nellie McClung, an author and well-known social reformer, who lived in Victoria, wrote in the *Victoria Daily Times* that "all precautions must be taken ... but we must not sink into Hitler's ways of punishing innocent people, just because we do not like their country." Similarly, the student newspaper at the University of British Columbia asked, "we don't like Jew-baiters and Jew-baiting. When did Jap-baiting become patriotism?" The *Peace River Block News*, the only BC newspaper published east of the Rockies, insisted on turning "the full fury of Canada ... against the Japanese Empire" but warned that "it is just as important we keep our heads and not unjustly hurt innocent people." These were voices in the wilderness.²⁰

WHILE FEARS OF FIFTH COLUMN activity inspired demands for the removal of the Japanese from the coast, an immediate concern was the fate of Japanese fishermen, whose approximately 1,200 vessels had been tied up. Security considerations neatly dovetailed with old desires of white and Native fishermen to be free of Japanese competition. If the government was so sure of their loyalty, A.W. Neill (independent, Comox-Alberni) facetiously asked, why was it necessary to take the "really rather drastic" step of tying up their boats? Neill was not disappointed; he only wished that "it had been in the middle of the fishing season!" The winter fishery was limited, so there was time to consider means of supplying the British Ministry of Food and providing a livelihood for the fishermen. After initially warning that white or Indian fishermen could not take up the slack, particularly in the shrimp fishery and salmon gill netting of the very productive Japanese, local fisheries department officials reported that apart from some temporary disorganization the departure of the Japanese would not cause serious difficulties. The executive of the British Columbia Fishermen's Protective Association, an organization of gill netters, recommended that its members refuse to fish if Japanese were allowed to do so. Saying that reissuing licences to Japanese "would seriously endanger the safety of the Canadian people," the United Fishermen's Federal Union proposed making Japanese boats available to experienced white or

Native fishermen. The Fishermen's Protective Association suggested that, if its members could buy Japanese fishing equipment, they, along with Indian fishermen and men who had left the industry because it was overcrowded, could pick up the slack. The *Fisherman*, a Communist newspaper that spoke for several unions, denounced racial prejudice and violence but demanded removing the Japanese from fortified areas, cancelling their fishing licences for the duration of the war, and making their vessels and gear available to white fishermen. Similar representations by other fishermen's unions led General Alexander to accuse them of seizing "an opportunity ... to secure absolute monopoly of the fishing industry." That too was the observation of a Ladner pioneer, who recalled that "the greatest clamor" for removing the Japanese came from those who wanted the competition out and who "had covetous intentions toward the equipment of their hated rivals." The fishermen were not alone in wanting the Japanese out of the industry. Saying that they must be removed to avoid opportunities for treachery, Alan Chambers (Liberal MP, Nanaimo) asserted that it was time to ensure that the Japanese "be forever excluded from the woods and mills, the farms and from industries" to make places for returning veterans. Inland, the *Penticton Herald* mused, "it would be marvellous ... if the Oriental fishing population could be replaced by men of our own color and heart."²¹

The decision to remove Japanese Canadians from the fisheries was well received for relieving "any temptation" to assist Japan. Indeed, it was one of the rare occasions when fishermen and canners agreed. The Fisheries Institute of British Columbia, representing over 90 percent of the canners and packers, denied asking for their return. So too did H.R. MacMillan, the president of BC Packers. Richard Bell-Irving, a prominent canner, privately said that losing an "efficient fishing fleet" was a "blessing in disguise since the Japanese were becoming more independent each year," and their absence would give white and Indian fishermen a larger share of the catch. Similarly, George Anderson, secretary of the Halibut Fishermen's Association at Prince Rupert, retailed old stories of Japanese fishermen being naval officers in disguise and warned that they would be a serious postwar problem. The Native Brotherhood there complained of Japanese at coastal canneries endangering the industry and "our Native people." When a rumour circulated that Ottawa might let some return, F.J. Hume reported "a state of uneasiness," the Vancouver *Daily Province* warned that feelings "might easily get out of hand," and a fishermen's union predicted "a Hell of a row." Police discouraged the United Fishermen's Federal Union from holding a meeting at Vancouver lest it lead to "precipitous action," but an RCMP special patrol of Steveston saw no evidence of disturbances. The Vancouver Zone Council of the Canadian Legion studied ways of using the Japanese fishing fleet to rehabilitate veterans of both world wars. Alderman Halford D. Wilson tried to abet the agitation, but the censors hindered him.²²

Advised of “the need to humour the white population until such time as they calm down a bit,” General Stuart recommended against letting Japanese return to the fisheries. Although the military had plans to aid the civil power in case of emergency, like General Alexander, Stuart worried about “protecting the Japs against an unruly faction of the white population.” Perhaps to assuage such sentiments, the press published photographs of masses of Japanese fishing vessels tied up “somewhere” on the BC coast. Meanwhile, J.A. Motherwell, the chief supervisor of fisheries in British Columbia, announced that he would issue fishing licences only to whites and Indians until further notice.²³

Japanese fishermen had lost their livelihoods. Provincial police feared that rumours their boats might be transferred to whites would “not tend to harmonious conditions” among 1,500 unemployed Japanese at Steveston, where the situation was “delicate.” The *Vancouver Daily Province* and the *Vancouver Sun* urged Ottawa to find other employment for them. Most members of the Standing Committee favoured selling Japanese equipment to white fishermen but saw a serious unemployment problem after Japanese discharged from employment because of “public indignation” moved to Vancouver and New Westminster, where “public resentment” was greatest. The committee suggested putting all male Japanese aged eighteen to forty-five in “volunteer” work units inland, where they could “further our War Effort” by work such as building air raid shelters and the Hope-Princeton road.²⁴

Fearful of displaced fishermen taking up farming, white Fraser Valley farmers sought legislation to prevent Japanese from buying or renting more farmland or buying or renting crops. They said nothing of fifth columnists but rehearsed an old claim that Japanese “peaceful penetration of farming and other primary industries plus the raising of large families constitutes a serious political, economic and social menace to this country.” Several municipal councils and boards of trade endorsed the resolution, but the attorney general said that such a law would be *ultra vires*. Nevertheless, many saw the war as a way to end Japanese competition and solve the “Asiatic problem.” The *Langley Advance* honestly admitted that many who demanded the removal of the Japanese were “not so much interested in a military sense as they are in getting rid of Japanese competition from commercial and agricultural ranks.” The Prince Rupert *Evening Empire* observed, “whites cannot compete with them.” In the roundup of the fishing fleet, it saw a loosening of “the roots of Japanese penetration.” At a mass meeting in Duncan, C.F. Davie, a former Conservative MLA, referred to the Japanese “saturation” of lumbering and fishing; another speaker suggested that “loyal Canadians” could “remedy their infiltration” of industry by refusing to employ or work with Japanese. A plea by Dr. W.B. Clayton for “British justice” for local Japanese who had done nothing wrong elicited a strong attack; his argument that Germans had not been interned drew a telling shout, “but they’re white.”²⁵

Dr. Clayton was one of the few to question removing the Japanese. Another was the *Federationist*. Its first editorial after Pearl Harbor referred to the Japanese as economic competitors but concluded that removing “low standard groups” would not end unemployment, bring social security, or “necessarily bring us closer to the co-operative commonwealth.” It soon changed its mind, endorsed interning Japanese nationals and individuals of doubtful loyalty, and urged watchfulness for possible fifth columnists. Yet it stressed that the Canadian born “deserve more consideration, if not different treatment,” and the necessity of remembering that “we are fighting against racial persecution.” Similarly, delegates to the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) convention in Vancouver approved essential defence measures but warned against “racial prejudice and mass hysteria.” Individually, many labour leaders favoured removing the Japanese to prevent fifth column activity. Harold J. Pritchett, president of the IWA, wanted to evacuate all Japanese but claimed that doing so didn’t “mean embarking on a policy of racial hatred, or opening the way to anti-Japanese riots.” At a CCF-sponsored conference of trade unions associated with both the rival American Federation of Labor and the Canadian Congress of Labour, delegates decided not to debate the Japanese question, but they represented only a small portion of British Columbia’s labour force.²⁶

In the meantime, H.F. Angus, a University of British Columbia professor of economics and political science and a prewar champion of the enfranchisement of the Canadian-born Japanese who was temporarily working for the Department of External Affairs, worried about retaining the goodwill of the Japanese. He proposed inviting Hume and provincial government representatives to a conference in Ottawa to discuss problems arising from the presence of “Canadians of Japanese race and resident Japanese nationals” and the “particularly urgent” question of fishermen. F.J. Mead of the RCMP suggested including MacGregor Macintosh, who for some years had claimed that the Japanese were taking over British Columbia, to avoid giving “Jap-baiters” an excuse to criticize the government. The government hoped to formulate “a definite policy” that all would co-operate to implement. The invitation was issued on 3 January; the next day Sparling, Hume, and Macintosh of the Standing Committee, T.W.S. Parsons of the Provincial Police, Jack Barnes of the RCMP, and George Pearson, provincial secretary and minister of labour, boarded a Canadian Pacific Railway train in Vancouver. Hume, Pearson, and Barnes had at least one formal meeting on the train, but the four-day-long journey undoubtedly provided occasions for informal discussions.²⁷

BY THEN THE FISHERIES were a secondary consideration. A trickle of resolutions calling for interning all Japanese began in Victoria and became a flood from individuals, veterans’ organizations, service clubs, and municipal

councils in the Vancouver Island communities of Nanaimo, Duncan, Courtenay, Ladysmith, and Alberni. Despite espousing “the apparent truth that many Japanese in British Columbia dislike the conduct of the men of Tokyo as much as we detest it,” the *Victoria Daily Times* refused to believe that the government proposed “to wait until a few railway bridges, a few power plants, a few water systems, have been destroyed before they are convinced these Japanese – or at least some of them – are actual enemies in our midst.” Vancouver Island weeklies reported “definite uneasiness” over Ottawa’s handling of the situation, distrust of the Japanese, and inability to distinguish between those who were loyal to Canada and those who were not. “The innocent,” conceded the *Cowichan Leader*, “have to suffer with the guilty.” The Japanese “may be all right,” said Alderman W.T. Grieves of Nanaimo, “but we do not know. It is our duty to adopt ‘safety first.’” The military was also concerned. Air Commodore L.F. Stevenson, in charge of Western Air Command based at Victoria, agreed with popular sentiment that “our national security cannot rest on precarious discernment between those who would actively support Japan and those who might at present be apathetic.” He recommended moving “all male Axis Aliens between 16 and 50 years” from the coast and interning them or keeping them “under careful surveillance.” In the meantime, Hume announced that the Standing Committee would urge removing “all male Japs” between ages eighteen and forty-five and disposing of the fishing fleet. Hume and Sparling added to apprehension when their comment that several hundred Japanese fled during registration was interpreted to mean that Keenleyside’s 1938 report on illegal immigration was based on false information.²⁸

Not all British Columbians believed RCMP assurances that the Japanese had surrendered their guns and had nothing “much stronger than a peashooter.” Commissioner Hill informed his superiors that the Standing Committee’s discussions with businessmen, canners, and fishermen revealed “unanimous sentiment” that the government should take “strong action” immediately, that the Occidental population thought that it had “reason to fear the Japanese, and the Military authorities, for your confidential information, admit that in the event of an attack here, they would be unable to handle the large number of local Japanese should those Japanese assist the enemy.”²⁹

Mayhew was less pessimistic. After discussions with Mackenzie in Ottawa, he told the press that the government had taken “very definite safety measures,” which could not be disclosed for security reasons. Explaining the need to consider “our own security” and “the safety of the loyal Japanese,” Mayhew suggested letting Canadian-born Japanese men prove their citizenship by joining the Canadian army for training and service in eastern Canada. He would send the rest “far inland . . . where they would not be a problem in case of an attempted invasion” and “could be properly protected” while doing useful work such as road construction. Despite its Liberal leanings,

the *Victoria Daily Times* disagreed. It argued that “the comparative handful of Japanese who might be trusted to wear His Majesty’s uniform would not be worth one-tenth of the risk involved by their recruitment.” Reporting the Japanese atrocities in British Malaya, it thought that it would be “kind to the [BC] Japs by segregating them on sensible lines” to ensure their safety and “decent treatment under the circumstances.”³⁰

Both major Vancouver newspapers worried about sabotage but considered the internment of *all* Japanese to be an unnecessarily strong measure. The *Daily Province* would accept the word of those who said they were loyal to Canada but insisted on protecting vulnerable points against sabotage. The *Vancouver Sun* agreed that the Japanese must not be “treated harshly or unkindly” because many Canadians were in Japanese hands but deemed it impossible to separate the loyal from the disloyal. The censor kept the papers on a short leash and quashed plans of both dailies to gather more stories for “steam-ups’ on the Jap situation.” Yet the *Vancouver Sun* repeatedly called for removing all male Japanese at least 100 miles inland “for their own protection and for the future goodwill of the Japanese colony here.” Asserting that the “beastly nature” and shocking “treachery of Pearl Harbor and the Manila murders” had “prejudiced the case of hard-working, right-living Japanese everywhere in the world,” it warned that local Japanese would “be suspected and distrusted if hit-and-run forces of the enemy” ever assaulted the city. It attacked the *New Canadian*, the English-language newspaper published by Japanese Canadians, for “sneering” at jitters after Pearl Harbor. Similarly, the New Westminster *British Columbian* recommended moving Japanese inland to prevent fifth column activity in case of an air attack and “a popular outburst” that would be a “blot on Canada’s record.” The next day it cynically responded to comments from Ottawa that moving the Japanese east of the Rockies was “silly” by averring that Ottawa was unlikely to “welcome an opportunity to make a close acquaintance with the little brown brother.”³¹

Meanwhile, Alderman Wilson, who had campaigned against potential Japanese fifth columnists since at least the spring of 1940 but who had been fairly quiet since Pearl Harbor, reappeared even though the censor considered him “a menace, a nuisance and a pest.” A syndicated Ottawa columnist reported that the mildest description of him was a “thoroughly bad influence” whose agitation might incite anti-Japanese riots and put “a mess on our hands.” Wilson had two proposals. Varying an old theme, he proposed requiring Japanese to show evidence of renunciation of their Japanese citizenship before they could get trade licences. The city’s legal advisers said that the Defence of Canada Regulations gave enemy aliens the protection of the law. Citing Knox’s allegations of fifth column activities in Hawaii, Wilson planned to ask city council to demand the removal of all Japanese east of the Rockies. His “fans” encouraged him with comments such as “when the Japs begin their sabotage all that needs to be done is to start a fire in one of their

own yards to sweep everything along the water front." Because it added little new "fuel to the rising anti-Japanese sentiment of this coast," the censor let the Vancouver *Daily Province* report Wilson's proposal. In supporting Wilson, Alderman Jack Price suggested that the Japanese should welcome a move for their own protection, for "if a bomb dropped here there is no telling what might happen."³²

Despite dismissing Ottawa's disapproval of his campaign lest it incite "anti-Japanese riots," Wilson realized that he had little sympathy from the press, and most city councillors thought it "presumptuous" to interfere while Ottawa considered the matter. Thus, he proposed to introduce only a notice of motion but, "yielding ... to pressure of public opinion," sought immediate passage of a motion to remove Japanese to work camps east of the Rockies. Mayor Cornett asked citizens "to refrain from 'rabble-rousing'" and to deal with the situation "calmly and judiciously." Cornett anticipated problems; a week earlier he had reminded Justice Minister Louis St. Laurent that "ambitious politicians" had "fanned" anti-Japanese sentiment. Seeking an indication of government policy, he warned that "a good many serious thinking citizens have sensed a potential danger here as Japan's ambitions grew." Since he was waiting for a reply when Wilson introduced his motion, Cornett "smothered" it procedurally. Buoyed by supportive phone calls and telegrams, as members of the Standing Committee left for Ottawa, a dauntless Wilson told them that a mass meeting was being organized and that "if something isn't done there are going to be riots." Wilson was not alone in warning of riots, though others blamed him for the situation. Ira Dilworth, the BC representative on the CBC, worried that by setting "themselves at the head of movements to take direct action" Wilson, Macintosh, and their like were endangering "the whole constitutional framework of our State." "I shudder to think," he told Angus, "what might happen" if there were "bad news concerning the Pacific situation." Grey Turgeon (Liberal MP, Cariboo) confidentially advised the prime minister that, without "drastic action, the situation will get out-of-hand. The Government will suffer, and so will the Japanese personally and through destruction of property."³³

Wilson was already organizing what was tentatively called the "Pacific Coast Defence League." Under the chairmanship of Tom Burnett of the Ex-Servicemen's League, it first met on 9 January. It planned a mass meeting to discuss resolutions for removing all Japanese from the coast, forming a home guard "to teach men street fighting and bush fighting," providing for unemployed whites "before we worry about the Japanese," and making "some adequate use" of idle Japanese fishing boats. Representatives of several unions of fishermen, truck and laundry drivers, civic employees and street railwaymen, the Canadian Legion, the Army and Navy Veterans, and "The Flying Column," a self-appointed defence group, allegedly attended. The committee was quite secretive, however, about its membership. Wilson told

the meeting that “an expression of public feeling regarding the situation here will influence Ottawa in minimizing the claims of some members [presumably Angus] of the Standing Committee on Orientals now in Ottawa.” Wilson called local Japanese a “potential reservoir of strength” for the enemy. He denied wanting “any mass hysteria or rabble-rousing,” but Burnett told reporters that “perhaps it was time there was some of that.” In fact, as Jack Scott of the Vancouver *News-Herald* revealed, only sixteen people attended the meeting, and the only one to speak from the audience, C. Wilmott Maddison, was best known for wearing a pith helmet! Maddison claimed that “the Japanese here were out to get him” because he had planned to write “an exposé of conditions” in Japan for *Maclean’s* and *Liberty*. Scott noted that Maddison’s writings were confined to his own local magazine, *The Parashooter*. The *News-Herald*, the only daily to comment on Wilson’s scheme, warned against “private zealots” trying to solve the “Japanese problem” instead of leaving it to proper authorities such as the RCMP.³⁴

Similarly, in commenting on rumours that Ottawa thought it too costly to move the Japanese, the Vancouver *Daily Province* advised letting military and naval authorities deal with local Japanese “unclouded by the performance of agencies who are riding the storm of public restlessness for their own selfish advantage.” Writing from Ottawa, Bruce Hutchison, a Victoria-based reporter, argued that an “unofficial spokesman” who feared “anti-Japanese riots and bloodshed . . . underestimates our intelligence. Anyone who would do violence to the Japanese of British Columbia is not only mad but criminal and should be locked up immediately.” Nevertheless, he noted that, if there were 24,000 Germans in a small area on the Atlantic coast, Ottawa might not think British Columbians were “so crazy . . . in asking that the male Japanese be moved quietly, without violence, without hardship, with courtesy and decency to some other part of the country where they can work for a living at reasonable wages and support families.”³⁵

In reporting the departure of members of the Standing Committee, the press indicated that the Ottawa meeting would deal with possible fifth column activities. It quoted Premier Hart as saying that he and Attorney General R.L. Maitland had urged Ottawa “to remove the menace of fifth column activity” and had met senior military officials. The press correctly reported that the federal government was investigating how the United States was coping with a similar problem, but reports were sketchy. The *Victoria Daily Times* said coastal states were strictly controlling Japanese; the Vancouver *Daily Province* reported that no large coastal city had urged a wholesale transfer of Japanese inland and that Seattle was tolerating them.³⁶

ON 8 JANUARY AT 2:30 P.M. in Room 123 of the East Block in Ottawa, several federal cabinet ministers and officials from concerned federal departments met the Standing Committee and provincial government representatives.

Perhaps not so coincidentally, a number of the federal representatives were past or current residents of British Columbia.³⁷ Mackenzie opened the meeting by outlining “the peculiar position of the Japanese population in Canada,” notably their concentration in one province close to a theatre of war and the apparent absence of any strong group among them opposed to the government of Japan. He described the tendency of Canadians to believe that their loyalties were racial. He admitted “intense economic jealousy of the Japanese, and a wish in some quarters to appropriate their property,” and he noted their existing economic and political disabilities and the lack of a long-term policy on their future. Keenleyside then reviewed recent policies emphasizing “just and decent treatment for Canadians of Japanese race,” including normal employment insofar as it was compatible with defence needs. He noted co-ordination with American policies, the importance of avoiding excuses for retaliation against Canadians under Japanese control, the desire to maintain “a reasonable attitude” among civilians,” and the need to use “the full force of the law to prevent anti-Japanese demonstrations and to protect Japanese Canadian communities.”³⁸

The agenda provided time to discuss postwar problems, the position of Canadians of Chinese and East Indian descent, censorship, and ways of making the policies “known to the public of Canada in order to insure their intelligent co-operation.” Those at the meeting accepted most of Keenleyside’s principles but would not allow all Japanese to remain in their normal employment. For “reasons of national defence and security,” they decided that the Japanese should not engage in the coastal fishery and that their boats and equipment should be made available, “on equitable terms,” to white fishermen. Those at the meeting also agreed that the RCMP should strictly control the sale of gasoline and blasting powder to persons of Japanese racial origin and that Japanese nationals should be kept under surveillance and not be allowed to possess or use short wave radios, radio transmitters, or cameras. In a rare effort to distinguish between nationals of Japan and nationals of Canada, the meeting participants accepted offers from Canadian Japanese to perform wartime service. They suggested encouraging them to enlist in the Canadian army, calling up others under the National Resources Mobilization Act for service outside British Columbia, and forming a Civilian Corps to work on projects of national value, presumably in British Columbia since a suggestion that these projects be in central or eastern Canada was crossed out in the final draft.³⁹

According to Mackenzie, “the real difference of opinion” arose over a proposal to remove all persons of Japanese origin, or at least males of military age, to areas east of the Rocky Mountains. Mackenzie estimated about 2,000 to 2,500 able-bodied adult males fell into this category. Calling the debate a “difference of opinion” was an understatement. General Pope recalled how Pearson, Hume, and several committee members were “breathing fire,” and

at one point “all hell broke loose.” A “vitriolic” Pearson accused Keenleyside “of knowing nothing” about his “own province and of being uninterested in the fate of the people living in great danger there,” even though Pearson, a family friend, knew that Keenleyside had many close relatives at the coast. Henry Angus admitted antagonizing some attendees by protesting the molestation of “Canadian citizens on grounds of race” but accepted any movement recommended by the military or police for security reasons. Escott Reid recollected “the physical presence of evil” as the British Columbians “spoke of the Japanese-Canadians in the way that the Nazis would have spoken about Jewish-Germans.”⁴⁰

Despite emphatic protests from Pearson and Hume, the majority decided that removing all persons of Japanese racial origin or at least males of military age from the coast was unnecessary for national defence and security, would contradict Allied professions of justice and humanity, would “be answered by vicious cruelties” on Canadians under Japan’s control, and would be at variance with American policy. Mackenzie suggested that Pearson and Hume submit a minority report. He agreed on the difficulty of convincing British Columbians that there were no problems with defence and security; he favoured compelling Japanese nationals to move from the coast and giving them suitable employment in secure areas under surveillance. Giving more weight to the views of the British Columbians than to those of government officials, Mackenzie warned the prime minister, “unless we take immediate action, our white people may resort to unwise tactics in Vancouver.” He urged the government to make its policy public. The prime minister endorsed restrictions on fishermen, believed that Japanese nationals “must be treated differently with no possibility of treachery,” opposed enlisting any Japanese in the army, endorsed the Civilian Corps, and according to an unsigned note favoured “evacuation to points in the interior of Japanese Nationals (able-bodied).” Agreeing with the difficulty of dealing with a panicky and sceptical public, Angus suggested that King and a government spokesman speak to British Columbians over the radio, state the policy, and generally “convey the atmosphere of sober deliberation” at the meeting to “impart confidence and carry conviction.” He thought that representatives of the Standing Committee, the Armed Services, and External Affairs should have “off-the-record” discussions with the press in Victoria, Vancouver, and Ottawa. The meeting participants accepted variations on these ideas, but the Prime Minister’s Office rejected a radio talk.⁴¹

Without firm information, the press speculated about what had gone on. The Department of External Affairs promptly denied a press report by Charles Bishop that the meeting seemed to favour moving Japanese from the province, but the press got a good sense of the meeting. It reported that the BC representatives and the Ottawa officials disagreed on the danger but would recommend measures to guard against both “potential treachery by

the few Japanese residents who may be inclined toward subversiveness” and “possible riots by civilians against Japanese nationals in case of an enemy air attack.” It quoted Pearson as saying that British Columbians wanted “all Japanese moved well inland to prevent them from linking up with their countrymen in the event of a Japanese attack on the west coast.”⁴²

After the meeting, several participants spoke to the press. In a telephone interview from Ottawa, Hume refused to reveal details but said that the government had been very fair. Later in Vancouver he explained that hundreds of enemy aliens would be removed from the coast, while Canadian-born and naturalized Canadians could volunteer for works projects. He said that Ottawa accepted his committee’s recommendations, and with Mackenzie’s help the committee overcame “tremendous obstacles,” including the failure of federal authorities to plan immediate action. In Victoria, Pearson emphasized the desire “to avoid compulsion in dealing with the Canadian-born Japanese,” who “think Canada is a pretty good country and do not want Japan coming here to disturb things.” Yet, he speculated, if Japanese forces landed, “it might be a different matter.” He thought that Ottawa did not realize the seriousness of the situation but would act on military advice “as to what constitutes a military danger” and was “most anxious” to protect the Japanese “against any riots.”⁴³

By then the recommendations of the Ottawa conference were public knowledge. The press release had been delayed, possibly because of a two-day debate in cabinet in which Mackenzie believed “we went as far as we could possibly go in regard to the Japanese situation.” Later King made some “slight changes in construction” in Keenleyside’s draft press release. Significantly, he asked for “specific mention” of the “real danger of [the] situation being provoked by citizens other than Japanese,” since such trouble would “be greatly exaggerated and misunderstood in Japan, where many Canadian soldiers and others are obliged to rely upon the protection of the Japanese Government.” In slightly different words, the published press release noted, “the full force of the law will be invoked to prevent anti-Japanese demonstrations and to protect Canadian residents of Japanese race.” It promised that there would be no action to give Japan an excuse to mistreat Canadians under its control. Anyone who read the entire press release, a rather long document that few papers published in full, would see the distinction between those Japanese who were Canadian nationals and those who were not, but an ambiguous reference to taking “utmost precautions ... to see that no illegal acts are committed by Japanese or other enemy aliens” was often misinterpreted.⁴⁴

Premier Hart was satisfied with plans to deal with the “very disturbing situation.” For most British Columbians, the main point was that “Japanese and other enemy aliens” would be removed from the defence areas. The phrasing was unfortunate. Although the Vancouver *Daily Province* congratulated the government for putting “a premium on Canadian citizenship,” many British

Columbians regarded *all* Japanese, including the Canadian born, as “enemy aliens” or “Japanese nationals,” and this view was reflected in press commentary. The *Vancouver Sun* commended the “common sense decision,” but its praise seems to have been based on a faulty premise that all Japanese, except those granted police permits, would be removed from the coast. That also seemed to be the understanding of the *Victoria Daily Times*, which, in referring to hostages in Japanese hands, ominously added that “two can play at reprisals if need be.” The *Comox Argus* urged “a long view” that a condition of peace with Japan be the exclusion of its nationals from British Columbia. Other editors were generally pleased but prophetically warned that “extremists, who were calling for immediate internment,” would not be satisfied and expressed concern if Ottawa did not act promptly.⁴⁵

No better evidence of that was Alderman Wilson. He doubted that the plan went “far enough” but claimed that making the coastal strip “a protected zone” would end anti-Japanese talk, satisfy public opinion, and cause the cancellation of a proposed mass meeting on exclusion. Wilson told city council that he would await clarification of Ottawa’s policy before formally seeking support for a “campaign to induce the Dominion Government to exclude Japanese from British Columbia for all time, either under a redistribution of Nipponese among the various provinces, or repatriation to Japan.” In the meantime, responding to the prime minister’s desire to halt Wilson’s “inflammatory statements,” the censors prepared to impose “a fairly complete ‘black-out’” on him.⁴⁶

Wilson’s proposal for postwar repatriation was extreme, but other politicians demanded the removal of all the Japanese from British Columbia. Provincial Conservatives in convention on 10 January resolved that the Japanese should be sent east of the Rocky Mountains to places where they would not be a danger and be given adequate maintenance. Delegates spoke of the imminent danger and of fifth column activities. J.A. Paton (Coalition-Conservative, Vancouver-Point Grey) said that high military authorities in Victoria wanted all Japanese removed from the coast; in the legislature, he urged the government to press Ottawa for their immediate removal “lock, stock and barrel” to a place where they could not act as fifth columnists in case of an attack. Retired Brigadier J. Sutherland Brown predicted that “every little slant-eyed Jap will wave the flag of the Rising Sun if his countrymen invade this coast.”⁴⁷

Such rabble rousing led the *Vancouver News-Herald* to impose an interregnum on the debate; its silence lasted two days. The *Vancouver Daily Province* attacked Howard Green, the association president, and Paton as “definitely discreditable.” Green, however, sincerely believed what he said. A few days later, “very much concerned about the situation in the Pacific,” he put “a great deal” of himself into a speech to the Ad and Sales Bureau of the Vancouver Board of Trade, where he declared that British Columbia “must

take the lead in acquainting the rest of the Dominion of the deadly peril on the coast” and warned that, if potential fifth columnists were not removed, the province could become another Belgium. Green was making a political point, but he was genuinely frightened. He arranged railway passes for his family “just in case” and told his parents, “Each morning I wonder whether there has been a raid.”⁴⁸

Some Liberals agreed with these views. A few days later, referring to Okanagan demands that no coastal Japanese be allowed to stay there after the war, the *Vancouver Sun* averred, “our people will not again stand for Japanese domination in any industrial activity. The short-cut may be to send them all home after the war.” Several Liberal associations in Vancouver suburbs wrote to Ian Mackenzie urging the removal of all the Japanese, including the Canadian born. North Burnaby Liberals favoured seizing their property but compensating them once they left the country. At a meeting of several Burnaby Liberal associations, Tom Reid (Liberal MP, New Westminster) claimed that there was “not a military secret on this coast the Japanese did not know” and proposed deporting all of them. Nanaimo Liberals unanimously endorsed Chambers’ earlier demand for the “total exclusion” of Japanese from coastal waters, woods, mills, farms, and industries and the detention of all males of military age who were Japanese nationals. Mayhew told Victoria’s Chamber of Commerce that he favoured more drastic steps than recommended by the committee but would “wait and see if that was a preliminary measure or a full control program.” He privately advised Mackenzie of “every indication of organized effort on Vancouver Island opposing your Committee’s action,” including a proposal to boycott the Victory Loan to force the removal of all Japanese from the coast. That body was the Defence of Canada League, which Reginald Hayward, a former Victoria mayor and former Conservative MLA, explained was a 100 percent Canadian organization “composed of native born white Canadians.” Citing Japanese knowledge of the coast and opportunities for sabotage, the league urged the government to remove all Japanese, the “Yellow Peril,” from defence areas. Veterans’ groups, the United Commercial Travellers, the Victoria Kinsmen Club, and others continued to demand the removal of all the Japanese. Individuals such as Ker congratulated Mackenzie on his success “so far” in clearing “from this coast ... all Japanese (and other enemy aliens as well) who might be potential fifth columnists should an attack occur from across the Pacific.” The *Vancouver Daily Province* ominously cautioned, “the order about the local Japanese seems to have satisfied everybody – for the moment.”⁴⁹

“FOR THE MOMENT” was the operative phrase. After a brief decline in the number of letters to the editor and to Ottawa, disenchantment returned as the government seemed to do little to remove anyone. As historian Ken Adachi noted, the government did not follow up with any publicity to reassure

the public. Ottawa correspondents could only speculate about government plans and the location of labour camps. At the coast, there was confusion. Members of the Standing Committee had been quoted as saying that the government did “not intend to force naturalized or Canadian born Japanese to move,” but Pearson, in suggesting that “force” had a special meaning, implied that “all loyal Japanese will volunteer.” No one would say what would happen to those who did not. Delay was inevitable. The government had no detailed plans, it did not know which department would be in charge, the extent of the “Protected Area” had not been defined, and the press release – the only written record of government policy – could be misinterpreted.⁵⁰

The government’s work was complicated by the petty concerns of some BC members of Parliament. A minor distraction was uncertainty over the future of the Standing Committee. Angus and Mead had resigned because of their duties in Ottawa, and the MPs, particularly Reid, were jealous of local references to “Mayor Hume’s Standing Committee” and of Hume’s alleged use of his work on the Standing Committee in a recent civic election.⁵¹ Reid complained that he had been “kept entirely in the dark” about what was happening. He said that he had been “very discreet” and made no public statements after Japan entered the war, but Hume’s activities had “somewhat undermined” him in the constituency. Describing what he must have considered the most heinous political crime, Reid suggested, “it would not surprise me if Mayor Hume accepted a C.C.F. nomination at the next election.” Neill objected to the lack of restrictions on “the naturalized Jap [who] is often the most dangerous class” but seemed more angered by the fact that Angus, “a man whose violent and extreme pro-Japanese tendencies through long years have become a byword and reproach in the minds of 90 percent of the people of British Columbia,” had signed the reply to his complaint. Moreover, Neill disputed Angus’ assertion that Pearson and the Hume committee fully agreed with government policy. Mackenzie reported that the BC MPs were “very antagonistic” to the Standing Committee and to Hume, who had been “of no use” at the meeting of 8-9 January.⁵²

After considering personnel changes,⁵³ the cabinet accepted Keenleyside’s advice that, rather than debate the committee’s membership and role, it should dissolve, explaining that the government had decided on its policy and was “taking over direct control of the situation.” Two weeks passed before that decision was announced. No one much noticed the committee’s demise, although the *New Canadian* thanked it for the “relatively orderly and smooth manner in which the problem is being solved, the absence to date of violent outbreaks of any kind.” Hume graciously told the press, “we have done all we can do. I’m quite satisfied with the new arrangement provided they give us some action on our recommendations.” Dissolving the Standing Committee assuaged backbenchers, but Mackenzie continued to propound their sentiments. After rejecting a suggestion to put Colonel B.R. Mullaly,

a Japanese-speaking officer of the Canadian army, in charge of the Civilian Labour Corps, Mackenzie reminded civil servants that a cabinet committee of himself and the ministers of agriculture and labour must approve any policies and that the BC MPs must be informed of any changes.⁵⁴ These were procedural niceties; the real difficulty was Mackenzie's understanding that "all able-bodied, adult enemy aliens" and "all able-bodied Canadian Nationals" would be removed from the protected areas, although Canadian nationals could volunteer for the Civilian Corps. The civil servants recalled that no one, "not even Colonel Macgregor Macintosh," had suggested compulsion of Canadian nationals and that "a clear distinction" had been made between them and Japanese nationals. Keenleyside observed that, after the BC MPs returned to Ottawa, the belief developed "that all persons of Japanese racial origin are to be treated alike" and that Canadian nationals would be required to move. That, Keenleyside feared, could lead to pressure "to carry out a policy" that had been rejected since "compulsory deportation of Canadian nationals, based on the colour of their skins, would be used for propaganda" in Asia and might harm Canadian and British prisoners of Japan.⁵⁵

A memorandum, probably drafted by Keenleyside and designed for distribution to the BC MPs, outlined the situation. It explained that responsibility for policy had been assigned to the Department of Labour and the actual placing of Japanese, German, and Italian nationals in suitable employment outside the defence area to the Unemployment Insurance Commission. The RCMP was notifying nationals who would be required to leave and was considering applications to remain from women, children, men over military age, and "special cases" who had good reason for remaining and posed no public danger. The government expected that movement would begin soon and would probably set a deadline of 1 April 1942 for departures. As for the Civilian Corps, plans were still being formed, but it expected to treat enlistment as a "patriotic act," that pay and allowances would, like those of the army, be sufficient for decent maintenance of dependants, though it might involve a "financial sacrifice," and that the work should relate directly to the war effort against Japan. The memo reported that the Japanese were "eager to co-operate" but wanted definite information and advice about subscribing to the war loan or conserving their cash for emergencies. It also noted that Japan, through the protecting power, had inquired about its nationals. Yet, the memo pointed out, much still had to be done to stress to the Japanese that "subject to military requirements" they, and their property and occupations, would be treated with justice. The memo advised that the prime consideration was destroying "the military power of Japan, Germany and Italy," that the Department of National Defence had not asked for the removal of "either Canadians of Japanese race or Japanese nationals," and that men were often of greatest use to the war effort by remaining in their normal employment or replacing someone serving in the Armed Forces. Moreover,

the memo stressed, Canadians should not “display fear or anger” against the Japanese in Canada since Japan could easily interpret that as a “white” versus “Asiatic” conflict and use it for propaganda purposes in China and India and similarly that talk of “fear of reprisals” could make the Japanese feel that “protection against harsh treatment” lay not in “British tradition and Christian ethics” but in Japan’s military strength.⁵⁶

The memo was submitted to cabinet but apparently not to the BC MPs, who, Mackenzie reported, “seem to insist on the compulsory evacuation of Canadian nationals if they do not volunteer” and who thought that the wages offered in the Civilian Corps were too high. He warned that, if the prime minister did not have a “full and frank” conference with them, there could “be an unpleasant discussion” in Parliament. Mackenzie may have exaggerated their anger. In Parliament, the MPs had been silent except for two brief questions and had not protested the vague answers they got. Responding to Grote Stirling (Conservative, Yale) about the placement of Japanese labour in the interior and removing women and children, Mackenzie said, “that is not definitely determined.” When Reid asked three days later about an official statement on the removal of the Japanese from the coast, the prime minister merely said that he would give a statement but did not know when.⁵⁷

On the coast, however, federal officials reported a deteriorating situation. J.H. McVety, the regional superintendent for the Unemployment Insurance Commission, “heard certain threats and rumours” that if any part of the coast were bombed and lives lost “the vengeance of the population would be taken out on Japanese regardless of the category to which they belong.” Thus, he warned, it might be necessary “to provide troops to protect Japanese from our own people. If the males are removed, the natural chivalry of our people, I think, would prevent attacks on the Japanese women and children.” Major H.C. Bray, an intelligence officer with Pacific Command, reported that the “good effect” of the mid-January announcement about removing enemy aliens had “been more than counteracted by the fact that no further action appears to have been taken nor plans prepared.” Moreover, he claimed that the Japanese were becoming insolent, that British Columbians were becoming “hysterical,” and that the government intended to do nothing further. He reported a growing movement to withhold subscriptions to the coming Victory Loan “until such time as every Japanese irrespective of age, of sex or place of birth has been removed East of the Rockies.” In passing the report to Minister of Labour Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Defence J.L. Ralston said that he had “done all I can” by signing the order creating the protected areas, but physically moving the Japanese was up to the RCMP and the Department of Labour.⁵⁸

Initially, there were so many proposals for employing Japanese that finding work was not a problem. One of the most bizarre was that of George Murray, former Liberal MLA for Lillooet, who would dress them in Native

costumes and employ them as gardeners in provincial and national parks to serve as a tourist attraction. Most proposals were more realistic. The provincial government offered to find suitable public works projects but left open the question of who would pay for these projects. Interior communities promoted pet projects such as building or improving roads between Hope and Princeton, Terrace and Prince Rupert, Usk and Hazelton, Nelson and Nelway, Sicamous and Revelstoke, and Blue River and Valemont. So many Okanagan fruit growers wanted Japanese labour, the *Victoria Daily Times* observed, that “there aren’t enough Japs to go ’round.” That too was the conclusion of Angus, who thought that Ontario would take 2,000 farm workers and that “opportunities for normal employment [were] so great, the proposed Civilian Corps might be unnecessary.”⁵⁹

National magazines agreed that it was a national problem; British Columbia did need safeguards “against stabs in the back.” Some eastern papers also expressed sympathy for British Columbia’s demand that the Japanese be removed from the province. As well as almost daily front-page news of the war in the Pacific, they carried wire service stories of the situation in British Columbia and of the parliamentary speeches of BC MPs. The farther east, however, the fewer the stories. The *Halifax Herald* and the *Star*, the *Gazette*, and *Le Devoir* of Montreal, for example, had plenty of news on the Pacific War and, in the case of the *Gazette*, expressed concern about the vulnerability of the Pacific coast given the fall of Singapore but only scattered reports on British Columbia. Major dailies in Ottawa and Toronto had news reports and occasional editorials, though curiously, given its later interest in the matter, the only editorial comment in the *Toronto Daily Star* was a Les Callan cartoon depicting the “strategic withdrawal” of the Japanese from the coast. Editorially, the *Ottawa Journal*, the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, and others shared the view of the *Winnipeg Free Press* that precautions were necessary. After erroneous reports of fifth columnists in Hawaii and Asia, they commended the federal government for acting “to guard against potential fifth columnists” by making registration compulsory, incarcerating potential saboteurs, and rounding up the fishing fleet. Yet they also thought that the government should “not be too severe with the Japanese in general” since most Japanese in Canada were loyal to Canada. In commenting on the unwillingness of other provinces to accept the Japanese, the *Star-Phoenix* suggested that British Columbians were perhaps too alarmist in demanding the removal of the province’s entire Japanese population.⁶⁰

In any case, central and eastern Canada was no more amenable to accepting Japanese workers than the interior of British Columbia. Officials in Ottawa had hoped to send most Japanese nationals to Ontario to help solve an acute shortage of bush labour, but problems soon arose. Early in February, one lumber operator who was anxious for their labour cancelled the plan because



"Strategic Withdrawal to Prepared Positions," *Toronto Daily Star*, 21 January 1942. Les Callan, the *Toronto Star* cartoonist, was well aware of the situation in British Columbia as he had previously been the *Vancouver Sun*'s cartoonist. By permission of the *Toronto Star*.

the Ontario government warned him that he would lose its business if he employed Japanese. At the same time, Ontario's labour minister informed his federal counterpart that the provincial cabinet did not want any Japanese "brought in for any kind of work" under any "conditions or circumstances" and would not give any business to their employers. When the Department of Labour abruptly cancelled departure arrangements for a group of Japanese nationals, it cited "unforeseen difficulties with the lumber company." The *Vancouver* press variously interpreted that to mean logging camps no longer required workers or that problems had arisen with accommodation, but the truth soon came out. Keenleyside suspected Premier Mitchell Hepburn of

making the decision as part of his campaign against Ottawa. Other provinces, though less belligerent, were also unwilling to accept Japanese. In Alberta, for example, the Medicine Hat City Council protested moving “enemy aliens from one part of Canada to another for employment in private industry.”⁶¹

In commenting on this rejection, Attorney General R.L. Maitland drew on an ancient BC theme as he asserted, “Ottawa says that there is difficulty in getting other provinces to take Japanese from British Columbia ... [since] we are at war; we are in the front line. It is not a question of who wants them or who does not. The Dominion Government must see that they are placed in safe areas as will assure the safety of this coast.” Echoing that sentiment, the Vancouver *Daily Province* described the war as “the problem of all Canada” but admitted that other provinces were probably reluctant to take Japanese because of assertions by “the most vociferous of the agitators that once the Japanese were outside the province” they would not be allowed to return.⁶²

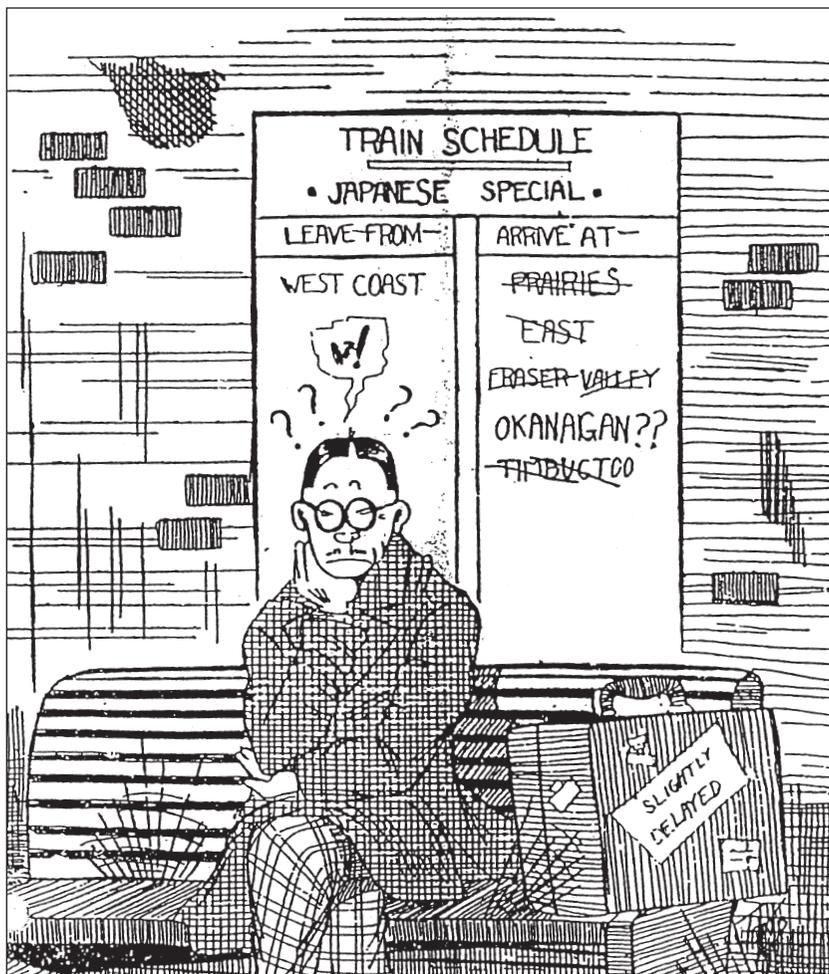
Residents of British Columbia’s interior were equally hostile to accepting Japanese. Okanagan residents resented the desire of those on the coast to be rid of the Japanese and often behaved much like people on the coast. Despite shortages of agricultural labour, few wanted to add to the local Japanese population of somewhat under 1,000. With rare exceptions, even those who wanted Japanese labour wanted it strictly controlled and only for the duration of the war. In the southern part of the valley, there was little debate. Oliver residents had long ago decided “No Japs.” In Summerland, the Municipal Council, the Board of Trade, and the local branch of the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association (BCFGA) unanimously protested importing “any Japanese whatsoever into the Okanagan Valley” lest they infiltrate “into the Summerland district.” Some mention was made of possible sabotage of fruit and vegetable crops, but the main objection was economic. Penticton Municipal Council utterly opposed “the mass importation of Japanese unless in the opinion of the federal government it is vitally necessary to the defence of Canada.” At a public meeting, Mayor R.J. McDougall argued that if Japanese “must be brought in” they should not bring wives or families. Others suggested admitting them only under guard. The president of the Board of Trade warned that Japanese would want to stay and would, as in the Fraser Valley, “endanger our fruit growers’ interests.” The past president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce declared that nothing would stop them from buying land, settling permanently, and creating “a half-Jap community.” Fearing the arrival “of Japanese who elsewhere by their economic standards and group solidarity have ousted all but themselves,” the *Penticton Herald* agreed. A Penticton resident who took in a Japanese friend faced so much protest that he sent the friend away.⁶³

Several hundred Japanese already lived on agricultural land around Kelowna. When fruit and vegetable growers said that they could employ about 1,200 Japanese labourers, the Board of Trade invited service clubs and the Canadian

Legion to join it in sending a telegram to Ottawa demanding that evacuees be kept in “concentration camps” and let out to work seasonally only under “strict police supervision.” As in Penticton, there was concern that once in the Okanagan they would remain there. Kelowna City Council unanimously opposed their entry. At nearby Winfield, a public meeting was 100 percent in favour of not bringing in Japanese from the coast. By early February, as some “well-dressed and educated young Japanese” drove into the district in “large, private automobiles” and sought information about buying land, Kelowna residents feared that it would be “extremely difficult to prevent a substantial influx.” The Board of Trade urged the prime minister to “take immediate action to prevent Japs settling here to forestall any possible unfortunate action by resentful citizens.” Kelowna City Council warned of violence and asked other municipalities to sign a demand that all male Japanese of military age be interned, that Japanese be prohibited from purchasing, leasing, or renting land or other real estate, and that evacuees be strictly supervised. As for demands from Vancouver that the Japanese be moved east of the Cascades, the *Kelowna Courier* asked, do coast people “not care what happens to the rich Interior country as long as the Japanese are moved out and kept out of the coast area?” As for the eastern provinces that would not accept the Japanese, it asked, “are we part of Canada?” Kelowna lawyers, like Penticton realtors, promised not to help the Japanese acquire land.⁶⁴

In the Vernon area, where some Japanese had long resided, opinion was divided. The *Vernon News* deplored using the war as an excuse “to put these unfortunate peoples to work” on projects designed to help develop certain areas and to interfere with their contributions to growing food for Britain. Later it admitted that Okanagan residents did not necessarily agree, but reminded them that Canada professed “British ideals of freedom, tolerance, and personal liberty,” that precautions were necessary, but that persecution must be avoided. Members of the Vernon Board of Trade were somewhat ambivalent about evacuee labour, but the executive and some prominent growers sought Japanese labour “under guard” for agricultural work and construction projects such as the Monashee road. When some city councillors opposed bringing in Japanese under any circumstances, Vernon City Council adopted a compromise accepting Japanese only for highway work and under military supervision. The Okanagan Municipal Association noted that the valley already had “too great a percentage” of Japanese and asked the government to stop their infiltration and enact laws, retroactive to 7 December 1941, preventing them from buying, renting, or leasing land or crops. Possibly as a sop to those who wanted roads or agricultural labour, it suggested that “a properly controlled evacuation” under military supervision for useful work in less dangerous areas would “cause local indignation to subside.” Ottawa was already moving to restrict the acquisition of land by Japanese.⁶⁵

While urban residents did not want more Japanese in the valley, vegetable



“When Does the Train Leave?” *Vernon News*, 29 January 1942. At the time this cartoon was drawn by an unknown artist, only adult male Japanese nationals had been told to leave coastal British Columbia. Finding destinations for them delayed their departure.

growers complained that townspeople and small orchardists were stirring up the issue without solving a labour shortage. Many fruit growers also needed labour, but southern delegates at the BCFGA convention generally opposed the use of Japanese labour. The meeting applauded provincial Minister of Agriculture K.C. Macdonald’s assertion that he would not support moving any Japanese to the Okanagan “even for the rescue of your crop” since “once they were allowed in it might be hard to get rid of them.” Nevertheless, after hearing J.B. Shimek of the Coast Berry Growers Association say that the Japanese were good workers and loyal members of co-operatives but should be prohibited from buying or renting land, the convention voted thirty-six

to nine to admit Japanese to help handle the fruit crop under certain conditions – namely, that they would be under supervision, could not buy or lease land or crops, and had to leave after the emergency. Three southern interior MLAs, Frank Putnam (Coalition-Liberal, Nelson-Creston), C.S. Leary (Coalition-Liberal, Kaslo-Slocan) and T.A. Love (Coalition-Conservative, Grand Forks-Greenwood), however, opposed their entry lest they become permanent residents. At Grand Forks, the Canadian Legion and the Junior Chamber of Commerce also objected, but the Nelson Junior Chamber – saying that it was “purely a military matter” – refused to support a Grand Forks resolution. Just after Ottawa announced that all Japanese would be leaving the coast, a delegation of Kelowna-area residents headed by W.A.C. Bennett (MLA, Coalition-Conservative, South Okanagan) and including the mayor and representatives of the Kelowna Board of Trade, the BCFG, the BC Federation of Agriculture, and the Interior Vegetable Marketing Board, warned that “something drastic is going to happen” unless “the present alarming uncontrolled infiltration of Japanese from [the] coast” was stopped.⁶⁶

Kamloops City Council, fearing that Japanese labour would increase local unemployment, recommended that “the only safe method of dealing with enemy aliens is to place them in internment.” The *Kamloops Sentinel* agreed that this would allay fears of their becoming permanent settlers. When Japanese, who allegedly demonstrated a “very truculent and insolent” behaviour, began drifting into the area, the Kamloops City Council and Board of Trade demanded the immediate internment of all male Japanese of military age and “strict police supervision” of others. The Kamloops and District Liberal Association wanted to ensure that no Japanese could buy or lease land during the war, a proposal that Ian Mackenzie endorsed as “the unanimous opinion of the people of British Columbia.” After returning from the Okanagan Municipal Association meeting, Mayor George R. Williams reported a sense there “that they would take the law into their own hands” rather than have Japanese. He complained of the “scurvy trick” of the coast people who “do not care who gets the trouble so long as they are free of it.” Aldermen agreed. They rejected a Victoria resolution for the removal of “all persons of enemy races” from the coast as “too much milk and water.” After inserting the word *immediately*, they adopted a resolution prepared by the local Canadian Legion complaining of the “apparent unsupervised infiltration [of] Japanese to interior points” and called for the internment of males of military age and the “humane evacuation” of all Japanese from the coast under “strict supervision.” The *Kamloops Sentinel* attributed intense feelings to delays in moving the Japanese from defence areas, a lack of supervision, and the absence of concern by coast residents about anything except getting “the Japanese away from the coast, irrespective of what trouble may ensue elsewhere.” T.J. O’Neill (Liberal MP, Kamloops) quoted a prominent Kamloops businessman as saying that it would not be surprising

“if the citizens decided to take the matter into their own hands if Ottawa does not act soon and definitely.”⁶⁷

During January and February, only male Japanese nationals of military age were under orders to move, though Ottawa encouraged all Japanese men to move inland. Given the refusal of other provinces to accept them, building the Yellowhead Pass highway and other roads in the interior of British Columbia seemed to be the most likely employment, but arranging accommodation took time. When the Canadian National Railway objected to having potential saboteurs working adjacent to its rail lines, the RCMP said that suspected subversives had been interned and promised to protect the railway from sabotage. In mid-February officials announced that the movement would begin imminently, but repeated delays in the departure of the first 100 Japanese nationals did not ease public doubts. Finally, on 23 February 1942, amid publicity designed to “demonstrate to the public that the Government had actually instituted the Jap exodus,” the first Japanese nationals left for the Jasper area.⁶⁸

IN THE MEANTIME, daily news of Japan’s military successes increased tension. Hong Kong fell on Christmas Day, Manila on 2 January. By mid-January, Japanese forces were rapidly taking over the Netherlands East Indies and had invaded Malaya. On 15 February, they captured Britain’s supposedly impregnable fortress of Singapore. Adding to the jitters of coastal British Columbians was the observation of the liaison officer between the U.S. Army Air Corps and the Royal Canadian Air Force that “the fall of Singapore would leave the west coast of North America exposed to attack by sea and land.” In Vancouver, rumours circulated that the local Japanese celebrated the victory with feasts and were dressing in “flashy new clothes to impress their countrymen when they arrive.” British Columbians increasingly felt insecure. The *Cowichan Leader* declared, “military authorities know that, even as you read this, the B.C. coast may be subjected to what may be described as a nuisance attack. If Japan’s drive southward is not stopped, ... she will ere long ... extend the scope of her operation towards this coast.” Elmore Philpott suggested that “if Singapore falls a Japanese attack on Alaska is much more than a possibility.” In Vancouver, St. Paul’s Hospital organized a blood bank “exclusively for use of air raid victims in British Columbia,” and Mayor Cornett took full control of the local air raid protection program “to relieve public anxiety and eliminate internal friction” in the organization. Vancouver City Council asked Minister of Defence Ralston to visit the Pacific coast. “If adequate precautions have been taken to protect Vancouver and other coast cities against attack by air, land or sea,” Cornett averred, “it is only right our citizens should receive assurance of this.” Ralston’s reply that coastal defences were being constantly reviewed, could be reinforced, and were planned to meet any expected attack temporarily satisfied Cornett.⁶⁹

Concern about defences extended east of the Rocky Mountains, where politicians and editors recalled how the United States had claimed that its defences were in good order before Pearl Harbor and how the British had said the same about Singapore. After Premier Hepburn told an Ontario agricultural group that Japanese forces might invade Canada within three months by coming “down the prairie side and not the Pacific,” the press envisioned a scenario in which Japan might seek to take over Alaska and British Columbia as a “buffer” against American might. Vendors of Victory Bonds had already suggested this possibility. For example, a full-page advertisement published in both English and French across the country portrayed sinister-looking Japanese and Nazi figures on either side of a map of Canada with the slogan “Ils menacent le Canada à l’est et à l’ouest,” or, in English, “They menace Canada on both coasts.”⁷⁰

The BC MPs stressed the need for better coastal defences. Green repeated earlier assertions that “Canada is in deadly peril” because Canadian forces on the Pacific coast were “hopelessly inadequate” to cope with the situation in which Japan controlled the ocean and might seek Aleutian bases from which to attack “Prince Rupert, the Queen Charlotte Islands, and even Port Alberni,” the whole of British Columbia, and even Edmonton and Calgary. Trying to score points in the concurrent conscription crisis, he emphasized that home defence conscripts could not even be sent to the San Juan Islands to defend Victoria. He claimed that 1,800 Japanese fishermen could “guide enemy naval forces to every bay, every landing place and perhaps every gun on the Canadian coast.” If that happened, he expected that “our generals would make another of those strategic retreats with the remnants of our forces to the mountains, leaving the people on the coast to their fate, and in the result thousands of Canadians would have to die to get back what need never have been lost.” Pacific coast residents, he declared, were entitled to “protection from being stabbed in the back,” with “the only complete protection” being removal of the Japanese population from the province. British Columbia, he concluded, was waiting “rather impatiently” to know if the government would implement its announcement of 14 January to define protected areas and move the Japanese from them, though it had not said whether that applied to the Canadian born and the naturalized as well as Japanese nationals.⁷¹

BC Liberals were equally concerned. George Cruickshank (Fraser Valley) followed with a brief admonition: “We cannot afford to take chances after Pearl Harbor,” or “everybody in British Columbia will, in a few years, be speaking Japanese.” Tom Reid, noting that the “many optimistic reports” of “high military men and authorities” were “certainly not justified” by later events, suggested that people could “hardly be blamed for being rather sceptical.” Asserting that coastal residents were “greatly perturbed with respect to Pacific coast defences,” he asked, if Singapore falls, where “will Japan strike next?”



Ils menacent le
Canada
à l'est et à l'ouest

Le Canada est maintenant menacé de deux côtés à la fois.
 La guerre s'est étendue aux deux océans, l'Atlantique et le Pacifique. Plus que jamais, c'est la guerre mondiale et le Canada est en plein sur la ligne de feu.
 Nous qui combattons pour la liberté, nous avons de vastes ressources, mais l'agresseur se préparait depuis longtemps.

Le travail, les sacrifices, la farouche détermination de combattre avec les armes efficaces dont nous disposons, nous apporteront la Victoire finale.
 Ceux qui ne peuvent prendre les armes voudront prêter leur argent pour fabriquer les instruments de la Victoire. Tout le monde doit faire sa part, dans toute la mesure de ses moyens.

L'ennemi est à nos portes

LE COMITÉ NATIONAL DE LA FINANCE DE GÉNÉRAL OTTAWA, CANADA

**PRÉPAREZ-VOUS
 A ACHETER DES**

OBLIGATIONS de la VICTOIRE

NOUVELLE ÉMISSION

VOS DOLLARS VOUS SAUVERONT · VOS DOLLARS VOUS REVIENDRONT

Victory Bond advertisement, 1942. With its menacing figures of both a Japanese and a Nazi soldier, this advertisement appeared in many newspapers, in both English and French, throughout Canada in early February 1942.

Grey Turgeon was less “afraid of a direct attack, unless it be of a sporadic nature against Vancouver and Esquimalt,” than of a “positively planned attack across Alaska or over the Aleutian Islands.” He proposed completing highways

from Prince Rupert to Edmonton and from Vancouver to Edmonton via Blue River and constructing airports that would, incidentally, benefit his constituency. R.W. Mayhew asked, “we have the Japanese, the counterpart of Hitler; starting in Malaya, working their way to Singapore, into the Philippines, into the Indies and to Australia and New Zealand; and how do we know that Canada is not the next?” He did not think that Japan was interested in bombing BC cities but saw the Esquimalt dry dock, the Pacific Cable, the Trail smelter, and links with the rest of Canada as possible targets.⁷²

The press was also worried. In reminding readers of the protection provided by the Pacific Ocean and air defences, the Port Alberni *West Coast Advocate* was in line with the thinking of senior military officers but was exceptional among its provincial counterparts. Citing Reid’s speech, the *Vancouver Sun* implied that the government had been unable to offer Reid private information to “diminish his anxiety” about inadequate defences. It opposed sending the fourth division overseas until it could be replaced in British Columbia by a unit of similar size. The *Trail Daily Times*, noting the two-hour flying time from Vancouver to Trail, suggested that Green’s allegations about neglected defences “cannot be thrust aside ... ‘Too little too late’ has become more than a catchword in many parts of the world.” Similarly, the *Victoria Daily Times* asserted that experience elsewhere showed that “it can happen here”; the *Cowichan Leader* observed, “here we are on Vancouver Island like the neck of a chicken stuck out ready for the next axe, while an apathetic government at Ottawa still in effect chants those same damning words, ‘It can’t happen here.’” The *Evening Empire* described Prince Rupert as the “nearest neighbor to that militant power, over yonder.” Well inland at Kaslo, the *Kootenaian* warned that Japanese fishermen would be valuable “in establishing sub-nests with which to wreck our shipping and ports.”⁷³

Provincial legislators joined the cry and largely set aside partisan differences. CCF leader Harold Winch was as concerned about the Japanese presence as were any of the coalition members. He warned that, unless his party got “certain facts on the state of preparedness in B.C. to meet a possible Japanese attack,” he would seek a closed sitting of the legislature to examine coastal defences. Now that Japan’s forces were “within one hundred miles of Australia,” J.A. Paton said, “this part of the Empire [must] not be allowed to become a danger spot.” Attorney General R.L. Maitland, who did not “feel safe while the Japanese are on the coast,” claimed that “we have every reason to fear attack and to fear fifth-column activities” since to strike the rest of Canada Japanese invaders would have to “pass over our dead bodies, our fields, our timber, our homes.” The legislature passed a motion, introduced by H.G.T. Perry, the minister of education, and seconded by Winch, calling Ottawa’s attention “to the immediate necessity of completing the strongest and fullest measures of defence against our enemies.” Premier Hart expected that the Japanese would soon be leaving vulnerable areas but promised to go

to Ottawa if its action was “insufficient.” Amazed that the legislature had to remind Ottawa about defence, the *Victoria Daily Times* exhorted readers to “remember everything – not only Pearl Harbor and Singapore!”⁷⁴

The fall of Singapore was crucial. As Bruce Hutchison wrote from Ottawa, “when Singapore fell, Canada’s conception of the war fell with it.” Paton described British Columbia “as the meat in a Japanese sandwich, with landing parties in front and ‘quislings, fifth columnists, and enemy aliens’ in the rear.” Walter Sage, a University of British Columbia historian, wrote to his friend Henry Angus that “the fall of Singapore has certainly changed things ... We are anxious and trust that Ottawa will waken up fully to our danger.” The *Vancouver Sun* suggested that Canada establish a well-equipped mobile striking force of 15,000–20,000 men to repel “any Japanese landing attempt from Alaska southwards.” Then President Roosevelt warned that Alaska was in danger and that the United States could not defend it. The *Vancouver Sun* asked, did the prime minister “not realize that a Canadian division might be the salvation of British Columbia or Alaska?” The *Vancouver Daily Province* complained of the government’s “equivocation and evasiveness” since Pearl Harbor, the lack of military forces at the coast, and the presence of local Japanese. Inland, the *Trail Daily News*, inspired by Howard Green’s speech to the Toronto Conservative Club, suggested that Japanese forces might be at the “northern gates of British Columbia” within a month, launch bombing raids, and use Japanese residents of the province as effective fifth columnists, as they had done in Malaya. Green got so many letters about defence and the Japanese that it seemed “the people are now thoroughly roused to their danger, which is very encouraging for it means that something may be done.” Some approached the prime minister directly. The Vancouver local of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, citing “a great general feeling of unpreparedness,” wanted fortifications up to and including the Rockies, a call up of all persons aged eighteen to sixty, the formation of guerrilla and home guard units, the commandeering of property to prepare for an invasion, tightened regulations on the freedom of movement of enemy aliens, and guards for industrial plants and public utilities. Arthur Turner (MLA, CCF, Vancouver East) told the prime minister that waste, incompetence, delays, and “general unpreparedness” against any kind of attack were “having such a dangerous effect on the people of B.C. that responsible officials cannot settle down to their work while the condition lasts.” The secretary-treasurer of the Associated Property Owners of Vancouver cited “the possibility of a Japanese invasion” to argue for reduced city taxes!⁷⁵

In Ottawa, Hutchison found the BC MPs in a state “bordering on revolt because they are not satisfied with the government’s military preparations,” and Roosevelt’s warning had persuaded other MPs of their case. Citing the minister of national defence as admitting that “preparations on the Pacific Coast are entirely inadequate,” Mackenzie opposed sending more troops

“overseas until we have adequate defences for our coast.” Green told his family, “this Singapore business is devastating”; if British Columbians “place any value whatever on their lives [they] had better not be satisfied until every individual in the Province is in his or her place for the defence of every inch of our territory – and is planning to strike out at the Japs away from our shores.” Such claims garnered sympathy elsewhere in the country. In commenting on one of Green’s statements, the *Brantford Expositor*, for example, suggested that such “apprehension” was “entirely logical,” that “Vancouver must never be another Pearl Harbor.”⁷⁶

In fact, the government was planning a secret session of Parliament to discuss the military situation. Ralston’s speech notes for the session mentioned possible nuisance raids but said nothing of the Japanese in British Columbia. A somewhat alarmed Hutchison reported that the “brass hats” persisted in seeing only occasional bombing raids. Claiming that “Nero would be quite at home in Ottawa,” he sketched a scenario in which “Nero supplies the music. The Japanese will supply the background, the flames and the sound effect in Vancouver.” He suggested that the BC MPs would use the secret session to demand the total evacuation of the Japanese. “Never before,” he alleged, “have B.C. members acted so unitedly in any issue.” Editorially, the *Vancouver Sun* suggested that “Mr. King is not doing everything he can to defend Canada.” Visually, the *Victoria Daily Times* and a number of other Canadian newspapers published a syndicated cartoon of the “Wishful Thinker” mounted on a rocking horse, “Japan Can’t Get the Raw Materials Needed for a Long War,” and gazing out over a fallen horse, Singapore, and about to be hit by “Attacks on the Dutch Indies.” In urging British Columbians to buy Victory Bonds, the *Vancouver News-Herald* reported a story of Japanese shelling California and warned of Japan’s plans to invade British Columbia. Lieutenant Governor W.C. Woodward expected a raid soon.⁷⁷

NEWS OF JAPAN’S MILITARY SUCCESSES and stories of fifth column activities increased suspicions of all Japanese, including the Canadian born. Although it did not appear in the Vancouver press, possibly due to censorship, adding to the sense of foreboding, as it did in the United States, was the comment of the influential American columnist Walter Lippman that enemy aliens on the Pacific coast were holding back on sabotage until they could strike the blow “with maximum effect.” British Columbians impatiently observed the government’s apparent inaction in implementing plans to remove male Japanese nationals from the coast. All the prime minister did in early February was dissolve the Standing Committee, summarize the policy announced in mid-January, and urge other Canadians to deal with Canadian citizens of Japanese race with “tolerance and understanding.” Not until 14 February were male enemy aliens – Japanese, German, and Italian – told that they must move east of the Cascades by 1 April and, along with all Japanese

nationals, no matter their age or sex, surrender cameras, radios, firearms, and explosives. From Vancouver, Senator J.H. King advised that the “somewhat confusing” reports of the mid-January policy statement would make it necessary to announce officially “that the removal will be thorough.” For “peace of mind and assurance to the public,” he urged that it “be done at the earliest possible moment and there should be few exemptions.”⁷⁸

The government was well aware of such feelings. General Alexander and the Joint Services Committee, Pacific Coast, warned that “the continued presence of enemy aliens and persons of Japanese racial origin in the Protected Area constitutes a serious danger and prejudices the effective defence of the Pacific Coast of Canada.” That committee recommended moving male Japanese from the west coast of Vancouver Island, the Prince Rupert-Terrace area, and the Queen Charlotte Islands but within days urged removing *all* Japanese, regardless of sex or age, from those areas by 1 April 1942. Commissioner T.W.S. Parsons of the Provincial Police confidentially advised Attorney General R.L. Maitland that existing regulations for removing Japanese were “ineffectual.” “With these people,” he argued, “neither Canadian birth nor naturalization guarantees good faith. Something to remember in the case of invasion or planned sabotage.” To support his claim, he cited specific cases of Japanese, including overage Japanese nationals, still living near air bases or important communications links such as the Victoria telephone exchange. Maitland immediately sent the report to Mackenzie with a covering letter saying that “nothing short of immediate removal of the Japanese will meet the dangers which we feel in this Province.” G.S. Pearson told the press that federal and provincial authorities intended to undertake “a progressive removal of *all* persons of Japanese origin from coastal British Columbia” but advised Arthur MacNamara, the federal deputy minister of labour, that moving adult males quickly would avoid “a very serious situation . . . through the bitterness of the whites at the dilatoriness of the Federal Government’s action” and prevent “an insistent demand for the removal of every Japanese of every category from this province.” Harold Winch asked Premier Hart to press Ottawa for “immediate action to move all Japanese from vulnerable areas of the coast.” After conferring with Hart and General Alexander and talking to Mackenzie on the telephone, Winch reported that Hart had done all that he could, but federal officials were “passing the buck.”⁷⁹

Some British Columbians wrote directly to the prime minister. Lieutenant Governor W.C. Woodward sent a three-page letter on the “appalling” “lack of precautions” about “the Japanese menace on our coast.” Colonel Macintosh publicly and privately “earnestly” entreated the prime minister to remove all Japanese from the Pacific defence area immediately. “With every enemy success,” he contended, “local Japanese of all categories are becoming more arrogant and white citizens comparing measures taken by United States on

their Pacific Coast with lack of decision here are preparing to take drastic action themselves.” On 19 February, the day before Macintosh wrote his letter, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had signed Executive Order 9066, which, though not naming them, effectively authorized the removal of all Japanese from designated military areas.⁸⁰

Tales of “truculent” Japanese increased. Stories of Japanese schoolchildren in the Fraser Valley saying that their parents expected Japan to invade in April became urban legends. Richard Bell-Irving told of a foreman finding some Japanese workmen sitting in a circle around a large map and gloating as they put “rising sun” flags on points taken by Japan. One incident hardened opinion. After Ian Mackenzie announced that the departure of Japanese nationals would begin on 18 February, about 100 Japanese nationals refused to board a train bound for interior work camps apparently because they knew that they did not have to leave until 1 April and thought that they were not wanted anywhere, as demonstrated by Ontario’s reaction to their employment. Japan’s military successes may have strengthened their resistance.⁸¹

Editorial opinion reflected the desire to remove potential fifth columnists and dissatisfaction with Ottawa’s inaction. As the *Victoria Daily Times* commented, “if even half the yarns about the activities of the Japanese which filter, directly or indirectly, into the office of this newspaper are true, there is much to justify the apprehension which Mr. Mayhew has just voiced in the House of Commons.” It complained of Ottawa’s failure to recognize experience elsewhere that “anything can happen here.” Similarly, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* noted that public opinion had “crystallized in favor of removal of ‘all’ Japanese” and that Ottawa’s inactivity was not tempering “the antagonistic attitude of the Pacific Coast Canadians towards the Japanese.” It repeatedly called for public pressure to “insure safety within the country” by interning alien enemies outside the province. The *Nanaimo Free Press* agreed that continued pressure was necessary to “complete removal of these people from the protected areas which are likely to be the scene of invasion.” Newspapers in Comox, Duncan, and Ladysmith agreed that the Japanese were a danger and complained of Ottawa’s inaction. Such sentiments were not confined to Vancouver Island. The *Trail Daily News*, in reporting FBI seizures of “vast quantities of contraband” from Japanese in the United States, observed that “a Jap does not change his color when he steps from the American to the Canadian side of the border yet . . . the benevolent government is allowing the dear little yellow man to remain at the coast a few weeks longer meanwhile giving them opportunities to do a little more dirty work for their emperor.” Both Prince Rupert newspapers questioned the loyalty of local Japanese. The *Vernon News* claimed that there was “more danger” in delay than a scheme “to give British Columbia absolute safety and treat the Japanese fairly.” In the Fraser Valley, the New Westminster *British Columbian* urged Ottawa to “get on with the job”; the *Chilliwack Progress* contended that international

relations were no excuse to “pussyfoot” around the Japanese. Similarly, the *Vancouver Daily Province*, which had tried “to steady public opinion” against rabble-rousing MPs, MLAs, and other newspapers, described “growing impatience” with Ottawa’s failure to say what it was going to do. In the *Vancouver News-Herald*, Philpott wrote that there was no way to prevent Japan “from planting or employing active fifth columnists to do whatever it wants done. The entire Japanese population should be moved from this coast as soon as it is humanly possible. That means now – before an actual military action can take place.” His editors called it “no service to democracy when the interests of minorities are allowed to prevail against the interests of the majority.” The *Vancouver Sun* claimed that “all authorities regard it as unthinkable that any colony of Japanese males should remain” on the coast and that moving them east of the Cascades would “satisfy most” British Columbians. As the military situation deteriorated, it demanded the immediate removal of all Japanese and an end of incidents that let them “snap their fingers at Canadian authority.”⁸²

As individuals and in groups, British Columbians sent their views to Ottawa and especially to Ian Mackenzie. They represented a wide variety of interests, as a random list suggests: the Vancouver South Conservative Association; the Victoria Rotary Club; the Vancouver Kinsmen Club; the Fraternal Council of British Columbia; the Provincial Council of Women; the United Commercial Travellers, Vancouver; the Maple Ridge Citizens League; the Lynnmour-Dollarton Liberal Association; the Canadian Corps Association (representing several regimental organizations in Vancouver); the union of Canadian National Railway Sleeping and Dining Car Workers; the Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce; the North Fraser District Board of the British Columbia Women’s Institutes; the North Vancouver, New Westminster, and Powell River Boards of Trade; the Provincial Command of the Army and Navy Veterans of Canada; the Vancouver Real Estate Exchange; the Vancouver Gyro Club; the Prince Rupert and Revelstoke Women’s Canadian Clubs; and the Housewives League of British Columbia. A few, such as the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE) in Prince Rupert, the Nanaimo Board of Trade, and the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association, worried about the presence of Japanese in places offering easy opportunities for sabotage. Some warned of violence if the Japanese were not removed. A Prince Rupert church group suggested that removal from the coast was “for the safety of Canada, for the safety of the Japs themselves.” A Victoria resident predicted that if his city was bombed its people “would kill every Jap they could lay their hands on.” Most resolutions simply demanded the removal of all Japanese, regardless of age, sex, or citizenship, from the coastal area or in some cases east of the Rockies. “Do not let the color of card or age of Jap stand in your way,” admonished the British Columbia Poultry Industries Committee. “Remember Singapore and

the consideration their troops gave the civilian population.” More influential was a resolution unanimously passed by over 800 men and women at a special Victory Loan luncheon in Vancouver where Dr. Hu Shih, China’s ambassador to the United States, spoke. Referring to the “imminent danger” of an enemy attack, and the “alarming” lack of effective measures to relieve problems caused by the presence of enemy aliens, the resolution urged the immediate evacuation of “all enemy aliens and all people of Japanese origin from Defence Areas of Pacific Coast.”⁸³

Municipal councils also sent resolutions to Ottawa and asked other BC municipalities to do the same. On 13 February, Victoria City Council unanimously resolved that “the experience of countries overrun by our enemies has shown us the menace of allowing persons of enemy races to live in any place that may be open to attack.” It called for “prompt action” to relieve “the apprehension ... and to assure that our women and children are to be safeguarded from grave jeopardy” by removing “all persons of enemy races from the coast of British Columbia without further delay.” Within two weeks, Saanich, Duncan, North Cowichan, Surrey, Alberni, Port Alberni, Chilliwack, Esquimalt, New Westminster, West Vancouver, Prince George, Nanaimo, Courtenay, Langley, Trail, and Enderby and Canadian Legions in Delta and Sooke had endorsed the resolution. Yet as far as Victoria City Council was concerned, the resolution had had no effect on Ottawa. On 20 February, on behalf of the city and adjacent municipalities, Mayor Andrew McGavin wired the prime minister urgently requesting action: “Unanimous opinion that enemy action will develop against this coast and people alarmed at lack of defence precautions and complacent attitude of your government.” Three days later council reminded the prime minister of its dissatisfaction and asked for Mackenzie’s “resignation in view of the ‘slaphappy way’ in which the Japanese situation has been handled on the Pacific Coast.” Coming to the defence of a fellow Liberal, Mayhew told the *Victoria Daily Times* and Victoria City Council that Mackenzie had “done everything he possibly could” to secure the removal of “all Japanese” from the coast “at the earliest possible date” but was only one voice in cabinet. Mackenzie himself accused council of acting “without knowledge of the facts.” He accused other parts of British Columbia and Canada of refusing to accept Japanese and reminded the city of the need to act sanely and humanely because many British subjects were in Japanese hands.⁸⁴

In the meantime, an umbrella group, the Citizens’ Civil Defence Committee, and its affiliate, the Immediate Action Committee of the Victoria and District Canadian Legion, began planning a mass protest meeting. Mayhew cautioned that the “many old people” in Victoria “are liable to think that a Mass Meeting is an indication that danger is more imminent than appears on the surface. Then one never knows how far some people who are excited might help to excite each other.” Mayhew’s advice had no effect. By 20 February,

the Victoria Kinsmen Club had got other interested organizations to support a resolution demanding the removal of “all Japanese from the coastal area” and threatening to boycott Japanese individuals and businesses. Twenty-four groups sent representatives to a meeting that set up a temporary executive of what was renamed the Citizens’ Security Council. The representative of the CCF District Council argued that “the things we suggest doing to the Japanese are what the Nazis did to the Jews and the Poles,” but the meeting unanimously demanded the removal of “all Japanese of all ages and both sexes” within thirty days. A resolution sent to MPs warned that “the feeling of the people of British Columbia is rapidly becoming uncontrollable and will undoubtedly lead to violence.” Three days later the president of the Victoria Chamber of Commerce cited a planned “open air mass meeting” on 1 March to buttress arguments for immediate action to deprive Japanese on Vancouver Island of “the right of free movement” and to put them under strict surveillance until quarters could be prepared for them elsewhere.⁸⁵

The Immediate Action Committee prepared a handbill, “News Flashes after We Are Dead,” which urged people to read it “commencing with the evil Japanese face and hands in the left-hand top corner, menacingly regarding any and all of our coast cities and the foundation of their community life, and even their means of escape,” and to use their influence “towards the total elimination from the Pacific Coast, of the Japanese of all ages and all sexes.” It circulated the leaflet widely. The Montreal *Gazette* reproduced it; others used it as inspiration for sympathetic editorials. In Victoria, the committee planned a parade from downtown to the Beacon Hill Park bandstand on Sunday, 1 March, where Colonel Macintosh, Colonel Ross Napier, and Tom Barnard, provincial president of the Canadian Legion, would speak on behalf of a resolution similar to that of the Citizens’ Defence Committee.⁸⁶ The prospect of such a meeting was frightening. The Chamber of Commerce did not support it lest it cause anti-Japanese demonstrations similar to the anti-German riots after the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915. Mackenzie warned the national headquarters of the Canadian Legion that the “firebrands” who circulated the literature might “try to organize mob action” that could lead to reprisals against Canadians in Japanese hands or sabotage in Canada. Since the government had just announced the removal of all Japanese from the coast, the Canadian Legion withdrew its support, and Barnard did not speak. Neither did Macintosh, a member of the active army. Mackenzie asked the minister of national defence to hold members of the services in quarters during the proposed mass meeting lest uniformed personnel “become associated with riotous and destructive behaviour” or be “required to quell disorder.” The military declared the park off limits for the day, and military police saw that no one in uniform entered it. The meeting passed without incident.⁸⁷

A similar movement emerged in Vancouver. Vancouver City Council moved cautiously, but its actions escalated in the first three weeks of

February as discontent with federal inaction rose. On 2 February, council, taking a “wait and see” policy, tabled a resolution from an Army and Navy Veterans Association branch endorsing any city action “to guarantee transfer of all Japanese residents out of the coastal district.” A week later council agreed to Alderman Wilson’s requests, sought federal authority to cancel the trade licences of enemy aliens and Japanese, and resolved that “speedier action on part of the Government . . . will not only provide greater security for defence areas but will allay fears of Vancouver citizens generally and will be in the best interests of the Japanese residents.” In forwarding this to Minister of Defence Ralston, Mayor Cornett reported “increasing irritation and criticism” over the government’s “apparent failure” to implement announced policies. One reporter suggested that council had set itself up as “the unofficial successor” to the Standing Committee as “watchdog on the Nipponese situation.” The next week, after a vigorous debate, it beseeched Ottawa to re-establish the Standing Committee. Unlike Victoria’s generic reference to “enemy aliens,” Vancouver specifically named the Japanese. Citing the danger of “a potential reservoir of voluntary aid to our enemy,” it implored Ottawa “to remove all residents of Japanese racial origin to areas of Canada well-removed from the Pacific Coast” under conditions that would give them “a reasonable livelihood.” Minister of Justice St. Laurent replied that the government did not want to inflict “unnecessary hardship” on people who were being moved “as a precautionary measure only.” He indicated that the volume of departures from the coast would increase in the next week. Council listened. It refused, for example, to endorse a housewives’ plan to boycott all things Japanese.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, Alderman Wilson was the principal speaker at a meeting on 12 February sponsored by the United Commercial Travellers and attended by delegates from sixty organizations, mainly veterans’ groups such as the Army and Navy Veterans and The Flying Column; “patriotic” British and Canadian bodies such as the Royal Society of St. George, the IODE, the Canadian Daughters’ League, the Native Sons of BC, and the Primrose Club; and fraternal orders such as the Lady Foresters and the Elks. Wilson attacked Canadian-born Japanese, most of whom, he alleged, were trained in Japanese-language schools, “the chief instrument of propaganda of the Imperial Education Department of Japan.” He quoted one of them saying in the *New Canadian* on 31 July 1940 that “some day a Japanese Hitler will arise which will wreck vengeance upon Canadians.” Such a sentiment was quite out of keeping with the fiercely Canadian editorial policy of the *New Canadian*, but its columnist “K.W.,” in commenting on the inability of Nisei to practise as lawyers, suggested that such denials could sow “seeds of bitterness” that in the future might “see a group of brilliant Nisei who have emigrated to Japan, leading a virulent anti-Canadian movement in Japan, because they have been abused here in early and tender years. After all, most

of us have heard of an embittered Austrian house painter whose name is Adolf." The meeting unanimously called for organizing a council to preserve and promote "the British way of life in Western Canada" and to co-ordinate activities to impress on "Ottawa the necessity for immediate action in removing British Columbia's entire Japanese population east of the Rockies."⁸⁹

Since this group seemed to be under the influence of Wilson and The Flying Column, members of Vancouver's business and political elite became alarmed. Twenty prominent residents – including Austin Taylor, an industrialist; Grant MacNeil and Harold Winch, CCF MLAs; Mrs. F.J. Rolston, a coalition MLA; Birt Showler of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council; P.A. Woodward and Victor Spencer, whose families owned two of the city's largest department stores; Henry Macken, a prominent lumberman; W.G. Murrin, president of the BC Electric Railway; and J.A. Clark, a retired general and former Conservative MP – formed a Citizens' Defence Committee. "With a view to stabilizing public opinion and in the interest of public safety," the committee circulated a petition for immediate removal of enemy aliens from all points that the military thought essential for defence and public safety and the immediate "evacuation of all those of Japanese origin from the Pacific Coast." Within a day, the Vancouver Labour Council, the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, and the BC Command of the Canadian Legion endorsed it. As the preamble to the petition hinted, committee members saw a need for leadership and co-ordination "to prevent untoward action and expression." They were particularly worried that The Flying Column's proposed mass meeting on 4 March might cause "unfortunate incidents," a euphemism for a riot. The Canadian Legion executive warned that a "trifling incident" could require a call out of the reserve army "to protect the Japanese against the Canadian white people." By then Wilson claimed that about 150 associations were co-operating in his council. He also subscribed to a theory that there was a move afoot to create a disturbance so that the military would have to take over.⁹⁰

Mackenzie viewed the mass meetings as part of a "calculated plan to incite riotous actions against Japanese." Moreover, the idea was spreading. In the Fraser Valley, Reeve S. Mussallem of Maple Ridge warned that "riot and bloodshed" might follow indignation meetings planned "to condemn the dilatory Government action" and that the Japanese had been "openly hostile since Singapore." Mackenzie again explained why the movement of the Japanese had been delayed and asked Mussallem to tell people that resolutions were welcome but in view of the danger to "use your authority to discourage such public assemblies." Mussallem was able to cancel the meeting, and the White Citizens League of Maple Ridge organized a petition instead. Commenting on the agitation, the editor of the *Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Weekly Gazette* suggested that the hysteria "being dished up" was "not altogether groundless," that "people's tempers are getting frayed,"

and that “in fairness to them and to the Japanese” “something should be done at once.”⁹¹

Concerns about a Japanese invasion persisted. The *Cowichan Leader* admitted the possibility of “some exaggerated tales about Japanese activities in our midst” but cited plans allegedly found in California for a Japanese invasion via Canada to claim that not all stories were “pipe dreams.” Even the editor of the Vancouver *Daily Province* asked why Prime Minister King had not taken British Columbians, who were “living in the midst of alarms,” into his confidence. “Vancouver will be patient if Mr. King will be frank,” it asserted, and “make allowance for unavoidable setbacks and disappointments if they are clearly disclosed. What is desperately needed is authoritative assurance that the government recognizes the dangerous situation and is proceeding with all possible haste to meet it.”⁹²

IN OTTAWA, BC MPs continued to draw attention to provincial sentiment. Only Angus MacInnis, who observed that most Japanese in British Columbia were Canadian citizens, thought that the situation was in hand. Others agreed with Cruickshank, who had “not the faintest idea which branch of the government is handling the Japanese question – nor has any other British Columbia member.” They criticized inadequate coastal defences, referred to the danger of fifth columnists, and stressed the difficulty of distinguishing between the loyal and the disloyal. Mayhew, for example, complained that Japanese could still move freely about and suggested that they might have cached munitions along the coast. While agreeing that they must have “proper shelter and proper care,” he asserted that “blood is thicker than water” and concluded, “I would not want to be the one responsible for sorting out the loyal Japanese from the disloyal.” Olof Hanson (Liberal, Skeena), claiming that fishermen were the “greatest potential danger,” urged removing “all Japanese of military age” from coastal areas. Other MPs referred to the Japanese question in the throne speech debate, but Neill, “a cantankerous fellow” in King’s eye, focused on it entirely and implied, “I told you so.” Spy and sabotage stories figured in it, but Neill also anticipated buying out and expatriating the Japanese to “settle once and for all this canker in the life of Canada which prevents us from being a united white Canada.” McGeer expressed concern about defences and the trustworthiness of the Japanese race. Mayhew privately apprised King of proposed mass meetings, of the plans of “experienced hunters and woodsmen” to act against potential saboteurs, and of many calls from Victoria and Vancouver “expressing considerable alarm” that Japanese had not been moved from strategic sites. Senator J.H. King reported, “people in Vancouver and Victoria are very nervous.” He was certain that Japanese government agents all along the coast would “strike whenever the opportunity occurs.” Ian Mackenzie approached cabinet colleagues. On 14 February, for example, he told Minister of Justice St. Laurent

that the date of 1 April for removing Japanese nationals was “far too remote, and public opinion at the coast will demand much quicker action.” By then Mackenzie was taking credit for carrying “British Columbia’s fight for action on the Japanese problem” against fellow cabinet ministers who did not want Japanese in their parts of the country.⁹³

On 19 February, in answering Grote Stirling’s question about Japanese in the interior, the prime minister emphasized the necessity of restrained language in order to “prevent hasty and unwarranted action” by individuals who might not appreciate the consequences of their actions. He neither clarified policy nor satisfied BC MPs. On 21 February, six Liberal backbenchers plus A.W. Neill and G.E.L. MacKinnon (Conservative, Kootenay East) drafted a letter to him expressing frustration at the lack of government responses to their representations. They complained that King had not referred to “many of the Japanese who would be dangerous to us and helpful to our enemies” and demanded the removal of all Japanese to points east of the Cascades. Perhaps realizing logistical problems in placing evacuees, they asked only for their immediate removal from sensitive areas near airports, military installations, and power plants and the removal of the rest as rapidly as possible, beginning with able-bodied males and concluding with families. They asked too that regulations concerning curfews, radios, cameras, explosives, motor vehicles, and the like be applied to naturalized and Canadian-born citizens. They also wanted a prohibition, retroactive to 7 December 1941, on Japanese acquiring land anywhere in British Columbia.⁹⁴

Events rapidly overtook these requests. Two days earlier cabinet had discussed the Japanese situation. Musing in his diary, King agreed that the problem had drifted because no one minister was responsible and two who were, Mitchell of Labour and St. Laurent of Justice, had been absent fighting by-elections to get into Parliament. St. Laurent, however, had been thinking about the subject. On 21 February, he told the Ontario section of the Canadian Bar Association that, while many Japanese were Canadian born and most Japanese in Canada were normally “entitled to full recognition of the same fundamental rights we claim for ourselves,” the crisis made “preventive” but not “punitive” measures necessary. “After the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor,” he did not think the white population could “be expected to pursue their war effort with singleness of purpose and confidence if something was not done at once.” In a statement that might have emanated from British Columbia, he added, “we know that the oriental mind differs from ours, and we know what disasters have overtaken others because of the twists and quirks of that oriental mind.” He believed that it was necessary “to safeguard the interests and perhaps even the lives of those we are surely entitled to look upon as the real Canadians of that territory.”⁹⁵

King was convinced that “public prejudice is so strong in B.C. that it is

going to be difficult to control the situation.” The next day the Cabinet War Committee discussed the matter. Stressing the need to regard Japan as a potential aggressor on North America, King convinced the committee to pay more attention to defence and air raid preparations. Home defence, of course, would increase the need for soldiers in Canada and “probably avoid any necessity of conscription and meanwhile will help to quiet the feeling in Canada.” Conscription was King’s main concern, but his fear of riots was real. His main personal experience with Japanese in British Columbia was investigating damage claims after the 1907 anti-Asian riot in Vancouver. Since at least 1938 and especially since 7 December 1941, officials watching British Columbia had warned of anti-Japanese riots. On 23 February 1942, Mackenzie told Ralston that Premier Hart reported that “feeling” was “simply aflame.” Without immediate action to remove all Japanese from near power dams, gun emplacements, and the like, Mackenzie feared “an outburst of feeling.” As evidence, he enclosed the telegram from Vancouver’s Citizens’ Defence Committee. The next day he reinforced his warning with a clipping about Victoria City Council’s demand for his resignation because of the “slaphappy way’ in which the Japanese situation had been handled.” Although Mackenzie had no sympathy for the Japanese, he was the messenger, not the decision maker.⁹⁶

On the afternoon and evening of 24 February 1942, Parliament met in a secret session. Defence was the main theme, but the prime minister spoke “more or less freely about the Japanese situation and the need to be very much on our guard in dealing with the Japanese.” Earlier that day cabinet had authorized the minister of justice to “exclude any or all persons regardless of their citizenship, from protected areas as defined under the defence of Canada regulations.” On the morning of 25 February 1942, the prime minister issued a press release announcing the new policy. That afternoon, as he tabled an order in council, he noted the need for haste “in the interest of law and order out on the Pacific coast.”⁹⁷

Five days earlier the United States had announced a similar program. The coincidence of timing is striking; however, despite the agreement of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence in the fall of 1941 that the two nations “should follow policies of a similar character in relation” to their “populations of Japanese racial origin,” there is scant evidence of consultations. Nevertheless, H.F. Angus, who was close to the decision-making process in Ottawa, declared in his memoirs, “the fate of persons of Japanese race in BC was sealed by the panic action taken by the United States, in spite of its famous bill of rights.” In both countries, race had trumped citizenship. The prime minister, who eighteen months earlier had viewed the real problem with the Japanese in Canada as making them and especially the Canadian born “good and loyal citizens,” now yielded to pressure from the West Coast and his own fear that hostility to the Japanese could lead to outbursts against them.⁹⁸

CURIOSLY, THE PRESS REPORTED the momentous decision to remove all Japanese from the West Coast with less than banner headlines. The handful of editorial comments tempered relief at Ottawa's response with complaints that the government should have acted earlier and concern over the need for vigilance to ensure that the government did not change its mind. While the *Vancouver Sun* suggested that British Columbia should unanimously state that the Japanese should never be allowed to return, others warned of "dangerous emotionalism" and "hysterical clamour" against "helpless" Japanese who, "as a military measure, are required to leave their homes and their occupations at the coast." Indeed, Angus MacInnis, a later champion of the rights of Japanese Canadians, told a correspondent, who wanted all Japanese removed from the coast, that most were Canadians whose "rights as Canadians must be respected." Then he added a qualifier: "in so far as it is compatible with adequate defence and public safety." Few questioned the decision, though a suburban newspaper, the *Marpole-Richmond Review*, wondered if fear or economic jealousy explained the outcry against the Japanese and if this is "Hitler's country or a democracy."⁹⁹ Once the government announced that all Japanese would be leaving the coast, the volume of protests rapidly declined. Nevertheless, hysterical outbursts were still possible, and the Provincial Police kept a close watch.

If all Japanese were removed in order to prevent riots and demonstrations, the policy succeeded. Mayhew was relieved because he thought that British Columbians, especially in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster, "would have taken the matter into their own hands." In Vancouver, the Citizens' Defence Committee and its subcommittee, the Citizens' Defence Council, welcomed the news but warned of the urgent need to stabilize public opinion by announcing when the movement of Japanese "from strategic areas of defence and public safety" would begin. It promised to co-operate with the British Columbia Security Commission that Ottawa established to manage the removal of the Japanese and said that "mass meetings or other demonstrations" were "at present unnecessary." On 2 March, Mackenzie sent a wire to Maddison, expressing the hope that "you and other experienced men will have sufficient influence to restrain any excitable elements." The United Citizens' Defence Council, which seems to have been separate from the Citizens' Defence Committee, also offered co-operation and recommended postponing protest meetings until "reasonable time has elapsed" to permit execution of the general evacuation orders.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, some planned mass meetings went ahead. In Victoria, despite sanctions by the Canadian Legion and the Armed Forces, the Immediate Action Committee, with Victoria City Council's support, held a meeting but promised that there would be no inflammatory speeches. Colonel Napier, the chief speaker, rehearsed old arguments about difficulties in distinguishing between loyal and disloyal Japanese and denied that such meetings could

lead to violence. The meeting quietly endorsed resolutions for a sunset-to-sunrise curfew for all Japanese and immediate implementation of plans to remove the Japanese from the protected areas. Most present were well dressed, middle aged, or elderly; they sat politely as if listening to a dull sermon. At Mission, an overflow crowd attended an anti-Japanese meeting sponsored by the Canadian Legion on Sunday, 1 March. After Reverend G.L. Collins called for a “white” Fraser Valley and Alderman Wilson said that some Nisei sympathized with Japan’s aspirations, the assembly, fearing “imminent danger of attack,” urged the government “to expedite the enforcement of the orders” to remove all persons of enemy alien origin, not just enemy nationals, by 1 April 1942.¹⁰¹

The official announcement on 10 March of Japanese atrocities against Canadian and other British subjects at Hong Kong raised the possibility of reprisals against Japanese Canadians. The *Montreal Gazette*, for example, warned that such talk was useless; it would not hurt the Tokyo warlords, and the notion of “punishing one man for another’s crime” was repugnant. Nevertheless, it urged the government to act more swiftly in placing restrictions “upon those 25,000 potential fifth columnists of the West.” Naturally, the greatest concern was in British Columbia. Expecting the “ugly” story to “shock public opinion,” the Department of External Affairs asked the RCMP, the local police, and the military to work “to prevent the indignation which must follow on the publication of reports from Hong Kong, venting itself on persons of Japanese origin in Canada.” In Vancouver, the army confined soldiers to barracks to have them on hand in case of “reprisals against Japs.” Mackenzie proposed banning public meetings protesting “Government war measures” because of the “danger of disorder.”¹⁰²

The Department of External Affairs was right about indignation. News of “unspeakable atrocities,” “sadistic vengeance,” and “barbarities” shocked the public. A *Victoria Daily Colonist* columnist said that it was time “to cease cuddling and coddling our potential coastal jackals”; the *Powell River News* proposed killing one Japanese for every Canadian killed in Hong Kong, but that measure was extreme. Other editors confined ideas of reprisals to interning all Japanese, speeding up the evacuation, or more constructively making a greater effort to win the war. In fact, most people took the news quietly and heeded advice to provide no excuse for reprisals against Hong Kong prisoners. The *Vancouver Sun* contended, “because the Japanese military have made beasts of themselves is all the more reason why our treatment of Japanese in Canada should be completely exemplary of the rights and principles expected of a Christian country.” “As our indignation burns,” said the *Vancouver Daily Province*, “we must keep our heads.” Similar calls for “British fair play” appeared elsewhere. “We are,” said the *Nanaimo Free Press*, “treating the Japanese rather in the code of a Christian country, merely placing them where they can earn a living, and be removed from a

region which is too close to the Pacific Ocean to be occupied by combatants of an alien race, in fact removing them for their own safety.”¹⁰³ That damning comment on white British Columbians was true. Removing the Japanese from the coast was evil, but there were no riots.

In a brief for redress in the late 1980s, the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) rightly denied “military necessity” as a cause of removal but erred by completely rejecting the concept of “Protective Custody.” Protective custody, or removing the Japanese from the coast for “their own good,” had two meanings. One was the notion expressed, for example, by John Shirras, assistant commissioner of the BC Security Commission, that Japanese were moved because they “would be compelled to join the invading forces” in the remote event of an invasion by Japan. In 1942, however, protective custody reflected concern that a “public seething with hatred and hysteria, demanding the removal of Japanese Canadians,” might physically attack Japanese people and property. Since at least 1938, federal officials had warned of riots if something were not done to appease anti-Japanese sentiment in British Columbia.¹⁰⁴

H.F. Angus remembered believing that the idea of possible “bloodshed” in British Columbia if the Japanese were not interned was “absurd,” but others who were also sympathetic to the Japanese accepted the need to protect them from white hysterics. A lawyer hired by some Vancouver Japanese who wanted to move in family groups noted that “feeling” was so “very tense” they feared “violence,” “accepted evacuation as a necessary evil,” and wanted to co-operate. The BC Security Commission told a Lethbridge alderman that it had concerns about spying but emphasized the need “to avoid civil disorder” and observed that sabotage was not a concern “as most of the Japanese are far more frightened than our own people.” A CCF speakers’ handbook advised, “persons of Japanese origin were removed from the defence areas of British Columbia as much for their own safety as for the safety of the state.” The *Western Recorder*, the United Church newspaper in British Columbia, mentioned “military reasons” for moving the Japanese but also cited “possible danger from extreme individuals.” That too was the recollection of officials. In later interviews, F.J. Mead of the RCMP and Colonel A.W. Sparling, who represented the Department of National Defence on the Special Committee on Orientals, recalled fear of “riots or racial clashes” that would “cause bloodshed in B.C.,” with “fatal consequences in Jap prison camps in retaliation.” Hugh Keenleyside, who was sympathetic to the Japanese Canadians, recounted how, “given the temper of the times and the irresponsibility of some of the leaders of the anti-Japanese forces,” there was a “real danger of riotous attacks.” Minister of Labour Humphrey Mitchell “vividly recalled” discussions in 1942 when Howard Green, Harold Winch, Birt Showler, and other British Columbians warned of “bloodshed” unless the Japanese were moved. As the Pacific War

was ending, Mitchell told a delegation from the Co-Operative Committee on Japanese Canadians that it had been necessary to move the Japanese in 1942 because “Canada is a democracy and the Government has to take some notice of public pressure.” To the latter comment, *Nisei Affairs*, a new magazine, commented, “what he did not state was that this ‘pressure’ came from a reactionary racist group which is definitely not a majority opinion.” *Nisei Affairs* was partly correct; there was public pressure, but it reflected what appeared to be majority opinion.¹⁰⁵

Early in 1943, G.E. Trueman of the Department of Labour’s Japanese Placement Division told a Toronto audience that “mass hysteria and race prejudice” forced the mass evacuation. British Columbians knew that this version of protective custody reflected poorly on them. The New Westminster *British Columbian* thought his explanation “mischievous because it sails close to the truth without actually touching it.” It denied “mass hysteria” but admitted that “hotheads” could have incited “the mob spirit.” Other angry editors called Trueman’s comments “foolish”; “the product of woeful ignorance of the situation here, or direct misrepresentation of the facts”; “stupid”; an “insulting slander”; and, in the word of the *Vancouver Sun*, “nonsense.” In Parliament, Tom Reid denied that “mass hysteria and agitation by some members of parliament” had caused the removal of the Japanese. After Pearl Harbor, he argued, no one “knew what might happen in British Columbia. Here were 23,000 Japanese, hundreds of whom had bought new trucks which they had filled up with gasoline and loaded with gunpowder. They had the finest maps of the coast and they have [sic] eleven hundred fishing boats.” After the excitement over Trueman’s statement faded, the *Vancouver Sun* conceded that the Japanese had been removed “as much for the safety of the Japanese themselves, as for reasons of national prudence for Canada.” Sadly, in early 1942, so strong were suspicions and hatred of all things Japanese that violence was possible. In almost identical words, Harold Winch and R.W. Mayhew said that all Japanese must leave the coast for the protection of the province and themselves. Mayhew feared that news of ill treatment of prisoners of war in Hong Kong would “cause serious trouble” and an embarrassing local situation; certainly, fears of riots permeated the thinking of officials in Ottawa.¹⁰⁶

Moreover, the Japanese had few friends who were willing to speak out on their behalf. In his history of the Japanese in Canada, Ken Adachi, a teenager in 1942, asserts that white Canadians raised “not one effective voice of protest” against evacuation. That statement was almost totally correct. The Pacific Co-Operative Union, a Fraser Valley berry growers’ organization, told Ottawa that the Japanese were important food producers, that farm work was available for unemployed fishermen, and that the Standing Committee on Orientals had not considered the cost of moving thousands of Japanese. The union was not disinterested; many of its members were Japanese, but others noted the importance of the Japanese to the berry industry. Leo

Sweeney, whose Vancouver cooperage supplied the barrels in which a large part of the crop was shipped to England, reminded agitators of the key role of the Japanese in the berry industry. Nevertheless, he endorsed precautions against fifth column activities.¹⁰⁷

The few Christian church leaders who spoke merely called for “Christian principles and British fair play” and warned against “ugly Hitlerian methods” of race prejudice. Reverend Hugh Dobson of the United Church’s British Columbia Conference opposed sending Japanese men away from the coast lest doing so “breed such a resentment that Japanese women might become as dangerous as men.” Church leaders could not easily go beyond the feelings of their congregations. After a talk by Reverend W.R. McWilliams, pastor of the Japanese United Church in New Westminster, some members of Vancouver’s St. John’s United Church agreed that many Japanese were loyal to Canada, but others favoured removing those of military age from the coast. Several members of the Ladysmith United Church ignored their pastor’s advice that work among the Japanese was more necessary than ever and questioned the advisability of ministering to the Japanese. Like United Church leaders, the Anglican Provincial Board of Missions to Orientals in British Columbia declared that “the safety of the Country is the first consideration” but called for “the true British tradition of justice and fair play” in “any protective measures the Government may feel necessary” toward the Japanese.¹⁰⁸ Such ambivalence reflected traditional views of BC Christians toward Asians in their midst.

In sum, although economic factors cannot be ignored, a major reason for moving Japanese Canadians from the West Coast was to protect them lest physical violence follow verbal attacks. As Japan’s military machine seemed unstoppable in Asia, civilians increased their fears of a Japanese invasion, forgot the early advice of the press and politicians to keep calm, and ignored the distinction between Japanese who were nationals of that country and those who were Canadian citizens. Adding to the unease of British Columbians were the sometimes ambiguous statements of the Canadian government about its policy toward Japanese Canadians, and its seemingly dilatory action in removing male Japanese nationals after announcing in early January that it would do so. It is also true, of course, as the National Association of Japanese Canadians later asserted, that government policies were “motivated by political considerations based upon racist traditions accepted and encouraged by politicians.” Indeed, Austin Taylor, who was in charge of the evacuation, said in May 1942 that “political pressure” made the government deem “it necessary to evacuate all Japanese from the coastal area.”¹⁰⁹ In January and February 1942, the politicians did not have to encourage anti-Japanese feelings; they had only to respond. Alas, the anti-Japanese cries emanating from the coast spread to the interior of British Columbia and to the provinces to the east; that seriously complicated the efforts of the British Columbia Security Commission to resettle the Japanese.