

"We Shall Get Their Loyalty"

(A speech by Angus MacInnes, M.P., member for Vancouver East in the House of Commons, as reported by Hansard, February 25, 1941)

I rise for two purposes. First, I would not like the committee to suppose that the honorable member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) is expressing the attitude of the whole of British Columbia in connection with the matter under discussion. Second, I want to say that I listened to the statement referred to which was made by the Prime Minister earlier in the session, and it is not often I have heard him anything which has pleased me so much.

In my opinion, the attitude which a few—a very few—people in British Columbia have adopted toward Orientals is a disgrace to Canada. I have said that this attitude is that of only a very few; maybe I am wrong, but if many hold it, I have not met them.

About two years ago the City of Vancouver, because of the same kind of agitation, which has been going on for quite a number of years, and particularly since the war with China began, asked the provincial legislature to enact amendments to the city's charter to allow the city to discriminate against Orientals in the matter of trade licences. When these proposals came before the municipal committee, Mr. Perry, the provincial member for Prince George, told the Vancouver city delegation that if they would substitute "Jew" for "Japanese" or "Oriental," there would be no difference between what they were asking for and what the Nazis had already done in Germany and were doing in the various countries over which she had got control.

There is one thing of which we lose sight. The Japanese and other Orientals are here. They are in British Columbia and it is impossible to deport them. They are no longer Japanese or foreigners; they are Canadians, and we cannot ship them off somewhere else; whether we like it or not, they are here. The obvious thing to do, in my opinion, is to seek ways to make loyal Canadians of them.

The honorable member for Comox-Alberni says, "Once a Japanese always a Japanese." My friend and I are of Scottish descent, and I may say with equal truth, "Once a Scotsman always a Scotsman." The Japanese are no different from ourselves in their reaction to life and to the things around them.

Inspire Loyalty by Fairness

If we are to have harmonious and friendly relations between the Oriental population and the rest of our British Columbia citizens, we must stop discriminating against and abusing Orientals. We must find some common ground on which we can work, and I think it can be found. Is there any reason, if we should get into difficulties with Japan on the Pacific Coast, why the Japanese in British Columbia should be interested in helping Canada after the way in which we are treating them? I am satisfied that if we treat the Japanese and our other Oriental citizens aright, we shall get their loyalty, because they are no longer Orientals in the accepted sense of that term. They would feel as much cut of place in Japan as we would. I know them, speak to them; I visit them and have them in my home, and I have not the slightest doubt that what I say is correct.

If we are to avoid the troubles that other countries have had with racial minorities, then we must take a realistic view of the situation in British Columbia and attempt to make these people feel at home among us. We will secure their loyalty by fairness and kindness and by the practice of those other attributes which we exercise in our relations with other people. Otherwise we shall have trouble. I appreciate most sincerely what the Prime Minister said on the occasion to which reference was made.

Question of Social Justice

I do not wish to prolong this discussion. The last part of it is a sad commentary on itself (referring to Mr. Neill). I am wondering what we are fighting for in Europe today. The honorable member for Fraser Valley and the honorable member for Comox-Alberni stated that the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation lost votes in British Columbia because of the position we took with regard to Orientals. I never asked anyone to vote for me because of my racial prejudices. I would not appeal to anyone for his franchise on his racial prejudices. I have not the least doubt that before Hitler got his people into the reichstag, many of them got there by demonstrating their hatred of the Jews on the public platform. Our friends from British Columbia are doing that today.

They say we are losing and have lost ground. As a matter of fact, at the last federal elections in British Columbia we polled more votes than we ever did before. Let me tell my honorable friends this, that after I brought the Oriental situation before this House in the session of 1936, there was not much said about the Oriental question in the last election and there will not be in the future. This is not a political issue at the present time. It is first of all a question of social justice, and in the second place a question of dealing in a statesmanlike way with a problem which we cannot shift from ourselves to somebody else.

just reminiscing . . .

By Miscellani

When the present war-torn world becomes rather "mixed-up" and a little too, too complicated for me. I like to run to my retreat—to think back of past scenes, to remember pleasant thoughts, to live again lovely times of long ago.

... then pictures . . . beautiful scenes come to my mind, and with them, the thrill—yes the wonderful thrills, that "up-lifting of the heart" feeling, of watching the fireflies, opening and closing their luminous glow of blue and green . . .

... that transition of light to darkness, of darkness to light, perfumed ever so delicately and ethereally by these exotic creatures of night . . . flitting here and there, forever a bright spark in the cool denseness of black night.

... while near-by, the clear stream ripples faintly beside the park and lover's lane . . . and the buzzing sound of the "semi", the huge singing beetle of Japan . . . his incessant buzz, buzz lulling one into hazy summer laziness . . . forgetfulness, yet forgetfulness of the grit, the grind, the nerve-wracking friction of a much too realistic world . . . a world in which I had so often wished I were a wanted part—not, as I sometimes wonder, a bit of useless furniture.

Nichiren-Steadfast Faith and Conviction

The snow winter had already come to this northern island of Sado when Nichiren arrived. The shogunate authorities, who were afraid of killing this prophet with their own hands, had planned to let him die alone in the cold of the northern snow and the bitterness of hunger. A wretched hut six feet square in the Tsukahara valley was his only permitted shelter. In this tiny hut he lifted a small image of Buddha from the bosom of his torn robe and began his holy chanting of "Nam-Myo-Ho-Ren-Ge-Kyo, Nam Holy Lotus Sutra." The snowflakes fell on the earthen floor and heaped on Nichiren's lap covering the image of Buddha. He passed nights protected merely by a straw hat and grass raincoat. When the snow got deeper and heavier, Nichiren's meals, which were supposed to be brought from the neighbouring village, were cut off. Many days in the snowbound valley he did not eat. Yet he never worried about his food; nor was he ever afraid to die for the sake of his faith. His voice, chanting the Sutra was never silenced.

The man Nichiren, who with steadfast faith and conviction always pushed ahead in the promotion of his cause, moved me the most of all religious forces. My husband himself was not unlike a Nichiren disciple in sacrificing his family—not for the sake of the Lotus Sutra but in action through a faith in the national policy which he considered as holy and important as the Sutra. But alas! his wife, who had been brought up in well-to-do circumstances, naturally, like every wife suddenly cast in to the wilderness of economic insecurity, was worrying terribly about financial reverses. However, since I was inspired by the spiritual power of Nichiren, who feared neither hunger nor death, who never worried about shelter or clothing, I reached a wonderful calmness of mind, never to be disturbed again by uncertainty, grief, anger or momentary pleasure. —From Facing Two Ways, the autobiography of Baroness Shidzue Ishimoto (Farrar & Rhinehart).

Femme-Fare

By Cinderella

O-Hina Matsuri . . .

For the last few weeks little black-eyed girls have had their wee noses pressed against shop windows on Powell Street, gazing in awe and rapture at a miniature Imperial Court, with an Emperor and his Empress resplendent in their ceremonial robes, while on the descending six tiers sit the courtiers, ladies-in-waiting, the imperial guards, eunuchs, and favorite childhood characters, complete with enchanting little household articles.

I remember my younger days, and with a pang I realize that the Dolls' Festival was something I missed in my boisterous childhood. It was not because my parents failed to give me this special aspect of Japanese girlhood, nor because they were indifferent to the way I managed to "just growed" like Topsey, that I never thrilled to it as these youngsters along Powell Street.

I was too much of a tomboy. I could never be content just to sit and gaze at the beautiful lady-in-waiting or the figure of Momotaro-San that was given me. I could not sit and play hostess to the little girls mother invited on that day. Ah, no! I must take my Momotaro-San and make him fight the green "oni," and undress the beautiful lady-in-waiting to see how the little limbs were put together and made to stand. (I can still feel what I was given for my pains!)

I was too young for spiritual things then. I wanted something to hold in my hand and discover to love. And so I turned to my rag doll and to the sleeping beauty with the fallen-in-eyes.

How was I to know what I know now—that the beautiful figurines are sacred—sacred because they embody the Japanese love and respect for their long and glorious past; that these dolls from the Emperor and his Empress to the lowest character on the seven tiers were symbolic of the Flowery Kingdom, a closely-knit family system, interwoven of respect, womanly ideals and love. How was I to know that these little dolls, calmly poised on their little lacquer stands—were placed there to instil in a hopeless tomboy, some elements of Japanese womanhood—calmness and dignity.

Let's Go Dutch!

Although the good old historical dictionary says that Dutch treats were practiced in 1891, the idea is a matter of controversy in our little Nisei world.

How does the male of the species react? There are those who, even at the suggestion of "Dutch treats," says, "Thumbs down!" They put up with women suffragettes, woman in business, woman in trousers, but when it comes to taking a girl out, he does it right with all the trills. Conceited? No, let's say "romantic." Hang on to him!

Then, there's the blandly smiling "gay companion" type, who doesn't mind in the least. He's the kind who'll sit on the edge of a desk, push his hat back on his head and says, "I think it's a swell idea. Women are earning just as much and maybe more than we are, so why shouldn't we go fifty-fifty?" A girl would never feel obligated in his company.

Then, there is that vast army of "fence-sitters" those who don't commit themselves—well, that is, they try not to. "A fella likes to take a girl out once in a while, but it's hard on the pocket at times, and a girl who offers to go 'Dutch' is darn thoughtful and considerate." This one is more practical than romantic. If he be the kind that is more romantic than practical, he'll add, "Dutch treats are fine, but please, not the first few times!"

So where does the controversy end? Don't ask me! It's true that girls can well afford to pay their way. It's true that "Dutch treats" will do away with that feeling of indebtedness. It's true that when the expense is shared by both, the two can go on twice as many dates. The reasons carry more weight for "pro" than "con," but girls, it's a queer world, so you'll have to decide for yourself.

You can be definitely "thumbs down" on the practice, in which case you'll return in subtle little dinner parties at home, or an evening "chin-wag" or "shin-dig" before a fire, or a small party where he can be remembered.

You can be practical and "go Dutch." The romantic type will frown at you as a "go-getter" or a "pants-wearer," but your type will love you for it.

What do I think about it? The engaged couple can practice "Dutch treats" all they want, for he's roped anyway. In a gang, it's a grand idea! But for "twosomes," well, this columnist isn't talking!

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