

The New Canadian

Vancouver, B. C.

A paper published by and for second generation Japanese in Canada, and devoted to their welfare as citizens of Canada.

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Published weekly at the Taiyo Printing Co.
1 month 25c, 1 year \$2.50 in advance.

Russo-Japanese Pact

VARYING interpretations have been attached to the diplomatic manoeuvre accomplished last week in the signing of a Soviet Russia-Japan neutrality pact, but probably the strongest weight is attached to the prediction of an active Japanese drive toward southern Asia.

Whether any such move will be made, and if so, what possible conflict will it precipitate are questions which possibly may be answered within the space of a few weeks.

It is not likely, however, that the

The Strain Of Language Schools

A NEW move against the Japanese language school has again cropped up in Vancouver's City Council, again at the direct instigation of Alderman H. D. Wilson. As far as the worthy alderman is concerned, this journal has neither the space nor the patience to re-emphasize the already-proven falsity of his charges; long and irritating experience has already revealed to us that he is rarely, if ever, to be taken seriously in any discussion of the Japanese question in British Columbia.

But Dr. Harold White, director of school health services, and presumably a specialist in his chosen field, who knows whereof he speaks, has broached a provocative and disturbing angle, even if it is by no means new. In a report submitted to a special committee of aldermen, Dr. White declares that health workers are convinced that children suffer from overstrain caused by the additional work imposed by the language school.

If Dr. White's conclusions were to be the sole basis for a decision on the school issue, there would undoubtedly be good reason for seeking to have these classes abolished. The problem, however, is a much wider one than this, and embraces far more than only a consideration of the effect of longer hours of study upon the health of children. Essentially, parents, school authorities, citizens and even pupils themselves are faced with the larger question of deciding whether or not the benefits accruing from study in these schools warrant the additional strain demanded of the children.

And here the practical, day-to-day experience of several thousand young Canadian-born Japanese, including both those who have attended the schools, and those who have not, offers overwhelming evidence to justify the continued functioning of the language classes.

Ninety-nine per cent of Canadian-born Japanese, of an age sufficient to judge, will declare from their own personal experience that a knowledge of the Japanese language is essential for effective and wholesome relationships which in the past have been largely responsible for the most enviably-low rate of juvenile delinquency in the city. And these are the relationships which are in need of even further broadening and deepening, if increasingly grave social problems

new treaty will be beneficial to local Japanese Canadians through a lessening of feeling and suspicion against them. Rather the reverse is probably true, and military or naval developments in Europe and in Asia are likely to have a direct and vital bearing upon the status of Canadians of Japanese ancestry in this province.

For us, of course, there is little that can be done, beyond that which we are doing. Our course, ever since the war began, has been to serve Canada as loyal subjects and good citizens. We have attempted to carry as much of the war burden as possible, as the current war services drive in Vancouver has illustrated. First among all groups, the Japanese community contributed a sum 33 1-3 per cent over its quota. Both by word and deed throughout the province there has been a continuing emphasis upon a Canadian outlook and a Canadian spirit on the part of every individual.

Today neither new pacts nor new conflicts, external nor internal, will shatter that spirit, but will serve only to strengthen and deepen our determination to serve as Canadians and ultimately to win recognition as such.

within the family and community are to be met successfully.

The same ninety-nine per cent will declare from that same personal experience that a knowledge of the Japanese language is practically an indispensable asset in seeking employment. With discrimination both in law and in fact imposing very real restrictions upon vocational outlets, it is a recognized and regrettable fact that the vast majority of Canadian-born Japanese whatever their talents and education, can find work only from Japanese-speaking buying public.

The simple fact of the matter is that if the pupils meet with a strain through the study of the Japanese language, it is an unavoidable strain, and is but a part of the whole burden which members of any immigrant group seeking to assimilate into an adopted country must face, endure and overcome. There is no immigrant group which wholly escapes from the conflict between an old and new cultural background, between a new and older group of people. In the case of Oriental immigrants, this universal conflict is simply deepened on the one hand by very diverse cultural heritages, and on the other by intense human prejudice directed against a new people racially very different from the old.

Responsible officials of the Provincial Department of Education are fully conversant with all these angles to the situation. And where they have issued permits, they have been satisfied upon due investigation that nothing that could be construed as subversive or anti-Canadian is being offered in the courses of instruction.

The Japanese school authorities can be depended upon to do their utmost to minimize the strain imposed by the extra study required. After all they are dealing with their own children. They would undoubtedly welcome the assistance and advice of the school health service in achieving that end.

But there is neither reason nor common sense in arguing for the closing of the schools, and wilfully or stupidly ignoring the very real and valuable functions they have performed and must continue to perform for some years to come.

« » Confetti « »

By "SUE SADA"

The rose is as sweet by any other name, but will the Japanese in Canada, or in the States, retain their original syllabic names? Through unhappy mispronunciations and misspellings might not a Kitagawa eventually evolve into a Kittygaw? Or a Shiosaburo degenerate into a Shaw?

Perhaps we ought to translate our names into English before they lose all their original sound and meaning. We would then have a pretty collection of suffixes such as "villes", "rivers", "woods" and "paddys".

For instance, Tamura can be Paddyville; Akagawa would be Redriver; Matsubayashi would be Pinewood.

South of the border: the Japanese Americans now living in foreign lands are liable to loss of citizenship if they remain out of the U. S. after a certain date. If they happen to be stuck in whatever part of the world they are in, and if they are desirous of keeping their American nationality, they must make special arrangements.

One gathers there are a great many American Niseis in Japan. Will every one of them make haste to affirm their American citizenship, or will some of them neglect to do so? American Nisei are born to citizenship. They never had to fight for it. It is their birthright. Will they value it only after they have lost it?

The quality of loyalty is the more refined for having been through the fire, and the Canadian Nisei, when they receive their ultimate rights and privileges as Canadian citizens can be depended upon to guard them jealously.

The third generation will be the vaunted ancestors of our unborn generations. Born to Niseis who have known want and limitations, they will know as much of plenty and leisure as their young parents can manage. They will be dressed with greater care and fashion, fed according to the best Child Health rules, polished with numerous accomplishments. They shall be better-looking, more fastidious, and infinitely more snobbish (I'm afraid) than the present second generation. But let's hope that the Sansei and Shisei can be as hardy as their pioneer forebears when it comes a tackling a dirty job that has to be done.

Spiritually the Niseis in Canada are still unborn. Attendance at church or temple is sporadic. There is an unfortunate indifference to religious faiths as spiritual guides among the majority who teeter between Christianity and Buddhism, and who end up as agnostics. Consequently the children receive little or no training in the recognized morals and conscientious catechisms of any creed.

In childhood this lack is scarcely missed, but in later life when the complexities of life weigh heavily, they yearn for some inner strength they know not what. An upswing in spiritual belief is one of our gravest needs today.

The New Canadian:

PA 8431

Confessions Of A Married Man

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MANY have already asked me, "How does it feel to be a married man?" To each one I have answered, "Great."

Some faintly smiled as if to pity the naive innocence of this newlywed. Others cynically remarked:

"Oh, yeah? Wait till you're married a year. You'll sing a different tune."

Perhaps I will; and perhaps not. A man will either have to be a crystal-gazer or a fool to predict definitely how he will feel one year from now. One never knows what twelve months will bring. Tomorrow's human affairs are as uncertain as the final destiny of a smoke.

Of this much I am certain. Now that I am married, my room will be much neater and cleaner. There was a time when I could not set a foot in my room without stepping on a shoe or a slipper. A pair of last week's socks tossed here . . . reams of paper scattered all over the floor . . . wrinkled shirts flipped over a chair . . . a hat thrown on the table . . . and the bedding piled and twisted like the aftermath of a cyclone . . . That was the state of my bachelor room.

Now I can show the room to any meticulous person and have no fear of criticism. True, at first I had a hard time finding my things. I felt as though I were in a different room, but now I'm glad and proud of the change.

This married life has me eating at home more often. I was in the habit of dropping into any cafe for a bite. Now that I have some one to cook for me at home I'll be an infrequent restaurant counter-leaner. I know I'll prefer home cooking, because I've married a woman who doesn't wear a can-opener around her neck.

Finally, now that I'm married, no more gallivanting around for me. During my bachelor days I covered hundreds of miles flitting here and yon, wherever moods and desires took me. All this gallivanting I've traded for a two-room flat I call "Our Home." Do I regret it? Does a man ever regret having a castle all his own? I'd much rather live in a shack I can call my own than in a borrowed castle.

Some will say I'll miss my gallivanting days, now that I'm anchored down by a wife. If a wife is an anchor, that is exactly what a man needs. He just has to have some one who can persuade him to stay in one place long enough to accomplish something worthwhile. A fellow needs to have some responsibility handed to him before he can honestly feel he is a full-grown man.

A lot of sentimental mush, you say? Try this marriage business yourself, and maybe you, too, will feel like a full-sized man.

FENS

Gray dawn in the deep
Blue sky;
And a gray heron stood
In a deep blue pool—
A silent sentinel
Of the marsh.

G. D. E.