

The New Canadian

395 Powell Street

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Pacific 8431

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

IN the space of a few terrifying hours this modest weekly newspaper, The New Canadian, has been thrust by the power of overwhelming events into a wholly new role.

No longer merely the "voice of the second generation," it remains now the sole organ, written and published by Canadians of Japanese descent. It assumes now the responsibilities carried on for the past four decades of three daily newspapers of great repute and long standing. And those responsibilities are laid upon the shoulders of a youthful staff at a time of emergency and peril to all of us, never before experienced in our history.

This, then, we conceive to be our task. To bear the torch of loyalty and true Canadianism among all of us—just as we have never ceased to bear it since this journal was founded three years ago. To speak forthrightly and courageously to a hostile Canadian public, in a never-ending crusade against injustice, ignorance, and mis-placed hate. To gather and disseminate news that is significant and important, and to interpret it in truth and honesty. To rally the second generation to a great work before it!

We do not know if our resources will measure up to this great duty. There are powerful forces of evil abroad, and there is human error and weakness on every hand. But in this historic hour, we do solemnly dedicate our every effort, our every moment, our every energy to the fulfillment of our task.

Let's Watch Our Step

ALL of us, it is safe to say, realize fully just how "tough a time" we are facing; no one is more conscious of the "eight ball" than the people behind it. Most of us too realize that our own safety demands that in everything we do or say, particularly for the present, we must exercise the greatest caution. Careless talk, careless actions, careless tempers—these are individual sins that will invite suspicion and arouse feelings against our whole community, no matter how loyal we may be.

There is no need for us to stress how important it is for each one of us to co-operate to the fullest measure with any established authority, and to uphold the law even more circumspectly than we have in the past.

Obviously it will be wise for us not to congregate in groups on the street or in public places, even to offer each other only sympathy. Those who are prejudiced and suspicious will see in the most innocent act the most culpable of crimes. Nor is it good sense to use the Japanese language in public places, thus attracting unnecessary attention.

An excellent place to stay away from (perhaps even in times of peace) is the beer parlour, for talk is loose and tempers easily aroused when alcohol removes the controls of common sense and reason.

The many disquieting rumours that have gone the rounds indicate that we ought not to talk about things of which we know nothing. Let's not listen to some wild tale that someone got from his grandmother's forty-second cousin who heard it from a friend, and then to pass it on in our own inimitable style. And let's not be foolishly misled by unreasonable rumours.

Nor should we allow ourselves to be exploited by those contemptible racketeers, those blood-suckers, who are attempting to exploit the difficult situation in which we are placed, to make money for themselves. They have already gone into action with their smooth salestalk based upon a wholly false appeal to patriotic motives.

Our last suggestion is one that is a little more difficult to take. And that is to hold your temper, even if and when you feel that you have been grossly subjected to a personal indignity. These unjust, malicious attacks, it is certain, will come; and they will arouse, especially among the young men, a wish to strike back. Try not to! Try to keep your heads, and a strong rein on your temper, if not for yourself, then for all of those who stand behind you. A soft answer, says the proverb, turneth away wrath.

And above all, keep your thumbs up, and have faith in Canada. Have faith in the ideals for which we fight, have faith in democracy. For we have need of that faith today.

Thumbs up, and Keep the Faith, Folks!

In This Way . . . We Also Serve

By E. H.

We must go about our daily task . . . and keep our house in order no matter what happens. We live in a swiftly moving world, how swift, I never fully realized till Sunday . . . and in less than twenty-four hours, Vancouver has become the front line of a Pacific conflict.

And Powell Street of yesterday, our Powell Street has gone. The idle carefree chatter, the friendly happy faces, the noise of merry tunes, the strange smells and the characteristic atmosphere have not vanished. They are still there, yes, but down to a silence, shocked, a little bewildered . . . waiting . . . waiting.

Almost overnight the horizons of our little Nisei world have changed . . . Only yesterday, some of us were buying gifts for loved ones . . . mailing Christmas cards, splendidly gay, with wishes for the New Year . . . or planning, womanlike, so frivolous doled in wing to chase out the old and greet in the new. Today, that world is far away.

Out of our little peaceful private worlds, we have been thrown against our wishes, into the limelight . . . 23,600 of us . . . the cynosure of all because the land of our ancestors, of which we know so little, is the aggressor nation threatening our peace, and we, despite our loyalties, have their eyes and their colouring.

Strange things, unexplainable things, demands which will test our endurance of will, our heroic, our capacities for tolerance and understanding . . . will be ours. And in this time of waiting . . . of fear . . . heightened by swift moving changes day by day . . . it is so easy to give way to our emotions and feelings, to give way to unnatural actions because of unnatural times, to forget that we still have a part to play in this time, in this city, as citizens of the land we call our own.

Because war has been declared does not mean that we must throw up the usual tenure of our ways for no reason at all but that we are now in the public eye. We too, in our little Nisei world, such as it is now, in what little we have left of it, must go about our daily tasks . . . keeping our house in order, sanely, with tolerance, and with hope . . . as far as we are able.

Fellow citizens are not wholly unaware of the mingled fear and the strain that hangs over Powell Street. They are doing their best . . . and we, as Japanese Canadian citizens, must fit into the scheme of things.

In this way . . . by quietly going about our daily tasks . . . without hysteria, with balance . . . in this way, we also serve.

Only a man harrowing clods

In a slow silent walk

With an old horse that stumbles and nods,

Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame

From the heaps of couch-grass;

Yet this will go onward the same

Though Dunasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight

Come whispering by:

War's annals will cloud into night

Ere their story die.

—Thomas Hardy

A Plea for Sincerity and Tolerance

(An excerpt from a speech on "The Far Eastern Scene" delivered to the Vancouver Institute, Vancouver, B.C., October 11, 1940, by Prof. H. F. Angus, and reprinted from the November 1, 1940, issue of The New Canadian).

There is one aspect of the crisis in the Far East which may affect us here in Vancouver and I think it is best that we should face it frankly. In any war between Japan and Great Britain or between Japan and the United States, Canada, although not a principal in the quarrel is certain to be a belligerent. But there is an appreciable number of Canadians (just as of Americans) who are Japanese by race, though not nationals of Japan. There are also some who have a dual nationality. In the event of war how will the Canadian government and the Canadian people deal with this situation?

It would be foolish to think of this question as a simple one. The foremost consideration must be national safety—and the importance of this consideration will be fully understood by the men and women concerned. But almost as important is the question of the permanent situation here, the undesirability of racial hatreds and animosities, the danger of making any substantial class of citizens feel that it is being unfairly treated. Unhappily, the problem is not purely a rational one. There is certain to be in some quarters a disposition to retaliate for insults or injuries which British subjects in Japan have borne or may have to bear. There is certain to be profound suspicion of the bona fides of the Canadian patriotism of young men and women of Japanese race. Let me add that this is a suspicion which I feel is inevitable though, I personally, do not share it. There is certain to be resentment felt against suspicion which a man knows to be undeserved.

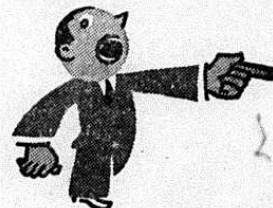
In short, there is a situation which demands cool handling, a great deal of philosophical tolerance of the man of the world, great tact and above all, complete sincerity.

What I mean by sincerity is this: It is tolerably easy to bear severe restrictions without resentment, to make allowance for the position and outlook of others, if you believe that that outlook, though you may think it mistaken, is none the less sincere and, in intention, just. It is another matter if you feel that an opportunity is being seized on by those who have always disliked you to injure or repress you.

We may have within our own community one of those tragedies which have occurred when race in Europe have been discriminated against; or which have occurred when masses of refugees have been harshly dealt with because the easiest disguise for the spy or fifth columnist is the dress of the refugee. In such circumstances no one can hope to draw a perfect line between prudent precautions on the one hand and panicky suspicions on the other. If we must face (as I am afraid we must) this most intractable of problems, let it be in an earnest endeavour to inflict the minimum of harm on the innocent.

Self-interest points in the same direction; for we are engaged in a struggle which transcends national and racial lines and we cannot afford to alienate any men of good will from our ranks—or to weaken our own self respect by departing from the spirit of the ideals for which we are fighting.

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