

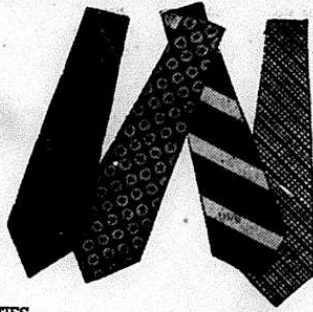


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## Blackout Bamboozled

# Loss of Language Papers Severe Blow But Kids Rejoice In School Closure

Over the weekend the war parked itself right on the doorstep of every home in Nihonmachi. The sharpest pinches felt by the community as a direct result of the war were the closing of the Japanese language schools and the suppression of the Japanese dailies—pinches which your reporter discovered, hit most older folks keenly.

Nisei and Isseis alike felt that the government had taken the most logical and wisest step in closing the schools and the Japanese dailies. Some, perhaps illogically, forecast the reopening of the schools and papers when the situation would have returned to normal.

The loss of the Japanese language paper was the much more keenly felt of the two closures. Some declared that its usefulness had been proved in the one day it had failed to come out. The majority considered it as absolutely necessary to the Isseis. A few thought that the Niseis should and could give translations from English dailies to their elders.

Among the people interviewed, the Isseis your writer questioned were all well-known business men. They listened with grave attention to my questions and gave them serious consideration before answering.

An insurance agent said that since the government had closed the German and Italian language schools, it was only natural and proper that the Japanese language schools should shut up also. As regards the newspapers, he thought that perhaps the authorities might be satisfied with a paper carrying an English translation of the Japanese passages.

An interview with a show-shop owner and a druggist on Powell Street revealed that they were able to read the metropolitan dailies but they admitted with a wry grin that a Japanese paper would be much easier to read and more acceptable. The three business men were unanimous in giving their strongest encouragement to The New Canadian to go ahead and "show to the white people that we are loyal Canadian citizens."

The Niseis were much more relaxed about the whole affair. One petite Miss in a Main Street confectionery declared that she didn't care one bit about the schools. Another brushed off the subject with a "I don't care, I'm finished" statement. Both girls ruefully added that translating English from the Province or the Sun to their parents was a difficult task accompanied by many references to the

dictionary for adequate expressions.

"I feel sorry for my pa," one lad exclaimed. "He just sits and stares at us after supper while we pore over the Province like we never did before."

The younger Niseis, the group most affected by the closing of the schools, were to the last one overjoyed and jubilant. "More time to play," one sang gleefully. "I hate Japanese school," another one spat. "Phooey," a tough young man shouted, "blackout is more fun than school any day."

From the economical angle the order had hit many employees in the publishing firms and school staffs. Those feeling the axe were all indefinite about their immediate future.

At the Tairiku Nippo, members of the printing staff were taking turns. A Nisei girl on the editorial staff of a smaller paper shrugged her shoulders, "Oh, we sat around the stove all day today. Everybody doesn't know what to do. We just talk and talk."

The Japanese school teacher appeared cheerful when I appeared on the scene to question him about his position. He just smiled at me and said, "Don't worry about us." But it was easy to see that he had nothing definite in mind.

And that blank, half-worried look on everybody's face pretty well expressed the state of mind of the Isseis and the Niseis. Things had happened so suddenly that everyone was still stunned by the impact of the news. War is grim.

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