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STUDENT LIBERAL CLUB

The Alma Mater Society

The University of British Columbia

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It has been reported in the national press that the Student Liberal Club of the University of British Columbia has, on the question of the Japanese-Canadians, taken a stand that differs somewhat from official Liberal policy in British Columbia. At the outset it would be well to make it clear that this is not an outburst of adolescent emotionalism. Many of this Club's members, including the writer, are veterans who are in a state of somewhat advanced youth and all the Club's members, regardless of age, take a very serious and responsible interest in public affairs.

It is well-known that the Japanese-Canadians came to this country under the terms of a "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the Japanese Empire. A number of them served with our forces in World War I and before Pearl Harbour in the Second World War, a number had enlisted. The veterans were enfranchised and naturalized. Non-veterans could become naturalized but were not, and still are not, eligible for the franchise. The families of veterans gained no new status because of the military service of the husband or father. There have also been certain occupational restrictions placed on these people, e.g., in British Columbia, they have been for over 40 years banned from work in the forests and in the mines. Under the extended Federal wartime emergency powers, they are also barred from the Pacific Coast and the fishing industry.

This Club advances the view that in following the policies outlined above, Liberals are in danger of lending a factual basis to the claims of the C. C. F. and the L. P. P. that the "Left" alone is the true and the only protector of minorities. Liberals will cease to be Liberals when they forget British and Liberal practice and principle in the treatment of minorities.

The United States has been able to permit Japanese-Americans to re-enter the Pacific coastal area without any of the disastrous results, to either the economy or the peace of the coast that has been so loudly feared in Canada. Surely, we Canadians are not less democratic and generous in our treatment of a minority than the United States of America.

It would be well to comment on and to condemn the utilitarian concept that anything that is in the interest of the majority is justified. A minority should not be permitted to hinder the progress of the majority but on the other hand, the ideals of Christianity and Liberalism proclaim that the many are not justified, in riding roughshod over the few.

Before the war there may have been, and indeed probably was something in the fears of people on this coast that the Japanese here were a menace, were loyal first to Japan. Now much is heard of the success of General McArthur's demilitarization and democratization of Japan. In view of Japan's weakened condition, surely no one seriously believes that there is a threat to the security of the west coast by Japan or by Japanese-Canadians. The restrictions on these people must be an embarrassment to the American democratization of Japan and also to our own representatives to the United Nations. Presumably no disloyal sentiments can be imputed to them as the Canadian Government has returned to Japan those people of proven and avowed nationalistic tendencies.

It may have been unwise to admit these people but they are now here. We cannot and should not deport those who, by their denial of nationalistic Japanese sympathies at the time when Japan's military fortunes were high, have signified their desire to become Canadians.

This Club proposes that to further the ideals of the United Nations Charter and to implement true Liberal principles:

(a) Federally

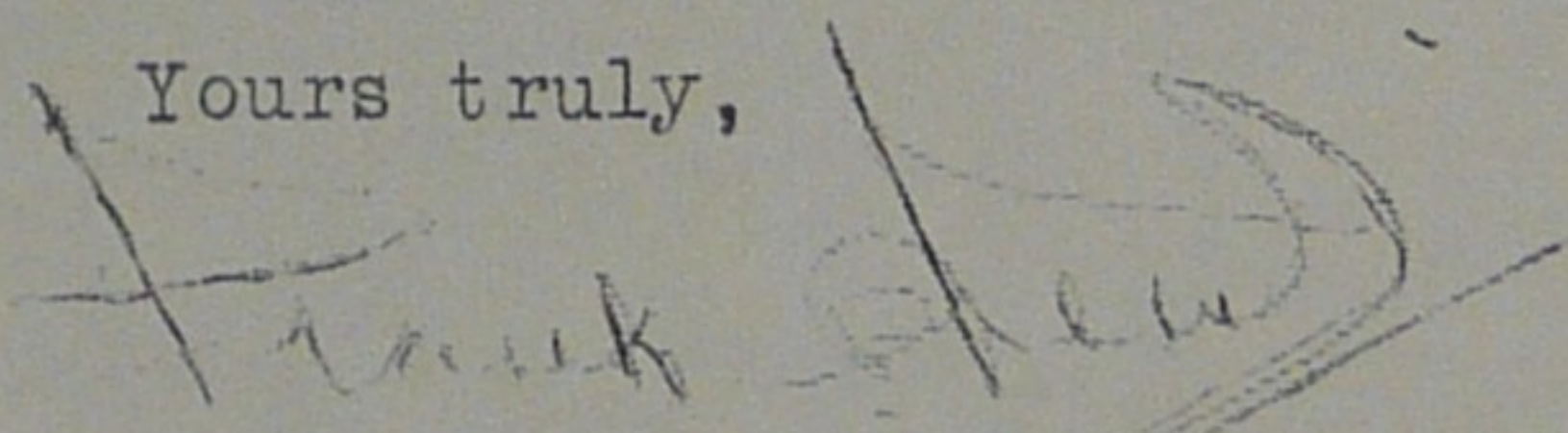
- i. Citizenship should be offered to these people on the same terms that it is offered to aliens.
- ii. The Citizenship of those Japanese-Canadians who have become British subjects should be specifically recognized.
- iii. Wartime restrictions on movement should be abolished.
- iv. The federal franchise should be granted (after, of course, the granting of provincial franchise.)

(b) Provincially

- i. The franchise should be granted.
- ii. Occupational restrictions should be abolished.

The members of this Club feel that there is no situation that calls as loudly as this for the application of Liberal principles. If the Liberal Party, in dealing with this problem, will live up to its traditional duty of emancipating the people, it will indeed earn the gratitude of the ages.

Yours truly,


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