

UNITY AND SACRIFICE IS ESSENTIAL TO AN ALL-OUT EFFORT--By Rev. G.L.
Collins.

No longer should any group or individual be allowed to be a dividing element in private or public affairs. Our duty is to multiply the activities which unify. There should be a ruthless pruning of Canadian life so that the cancerous growths which pervert, disease, or subvert, the public and private mind may be destroyed. The ideals of democracy, which we are striving to maintain by the war we are waging against the elements of barbarism, must be perpetuated and nothing or no one must be tolerated that would endanger this effort. Has there been, is there now, any disturbance in the public mind in B.C., that would cause interference in this effort to prosecute the main task before us, that of winning the war? If there has been, if there is, the questions for us to ask are: What is it? Where is it? Who is it?

On this west coast there is a question which is diverting a great deal of energy from the efforts being made toward winning the war and that question is methodically, consistently and with selfish and maybe with unpatriotic motives, being fanned into a flame that will not only destroy our usefulness in war activities, but consume us in a destructive conflagration of racial hatred.

Those who are active in this effort are using exactly the same methods as were adopted by Hitler and his Nazi gang. A plea for the rights of minorities. A championing of the downtrodden, with the added argument here of the impossibility of replacing for certain work, part of our population, which cannot or will not assimilate.

No man, no group is indispensable. If it should be found that he or they were in such a category in private business, then private business must be sacrificed to the public welfare.

The Japanese question is one that has troubled the public mind for years and because of the present unfortunate relations existing between Japan and Canada, it has become a vital one to all. That it be the cause of no future friction, now is the time to settle it. However, it is becoming more evident from day to day that this is not going to be as easy as it sounds. Because certain interests are determined that their own selfish and private affairs shall not be disturbed.

For quite a long period there has appeared in B.C., particularly in the Fraser Valley, articles inspired by an individual, who delights in rattling about his humanitarianism, particularly to the downtrodden Japanese

- 2 -

He is using the same tactics as all dictators, great and small, for generations. On two occasions since he came to B. C. he has been able to persuade some gullible folk to partake of his generosity such is their error. Now, when we find ourselves in the throes of an emergency, he decides to play both ends against the middle when he appears to be interested in the prosperity of the fruit industry with one hand and champions the Japanese with the other.

Let us look at the articles he has had published during the last few weeks, counselling the Japanese whom he has apparently decided to "protect" then see what he says at Vernon about them and finally read what the Kelowna Courier thinks about him.

Four days after war was declared between Japan and Canada, this man issued a circular "To the Japanese Members of the Pacific Co-operative Union!" In the first paragraph the Japanese, who were born in Japan and chose to make there adopted home Canada, are told that it would be an unnatural thing for their sympathies to be other than with "your fellow Countrymen and Women over there in your homeland." That they "are unfortunate victims of existing circumstances." Again "we know---you do not approve of the action of your government." In another part of this paragraph the statement is made, "you are now, as you have been in the past, law-abiding and anxious to do what is right." The whole paragraph is an attempt to apply a coat of whitewash to a group of residents in this Province who are here to exploit the natural resources of this Province for their own benefit and a barefaced attempt on the part of this man to pose as a champion for a supposedly downtrodden group.

If they were so dissatisfied with conditions politically, economically and socially in Japan that they deemed it wise to come to this country why in the face of common sense should it be unnatural to be out of sympathy with those who at the present time are trying to break up the very system which they as immigrants preferred. If they are law-abiding citizens here they should owe allegiance to the government of this land. Why then make the statement that the government of Japan is "your government?" It is utter nonsense, worse it is positive disloyalty to even suggest that their government is any other than our government--that government set up in Ottawa and Victoria by the votes of Canadian people.

In instruction 2 of the circular these "law-abiding citizens" are cautioned not to come into the cities or towns especially after dark or

before daylight. * He appears to be so suspicious of these "law-abiding citizens" that he would curtail what is an unquestioned right of such citizens to enjoy their place or creed in this Canada of ours.

In instruction 3 they are warned against having parties or any kind of gatherings, and in number 7 of the same instructions they are advised to join a local Association to "enjoy the protection of the Association." This looks like a deliberate attempt to paint the Japanese as an ill-treated minority. To impress upon these Japanese the peril of their position in B.C. This man brands anyone who might question these "law-abiding citizens" activities as "unthinking" and "anxious persons" and suggests in instruction 4 that these persons are interfering, it is presumed with the supposed right of Japanese in Canada to "sympathize" with "fellow country-men in your homeland."

J.B.Shimek, over whose name this circular appeared, concludes by asking these "law-abiding citizens" to "be good Canadians", yet interwoven in the whole circular is an unvarnished attempt to create suspicion in the minds of these people against their white neighbors, while by flattery they are held up to themselves as the essence of purity and goodness. A people to be pitied because "existing circumstances" have made them the "unfortunate victims" of a free democracy. Paraphrasing Winston Churchill--"What a chicken is this Shimek, and what a neck he has."

But that is not the end. Comes January 15th issue of the Fraser Valley Record and this choice bit of plaver. "we are sorry to say", says Mr. Shimek, "that you have not complied with our recommendations." Imagine having to use such language to "law-abiding and anxious to do what is right" Japanese.

Flattery has failed and true to German instinct the next instrument to be used is the iron mitt of force. Kisten "don't use your cars" or you will lose them entirely." Yet he drives his own car when and where he pleases. "Stay on your farms", or you'll "be subject to curfew." These "dire consequences" will be capped by personal "internment" brought about by those who can bring pressure to bear on the Government at Ottawa. Note not "your government" or our government, but "The" government.

Not satisfied with his efforts here Mr. Shimek becomes impregnated with the idea that his "law-abiding and anxious to do right" proteges can be the saviours of the fruit crop in the Okanagan, so he journeys to Vernon to attend the convention of the B.C.F.G.A. There he made a speech in true

"Shimekian" style. But let the Kelowna Courier tell the tale:-

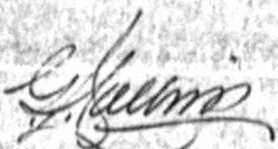
"One of the dark horses of the convention was J. B. Shimek, manager of the Pacific Co-Operative Union at Mission City. He was present for a purpose and while that purpose was not brought clearly into the open, it was obviously his intent to enlist the fruit growers' support in an effort to have the Fraser Valley Japanese berry growers left on their land. He found it necessary to praise the Japanese as citizens, but at the same time, to accomplish his purpose, it was necessary that he warn the fruit growers not to bring them in here without proper supervision and guarantee that they would be removed as soon as the harvest was over."

"This man Shimek is smooth. That would seem to be the only word to describe him. He knows how to appeal to a crowd. He stood solidly upon the platform and figuratively waved the Union Jack with his guttural accents. His speech was slush and goo and syrup. The patriotic sentiments fell thick and fast but even at that they took second place to the barefaced unadulterated flattery he peddled the growers--and they ate it up!

"This reporter happened to be sitting where he could watch the audience's reaction to Mr. Shimek and expected momentarily to be deluged by vest buttons torn from the growers' clothing as Mr. Shimek's flattery made the chests expand. One could actually see growers try to emulate the pouter pidgeon as Mr. Shimek put his flattery across."

Again, unity and sacrifice is essential to an all-out war effort. There is a disturbance in the public mind, interfering with the accomplishment of a unified effort. Can there be any doubt as to what it is? Where it is--and who it is? As far as the Fraser Valley is concerned it is time for the pruning knife to be used in a drastic manner.

Mission City, B.C.,
Feb. 10th, 1942.


G. L. Collins.