

CANADA
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE CUSTODIAN

JAPANESE EVACUATION SECTION

File No. G/9

506 Royal Bank Bldg.,
Vancouver, B. C.

21st November, 1942.

W. A. Eastwood, Esq.,
General Manager,
British Columbia Security Commission,
Marine Building,
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Sir:

In the absence of Mr. McPherson, who is in the East, I am taking the liberty of replying to your communication to him dated November 17th as obviously it concerns the property of Japanese evacuees.

It is difficult, if not entirely impossible, to issue a general statement which will serve to enlighten all Japanese evacuees as to the arrangements made for the protection and administration of the property left in the protected area by each individual Japanese evacuee as there are almost as many different types of treatment as there are types of property and almost as many different types of property as there are individual Japanese evacuees.

Each individual of the Japanese race who has property vested in the Custodian is always at liberty to communicate direct with the Custodian's office and many of them have done so, asking for statements covering their own affairs, and all such requests for information from individuals of the Japanese race evacuated from the protected area have in the past, now are and in the future will be given very sympathetic consideration.

If the Spanish Consul-General will be good enough to bring to our attention any specific instances of complaints made by Japanese Nationals concerning arrangements made for the protection and administration of their property, it will be appreciated by this office.

Yours truly,

"R. P. Alexander"

Manager.

MEMORANDUM

FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE :

re Japanese property
Pacific Defence Area

The Order in Council vesting in the Custodian the property of Japanese evacuated from the Defence Area provided that the property so vested would include property delivered up to any person by the owner pursuant to an Order of the Minister of Justice. This meant that the motor cars, radios and cameras turned in by the Japanese vested in the Custodian. Mr. McPherson, our representative at Vancouver, called my attention some time ago to the fact that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had told one of the evacuated Japanese that he might have his camera X and radio. I took the matter up with the Commissioner, who stated that since there were no regulations preventing a person of the Japanese race from buying or using any of the articles outside the protected area, he did not think any good purpose appeared to be served by not returning to Japanese outside the area the articles they had turned in.

The Custodian has in his charge some 800 motor vehicles, upon which we have had to spend several thousand dollars for maintenance and care. With your authority we recently advertised these cars for sale and tenders are X now in.

In the meantime, however, McPherson tells me over the telephone today, a considerable number of the so-called evacuated Japanese have been writing and wiring for their X cars, cameras and radios. He tells me something which is

- still ---

still more startling, that a number of these people, who are listed as having been evacuated, have returned to Vancouver and have in person called and demanded the return of their cars, cameras and radios, stating that the Police have indicated that they may drive the cars out of the area. X

Although it is, strictly speaking, not our business, McPherson is of the opinion that to return these articles to Japanese will have a very disturbing effect on the white population in Vancouver. He is of the opinion, to use his own words, that "to a large extent the evacuation scheme has broken down". X

He desires directions, therefore, as to whether he will proceed to deal with the tenders for the cars submitted or call the whole thing off.

I am of the opinion, judging by the debate in the House of Commons yesterday, that you should take up the matter with your colleagues the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Justice, putting the difficulty of the Custodian's position before them.

You may remember that at the end of June an Order in Council was passed requiring the Soldier Settlement to conduct a survey of the Japanese property and, in co-operation with the Custodian, to deal with proposed sales or leases of farm property. McPherson tells me on the telephone today that in more than one instance the inspectors of the Soldier Settlement have gone to the farms of supposedly evacuated Japanese to find that the Japanese owner has returned and is calmly resting in possession. X

E. H. COLEMAN
Under Secretary of State
and Deputy Custodian.

Ottawa, July 30, 1942.

(COPY)

Ottawa, December 22, 1942.

Mr. A. W. Neill, M.P.,
Alberni,
British Columbia.

Dear Mr. Neill,

The Honourable Mr. Mitchell has asked me to reply to your letter of December 15, concerning assets of Japanese who have been evacuated from the restricted areas of British Columbia under control of the British Columbia Security Commission.

I would advise that the property of all Japanese evacuees is under the supervision and management of the Custodian of Enemy Property. The assets of interned or repatriated Japanese are held by the Custodian, and are not available to the owners thereof.

Yours very truly,

HTP:LM

Associate Deputy Minister
(A. MacNamara)

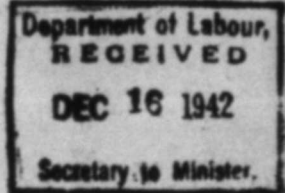


House of Commons
Canada

AIRMAIL

Alberni, B. C.,
December 12th, 1942.

Honourable Humphrey Mitchell,
Minister of Labour,
OTTAWA, Canada.



Dear Mr. Mitchell:

I see in this morning's Sun, a statement that the Security Commission is preparing to hand over to the Japs in British Columbia, outside the defence area, all their radios. There is also a statement in the same paper from a radio expert, giving his name, and saying that he knows what he is talking about, explaining that it is quite simple and easy to change one of these ordinary receiving sets into a transmitting set, and that it would be impossible to detect it having been done, except by an expert.

I see Mr. Cruikshanks, M.P. has been protesting and I wish to add my protest also. Has this Security Commission nothing better to do than to pander to these enemy aliens? What is the need for it? Could the Japs seriously be held to be ill treated because they weren't

allowed a means of communication, which they might very readily, very easily and without detection use for communication with their friends and our enemies in Japan or elsewhere.

I see that Mayor Cornett of Vancouver asks if the British prisoners in Japan are allowed transmitting sets or what could be used for it. By the way, Mayor Cornett was elected the other day by a huge majority, and practically the only difference between his platform and that of his opponent was that Mayor Cornett was out to have the Japs repatriated at the end of the war, and the other man was favouring them.

Some people claim that this is a post war matter. It certainly is not, it should be part of the terms of peace and that ought to be discussed before the end of the war, but to return to the subject of the radios, I would ask this question. Is it really essential to the health of these Japanese that they should be furnished with these instruments? Or is it part of the Geneva convention that we should supply our enemy aliens with means of communicating by radio?

Then let us ask ourselves this question. Is it a wise thing from a military point of view to afford enemy aliens, some of them avowedly enemy sympathizers, that means by which they could communicate perhaps, not with Japan, but with

sympathizers perhaps in the States, where they might have facilities for radioling to Japan, or even if they only radiod between different parts of Canada and the States, preparing perhaps for a concerted action, either of attack on government forces or in some similar way.

Will it help our war effort, or will it endanger it? I think the answer to this is that while it might not hurt us, it very easily might be a considerable hindrance to our war effort. Then why do it?

Yours faithfully,

A. W. Neill.

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HOWARD SMITH
BELL-FAST BOND

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BRITISH COLUMBIA SECURITY COMMISSION
MARINE BUILDING
VANCOUVER, B.C.

AIR MAIL

August 5, 1942.

Department of Labour,
RECEIVED
AUG 8 1942
Secretary to Minister.

Mr. A. MacNamara,
Assoc. Deputy Minister of Labor,
OTTAWA, CANADA.

Dear Mr. MacNamara:

It is desired to acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 1st in which you enclose copy of memorandum to the Secretary of State from the Under Secretary of State.

The Custodian in Vancouver has taken charge of motor cars, radios and cameras turned in by the Japanese. None of these articles can be used by the Japanese in the protected area by virtue of orders passed by the British Columbia Security Commission.

As far as cameras are concerned the Order has been enlarged to prohibit the use of cameras by Japanese not only in the protected area but in our interior housing schemes and work camps. We have permitted, however, the use of longwave radios only in these work camps and housing schemes.

As far as automobiles are concerned the use of these was prohibited to Japanese by Order in Council and the cars were turned in, of course, to the Custodian. This Commission has passed no orders prohibiting the use of cars among the Japanese. We have on a few occasions authorized the use of light trucks on farms outside the protected area although legally such authority was not necessary.

Briefly, therefore, as far as the legal aspect is concerned there is nothing to prevent the Japanese outside the protected area or outside our housing projects or work camps from possessing either cars, radios or cameras. As a matter of fact, some Japanese have been buying cars in southern Alberta.

With regard to the third paragraph of the memorandum in question it is quite likely that a number of Japanese have called at Mr. MacPherson's office, asking for their cars, cameras and radios even after they have been evacuated. The explanation of this is that we, as you know, are clearing out certain work camps and for a while the workers were brought into Vancouver to be evacuated to another point immediately. They would spend one or perhaps two days in the city and doubtless these are the people of whom Mr. MacPherson speaks in his letter.

BRITISH COLUMBIA SECURITY COMMISSION

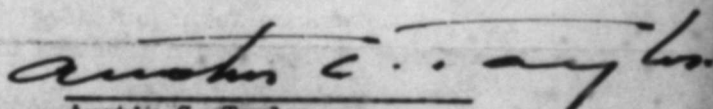
We agree with Mr. MacPherson when he states that to return these articles to Japanese would have a disturbing effect on the white people of Vancouver and there is no necessity for him so to do. In fact, he cannot so do unless the owners are outside the protected areas.

It is regretted that he is of the opinion that to a large extent the evacuation scheme has broken down. It is not correct and it is doubted here if Mr. MacPherson has sufficient knowledge of the progress of the evacuation scheme to make such a broad statement.

Regarding the last paragraph of this memorandum according to which Mr. MacPherson states that inspectors of the Soldier Settlement have gone to the farms of supposedly evacuated Japanese to find that the Japanese owner has returned and is calmly resting in possession, it is desired to state that this is not correct. What has happened is that the Japanese farmers, chiefly in the Fraser River valley, immediately this Commission took over supervision of the Japanese, were notified to hold themselves in readiness for evacuation and the Custodian was also notified to the same effect. To use our parlance, they were "custodianized." However, we have not yet found a place to put many of these people and they have never been evacuated. They have not returned to their farms because they have never left them.

No Japanese who has been evacuated from the protected area has been allowed to come back and Mr. MacPherson's telephone message was given without a correct knowledge of the facts. He could easily have obtained these facts if he had requested same from us as we are only too anxious to cooperate with and assist him in every respect.

Yours very truly,



Austin C. Taylor,
Chairman, B. C. Security Commission.

AHLM/JM

OTTAWA, December 26, 1942.

No. J129

Sir,

During a recent visit to this department you expressed the view that some Japanese nationals in Canada who had left their homes in the coastal region were anxious respecting the property which they had left behind them. I have now the honour to transmit to you information gained from the Departments of Government concerned.

It is difficult, if not entirely impossible, to issue a general statement which will serve to enlighten all Japanese as to the arrangements made for the protection and administration of the property left in the protected area by each individual Japanese as there are almost as many different types of treatment as there are types of property and almost as many different types of property as there are individual Japanese.

Every person of the Japanese race who has property vested in the Custodian is always at liberty to communicate directly with the Custodian's office and many of them have done so, asking for statements covering their own affairs. All such requests for information from individuals of the Japanese race evacuated from the protected area have in the past, now are and in the future will be given very sympathetic consideration.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.

H. H. Wrong

for Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The Consul General of Spain in
Charge of Japanese Interests,
Sun Life Building,
Montreal, P.Q.