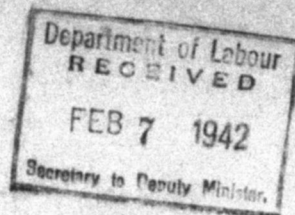


DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



February 6, 1942.

Personal.

Dear George,

As you will have seen from the press we are having a real battle in regard to the treatment of Japanese residents on our Pacific Coast. One of the ways in which we are trying to give the loyal Canadians of Japanese origin a chance to serve their country and, incidentally, to reduce the viciousness of the campaign against all persons of Japanese racial origin is by the organization of a voluntary Civilian Corps. It is hoped that a considerable number of able-bodied male adults of Japanese race but of Canadian nationality will enlist in this Corps which will then be employed on works of value to the national cause.

The Corps will be semi-military in character, and membership in it will, we hope, be looked upon as an honour and discharge from it as a disgrace. It will be given uniforms and/or insignia; and arrangements will be made for pay, separation allowances, and so on.

One of the matters to which we feel special attention should be paid is the provision of educational and recreational opportunities for the members of the Corps. We have to do everything we can to maintain the morale of the men enlisted, and we do not want to have the Corps in any way looked upon as a punitive organization. I have been wondering if it might not be possible for the Y.M.C.A. to come to our assistance in connection with this matter. As you know

Dr. G. S. Patterson,  
Metropolitan Secretary,  
Y.M.C.A.,  
Toronto, Ont.

we are having a very hard time in trying to keep the more jittery and prejudiced elements in the British Columbia population within bounds on this subject. The situation is very serious, and every bit of enlightened and humane assistance that we can obtain will be of the greatest value. Do you think it would be possible for the Y.M.C.A. to offer publicly to establish recreational facilities and educational opportunities for the Corps? Such an offer coming at this time would be helpful to us, be very well received by the Japanese, and would, I think, redound greatly to the credit of the Y.M.C.A. itself.

The Corps is being organized under the auspices of the Federal Government, by the Department of Labour and the Unemployment Insurance Commission; and the offer from the Y.M.C.A., if it is made, should appropriately be addressed to the Minister of Labour, the Honourable Humphrey Mitchell.

I am writing to you about this matter because I know that you will understand the implications of the situation better than anyone else in the Y.M.C.A. and because I hope that you may be willing to take the responsibility for presenting the case to the National Council. If necessary it could be discussed at the Annual Meeting in Montreal. I would try to be present for the discussion if you think that desirable. Any steps that you feel able to take will be most gratefully appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

H & KEENLEYSIDE