

SR

Ottawa, 3rd March, 1942

URGENT

My dear Colleague,-

I enclose herewith, copy of a telegram received today from Mr. W. A. C. Bennett, Member of the Provincial Legislature for the South Okanagan. I have also been informed that the Security Commission have notified the people in the Okanagan that they have no authority to prevent the Japanese from moving about in this area, which is outside the protected zone.

From two or three of the Members, I am informed that a vigorous protest has been recorded against the fact that your executive order of February 26th does not prohibit the possession of automobiles, firearms, explosives, radios, etc., except within the protected area. If one considers the implications of the more extremely dangerous items such as firearms, explosives and radio transmitting sets, it becomes evident that restrictions in this regard should be considered with regard to the whole of Canada and not merely the protected areas.

With regard to the influx of Japanese into the Okanagan, while it is true that they cannot acquire land, it appears that they are able to live with their Japanese friends already established in this part of the country. Any of them who have funds will also be able to acquire motor cars and travel freely about the country.

While I have not particulars, I understand that there is a mass meeting of protest to be held in the Okanagan this week and the Honourable Mr. Stirling informs me that he is fearful lest disorder

The Honourable Louis St. Laurent, M.P.,
Minister of Justice,
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shall follow.

In my reply to Mr. Bennett's telegram, I have simply advised him that I am taking the matter up with the Minister of Justice immediately, but I think we must be prepared to give a more definite answer as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,

(COPY)

CANADIAN PACIFIC TELEGRAPHS

KELOWNA, B.C.,
March 2, 1942

Hon. Ian Mackenzie,
Minister of Pensions and National Health,
Ottawa.

Further to telegrams and telephone conversations.

B.C. Security Commission advise Rutherford they have no authority to stop uncontrolled infiltration of Japanese into Okanagan Valley. When Japanese were registered here there was a total of 750, between Vernon and Penticton, 425 of whom were in Kelowna district. Since registration estimate over 2,000 additional have arrived this area alone. Strong opinion exists that hundreds more will come if movement not stopped. Public feeling running high with public meeting called for Thursday this week. Urgently recommend that policy be changed and that you advise me action of Government before Thursday.

(Signed) W. A. G. Bennett, M.L.A.