

January 27, 1942.

SECRET & CONFIDENTIAL

Memorandum to Mr. Robertson

THE JAPANESE PROBLEM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

At the request of the Honourable Ian Mackenzie I attended a meeting at his office at five o'clock this afternoon, in which the Honourable Humphrey Mitchell also participated.

Mr. Mackenzie referred to the public statements being issued by Mayor Hume in regard to action which the Standing Committee proposes to take in regard to the handling of the Japanese problem in British Columbia. Mr. Mackenzie pointed out that the Committee had no power to decide on matters of this nature and that it was quite improper for Mayor Hume to make such statements at all, much less to make them publicly.

I informed Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Mitchell that we had been wondering whether it might not now be appropriate to dissolve the Standing Committee. The Government has decided on its policy in relation to the Japanese in British Columbia and is taking over direct control of the situation. This being the case, the *raison d'être* for the Committee rather seems to have disappeared. I explained that in the opinion of the interested members of this Department it would be much better to dissolve the Committee rather than to enter into prolonged discussions, in regard to its reconstitution, and into a debate over its functions. Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Mitchell both agreed that it would be very desirable to dissolve the Committee at this time. It was agreed that I should draft a letter for the Prime Minister's signature, thanking Mayor Hume and the other members of the Committee for their assistance, and explaining that in the new circumstances the Government would accept direct responsibility for handling the situation in British Columbia.

Mr. Mackenzie then referred to the points made in the memoranda which he had received during the last day or two in regard to the application of compulsion to the Canadian nationals among the

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Japanese population of British Columbia. He pointed out that many of the British Columbia members and other residents of the coastal area feel very strongly that the Canadian Japanese, as well as the Japanese nationals, must be moved out of the protected area.

After some discussion it was agreed that:

- (a) that the Japanese nationals would be moved, by compulsion if necessary, as soon as possible;
- (b) that the Canadian nationals would be allowed and encouraged to enlist in the civilian corps, and that all reasonable steps would be taken to see that such enlistment would be made as attractive as possible to them;
- (c) that, if in the event it developed that the Canadian nationals did not enlist in large numbers, the whole situation would have to be reviewed and the question of the application of compulsion considered.

Mr. Mackenzie approved the programme for the transfer of enemy aliens from prohibited areas as outlined in the memorandum from the Department of Labour dated January 24th. It was agreed, however, that the words

"with a view of satisfying itself that there will be no objection from the Province"

should be omitted from paragraph 2 of the memorandum.

Mr. Mackenzie stated that after further consideration he had come to the conclusion that it would be inadvisable to have Colonel Macgregor Macintosh associated with the civilian corps, as the antipathy of the Japanese to Colonel Macintosh would greatly lessen their enthusiasm for enlistment. Mr. Mitchell agreed, and added that it was expected that Colonel Mullanly would shortly reach Ottawa for consultation in regard to this matter.

Mr. Mackenzie expressed the hope that the Prime Minister would find it possible to make a statement to the House of Commons in regard to the situation on the Coast and that in the statement he would avoid any commitment which would make it impossible to apply compulsion to the Canadian nationals if this should eventually be found necessary. I stated that in working on a draft for submission to the Prime Minister I would endeavour to include a statement which would meet Mr. Mackenzie's point.