

(PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE)

PRESS RELEASE

January 24, 1947

The Prime Minister, Mr. MacKenzie King, announced today that the government has decided that it is unnecessary to continue in force orders in council permitting as an emergency measure the deportation from Canada of persons of Japanese origin. Assistance will, however, be continued for voluntary departure from Canada.

In making his announcement, the Prime Minister issued the following statement:

The decision of the government respecting certain orders in council relating to persons of Japanese origin in Canada marks the substantial completion of a program contained in the statement I made in the House of Commons on August 4, 1944. At that time I indicated the following "tentative measures" which the government proposed to put into effect:

- (a) Separation of the loyal from the disloyal among the persons of Japanese origin in Canada, and the removal from Canada of those who were disloyal;
- (b) Provisions to enable those loyal to Canada to remain and be treated "fairly and justly"; and
- (c) Settlement throughout Canada, rather than exclusively in British Columbia, of persons of Japanese origin remaining in the country.

Under the provisions for assisted movement from Canada which the government put into effect, the separation of those whose continued presence would be undesirable in Canada has been accomplished on a voluntary basis. Nearly 4,000 persons of Japanese origin have now left Canada and returned to Japan. Among these were the Japanese whose deportation would have been necessary had they not gone voluntarily. Accordingly the provisions of the Order in Council (P.C. 7355 of December 15, 1945) permitting deportation as an emergency measure have been repealed. In view of the government's decision it is no longer necessary to continue the authority given by the Order in Council (P.C. 7357 of December 15, 1945) authorizing the establishment of a special commission to investigate the loyalty of persons of Japanese origin. That order, therefore, has also been repealed.

The government is retaining the authority to provide free passage and financial assistance to persons of Japanese origin wishing to move to Japan on a voluntary basis. The Order-in-Council (P.C. 7356 of December 15, 1945) respecting the revocation of the Canadian status of naturalized persons of Japanese origin who leave Canada, has also been repealed. This repeal will not, of course, restore the Canadian status of persons who have already lost such status.

With respect to the property of persons of Japanese origin who were removed from the Pacific coast, and whose property was sold by the Custodian, the government is of the opinion that the sales were made at a fair price. In all cases a complete appraisal was made before disposition. The total of the prices secured is greater in aggregate than the total appraisal value. To ensure, however, the fair treatment promised in 1944, the government is prepared in cases where it can be shown that a sale was made at less than a fair market value to remedy the injustice.

Of 20,558 persons of Japanese origin now in Canada, there are fewer than 1700 who have not as yet settled in new homes and employment. Of these 1700, a large proportion are aged persons, invalids, or persons otherwise unemployable. These persons are still in government relocation centres.

In 1941, out of a total population of 23,149 persons of Japanese origin, 22,096 resided in British Columbia; only 1,153 resided in all the rest of Canada. On December 31, 1946, the total had decreased to 20,558. Of this number only 6,776 were in British Columbia; while 13,782 now live in other parts of Canada. Since 1941 the population of British Columbia of Japanese origin has declined by 15,320 - or approximately two-thirds. In addition, the pre-war concentration on the coast has been eliminated.

To assist in the resettlement of persons of Japanese origin the government provided free transportation to new locations in Canada, gave financial assistance in resettlement, and, through the Department of Labour, assisted in securing suitable employment outside British Columbia.

To ensure the success of the resettlement, the government has decided to continue the restrictions on movement which are at present in effect. The provision respecting fishing licenses which applies to persons of Japanese origin will also be continued. All other Orders-in-Council and special controls respecting persons of Japanese origin, other than those necessary to complete the administration of assets already vested in the Custodian, have been revoked.