

## MEMORANDUM

### CIVIL RIGHTS AND CANADIANS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

Issued by the Canadian Committee (Pro Tem), World Federation of Democratic Youth, 200 Adelaide Street West, Toronto, Ontario.

June 22, 1946.

#### DEPORTATION

Orders in Council were passed on December 15, 1945, by the Government of Canada to deport certain categories of Canadian residents of Japanese ancestry to Japan. These Orders are now before the Privy Council in England for a ruling on their legal validity. Whatever the decision on legal grounds, there is the need for the democratic and progressive people of Canada to condemn these Orders in Council as morally and politically subversive and a threat to the civil and personal rights of all Canadians.

These Orders in Council are an outgrowth of a public policy based on race prejudice and discrimination adopted by our Government. For this reason, progressive groups must take action to eradicate all discriminatory practices based on race. Unless such action becomes the declared policy of groups, the task of re-establishing our population of Japanese ancestry will be very difficult.

#### MOVED FROM HOMES - DEPRIVED OF RIGHTS

Following the outbreak of war on the Pacific, the Japanese people in Canada were moved from their homes in the British Columbia coastal area. They were moved into abandoned mining towns, to housing centres and road camps in the Interior of the province. Others of them were sent to sugar beet farms in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario, and to the farms and industries of Ontario and Quebec. Wherever they settled, even to this day, a year after the ending of the war, these people are denied many of the civil rights which are considered fundamental to democratic countries. They are denied the right of movement between provinces except with travel permits which are usually refused; they may not return to their former homes; to purchase land or a home, they must secure a special license; they are refused business licenses on racial grounds; and they are excluded from some professions.

In British Columbia, persons not subject to deportation are being forced out of the province, and may not take employment within the province even where they are needed.

#### HOMES AND PROPERTY SOLD

Their homes and businesses which were registered with the Custodian of Japanese Property, a government agency, "as a protective measure only", were sold without their consent and against their wishes, at a small fraction of the value. Some persons have been credited with \$200 for businesses they valued at \$60,000, other persons received \$250 for property where offers of \$2500 had been turned down. Some owners received ten dollars and three dollars and fifty cents for automobiles.

#### THREE OUT OF FOUR ARE CITIZENS

There are about 24,000 Japanese in Canada. Of this number, three-quarters or 18,000 are Canadian citizens, and two-thirds are Canadian by birth. Previous to the war about 22,000 lived in the coastal region of British Columbia and another thousand lived in the river valleys of the Interior.

Their main sources of livelihood were fishing and the allied industries of canning and boat-building, logging and lumbering, vegetable and small-fruit growing in the Fraser Valley, and in the cities,

in the retail trades and services such as small grocery stores, fruit and vegetable stands, dry-cleaning, pressing and tailoring, gardening, and domestic work.

#### GOVERNMENT POLICY - TO SCATTER

Since the Spring of 1942 the Japanese in Canada have been continually on the move. As a result of stringent Government pressure, the number of persons in British Columbia at the end of June, 1946, is expected to be reduced from the original 23,000 to 11,500. The Japanese have found that they have no security of residence, and may be ordered to move to another part of Canada at any time.

This forced movement, and the prohibiting of free movement, is a part of the Government's scheme to scatter the Japanese throughout the country, and to prevent a "concentration" in any area. It is their contention that "concentration" is the cause of anti-Japanese sentiment, and hostile attitudes and actions. It must therefore provide safeguards, to avoid at all costs, and without regard for personal and civil rights and liberties, any accumulation in numbers. For this reason, movement must be forced and controlled, with some areas defined as "closed".

#### "REPATRIATION" STARTED

The Government, desiring a rapid dispersal of the Japanese, was also mindful that the special powers used to order people to and fro were assumed under the War Measures Act and would not be continued indefinitely. During the Spring of 1945 a repatriation survey was carried out to find the number of persons who wished to go to Japan. However, there was no free and voluntary choice. Persons who stated they wished to remain in Canada were told they would lose their job and must leave the province if on government projects in British Columbia, while persons who applied to go to Japan were able to remain at their work and were assured relief measured if required. Persons with small children, aged parents or ailing wives in hospitals, and others, who saw no good reason for them to leave the province, and finding it convenient to stay where they were, declared their intention to go to Japan.

#### GOVERNMENT INDUCEMENTS

The Government offered certain inducements to persons who would go to Japan. Adults were assured assistance so that they would have at least two hundred dollars each and fifty dollars for each of their children. A Government circular stated: "This assured assistance will mean to many who desire repatriation, relief from unnecessary anxiety and it will allow them to plan their future, and that of their children, along economic, social, and cultural lines which they fear may be denied them were they to remain in Canada."

#### PUBLIC PROTEST

The Canadian public rose in protest against this deportation scheme. The Orders were referred to the Supreme Court which ruled that children and wives who had not applied for Japan could not be deported, but other categories of persons were deportable. Believing that such deportation would be a threat to the civil rights of all Canadians, an appeal was entered to the Privy Council.

The protest has resulted in changed practices. Without a formal announcement the policy is changed to allow deportable persons to leave British Columbia for other provinces to re-establish themselves. Placement allowances and rail fares are paid to these persons on a basis equal to non-deportable persons.

#### CAMPAIGN FOR FULL CIVIL RIGHTS NEEDED

The present requirement is to give all possible assistance to programs for the re-establishment of these people. Since their property was sold by the Government for almost nothing, financial grants should be provided to assist them in setting up households. Their property and business losses should be compensated, and, above all, full civil rights and liberties, enjoyed by Canadians, should be restored to them.