

ADDRESS BY GEORGE TANAKA, NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, JAPANESE CANADIAN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION, TO THE B.C. UNITED FISHERMEN AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION CONVENTION AT VANCOUVER, B. C., ON MARCH 22, 1949. (Transcript by the Convention Secretary)

MR. TANAKA: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate very much this opportunity to speak to you on the story of Japanese Canadians in Canada. As a note of explanation, I would first like to touch on our National Organization, the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association.

This Organization is national in scope, with component chapter organizations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. Its primary aim is to work for the protection of the economic and social welfare of Japanese Canadians and the development of a truly democratic society wherein fundamental rights and liberties are preserved for all citizens in Canada.

In my talk today, I will be branching off a little from the subject of the fishing industry. With your permission, I would like to tell you about the Japanese Canadians in general, by giving you perhaps an overall picture of Japanese Canadians as they are settled throughout Canada, and what they are doing. I hope that my contribution in some measure will create better understanding between our Canadian citizens.

While I have no desire to speak on matters which are now history, I feel that by giving you an overall picture, you will be able to understand the Japanese Canadians perhaps a little more clearly.

With respect to the military effort of Japanese Canadians, I would like to inform you that over 150 Japanese Canadians volunteered their services to the Canadian Armed Forces. Over half saw service overseas in the South-East Asia Command as interrogators, interpreters and translators. I am informed that they did a good job, and did contribute something to the war effort, working under the British Army. Some of them were required to remain in Canada, and were stationed eventually at S. in West Vancouver, where they studied the Japanese language. I happened to be one of those who were included in that group, and I might add that I did study the Japanese language taught to me by the Canadian Army for one year in West Vancouver, and I can tell you that the Japanese language is certainly a very difficult language to learn.

I am impressed with the war record of the Japanese Americans. They served as a Combat Team known as the 100th and latterly the 442nd Combat Team in the American Army. They are, as you perhaps know, the most highly decorated Combat Team in the American Armed Forces. They fought in Italy, in Europe, and in the South Pacific. I have a very great respect for their achievements. I believe too, that if the Japanese Canadians were permitted to volunteer their services to the Canadian Armed Forces in 1942, they too, perhaps not as brilliantly, would have contributed to some parallel extent, to the war effort of Canada.

During the process of evacuation of Japanese Canadians from British Columbia, and I am one who experienced that evacuation since I happened to be a Vancouver hometown boy, born here, the evacuees did experience a good deal of prejudice against them, race prejudice engendered by propaganda during the war period. In my own experiences in 1942, in attempting to settle in Toronto, I discovered that in the Eastern Provinces the average Canadian had never before met a Japanese Canadian. Naturally, they were influenced by the propaganda circulated at that time, engendered against us by war hysteria. But I can also inform you that despite the fact that we did find it very difficult in the initial stages to gain employment, once we were hired, and given just one day to work with our fellow Canadians, we were able to break down any personal prejudice that our fellow-workers might have harbored.

I know of one instance, my own personal one, which is an example, where an employer hired a Japanese Canadian and found that there was no difficulty; that the Japanese Canadians were able to work with their fellow Canadians. He immediately hired a number of others, and he had, within six months, something like ten working for him. And that was in 1942-43.

With respect to the overall picture of re-settlement of Japanese Canadians throughout Canada, I might point out to you that the present population in British Columbia is something less than 6,000; in Alberta about 4,200; in Saskatchewan, 200; in Manitoba about 1,200; in Ontario, 7,000, and in Quebec, 1200. In Toronto.- I believe there are over 4,000 settled in that city. During the course of each day, while traversing that city, I have very seldom come across groups of Japanese Canadians, despite the fact that there are 4,000 settled there. The Japanese Canadians have learned to disperse and not to settle in groups, and you will find that they are living everywhere. They are employed in every field of endeavour. They are in the professions, as Doctors, Electrical Engineers, Dentists and in other professions. They are in the skilled trades, working in factories and in the offices. I know two friends of mine who are graduate Electrical Engineers who received their degrees at U.B.C. They are now employed as Electrical Engineers by Canadian General Electric in Toronto.

They are learning the value of becoming members of Unions. One personal friend of mine is a member of a Printers Union. Last year the printers went on strike, and my friend also supported that strike, and he told me how he used to stand picket outside his own firm during the cold months in January and February of last year. It was heartening to know that their efforts were successful.

I know of a Japanese Canadian girl, (this incident, by the way, occurred about a year ago) employed in a garment factory in Toronto. She happened to be the only Japanese Canadian girl employed in that Department of the factory and she also happened to be second in seniority position to the forelady. One day the forelady had occasion to leave her job and the management decided to fill that position with someone from outside the Department. Immediately the Japanese Canadian girl's fellow-workers discovered this, they went on a strike, protesting, for they felt that the Japanese Canadian girl should have been promoted to that forelady's position. As a result of the efforts of her fellow-workers, the Japanese Canadian girl was able to obtain that position, as forelady.

That, I think, is an example which indicates how Japanese Canadians are getting along very well with their fellow-workers. As far as I know, our organization has no record of employment discrimination against Japanese Canadians in the Provinces outside of British Columbia.

With respect to the older people, our parents, I might inform you that a very large number, increasingly larger each year, are applying for naturalization. I can also inform you that many of the younger generation, the children who should know better, have discovered that their parents know more about Canadian history than they do, because they are studying that pamphlet issued by the Canadian Government, "How to Become a Canadian Citizen." They are also going to night-school this present day, learning English.

I believe the rapid integration of the Japanese Canadians into the social life of the local communities does indicate that Japanese Canadians were always, in the first place, good Canadians, because, without their background, environment, way of thinking as Canadians, they would not have become assimilated in their local communities within the short span of six or seven years.

With respect to discrimination, Legislative discrimination against Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry, as you perhaps know, we have been fortunate recently to have received the B. C. Provincial franchise.

At the end of this month, March 31st, two Federal restrictions, Order-in-Council P. C. 946 and 251 will be revoked. By virtue of P. C. 946, Japanese Canadians are not permitted to come to the coastal areas. By virtue of P. C. 251, they have been prohibited fishing licenses and the right to sail on fishing boats out of B. C. Ports.

I feel certain that there will be no large mass return movement of Japanese Canadians to the coastal area after March 31st.

In the Eastern Provinces, the Japanese Canadians are very well re-settled. They are employed, as they could not hope to be employed, if they returned to British Columbia. They are now doing work which would not be open to them if they were to return to British Columbia, and for that reason, I am certain that very few, and perhaps none from the Eastern Provinces, will come westward to British Columbia. In Alberta, where there are 4,200 Japanese Canadians, they are doing very well in work in agriculture. Some of the people have managed to purchase small farms. Others hope, some day, to purchase land, and they look towards permanent settlement in that Province. From my observations, I have discovered that almost all of them have cars, and most of the cars look to me to be good cars. Personally, I know I can't afford to buy a car, but apparently they are doing well enough there to afford it. Of course I realize that a car is a necessity in Alberta.

From the interior of British Columbia, I doubt if very many will come to the coastal areas this year. Although we have not conducted a survey of any kind, we have made enquiries, and through those enquiries it is indicated to us that the Japanese Canadians seem to be very well settled where they are. I know of several instances where, this month, two or three young Japanese Canadians who had come to Vancouver on special permit for one reason or another, through curiosity, tried to find out whether they could get a job, and their experiences were not at all encouraging. In fact, they were so disgusted that they left, and vowed that they would not return. Of course, that is reasonable to understand under the circumstances, when we know there are something like 30,000 unemployed in Vancouver. Also, another reason why it is not possible for the families to move immediately to Vancouver, to the coastal areas, is because of the critical housing shortage. Likewise, these families have put down roots during their seven years living in the interior, and you can see it would be difficult for families to uproot themselves again, and take a chance of settling in the coastal areas.

I believe, a fair proportion of Japanese Canadians should be permitted to return to the coastal areas, and no doubt over an extended period of five or six or seven years, there may eventually be a few hundred settling in Vancouver and in the various parts throughout the coastal region. But there should be no concern, I feel, over that situation.

During the war period when we faced extreme discrimination and racial prejudice, we did receive a good deal of support, help, and understanding from the Church bodies, the Civil Liberties Organizations, the Canadian Racial Minority Groups and Labor Groups. I recall that in 1942 in Toronto, when discrimination against Japanese Canadians was at its height, one United Church Minister by the name of James Finlay, broadcasted over the air Sunday mornings his views that he felt that the treatment accorded Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry was not democratic. That is the type of person who heads organizations which have done a great deal to alleviate the difficulties <sup>with</sup> which we have been confronted during the war period.

We appreciate very much that kindness and understanding given to us. I must admit that prior to the evacuation, our outlook on life in general was not as broad as it could have been. We have come to know that there are problems faced by other Canadian racial minority groups, and we feel that when Legislative discriminations are wiped away entirely against Japanese Canadians, and while we make headway in overcoming race prejudice, we feel that there is a great need to work with and co-operate with other groups who are interested in combating race prejudice in general in Canada. As an organization, we have co-operated in the last two or three years with the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Joint Labour Committee to Combat Racial Intolerance, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and a colored people's organization in Toronto, to promote, through a Race Relations Institute, the informing of the public of the dangers of race prejudice, and through other means, to do whatever we can to overcome this evil. I have learned that there are, roughly speaking, definite areas of discrimination where race prejudice exists in Canada. In Eastern Canada, I am reminded especially of Toronto, that race prejudice is extremely great against the Canadian Jews.

I can cite you one story where a Jewish Canadian boy, a Veteran who saw service overseas, returned to his home town, Toronto, and tried to get a job. He applied for a particular job with some ten or twelve others. He was accepted because apparently he was the most qualified. Two or three days later, the management discovered that he was of Jewish origin, and they fired him. I know also that the Jewish Canadians are finding it very difficult to obtain employment in the Engineering field.

I am also reminded of the Negroes, the Colored people. They, of course, as you know, are faced with discrimination all across Canada. In my travels, I have met many well-educated Negro Canadians working as porters on the trains. Many of them have received higher education and certainly should not be working as porters. They could give a greater contribution to Canada by doing what they have learned to do, but they unfortunately are denied employment in the fields where they are skilled.

I am also reminded of a story concerning the Chinese Canadians. Last year, when I was here in Vancouver, I spoke to a Chinese Canadian girl. She had attempted to find employment in offices in Vancouver. It appeared to me that she could not obtain employment because of her racial origin, despite the fact that she was a Canadian and had the Provincial franchise. I told her of our experiences, that Japanese Canadians were working in offices in Toronto. I have now heard that she is in Toronto, that last August she moved there, and she is now working as a Secretary for the Bell Telephone Company in Toronto.

With respect to Japanese Canadians, I have one case that comes to mind where a Japanese Canadian girl tried to take nurse's training in Essondale mental hospital last August, but according to word received, Mr. Pearson, Minister of Welfare, stated that it was the Government's policy not to employ Orientals in Civil Service.

Therefore, we, as an organization and as individuals, are interested in promoting legislation in human rights. We feel there is a need for a fair employment practices legislation in Canada. There is no such law at present existing in Canada. We are also keenly interested in promoting a Bill of Rights in Canada.

In the United States there are four States, State of New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Jersey, where they have a Fair Employment Practices Commission. Up until the last war, they have had no such Legislation in America. Because of this Legislation, members of American racial minority groups have been able to gain employment where, were there no such Legislation existing in those States, they would not be holding their present jobs. I am reminded that in New York, two years ago, I saw a Negro girl working in a fashionable store on Fifth Avenue as a salesgirl. She was well-dressed, but she was dark. If it wasn't for such Legislation in New York I know she would not be enjoying that privilege of employment, regardless of race, creed, or color.

Under principles of justice and democracy, I feel Japanese Canadians should be permitted, as Canadian citizens, to work in any field of endeavour without restraint. In the other Provinces outside of British Columbia, the Japanese Canadians are now living and working as normal Canadian citizens, sharing the responsibilities as well as receiving the rights and privileges.

With respect to the fishing question, as a matter of principle, we feel that Japanese Canadians should be granted fishing licenses without discrimination. According to a note I read in the press recently, it would appear that the attitude of the Minister of Fisheries will be that he will not deny fishing licenses to Japanese Canadians after March 31st.

We also feel that Japanese Canadian fishermen should become members of your Union.

We are definitely opposed to Japanese Canadian fishermen becoming subservient to Cannery Companies. As some of you may know, in past years, some of them have been financed by Cannery Companies in order to get fishing equipment to fish. They became indebted to the Companies in that way, and I feel that should never again occur.

We are also opposed to Japanese Canadian fishermen forming their own organization.

We would be opposed to any restrictions applying only to Japanese Canadians, permitting them to fish only in designated areas, because this would tend to influence such Japanese Canadian fishermen to live in the proximity of those areas, and would create again the unwanted situation of a group living too closely together.

We are also opposed to any quota system, where issuance of fishing licenses is based on racial grounds.

I might inform you that to my knowledge in 1941, only 11-- fishing licenses were issued to Japanese Canadians. I feel sure that only a small proportion of that number will eventually return to the fishing industry. My reasons for believing this are as follows:

The former fishermen are now dispersed throughout Canada. I know from my own experience that there are a number of them settled in Toronto, and they are well established doing other kinds of work, and they have no desire to return to the fishing industry. Seven years have passed since they have last fished in British Columbia. Many of the older people are now too old to fish. They would not be physically able to carry on as fishermen, and I doubt very strongly that they would even contemplate returning to the fishing industry. I am also reminded of the high cost of fishing equipment today. I can inform you that the former fishermen did not receive the full value of their fishing equipment when it was sold, and they have used up all of their financial resources in becoming established wherever they may be, and they certainly have not the funds, many of them to invest in fishing equipment. I understand that the minimum amount required to purchase equipment to fish at the present time might be in the neighbourhood of \$7,000.00, and I certainly know that they haven't that kind of money at the present time.

In conclusion, I would like to state that our organization is ready and willing to co-operate with your Union on any question which concerns the Japanese Canadians and the fishing industry. Thank you.

(Applause)

QUESTION PERIOD

BRO. STAVENES (Chairman): Thank you, Mr. George Tanaka. And now, we will leave the floor open for a period for questions, and I would like again to remind the Delegates that there will be a resolution submitted by the General Executive Board at a later session of the Convention, and that resolution will deal with policy of the Union to be followed on this particular question.

Now, if anyone here wishes to ask Mr. Tanaka any questions he is welcome to do so.

BRO. McKEE: Bro. Chairman, I would like to ask Mr. Tanaka a question that was of concern at the time of evacuation, or during the time of the residency of the Japanese in the coastal area here. We all knew that they subscribed to the citizenship rights to Japan. That is to say, they maintained their Japanese citizenship rights during their stay on the coast here. Have those rights been foregone in the interim period, or do they still subscribe to those rights, and if they do, are they willing--I gather they are from your talk here--but maybe further explanation would be good; are they willing to forego those rights if they have not already done so?

MR. TANAKA: They are certainly anxious to break all connections with respect to citizenship with Japan. I might add, as a note of explanation, that the reason for this situation coming about in the first place was because long ago our parents, through ignorance and through force of habit and custom, registered the births of their children in Japan, and I know for a fact that during the years when we did live in British Columbia, before the war, many of us felt and desired not to have any connection with Japan with respect to citizenship. And our organization now is actively engaged in making certain that where there may be registration of Canadian born in Japan, that those names be struck off immediately. And we are doing that wherever they still remain. I can also tell you the sentiment of the Japanese Canadians that they don't want to have anything to do with Japan with respect to that point.

BRO. PAYNE: Bro. Chairman, I would like to inquire of Mr. Tanaka whether any Japanese are engaged in fisheries in the Prairie Provinces or whether the ban on licenses is in effect there.

MR. TANAKA: There are none fishing in the Maritimes. In fact, as far as I know, there is only one family in the Maritimes. They only go as far east as Montreal, as far as settling in any large numbers. I believe there is a small group, something like 24 or 25, fishing in Northern Alberta, but nowhere else in the other Provinces.

MR. MACPHEE: On what basis were the Japanese refunded for their expropriated possessions? Have you any knowledge of that?

MR. TANAKA: As you perhaps know, the Federal Government has appointed a Commission to investigate the property losses suffered by the Japanese Canadians as a result of the evacuation. At the present time, Commissioner Bird here in Vancouver is investigating these claims. There is no information that I can give you regarding what settlement probably will be made, because I myself have not that information as yet and the Commissioner is not prepared at this time to make any report.

I do believe that sometime in the next few months, a report or an interim report by the Commissioner will be submitted to the Federal Government. There is a possibility that some adjustment probably will be made.

BRO. STAVENES: Anyone else have any questions to ask?

BRO. STANLEY: I would like to ask, on the question of language, are they educating the rest of them to speak entirely English when they have been out here? The point is that when they left sometimes they got in two or three groups, then speak their language entirely. Just want to know if there is any move towards their speaking English entirely.

MR. TANAKA: There is no Japanese language school existing in Canada at the present day, excepting for any that the Canadian Army may have.

I can tell you that it is very easy to forget that language, because I tried to learn it in one year, and I forgot more in one day than I learned in a month.

Our home life, the children, naturally speak English, and where they have learned or picked up some of the language, I have heard it remarked quite often how much they have forgotten. Now, they are anxious, naturally, in the interests of culture, to retain some of the language for those who desire to learn the language as a language. But so far there has been, to my knowledge, no desire on the part of any of the Japanese Canadians to learn that language, and the older people are learning English. There has been a definite change in their attitude. As far as the parents are concerned, before the war they had, perhaps, wished their children to learn the language so they could speak to their children in that language, but now the reverse is true. The older people are keenly anxious to learn English so that they can speak with their children.

BRO. STAVENES: Any further questions by anyone? Bro. Rigby?

BRO. RIGBY: I feel, that since Mr. Tanaka will not be here while we are debating the resolution, this is the time when we should, all the Delegates should ask all the questions they might have on their mind. For myself, I would like to ask whether there is any statistical information available as to the number of fishermen amongst that group who returned to Japan, or were sent back to Japan.

MR. TANAKA: We haven't any data at all on that. I believe there were roughly about 4,000 of them returned to Japan. But, of course, a number of them were children. I know there were some who were former fishermen, but as to the number I couldn't give you any idea at all.

VOICE: I would like to ask Mr. Tanaka if there is any truth to the rumor that there are some Japanese Canadians who have already got boats built in the Interior, or if that is so, in what extent?

MR. TANAKA: That is news to me.

VOICE: That is the rumor.

MR. TANAKA: The question was, I believe, that rumor has it that the Japanese Canadians are building boats in the Interior. They may build a canoe or a rowboat, but as far as I know I have never heard of any such rumor and I feel certain they would be too busy to even think of building a boat in the interior.

BRO. MCKEE: Mr. Chairman, in respect to that, I believe there is one former boat builder on Okanagan Lake. I believe it is in the Okanagan Lake, who is in the business of building boats, and he has a very good business I am informed. Whether that has anything to do with the rumor, I don't know; but that may have been where the rumor originated.

BRO. ANGUS NEISH: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask our visiting Delegate here the number of members in his organization, and what does it total, and if what I sense are the key points of his speech here today, if those key points are the official ideas of his organization, and have his organization's approval, or if this is his idea of how they would react.

MR. TANAKA: I take it you mean that are we the representative voice of the Japanese Canadians as a whole, and what we say would be abided by the membership in general?

BRO. ANGUS NEISH: That is what I have in mind, and roughly what is the membership? That is, what is the proportion of the over-all Canadian Japanese--how much of that do you represent?

MR. TANAKA: Actually, we represent all the Japanese Canadians in Canada. The reason I say that is because our organization was founded through a National Conference held in Toronto, and we had Delegates from each Province, and the Delegates represent their Local Provincial Chapter. They have a set-up where they have local organizations throughout each Province. How that came about in the first instance was that the Japanese Canadians felt that in the areas where they happened to live that they needed to get together in order to gain public support in combating Legislative discrimination and other things. We feel that the attitude of the Japanese Canadians in general is that they accept this, our organization, as their representative group.

As far as membership is concerned, I couldn't give you a definite figure because, like any organization, we are faced with the same difficulty. We would not now have a National Organization were it not for the fact that there are various individuals throughout each Province who are keenly interested in combating discrimination, and also trying to co-operate with other groups for our mutual benefit. I think, as delegates, you are fully aware that in general the rank and file are reluctant to take an active part, or give of their time and services day after day, month after month, and year after year, for some idea or principle. I think it is to the credit of the Japanese Canadians that there are leaders throughout the various Provinces who are willing to sacrifice their time and effort, and I can assure you that they have certainly sacrificed a great deal of their time, even their future and their financial resources, because they believe in a principle, and that is the only reason why we have an active organization. But through that, and through the machinery of democratic procedure, we have gained the support, the outspoken support, of the Japanese Canadians in general.

BRO. ALLISON: Has Mr. Tanaka any record of the period in which the Japanese Nationals first emigrated to Canada, and the number that came that first year?

MR. TANAKA: I haven't accurate figures, but I can tell you offhand. I believe the first group emigrated from Japan to Canada away back in 1890, and up to 1905 there were not more than 1,000 or 2,000. Then, between 1905 and 1912-15, I believe there was a further group of several thousands. Then between somewhere in the period of the 1920's we had a few more thousands immigrated from Japan.

BRO. TOM PARKIN: Just one point, Bro. Chairman. I understand from the press that the Loggers Union in B. C. has mentioned a membership of Japanese Canadians in Interior locals of what was the I.W.A., and I understand some of the Locals today are the W.I.U. I wonder if Mr. Tanaka could tell us to what extent the Japanese Canadians were members in the Loggers Union in the Interior of this Province?

MR. TANAKA: I would say that substantially the majority, a great percentage are members, if not practically all, because the feeling has been that they should become members of Unions.



BRO. JOHN SILVEY: Mr. Chairman, the Japanese Ass'n was in B. C. here before the war. Now, they still have a Japanese Ass'n. I would like to know, if the Japanese come back and fish on the Coast here, will they bring the Association back with them? We must think that over again. We know what the Japanese Association means. That is organizing, that is what it means, so he is just telling us he is organizing a Japanese Association in the interior of Canada and east. Is that coming back to B. C. again, the coastal area?

BRO. STAVENES: You are referring, I believe, to the Japanese Protective Association, the Union of Japanese Fishermen here in B. C. before the war. That is what you were referring to?

BRO. JOHN SILVEY: That was one in B.C. here before, and there is one coming back in again according to Mr. Tanaka.

MR. TANAKA: That is not quite true. As pointed out, we certainly don't want the Japanese Canadian fishermen to form their own organization, and we certainly feel that we should become members of this Union. I don't know whether you were referring to our Organization of which I am the Executive Secretary, because that has nothing to do with the fishing industry specifically. It is only that at this time I have been granted the opportunity to give to you some picture of what the Japanese Canadians are doing, and it seemed opportune that I could give you some information at this particular time about the Japanese Canadians. But certainly, as with respect to the fishing question, we certainly do not desire and certainly strongly oppose that Japanese Canadians form in their own group. They should be encouraged to become members of this Union and take part as good Union members.

BRO. JOHN SILVEY: Mr. Tanaka, still I am not quite satisfied on that answer to the question. You still have your Association, the Japanese Association in the east or in the interior. Is that organization coming into B. C. coastal areas? That is the question. In the fishing industry? You see, we are already organized, we have our Union, only one Union.

I am a Canadian, all of us are of different nationalities, here, but we are all organized in the one group. But you come down here and you are still going to have your Japanese Association when you come into the coast again. That is what I was getting at.

MR. TANAKA: Fishermen?

BRO. SILVEY: Fishermen, farmers, loggers--you still have that Japanese Association. Every second word of yours is about the Japanese Association. You had it seven years ago and you have it yet. That is the thing I want to get clear.

MR. TANAKA: There is a definite reason why we organized. Now, we are not going to sit down and put up with Legislative discrimination, race prejudice, if we feel that we have a right to fight for our rights and the only reason, the only way you can fight for your rights is when you get together. We felt that there was a need for some kind of machinery to fight for our rights, and that is the reason why we formed this organization. We certainly don't want to use this organization to the detriment of Canadians in general, and specifically with respect to the fishing industry or any other industry.

Regarding fishing, naturally, we do not want to act as representatives for the fishermen as a bargaining group with this Union. We have no right to. There is no need for it. We feel that Japanese Canadians should join their own Unions and act as individual members. Our Organization which we have now, I think, is comparable today, to the Canadian Jewish Congress and the only reason they have

the organizations because they are faced with race prejudice and discrimination in employment in Canada. That is the reason why we have our organization. I myself have put in three years in this work. I certainly have no desire to do this work because in doing so I am only sacrificing my own time and my future. Being 36 years old, naturally I should get busy to become re-settled where I am living in Toronto, but I haven't done that.

I felt that there was a need to do something as a Canadian citizen of Japanese origin, because we faced a peculiar situation which was faced only by Japanese Canadians, Chinese Canadians, and Jews, and coloured people to a large degree. Naturally, I know that other Canadian racial minority groups have been confronted with their problems too. I feel that just as soon as there is no need for our organization, we will dissolve. But I feel that we have a responsibility. We have been faced with race prejudice and discrimination during the war years, and we have received assistance and help from other people, other groups, and I feel it would be very selfish for us that just as soon as our problems are solved that we sit down complacent, self-satisfied, and ignore the problems of other Canadian racial minority groups.

Inasmuch as there may be criticism, and I grant you that there has been from past experiences in British Columbia, that we form an Organization, I personally felt, and so do all of our leaders, that there was a need for some kind of machinery to do what we felt could only be done through an organization, and that is the reason we have this organization. So long as an organization is used for positive ends, for creative work, I feel that it is justified, and there has been justification in the past years for our organization. I don't think we would have received the franchise this year had it not been for the efforts of our organization and also, I grant you, the very important contribution and help given to us by other organizations such as the Vancouver Civil Liberties Union and Church organizations, and other groups and individuals. There isn't very much I can say about the existence of our organization, excepting to say that if it is doing some good work, then I feel there is justification for it at the present time. Just as soon as there is no need for it, I would be the first one to say, and I would be very happy to say, that it should be dissolved.

(Applause)

BRO. TOM PARKIN: Bro. Chairman, just one question that might also further clarify the question that Bro. Silvey raised. Just as a whole host of our members belong to the Elks Club, the Moose Club, the Kiwanis Club, and a whole number of other fraternal organizations as well as being members here, I don't think they join those clubs in order to negotiate fish prices. They join them for social and cultural reasons. And I would suggest that his organization, the Canadian Japanese Citizenship Organization, bears the same relationship to the Japanese people. It is not there to negotiate wages, prices, or conditions of that sort; but rather to deal with the cultural and educational and organizational problems that they, as a racial group, face. I think that would be your opinion, Mr. Tanaka?

MR. TANAKA: That is one good point. We have been asked as a group to take part in folk festivals. In 1947 in Toronto there was organized the Toronto Folk Festival and all the ethnic groups, about seventy of them, were invited to take part and exhibit some of their folk dances and to show some of the products of their cultural backgrounds, and this was done, and was held in the Toronto Art Gallery. We were able, because we had a group organized, to round up the people who could contribute something to this affair and I have been told so often by people, Caucasian Canadians who are interested in Japanese Canadians, that it would be a pity if we lost our cultural background.

I feel, too, that if we can contribute something from our racial background or cultural background to Canadian culture, then, we should do so, and naturally in order to do that it would be necessary for us to get together and have some kind of a group. That is one of our projects, to try to encourage in the various centres that the Japanese Canadians not forget their cultural background, and wherever they can take part in

folk festival affairs in their local community they do so. I can tell you that several times in B. C., in the interior of B. C., in the various local communities, they were able to hold such affairs, and also that holds true in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, in Toronto, in London, in Hamilton, and in Montreal.

BRO. GUY WILLIAMS: Mr. Tanaka, just one question. What percentage of the total Japanese population in Canada are Canadian born?

MR. TANAKA: Roughly there are about 20,000 in Canada. Of that number I would say over half are Canadian born. Of the others I would say perhaps over half would be naturalized, and each year more and more are becoming naturalized, so I would believe that there are very few Nationals at the present time. I am sorry I can't give you the exact figures on population because I haven't them with me.

BRO. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Tanaka, that answers my question.

BRO. RIETAN: Mr. Chairman, with a group such as Chinese and Japanese before the war, it was usual for the employer to give them a lower rate of pay than that which was established for the industry by Union Agreements and so forth. I believe that in the fishing industry and other industries, that has been one of the objections to those races being employed in industry.

BRO. STAVENES: You are asking a question?

BRO. RIETAN: I am going to ask a question. Now, in the case of the Japanese returning to this coast, does your organization exercise sufficient control or suggestion on the part of your members or your race, to induce them to participate and live up to the existing Labor Union Agreements in the particular industries which they intend to participate? What control would you hold over those members? Would you be any aid to the Labor Unions in making your race adhere to the existing Labor Agreements?

MR. TANAKA: Offhand, I would say that we could exert an influence in carrying out an educational program, but actually I don't think there would be any need for the organization to do that, because the Japanese Canadians themselves desire very much to receive standard rates in wages. The indications from the actions of the Japanese Canadians throughout Canada are that they want equal pay and no less, and it is natural because they are used to the same standard of living as other Canadians at the present time, and I know specifically with respect to British Columbia in the interior they are receiving Union rates in the lumbering industry and also they are receiving them because they happen to be members of a Union. I know also in other fields of employment there has not been one case where a person has been willing to accept a lower rate of pay. I feel, from my own experience before the war, I remember trying to get a job in a pulp mill during my holidays between school,

and it was my first experience and I discovered that there were two standards--one for the Caucasian Canadians and one for the Oriental. Despite my attempts to get a higher rate of pay, I was automatically put into the Oriental class and I couldn't do anything about it. That has been something that I felt has been with us ever since we were born here.

We have had no other choice, and it has been a very good thing, I feel personally, that through the evacuation, however painful it may have been at the time, we have benefited by it because we have been received in other parts of Canada as Canadians on an equal status. We have not had to fight any deep-rooted prejudice. In British Columbia, there is a stereotyped conception of the Jap. Now, I use that term because it is an interesting point that before the war we were very sensitive about that term, "Jap", and to anybody or any paper that would use that term, we

were antagonistic and had a chip on our shoulders, but since our evacuation we have come to use it very freely amongst ourselves. It doesn't mean a thing. And the reason we can afford to take that attitude is that we have been accepted as Canadian citizens in other parts of Canada, and we have come to feel as Canadian citizens, without any vestige of inferiority complex which was engendered in us during the time we were here before. From the time we were able to think for ourselves, we had always been confronted with that race prejudice and, naturally, when you are young, when you face this day after day, you naturally get into a little shell of your own. But since the evacuation we have been able to overcome that. I think we have the courage now to ask for our rights when we don't get them.

BRO. BURNELL: The question I would like to ask is somewhat related to the preceding question, and it is this, and no doubt Mr. Tanaka is aware that among the Japanese population there are different classes of people. There are those who employ labor and there are those who work. Now, we here generally are of the people who work, and because of that we would be interested in, as our Constitution says, furthering the ideas of non-discrimination towards any type of Canadian. However, if a situation obtains in which the Japanese do break away and form their own association, now there would be a possibility of that, then there would be a tendency to develop racial discrimination again. The question I wanted to ask is there any way your association, and would it have weight with the Japanese who are returning to the fishing industry, to contact them and urge them to join our Union? Would it be possible to contact them, get a list of those returning to the fishing industry, and use the influence of your association to urge them to join our Union? You can't compel them to join our Union, but what could you do to help us in this question?

MR. TANAKA: We have already made plans to do what we can, and we have a weekly paper which is subscribed to, and in that we report the activities of our organization and the policies and so on. We intend in the next issue to print an article which will urge the Japanese Canadians, those who may contemplate going to the fishing industry or any work at all, to join the proper Union and not to form their own organization. In fact, if there was any suspicion at all that the Japanese Canadian fishermen are about to form their own organization, we certainly, as an organization, will do everything possible to prevent it. I doubt, though that there is any need to fear that, because, having talked to a number of the former fishermen, and even to one or two of the older people who were officers in their former Japanese Fishermen organization, they have stated to me privately that it would be dangerous and wrong, and not wise to form their own organization as in pre-war days. So, I am quite confident that through our educational program we can enlighten them. And not only that, privately, I might add, I will tell them of the high cost of equipment, in fact, in the current issue I have reported my findings as to the high cost of fishing equipment. I hope that will discourage some of them who may not be actually thinking about going into fishing again but just toying with the idea, that they will forget about it immediately. That is one reason why I try to obtain information on present cost of fishing equipment. And also, I have reported the extreme housing shortage in Vancouver, and the fact that there are 30,000 unemployed. That is also one reason that I hope through this publicity, that it will tend to prevent a certain number who may desire, or are even thinking about it, coming back to the industry in the next year or two. I feel that through this process of education and advice, we can, and will be able to control the situation.

MR. JOHN SILVEY: I would like to ask Mr. Tanaka a question. There used to be an old Japanese Association here at one time, a Codfish Association. Has that been dissolved? Do you know anything about that?

MR. TANAKA: That had headquarters in Vancouver, hadn't it? That has been dissolved. In fact, they donated the balance of their funds of \$2,000 to our organization. If it wasn't for that, I wouldn't be paid next month.

MR. JOHN SILVEY: As a Canadian, Mr. Tanaka, I will take the United States on this, too--I think in the American Army, I believe that there were somewhere around 13,000 Japanese Americans demanded their rights when war broke out, and I believe the Japanese American War had started. They demanded their rights? I want to know, and I think the delegation would want to know this in the end, too, before this is finished, that you are a Canadian, did you demand your rights to fight for your country or did you run away and go up in the interior, and then come back now and claim the right of citizenship of your country? That is the thing I think lots of people right here in this hall would want an understanding on that.

MR. TANAKA: Prior to the evacuation, we had a little group and -----

MR. JOHN SILVEY: Excuse me, Mr. Tanaka, this as a Canadian, you see. I am working on the basis of Canadian-Japanese.

MR. TANAKA: Canadian born?

MR. JOHN SILVEY: Canadian born -- three or four generations. On the other hand, we have people here in this hall, probably German descent or other descent, we can't say, we will put it that way, they were only just born in this country and they put on their uniform and went over and they killed their own uncles or grand-sons or whatever it might be, and this is what we want to know: There were Japanese Canadians born, three, four generations in B. C. here that failed to put the uniform on, outside of 150 of them.

MR. TANAKA: Actually, there are not four generations. I am the second generation, and until we have children there won't be a third generation. But you can see our parents were the first group of Japanese that came to Canada, and at the time of evacuation most of us were pretty young. They were hardly in their teen-ages, I think. In 1942, as a result of Pearl Harbour and the evacuation--this is not generally known--but Japanese Canadians here and there in Vancouver volunteered for the Armed Forces, but they were rejected, refused. There were a number from Nanaimo or somewhere, a group of five or six who came to Vancouver prepared to volunteer. They passed their physical AI. But then they were notified that they could not be accepted into the Armed Forces. I feel that if Japanese Canadians were permitted at that time to volunteer, we would have had a substantial group in the Canadian Army. It wasn't until the spring of 1945 that the Canadian Government allowed us to volunteer into the Armed Forces and, mind you, the only reason the Dominion Government did that was because of pressure exerted by the British Government because they needed Japanese Canadians as interpreters down in the South-East Asia Command and in the British Empire they had no other source of Japanese interpreters excepting for those who lived in British Columbia. I know my C.O. in British Columbia here informed me that in 1942, the Pacific Command here felt there was need for Japanese Canadians to work as interpreters and soon, and they did put in a recommendation, but that recommendation was not considered by the higher authorities in Ottawa.

Actually, since we were not given the opportunity to volunteer, I cannot assure you that there would have been hundreds volunteering, but I feel confident that had we been accepted we would have volunteered. Even as late as 1945, at that time we did volunteer. And at that time, I might remind you, we thought that the war with Japan would continue for several years. We had no way of knowing that in six or seven months time we would face V-J Day.

There is one other point I would like to state, that the evacuation did create bitterness. I myself, born and raised in Vancouver, never even dreamt that we would be uprooted from our homes. I felt confident that, because we had always lived as Canadians, we would be accepted as such. It was a shock to me that we

were uprooted. But we got used to the idea and most of us felt we were big enough to realize that it was something that we couldn't do anything about and that the best thing we could do, as Canadian citizens, was to co-operate with our Dominion Government, and we did so. Some of the younger people--I can tell you a story of a family of young people who were put on a train and were sent to Alberta. They were not permitted to get off at the Railway Station at Lethbridge, but the train was put into the stockyards there, and the people were let out there. And then the farmers to whom the families were sent would come to them trying to identify each family and ask, "Are you with so-and-so going to work for me?" And I heard of one story where a young girl said, "What is it to you, we are only Japs." She was only 12 or 15 yrs. old. That indicates the kind of bitterness that hit those young people. It is surprising that they did and were able to overcome that bitterness. But they did eventually.

It is unfortunate that our Government didn't feel it wise to accept us in the Armed Forces in 1942--that is about all I can say now that it is all over.

BRO. JOHN SILVEY: Still doesn't quite suit me.

BRO. STAVENES: You have already had the floor several times on this particular question. Any other delegates wish to have the floor?

BRO. MCLELLAN: I think we could do a lot better work by going after our own defunct members and get them back in our own Union instead of trying to fight with 200 Japanese.

(Applause)

BRO STAVENES: Any of the other delegates wish to have any further questions answered?

BRO. ALLISON: I move the questions cease.

(The motion was duly seconded).

BRO. STAVENES: Regularly moved and seconded that this question period cease. The question on the motion has been asked. All in favor of that motion signify in the usual manner. Contrary? Carried and so ordered.

I take this opportunity of thanking Mr. George Tanaka for the period he has spent with us this afternoon. I am quite sure that out of what he has said out of the questions that have taken place this afternoon, that you will give your consideration to the Japanese question when it comes on the floor.

(Applause)

TEXT OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE B.C. UNITED  
FISHERMEN AND ALLIED WORKERS' UNION RESOLUTION ON POLICY  
TOWARD JAPANESE CANADIAN FISHERMEN ADOPTED ON MARCH 23, 1949.

(The attitude of B.C. fishermen toward Japanese Canadians was clarified in a resolution adopted on March 23, 1949, by the Fifth Annual Convention of the B.C. Fishermen's Union, in Vancouver, B.C., following a 2 hour presentation to the convention's 200 delegates of the case for Japanese Canadians in general, and Japanese Canadian fishermen in particular, by George Tanaka, National JCCA Executive Secretary on March 22, 1949.)

POLICY ON JAPANESE CANADIANS

WHEREAS: The United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union is a democratic organization which does not bar anyone from membership because of race, colour, religion or political opinion;

AND WHEREAS: The federal government has announced that licenses will be granted to Japanese Canadians upon their return to the B.C. coast;

AND WHEREAS: It is in the best interests of all fishermen that if any Japanese Canadians re-enter the industry that they should not constitute an economic threat to fishermen who are presently engaged in the industry.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union adopt the following policy in respect to the return of Japanese Canadians to the coastal area.

1. Japanese Canadians who return to the industry should be organized into the U.F.A.W.U. and we would seek the co-operation of the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association in this organizing task.
2. The Union should oppose any move to form a separate Japanese fishermen's union or association.
3. The Union, in co-operation with other organizations should seek to prevent a situation whereby Japanese who re-enter the industry become subservient to the canning companies through heavy indebtedness for boats and gear or by living on company property.
4. The Union should not oppose the granting of fishing licenses to Japanese Canadians but when the government decides to issue such licenses, our Union should oppose any attempt at segregation of Japanese by limiting them to certain types of fishing or special areas.
5. The Union should continue to press for an over-all control or limitation on the granting of new fishing licenses in order to prevent further overcrowding in the industry.

Adopted by the Fifth Annual Convention,

United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union.